

Doctrine and Debate in the East Christian World, 300–1500

Edited by
Averil Cameron and Robert Hoyland



The Worlds of Eastern Christianity, 300-1500

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Volume 12

Doctrine and Debate in the East Christian
World, 300–1500

THE WORLDS OF EASTERN CHRISTIANITY, 300–1500

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World, 300–1500

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period covered, 300–1500 CE, is inevitably to some degree arbitrary, but its general parameters do encompass the key events of the formation of Eastern Christianity. The starting point is marked by the accession of Constantine the Great, in recognition of the immense changes that his conversion set in train in this region. There is no natural end point – indeed, Eastern Christianity is still changing and adapting today – but, with the fall of Constantinople in 1453 CE, the last vestiges of Christian rule in the East were swept away and with them went any hope of a *reconquista* and a return of a Christian polity.

As noted above, Eastern Christianity is much less known and studied than its Western counterpart that grew up in an emerging Europe, and it is the principal aim of this series to redress this deficiency and to provide a foundation for new research. Distance from Europe is not, however, the only reason for the relative neglect of the topic. East Christian studies were born in the Vatican of the early modern period, when the See of Rome was trying to attract the Middle Eastern churches to Catholicism. This legacy has left traces in subsequent research to this day, fostering an approach that has been overwhelmingly theological and philological, often disguised as ‘oriental’ or ‘biblical’ studies. Originating, as it did, from different disciplines, scholarly production is very scattered across frequently obscure publications that are difficult to access by those who have no specialized library at hand. In addition, the multicultural and multilingual world of late antique and medieval Eastern Christianity has quite naturally created compartmentalized clusters of scholars, defined and divided by various linguistic and subject specialities, to the point that students of the same bilingual society have worked separately on the sources available in each language.

This series seeks to address these problems by making available some of the most influential research published to date on a selection of subjects – works that have been central to the way in which we have come to define and understand Eastern Christianity. Reflecting what has long been the most common approach, a first set of volumes will present the language, literature and history of the various East Christian communities; a second series will, however, take a thematic approach, so that a number of different topics prominent in modern scholarly literature can be dealt with in a way that crosses the various cultural and linguistic boundaries. This will permit a reframing of the fragmented and static view that research to date has tended to give of the east Christian world – and behind it, of the early Islamic empire which these communities populated. The series as a whole will, it is hoped, serve as a starting point for a more holistic approach to Eastern Christianity.

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Chapter 10: Averil Cameron, ‘Texts as Weapons: Polemic in the Byzantine Dark Ages’, in Alan K. Bowman and Greg Woolf, eds, *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 198–215. Copyright © 1994 Cambridge University Press.

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Chapter 16: Ramy Wannous, ‘Abdallah ibn al-Faḍl’s Exposition of the Orthodox Faith’, *Parole de l’Orient* 32 (2007), pp. 259–69.

General Editors' Preface

Christianity very quickly expanded beyond its narrow Palestinian confines, spawning different versions of itself as it went. By the seventh century, Christian communities were to be found as far apart as Ireland and China. Such a situation makes a mockery of any simple division into Western and Eastern Christianity, and certainly it makes more sense to accept that even quite shortly after the life of Christ there were many Christianities across Eurasia that differed in innumerable subtle and not so subtle ways. Yet lines must be drawn if one is ever to achieve anything more than a superficial survey and often, as here, there is a need to shed light on a relatively neglected area of study. For the purposes of this series, therefore, 'Eastern Christianity' will refer to those forms of Christianity that evolved in the Middle East in the period 300–1500, excluding the forms of Christianity that grew up in the Slavic world and the lands east of Iran.

Besides the fact that the Christianity of this region and period has received less attention than the Christian communities of Europe, which deserves redress, it is also true to say that Christianity in the Middle East developed along very different lines to Christianity elsewhere, evolving its own distinctive forms and identities. In the first place, it was heir to Greek culture in a very intimate way, for all the principal Hellenistic cities were to be found in this region and the Greek language and literature continued to predominate there until at least the seventh century CE. Secondly, the linking of religion and imperial power that followed on from the conversion of Constantine the Great affected the Middle East much more than Europe, since the majority of the great urban sees of the Roman Empire were located in the East, and this became even more true after the fall of Rome in the fifth century CE and the consequent decline of urban culture in the West. Thirdly, the Middle East was a land of very ancient civilizations, with many different groups of very diverse linguistic, ethnic and religious traditions. This, combined with the second point, gave rise to a series of confrontations between the imperial position and the position of those communities that wanted to maintain a certain distance from the imperial authorities, the result of which was a number of subtly distinguished doctrinal positions that served to reinforce and articulate the pre-existing differences. Fourthly, in the seventh century there occurred in the Middle East the event that most strongly defined Eastern Christianity, namely the rise of Islam. This saw Christians revert from being a ruling majority to, over time, a ruled minority – one that had to come to terms not only with loss of political power and patronage, but also with the ideological challenge of a new and successful monotheism. These four reasons, along with numerous features of climate, topography and human geography that are unique to the Middle East, meant that the Christians of the region evolved a distinctive culture, the main aspects of which will be presented in these volumes. The

Introduction

300–700

Beginnings: Before Constantine

‘There is hardly any book of our New Testament that does not contain an invective against false teaching’ (Edwards, 2009, p. 2). The disciples of Jesus asked themselves what his life and teaching meant while he was alive, and still more after his death. A key problem that presented itself was whether the message was to go to all or only to Jews; this was resolved in favour of the gentiles after a dream experienced by Peter at Joppa (Acts 11: 1–18). On his journeys, St Paul constantly had to deal with questions and situations that demanded answers, and he did not hesitate to oppose mistakes or express his own views. He tells the Galatians, ‘I now repeat what I have said before: if anyone preaches a gospel at variance with the gospel which you received, let him be outcast!’ (Gal: 1: 9). In Paul’s day, new Christians needed not only to understand the nature of Christ, but also to be taught how and why they were different from pagan polytheists and from Jews. By the second century, as Christianity spread, albeit very slowly, and Christians had to deal with a sometimes hostile Roman imperial establishment, its writers were producing argumentative refutations of pagan and Jewish beliefs and had begun to define wrong belief within their own circles as heresy. Among the works of Justin (103–ca. 165), who was martyred in Rome under Marcus Aurelius, was the *Dialogue with Trypho*, the earliest example of what was to become a major Christian genre of dialogues designed to demonstrate the superiority of Christianity over Judaism. He also wrote apologetic works, designed to persuade pagans of the truth of Christianity, and set out a genealogy of heresy according to which every new example was traced to one source, Simon Magus (Acts 8: 9–24; Edwards, Goodman and Price, 1999; Rajak, 1999, pp. 59–80; see also Lieu, North and Rajak, 1992 and, generally, Le Boulluec, 2000). Justin’s pupil Tatian (120–80), who was also responsible for the Syriac *Diatessaron*, or harmony of the four Gospels, composed a Greek refutation of ‘the Greeks’ – that is, of Hellenic philosophy and religion. He ridicules Greek philosophy and pagan deities, and key themes are already present that were to be constantly repeated in later Christian writing, including the eternity of the world, the assertion of free will and the claim that Moses lived before Homer and the Trojan War, and therefore that Christianity is more ancient than Greek thought.

The question of whether there was an emerging Christian orthodoxy is more difficult and more contentious. Irenaeus is usually thought to have set out the basics of the catholic – that is, mainstream – position, and his *Against Heresies* (ca. 180, known in a Latin

translation of the original Greek) adopted the same attitude towards heterodox views as Justin's. All those who engaged in internal Christian debate claimed to be orthodox, whatever their position, and this continued throughout the period covered in this book. All sides condemned their opponents as heretics, adapting terminology originally applied to philosophical sects but now applied to alternative views on Christian doctrine.¹ Modern views about the development of Christian orthodoxy vary dramatically according to who is expressing them; for some, even the term 'development' is controversial, implying, as it does, that there was, and is, a Christian orthodoxy that is not fundamentally given and unalterable.² Alternative views, or 'heresies', are seen as emerging or springing up, and may allow the central orthodoxy to be better understood. This is how the history of the early church is presented by Eusebius of Caesarea, whose early fourth-century *Ecclesiastical History* has been (and was meant to be) highly influential in imposing its view of Christian origins.³ A completely different view is held in much current non-confessional scholarship on early Christianity. According to this view there was no single correct doctrine that was 'given', and indeed there was no single authoritative structure capable of managing diversity; rather, out of a plethora of different 'Christianities' and movements came the painful process of self-differentiation accompanied by the assertion of orthodoxy. Given such variation, it was to prove extraordinarily difficult to achieve consensus, and the ensuing struggle lasted for many centuries; indeed, it has persisted until the present day.

It was not clear in the early period which group would emerge as mainstream. A key publication arguing for a plurality of what would now be called 'early Christianities' was Walter Bauer's *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum* (1934), and this approach has been greatly reinforced in recent years under the influence of literary theory – especially post-colonial theory – and debates about the construction of identity (see Ehrman, 2003).⁴ The Gospels are seen as emerging from specific communities and the New Testament canon as correspondingly late in being finalized. Alongside these tendencies has been a similar emphasis on the 'construction' of 'Gnosticism' and of Jewish identity, with a corresponding view of a late 'parting of the ways' between

¹ For this development see Le Boulluec (1985) and Lyman (2003).

² John Henry (later Cardinal) Newman's *Essay on the Development of Doctrine* (1845) was written as he was approaching conversion to Roman Catholicism and is a defence of the idea that doctrine, or the understanding of it, could develop.

³ Barnes (1981) includes a powerful discussion of Eusebius's many works and of Eusebius as a biblical scholar. Older studies of the *Ecclesiastical History* include Wallace-Hadrill (1960) and Grant (1980). The *Ecclesiastical History* is a highly apologetic work, and Eusebius also revised and added to it as political circumstances changed and the religious importance of Constantine became apparent after 312.

⁴ This approach is also evident in the *Cambridge History of Christianity* 1 (2006), which has sections on 'The Jesus movements', 'Community traditions and self-definition' and 'Regional varieties of Christianity in the first three centuries'. For issues of identity see Lieu (2002, 2004).

Christianity and Judaism.⁵ In this light, the Christian texts which proclaim their distinctiveness are read as representing the effort needed to achieve what they claim.

Given such a situation, a huge industry grew up in the techniques of argument, including polemic and the definition and labelling of heresies; it reached a peak during late antiquity and into the medieval period, but its roots lay in the first centuries AD. These techniques were honed and practised by almost every Christian writer and were used in almost all genres of Christian writing. The debate might be bad-tempered, as often, or more irenic, depending on what was at stake at the time; the modern concept of ecumenical dialogue had not been invented, and issues of power relations, which became even more important as time went on, were certainly involved. In the post-Constantinian period and later, the stakes were raised as issues of enforcement became critical (Cameron, 2007). Finally, the argument was largely conducted in Greek, and the search for definitions has often been ascribed to the influence of Hellenism and of Greek philosophy, leading to a search for an unspoiled 'original' Christianity. Indeed, Tatian's *Against the Greeks* demonstrates the hostility with which Greek culture was viewed by some early Christians, and the term 'Hellenic' later became synonymous with pagan. Yet Tatian, a native of 'Assyria', had himself been educated in Greek rhetoric and philosophy, and later writers, notably Eusebius of Caesarea, were deeply indebted to Greek philosophy and sought to incorporate this background into Christian thought.⁶ The attitude of Christian writers to Hellenism was ambivalent, but Greek rhetoric and Greek philosophy are inseparable from the development of early Christianity.⁷

In the pre-Constantinian period the role of bishops became established and, with this, the claim that only apostolic succession guaranteed true authority; those who could claim it, through an unbroken line of succession, had the true gospel, whereas doctrines preached by others were heretical.⁸ The status of individual bishops often became controversial in later periods, especially in the sixth-century East, as those who continued to oppose the Council of Chalcedon (451) gradually formed themselves into a separate church (see below) and removed from their liturgical diptychs (names of the orthodox read out in the liturgy) those with whom they were not in communion. Local meetings

⁵ A variety of groups in the second century claimed to offer gnosis ('knowledge'), and this led to the dubious assumption that 'Gnosticism' was a single entity: see Williams (1996); Markschiefs (2003); and Brakke (2006). For Judaism (or 'Judaisms') and a late 'parting of the ways', see especially Boyarin (2004) and Becker and Reed (2003); this tendency goes along with a greater emphasis on the Jewishness of Jesus, for which see Young (2006, pp 23–28).

⁶ See especially Eusebius's *Preparation for the Gospel* and *Demonstration of the Gospel* which, in the course of their argument, preserve many Greek philosophical quotations not found elsewhere.

⁷ Among the explanations for the conversion of the empire to Christianity was the willingness and ability of Christian leaders to appeal to the prevailing intellectual and literary culture: see Cameron (1991a). In the fourth and fifth centuries bishops had usually received the same rhetorical and philosophical education as non-Christians and often studied together with them; this was often translated into power relations: see Brown (1992).

⁸ For this thinking see also Buell (1999).

of Christians were also held, and these gradually became more formal in character, with the discussion sometimes resulting in disciplinary action (Hess, 2002). The council held at Elvira in Spain (ca. 305–306) issued 81 disciplinary rulings (canons), one of which laid down the duty of celibacy for clergy. Other disputes discussed at such meetings included the date when Easter should be observed (Eus., *HE* 5.23.2), still a matter of division at the Council of Nicaea in 325. The ending of the Decian persecution of 250–251 required decisions about the treatment of Christians who had complied with the Roman authorities, and councils were held to discuss this in Carthage and Rome. At this point councils were not confined to bishops – other clergy and also laymen attended. Pre-Constantinian councils (also called synods) were local, but a precedent was set by the condemnation of Paul of Samosata, Bishop of Antioch, by an ‘ecumenical’ council held there in 268 (Eus., *HE* VII.27–30), in that not only did the council aim at being worldwide (ecumenical), but also that it involved the emperor.

Rebecca Lyman’s essay (Chapter 1) discusses the way in which a later controversialist deliberately influenced the representation of earlier figures. The Alexandrian theologian Origen (185–ca. 254) was a powerful figure in third-century Christianity. He was a prolific writer, scriptural scholar and exegete, an ascetic and a philosopher. He spent the last part of his life at Caesarea, and Eusebius, who became its bishop, included a laudatory biography of him in book VI of his *Ecclesiastical History*, presenting him in the guise of a holy man (Cox, 1983).⁹ However, by the later fourth century, Origen’s views had become very controversial,¹⁰ and Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis in Cyprus, included a highly tendentious biography of him in his *Panarion*, or ‘Medicine chest of remedies’ against heresies, composed in the 370s. Epiphanius’s work is an extraordinary listing and condemnation of heresy (he names 80, the number of the concubines in the *Song of Songs*, and it became a model for later heresiologies or lists of heresy by theologians including St Augustine and St John of Damascus (see Cameron, 2005; Lyman, 2000, 2007; Pourkier, 1994). The blackening of Origen in Epiphanius’s *Panarion* derived from current theological disputes, but it also shows how far theologians could now go in moulding earlier church history to controversialist ends.

Constantine and After

Constantine’s decision to favour Christianity in 312 was momentous. He never wavered thereafter, and within months began to intervene personally in church affairs. He was not alone among the tetrarchs in support for the Christians, and persecution had already been called off by Galerius in 311. However, although Constantine did not, and could not, make Christianity the religion of the Roman Empire, his ruthless progress towards becoming sole emperor (achieved in 324 when he defeated Licinius), his deference

⁹ Along with Pamphilus, Eusebius was also the author of an *Apology for Origen*. For Origen and the library at Caesarea see Grafton and Williams (2006).

¹⁰ For Origenism in the late fourth to early fifth centuries see Clark (1992).

towards Christian bishops, his use of state funds for church purposes and his church-building programme together introduced entirely new opportunities for Christians. Bishops were given a judicial role and invited to travel at public expense to church councils summoned by the emperor. The church was legally allowed to inherit property, and new churches were built with imperial and other patronage. When the catholic Christians of Constantina (Cirta) in modern Algeria had their church occupied by dissenting rigorist Donatists, Constantine handed over a secular building for them to use. Eusebius of Caesarea was not the only one to be bowled over by such a reversal; he had already pioneered a Christian chronology in which the whole of history from Creation led to the establishment of a Christian world order, and the final part of his *Ecclesiastical History* cast Constantine in the role of a new Moses, while in his *Life of Constantine*, where the emperor's death is described, he presented him almost as a Christian saint. The speech he wrote for the emperor's 30th anniversary set out a theory of Christian monarchy with the emperor as Christ's representative on earth and the Christian empire mirroring the kingdom of heaven.¹¹ The emperor was surrounded by bishops hoping to influence his policies, and who had a personal interest in the outcome (Drake, 2000).

Christology and Councils

Constantine set a momentous precedent by deciding to intervene in internal church disputes. He sent letters with appeals and threats in the hope of reconciling the parties, attempted to resolve them, and summoned councils of bishops, first to Arles in 314 and then to Nicaea in 325. The Council of Nicaea debated the date of Easter, but most importantly the status of the Son in relation to the Father, about which there had been disturbances in Alexandria associated with a presbyter called Arius who allegedly argued that the Son was second to the Father. Constantine introduced the council, but did not chair it, and professed to defer to the bishops, but the agreed formula for the relation (*homoousios*, 'of equal substance') was attributed to the emperor himself. This was the first recognized ecumenical council. It issued a statement of belief (creed) which later formed the basis of the Nicene Creed. Imperial punishment was meted out to the few who refused to sign, and Arius himself was exiled. Constantine soon changed his position and was himself baptized, when near death in 337, by an 'Arian' bishop; the previous year the strongly pro-Nicene Athanasius of Alexandria had been exiled. Constantine was eventually succeeded by his son Constantius II who was also pro-Arian, and the next several decades were dominated by the continuation of this dispute, with numerous synods. In the course of the 'Arian' controversy Arius himself was attacked and blackened as a heretic so successfully that the term 'Arian' was subsequently used for centuries as a term of abuse.¹²

¹¹ For this, see Drake (1976); for the *Life of Constantine*, see Eusebius (1999).

¹² Contemporary accounts of the Arian controversy and Arianism are no longer generally taken at face value, since they depend on the hostile witness of opponents; see Williams (1987,

These divisions not only raised issues of legitimacy and authority between bishops and sees, but also stimulated a range of tendentious writing – letters, sermons, treatises. Ecumenical councils, with their imperial involvement, were intended to resolve them, but they also served to sharpen division and stimulate rivalry. The Council of Nicaea was followed by the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 381, which condemned Arianism and seems to have adopted a version of the Nicene Creed with clarification of the role of the Holy Spirit; in its canons it also declared the patriarchate of Constantinople to be second in status after Rome (Ferguson, 2008).¹³ Ecumenical councils also became more and more elaborately staged, but many other important councils and synods were also held. The Council of Ephesus (431) took place amid intense lobbying and lavish bribes by the followers of Cyril of Alexandria; Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, was deposed for opposing the title ‘Mother of God’ for the Virgin Mary, thus downgrading Christ from divine to human.¹⁴ His name lived on, attached to the dyophysite (dual-nature) Church of the East, the dominant Christian sect in east Syria and the Persian Empire, and extending to Arabia and the Far East; there were Nestorians in China by the seventh century and in south India by the ninth.¹⁵ The issues at stake at the Council of Ephesus focused on the correct understanding of the nature of Christ, with which the status of the Virgin Mary was intimately connected; an attempt to overturn it and condemn Cyril was made by a second council at Ephesus, and followed in 449 by the so-called Robber Council. A casualty of the latter was Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrhus in northern Syria, who refused to condemn Nestorius and was now condemned himself. Theodoret was a prolific and varied author, whose works include the *Eranistes*, three dialogues on orthodoxy and heresy, as well as a *Compendium of Heresies* written after 451 (see Sillett, 2000).¹⁶ In 451, after the death of Theodosius II, Empress

1989); Hanson (1988); Ayres (2004); and Lyman (1993); for the blackening of Arius’s reputation and the polemical construct of a ‘Eusebian party’, called after bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia see Gwynn (2007). The term ‘Arian’ was applied to a wide range of views and nuances; the Goths were converted to a form of Arian Christianity, and this became a plank of imperial policy against them, as well as the source of disputes and even violence in Constantinople at the end of the fourth century during the bishopric of St John Chrysostom, but it is much less clear what it meant in actual practice.

¹³ For the procedures and type of arguments used at councils see MacMullen (2006). Bishops were often trained in forensic argument: see Humfress (2007).

¹⁴ On Ephesus see Graumann (2009). On Ephesus II see Millar (2009a). For an introduction to Ephesus I and II and Chalcedon see Price and Gaddis (2005, I, pp. 17–51).

¹⁵ On Nestorians in south China at Quanzhou (Zayton) see Gardner, Lieu and Parry (2005). Nestorians were allowed to establish themselves and were initially called ‘the Persian religion’, but in the eighth century they were allowed to call themselves ‘the Roman religion’. Inscriptions in Syriac in China begin in the seventh century. For Manichaeans in China see below.

¹⁶ On *Eranistes* see Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (2003). It is true, as Sillett maintains, that heresiologies now took on a more formal and even ritualistic character, but this was part of the trend towards encyclopaedism with which their authors claimed to synthesize Christian

Pulcheria and her new husband, Emperor Marcian, called the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon to try to settle these matters; Theodoret was called back and restored after a qualified condemnation of Nestorius.¹⁷ Under heavy pressure from Pope Leo I, this declared Christ to have had two natures, both human and divine, united in a single hypostasis. The Council became the basis of subsequent Western Christianity, but was fiercely resisted by many in the East; it was followed by decades of struggle and, finally, under Justinian (527–565) by the first stage of a definitive split and the creation of a Miaphysite hierarchy, which became known as the Jacobite or Syrian Orthodox church (see below). The Council of Chalcedon issued 27 disciplinary canons and a 28th which reaffirmed the position of the see of Constantinople as second only to Rome; it also raised the see of Jerusalem to patriarchal status, but it was most important for its doctrinal statement (creed) which played a fundamental role in the Eastern and Western churches. For many in the East, it was extremely divisive and gave rise to a torrent of argument and struggle.

The Refutation of Paganism

Christianity was far from being the sole religion in the Roman Empire during the fourth and fifth centuries, despite anti-pagan legislation by Theodosius I (347–395). Besides engaging in their own disagreements, Christian writers also wrote works designed to show the superiority of Christianity over paganism and Judaism. Attitudes to classical learning varied, from condemnation, as in the Syriac poems of Ephraem the Syrian (d. 373), to attempts to integrate it with Christianity, in which the Cappadocian Fathers Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus were important. The extent to which future Christian leaders depended on the secular educational system became a critical issue when Julian (361–363), the sole pagan emperor after Constantine, attempted to ban higher education by Christian teachers, provoking an outraged response (see Athanassiadi, 1981).¹⁸ Julian was killed in 363 in mysterious circumstances while on campaign against Persia, and the immediate threat disappeared with him, but polytheism continued and, with it, the need for Christians to argue against it as well as forge their own complete Christian system of knowledge (see Inglebert, 2001).

knowledge; this was particularly clear in the case of John of Damascus. In any case, Theodoret himself did not simply follow existing precedent.

¹⁷ The voluminous records of the Council of Chalcedon are now translated and annotated in Price and Gaddis (2005); see also Price and Whitby (2009) and Grillmeier (1975).

¹⁸ Julian had been brought up as a Christian himself and was the author of a literary attack on Christianity, *Against the Galilaeans*.

The Weaponry of Debate

The sheer volume of polemical and argumentative writing by Christians, and the high stakes that were now involved, led to the development of a whole apparatus of tools that could be used in the arguments. These included lists of heretics and heresies, genealogies of orthodoxy and heresy, the blackening and abuse of key figures and, later, the listing of ecumenical councils as a badge of orthodoxy. One very important tool of argument emerged during the fifth century and was soon widely used on different sides of the debates: this was the doctrinal *florilegium*, taking the form of a 'proof' list of scriptural or patristic quotations designed to demonstrate a particular argument. Marcel Richard's essay (Chapter 12) represents the classic discussion of this kind of *florilegium*. Such collections were used and adapted often, and circulated widely.¹⁹ The concept of proof texts also extended to Christian arguments against Manichaeans and Jews. They were needed for the public disputations which took place between Christians and Manichaeans, and probably sometimes also with Jews, although many of the anti-Jewish disputations in Greek and Syriac may have been literary productions. Richard Lim's essay, 'Manichaeans and Public Disputation in Late Antiquity' (Chapter 2), vividly sets out the context of these public debates (see also Lim, 1995; cf. Cameron, 1991b). Manichaeans posed a real danger to the developing church and Manichaeans, like Nestorians, were spread all over the Persian Empire and further east, although they seem to have ceased to be a real threat within the Byzantine Empire in the sixth century (Lieu, 1992). As the case of St Augustine – himself a former Manichaean – shows, the need to argue against Manichaeism acted as a considerable spur to the techniques of debate among Christians themselves. Disputations among Christians took place not only at councils or local synods, but also in specially called meetings, like those summoned by Emperor Justinian in Constantinople in the early years of his reign, when both east Syrians and Syrian Miaphysites were called to the capital to debate, as illustrated by Sebastian Brock's essay (Chapter 4).²⁰

In the case of the anti-Jewish dialogues, a range of alleged Jewish objections to Christianity were regularly cited, with stock Christian rebuttals; as time went on, and from the later seventh century, these included the charge that Christians worshipped created images (see Déroche, 1994, 1986). Passages condemning Judaism are common in many kinds of Christian writing in late antiquity, and the number of surviving explicitly anti-Jewish dialogues grows in the seventh and eighth centuries, especially under the

¹⁹ *Florilegia* later played a vital role in arguments relating to the iconoclast controversy; for a key iconophile example see Alexakis (1996); see also Averil Cameron's 'Texts as Weapons: Polemic in the Byzantine Dark Ages' (Chapter 10, this volume).

²⁰ For the debate of 'Paul the Persian' with a Manichaean (527) see Walker (2006, p. 173); for East Syrians debating in Constantinople after 561, led by Paul of Nisibis who composed an account entitled *The Disputation against Caesar*, see *ibid.*, p. 174.

impact of the Persian occupation of Jerusalem and Palestine,²¹ even if it seems unlikely that many of them were ‘real’ disputes – that is, disputes that actually took place in the form in which they have come down to us. These dialogues also formed a context, and perhaps a model, for the later development of Christian dialogues with Islam, and it has often been argued, though less plausibly, that they were themselves a surrogate for early discussion of Islam.²² Vincent Déroche’s essay (Chapter 5) provides a context and discussion of these issues, and he and others have extensively studied the anti-Jewish dialogues in general.²³

Debate and polemic about doctrine was far from confined to councils or forms of writing explicitly concerned with doctrine. The model for all later saints’ lives, the *Life of Antony* by Athanasius, already demonstrates a strong concern to present its subject within the framework of Nicene orthodoxy, and ascetic literature thereafter was almost invariably imbued with a doctrinal slant, which became more obvious as time went on (see, for example, Goehring, 1997). The language used was often abusive, as in anti-Chalcedonian John Rufus’s *Life* of the fifth-century Georgian Peter the Iberian, Bishop of Maiuma, the port of Gaza. Peter is praised, at a time when the see of Antioch was split between Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians, for supporting the orthodox – that is, the non-Chalcedonians – in Palestine and Egypt when their bishops were deposed (Rufus, 2008, 1111–12); the terms applied here to a Chalcedonian bishop, such as ‘the fog of ungodliness’ and ‘rapacious wolf’, are typical. The divisions were not only about doctrine, but also about practice, and correct practice was a primary issue in many sets of questions and answers produced for the faithful, especially in the seventh century. The range of anxieties experienced, which often extended to questions about fate and astrology, the complexity of regional variation in church matters in the East and the types of response that were provided are all well brought out in Gilbert Dagron’s essay (Chapter 13).²⁴

The Reign of Justinian (527–565) and the Separation of the Churches

Justinian was an ambitious emperor, and his aims extended not only to military affairs, building programmes and legislation, but also to the resolution of Christian disputes, still intense after Chalcedon. Imperial policies differed according to the personalities of individual emperors, and Emperor Zeno (474–491) attempted to calm down the reaction to Chalcedon with a letter known as the *Henotikon*. This held for a while, but his successor, Emperor Anastasius (491–518) leaned towards the Miaphysites (who

²¹ For this, and for the level of abuse in contemporary Christian texts referring to the Jews, see Cameron (2002, pp. 57–78); for the context, see Flusin (1992).

²² See Cameron (1996, pp. 249–74) with reference to Olster (1994).

²³ *Travaux et Mémoires*, 11 (1991) is fundamental; for the texts see Déroche (1991).

²⁴ See also on the ‘questions and answers’ Papadoyannakis (2006, 2008, 2009); and Haldon (1992).

believed that Christ had one nature), whereas Justinian's uncle and predecessor Justin I (518–527) turned instead to the persecution of anti-Chalcedonians.²⁵ The breach between Constantinople and the strongly Chalcedonian papacy, known as the 'Acacian schism' (484–518), was ended. Among the Eastern bishops who were exiled was the key figure of Severus of Antioch, who continued to promote the anti-Chalcedonian cause by allowing John of Tella to ordain non-Chalcedonian clergy for the eastern provinces (Menze, 2008).²⁶ In Palestine, however, the Chalcedonian cause dominated, especially after the foundation of the Great Lavra and other monasteries by Sabas (d. 532), and the see of Jerusalem remained Chalcedonian.²⁷ It was in the imperial interest to continue to resolve the divisions, and, as we saw, when Justinian came to the throne he held discussions in Constantinople (see Sebastian Brock, Chapter 3). In 536 harsh measures were taken against Severus, while in 543 Justinian (a theologian himself) issued a decree condemning the 'Three Chapters', writings by Theodoret, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Ibas of Edessa, in the hope that this would satisfy the anti-Chalcedonians.²⁸ This caused a furore in the West, especially in newly reconquered North Africa, whose bishops went to Constantinople *en masse*; the three patriarchs of Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria found this imperial intervention in matters decided at Chalcedon suspect, and Pope Vigilius, brought to Constantinople by the emperor, gave his support alternately to one side and then to the other.

The upheaval led to Justinian's summoning of the Fifth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople II) at Constantinople in 553. This was essentially a failure. Vigilius, who had already been driven from place to place and ill-treated, spent months under virtual house arrest during the period of the Council and for a long time refused to attend; he was excommunicated on 26 May 553 but recanted his opposition before the Council officially ended. The Council was received with hostility in Italy, and the opposition continued, Vigilius having died on his way home.²⁹ Meanwhile, Miaphysite ordinations increased under the new bishop of Edessa, Jacob Baradaeus. This proved the effective tipping point for the creation of a separate Miaphysite hierarchy, although emperors

²⁵ Of this phase Fergus Millar (2009b, p. xx) writes of 'the conflict-ridden history of the Greek-speaking church of the fifth and sixth centuries'; see Millar (2009c, p. 17) for a discussion of the large dossier of letters and other documents drawn up in 518 making the Chalcedonian case against Severus and Peter of Apamea.

²⁶ Severus wrote in Greek but his work survives in Syriac: see Allen and Hayward (2004). For John of Tella see Menze and Akalin (2009).

²⁷ For the *Life* of Sabas see Cyril of Scythopolis, *The Lives of the Monks of Palestine* (1991); Binns (1994, pp. 313–631); for the material context see Patrich (1995) and Hirschfeld (1981).

²⁸ On the events of 536 see Millar (2009d); on the Three Chapters controversy see Chazelle and Cubitt (2007). The decree followed directly from suggestions made by the Miaphysites in the debates in 532: see Sotinel (2000).

²⁹ On the treatment of Vigilius see Sotinel (2000, pp. 283–84); on the reception of the Council in Italy see *ibid.*, pp. 285–87 and also Sotinel (2005); for the Council and the problems surrounding it see Price (2009).

from Justinian to Heraclius continued to alternate between persecution and attempts at compromise.

At the end of the sixth century Palestine remained dyophysite (Chalcedonian), but Syria and Egypt were largely Miaphysite. In the Persian Empire the majority of Christians belonged to the 'Nestorian' Church of the East, which had spread throughout the Sasanian lands and into the Arabian Gulf. There were Christians at the highest levels in the Sasanian court, including the wife of Chosroes II (590–628), who was a patron of the Christian pilgrimage centre associated with St Sergius at Resafa (Sergiopolis). Chosroes had suffered a coup at home and had regained his throne only with the assistance of the Emperor Maurice; he renewed the promise of freedom of religion to Christians within his kingdom that had been included in the peace of 562, and showed his attachment to the shrine of St Sergius with gifts when the saint answered his prayer that his Christian wife, Shirin, should conceive. Theophylact Simocatta records a long letter in Greek which the king sent to the saint and also tells how the king prayed before an image of the Theotokos carried by a Byzantine ambassador (Theophylact, 1986, V. 1.14–15; see also Whitby, 1988, pp. 392–304). Chosroes I had held formal debates between Christians and Zoroastrians at his court at Ctesiphon,³⁰ and there were also debates within the Sasanian Empire between east Syrians and Miaphysites. The influence of east Syrian theological ideas also made themselves felt in Constantinople and Alexandria, where the Christian philosopher John Philoponus set himself the task of refuting the Antiochene cosmology of Cosmas Indicopleustes (Walker, 2006, pp. 192–93). Georgia accepted Chalcedon in 583, but other divisions continued in the East; the Emperor Heraclius took time, when he was in the East, to hold meetings in Aleppo with Isho'yahb II, the Catholicos of the Church of the East (628–643), and with Athanasius, Miaphysite patriarch of Antioch, and other bishops in Mabbug in 630–631. According to Bar Hebraeus, the emperor then resorted to threats of force, and some communities accepted communion with Constantinople (*Chron.* I, 271–74). He also attempted to bring the Armenians to the Byzantine position with a synod held at Theodosiopolis (Howard-Johnston, 2002). The Armenians had rejected Chalcedon in 506, but the catholicate had been split between a Chalcedonian and a Miaphysite in the 590s, and the Chalcedonian position was accepted in 632, based on the monoenergist formula (see below). However the Council of Dvin, held in 649, again rejected it, and a short period of Byzantine pressure in the 650s did not change this.

³⁰ See Walker (2006, ch. 3) – an important discussion. The teaching at the east Syrian School of Nisibis was crucial for the intellectual background to these debates: see Becker (2006). The religious currents between west Syria and east Syria are partly covered in John of Ephesus's *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, for which see Harvey (1990); see also Wood (2010) and cf. Fowden (1999).

The East in Ferment: The Seventh Century

The seventh century opened with renewed and serious warfare between the Sasanians and Byzantium, in the course of which the Persians captured and occupied Palestine, Syria and Egypt, and launched a near-fatal siege of Constantinople in 626. It also saw the East divided in religious terms in multiple ways. In 614 the Persians carried off the True Cross from Jerusalem to Ctesiphon, together with the patriarch and many Christians, and this event intensified Christian outrage and resentment against the Jews, who were blamed for helping the Persians (see above).³¹ An order, attributed to Heraclius, was issued for the conversion of all Jews, but it was impossible to implement it in the circumstances, although it was later repeated by Leo III and then by Basil I. The character Jacob or James, in the *Doctrina Jacobi nuper baptizati*, was such a converted Jew, and forced conversion is the subject of a letter by Maximus Confessor in 632 (see Dagron, 1991a, 1991b; Dagron and Déroche, 1991). As we have seen, there were Christians throughout the Persian Empire and in the Arabian peninsula, and, as early as the fourth century, the kingdom of Himyar (south Yemen) in south Arabia had adopted a form of monotheism which underlay the Christianity that was imposed there together with rule from Ethiopia (Aksum) in the sixth century (Gajda, 2009; Beaucamp, Briquel-Chatonnet and Robin, 2010). Further disruption came in the context of Heraclius's continued attempts to resolve the Christological divisions by first promoting formulas known as monoenergism (one energy in Christ) and then monotheletism (one will). Both met with intense opposition from dyophysite bishops in Palestine and Cyprus, and Sophronius, on becoming patriarch of Jerusalem in 634, issued a synodical letter – a Greek version of which is preserved in the Acts of the Sixth Ecumenical Council (680–681) – which not only combined a statement of orthodoxy with traditional heresiology, but also set out the first five ecumenical councils in canonical order.³² Sophronius's *Letter* demonstrates the increasing formalization of doctrinal argument and the role of bishops and patriarchs in promoting it. All these debates and discussions also formed part of the context in which Muhammad was active and Islam beginning to take shape.

Monotheletism remained the official stance of Constantinople until it was reversed by the Sixth Ecumenical Council in 680–681. The patriarch Sophronius was an older friend

³¹ The contemporary account attributed to Strategius, a monk of St Sabas and surviving in Georgian and Arabic versions of the original Greek, the *Life of George of Choziba*, one of the Judaeen desert monasteries, written soon after the events and the Armenian Chronicle attributed to Sebeos, are just some of the sources displaying a strong hostility to Jews: see Cameron (2002); Hoyland (1994, pp. 78–87); Howard-Johnston (2010, pp. 164–71; Thomson and Howard-Johnston (1999).

³² For Sophronius's biography, the text and the context of these events see Allen (2009). The listing of 'orthodox' councils was to become a familiar feature: see Munitiz (1974); for monoenergism see *ibid.*, pp. 26–34; for sources for the monothelete controversy see Winkelmann (1987, 2001) and Hovorun (2008).

and mentor of Maximus the Confessor; both came from the monastery of Theodosius, and the latter was to become the chief theological opponent of monotheletism (Louth, 1996; Allen and Neil, 2002).³³ Maximus and other monks from the East had moved first to Egypt and then to North Africa; Maximus settled at Carthage, and Sophronius was also there in the late 620s (Sansterre, 1983; Ekonomou, 2007). From ca. 640 Maximus openly opposed the official monothelete doctrine contained in an *Ektthesis* issued by Sergius, patriarch of Constantinople, in 638; in 645 he debated with the former patriarch of Constantinople and monothelete, Pyrrhus, and then left with an entourage of Greek-speaking followers for Rome. The Lateran Synod, held in Rome in 649 under the auspices of Pope Martin I, himself an Easterner, condemned monotheletism and was heavily influenced by Maximus. Its Acts, or at least substantial earlier drafts, have been shown to have existed first in Greek and only then been issued in a Latin version; they incorporated large amounts from Maximus's writings and included lengthy *florilegia* of both dyothelite citations and the monothelete citations that they condemned.³⁴ Whatever the status of this meeting as a genuine synod, the documentation surrounding it illustrates the huge quantity of polemical writing to which these disputes gave rise. Both Pope Martin and Maximus provoked imperial action and were arrested and taken to Constantinople on charges of treason. Martin was tried, deposed, exiled and died in 655, and Maximus died, mutilated and in exile, in 662. Martin, Maximus and Sophronius were then all formally anathematized (Brandes, 1998).

Following a change in the political circumstances of the Byzantine state monotheletism was condemned, and Martin and Maximus were posthumously reinstated by the Sixth Ecumenical Council held in Constantinople in 680–681, although monotheletism was still an issue in the early eighth century. Maximus is one of most important theologians of the Orthodox Church; his theological writings range widely, and his exposition of the symbolic meaning of the church and the liturgy was taken up later by Germanus, patriarch of Constantinople from 715 until he was forced out by the policies of Emperor Leo III in 730. The Council of 680–681 also responded to other late seventh-century concerns with a canon forbidding the depiction of Christ in any other than human form and in its anxiety about the reliability of the proof texts being cited in defence of the arguments presented. This concern continued in the next century during the debates about images and is evident in the context of the iconophile Second Council of Nicaea (787), as indicated in Averil Cameron's essay (Chapter 10; see also Mango, 1975). Theopaschism – the question of whether God or merely the human nature of Christ suffered during the Passion – also emerged as an issue during the seventh century. This represented a further twist in the Christological debates; in arguing for the union of the two natures, dyophysites necessarily also argued that the divine nature suffered.

³³ Maximus's monastic origins in Palestine are derived from a hostile Life: see Brock (1973) and Brock (1984, p. xii).

³⁴ As argued by their editor R. Riedinger (1982); see also the discussion by Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil in *Maximus the Confessor* (2002), pp. 19–21.

These concerns lay behind anxieties about the depiction of Christ in visual art, in a context in which religious images were receiving more attention and inviting veneration from the faithful (see Cameron, 1992);³⁵ religious images also began to appear in the Christian anti-Jewish literature as an example of the possible worship of created objects. In addition, this mix of concerns drew on concerns about the reality of intervention by the saints and about the fate of souls after death, which had been expressed and debated since the sixth century (see Sarris, Dal Santo and Booth, 2001; Dagon, 1992).

700–1500: The Byzantine Perspective

Byzantine Iconoclasm

Opposition to religious images in the Byzantine Empire was pursued under Emperor Leo III (717–741) and his son Constantine V (741–775), another emperor who was also a theologian, and the matter was not finally resolved in favour of images until 843 with the so-called ‘Triumph of Orthodoxy’. Our sources for this are largely iconophile and often very biased; various explanations have been put forward for the imperial policy, and Peter Brown’s essay (Chapter 9) suggests that it was an attempt by the centre to regain control, especially over monks and monasteries. It has also frequently been argued that Leo III was responding to the successes of the Muslims by launching a reform movement to purify Byzantine Christianity. In recent years the topic has been addressed in terms of both the sources and their interpretation in a large quantity of revisionist scholarship, and many scholars agree that this was more a policy directed from the top than an issue that actually divided Byzantine society. It did, however, divide the imperial church over a period of more than a century, and bishops were required to commit themselves to the changes in imperial policy.

The Second Council of Nicaea, held in 787 under the Empress Irene and the patriarch Tarasius, ruled in favour of images and overruled the iconoclastic synod of Hieria of 754, but at a further iconoclastic council held in 815 it is clear that many bishops were prepared to change their position. Whatever the original impulse towards imperial iconoclasm, the issue drew on theological trends already evident from the later seventh century and was argued with an intensity rarely matched,³⁶ with theological writers during and after the iconoclastic controversy willing to distort or even fabricate argument and evidence (see, for example, Auzépy, 1999, 2007). There is some indication of contact between Constantinople and the East: in the second phase of iconoclasm the

³⁵ These anxieties are also reflected in the work of Anastasius of Sinai: see Kartsonis (1986).

³⁶ See Brubaker and Haldon (2010), who deny a theological focus for the controversy. See also Brubaker and Haldon (2011); Ousterhout and Brubaker (1995); Parry (1996); and Barber (2002).

leaders of the opposition included two brothers, Theodore and Theophanes – known as the ‘Grapti’ because they had been whipped and had lines carved on to their skin – from the monastery of St Sabas near Bethlehem, as well as Michael the Synkellos, another monk from Jerusalem, who went to Constantinople and engaged in the controversy (see Cunningham, 1991).

One of the most important defenders of images in the first phase of Byzantine iconoclasm was John of Damascus, who composed three treatises on the subject, probably in the 740s, together with an extensive *florilegium*.³⁷ The argument mainly seeks to rebut charges of idolatry – worshipping created objects – already familiar in the anti-Jewish texts; religious images were included in this category, and the question turned on whether they received actual worship – for instance, through the practice of prostration (*proskynesis*) – or merely veneration. However, several puzzles surround John and his works. He was targeted by name at the iconoclast council of Hieria in 754, but it is not clear that his writings had actually reached Constantinople (Van den Ven, 1955–57). He lived in Syria and Palestine under Muslim rule, almost certainly at the monastery of St Sabas, yet his name is curiously absent in other documents from there (Auzépy, 1994). Finally, it has been argued that he was in fact reacting to local iconoclasm in the caliphate rather than to Constantinople. Nevertheless, John’s oeuvre falls fully within the dyophysite Greek theological tradition, and recent discussions agree that the iconoclastic damage found in Christian churches under Umayyad rule was probably the work of local Christians themselves in the face of Muslim views about images (Schick, 1995).³⁸ Like Sophronius, though on a bigger scale, John produced a massive statement of orthodoxy in a synthetic work known as the *Pege Gnoseos* (‘Fount of Knowledge’), together with a listing of 100 heresies, and ending with the famous chapter on Islam.³⁹

After Iconoclasm

The ending of the controversy was marked by the production of the Synodikon of Orthodoxy, an official list and anathematization of heresies, drawn up for a newly established Feast of Orthodoxy, although even the circumstances surrounding this were highly contested (Gouillard, 1967; Karlin-Hayter, 2006). It was also depicted in icons, such as the one dating from the late fourteenth century in the British Museum (Kotoula, 2006). A period of relative calm then ensued, during which the standing of monks and monasteries was enhanced and religious buildings flourished, as artists were able to develop their repertoire of figural mosaics, frescoes and icons. Manuscript copying in the relatively recently developed uncial script coincided with the revival of secular learning which had begun earlier, and in which churchmen were prominent. However, the

³⁷ A very large body of writings is attributed to John, and there are many problems of authenticity; the best critical edition is by B. Kotter (Berlin, 1969–).

³⁸ For pressures being placed on Christians see King (1985).

³⁹ See Louth (2002), emphasizing monastic themes and origins; also Le Coz (1992).

successful iconophiles also launched an energetic and at times unscrupulous campaign to expunge the iconoclastic record and rewrite recent history to their own taste (Brubaker, 1998). Nor, contrary to the official view, did religious debate now effectively end (Rigo and Ermilov, 2010).

Struggles between emperors and the church remained a prominent feature of Byzantine life (Dagron, 2003), and the reign of Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118) was marked by a strenuous effort by the emperor to oppose heresy and present himself as the defender of orthodoxy (Smythe, 1996). The philosophical teacher John Italos was put on trial and condemned, and a leader of the dualist Bogomils was burned in Constantinople (Gouillard, 1985, p. 169).⁴⁰ Alexios commissioned the *Dogmatic Panoply*, yet another compendium of heresies, from Euthymius Zigabenus (PG 130, 19–1362). Directed against Bogomilism, it followed the technique of explaining the latter by placing it in a long and familiar genealogy of previous heresies. The *Treasury of Orthodoxy* by Niketas Choniates (1155–1216) was written in similar mode (PG 139–40). Such texts followed a long precedent by rehearsing the lists of earlier heresies and bringing out an array of familiar patristic citations in order to refute them. Late in the reign of Manuel I Komnenos (1143–1180) came the *Sacred Arsenal* (the title following the metaphor of an armoury of weapons for use against heresy) by Andronikos Kamateros (Bucossi, 2009; Magdalino, 1993). A number of abjuration formulae also survive for the formal and public re-reception of heretics who were willing to recant (Patlagean, 1986; Eleuteri and Rigo, 1993, pp. 16–19; cf. Ioannou, 1953, 1958), and formal debates continued to be held, as when the archbishop of Milan came to Constantinople in 1112 (Grumel, 1933; Darrouzès, 1965). The reign of Manuel I was marked by several more doctrinal controversies, the first two involving the relation of the three persons of the Trinity. In 1166 Manuel presided at a synod to settle the matter and had his edict written up in red letters in St Sophia (Mango, 1963). From the eleventh century onwards, as religious tensions between Eastern and Western churches heightened, a series of anti-Latin treatises set out the ‘errors of the Latins’ as seen from the Byzantine point of view; they ranged from differences of practice, such as the wearing of beards by clergy, to doctrine, as in the argument over the term *filioque*, seen in the East as an unacceptable addition to the Creed originating and adopted in the West. Tia Kolbaba’s essay (Chapter 11) demonstrates the shrill tone of much of this writing, which intensified under the influence of negative Byzantine experiences during the period of the Crusades (see also Kolbaba, 2000, 2006).

1204–1453

The sack and conquest of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade in 1204 was a disaster which led to the formation of a Byzantine government and court in exile at Nicaea and

⁴⁰ Cf. also Clucas (1981); a further step was taken when the Synodikon of Orthodoxy was modified to include Italos.

the permanent loss of the city's treasured relics of the Passion, taken to the West by the Crusaders. Although Constantinople was recovered by Michael VIII Palaiologos in 1261, the last period of Byzantium was still marked by debate and division among Christians. Union with the papacy provided a principal source of division in the period from the Union of Lyons (1274) to the Council of Ferrara/Florence in 1438–1439, held in the presence of Emperor John VIII Palaiologos, who had travelled to Italy at the head of a retinue of several hundred. The aim of union was pursued by both successive emperors, desperate for military and financial aid, and churchmen, especially in the fifteenth century, when intellectual contacts increased between West and East, and several leading Byzantines converted to Roman Catholicism; Bessarion and Isidore of Kiev had both been members of the Byzantine delegation at the Council of Ferrara/Florence and both later became cardinals in the Roman church. In the fourteenth century the church was split over the Hesychast ('quietist') movement, an ascetic style of spirituality based on inner repeated prayer and owing a debt to the teachings of the earlier and controversial Symeon the New Theologian (d. 1022), this was now associated especially with Gregory Palamas, a monk on Mount Athos and later archbishop of Thessalonica. The issue of Hesychasm became a conduit for other profound divisions in intellectual and political life; it was opposed by Barlaam, a monk from Calabria influenced by Western Scholasticism, and 'Palamism' was approved, condemned and then officially accepted by a series of synods culminating in a council held in Constantinople in 1351, at which Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos presided. This dispute took place against a further background of debate in intellectual circles about the respective merits of Plato and Aristotle (Karamanolis, 2002) and, from the late fourteenth century, of continuing anti-Latin polemic by opponents of union, such as Demetrius Chrysoloras.

Byzantine refutations of Islam and anti-Muslim tracts were also a feature of this period during which the Ottoman threat was becoming increasingly serious (see Chapter 5 below). John VI Kantakouzenos composed four apologies and four dialogues against Islam (PG 154.372–692), and Demetrius Cydones (d. 1398), a leading statesman who served three successive emperors and was the translator of Thomas Aquinas's *Summa contra gentiles* into Greek, also translated the Latin *Improbatio Alcorani* by the Florentine Riccoldo da Monte Croce (d. 1320) (ibid., 1032–1152). The complex interplay of contacts with Italian humanism (some prominent Byzantines not only visited Italy, but also taught Greek there), combined with traditional Orthodox hostility to Islam and to Latin Christianity, also lies behind a remarkable work by Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos (1391–1455), variously known as *Dialogues with a Persian* (Palaiologos, 1966a) or *Dialogues with a Muslim* (Palaiologos, 1993–96, 1966b; cf. Reinert, 1991). The 26 dialogues – 10 polemical and 16 apologetic – comprise some 300 pages of Greek text in Trapp's edition. The first 10 dialogues expose the errors of Islam, while the remaining 16 consist of long speeches by the emperor, drawing on patristic authors in order to expound the central doctrines of Christianity. Manuel II spent some months in Ankara as the vassal of Bayezid during the winter of 1391, and the work (finished, or perhaps indeed composed, after Manuel's

return) purports to be a record of actual conversations held with a ‘Persian’.⁴¹ However, this seems unlikely not only for reasons of the long precedent in such works, but also because of Manuel’s own large and highly literary output, which continued even while on his extended travels in the West, during which he spent Christmas 1400 as the guest of Henry IV at Eltham Palace. Manuel was clearly familiar with other examples in the genre, including that written by his grandfather John VI Kantakouzenos, as he notes in his preface; his mentor Cydones had also sent him a copy of his translation of Riccoldo da Monte Croce in 1385–1386, and Manuel corresponded with Cydones while the latter was in Venice in 1389–1391. Although there are many parallels between this work and that of Aquinas, and especially with Cydones’s translation, Manuel’s work was more than a conventional anti-Muslim treatise in that he had firsthand experience of the Ottoman court, and, as emperor, had to deal with the ever-increasing threat it posed to Byzantium and with his own desperate need for resources. Manuel draws on the long tradition of Byzantine treatises against Islam, but his own Islam is that of the Ottoman Turks, whom he had tried unsuccessfully to confront in the 1380s. His overlord, Bayezid, was indeed to fall to the Turks, but not until after he had besieged Constantinople for years and was then defeated by Timur in 1402 while Manuel himself was lingering in the West.

700–1500: The Encounter with Islam

Background

Although this volume focuses on the topic of doctrine and debate, it seems to be worth giving a brief introduction to the ways in which the onset of Muslim rule changed the destiny of Eastern Christians.⁴² As has just been shown, at the time of the Muslim conquests Eastern Christians faced a considerable degree of internal dissension, especially over matters of Christology, and the different doctrinal groups had started to develop their own hierarchies and institutions. Yet, although one might say that the die was already cast with the Second Council of Constantinople in 553, the parties to the dispute were still in the process of defining their positions and disentangling their organizational structures when the Muslims arrived on the scene. It was, therefore, in the context of a Muslim-ruled Middle East that the Eastern Christians evolved into fully-fledged independent socio-religious communities (Morony, 1974; Papaconstantinou, 2008).

⁴¹ One of many classicizing anachronisms in the work, similarly employed by Demetrius Cydones in his translation of Riccoldo da Monte Croce.

⁴² The bibliography on the situation of Christians living under Muslim rule is enormous and politically charged, with depictions ranging from harsh oppression (*dhimmitude*) to peaceful symbiosis (*convivencia*). See the introduction and bibliography provided in Hoyland (2004).

Those living in lands still governed by the Byzantine emperors were overwhelmingly loyal to the Council of Chalcedon and, with their former opponents now languishing in the former Byzantine provinces, their church became intimately linked to the Byzantine state and its leadership. There were also many in Muslim-ruled lands, especially in Palestine and Sinai, who maintained their adherence to the Chalcedonian position, but they were now cut off from the patronage and protection of the Byzantine Empire and had to compete on an equal footing with those who had formerly been persecuted as heretics. This, plus the simple fact that they now lived under Muslim rule and gradually came to adopt Arabic as their principal language, meant that they formed a community (labelled Melkite/'royalist' by their opponents) distinct from the Chalcedonians living under Byzantine rule. The Miaphysites of Syria and Egypt (commonly referred to as Jacobites and Copts respectively) went from being viewed with suspicion or outright hostility to being on a par with all other Christians in their regions. Although a return to the imperial fold was now excluded, this did at least mean that they were free to develop their own social and religious life as they wanted. Over time the two communities drifted apart, especially once the Muslim Empire had fragmented into different polities in the mid-ninth century, and they came to form the Coptic and Syrian Orthodox churches that we know today.

The dyophysite community (labelled Nestorians by their opponents), today's Church of the East, had principally established itself in the lands of the Persian Empire, and so had already become used to the idea of living under non-Christian rule. The Muslim conquests did not, therefore, make so much difference to them. Indeed, whereas the Persian emperors instigated occasional bouts of persecution, the Muslims mostly adhered to the Qur'anic injunction to respect those who possessed a scripture and certainly embarked upon no large-scale persecution. Moreover, the Church of the East, as noted above, took advantage of the creation of a single realm that extended as far as the borders of China and sent out missionaries, spreading their version of Christianity as far as the capital of China itself.

Besides the lack of discrimination between Christian groups, or for that matter between Christians and Jews, there were two other major changes that Muslim rule wrought upon the lives of Eastern Christians. The first is that they were largely left, or indeed expected, to run their own affairs. In return for paying their taxes they received a guarantee of protection with regard to their lives and property and the right to practise their faith without hindrance. To qualify for this protection and tolerance, the various non-Muslim communities were required to be in possession of the legal wherewithal to exercise autonomy. This would seem to have been an early concern, since the Qur'an already demands that 'the adherents of the Gospel judge by that which God has revealed therein' (5.47). This was problematic for the Christians, since the Gospel is much less explicit about most areas of human social intercourse than the Torah and the Qur'an and is little interested in legal matters. Under pressure from Islam, Eastern Christian clerics set about rectifying this, and indeed, it is only in the churches of Muslim-ruled lands that we find such developed Christian law codes. These went far beyond the usual

chapters on doctrine, scripture, sacraments and hierarchical administration, and included sections on marriage and divorce, dowries and settlements, inheritances, degrees of consanguinity, debts and loans, selling and buying, contracts and partnerships, pledges and oaths, and so on (see Rose, 1982; Friedman, 2003).

The second condition imposed upon the Christians living in Islamic lands was to abide by a number of rules for social conduct. These most famously appear listed in the so-called ‘Pact of ‘Umar’, which purports to be a letter sent at the time of the Muslim conquests from the Christians of Syria to Caliph ‘Umar I, requesting protection and promising observance of certain obligations. The document has provoked much discussion in respect of both its authenticity and its significance. Earlier scholars tended to regard it as a late invention and an indication of the discrimination and isolation endured by non-Muslims of later times. More recently it has been argued that the list does date back to an early period, but that it evolved over time and drew on Byzantine restrictions on Jews and heretics and on pre-Islamic Persian social codes, which regulated conduct between the elite and the lower classes. Furthermore, it is asserted, the contents of the list were intended for the benefit of Muslims rather than for the detriment of non-Muslims (Noth, 1987; English version in Hoyland, 2004; also Levy-Rubin, 2011). Faced with a massive majority population of non-Muslims, the conquerors, like the Germanic conquerors of Rome and so many central Asian conquerors of China, instituted measures to erect boundaries between themselves and the conquered peoples in order to prevent their assimilation.

Christian Debates with Muslims and Jews

The Christians do not seem initially to have taken much notice of the invaders’ religion. This is probably because, for a while, they were not expecting the conquest to last. The Persians had occupied parts of the Near East for up to 25 years in the early seventh century and yet had been ultimately forced to retreat. And many Christians thought the same would happen in the case of the Arabs, or at least were encouraged to think that way by church leaders. In a late seventh-century Greek apologetic work, known as the *Trophies of Damascus*, the Christian protagonist counters the taunts of his Jewish opponent about the embattled state of Christianity with the following retort:

As long as the head and the empire remain firm, all the body will renew itself with ease ... 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. (Bardy, 1921, II.3.4, 222)

But as Muslim rule endured and the Muslims started to become more assertive about their faith in the public sphere – building mosques, putting the Muslim declaration of faith on coins and official documents, and passing legislation that discriminated between Muslims and non-Muslims (first done by ‘Umar II, r. 717–720) – and, in particular, as

the numbers of converts to Islam increased, Christian clerics and scholars felt obliged to respond. Evidently, debates had already taken place with Muslims before this, as we learn from a manual for the refutation of wrong belief written by the Chalcedonian monk Anastasius of Sinai (d. ca. 700):

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 carnally begotten a son, or whoever worships as god any created thing at all, in heaven or on earth. (Anastasius, 1981, I.1.9; *PG*, 89, 41A)

But from the mid-eighth century we start to encounter texts dedicated specifically to the refutation of Islamic beliefs, with recurrent themes and conventions, as illustrated in the surveys by Wolfgang Eichner and Sidney Griffith in Chapters 5 and 6 of this volume, among others. In short, we are witnessing the birth of a new genre. It clearly grew out of the anti-Jewish literature, which had by this time flourished for over half a millennium. Indeed, we meet with quite a few of the same topics and arguments. Interestingly, in a number of seventh-century anti-Jewish texts the issues of circumcision, direction of prayer and veneration of images is given greater prominence, and subsequently they appear in Christian–Muslim dispute texts.⁴³

There is one noticeable difference between Christian–Jewish and Christian–Muslim disputations, however – namely, that in contrast to the sometimes stale and always one-sided Christian–Jewish literature of pre-Islamic times, a reasonable proportion of the Christian–Muslim apologetic writing seems to derive from real debate. We can infer this from actual examples where an argument is proposed by one author and then refuted by another, and from the existence of a number of tracts that were composed in direct response to another polemical tract. Thus ‘Ali ibn Yahya al-Munajjim (d. 888) wrote to the physician and philosopher Hunayn ibn Ishaq (d. 873) presenting arguments based on Aristotelian logic in favour of the prophethood of Muhammad; Hunayn subsequently replied, pointing out the errors in al-Munajjim’s argumentation. Sometime later the physician and scholar Qusta ibn Luqa took up al-Munajjim’s composition and replied to it, now writing to the latter’s son, refuting, in particular, the doctrine of the inimitability of the Qur’an. The philosopher and scribe Yahya ibn ‘Adi (d. 974) drafted treatises countering the writings of the Muslim scholars Abu ‘Isa al-Warraq (d. 862) and Abu Yusuf al-Kindi (d. ca. 870). Moreover, as noted by Nancy Roberts in her essay on his text (Chapter 8), from a much later period, the theologian Ibn al-Taymiyya (d. 1328) wrote his celebrated work *The Right Response* in reply to an abbreviated form of the treatise of Paul of Antioch, Bishop of Sidon (ca. 1180) (Samir and Nwiya, 1981; Périer, 1920–21; Platti, 1987).

⁴³ Noted and discussed in Hoyland (1997).

There are two salient characteristics of the polemic conducted by Christians, Jews and Muslims in the eighth and ninth centuries. First, the combatants of each party entered the interconfessional arena with the same intellectual armoury: scriptures, authenticated traditions and dialectical reasoning based on categorical definitions. The latter was the most important, as it enabled the debate to cross sectarian lines, and it is noticeable that many of the dispute texts of this period open with an excursus on the nature of knowledge and truth and on the procedure for deriving them. Second, as mentioned above, the debate was clearly a real one. The question of how to recognize a true prophet, given careful consideration in a number of texts, was scarcely considered by pre-Islamic Christian and Jewish authorities and was clearly provoked by Muslim claims about Muhammad's prophetic credentials, as is discussed by Sarah Stroumsa in her essay 'The Proofs of Prophecy' (Chapter 7). Of course, this does not mean that we have records of actual discussions, only that the authors of the texts, though purveyors of literary fictions, may have tested their metal in the field.

This interconfessional debate 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 in the East. Whereas only eight authors are known to have polemicized in Syriac against Islam from the seventh to the thirteenth centuries in Muslim-ruled lands, and even fewer in Greek, just as many did so in Arabic in the first 'Abbasid century (750–850) alone (Griffith, 1983). 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 in 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.

But although 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; Muslims and Christians remained opposed to Judaism on the subjects of abrogation of the law and falsification of the scriptures; and Jews and Christians persisted in their rejection of Muhammad's prophethood and his claim to have brought a revelation from God, arguing that he was not announced in the scriptures and had worked no miracles. Yet in the process each was subtly transformed and drawn a few steps towards its opponents' position. For example, Christianity came to stress more diligently its monotheist credentials; thus the religious encyclopaedia known as the *Book of the Tower* begins its exposition of Christianity with the words: 'The acme of faith is the oneness of God'.⁴⁴ Muslims responded to attacks on Muhammad's prophetic credentials by providing biblical citations that they said foretold Muhammad's coming and by adducing examples of miracles worked by him (Martin, 1980; Tartar, 1990–91; Stroumsa, Chapter 7 this volume, esp. p. 210). And both Christians and Muslims

⁴⁴ On the authorship and transmission of this text see Holmberg (1993).

absorbed many of each other's ideas and phraseology in the course of their lengthy confrontation (Becker, 1911; English version in Hoyland, 2004; Cook, 1980; Swanson, 1998, 2007).

Most scholarly attention has been focused on the early encounters between Christians and Muslims: origins are, of course, always more attractive, and it is assumed that later writers will largely be dependent on earlier texts. Once the basic parameters of the debate had been worked out, so the thinking goes, then the same ideas and motifs would be trotted out again and again, with little variation. This means that later authors are little studied, making it difficult to ascertain whether this dictum is true or not. The 120-page critique of Christian origins by the Muslim theologian 'Abd al-Jabbar (d. 1025), with its many unusual assertions and claims, provides one instance where this is not the case,⁴⁵ and it is possible that there may well be other such texts waiting to be discovered. There have been some advances in recent times, particularly in the interest of highlighting the patrimony and contribution to the world of Arabic, Syriac and Coptic Christianities. However, these tend to do no more than give a very basic overview of the text and the author's life. It is to be hoped, though, that this situation will now improve substantially with the publication of David Thomas's *Christian–Muslim Relations* project (see Supplementary Bibliography), which aims to provide a handy reference tool for all relevant texts and should draw attention to what remains to be done.

Christian Debates with Other Christians

Intra-Christian doctrinal and debate texts composed by Christians living under Muslim rule are even less studied than late medieval Christian–Muslim ones. Even the works of such famous and productive figures as the doctor-cum-philosopher Ibn al-Tayyib (d. 1043) languish unedited and unstudied, as noted by Ram Wannous in his presentation of one of these neglected works (see Chapter 16, this volume).⁴⁶ The problem is that those trained in Christian doctrine tend to read only Latin and Greek (and perhaps biblical Hebrew) and are therefore unable to read the later Arabic and Syriac theological texts; consequently, they mostly concentrate on early Christianity or medieval Western Christianity. Moreover, the same presumption is made as was noted above – namely, that later texts will be derivative and so offer nothing new. Those who do work on these Arabic and Syriac Christian texts tend to be primarily interested in interfaith dialogue, with the result that they look at Christian–Muslim disputations, not at intra-Christian debate texts. The latter tend only to be studied by members of the Arabic and Syriac Christian communities, who want to highlight their own heritage, and by a very small number of scholars interested in medieval Middle Eastern Christianity. This can be

⁴⁵ The text has been thoroughly studied by Reynolds (2004).

⁴⁶ 'Although Abdallah ibn al-Fadl was by far one of the most prolific writers of the Melkite Orthodox church, oddly enough, there is not even a single comprehensive work on him or on his works' (this volume, p. 394).

illustrated by looking at the fate of the writings of the renowned author Dionysius bar Salibi (d. 1171), Bishop of Amida in north Mesopotamia. His treatise against the Muslims enjoys a fine CSCO edition and translation and a thorough modern analytical study, but his treatises against the Nestorians, Melkites and Armenians remain unedited, untranslated and unstudied (Ebied, 2007). On the plus side, this means that there is much left to discover, and, indeed, there are a very large number of unedited Christian theological texts languishing in manuscript collections in both the West and the Middle East.

Because of this neglect, it is little appreciated just how numerous are intra-Christian theological writings during this period. Although, as already noted, they remain to be studied in detail, some general remarks can be made about them. In the first couple of centuries after the Arab conquests such texts served a variety of purposes. First, they allowed Christian communities to define themselves and their relations between one another in the new environment of Muslim rule, in which they found themselves on an equal footing with, and in close proximity to, one another. Through such texts clerics could make clear to their flocks where the boundaries lay between them and the unbelievers and the importance of respecting those boundaries. Second, they gave the opportunity for Christian doctrine to be expressed in the Arabic language,⁴⁷ which very quickly became an international medium of scholarly exchange and not so much later became the principal spoken language, particularly in Egypt and Palestine. Third, they gave clerics a chance to impress on their flocks what constituted correct doctrine and the necessity of adhering to it, especially in the face of pressure from Muslims. Clear evidence of such pressure is adduced by a number of Christian authors. Thus Theodore Abu Qurrah (d. ca. 830) in his treatise in defence of the veneration of icons notes:

Many Christians are abandoning prostration to the icon of Christ our God ... Anti-Christians [meaning Muslims, and possibly Jews], especially those claiming to have in hand a scripture sent down from God, are reprimanding them for their prostration to these icons, and because of it they are imputing to them the worship of idols, and the transgression of what God commanded in the Torah and the Prophets, and they sneer at them. (Griffith, 1997, p. 29)⁴⁸

And a similar observation is made by the Copt Severus ibn al-Muqaffa', Bishop of Ashmunayn (d. 987), in his work, *On Clarifying the Religion*:

The reason for the concealment of this mystery [the Trinity] from the believers at this time is their mingling with the *ḥunafā'* [Muslims], and the disappearance

⁴⁷ See the articles by Sidney Griffith in the Variorum collected studies volumes, *Arabic Christianity* and *The Beginnings of Christian Theology in Arabic*, plus Leeming (2003) and Rubensen (1996).

⁴⁸ On this very influential theologian see Griffith (1992). Lamoreaux (2005) provides translations of much of his oeuvre.

of their language [Coptic], through which they know the truth of their religion. It has come to be the case that they do not hear any mention of 'the Trinity' among themselves except rarely; nor do they hear any mention of 'the Son of God' except in a metaphorical sense. Instead, most of what they hear is that God is *fard*, *ṣamad*, and the rest of the language that the *ḥunafā'* use. (Swanson, 1996, p. 216)⁴⁹

There is a sense that the challenge posed by Islam is a serious one on account of the simplicity of its key message (that is, there is only one God and Muhammad is His messenger), which was apparently appealing to many people, or so claimed the late ninth-century author of a *Summa theologiae*.

The language of this [Muslim] community about God is a clear language [as opposed to the 'complex and fiendish' language of the 'materialists and various dualists'], which the common people may comprehend. By this I mean their statement 'there is no god but God'. But by 'there is no god but God' they mean a god other than the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. According to their own statement God is not a begetter nor begotten (cf. Qur'an 112.3), and the Holy Spirit is in their view only one of the created beings. (BL Or 4950, fol. 5ab)⁵⁰

In this situation one might have expected the Christian communities to have tried to come together more, to present a united front in the interests of advancing Christianity's claim to represent the true religion, but by and large the various denominations maintained their separation. Only a few voices ever argued for a more ecumenical stance. One of the first to do so was the Melkite Abu 'Ali Nazif ibn Yumn (fl. 980s), who proposed that Christians should come to an accord amongst themselves, making clear that they confess the same faith even if they expressed it differently. The most famous Christian writer to take up this idea was the Copt al-Mu'taman ibn 'Assal (fl. 1230–60) who, in his monumental encyclopaedic work, *Summary of the Principles of Religion*, set out the common ground of the different Christian sects and stressed that they all professed the same faith in Christ, although they articulated it in different ways. He alluded to the works of other scholars who adopted this same approach, such as 'Ali ibn Dawud al-Arfadi, so we know that Ibn Yumn and al-Mu'taman were not alone in championing this cause, even if it did not gain ascendancy in their time (Samir, 1990, 1992; Wadi, 1998–99; Troupeau, 1969).

Authors, Genres, Themes and Approaches

Most of the authors of these texts were religious officials – monks, bishops and patriarchs in the Christian case, and religious scholars of one sort or another in the Muslim case.

⁴⁹ *Fard* and *ṣamad* refer to specific attributes of God in Arabic.

⁵⁰ On this text see Griffith (1990) and his essay in this volume (Chapter 14).

This is as one might expect, since this position meant they had education, access to books, authority and the motive to defend their own community and encourage their flocks to stay loyal to it. Others served in the administration, such as the renowned Coptic writer Shams al-Ri'asa Abu I-Barakat (d. 1320s), known as Ibn Kabar, who rose through the ranks of the Egyptian civil service, even serving for a time as the scribe of the great Mamluk sultan Baybars (d. 1277). Only much later was he ordained and devoted himself to Christian scholarship.⁵¹ And the rest mostly received patronage at court, as tutors, translators (especially of Greek into Arabic), theologians, philosophers and litterateurs.

During the Islamic period a number of genres were particularly popular among Christians for conveying doctrine and topics of debate.⁵² Three are overtly dialogic and literary in form – namely, the debate text, the question-and-answer collection, and the epistolary exchange. In the first, two characters, of different confessional allegiance, are portrayed as conducting a debate together. Usually one character, who is of the same faith as the author of the debate, is dominant and succeeds in bringing his interlocutor to acknowledge the superiority, or at least the greatness, of the other's faith. There was a tradition of public debate in the Middle East, as we have seen above, and these texts are likely to reflect that to some extent, but they had to be revised in the light of their key purpose: to show the faithful how to respond to opponents and to reassure them of the truth of their own creed.⁵³ Very closely related is the question-and-answer collection, except that this required less character development because it was usually a simple master–disciple situation⁵⁴ and the two characters could be of the same creed, for the genre is principally focused on instruction. More varied is the epistolary exchange, which ranged from genuine letters to carefully crafted works of fiction. At the latter end of the range are texts such as the correspondence between Byzantine Emperor Leo III (717–741) and Caliph 'Umar II (717–720), that between the rulers Constantine VI (780–797) and Harun al-Rashid (786–809) and, most famous of all, the exchange between the Christian 'Abd al-Masih ibn Ishaq al-Kindi and the Muslim 'Abdallah ibn

⁵¹ For his highly regarded theological encyclopaedia see Samir (1971).

⁵² Some useful discussion of this issue is offered by Griffith (2008, pp. 75–92).

⁵³ For examples in Greek see Chapter 5 in this volume, and for examples in Syriac see Chapter 6, alongside Reinink (1993) and the essay by Sidney Griffith reproduced as Chapter 14 in this volume, which includes examples in Arabic as well.

⁵⁴ The other option is what I would call the dilemmatic style. A question is posed which requires an either/or answer; whichever option the respondent picks, he is led either to an absurd position or to a further choice, but in the end he will always either say an absurdity or contradict his original position. The format is anonymous: 'If you say/they say/someone says ..., then we say ...' The context is evidently intersectarian debate over fine points of doctrine and its origin would seem to be the sixth- and seventh-century controversies over Christ's will, energy and nature. In the ninth century, 'Ammar al-Basri used this format for a Christian–Muslim debate and the Muslim theologian al-Baqillani (d. 1013) used it to frame a whole *Summa theologiae* (his *Tamhid*).

Isma'īl al-Hashimi. These latter two persons are presented as members of the court of Caliph al-Ma'mun (811–833). Al-Hashimi only gets to give a summary of the essentials of the Muslim creed, whereas al-Kindi is allowed to give a long defence of Christianity, its doctrines and practices, as well as a strong rebuttal of the Qur'an, Muhammad's prophethood and the teachings of Islam. This was a very popular text, used by Christians of all persuasions; it was translated into Latin at the request of Peter the Venerable (d. 1156) and even survived into the nineteenth century when it was used by European missionaries in their attempts to convert Muslims (Hoyland, 1997, pp. 490–501; Eid, 1992; Bottini, 1998).

Two genres were reserved for more serious discussion – namely, treatises and encyclopaedias. The former gave the opportunity for an extended, reasoned presentation of a particular subject or argument. Some of the earliest examples of this type are certain works of Theodore Abu Qurrah (d. ca. 830), such as his *On the true religion* and *On the veneration of the holy icons*. During the apogee of Abbasid scholarship (ca. 840–970), we come across a number of Christian intellectuals, based in or around Baghdad (usually serving as physicians, scribes and translators), who composed theological tracts that are deeply rooted in Aristotelian philosophy: in particular, Hunayn ibn Ishaq (d. 873), Qusta ibn Luqa (d. 912), Matta ibn Yunus (d. 940), and Yahya ibn 'Adi (d. 974).⁵⁵ They were in active dialogue with such Muslim thinkers as Abu 'Isa al-Warraaq (d. 862), Abu Yusuf al-Kindi (d. ca. 870), 'Ali ibn Yahya al-Munajjim (d. 888), Abu Nasr al-Farabi (d. 950), and Abu Sa'id al-Sirafi (d. 979).⁵⁶ Although this was indeed a golden age for such academic production, it did not cease with these great men, and indeed we witness another upsurge in the thirteenth century, when such energetic writers as Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286) in Mesopotamia and the 'Assal family (fl. 1230–1260) in Egypt were penning numerous theological works of a very high calibre (Graf, 1932).

In a sense, the encyclopaedia was the opposite of the treatise in that, instead of focusing on a particular dogma, it strove to present all aspects of the Christian faith in a single work. The earliest such text is the *Summary of the Ways of Faith* composed in Arabic in the second half of the ninth century and studied by Sidney Griffith in a number of essays (see, for example, his essay, 'The First Christian *Summa Theologiae* in Arabic', Chapter 14 in this volume).⁵⁷ One of the author's avowed aims is to reach out to vacillators (*mudhabdhabin*) – those whose employment and social status meant that they had much social interaction with Muslims and so 'will only utter what their [Muslim]

⁵⁵ Among the many studies of such treatises see: Holmberg (1986, 1989); Samir (1980, 1997); Kellermann-Rost (1965); Pines and Shwarz (1979).

⁵⁶ For examples of this dialogue see: Griffith (1983); Margoliouth (1905); Samir (1979); and Guillaume (1924).

⁵⁷ The *Pégé gnoseōs*/'Fount of Knowledge' of John of Damascus, on whom see above, is more of a synthesis of Christian orthodox teachings than an encyclopaedia after the fashion of the *Summary of the Ways of Faith*, the *Kitāb al-Majdal/Book of the Tower* (see Holmberg, 1993) or Ibn Kabar's *Miṣbāḥ al-zulma /Light in the Darkness* (see Griffith, 1983).

lords and masters agree with and what they will not take offence at'. He wished to draw attention to their error, to convince them of the rightness of the Christian teachings and the falseness of the Muslim doctrines. Most chapters elucidate and emphasize the core Christian beliefs, particularly those that were in conflict with Muslim beliefs – the Trinity and God's Incarnation and Passion – documenting them with a plethora of biblical testimonies. To ram the point home, one chapter (no. 14) is devoted to tenets that would exclude anybody who held them from being a Christian, and again they mostly centre on the Trinity and Incarnation – issues on which it was all too easy for the average Christian to slip up and, especially, be swayed by the apparent simplicity of the 'no god but God' refrain of Islam. Only one chapter (no. 18) deals with the Muslims directly. It is entitled 'Questions of the (non-Christian) Monotheists and Dualists' and is divided into two sections, dealing with the Muslims and dualists respectively. Besides some favourite questions previously posed in Muslim–Christian debate texts ('If Christ was content with the Jews' crucifixion of him, should they not be rewarded?', how can 'you maintain that God was in the womb where there is filth?', 'Why do you not marry more than one wife?' and 'Why do you prostrate yourselves towards the east?') there are questions on less familiar topics: the offering (of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist), baptism, divorce, poverty and wealth, health and sickness, disasters, the resurrection at the end of time and the reward of believers – although they may perhaps have been common questions put to Christians by Muslims in daily life. Particularly interesting are the questions on free will and predetermination, subjects that feature in earlier Muslim–Christian debates, but are here treated in more detail. I have described this text at some length in order to give some idea of what might be found in these encyclopaedias. Of course, they vary substantially in the topics they treat, but most, if not all, have as their overall purpose to demonstrate the truth of Christianity, and very often the author's particular version of it (see, further, Reinink, Chapter 15).

The themes and topics treated in these various genres are quite wide-ranging. However, given the proximity in which all the confessional groups lived to one another and their competing claims to possess the true faith, opponents inevitably picked on the most cherished aspects of their protagonists' creed. For the Christians, both in debates among themselves and with other religions, it was the issue of Christology and the Godhead that dominated the agenda (Haddad, 1985; Beaumont, 2005);⁵⁸ and Muslims composed numerous works against the Christian doctrine of the Trinity and the Incarnation (see, for example, Thomas, 1992, 2002). When Christians went on the offensive against Muslims, it was invariably the divine provenance of the Qur'an and the prophethood of Muhammad that attracted their attention. Certain devotional practices

⁵⁸ Christians developed the strategy – the germs of which are already present in the writings of John of Damascus – of linking the persons of God to the Muslim doctrine of God's divine attributes: see Beltran (2005) and Wolfson (1956).

also made it on to the list, most commonly Christian veneration of the cross and icons⁵⁹ and the Muslim practice of circumcision.⁶⁰

Eastern Christians living in the Byzantine Empire were overwhelmingly hostile and rejectionist in their approach to dealing with the challenge of Islam, dismissing it as a heresy and its prophet as an impostor. However, those living in the Muslim realm tended to adopt quite different approaches. Some were hostile, such as John of Damascus (d. ca. 750), who included Islam in his list of Christian heresies and labelled it a mere 'cult', and 'Ammar al-Basri (fl. ca. 850), who argued that Islam was inferior to Christianity because people were only drawn to it for base motives such as power and money. But most were inclined to be more accommodating, with some even admitting that Islam was at least a monotheist religion, even if not as developed as Christianity.⁶¹ This accommodating approach is most noticeable in the large-scale appropriation of Muslim Arabic theological terminology. The *Summary of the Ways of Faith*, for example, is saturated with distinctively Islamic vocabulary. It is not just a case of a shared language; rather, our author goes out of his way to deploy blatantly Islamic phraseology, referring, for example, to the prophets as 'messengers' (*rusul*), to Christ as 'lord of the worlds' (*rabb al-'ālamīn*) and to dissimulating Christians as *munāfiqūn* (rather than a less loaded word like *mutazābirīn*), all of which are overtly Qur'anic terms. The author could have chosen theologically neutral words, but he makes a deliberate decision to use Qur'anic vocabulary. Sometimes he even cites whole verses. Thus in the course of question 2 of chapter 18, on whether Christ is creator or created, he explains the Incarnation as God's veiling himself behind human flesh, for 'mankind has no access to the speech of God except 'by inspiration or from behind a veil' (BL Or 4950, fol. 117b). These last words are quoted directly from Qur'an 42.51 (though using *bi-wahy* instead of *wahyan*), and quite cleverly twist the sense of the expression in the Qur'an to support the idea of the Incarnation. Mark Swanson has recently emphasized that 'the early Arabic Christian literature is not merely a literature of translation, in close relationship to Greek and Syriac exemplars; it is also a literature in some inter-textual relationship with the Qur'an' (Swanson, 1998, p. 298).⁶² The *Summary of the Ways of Faith* and many other Christian texts of the same period bear witness to this phenomenon and illustrate the degree to

⁵⁹ Muslim texts do not make much of Christian veneration of the cross and images, but Christian texts give the impression that Muslims object to the practice, as we see from treatises on this subject by such authors as Theodore Abu Qurra (cited above) and Isho'yahb bar Malkon, metropolitan of Nisibis in the 1220s: see Teule (2007).

⁶⁰ For the contents of Christian–Muslim debate texts see the essays by Eichner and Griffith in this volume (Chapters 5 and 6 respectively) and the survey works, such as those by Caspar, Khoury, Rissanen and Sirry, listed in the Supplementary Bibliography.

⁶¹ For discussion see Hoyland (1997, ch. 12).

⁶² However, note that it was a two-way process in that we also see Muslims acting in a similar way towards the Bible; see Thomas (1996) and Swanson (2007).

which Christians of the Middle East came to espouse a religious world-view that had a very substantial overlap with their Muslim neighbours.

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Supplementary Bibliography

The bibliography for this subject is vast, and since we have included much relevant literature in the references to our Introduction, we will here just give a few reference works, surveys and studies that have appeared recently and/or are particularly useful for further research in this field.

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The Making of a Heretic: The Life of Origen in Epiphanius *Panarion* 64

J. Rebecca Lyman

The passionate anti-Origenism of the bishop of Cyprus is well known as is the tangle of ascetic networks, episcopal politics, and doctrinal passions of the late fourth century which created the 'Origenist controversy'. Epiphanius' motivations in urging the condemnation of a long dead teacher have been found in his Egyptian ascetic experiences, and his dedicated, if simple minded, devotion to Nicene credal orthodoxy¹. In her recent book on Epiphanius' heresiology, A. Pourkier has offered some insights into his originality, including an emphasis on individual heresiarchs and their character². The purpose of this brief paper is to suggest that his polemical description of Origen's life in *Panarion* 64 reflects new definitions of heresy emerging in the increasingly ascetic and imperial church of the fourth century.

Even before the Origenist controversy, Epiphanius' entire life was lived in the context of theological dispute and ascetic institutions from his nurturing in the Nicene faith by his parents to encounters with Gnostics as a young monk in Egypt to problems with sectarian ascetics in his monastery in Palestine to his dialogues with Apollinarians in Cyprus and negotiations with episcopal factions in Antioch. The diversity and range of theological opinion was therefore not theoretical to Epiphanius; his interest in heresiology reflected his experience as ascetic and bishop within the divided fourth century church³. As has been thoroughly outlined by Dechow and Clark, Epiphanius' theological interests were deeply shaped by his asceticism and conflicts within the networks of ascetic teachers and communities; Origen was increasingly controversial not only for his subordinationism, but because his speculations on the origin of the soul and body were seen by some as harmful to the ascetic enter-

¹ On his 'intransigent type of Egyptian monasticism' see Jon F. Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism in Early Christianity: Epiphanius and the Legacy of Origen* (North American Patristic Society Monograph Series 13; Macon, 1988), pp. 32-43, 96-124 and also Elizabeth Clark, *The Origenist Controversy. The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton, 1992), pp. 96-104. On his non-speculative orthodoxy, see Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism*, pp. 133-136 and Frances Young, 'Did Epiphanius know what he meant by "heresy"?' *Studia Patristica* 17.1 (1982), pp. 199-205; *From Nicaea to Chalcedon* (Philadelphia, 1983), pp. 133-136.

² *L'hérésiologie chez Épiphane de Salamine* (Christianisme Antique 4; Paris, 1992), pp. 487-8.

³ See Pourkier, *L'hérésiologie chez Épiphane*, pp. 26-34.

prise⁴. The work of Epiphanius therefore represents an ascetic response to conflicts concerning not only doctrinal orthodoxy, but also ascetic practice⁵.

As argued recently by F. Williams and A. Pourkier, even Epiphanius' literary style reflected his ascetic training and the ascetic audience of the *Ancoratus* and *Panarion*. He was not as well educated, eloquent or theologically sophisticated as many other Christian authors of the fourth century. He wrote or perhaps dictated a simple 'ecclesiastical koine' to be accessible to his ascetic audience, accented by diatribe and storytelling⁶. Although he used the earlier tools of Christian heresiology which included the distinct genealogies and demonic inspiration of heretics, and their theological and scriptural incoherence, Epiphanius according to Pourkier accented the heresiarch; the age of hagiography was also the age of heresiology⁷. Epiphanius' vivid polemical imagery of snakes, medicines, demons, and failed heresiarchs illustrates the continuing importance of the figural in Christian teaching⁸. The negative charge of the spiritual power of the holy man was presented in the heresiarch.

If asceticism thus provides the general context of Epiphanius' heresiology, the particular theological context is the Apollinarian debates of the 370's which frame his account of Origen's life. As outlined by Dechow, Epiphanius was writing his chapters on Origen in the second part of 376 at the same time that he was engaged in negotiations concerning the orthodox episcopal succession in Antioch and attempting to resolve a dispute with the Apollinarians. The doctrinal problems around Apollinarius, a fellow defender of Nicene orthodoxy and friend of Athanasius, had troubled Epiphanius for a number of years. In 370 he had challenged students of Apollinarius in Cyprus to debate their Christology; he had not condemned Apollinarius, but rather his pupils who had garbled his teaching⁹. This dispute was especially painful to Epiphanius

⁴ On the influence of Origen among ascetics see Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism*, pp. 96-107 and Clark, *The Origenist Controversy*, pp. 95-104.

⁵ On the varied connections between developing ascetic styles of life and the theological debates of the fourth century, see for example R. Vaggione, "'Arians", Polemics and Asceticism in the Roman East', *Arianism After Arius. Essays on the Development of the Fourth Century Trinitarian Conflict*, ed. M. Barnes and D. Williams (Edinburgh, 1993), pp. 181-214; Susanna Elm, *Virgins of God. The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 106-136, and Philip Rousseau, 'Orthodoxy and the Cenobite', *Studia Patristica* 30 (1997), pp. 239-256.

⁶ See comments by Pourkier, *L'hérésiologie chez Épiphane*, pp. 29-30; Frank Williams, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis, Book 1 (Sects 1-46)* (Nag Hammadi Studies 35; Leiden, 1987), pp. xxi-ii.; Young notes his 'credal style', *From Nicaea to Chalcedon*, p. 133.

⁷ Pourkier, *L'hérésiologie chez Épiphane*, pp. 23, 487-488.

⁸ On the importance of figural tendencies, especially lives of the holy in the fourth century, see Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire. The Development of Christian Discourse* (Sather Classical Lectures 55; Berkeley, California, 1991), pp. 39-88, 145-151.

⁹ See Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism*, pp. 60-84. Epiphanius discussed the exchange in *Panarion* 77.2.2-3 (GCS v. 3, 417): 'When at first we were informed of it by some of those ..., we could not believe that a man like him had brought the doctrine into the world, and we waited patiently and hopefully until we could get a more exact account. For we said that the boys who

because of the early brilliance of Apollinarius' teaching in defence of Nicaea¹⁰. In the *Ancoratus* Origen and Apollinarius' disciples are associated, but twenty-four years later he will condemn Origen and Apollinarius together as the most significant of all heretics.

Dechow has argued that the continuing polemical association of Apollinarius and Origen in Epiphanius' writings was due to his concerns about their Christology and anthropology, and to the opposition of simple believers to speculative theology¹¹. However, given Epiphanius' interest in biography, I think that there is another link between them which is persistently troubling to Epiphanius: they are both great teachers of the church who go wrong. In the public doctrinal debates of the fourth century church, doctrinal division was revealed as an embarrassing and persistent problem of the Christian community¹². As outlined by A. Le Boulluec, one of the strategies of the heresiological rhetoric of the second century was to mask the connection of dissenting groups to the mainstream church; they were described as alien interlopers whose theological falsity could be proved by their separate genealogy, even if paradoxically the passion of the refutation betrayed their close relation to the community¹³. Such an inherited strategy was less useful to Epiphanius for famous and venerated teachers such as Origen or Apollinarius who clearly began within the orthodox tradition. As Basil wrote to Epiphanius concerning the Apollinarian schism, 'Not only is heresy divided against orthodoxy, but even right doctrine against itself'¹⁴. In the context of the continuing debates of the fourth century, Origen could symbolize not merely learning or speculation in contrast to desert simplicity or credal orthodoxy. Like Marcellus or Apollinarius, Origen was another great orthodox teacher who had gone bad. He is the symbol of unstable orthodoxy.

Therefore, in 376 Epiphanius crafted a new picture of a heretic in his account of Origen's life. Most scholars have dismissed his account of Origen's apostasy in Alexandria as a 'vulgar episode' or 'confused gossip'¹⁵. My inter-

had come to us from him, not understanding the profundities ... had made up what they said on their own ...' (English translation from Philip Amidon, *The Panarion of St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis. Selected Passages* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 340-1.

¹⁰ *Panarion* 77.19.6-7 (GCS v. 3, 433-4): 'But, although I considered not writing, I was compelled by the truth itself ... It is rather that the man could have been of the greatest benefit to us, having excelled? those in the world on account of his training? and his love...' (trans. Amidon, 342).

¹¹ Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism*, pp. 91, 105.

¹² For a recent evaluation of the social implications of Christian debates, see Richard Lim, *Public Disputation, Power, and Social Order in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, California, 1995), pp. 109-181.

¹³ A. Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque (IIe-IIIe siècles)*, 2 v. (Études Augustiniennes; Paris, 1985), pp. 157-184.

¹⁴ Ep. 258 (*Lettres III*, ed. Yves Courtonne (Paris, 1966), p. 102).

¹⁵ These phrases are from Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism*, p. 136 and H. Crouzel, *Origen*, translated by A.S. Worrall (New York, 1989), p. 36. On the general rejection of this story by Origen scholars see Crouzel and H. DeLubac, *Exegese medievale I* (Paris, 1959), pp. 257-260.

est here is less in whether the story is true but rather how and why the story is told. In surprising contrast to earlier heresiarchs in his work, Epiphanius initially treats Origen rather kindly: in the first eight sections of *Panarion* 64, Origen is not a snake, a seducer, a weed, a poison, possessed by a demon, proud or even contentious in the usual vocabulary of his heresiology¹⁶. Unlike other wrong teachers such as Bardesanes or Tatian, he does not attribute Origen's error to alien influences or genealogies of other heretics¹⁷. In fact he separates the historical Origen from the odd groups of so-called Origenists in the desert in *Panarion* 63.

How then is Origen unmasked? In the opening sections of *Panarion* 64 Epiphanius tells us that Origen was the well-educated son of a holy martyr, brought up in the church, well known for his extensive learning, and wholly dedicated to God. He then includes one of the 'many brave deeds which ancient traditions relate of him': Origen is shaved, seated by the steps of the Serapeum and ordered to give out palm branches for worship. However, Origen 'raised his voice boldly, without fear or hesitation he cried, "Come and take not the idol's branch, but Christ's branch!"'. But, Epiphanius tells us, 'he did not retain to the end the reward of his virtue. For because of the excellence of his eloquence and education, he became the object of great envy'¹⁸.

In the next scene (64.2.2-9) Origen was therefore singled out for persecution. He is ordered to either be abused by an Ethiopian or to offer sacrifice. Origen stands silently, in imitation of Christ. Finally, '... breaking into speech, he chose to sacrifice'; but '... not even this did he do willingly as many accounts state ... but they put the incense into his hands and placed it upon the fire on the altar'. In spite of the involuntary nature of the act, the confessors and martyrs expel him from the church, and he withdrew to Palestine. When he arrives silently in the assembly in Jerusalem, the priests urge him to speak, because 'he was such an exegete and educated man'. They urge and compel him, but he stands only to repeat Psalm 49.16: 'To the sinner God says, "Why do you relate my precepts and take up my covenant in your mouth?"' and sat down in tears, everyone weeping with him.

These themes of compulsion, silence, and learning continue in the next section (64.3.1-4) where he is urged to meet Ambrose, 'one of the leading men in the imperial palace'. The former heretic is converted by Origen, and he urges Origen to exegete scripture. This Origen does with great care, 'surpassing

¹⁶ Snakes: Marcion (42.1.1); Arius (69.3.1). Seducer: Simon Magus (21.2.1). Weed: Archontic (40.1.2); Semi-Arians (73.1.1). Poison: Archontics (40.1.1); Apollinarius (77.1.1). Demoniac: Simon Magus (21.2.1); Nicolas (25.1.3); Noetus (57.1.2); Arius (69.2.1); Apollinarius (77.1.1). Proud: Ebion (30.1.1); Valesians (59.1.2).

¹⁷ Tatian was blind without Justin (46.1.5); Bardesanes fell in with Valentinians (56.2.1); Hieracas was influenced by Origen (67.1.1).

¹⁸ All references from *Panarion* 64.1.1-3.10 (GCS v. 2, 403-415) with the English translation by Amidon, pp. 213-215.

asceticism, application, and labor', but 'he did not keep his reputation unblemished to the end, for his great experience led him to a great lapse. His very aim of leaving no part of the sacred scriptures uncommented on led him to be seduced by sin and in his exegesis to write deadly words' (64.3.8-9).

This is not the familiar portrait of the stalwart confessor-philosopher of Eusebius, but a flawed and humiliated ascetic teacher¹⁹. Whether or not the stories are true, they are used and framed to good effect for an ascetic audience. First, throughout his ordeals, Origen is unwilling. The unwilling nature of his apostasy is highlighted by contrasting fears of bodily pollution by the Ethiopian to apostasy of the soul²⁰. One can imagine the shivers down ascetic spines at this point; which pollution — somatic or psychic — would you choose? Even if Origen chose to keep his body intact, and his hands were forced to do the acts, he was guilty.

Second, he is forced and compelled to speak by the needs of others. In Jerusalem he is urged by the clergy. He only begins his dangerous allegorical exegesis because of Ambrose, a converted imperial official. In these cases as in his apostasy, silence is the way to salvation, but Origen because of his learning is forced to teach by others²¹. Learning and brilliance are therefore risky acquisitions which led to error. Like Christ, Origen waits silently in front of his persecutors, and in breaking into speech, will sacrifice. So in Jerusalem, he enters and wishes to remain in silence, but is pressed to speak. So in his study, it is his exegesis assigned by Ambrose which leads him to 'deadly words'.

In these paragraphs therefore Epiphanius begins a subtle polemic against an obviously respected and heroic teacher. He does not have to overtly condemn Origen's speculative or philosophical interests. He simply tells a story which highlights danger points for teaching ascetics. First, in spite of Origen's strenuous practices, no amount of *askesis* could balance his intellect, and indeed his very zeal and boldness became an occasion for error. His great education caused attention and danger from pagans, imperial officials, and fellow churchmen: all of these forced him to speak. Origen's zeal and boldness — the virtues of a martyr or philosopher — have become an occasion for heresy in spite of his intentions or repentance²². Other teachers fail because of their education in the *Panarion*, but none so spectacularly as Origen²³. His brilliance is

¹⁹ On the portrayal of Origen as a philosophical teacher in Eusebius, see Patricia Cox, *Biography in Late Antiquity. A Quest for the Holy Man* (Berkeley, 1983), pp. 69-101.

²⁰ On the image of Ethiopians as demonic, see Jean Marie Courtes, 'The Theme of "Ethiopic" and "Ethiopians" in Patristic Literature', *The Image of the Black in Western Art*, 2/i, pp. 19-21.

²¹ On silence advocated in the desert, see G. Gould, *The Desert Fathers on Monastic Community* (Oxford, 1993), p. 79.

²² On the opposition of *παρρησία* and *πένθος*, see Irenée Hausherr, *Penthos. The Doctrine of Compunction in the Christian East* (Kalamazoo, 1982), p. 94.

²³ Theodotus, in spite of his education fell (54.1.3-7); Bardesenes, a good man fell into error (56); Hieracas, was well educated, but did not persevere (67.1.1).

the hand he will not cut off, to quote the gospel, and no practice can balance the pressure of the church or the society upon him. In spite of his severe asceticism and humility, his passion for learning leads to 'a dreadful sect more wicked than those of old, more absurd in theology than all of those before him'. He has become the beginning of a new genealogy, the heresiarch who leads ultimately to Arius.

Equally important, Epiphanius does not mention any conflict with Bishop Demetrius, the bishops of Palestine, the appeal to Rome for condemnation, the validity of his ordination or questions of orthodoxy in his leaving Alexandria. For an ascetic writing to ascetics, it is much more damning for Origen to be expelled by martyrs and confessors from Alexandria than by a bishop. The pressure on Origen to teach from the clergy and imperial patrons also echoes fears of ascetics in the imperial context²⁴. Origen might have retired to silence, compunction, and salvation without the pressures his education brought to bear.

However, perhaps most revealing in this story is the change in the central linguistic image of heresy, *haireisis*. This neutral Greek word meaning choice acquired in the second and third centuries the pejorative sense of the individualistic choice of error which separated individuals from the church and true belief²⁵. Although embedded in the intellectual context of Late Hellenism, Christians gave the word a highly charged moral and intellectual content. In a world of competing sects, conversion to sectarian Christianity was a profound social and spiritual act. By baptism one joined an exclusive community with an exclusive worldview. The 'totalizing discourse' of Christian orthodoxy was 'chosen' in some sense by all Christians before the imperial patronage of the fourth century, and the sectarian language of Hellenistic schools was therefore a helpful fit²⁶. On such a social map, heresy could indeed be drawn as a wrong and deadly choice among significant choices. Heresiology was therefore the classification of those who had chosen to leave by their allegiance to the wrong authority — by wrong teaching, by ambition, by novelty, or by demonic possessions. These teachers formed parallel genealogies of falsity which defined the true succession of the church.

Origen as an 'unwilling' heretic, a failed ascetic who teaches deadly words in spite of his best intentions, signals I think important shifts in both Christian social and theological identity. Unlike the earlier rhetorical model of Justin

²⁴ On the ambivalent attitudes of ascetics toward the church and society, see Peter Brown, *The Body and Society. Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York, 1988), pp. 190-240.

²⁵ Marcel Simon, 'From Greek *Hairesis* to Christian Heresy' in *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition*, ed. W. Schoedel and R. Wilken (Paris, 1979), pp. 101-116.

²⁶ Cameron describes Christian belief as a 'totalizing discourse' in *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*, p. 2.

and Irenaeus, the heretic is not pictured as external. In these stories Origen's heresy was not explicitly from philosophy nor was he an alien apostate who never truly belonged nor does he have a bad teacher. The heresy of Origen is the more frightening internal failure of a deeply learned and ascetical churchman, compelled by the needs of others and unable to control his own gifts: he does not endure until the end. Somehow error appears in the midst of good intentions, just as apostasy happened even in an occasion of heroism. This is the mystery of a good man gone bad, the poison in the honey, the sickness of the healthy body, and the continuing theological divisions of the public imperial church. In a final letter to Jerome, Epiphanius described Origen and Apollinarius as 'poisoned roots' which were deeply implanted, and must be dragged out to wither. The image is again organic, stark in the language of life and death, and the need for purification²⁷. In later accounts Origen's early heroism therefore disappears. He has been transformed into the spiritual father of Arius, the root of all heresies, the Simon Magus of fourth century theology for Epiphanius, explicitly associated with Manichees and Gnostics²⁸.

Epiphanius is therefore troubled by Origen as an ascetic judging another ascetic as much as by an argument between teachers and bishops or intellectuals and simple believers. Heresiological classification for Epiphanius the ascetic imperial bishop is no longer a map of external enemies as for a sectarian teacher of the second century, who may ironically, if correctly, characterize his opponents as 'teachers' or 'sectarians'²⁹. Heresiology is now a guide to internal theological and spiritual fault lines. However the teaching of Origen may have been misinterpreted and blurred in the later Origenist controversy, Origen himself represents internal error. Origen becomes 'the core' in the words of Elizabeth Clark, for the theological disputes of ascetic teachers in the fourth century, because he is a deeply ascetic teacher, not merely a speculative one³⁰.

²⁷ Jerome, Ep 91 (*Lettres IV*, ed. J. Labourt (Paris, 1954), pp. 146-148).

²⁸ Jerome, Ep. 51.4 (*Lettres II*, ed. J. Labourt (Paris, 1951), p. 163).

²⁹ Allen Brent notes Hippolytus' use of sectarian rhetoric against his opponents in 'Diogenes Laertius and the Apostolic Succession', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 44 (1993), pp. 367-389.

³⁰ Clark, *The Origenist Controversy*, p. 246.



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Manichaeans and Public Disputation in Late Antiquity*

Richard Lim

As the Manichaean movement swept out of its Mesopotamian home in a seemingly inexorable fashion, its diffusion was accompanied by tales of local resistance and public debates with others¹. In the later Roman Empire, the Manichaeans were especially feared and loathed by adversaries who viewed them as formidable public debaters and hence stiff competitors².

In the present paper, I would like to focus our attention on this aspect of the Manichaean movement in the fuller context of the social interactions between Manichaeans and other groups. For this purpose, I postulate two analytically distinct forms of activities which we tend to subsume under the rubric of debating in public. First, there is the Manichaean practice of posing difficult or aporetic questions as part of their protreptic invitation to secure their listeners' attention and prepare the way for their preaching. The second kind of public debate reflects the more familiar image of a formal verbal contest or disputation between two or more protagonists for the benefit of an extended audience.

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1. On the spread of the Manichaean movement, see E. DE STOOP, *Essai sur la diffusion du manichéisme dans l'Empire romain* (Ghent, 1909) ; F. CUMONT, «La propagation du manichéisme dans l'Empire romain», *Revue d'histoire et de littérature religieuses* n. s. 1 (1910), pp. 31-43 ; P. BROWN, «The Diffusion of Manichaeism in the Roman Empire», *Journal of Roman Studies* 59 (1969), pp. 92-103 ; S. N. C. LIEU, *History of Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China. A Historical Survey* (Manchester, 1985).

2. See P. BROWN, *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley, 1969), pp. 43, 48, 141, n. 5 and IDEM, «St. Augustine's Attitude to Religious Coercion», *JRS* 65 (1964), pp. 107-16 ; reprinted in *Religion and Society in the Age of St. Augustine* (London, 1977), esp. p. 265, n.1. A close scrutiny of the evidence yields an anomalous yet readily understandable result : in the fragmentary accounts involving public debates written by the Manichaeans themselves, the sectarians were triumphant, while in the more abundant records written by their opponents, the Manichaeans were ultimately the losers.

I argue that we have no basis for assuming that the Manichaeans programmatically engaged others in public debates belonging to the second kind as part and parcel of their missionary activity. Instead, they employed more private or intimate forms of suasion, which partly relied on posing questions, aimed at individuals or small circles. The initiative behind the prominent set debates between Manichaeans and their opponents derived instead from the latter who, for reasons of their own, desired to bring about a high-profile encounter to put a stop to the general success of the Manichaeans in attracting support.

We note that the shape of evidence itself directs our gaze to the formal and high-profile public debates of which records were kept (either through the use of stenographic transcriptions or narrative descriptions). The increasingly prominent and interested use of written documentation as part of the environment of public debate was neither a neutral nor a negligible fact. It constituted a deliberate strategy and arguably had the practical effect of gradually edging out the actual event itself. Thus by tracing the developing role of writing in relation to the construction of public debates, we can also trace the rise and fall of the figure of the Manichaean public debater.

I. — DISPUTATION AND THE MANICHAEAN KERYGMA

The notion of disputing occupied a central location in Manichaean religious self-identification from the very inception of the movement. Mani's kerygma was fundamentally one which brought into question, though by means of radical reinterpretation rather than direct negation, the very legitimacy of the religious self-understanding of others, particularly Jews and Christians, but also Zoroastrians and Buddhists³. In this sense, conflict with others was not an unpleasant and incidental fact of life which Manichaeans would and could have avoided had they so desired. Neither could Manichaeans convey the cogency and compelling nature of their message without making undercutting references to the fundamental religious claims of others⁴.

The tradition which associated the Manichaeans with public debates ran deep into the earliest history of the movement itself. The publication of the so-called *Cologne Mani-Codex*, containing a Manichaean work entitled "Concerning the Birth of His Own Body", allows us to reconstruct more of the early career of Mani⁵. According to the *Mani-Codex*, an agonistic exchange of

3. See F. C. ANDREAS and W. B. HENNING, «Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch-Turkestan II», *Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin Phil.-hist. Klasse* 5 (1933), T II D126 IR, p. 295.

4. H. J. DRIVERS, «Conflict and Alliance in Manichaeism», *Struggles of the Gods*, H. G. Kippenberg, ed. (Berlin/New York/Amsterdam, 1984), pp. 99-124, see esp. p. 105 on the imagery of war.

5. *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis* (hereafter *CMC*), in A. HENRICHS and L. KOENEN, ed., «Der Kölner Mani-Codex (P. Colon. inv. nr. 4780) ΠΕΡΙ ΤΗΣ ΓΕΝΝΗΣ ΤΟΥ ΣΟΜΑΤΟΣ ΑΥΤΟΥ, Edition der Seiten», *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 19 (1975), pp. 1-85 ; 32 (1978), pp. 87-199 ; 44 (1981), pp. 201-318 ; 48 (1982), pp. 1-59.

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words marked the beginning of the rift between Mani and the Jewish-Christian baptists in Babylonia. The narrative presents a dichotomy between silence (lack of public disputing) and speech (public disputing) which is fraught with significance. The hagiographical text emphasizes the fact that, at first, the young Mani refrained from disputing with his fellow sectarians even while he was receiving a series of revelations which pointed out the errors in the baptists' religious practices and beliefs⁶. Later, after Mani became twenty-four or twenty-five years of age, he first made public his doubts and questions. He disputed openly and argued with the baptists over the tradition of Elchasaïus and the value of ablation which constituted the central pillar of the sect's religious self-understanding by putting questions before them in a public setting. This act of questioning and defiance understandably failed to endear Mani to the other members of the sect. Instead, they were described as becoming especially furious since they proved incapable of responding to his questions and were made to look foolish.

In our account, this lopsided debate which Mani dominated very nearly ended in mob violence. The shamed and enraged baptists proceeded to threaten Mani's own person with physical harm after they failed to oppose him with words ; serious injury was only averted thanks to the timely intervention of Patticius, Mani's father and patron in the sect. In the aftermath, an assembly was convoked to discuss the situation ; the baptists decided to expel Mani. Here we notice that, when no peaceful settlement appears possible within the context of a sectarian dispute, and when the group has no authority to discipline, expulsion stands as the only means of dealing with someone who defiantly disputes the central ethos of the group.

Once expelled from the sect, Mani commenced his missionary career which involved his travelling as far east as India.⁷ In broken lines of Greek, the

Critical edition by L. KOENEN and C. RÖMER, *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex. Über das Werden seines Leibes*. Papyrologica Coloniensia 14 (Wiesbaden, 1989). The early dating of the text to the 4-5th centuries is recently under challenge on palaeographical grounds, see B. L. FONKIĆ and F. B. POLJAKOV, «Paläographische Grundlagen der Datierung des Kölner Mani-Kodex», *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 83 (1990), pp. 22-29.

6. *CMC* 5,11. Such claims made *ex post facto* can of course constitute a veiled apologetical attempt to show that Mani's break with the baptists had long been prepared for and did not come as an accident. See A. HENRICH, «Mani and the Babylonian Baptists : a Historical Confrontation», *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 77 (1973), pp. 23-59, esp. 43-59 ; J. J. BUCKLEY, «Mani's Opposition to the Elchasaïtes : A Question of Ritual», in *Traditions in Contact and Change*. Selected Proceedings of the XIVth Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions, P. SLATER, D. WIEBE, M. BOUTIN and H. COWARD, ed. (Waterloo, 1983), pp. 323-336 and IDEM., «Tools and Tasks : Elchasaïte and Manichaean Purification Rituals», *Journal of Religion* 66 (1986), pp. 399-411.

7. The Middle Persian account of Mani's encounter with an Indian wise man named Gwndyš seems to reflect a private discussion between the two and not a public debate before an audience. See text and German translation in W. SUNDERMANN, ed., *Mitteliranische manichäische Texte kirchengeschichtlichen Inhalts*. Berliner Turfantexte 11 (Berlin, 1981), texts 4b.1 : M6040 and 4b.2 : M6041, pp. 86-89. Finally, Mani asked Gwndyš whether he could explain the origins of the world and the latter was not able to respond : «er ko[n]nte ihm

Mani-Codex reveals the only attested formal public debate involving the charismatic figure. Mani was already far advanced in his public career by the time he arrived at a local village after his favorable reception at the royal court in Ctesiphon by Shapur the *shah-an-shah*. There Mani entered the meeting place of a religious congregation in order to preach his customary message. His unsolicited attempt to proclaim his kerygma before an assembled congregation constituted a public challenge to the authority of communal and religious leaders, and common expectation would dictate that the latter must respond. Accordingly, the leader of the religious sect in question invited Mani to a public debate with him.

«He [the leader of the religious sect] conducted a debate (διάλογος) with me before men of his faith (δόγμα)⁸. On all points he was worsted and he incurred laughter with the result that he was filled both with envy and malice⁹.»

This vanquished leader attempted to avenge his public disgrace and temporary exclusion by his social group by uttering incantations (ἐπωδάς) against the stranger. The fragmentary nature of the text does not allow us to learn more about the nature of the incantations and their intended purpose. The spells can be construed as a maledictory curse to inflict harm on Mani or a means to constrain his ability to speak in public. In either case, the efforts of the debater-turned-spellcaster were in vain. Mani's person was afforded protection by his guardian spirit or σύζυγος so that the spells were deflected and he suffered no harm¹⁰. Here, as we will see elsewhere, we find a situation in which a public debate conducted in accordance with certain explicit or implicit rules appears as only one among several possible forms of social and religious conflict. The threat of physical violence and the use of illocutionary acts such as the casting of spells clearly remain viable options within the broader spectrum of such contests¹¹.

Mani proclaimed his kerygma openly, following what he envisioned as the practice of his favorite apostle Paul. Yet I know of no extant evidence (which is admittedly fragmentary) which claims that Mani resorted to public debating as a *modus operandi* of his mission. The noun διάλογος and the verb

keine Antwort geben. Und er handelte wie ein Unwissender, der nichts begreift» (in 4b.2 : M 6041, R18 [1377]-V5 [1395], SUNDERMANN, ed., pp. 88-89).

8. This word reflects the standard terminology used to describe religious sectarian groups in the *Codex*, see e.g., *CMC* 102,12.

9. *CMC* 138, 2-9 ; text and German translation in Henrichs/Koenen, *ZPE* 48 (1982), pp. 30-31 [pp. 348-49] : [-- διά]λογον ἐ[ποίησεν π]ρὸς με ἔμ[προσθεν] ἀνδρῶν τοῦ ἀύ[τοῦ δόγ]ματος. ἐν πάσ [δὲ ἡτ]ήθη καὶ γέλω[τα ᾤφ]λησεν ὡς καὶ [φθόνου] καὶ κακίας πλη[σθῆναι]. καὶ κατὰ τὴν [.....] καθεστεις ἐπε[λάλησεν] ἐπωδάς τῶν [..... ἀύ]τοῦ. On the role of laughter in (re)defining social boundaries, see E. DUPREEL, «Le problème sociologique du rire», *Revue philosophique* 106 (1928), pp. 228-260.

10. *CMC* 139, 11-13.

11. See P. L. RAVENHIL, «Religious Utterances and the Theory of Speech Acts», in W. J. SAMARIN, ed., *Languages in Religious Practice* (Rowley, MA 1976), pp. 26-39 ; see esp. 28-31 on spells and “magical” speech as illocutionary acts.

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διαλέγομαι are used in the *Mani-Codex* mainly to describe the act of preaching, not debating¹². The proclamation of the kerygma and the performance of miracles characterize Mani's missionary activities as well as that of his disciples¹³. In this respect, a document such as the *Doctrina Addai*, which may after all contain Christian anti-Manichaean polemic, can help us comprehend the historical milieu and expectations which governed the interactions between charismatic missionaries and local communities in late antiquity¹⁴.

For the advancement of his missionary career, Mani possessed the double gift of special revelation and the aid of his σέζυγος. His disciples and followers, however, needed assistance to ensure the success of their own missionary activities. The well-publicized ability of the early Manichaeans to succeed in public debates may be attributed to the fact that they were equipped with specific writings which helped them in situations of controversy. When Mani sent abroad his disciples to spread his kerygma, he instructed them to carry with them his own writings which they were asked to study with care¹⁵.

Addas, the disciple who ventured as far as Alexandria, was traditionally known to have brought with him three of Mani's writings, including the *Living Gospel*. Either while on his way to Alexandria or during his sojourn in the city itself, Addas could be expected to become involved in public debates with others¹⁶. In order to be able to survive in the highly competitive environment of a city in which various religious and philosophical groups competed with each other on a constant basis, one would need to be prepared

12. The case discussed above is the only occurrence of διάλογος being used to connote a public debate. Elsewhere in the *Mani-Codex*, διάλογος refers to preaching, see for example CMC 118,11 where διάλογος equals διδασκαλία. On διαλέγομαι as the act of preaching, see CMC 64,9. See L. CIRILLO, A. CONCOLINO MANCINI and A. ROSELLI, ed., *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis "Concordanze"* (Cosenza, 1985), pp. 53-54.

13. On Manichaean missionary activities and the working of miracles, see the excellent comprehensive account in LIEU, *History of Manichaeism*, e.g., pp. 54-90. On the Manichaeans and public preaching, see Middle Persian fragment M219, in ANDREAS/HENNING, «Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch-Turkestan II», pp. 311-312.

14. See H. J. DRIJVERS, «Addai und Mani. Christentum und Manichäismus im dritten Jahrhundert in Syrien», *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 221 (Rome, 1983), pp. 173-185.

15. On Manichaean scriptures, see P. ALFARIC, *Les écritures manichéennes I-II* (Paris, 1918-19).

16. See M2 RI 1-37 in ANDREAS/HENNING, «Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch-Turkestan II», p. 301. Addas is said to have "opposed the *dogmas* with these [writings], [and] in everything he acquitted himself well. He subdued and enchained the *dogmas*" English translation from J. P. ASMUSSEN, *Manichaean Literature. Representative Texts Chiefly from Middle Persian and Parthian Writings*. Persian Heritage Series 22 (Delmar NY, 1975), p. 21. The text does not specify whether these activities took place in Alexandria or whether they occurred while Addas was on his way to Alexandria: "Bis nach Alexandria kam er". See also L. J. R. ORT, *Mani. A Religio-historical Description of his Personality* (Leiden, 1967), p. 63.

to respond to attacks and criticisms¹⁷. Many would understandably wish to subject a newcomer with a novel message to public testing since a stranger could rarely make appeals to recognized and established credentials¹⁸.

Our hagiographical Middle Persian source describes Addas as emerging triumphant from these early encounters, thanks to his use of Mani's writings¹⁹. It further asserts that Addas' most fundamental imperative was the establishment of communities of the faithful, without hinting that he was expected to debate in public in order to gain adherents. In such a situation, we may surmise that debating in public with others was the unavoidable accompaniment of a missionary's career rather than his means of carrying out his mandate.

Coming out of a biblical tradition, Mani and the Manichaeans cherished a specific body of authoritative writings. Some of these valued Manichaean texts were either specifically designed for, or at least readily adaptable to, the task of religious controversy. In geographical areas where Christian communities abounded, such as within the Roman Empire on the other side of a long and wide-open frontier, the Manichaean missionaries quickly discovered that many of those whom they encountered were especially drawn to and impressed by claims concerning the status of the Hebrew bible as divine revelation. By initially focusing on this issue, Manichaeans were well positioned to preach their own distinctive message of the two principles of Light and Darkness to their engrossed listeners.

To exploit this opening, the Manichaeans (like most other religious groups) were not averse to adapting texts which came originally from other traditions. In particular, the *Antitheses* of Marcion of Sinope (mid-2nd century), whose teachings were very popular in eastern Syria, was quickly seized upon as a useful document in that it refuted the claim that the Hebrew bible was the work of a benign deity²⁰. Such documents were also reworked and incorporated into the Manichaean tradition. A work entitled *Móδιος* (meaning a small basket or a "dry-measure"), based on arguments adapted from the *Antitheses*, was attributed to the disciple Addas. The *Móδιος* was later translated into Latin as a result of the Manichaean effort to make their writings widely available in local languages. Since few texts not of present value were ever copied, least of all translated at great cost and with much

17. Thus the importance of Stoic dialectic to Christians such as Clement of Alexandria who sought to invite pagans to join Christianity. See J. PEPIN, «La vraie dialectique selon Clément d'Alexandrie», *Epiktasis. Mélanges offerts à Jean Daniélou* (Paris, 1972), pp. 375-383.

18. See J. PITT-RIVERS, «The Stranger, the Guest and the Hostile Host. Introduction to the Study of the Laws of Hospitality», in *Contributions to Mediterranean Sociology. Mediterranean Rural Communities and Social Change*. Acts of the Mediterranean Sociological Conference, Athens, July 1963, J.-G. Peristiany, ed. (Paris, 1968), pp. 13-30.

19. See M1750, in SUNDERMANN, ed., *Mitteliranische manichäische Texte kirchengeschichtlichen Inhalts*, (183-5), 2.5, p. 26 and ANDREAS/HENNING, «Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch-Turkestan II», M216c V 9-11. See M. TARDIEU, «Gnose et manichéisme», *Annuaire. École Pratique des Hautes Études*. Section des Sciences Religieuses 96 (1987-88), pp. 296-301, esp. 299.

20. See LIEU, *History of Manichaeism*, pp. 38-40.

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labor, we may surmise that the arguments it contained were deemed useful in disputing and refuting positions held by Latin Christians²¹.

II. – MESOPOTAMIA

The apparent ease with which the Manichaeans extended their influence in the Roman Empire instilled a sense of general alarm among many, Christians as well as pagans such as the philosopher Alexander of Lycopolis, who recoiled with apprehension at their success in a zero-sum competition for scarce commodities--people's allegiance. The analogy of people's reactions to a novel disease may help us comprehend the social dynamics behind the fears aroused by the diffusion of the Manichaean movement. To Christians, for example, the seemingly irresistible spread of Manichaean ideas was conceived of as a series of acts of seduction through which formerly loyal believers were lured into error through the contagious disease of heresy. Confused and helpless without a credible response to Manichaean success, threatened local groups searched for an antidote. As there was at first no known cure of this vaguely-understood disease, there was no initial consensus as to the means of combatting it. Even makeshift responses were difficult to devise since the Enemy was so elusive. Manichaeism, like a virus, was all the more threatening in that it was disseminated within intimate circles and close-knit groups in a way which escaped most people's attention.

In order to counter this helplessness in the face of a perceived public threat, a collectively-celebrated act of catharsis, similar to the ἀποπομπή of scapegoats from a community, was desirable and necessary²². Communal ritual must serve since no precise scientific cure could be deployed. The crisis could be transposed from a back area to the forefront of people's attention in order to allay the fear of the unknown. Historically, such an action could entail showcasing a confrontation with a representative of the Other so that the conflict could be dramatized publicly. If no such representative could be located and put on the stand for this purpose, or if the catharsis was meant to be translocal (and hence must be transferrable--especially through the medium of written texts which would then be disseminated), then one might instead turn to composing an account of a crisis, a confrontation, followed by a resolution. In our case, local hero(es), such as Christian bishops and prominent Christian notables, can be pitted against the heresiarch Mani himself in public debate.

21. It was for this reason that Augustine composed a refutation of this work belonging to Adimantus, as Addas was known to Latin-speakers, see *Contra Adimantum* in *CSEL* 25, pp. 115-190 ; see *Retractationes* 1.21.1 ; *CSEL* 36, p. 100 and F. CHATILLON, «Adimantus Manichaei discipulus», *Revue de Moyen Age latin* 10 (1954), pp. 191-203 ; LIEU, *History of Manichaeism*, pp. 64-65.

22. See J. BREMMER, «Scapegoat Rituals in Ancient Greece», *HSCP* 87 (1983), pp. 299-320.

Such was the strategy adopted by the author of the *Acta Archelai*, a work composed before ca. 350 in either Greek or Syriac²³, and surviving only in a Latin translation from 392²⁴. The incidental details in the fictive account can shed much light on Christian perceptions of the modes of contact and conflict between Manichaeans and Christians in a sensitive border region of the Empire.

According to the *Acta*, Mani once attempted to extend his influence around and within a Mesopotamian city, called Carchar in the text²⁵. His alleged plan was to convert one of the city's most preëminent citizens, a man by the name of Marcellus, because he thought that this act would thereby bring the entire city with the surrounding region under his influence : [*Mani*] *praesumebat enim universam se posse occupare provinciam, si prius talem virum sibimet suadere potuisset*²⁶.

Mani wrote personally to Marcellus, recalling the legendary correspondence between king Abgar of Edessa and Jesus (except in the matter of initiative). In his letter, which was delivered by his disciple Turbo, Mani urged Marcellus to follow his own teachings. The notable, however, was not impressed. Instead, he sought and secured the aid and counsel of Archelaus, the local bishop. By turning the spotlight to the local bishop as the primary agent for opposing Manichaeism, the author of the *Acta* might well be suggesting to his (Christian?) readers that all who happened to come into contact with Manichaeans should do as Marcellus is said to have done—they should not take the matter into their own hands but should instead seek the advice of the local ecclesiastical representative.

After consultation with Archelaus, Marcellus resolved to entice Mani to Carchar so that he could be defeated by the bishop in a public debate. Marcellus set the trap by sending an invitation to Mani requesting that he come personally to explicate his teachings.

Mani duly arrived, after having been thus lured to cross the border into the Roman Empire, with a retinue consisting of some twenty-two *electi* described

23. See the convincing arguments advanced by Lieu to support the thesis of a Greek original of the *Acta Archelai*, in LIEU, «Fact and Fiction in the *Acta Archelai*», in *Manichaean Studies I*. Proceedings of the First International Conference on Manichaeism, August 5-9, 1987, Lund University, Sweden, Peter Bryder, ed. (Lund, 1988), pp. 74-76.

24. Text in C. H. BEESON, ed., *Hegemonius. Acta Archelai*, GCS 16, (Leipzig, 1906). See M. HOFFMANN, *Der Dialog bei den christlichen Schriftstellern in der ersten vier Jahrhunderte* (Berlin, 1966), p. 91. The *terminus ante quem* is provided by a reference in Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses* 6.30-35. See LIEU, «Fact and Fiction in the *Acta Archelai*», pp. 69-89. Lieu argues («Fact and Fiction», p. 73), *e silentio* that the lack of mention of the *Acta Archelai* in Eusebius of Caesarea's account of Manichaeism in his *HE* (written, according to LIEU, in 326-330) provides a *terminus post quem*.

25. On the identity of the place, see LIEU, «Fact and Fiction in the *Acta Archelai*», pp.76-82. He presents a number of strong arguments against identifying Carchar exactly with Carrhae but proposes (p. 80) to locate the city "somewhere along the Syrian and Mesopotamian *limes*". See M. SCOPELLO, in *Annuaire. EPHE. Sciences Religieuses* 96 (1987-88), p. 301.

26. *Acta Archelai* 4.1-2 ; BEESON, ed., pp. 4-5.

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as young men and virgins²⁷. He is portrayed as an utter stranger, garbed exotically as befits a doctor from the East. Significantly he came carrying Babylonian books under his left arm. By means of this orientalist image, Mani is cast as a subversive (non-Roman) *barbaros* from Persia, a power frequently at war with Rome²⁸.

The debate, although held at the private residence of Marcellus, was nonetheless a town event given the much-trumpeted prominence of the local notable in the *Acta*. There, in Marcellus' *domus*, the town aristocracy assumed its usual pride of place²⁹. Four distinguished and learned men were selected to sit as the judges (*iudices*) of the forthcoming debate: Manippus, an expert in grammar and rhetoric; Aegialeus, an ἀρχιατρός³⁰ and a *nobilissimus vir* learned in letters; and Claudius and Cleobulus, who were both rhetors. This significant pagan participation in this public debate between two people who were emphatically not pagan, together with the fact that these *iudices* would render their opinion in a communal voice throughout the dialogue, appear as particularly noteworthy aspects of this narrative.

The public debate, though nominally between a Christian and a Manichaean, held significance for at least three parties--Christians, Manichaeans and pagans. In the account, Christians and Manichaeans were both competing for the hearts and minds of the pagan élites of the city. This sensibility, expressed through the instructive incidental detail of pagan participation, may reflect the concern of the Christian writer of the *Acta*; it may also represent a realistic appraisal of the balance of power in a border town in fourth-century Mesopotamia.

In the ensuing debate, according to the *Acta Archelai*, Mani was soundly defeated by the bishop Archelaus. Having lost in the verbal contest, the foreigner from Babylonia was further disgraced by being driven out of town by the assembled *turba* which *concitavit se ad effugandum Manen*³¹. Here we catch a glimpse of a possible role of a partisan audience in putting a firm closure to a debate by running an opponent out of town. Mani fled from Carchar, but not very far away, and settled in a nearby city to resume his missionary activities. There his influence was felt once again and the local Christians sent for help from their brethren in Carchar, especially from the

27. *Acta Archelai* 14.1-3; BEESON, ed., p. 22.

28. Christian teaching was considered *paterna* while Manichaean dogma was *aliena*. On the portrayals of the Manichaeans as unattractive foreigners and strangers, see L. J. VAN DER LOF, «Mani as the Danger from Persia in the Roman Empire», *Augustiniana* 24 (1974), pp. 74-84, see esp. 80-81. There was also an attempt to deflate Mani's social status from an *artifex morbi* (physician) to an *artifex* (craftsman), see VAN DER LOF, p. 84.

29. *Acta Archelai* 14.5-6; BEESON, ed., p. 23. These pagan *iudices* had to be advised to rely on the Torah and the Prophets for their judgement of the debate.

30. On the Roman archiatrate in late antiquity, see *Cod. Theod.* 13.3.2; T. MEYER, *Geschichte des römischen Ärztestandes* (Kiel, 1907), pp. 54-65; V. NUTTON, «*archiatri* and the Medical Profession in Antiquity», *Publications of the British School in Rome* 32 (1977), pp. 191-226.

31. *Acta Archelai* 43.1; BEESON, ed., p. 63.

victorious Archelaus. Interestingly, Archelaus initially dispatched the records of his first debate with Mani as a means of opposing him, and only later went to confront his rival in person for the second time. Predictably, the *Acta* credits Archelaus with success once more.

The role of stenography was crucial and helped to make the defeat of Mani by Archelaus more permanent and widely known. In the *Acta*, Marcellus the local notable took the initiative in making sure that stenographers were present to record the event: *Quoniam vero placuit Marcello disputationem hanc excipi atque describi, contradicere non potui [Hegemonius]*³². Once noted and transcribed into legible longhand, the records of the debate could be perused with profit by those who were not present at the debate long after a historical audience had dispersed: *finita ergo disputatione ista, Archelaus turbas cum pace dimisit ad propria, ego Egemonius, scripsi disputationem istam exceptam ad describendum volentibus*³³. This translocal and transtemporal character of written texts, beyond effecting an impact on a single local encounter, was especially vital in view of Manichaean mobility. In this way, the Manichaean missionaries travelling from one city to another would be shadowed by such writings which Christians could disseminate to distant communities through similar social networks which allowed their opponents their peripatetic travels.

III. — UPPER EGYPT

Located just beyond the Mesopotamian frontier, Egypt appears as the major destination of the very first Manichaean efforts to penetrate deep into the Roman Empire. The movement met with great success there, as the plentiful Coptic Manichaean texts attest³⁴. Manichaean influence went beyond Alexandria and the Nile delta to Upper Egypt, extending early on far into the oasis towns of the western desert as the recent find of a Coptic-Aramaic Manichaean book at Ismant El-Kharab illustrates³⁵.

32. *Acta Archelai* 43.3; BEESON, ed., p. 63.

33. *Acta Archelai* 68.5; BEESON, ed., p. 98. See TARDIEU, «Les manichéens en Égypte», *Bulletin de la Société française d'égyptologie* 94 (1982), pp. 5-19.

34. E.g., C. SCHMIDT and H. J. POLOTSKY, «Ein Mani-Fund in Ägypten. Originalschriften des Mani und seiner Schüler», *SPAW Phil-hist. Kl.* 1 (1933), pp. 4-90. More generally, see W. SESTON, «L'Égypte manichéenne», *Chronique d'Égypte* 14 (1939), pp. 362-372; G. STROUMSA, «Manichéisme et Marranisme chez les Manichéens d'Égypte», *Numen* 29 (1983), pp. 184-201 and «The Manichaean Challenge to Egyptian Christianity», in B. A. PEARSON and J. E. GOEHRING, ed. *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity* (Philadelphia, 1986), pp. 307-319.

35. On the site in general, see C. A. HOPE, «Three Seasons of Excavations at Ismant el-Gharab in Dakhleh Oasis, Egypt», *Mediterranean Archaeology* 1 (1988), pp. 160-178. Notices of the find in J. LECLAUT and G. CLERC, «Fouilles et travaux en Égypte et au Soudan, 1987-1988», *Orientalia* 58 (1989), pp. 404-405; IDEM., *ibid.*, 1988-1989, *Orientalia* 59 (1990), pp. 410-411. I owe part of my knowledge of the book to a presentation by L. Depuydt of Yale University at the Syriac Studies Symposium held at Brown University on June 27-29, 1991.

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In an area where the Manichaeans had been so successful, rosy optimism of the kind found in the *Acta Archelai* which describes a local Christian bishop's easy victories over Mani himself might well strike Christians who had to contend with actual Manichaeans as unhelpfully simplistic or even incredible. One may even surmise that, in such debates, the Manichaeans were not uncommonly the ones who would be favored to carry the day. Such an expectation comes through in a reported incident set in the city of Hermopolis Magna in the Thebaid.

In our source, Copres, an Egyptian ascetic and leader of a small monastic community of fifty, arrived in Hermopolis one day to find that a certain Manichaean had been successful in persuading people to join his cause³⁶. Viewed from Copres' perspective, the unnamed Manichaean was engaging in the deception of the local people:

«κατελθὼν γάρ ποτε ἐν τῇ πόλει εὔρον ἄνδρον τινὰ Μανιχαῖον τοὺς δῆμους ἀποπλανήσαντα.»

The wording in the Greek *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*, our oldest source for this encounter, does not lend support to Lieu's assumption that Copres came across the Manichaean while the latter was engaging a large crowd in a public debate³⁷. The phrase τοὺς δῆμους ἀποπλανήσαντα should be interpreted simply to mean that the Manichaean was finding support among the inhabitants of the town, probably through appealing to small groups or individuals. The aorist participle in the Greek (though not the present participle in the Latin text) certainly suggests that the deception took place prior to Copres' arrival. The references to actual crowds of people (τὸ πλῆθος and οἱ ὄχλοι) in the text appear some lines later, after the point where Copres is said to have engaged the Manichaean in a debate before the public (δημοσίᾳ). Thus we may assume that they refer to the people, perhaps including both pagans and Christians, who would have been understood to have gathered for a debate staged in a public space of the town.

In this story, Copres did not enjoy the good fortune which attended Archelaus in his debate with Mani. Speaking in the first person, the figure of Copres even revealed that he failed utterly to convince his opponent. This statement may be read as a euphemistic circumlocution that Copres lost the debate. Unperturbed by his ineffectual initial effort, Copres resorted to a more unsavory means of demonstrating the truth of his faith.

Since (ὡς) I was unable to persuade him in public, I turned and said to the crowds of listeners: "Light a great fire on the open road (εἰς τὴν πλατείαν) and we are both going into the fire, and whichever one of us remains unhurt shall be the one who has the noble faith

36. See *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* 10.30-35 (190-225) ; A. -J. FESTUGIERE, ed., *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*. Subsidia Hagiographica 53 (Brussels, 1971), pp. 87-89 ; and see Rufinus, *Historia Monachorum* 9 ; PL 21, 426C-427B.

37. See LIEU, «Fact and Fiction in the *Acta Archelai*», pp. 83-84. See TARDIEU, «Les manichéens en Égypte», pp. 13-14.

(καλῆν πύστυν)". When this had been done and the crowd zealously lit up the fire, I carried him with me into the flame³⁸.

At this point the Manichaean, perhaps becoming desperate, quickly spurted out what any clever youngster would say in a similar bind: "Let each of us go in by himself and you should go first since *you* suggested it". Undaunted, Copres, having crossed himself in the name of Christ³⁹, leapt into the fire and remained there for a half hour, unscathed; and thereupon the crowd shouted an acclamation (ἀνεβόησαν) before the deed of wonder (τὸ θαῦμα)⁴⁰. It was the Manichaean's turn to do the same. Unwilling to go in, the poor man was nevertheless dragged and pushed into the flames with the expected consequences. After this clear demonstration of who had the upper hand, the assembled Hermopolitans lifted up the victorious Copres and processed towards the church while praising God⁴¹.

This story, although no doubt elaborated according to hagiographical conventions, nevertheless has a peculiar aspect of verisimilitude. If the story were entirely invented, the author would most likely not have wished to bring attention to the fact that the final victory was achieved only after an initial setback⁴². In any case, the observation that the Manichaean could hold his own in a public debate with a Christian holy man is instructive about ancient expectations. The development of the plot of the story further reminds us that sometimes if Christians failed to compete with the Manichaeans through public argumentation for which the latter were normally well-prepared (even if the Christians initiated it), they could and probably did alter the nature of the conflict (or public demonstration) to suit their own particular strength. In this instance, a Christian holy man triumphed over his enemy by performing a

38. *Historia Monachorum* 10.30-31; FESTUGIERE, ed., pp. 87-88. See also the version in Rufinus, *HM* 9; *PL* 21, 426C-427A: *Descenderam aliquando ad civitatem, et inveni ibi virum quemdam doctorem Manichaeorum seducentem populos: cum hoc habui conflictum sermonis. Sed quia erat versutus nimis, et concludere eum verbis non poteram, veritus ne auditorum turbae laederentur, si ille quasi superior abscessisset in verbis, audientibus turbis, dixit: Accendite ignem plurimum in medio plateae, et ambo intremus in flammam: si quis nostrum ex ea non fuerit adustus, huius vera fides esse credatur. Quod cum dixissem, valde placuit populo. et continuo ignis ascenditur plurimus. Tunc ego apprehendens eum, coepi mecum pertrahere ad ignem.* Note the interesting expository expansion in Rufinus' version which I have underscored.

39. On the invocation of the name and titles of Christ as a form of protection against harm and sickness, see C. H. ROBERTS, *Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* (London, 1979), pp. 82-84 and R. W. DANIEL and F. MALTOMINI, *Supplementum Magicum* I. *Papyrologica Coloniensia* 16.1 (Wiesbaden, 1989), nos. 22, 23 and esp. 35, pp. 61-66, 102-103.

40. *Historia Monachorum* 10.32; FESTUGIERE, ed., p. 88; see J. COLIN, *Les villes libres de l'Orient gréco-romain et l'envoi au supplice par acclamations populaires*. Collection Latomus 82 (Brussels, 1965), pp.109-152.

41. See LIEU, *History of Manichaeism*, p. 157, who cites a later Syriac version of this story in the writings of Anan-Isho.

42. I also accept Scott Bradbury's suggestion that this setback may reflect a hagiographical plot-device to prepare the audience for a demonstration of power.

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deed of wonder after words and persuasion failed to silence the opposition. Needless to say, the ordeal, as a test of the extent of one's control over his own physical body, was a form of demonstration which clearly favored an ascetic who made self-mortification his daily practice⁴³.

The easy shift from public debate to ordeal which we have witnessed above should remind us of the fragility and limitations of the cultural realm within which formal public disputations would be appreciated and would make sense as a meaningful act. Among illiterate and unlearned audiences, demonstrations of power by deeds would be more convincing and irrefutable than the ability to spin arguments and win verbal contests⁴⁴. In encounters between religious rivals, deeds of wonder were commonly, though not necessarily, interpreted as signs of divine favor whereas eloquence and skill in argument were viewed as either of merely human, or diabolical, origin⁴⁵. The report of a miracle of power also possessed wider and more direct appeal in that it served as a readily accessible icon for those who either could not, or would not, embrace the bewildering complexities of a drawn-out verbal disputation. The ordeal can thus be read as the functional equivalent, and a kind of *sermo humilis*, of the public debate.

IV. – GAZA

A story similar to the account of the debate (turned non-debate) between Copres and a Manichaean can be found in Mark the Deacon's *Vita Porphyrii*⁴⁶. Porphyry, the bishop of Gaza, was known as a staunch promoter of Christianity in Palestine and a resolute destroyer of pagan temples⁴⁷. In 392, he was designated by his friend John, bishop of Jerusalem (387-417), as the guardian of the relics of the true cross (ὁ σταυροφόραξ)⁴⁸. The sanctification

43. This is not to say that Manichaeans were not respected ascetics in late antiquity ; in fact, the reverse is true.

44. For example, the success of the apostle Addai in Edessa was due to his deeds of wonder ; for that reason, "there was no one who stood against him, for the deeds which he did permitted no one to rise against him," see *Doctrina Addai* f. 21b ; English translation from G. HOWARD, ed., *The Teaching of Addai* (Ann Arbor, 1981), p. 67. On the low level of literacy in the ancient world, see W. V. HARRIS, «Literacy and Epigraphy I», *ZPE* 52 (1983), pp. 87-111.

45. On this issue see, e.g., Julian the Apostate and Eusebius of Rome in the Julian Legend, in H. GOLLANCZ, *Julian the Apostate* (Oxford, 1928), pp. 58-59.

46. See LIEU, *History of Manichaeism*, pp. 155-56 and F. C. BURKITT, *The Religion of the Manichees* (Cambridge, 1925), pp. 7-11.

47. See *Vita Porphyrii* 85-91, in H. GREGOIRE and M.-A. KUGENER, ed., *Marc le diacre. Vie de Porphyre évêque de Gaza* (Paris, 1930), pp. 66-71. See also G. FOWDEN, «Bishops and Temples in the Eastern Roman Empire», *Journal of Theological Studies* n. s. 29 (1978), pp. 53-78.

48. See M. VAN ESBROECK, «Jean II de Jérusalem et les cultes de s. Étienne de la sainte-Sion et de la Croix», *Analecta Bollandiana* 102 (1984), pp. 99-134.

of the holy land, a project which he shared with his associates in Jerusalem, continued to be Porphyry's self-appointed task when he assumed the episcopal seat of Gaza in 395.

He arrived at the city as an outsider, an aristocrat who hailed from distant Thessalonica. The new bishop thus faced a daunting challenge as he tried to install himself as a major player in the politics of Gaza since the strong pagan aristocracy of the city resisted him both as a foreigner and as a Christian. As a result, he painstakingly cultivated ties with the imperial court, competing with the local aristocracy for acceptance as Constantinople's man in Gaza, to further his goals of gaining more power within the city itself⁴⁹.

A large part of a Christian bishop's credibility as a useful local defender of the imperial government's interests came from his ability to establish a claim to being the representative of a solid constituency in the city. Thus it was vital for someone like Porphyry to ensure first of all that he would be able to maintain a sure grip on the undivided allegiance of his own congregation. Not before then could he expand his power beyond the local Christian groups by attracting the support of the court at Constantinople. In this view, any perceived attempt by others to undermine Christian solidarity within Gaza must be dealt with by Porphyry in a swift and decisive manner. There was to be no wavering. This background would help us understand the strong stand which Porphyry took when a Manichaean by the name of Julia was first noticed as being active among the Christians of Gaza *ca.* 402.

«At that time a certain Antiochene woman called Julia, who belonged to the abominable heresy of those called Manichaeans, arrived in the city. Upon realizing that were certain neophytes who were not yet confirmed in the holy faith, she, having gone among them, corrupted them through her fraudulent teaching (διδασκαλία γοητικῆ), and even more through the gift of money. For he who founded the aforementioned godless heresy [i.e., Mani] could not ensnare so many people if not by the furnishing of money⁵⁰.»

From this account, it appears that Julia was especially active among the neophytes in Gaza, some of whom she allegedly bribed to become Manichaeans⁵¹. The charge of using monetary gifts to seduce the young is intriguing though not unattested in the history of polemical accusations. In the *Vita* it was extended back to Mani, the eponymous founder of the heresy. Such a connection provided a way for Christians to rationalize to themselves the appeal of Manichaean teachings, which Christian polemicists consistently characterized as utterly absurd and filled with madness, to those who were educated and who possessed intellect (τοῖς γε νοῦν ἔχουσιν). One explanation for this apparent anomaly would then be that the Manichaeans bribed to gain adherents and to seduce the young (and hence inexperienced). This charge

49. See discussion of these issues in R. VAN DAM, «From Paganism to Christianity in Late Antique Gaza», *Viator* 16 (1985), pp. 1-20.

50. *Vita Porphyrii* 85 ; GREGOIRE/KUGENER, ed., pp. 66-67. English translation mine.

51. Since Manichaean *electi* could not reproduce themselves, there was a need to recruit others, especially from among the young, see, for example, Mani in the *CMC* 121,11-123,13, in *ZPE* 48 (1982), pp. 13-15.

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could therefore help to resolve an intrinsic contradiction in the Christian polemics against the Manichaeans.

In our story, Julia's success soon drew unwanted attention to herself and her activities. Some local Christians, wary of her growing influence, informed Porphyry of the stranger's actions. Thereupon,

«Porphyry, counted among the holy, sent after her and asked her who she was, where did she belong to and what manner of philosophical and/or religious view (δόξα) did she bring⁵².»

As a prominent member of the establishment of Gaza, Porphyry was able to have a stranger in town brought before him and interrogated in public. He demanded to know her name, her place of origin and her philosophical and/or religious views (δόξα). This line of questioning may, though not necessarily, suggest that the information which Porphyry received from certain members of his congregation was not very precise or explicit. When certain Christians began to notice an "out-of-towner" actively exerting influence over more and more people, they expressed their diffused concern by rallying behind their local bishop and demanding to know more about the subversive stranger.

Pseudo-Mark recounted that Julia readily responded to Porphyry's questions and professed that she was Antiochene and a Manichaean. This frank and unguarded declaration of her religious self-identification provoked barely-restrained hostility from the audience. This detail suggests that our author assumed that those present were not generally aware that the person before them was a Manichaean before then. Porphyry calmed down the locals and urged them to exhort Julia to revise her position rather than attack her. He himself approached Julia and said,

«"Sister, cut yourself off from this evil belief (κακοδοξία) for it is satanic" But she replied : "Speak and listen, and either persuade or be persuaded". The blessed one said : "Get ready till the dawn and appear here". And she, having been ordered, departed⁵³.»

The historical Porphyry of Gaza was known more as a man of action than an intellectual figure. Even the literary Porphyry knew that Julia was likely to be more than his match in a public debate. Furthermore, as the *Vita* informs us, the bishop of Gaza saw himself as not so much contending with a human being as with the devil himself. He prepared himself for the next day by fasting and repeated (πολλά) prayer that he might confound the devil, the superhuman adversary who stood behind Julia. Yet Porphyry also readied himself in a more practical manner--he summoned certain Christians, from both the laity and the clergy, to attend the public disputation (διάλογος) between himself and Julia on the following day. A local bishop such as Porphyry could mobilize a significant number, even a crowd, of partisan supporters to appear at events. By contrast, Julia arrived the next morning with only four companions :

«two men and as many women. They were young and beautiful, but they were all pale, while Julia was well-advanced in age. All of them steeped in the λόγος of worldly παιδεία,

52. *Vita Porphyrii* 87 ; GREGOIRE/KUGENER, ed., p. 68.

53. *Vita Porphyrii* 87 ; GREGOIRE/KUGENER, ed., p. 68.

though Julia was more advanced than they were. Their countenance was humble and their manner meek...⁵⁴»

After both Julia and Porphyry were seated, they began the debate (τὴν ζήτησιν ἐποιῶντο). Porphyry brought along the gospels and, as was appropriate for a guardian of the relics of the true cross, he “made the sign of the cross in his own mouth” before requiring Julia to explain her δόξα⁵⁵. Like Copres, Porphyry made the sign of the cross in preparation for a contest with an enemy of the faith. But a main difference is that Copres crossed himself before he jumped into the flames while Porphyry crossed himself “in his own mouth” before plunging into a verbal contest. The purpose of making the sign of the cross in such situations must have varied from person to person, though Cyril of Jerusalem considered the act as potent in reducing one’s opponents in debate to speechlessness⁵⁶.

This debate was a solemn occasion which had the air of an official judicial inquiry, and the words spoken by the seated protagonists were carefully noted down. Among the local Christians was a certain Cornelius skilled in brachygraphy and who could therefore write down, with a few strokes (πρὸ βραχέος), the statements made by both sides⁵⁷. He was made a deacon of the church of Gaza forthwith so that he could serve as the church notary for the debate⁵⁸. Cornelius dutifully sat next to Porphyry during the debate. Besides

54. *Vita Porphyrii* 88 ; GREGOIRE/KUGENER, ed., p. 68-69. The youths were no doubt young ascetics. On the *electi* who allegedly accompanied Mani to his debate, see discussion of *Acta Archelai* above.

55. *Vita Porphyrii* 88 ; GREGOIRE/KUGENER, ed., p. 69.

56. See Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses* 13.22 ; PG 33, 799-800 : “whenever you are about to debate with unbelievers [ἀπίστους = docetics ?] concerning the cross of Christ, first make the sign of the cross of Christ with your hand, and the questioner will be silenced (φυσῶνται ὁ ἀντιλέγων)”.

57. On Greek shorthand, see A MENTZ, «Die hellenistische Tachygraphie», *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 8 (1927), pp. 34-59 and H. J. M. MILNE, *Greek Shorthand Manuals. Syllabary and Commentary edited from Papyri and Waxed Tablets in the British Museum and from the Antinoë Papyri in the Possession of the Egypt Exploration Society* (London, 1934). In the *Vita*, Cornelius is said to know τὰ Ἐννόμου σημεία. Unfortunately, a person called Ennomos is not known elsewhere in connection with a system of Greek shorthand symbols (τὰ σημεία). Thus the editors of the Budé volume, after summarizing the debate over the interpretation of this phrase, seem inclined to consider it a corruption of ἐκ νόμου ; thus the phrase τὰ ἐκ νόμου σημεία would be the Greek equivalent of *juris notae*, see GREGOIRE/KUGENER, ed., p. 136 and p. lxxxvii, note 1. It is interesting that L. Parmentier, the editor of Theodoret’s *HE*, has conjectured reading Ἐύνομίου instead, referring to the Eunomius of Cappadocia who was involved in the Christological controversy of the late fourth century. Eunomius had learned stenography as a young man and was Actius the Syrian’s personal secretary, see PARMENTIER, «Eunomius tachygraphe», *Revue de philologie* 23 (1909), pp. 238-245.

58. It is not clear whether it was necessary for Cornelius to become a deacon in order to serve officially as the *tachygraphus* but this combination was not uncommon, see Epiphanius, *Adversus Haereses* 71.1.8 on Anysius, the *tachygraphus* and deacon at the debate between Basil of Caesarea and Photeinus. On the increasingly elaborate ranking of *notarii* in the Christian ecclesiastical hierarchy from the fourth century on, see the study by H. C. TEITLER,

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Cornelius, a certain Baruch and Mark the deacon drew up the minutes of the meetings⁵⁹. According to the author, the record of this encounter was allegedly still extant when he composed the *Vita*⁶⁰.

After many hours of debate, Julia remained obdurately and embarrassingly undefeated. Porphyry, according to our source, was therefore moved by divine zeal (like Phineas) as he witnessed Julia, who was inspired by the devil⁶¹, continuing in her utterance of blasphemous statements. Like Mani's opponent in the *Mani-Codex* mentioned earlier, the foiled bishop uttered a spell at Julia, invoking the Christian god, *ἵνα μὴ λαλήῃ δόσφημα*⁶². The debate was changed into a conflict which was concluded through the invocation of divine power. According to Pseudo-Mark, the *ira Dei* manifested itself and

«the punishment (ἡ θεῖα δίκη) followed the statement straightaway. For Julia began to tremble and to change her appearance, and remained outside her body for almost an hour. She did not speak (οὐκ ἐλάλει), but she was voiceless (ἄφωνος) and motionless (ἀκίνητος), having eyes which were open and fixated on the most holy bishop. Those who were with her, seeing what happened, were very afraid⁶³.»

No amount of first aid by her companions could revive Julia who had lost all speech and ability to move. Almost an hour later, still speechless (ἄφωνος), she died⁶⁴. Again, the divine power of effecting a miraculous deed secured victory when words alone proved useless. Reducing someone to a state of literal ἀφωνία was as complete a refutation (ἔλεγχος) and triumph as any could wish in a public debate. Before an indiscriminating audience, it did not matter much whether success came from one's own arguments or from divine intervention.

Notarii et Exceptores. An Inquiry into Role and Significance of Shorthand Writers in the Imperial and Ecclesiastical Bureaucracy of the Roman Empire (from the Early Principate to C. 450 A. D.) (Amsterdam, 1985), esp. pp. 89-92.

59. The meaning of the genitive absolute phrase ἐμοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ Βάρυχα ὑπομνησκόντων is not entirely clear since Cornelius was presumably already present to take down the words said in the debate. Perhaps Baruch and Mark were there to make a set of minutes or ὑπόμνημα which records the general nature of what was said, while Cornelius was there to take down *verbatim* the *ipsissima verba*.

60. *Vita Porphyrii* 88 ; GREGOIRE/KUGENER, ed., p. 69 : "I did not include the dialogue (διάλογος) in this book because it was long, wishing (instead) to include it in the present writing in brief (ἐπιτομή). But I placed in another book the dialogue for those who wish to learn the wisdom given by God to the most holy Porphyry and the old wives' tales which Julia, the fraud and poisoner (φάρμακός) whom divine justice quickly went after, uttered".

61. *Vita Porphyrii* 89 ; GREGOIRE/KUGENER, ed., p. 69-70 : γυναικὸς ἐνεργουμένης ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου.

62. *Vita Porphyrii* 89 ; GREGOIRE/KUGENER, ed., p. 70.

63. *Vita Porphyrii* 90 ; GREGOIRE/KUGENER, ed., p. 70.

64. *Vita Porphyrii* 90 ; GREGOIRE/KUGENER, ed., p. 70 : Julia passed into the Dark Realm (σκοτός). Here Mark was making a joke at the expense of the deceased by emphasizing the fact that the Manichaeans, unlike Christians, regarded darkness (σκοτός) as an ever-existing principle of the cosmos. By extension he could thus claim, though rather unjustifiably, that Julia in fact worshipped σκοτός.

This reported miracle which dramatically concluded the public debate between Julia and Porphyry was a powerful demonstration which those who either witnessed it first-hand or would learn about it subsequently could not ignore. Julia's four youthful companions, and "as many as were corrupted by her" raced before Porphyry and fell at his feet, crying, "We have erred, we seek repentance⁶⁵". Porphyry exploited this initial reaction to the outcome of the debate, and he ordered the Manichaean sympathizers to anathematize Mani. In the *Vita*, those who were thus commanded promptly obeyed his injunction; they received catechism and were later baptized and thus finally (re)incorporated into the structure of the church of Gaza.

In this, as in earlier episodes, the Manichaeans did not conduct public debates as part of their missionary activity. The *Vita Porphyrii* describes Julia as having been hauled in by the local bishop after she had been accused of gaining influence with a small group within the city. A historical Julia would probably have much preferred to go about her own business peacefully and far from the attention of the local bishop. In general, a Manichaean teacher stood to gain little from high-profile debates which he or she did not already have for such a person was already doing splendidly in more intimate settings (a fact which brought about a confrontation in the first instance). On the other hand, even if Manichaeans did not generally initiate public debates as part of a grand strategy for gaining adherents, they were rarely accused of hanging back from public contests (often with opponents who were in any case usually less well-equipped than they for such encounters). Once contact had been made, a Manichaean missionary/teacher could not afford to be seen backing down from a contest, however fraught with peril and contrived by the opponent. Porphyry packed the audience by summoning a large group of clergy and lay people for the occasion. The proceedings at Porphyry's church resembled a public trial, an image made even more convincing by the stenographer sitting by his side⁶⁶.

As in the *Acta Archelai*, the pagans in the *Vita* constituted the silent partner in this confrontation between a Christian and a Manichaean. Our author even claimed that Manichaeans were in the habit of acknowledging many gods so as to find favor with pagans⁶⁷. This alleged alliance of Manichaeans with pagans, or better yet, the ambiguity which attended the distinction between the two, made it possible for Julia to be identified as a Manichaean in the Greek and a pagan philosopher in the Georgian recension of the *Vita Porphyrii*⁶⁸. Regardless of whether Julia was a Manichaean missionary and/or a philosopher, her final experience had, according to the *Vita*, a broad impact

65. *Vita Porphyrii* 91; GREGOIRE/KUGENER, ed., pp. 70-71.

66. See Prudentius, *Peristephanon* 9.23; *PL* 60, 435A and the famous diptych of Rufus Probianus (4th CE) flanked by two *exceptores*, in A. VENTURI, *Storia dell' arte italiana* (Milan, 1901), I, p. 356 and *Dictionnaire d' archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* (Paris, 1935), XII, p. 1625.

67. *Vita Porphyrii* 87; GREGOIRE/KUGENER, ed., p. 68.

68. See H. PEETERS, «La vie géorgienne de saint Porphyre de Gaza», *Analecta Bollandiana* 59 (1941), pp. 65-216, esp. 196 (85-86). References to Manichaeans are lacking in this recension.

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for many pagans supposedly converted to Christianity after this demonstration of power by the Christian bishop⁶⁹.

V. – ALEXANDRIA

In the mid-fourth century, a certain Aphthonius, identified by our source Philostorgius as a leader (ὁ προεστώς) of the Manichaeans, arrived in and was active in Alexandria where he soon acquired an impressive reputation “among many on account of his wisdom and his skill in words (δεινότητι λόγων)⁷⁰”. Aphthonius’ fame reached the ambitious Christian Aetius the Syrian⁷¹. Earlier Aetius had been defeated by a member of a gnostic sect, the Borboriani, in a debate in Cilicia. He therefore wished to restore his own confidence and needed to find a means of reaffirming the power of his verbal skills⁷². Aetius made the journey south to Alexandria, “drawn by his [Aphthonius’] fame,” our historian tells us⁷³. This connection between fame and an ensuing challenge to debate from others reflect the fluid situation of Origen’s time when, “since Origen’s fame was noised abroad everywhere, [learned men as well as so-called heretics] came to him to make trial of the man’s sufficiency in the sacred λόγοι⁷⁴”.

69. While sometimes Manichaeans become confused with pagans in others’ minds, many pagan philosophers especially found Manichaeism, as an intellectual system, objectionable. One of the most celebrated cases of an anti-Manichaean polemic is to be found in the Neoplatonist Egyptian philosopher Alexander of Lycopolis’ *Dialogue against the doctrines of Mani*: see PG 18, 411-448; A. BRINKMANN, ed., *Alexandri Lycopolitani contra Manichaei Opiniones Disputatio* (Leipzig, 1895) and A. VILLEY, ed., *Alexandre de Lycopolis. contre la doctrine de Mani* (Paris, 1985).

70. Philostorgius, *HE* 3.15; J. BIDEZ and F. WINKELMANN, ed., *Philostorgius Kirchengeschichte* (Berlin, 1972), pp. 46-47.

71. See L. R. WICKHAM, «The Syntagmaton of Aetius the Anomean», *JTS* n.s. 20 (1969), pp. 231-240 and G. BARDY, «L’héritage littéraire d’Aetius», *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique* 24 (1928), pp. 809-827.

72. See Philostorgius, *HE* 3.15; BIDEZ/WINKELMANN, ed., p. 46: καί τις τῶν Βορβοριανῶν, λόγοις αὐτῷ ὑπὲρ τῆς ἰδίας δόξης συμπλακεῖς, εἰς ἐσχάτην κατέστησεν ἦταν.

73. Philostorgius, *HE* 3.15.

74. Eusebius, *HE* 6.18-2-4. Origen was no stranger to debates or discussions. He had conversed with the Roman governor of Arabia in 215, after which his fame spread even to Julia Mamaea who summoned him to Antioch to make trial of his abilities (see *HE* 6.21.3-4). Origen might have debated with rabbinic Jews and owed some of his method to them, see *Contra Celsum* 1.45, in *Origen. Contra Celsum*, H. CHADWICK, ed., p. 43 and also N. DE LANGE, *Origen and the Jews. Studies in Jewish Christian Relations in Third-Century Palestine* (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 89-102. See also the debate between Origen and Heraclides, in J. SCHERER, ed., *Entretien d’Origène avec Héraclide et les évêques ses collègues sur le père, le fils et l’âme*. Publications de la Société Fouad I de Papyrologie, Textes et Documents IX (Cairo, 1949) and SCHERER, ed., *Entretien d’Origène avec Héraclide*. S.C. 67 (Paris, 1960).

The eager Aetius found his targeted victim in Alexandria and they went at each other “as if in a contest for supremacy (ὡς ἐς ἀμιλλαν)”. Soon Aetius, “having forced Aphthonius into a state of speechlessness (ἀφωνία), brought the latter from great fame to great shame”. Unused to such reverses, Aphthonius fell sick and passed away a week later. The difference between this account and the earlier stories of public disputations between Christians and Manichaeans is that Aetius actually succeeded in defeating a Manichaean using arguments and did not have to resort to other means⁷⁵. There was no intervention of supranatural power--Aetius triumphed simply by virtue of being a better debater than Aphthonius. In this instance, it was not the case of a Manichaean who arrived in a particular town and who was then confronted by a local Christian leader ; rather, Aetius made the journey from Antioch to Alexandria specifically to seek him out. In many ways, Aphthonius and Aetius had more in common than they did with a local Christian bishop for they were both peripatetic and did not have a firm constituency in a locality. Theirs was the world of fluid movement, chance encounters and public debates with others who had reputations for wisdom. Such encounters took place on relatively equal terms, for neither party would have much actual power to impose inequality. Aetius could not bring to bear on Aphthonius the “psychological pressures” which Porphyry could place upon Julia in the *Vita Porphyrii*⁷⁶.

VI. – ROMAN NORTH AFRICA

A : Manichaeism as “Dialectical” Christianity

West of Alexandria, in the cities and towns of Roman North Africa, we find a similar environment in which people gathered around *scholae doctorum hominum* where debating formed part of the institutional culture⁷⁷. It was within such a general context of intellectual curiosity and exchange that the most famous Manichaean convert took to the precepts of Mani. The searching Augustine discovered that the Manichaeans offered him what he and many others regarded as a more rigorously rational form of Christianity.

Such a movement had much appeal especially among the young catholic Christians from the middling rungs of society. These ambitious and inquiring youths, who were later to rise to positions of considerable authority within the catholic ecclesiastical hierarchy, were attracted to the movement by the Manichaeans’ disavowal of the unquestioning acceptance of “superstitious” beliefs found in the Hebrew bible which exposed Christians to charges of idol worship. By parading well-trying *topoi* such as contained in Marcion’s *Antitheses*, Manichaeans led the way in attacking the common catholic

75. See Philostorgius, *HE* 4.12.

76. See LIEU, *History of Manichaeism*, p. 156.

77. See Augustine, *De Utilitate Credendi* 2 ; *CSEL* 25, p. 4.

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Christians' uncritical acceptance of the Hebrew bible⁷⁸. Thus a Manichaean proudly proclaimed : *non credo prophetis Hebraeis*⁷⁹. In a manner which was arguably more critical than constructive (and hence existing in a close dialectical relationship to that which they sought to criticize), the Manichaeans held up a religious alternative which appeared to many as more philosophically and logically defensible than that which was professed by their catholic counterparts.

Given the centrality of the notion of disputing in the legitimation and appeal of the Manichaean movement, it should therefore not be surprising to find Manichaeans inviting others to join in a discussion with them by posing challenging questions in public⁸⁰. One of the famous opening lines which the Manichaeans were prone to use in initiating a discussion which would then lead to their preaching was the fundamental question of "whence evil (*unde malum*)⁸¹?" By asking for a response to this loaded question, the Manichaeans were confronting catholic Christians with the difficult theological task of reconciling evil, free will, divine omnipotence and providence⁸². But the Manichaeans were not just casting out questions. They were often trained to deal with the likely responses of their interlocutors⁸³. Through this anticipation of the likely course of the unfolding of the responses and counter-responses, Manichaean debaters, like old-hands at set chess games, could comfortably and predictably disarm their "opposition." This aspect of the Manichaean movement in North Africa has been aptly described as a cult of "knockabout rationalism⁸⁴". It was within this cult that Augustine discovered his spiritual home during his youth in Carthage.

It was commonly accepted within ancient culture that an ambitious and educated youth would warm naturally to the dialectical art⁸⁵. It afforded him a set of intellectual weapons with which to demonstrate his superiority over

78. See *De Utilitate Credendi* 2 ; CSEL 25, p. 4. The treatise (composed in 391 just after Augustine became a priest) is addressed to Honoratus, a Manichaean friend whom he would like to convert to catholicism ; BROWN, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 43 and DECRET, *L'Afrique manichéenne (IV^e-V^e siècles). Étude historique et doctrinale I-II* (Paris, 1978), I, pp. 72-78.

79. *C. Faustum* 13.8 ; CSEL 25, p. 389.

80. See *C. Faustum* 23.1 ; CSEL 25, p. 707.

81. See Augustine, *Confessiones* 3.7 : *Nesciebam enim aliud, vere quod est, et quasi acule movebar, ut suffragarer stultis deceptoribus, cum a me quaereretur, unde malum est ?*

82. See Augustine's recollection of a question which he used to pose before catholic Christians while he was a Manichaean, in *Confessiones* 7.15 : *et dicebam parvulis fidelibus tuis, civibus meis, a quibus nesciens exulabam, dicebam illis garrulus et ineptus : "cur ergo errant anima, quam fecit deus ?"*

83. See *De Duabus Animabus* 10 ; CSEL 25, p. 63 : *Hic fortasse quis dicat : "unde ipsa peccata et omnino unde malum ? si ab homine, unde homo ? si ab angelo, unde angelus ?"*

84. See W. H. C. FRENCH, «The Gnostic-Manichaean Tradition in Roman North Africa», *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 4 (1953), pp. 13-26, see p. 21.

85. See *De Utilitate Credendi* 2 ; CSEL 25, p. 4 : *adulescentis animus cupidus veri.*

others, to be *superbus et garrulus*⁸⁶. Dialectic furnished both the weapon and the armor for a verbal disputation in that one was trained both to ask and to respond to questions. It was especially suited to the young and (perhaps therefore) impetuous because it was freely accessible to those who possessed talent and ambition. There were handbooks which outlined the system. Enterprising individuals could even teach themselves the art in a relatively compressed period of time if need be, as Augustine did when he mastered Aristotle's *Categories* with little or no help from preceptors⁸⁷. Such knowledge was therefore accessible to the autodidact without a long, socializing apprenticeship within a master-disciple relationship.

Dialectic and its practice were in fact closely associated in late antiquity with hot-headed youth. The *ars dialectica* held tremendous appeal among people who were clever and ambitious, among whom were Aetius, Eunomius and Augustine. Augustine recalled, in retrospect, the two bonds which tethered him to the Manichaeans: social familiarity and the dizzying success which he experienced when debating others using Manichaean arguments⁸⁸ :

«I used to almost always enjoy a certain harmful victory (*noxia victoria*) in debates while discoursing with inexperienced Christians who nevertheless eagerly endeavored to defend their own faith, each as he could ... Thus from their [Manichaeans'] arguments (*sermones*) a burning zeal for disputations (*certamina*) was daily renewed ; from the outcome of the disputations (*ex certaminum proventu*) love for them was daily renewed.»

The problem of associating dialectic with the arousal of an unsuitable "ardor of youth" was recognized as a difficulty in philosophical circles as early as in the famous discussion in Plato's *Republic*⁸⁹. Later, Diogenes Laertius related a story about Zeno of Citium relevant to this connection between youth and dialectic. When the Stoic philosopher heard a young boy posing a certain philosophical question (ζήτημά τι) with rather more reckless zeal (περιεργότερον) than seemed to him proper for a boy of that age, he was troubled. He proceeded to bring the young boy and stood him before a mirror. Then he asked: "is it seemly for someone who looks like this to ask these sorts of questions (ζητήματα)⁹⁰?"

86. *De Utilitate Credendi* 2 ; CSEL 25, p. 4. See Decret's discussion in *Aspects du manichéisme*, p. 31.

87. *Confessiones* 4.16. See L. MINIO-PALUELLO, «The Text of the 'Categoriae': the Latin Tradition», *Classical Quarterly* 39 (1945), pp. 63-74. Aetius was also such a self-taught person, see Socrates, *HE* 2.35. Augustine was called the African Aristotle by Julian of Eclanum (Augustine, *Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum* 3.199 ; *PL* 45, 1333) and *dialecticus Augustinus* by Sidonius Apollinaris (*Ep.* 9.2). See in general J. PEPIN, *Saint Augustin et la dialectique*. The Saint Augustine Lecture 1972. Published by the Augustinian Institute, Villanova University.

88. *De Duabus Animabus* 11 ; CSEL 25, p. 65-66 : *quod quaedam noxia uictoria paene mihi semper in disputationibus proueniebat disserenti cum inperitis, sed tamen fidem suam certatim, ut quisque posset, defendere molientibus christianis ... ita ex illorum sermonibus ardor in certamina, ex certaminum proventu amor in illos cotidie nouabatur.*

89. See Plato, *Republic* 537-539 ; and also M. MEYER, «Dialectic and Questioning : Socrates and Plato», *American Philosophical Quarterly* 17 (1980), pp. 281-289.

90. Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum et Sophistarum* 7.19.

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This intimate vignette captured the ambivalence which surrounded the posing of questions in antiquity. Excessive ambition, as culturally defined, was frowned upon especially when manifested by the young. Dialectic likewise should not be a tool for showing off one's superiority; rather, it was a science for the mature, to be cultivated as a part of one's progress in a philosophical life of virtue. Yet this elevated ideal which strove for a soul which was free from passion was not necessarily shared by all, especially not by the young themselves and others who stood to gain from open competition.

Augustine's conversion from "super-rational" Manichaeism back to the catholic Christianity of his boyhood coincided with the shedding of his youth. In his later years, the Manichaeans who were previously so dear to him became "false and deceitful men"⁹¹. The now more mature Augustine would renounce, in a reflective mood, his youthful championing of the asking of questions. He thought then how juvenile this attitude had been, for

«They consider that they reign supreme (*regnare se putant*) in this question, as if to ask were to know. Would that this were so! Then no one more knowledgeable than I would be found. But somehow the propounder of a great question in a controversial situation (*in altercando*) always puts on the appearance (*personam ostentat*) of a great teacher while for the most part he himself is more unlearned in the issue concerning which he would terrorize another than the person whom he would terrorize⁹².»

Philostratus's Apollonius of Tyana also expressed the view that posing questions was a characteristic preoccupation of youth, whereas assaying the more trying task of answering them was the duty of the mature who had acquired some degree of wisdom⁹³. Augustine likewise considered himself to have grown much more serious since the heady days of his youth as a brash Manichaean auditor. Yet he did not reject outright the gravity and relevance of the "great question" which the Manichaeans were in the habit of bandying about; but he now insisted that this question was not one for hot-headed debate in public, but "one that needs much calm discussion among those who are the most learned (*doctissimos*)"⁹⁴.

This emphasis on learning derived partly from the reflections of a more mature person⁹⁵. Still it must also be seen as a form of "credentialism" which Augustine was trying to introduce into Christian theological speculation. One's ability to speak with conviction and persuasiveness now depended, Augustine

91. *De Duabus Animabus* 1; CSEL 25, p. 51.

92. *De Duabus Animabus* 10; CSEL 25, pp. 63-64: *hac in quaestione illi regnare se putant, quasi uero interrogare sit scire. utinam id esset; nemo me scientior reperiretur. sed nescio quomodo saepe in altercando magnae quaestionis propositor personam magni doctoris ostentat plerumque ipse ipso. quem terret, in eo, de quo terret, indoctior.* See FRIEND, «The Gnostic-Manichaean Tradition in Roman North Africa», pp. 17-20 on the common pursuit of the knowledge of "whence evil?" by Manichaeans and gnostics.

93. Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* 1.17: *μειράκιον ὧν ἐζητήσα, νῦν δὲ οὐ χρὴ ζητεῖν, ἀλλὰ διδάσκειν ἃ εὔρηκα.*

94. *De Duabus Animabus* 2; CSEL 25, p. 52: *multum serenaē disputationis inter doctissimos indigens.*

95. See BROWN, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 59.

argued, on the mastery of a large body of complicated knowledge. This vast and deep *scientia*, which took long years of experience and consultation with learned tomes to accumulate, was contrasted with the “short-cut” to knowledge represented by the mastery of dialectic alone. There is no doubt that Augustine’s interests in a more philosophically sophisticated anthropology and epistemology reflected the changed interests of an inquiring intellect. On the other hand, his insistence that Christians should pay attention to what he conceded were “obscure and recondite things (*rebus obscuris abditisque*)” served the purpose of deflecting questions from certain common *topoi* of theological discussion which Manichaeans were accustomed to exploit for their own purposes⁹⁶. Most of all, Augustine could argue, *a fortiori*, that since most Christians were not even able to master the knowledge of terrestrial things, they had no business trying their hands on knowledge of supramundane topics⁹⁷.

Yet Augustine’s caveat about public debate applied only to what he might characterize as recklessly critical dialectical disputations. It did not prevent him from engaging the Manichaeans in a series of staged disputations which have come down to us in a form preserved by the winners, the catholic Christians. These debates between Augustine and Manichaeans provide valuable insights into the nature of religious contacts and conflicts within the cities and towns of proconsular Africa⁹⁸. This body of well-known material includes the *Contra Fortunatum* (392), the *Contra Felicem* (404), and the long treatise *Contra Faustum* (composed 397/98).

B : Augustine and Fortunatus

«Eodem tempore presbyteri mei, contra Fortunatum, quemdam Manichaeorum presbyterum disputavi⁹⁹».

On the 28th and 29th of August, 392, as a young *presbyter* of the catholic church of Hippo Regius, Augustine debated in public against another *presbyter*, the Manichaean Fortunatus¹⁰⁰. Like Pseudo-Mark’s Julia,

96. See *De Duabus Animabus* 13 ; *CSEL* 25, p. 68. Basil of Caesarea clearly also used scientific knowledge about the physical world to combat Manichaeism, among other targets, even though there were no Manichaeans in his immediate vicinity ; see *Hexaemeron* 2.4 and throughout 4 ; *S.C.* 26bis, ed., S. GIET (Paris, 1968), pp. 158-162, 358. On the absence of Manichaeans in Asia Minor, see F. DECRET, «Basile le Grand et la polémique antimanichéenne en Asie Mineure au IV^e siècle», *Studia Patristica* 17 (1983), pp. 1060-1064.

97. Cp. Pseudo-Basil, *Ep.* 16 ; Deferrari, ed., I, pp. 114-117.

98. See the important treatment of this corpus by DECRET, *Aspects du manichéisme dans l’Afrique romaine. Les controverses de Fortunatus, Faustus et Felix avec saint Augustin* (Paris, 1970).

99. *Retractationes* 1.15 ; *CSEL* 36, p. 82, 3. See *Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire I : Prosopographie de l’Afrique chrétienne (303-533)*, A. MANDOUZE, ed. (Paris, 1982), s.v. Fortunatus 2, pp. 490-493.

100. See *C. Fortunatum*, preface ; *CSEL* 25, p. 83 : *Sexto et quinto Kalendas Septembris Arcadio Augusto bis et Q. Rufino uiris clarissimis consulibus actis habita disputatio aduersum*

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Fortunatus was singled out for attention by the catholic Christians due to his facility in attracting support within the local community¹⁰¹. The success of the Manichaeans was achieved, in all likelihood, by building upon teacher-disciple relationships¹⁰². Still, like Pseudo-Mark's Porphyry, Augustine became troubled by the reports about the steadily growing influence of the Manichaeans in Hippo. What brought Fortunatus to his attention was the former's success and the extent of his activities : Fortunatus was noted as having been remarkably active among both the *cives* and *peregrini* of Hippo and its environs¹⁰³. In Possidius' *Vita Augustini*, a body of both *cives* and *peregrini* of Hippo, catholics and Donatists, turned to Augustine, a learned catholic priest trained in dialectic and familiar with Manichaean teachings¹⁰⁴. The reactions of Augustine and Porphyry are also comparable : they targeted a representative of the Manichaeans for a high-profile contest for the edification of the larger community. The rationale for the strategy was so that Manichaeans could no longer parade their arguments unchallenged before audiences which, in Augustine's view, were inexperienced : *quia diu multumque de inperitorum erroribus latissime ac uehementissime disputabant*¹⁰⁵.

Protecting the *imperiti* was Augustine's way of describing the situation. The unchecked and seemingly uncheckable movement of many, including members of the intelligentsia, across sectarian boundaries was long a significant and noted phenomenon. The presence and influence of charismatic teachers like Fortunatus threatened to tilt the balance in such a way that one could no longer continue in the tolerably acceptable *modus vivendi* of mutual boycott¹⁰⁶. Yet we should remember that it was not the case that the Manichaeans were taking over the Christian community in terms of the number of their adherents. Later

Fortunatum Manichaeorum presbyterum in urbe Hipponensium regionum in balneis Sossii sub praesentia populi.

101. *Retractiones* 1.15 ; CSEL 36, p. 82 : Fortunatus had been successful as a teacher and a community organizer in Hippo, a fact which Augustine admits : *Qui [Fortunatus] plurimum temporis apud Hipponem uixerat, seduxeratque tam multos ut propter illos ibi eum delectaret habitare*. Note here the recurrence of the language condemning seduction. This fear of seduction on the part of anti-Manichaean polemicists is on the one hand attributable to the Manichaean propensity to attract the young (see discussion earlier) who were seen as lacking in discrimination ; on the other hand, it reveals the paternal ideology at work : those in authority were seen as responsible for the *imperiti* under their care, and any threat to that ideal was construed as seduction. Agency and initiative were not conceded to the *imperiti* in this scheme.

102. See the importance of the teacher and disciple relationship in the *Fragmenta Tebestina* ; P. ALFARIC, «Un manuscrit manichéen», *RHLR* n.s. 6 (1920), pp. 62-94.

103. See DECRET, *Aspects du manichéisme*, p. 40. Were the *peregrini negotiatores*, merchants like Firmus, who were responsible for much of the spread of the Manichaean movement outside of the main towns, or were they displaced Roman aristocrats ? The *peregrini* were in any case an important group over which a local Christian leader was to have little direct social control and would therefore need to be impressed by other means.

104. Possidius, *Vita Augustini* 6 ; *PL* 32, 38.

105. *De Utilitate Credendi* 2 ; CSEL 25, p. 5.

106. See Augustine, *Sermones* 182.2 and 302.19 and BROWN, «Religious Coercion in the Later Roman Empire : The Case of North Africa», *History* 48 (1963), pp. 283-305.

Augustine felt entitled to joke about Fortunatus' small base of support compared with his own much stronger catholic Christian community-- *tanta vestra paucitate*¹⁰⁷.

Augustine's staged *disputatio* with Fortunatus was held in the Baths of Sossius in Hippo Regius, *sub praesentia populi*¹⁰⁸. That the audience of the debate, at least that one which assembled again in the second day, was made up mostly of catholic Christians is made known by Augustine himself in *Contra Fortunatum*¹⁰⁹. Stenographers, most likely *notarii* associated with the catholic church, were present to record the event. At the beginning, there transpired preliminary negotiations as to the topic of their debate and the mode of demonstration to be used¹¹⁰.

Augustine and the catholic Christians in Hippo almost certainly put tremendous pressure on the Manichaeans to make an appearance at this staged debate by circulating rumors, perhaps even *libelli famiosi*, which repeated some of the charges of immorality brought against Manichaeans¹¹¹. In order not to be seen to confess tacitly to the charges of which they were accused, the Manichaeans took to a public forum which had been carefully picked by their accusers.

During the proceedings, Fortunatus appeared to be standing trial before his judge and jury rather than engaging in a fair debate¹¹². The Manichaean, in arguing that the both he and Augustine should confine themselves to discussing the morals of the Manichaeans, revealed his primary concerns¹¹³ :

«The issue to be considered is our way of life, concerning the false criminal accusations by which we have been assaulted. Therefore let the respectable men present hear from you whether the charges upon which we are accused and sought out are true, or false.»

Fortunatus, like earlier Christian apologists faced with charges of gruesome crimes and misdeeds, wanted to make his defense by appealing to the moral and ascetic virtues of the elect. Interestingly, Augustine quickly pointed out that, in his view, faith and morals were separate matters and ought to be discussed independently. For the present moment, he wanted to limit their discussion to doctrine alone and justified his choice by shrewdly claiming not

107. See DECRET, *Aspects du manichéisme*, p. 40, note 1 and *L'Afrique manichéenne* I, pp. 189-190.

108. *C. Fortunatum*, prologue ; *CSEL* 25, p.83.

109. *C. Fortunatum* 37 ; *CSEL* 25, p. 112 : *fideles sunt*.

110. See *C. Fortunatum* 1-3 ; *CSEL* 25, pp. 85-86.

111. On such traditional charges, see A. HENRICHS, «Pagan Ritual and the Alleged Crimes of the Early Christians : A Reconsideration», in *Kyriakon. Festschrift Johannes Quasten P. GRANFIELD and J. A. JUNGSMANN*, ed. (Münster, 1970), I, pp. 18-35.

112. See DECRET, *Aspects du manichéisme*, p. 45 "...avec...la déférence d'un accusé devant un jury".

113. *C. Fortunatum* 1 ; *CSEL* 25, p. 84. See, for example, the charges which Augustine assembled ca 405 in his *De Natura Boni contra Manichaeos* 47 ; *CSEL* 25, pp. 886-887.

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to know about only what the *electi* alone could know, that is, their mode of life¹¹⁴.

The Manichaean complied with Augustine's restriction on their discussion. He therefore turned to declaring his *professio*, that God has a series of attributes ; he proclaimed that He is incorruptible, perspicuous, unapproachable, ungraspable, impassible, etc. This turn of events was welcome news for Augustine, who was trained in dialectical disputation and had studied Aristotle's *Categories* and predicate logic in particular. Once the opponent has declared his adherence to a number of divine attributes, the proposed thesis could be dismantled methodically using well-trying tools.

Augustine moved gingerly, reluctant to let Fortunatus raise counter questions¹¹⁵ or to shift to different (and no doubt more familiar) lines of argument which were probably part of Manichaeans' training for dealing with such situations. A reference to the "men of note" present (who preferred and presumably were able to follow rational arguments) was enough to bring the discussion back to Augustine's proposed topic.

Later on in the debate Augustine would again appeal to the nature of their audience to undermine Fortunatus' attempt to resort to a familiar and proven Manichaean tactic when dealing with catholic Christians--appealing to scriptural texts for dialectical premisses¹¹⁶. Later even the audience participated¹¹⁷ :

«At this point an uproar came from the audience who wished the debate to be held rather with rational arguments (*rationibus*) because they saw that Fortunatus was not willing to accept the things written in the apostolic book. Then here and there a discussion began to be held by everyone...»

On the following day, Fortunatus, who was handicapped by many imposed constraints, finally found himself *in extremis* after a series of exchanges. He

114. *C. Fortunatum* 3 ; CSEL 25, p. 84-85 : *Ad aliud uocas, cum ego de fide proposuerim, de moribus autem uestris plene scire possunt, qui electi uestri sunt. nostis autem me non electum uestrum, sed auditorem fuisse ... quaestionem de moribus, ut inter electos uestros discutiatis, si discuti potest. mihi fides data est a uobis, quam hodie inprobo. de ipse proposui. ad propositum meum mihi respondeatur.*

115. See Augustine's reply to Fortunatus' request for a dialectical premiss from him (whether the Word of God *anima dei est, an non ?*) in *C. Fortunatum* 10 ; CSEL 25, p. 89 : *Si iustum est, ut non interrogatis meis respondeatur et ego interroger, respondeo.* Even though Augustine finally granted Fortunatus' request, he was careful to score a tactical point by noting that Fortunatus was not willing to respond to his questions in *C. Fortunatum* 11 ; CSEL 25, 89 : *tantum illud memineris te noluisse respondere interrogatis meis, me autem tuis respondere.* Later (*C. Fortunatum* 13 ; CSEL 25, p. 90) he stated for the record that while he was willing to entertain Fortunatus' questions, the latter was not willing to answer some of his. This kind of argument was only possible because the debate was being recorded by stenographers.

116. *C. Fortunatum* 19 ; CSEL 25, p. 96 : *Rationibus ut discuteremus duarum naturarum fidem, interpositum est ab his, quis nos audiunt. sed quoniam ad scripturas iterum confugisti...*

117. *C. Fortunatum* 19 ; CSEL 25, p. 97. On an ancient speaker's deliberate attempt to incite the audience to make an uproar against his rival in a verbal agon, see V. BERS, «Dikastic thorubos», in P. A. CARTLEDGE and F. D. HARVEY, ed., *Crux. Essays in Greek History presented to G. E. M. de Ste. Croix on his 75th Birthday.* (Exeter, 1945), pp. 1-15, esp. 9.

helplessly exclaimed: "What then am I to say¹¹⁸ ?". Augustine, sensing despair and willingness on the part of Fortunatus to yield the debate, did not press on. He had reduced his adversary to silence and had therefore won the debate. He concluded by expounding the catholic faith to all present¹¹⁹. While Fortunatus went away ignominiously, pleading that he wished to refer to superiors (*meis maioribus*)¹²⁰, there was no total capitulation, nor did Augustine try to bring one about. The fact that the closure of this debate was not as dramatic or as firm as, for example, what transpired at the end of the encounter between Augustine and Felix suggests that the goal of the young priest in 392 was limited. It sufficed to humble Fortunatus who already had an established reputation and for whom Augustine no doubt had some regard. There was no need for Augustine to go further and secure total victory. This gentility of the early 390s would succumb to the requirements of maintaining episcopal authority after Augustine succeeded Valerius to the see of Hippo in 395.

C : Augustine and his "Contra Faustum"

The Numidian Faustus, called an *episcopus manichaeorum*, was potentially a much more formidable opponent for Augustine than Fortunatus¹²¹. He had risen from humble origins to a widely-known reputation for eloquence, and was already distinguished when Augustine first met him as a youth¹²². In those early days Faustus came to Carthage and daily displayed his skill in words¹²³. He had immense presence and impressed those near him with the stylistic panache of his discourse¹²⁴. It was to him that Augustine posed questions which were troubling him, probably in the manner of disciples who proposed *aporiae* for their teachers to solve. Only years later would Augustine pronounce his judgement that the man was unlearned¹²⁵. Some three years after Augustine departed for Italy in 383, Faustus was brought on charges

118. *C. Fortunatum* 36 ; *CSEL* 25, p. 112 : *Quid ergo dicturus sum ?*

119. *C. Fortunatum* 37 ; *CSEL* 25, p. 112 : *sed si confiteris te non habere quod respondeas, omnibus audientibus et recognoscentibus quoniam fideles sunt, catholicam fidem, si permittunt ut uolunt exponam.*

120. The debate ended on an almost amicable note, see *C. Fortunatum* 37 ; *CSEL* 25, 112.

121. *C. Faustum* 1.1 ; *CSEL* 25, 251. See DECRET, *Aspects du manichéisme*, pp. 51-70 ; MANDOUZE, ed., *Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, pp. 390-397, s.v. Faustus 2.

122. See *Confessiones* 5.6.

123. *Confessiones* 5.6.

124. *Confessiones* 5.13.

125. *Confessiones* 5.36 ; *CSEL*, p. 84. On this kind of prejudice of the learned against the "semi-learned", see R. REITZENSTEIN, «Alexander von Lykopolis», *Philologus* 86 (1930-31), pp. 185-198. Reitzenstein argues on p. 197 that the pagan philosopher Alexander's objections to Manichaeans stemmed from the traditional educated élites' prejudices towards the pretensions to knowledge of "upstarts".

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before the *proconsularis Africae* by catholic Christians and was subsequently sent on an exile which ended in 387¹²⁶.

Even when he was physically removed from the cities in Roman North Africa, Faustus was still able to strike back at his persecutors from a distance. He did so by composing a writing, called the *Capitula de Christiana Fide et Veritate*, in which he set forth thirty-three *disputationes* against beliefs held by catholic Christians¹²⁷. It began to make a splash among catholic Christian circles and soon reached the attention of Augustine¹²⁸. Augustine reacted to it in the same way that he was to react to the Donatist bishop Petilian's *Ad Presbyteros* (ca. 400)¹²⁹.

To rebut Faustus' arguments in the *Capitula*, Augustine composed a lengthy work which he termed his *grande opus*¹³⁰. Augustine composed his *Contra Faustum* as if he were refuting Faustus in person. Like another Irenaeus¹³¹ or Origen, Augustine began his fictive debate by stating that "I judge it convenient to put his words under his name and to place my response under mine¹³²". This convention enabled Augustine to render a detailed refutation of the favorite arguments of Faustus, and by extension, of the Manichaeans in general. He deliberately contrasted his own slow and lowly style with Faustus' sharpness and eloquence¹³³, but explained that "A sharp mind and a polished tongue would be of no value unless the steps of the person are guided by his Master¹³⁴".

Augustine's work was aimed at a broad interested audience, though perhaps especially at those who had Manichaean sympathies. It provided counter-

126. See *C. Faustum* 5.8 ; *CSEL* 25, p. 280. See P. GARNSEY, «The Criminal Jurisdiction of Governors», *JRS* 58 (1968), pp. 51-59.

127. See P. MONCEAUX, *Le manichéen Faustus de Milève. Restitution de ses Capitula* Mémoires de l'Institut National de France, Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres 43 (Paris, 1933), esp. pp. 14-43 and also A. BRUCKNER, *Faustus von Mileve. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des abendländischen Manichäismus* (Basel, 1901). Decret pronounces the supposition that this work was designed as a compendium for the perfect Manichaean polemicist for use in local settings a speculation, see *Aspects du manichéisme*, p. 61.

128. See DECRET, *Aspects du manichéisme*, p. 62 and n. 2.

129. See FRENCH, «Manichaeism in the Struggle between Saint Augustine and Petilian of Constantine», *Augustinus Magister* (Paris, 1954), pp. 859-866, esp. 861. Cp. *C. Faustum* 1.1 and also the circumstances under which the *disputationes* of Adimantus came into Augustine's hands, see *C. Adimantum* 1.21.1.

130. *Retractationes* 2.33 ; *CSEL* 36, p. 139.

131. See DECRET, *Aspects du manichéisme*, p. 15, n. 2.

132. *C. Faustum* 1.1 ; *CSEL* 25, p. 252 : *commodum autem arbitror sub eius nomine uerba eius ponere et sub meo responsionem meam*. Yet later traditions loved to portray Augustine engaging in a *disputatio* with Faustus, see J. and P. COURCELLE, «Quelques illustrations du 'contra Faustum' de saint Augustin», *Oikoumene* (Catinac, 1964), pp. 1-21 and see esp. plates I-IV. The illuminated MSS studied belong to the 12th-15th centuries.

133. *C. Faustum* 1.1 ; *CSEL* 25, p. 252.

134. *C. Faustum* 1.1 ; *CSEL* 25, p. 252 : *nihil sit acutum ingenium et lingua expolita, nisi a domino gressus hominis diriganur*.

arguments to Faustus' pointed questions and anticipates the situation of face to face debates :

«Et hoc quidem nunc a nobis ita responsum sit, quia uobis placet argumentari et arma temptatis aliena dialectice disputare uolentes¹³⁵».

Even then, Augustine was well aware that he did not furnish his readers with arguments which could pass as philosophical demonstrations. Here the goal was rhetorical persuasion and not *apodeixis* or *demonstratio*. Furthermore, Augustine cautioned his audience that it was not proper for them to expect philosophical proof in such contexts, for

«If you should consider first who you are (even as if you are moved by reason) and how very unfit you are for understanding the nature of your own soul, not to mention the soul of God...¹³⁶»

Augustine was willing to provide others with ready-made arguments against Manichaeans. But these arguments should not, in their turn, provide a context for further investigation for this regression *ad infinitum* was prone to lead to a situation of doubt and curiosity such as led Christians to be interested in Manichaean teachings in the first place. Augustine confounded Faustus' arguments by the sheer weight of the encyclopaedic learning which he mobilized against them. The same stratagem of underscoring the complexity of the science of human anthropology and cognition would be used to discourage Christians from "undue curiosity" about supramundane issues¹³⁷.

D : Augustine and Felix

By 404, the year of Augustine's debate with the Manichaean Felix, the hand of the catholic church in North Africa and elsewhere had been considerably strengthened by the Theodosian settlement. Positive imperial involvement brought new confidence and a radical shift in the catholic bishops' strategy for coping with their religious rivals. In particular, this affected their relationship with the other Christian church in North Africa, that of the Donatists.

Before 404, catholic Christians had approached the schism as a matter which they wished to resolve in a traditional ecclesiastical fashion, through discussion, exhortation and public debate. The Donatists, on the other hand, had wisely turned down invitations to such debates. With no compromise in sight, the catholic bishops began in 404 to petition the imperial government for rescripts authorizing them to taken repressive actions against the Donatists¹³⁸. Once such laws were obtained, they were not applied immediately but used instead as a psychological weapon to induce others to abandon their "error" of their own accord. Force would eventually be used and its adoption rationalized later. It was at this interesting juncture when the balance was

135. *C. Faustum* 26.2 ; *CSEL* 25, p. 730.

136. *C. Faustum* 33.9 ; *CSEL* 25, pp. 796-797 : *Si autem quasi ratione mouemini, primum cogitetis, quinam sitis, quam minus idonei ad comprehendendam naturam, non dicam Dei, sed animae uestrae, comprehendendam sane...*

137. See, e.g., Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 27.9-10.

138. See BROWN, «Religious Coercion in the Later Roman Empire», pp. 283-306.

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about to turn dramatically in the favor of the catholic bishops that Augustine came to face Felix in a debate in Hippo.

«Contra Manichaeum quemdam nomine Felicem, praesente populo, in ecclesia biduo disputavi¹³⁹».

The venue of the disputation between a Christian and a Manichaean had moved away from a public space of the town, the Baths of Sossius, to the bishops' cathedral (purportedly to protect Felix from an angry Christian mob). Much else had also changed. In these proceedings, the Manichaean debater was extremely respectful, addressing Augustine the catholic bishop as *sanctitas tua*¹⁴⁰. At one point, Felix revealed his handicaps in the debate¹⁴¹ :

«Non tantum ego possum contra tuam uirtutem, quia mira uirtus est gradus episcopalis, deinde contra leges imperatoris. et superius petui compendie, ut doceas me, quid est ueritas ; et si docueris me, quid est ueritas, parebit quod teneo mendacium esse».

The two had to negotiate over the agreed common ground before the debate could proceed. Felix wanted to use Manichaean texts which were already confiscated, but Augustine only agreed to discuss one of them, the *Epistula Fundamenti* which he had already refuted earlier in 396¹⁴². In this debate, Augustine was nothing if not well-prepared and the outcome understandably did not favor the Manichaean.

The events which surrounded the ending of this public debate are rather puzzling. While earlier exchanges between Felix and Augustine had been noted with care, and presumably with accuracy as well, the final words they said to each were quickly glossed over : *post haec cum multis uerbis inter se agerent, Felix dixit*¹⁴³. It would be interesting to know whether at this point these *verba* between Felix and Augustine were said in the full hearing of all, or whether the words *inter se* refer to a strictly private conversation between the two. The surprising silence of the stenographic record and what transpired later suggest that the latter is the correct interpretation. Perhaps Felix was even negotiating with Augustine the terms of his surrender, for he then asked Augustine : *quid uis faciam*¹⁴⁴ ?

Why did Felix not simply concede defeat and walk away, as Fortunatus did implicitly after pleading that he would seek advice from his superiors ? Why did he have to ask Augustine what the latter would want him to do next ? First of all Felix was in a much weaker position than even Fortunatus was earlier.

139. *Retractationes* 2.34 ; *CSEL* 36, p. 141, 14. See MANDOUZE, ed., *Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire* I, pp. 417-418, s.v. Felix 20.

140. *C. Felicem* 1.2 and 1.6 ; *CSEL* 25, pp. 802, 807.

141. *C. Felicem* 1.12 ; *CSEL* 25, p. 813 ; MSS P R S and B have the plural *imperatorum*, only T (12th century) has *imperatoris*. See below on the *leges imperatoris*.

142. *Contra Epistulam quam uocant Fundamenti* in *CSEL* 15, pp. 193-248 ; fragments in A. Adam, *Texte zum Maichäismus* (Berlin, 1969), pp. 27-30. See the recent attempt to reconstruct the letter from Augustine's corpus, E. FELDMANN, *Die "Epistula Fundamenti" der nordafrikanischen Manichäer. Versuch einer Rekonstruktion* (Altenberge, 1987).

143. *C. Felicem* 2.22 ; *CSEL* 25, p. 851.

144. *C. Felicem* 2.22 ; *CSEL* 25, p. 852.

His opponent was no longer a mere *presbyter* but a powerful *episcopus* to whom much respect was due. *Tua uirtus* and *tua sanctitas* were ever on Felix's lips, and one could expect his demeanor also to express studious deference to Augustine and to the *gradus episcopalis*.

Even though Felix had promised to be burnt with the confiscated Manichaean *codices* if Augustine should succeed in finding something evil in them, this was not a blanket commitment to an unconditional surrender if he were defeated in the debate. In any case, Felix need not have anathematized Mani and his teachings so dramatically if he did not want to. It is difficult to know whether Felix thought that Augustine would compel him with force to do so or whether he would invoke the anti-Manichaean legislations against him in the event. Augustine himself had reassured Felix that *nemo enim te cogit inuitum*¹⁴⁵. Nevertheless the scenario surrounding the anathema, a public renunciation of Mani and his teachings, seems contrived, and quite possibly prearranged¹⁴⁶.

For prominent figures like the African rhetor Marius Victorinus in Milan, a staged exhibition of a realignment in one's religious affiliation was an act which was preceded by serious deliberations and prior negotiations with those in positions of authority¹⁴⁷. This kind of public, and publicized, act of conversion demonstrated through highly stylized rituals a decision made earlier away from public view. It is very likely that this was what took place between Augustine and Felix. Augustine had put pressure to bear on Felix earlier to debate with him under very unequal terms and Felix came under duress. Felix might have sensed even before the debate the hopelessness of his situation regardless of how he argued in public. He then decided to appear conciliatory and deferential, and was already prepared to yield publicly at the end of the debate. How to yield was what was privately negotiated between Augustine and Felix¹⁴⁸.

But Felix was not the only one to anathematize Mani. The truly intriguing and interesting fact is that Augustine also did so at this juncture. One question

145. *C. Felicem* 2.22 ; CSEL 25, p. 852.

146. The text of the anathema in *C. Felicem* 2.22 ; CSEL 25, p. 852 : *ego Felix, qui Manichaeo credideram, nunc anathemo eum et doctrinam ipsius et spiritum seductorem, qui in illo fuit, qui dixit deum partem suam genti tenebrarum miscuisse et eam tam turpiter liberare, ut uirtutes suas transfiguraret in feminas contra masculina et ipsas iterum in masculos contra feminea daemonia, ita ut postea reliquias ipsius suae partis configat in aeternum globo tenebrarum. has omnes et ceteras blasphemias Manichaei anathemo*. Another anathema, formerly believed to be in reference to Felix's conversion, is now proposed to be a statement by Cresconius, see J. and S. LIEU, «Felix conversus ex Manichaeis' : a Case of Mistaken Identity», *JTS* n.s. 32 (1981), pp. 173-176. Their interesting suggestion is rejected by DECRET, «Du bon usage du mensonge et du parjure. Manichéens et Priscillianistes face à la persécution dans l'Empire chrétien (IV^e-V^e siècles)», in *Mélanges P. Lévêque* (Paris, 1990) IV, p. 144, n. 21.

147. See P. HADOT, *Marius Victorinus. Recherches sur sa vie et ses oeuvres* (Paris, 1971). On Marius' conversion, see Augustine, *Confessiones* 8.2.3.

148. See D. NEWMAN, «Pleading Guilty for Considerations : A Study of Bargain Justice», *Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology and Police Science* 46 (1956), p. 780.

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is why Felix urged Augustine to do so, *ut confirmes me*? We may speculate that Felix wanted a public affirmation that his Manichaean past would not constitute a blot on his future career as a catholic Christian by reminding all present that Augustine, too, was once a Manichaean¹⁴⁹. More puzzling is the question of why Augustine agreed to do so.

Disturbing rumors that Augustine remained a crypto-Manichaean were rampant in this period. These suspicions were spread especially by Petilian and others such as Julian of Eclanum in his reply to Augustine's response to his *Ad Presbyteros*¹⁵⁰. Perhaps this was the reason why Felix would ask Augustine, and why Augustine would agree in turn, that they each write and sign an anathema of Mani and Manichaean teachings. This debate was not just about the triumph of catholic Christianity over Manichaeism, but it also served to demonstrate, in the most public of ways, that Augustine was no longer a Manichaean, a purpose which the new bishop's *Confessions*, published ca. 397, also aimed to achieve¹⁵¹. Thus both debaters, a Manichaean and a Christian bishop, the loser and the winner, wrote and signed with their own hands, *in ecclesia coram populo*, their respective renunciations of Manichaeism¹⁵². The staging could not have been more effective.

In many ways Augustine had been so successful in his later dealings with Manichaeans because he knew his opponents well. He had the advantage of having been an insider. He knew in which direction and how to manoeuvre Fortunatus. At the end of their second day's debate, when Fortunatus confessed that he was at a loss, Augustine revealingly said: "I know that you don't have anything to say. Even I could never find anything to say on this question when I was an auditor among you¹⁵³".

Few other Christians would have shared either Augustine's fortuitous mixture of gifts or his imposing authority as a bishop and could therefore not easily defeat Manichaeans in a situation of debate unaided. Yet someone in Augustine's position could help the *imperiti* in two significant ways. First of all, as we have seen, he could furnish refutations of Manichaean arguments and beliefs by writing and circulating among friends doctrinal treatises. Even if Christians could not recite Augustine's convoluted arguments they could still wield his books as an authority or a talisman. The contest between catholic Christians and Manichaeans could then be translated from the local face to face

149. On the practical need for a public recognition of such a change in one's religious allegiance, see BROWN, «Religious Coercion in the Later Roman Empire», p. 327 on the *tesserae* issued by catholic bishops to converted Manichaeans referred to in the *Commonitorium Sancti Augustini*; PL 42, 1153-56.

150. See Augustine, *Contra Litteras Petiliani* 3.6, 19; CSEL 52, 177, 4 and *Contra Cresconium* 3.80.92.

151. See A. VECCHI, «L'antimanicheismo nelle 'confessioni' di sant'Agostino», *Giornale di metafisica* 20 (1965), pp. 91-121.

152. C. *Felicem* 2.22; CSEL 25, p. 852: *Augustinus ecclesiae catholicae episcopus iam anathemai Manichaeum et doctrinam eius et spiritum, qui per eum tam execrabiles blasphemias locutus est, quia spiritus seductor erat non ueritatis; sed nefandi erroris.*

153. C. *Fortunatum* 37; CSEL 25, p.112.

encounter to a proxy debate through treatises which people other than the authors and their immediate circles could appropriate for their own immediate use.

Second, Augustine could, through highly publicized debates with Manichaeans, defeat select Manichaean leaders. These carefully choreographed as well as carefully recorded debates could be circulated and they would again provide edifying *exempla* for other Christians. In either case, individual Christians need not argue afresh all the familiar points of contention, so common to the point of being *topoi*; they merely needed to know that it had already been done for them. Through this process, catholic Christians would begin to have the same advantage of possessing a body of useful controversial texts, as well as a tradition of success in debates, which the Manichaeans originally possessed¹⁵⁴.

VII. — THE NARROWING OF THE HORIZONS

When the first Manichaean missionaries arrived in the Roman Empire, they brought with them ready-made weapons in the form of written texts suited for religious sectarian controversy. Their ability to argue and to convince, as our sources inform us, depended on their grounding in these writings. Manichaeans accustomed themselves to a repertoire of arguments which Christians and others would be expected to be interested in, such as the origins of evil, and from such opening lines they could go on to preach the Manichaean message of the two principles.

The use of formal public disputation as part of the Manichaean mission is almost unattested in the evidence. Instead one finds an emphasis placed on disputing which consisted in raising *aporiae* such as “whence evil?” The purpose of the latter was not so much to engage their listeners in a debate, but to lead the audience to an appreciation of the Manichaean kerygma¹⁵⁵. Mani, in

154. The only known fourth-century Latin anti-Manichaean treatise written for catholic Christians is an anonymous work attributed to Marius Victorinus, see Pseudo-Victorinus, *Liber ad Justinum Manichaeum contra Duo Principia Manichaeorum et De Vero Carne Christi*, in *PL* 8, 999-1010. Augustine’s anti-Manichaean writings therefore provided ready and useful refutations of certain central Manichaean claims which Latin Christians had hitherto not been able to challenge successfully. By the fifth century, Latin catholic Christians would have access to a number of *florilegia* or prooftexts designed for arguing against certain positions which were deemed heretical; see the collected texts in *Florilegia Biblica Africana saec. V CCSL 90* (Turnhout, 1961), especially Pseudo-Augustine, *Solutiones Diversarum Quaestionum ab Haereticis objectarum*, B. SWANK, ed., pp. 149ff.

155. On the Manichaeans and their propensity to ask the question of “whence evil”?, see Titus of Bostra, *Adversus Manichaeos* A.4; in Paul DE LAGARDE, ed., *Titus Bostreni, quae ex opere contra Manichaeos edito in codice Hamburgensi servata sunt* (reprint edition, Wiesbaden, 1967; original 1859), p. 5 (Syriac), p. 3 (Greek). In general, see P.-H. POIRIER, «Le *contra Manichaeos* de Titus de Bostra», *Annuaire. EPHE. Sciences Religieuses* 98 (1989-90), pp.

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the fictive *Acta Archelai*, singled out a local notable in a city to convert through the private suasion of an exchange of letters. Even in the narrative, it seems that neither Mani nor his disciples would have wanted to come into town for the purpose of engaging in formal disputation with anyone. They came to bring about Marcellus' conversion. The debate in the *Acta Archelai* was thrust upon Mani. The staged public debates in which Manichaeans were involved were predominantly not initiated by the Manichaeans themselves. Instead we see a consistent pattern of local catholic and other Christians seeking out Manichaeans and challenging them to highly-publicized disputations as a means to counter the Manichaeans' perceived influence within a specific locality. Although Manichaeans were notoriously mobile, subsequent records of the debates could follow the Manichaeans so that the effects of one decisive victory in debate at one place could shadow the wanderings of the *electi*.

If this early history of Manichaeism and the stories about debates between Manichaeans and other religious figures depict a world of religious diversity and fluid frontiers, then from the late fourth century on this picture would be turned on its head. "To study Manichaeism is to study the fate of a missionary religion in a world of shrinking horizons¹⁵⁶". With increasingly powerful local bishops who could act as a religious police to enforce their own interests, and a set of hostile imperial legislations to back the bishops against them, Manichaeans, like so many other religious groups, could no longer compete equally in the religious market of late antiquity. One stunning change was that Christians no longer had to debate Manichaeans on equal terms for they could demand a written abjuration from suspected sectarians¹⁵⁷.

Writing played a central role in this new world of rising religious authoritarianism. The career of Augustine attested to the developing use of stenography and its relationship to power¹⁵⁸. In November of 386, Augustine had stenographers take down his dictation at Cassiacum when he was composing his Sceptical *Contra Academicos* as part of the stock exercise of late antique intellectuals to argue and defend their own views against other competing models of truth¹⁵⁹; in 392, as a young priest, Augustine made good use of stenography in a more formal setting--at his debate with Fortunatus in Hippo which was at any rate still a roughly equal contest; in 404 he again used

366-68, esp. 368 and H. PUECH, *Le manichéisme, son fondateur, sa doctrine* (Paris, 1949), p. 152.

156. BROWN, «The Diffusion of Manichaeism in the Roman Empire», p. 98.

157. For abjuration formulae for deconversion from Manichaeism in general, see *PG* 1, 1461-1471 and *Ioannes Caesariensis Presbyteri et Grammatici Opera CCSG* 1, M. RICHARD, ed. (Turnhout, 1977) xxxiii-xxxix (long formula) and *PG* 100, 1217-1225 (short formula); see text, translation and commentary in LIEU, «An Early Byzantine Formula for the Renunciation of Manichaeism: the *capita VII contra Manichaeos* of <Zacharias of Mytilene>», *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 26 (1983), pp. 152-218; this is reviewed by M. TARDIEU in *Studia Iranica* 7, p. 139. See H. GARFINKEL, «Conditions of Successful Degradation Ceremonies», *American Journal of Sociology* 61 (1956), pp. 420-424.

158. In general, see D. OHLMANN, «Die Stenographie im Leben des hl. Augustin» in *Archiv für Stenographie* 56 (1905), pp. 273-279, 312-319.

159. See HOFFMANN, *Der Dialog bei den christlichen Schriftstellern*, pp. 135-143.

stenography, this time to secure the refutation and the binding (written) anathema of Felix. Finally, in 411, stenography was used to its best advantage at the celebrated anti-Donatist Council of Carthage which he dominated. Augustine of Hippo had learnt over the years that stenography, the friend of the Roman imperial government for centuries, was also a loyal and useful friend of a Christian bishop.

The Christian bishop was also increasingly indistinguishable from an imperial official in terms of the coercive power which he possessed. The gist of the ominous anti-Manichaean *leges* referred to by Felix in 404 can be discerned by reading the *Theodosian Code*¹⁶⁰. Knowing that the local catholic bishop had it in his power to invoke and apply the laws made the Manichaeans more timid, at least in public¹⁶¹. Yet Felix's plight was not quite the unhappiest predicament in which a Manichaean would find himself under a Christian Empire. The dramatic tipping of the scales against the Manichaeans cannot be better summarized than by referring to two incidents during the reign of Justinian.

John of Ephesus related a telling incident during the bleak anti-Manichaean pogroms initiated by the emperor Justinian in which many noble women and senators were known to have become the emperor's victims¹⁶². In the undated incident (positioned before a story dated to the nineteenth year of Justinian's reign or 546), Justinian ordered to have arrested Manichaeans brought before him, presumably in the palace; there, according to this account, he personally attempted to convert the Manichaeans by debating with them¹⁶³. Yet his prisoners, "with satanic obstinacy", refused to alter their religious allegiance even at the cost of martyrdom. The emperor obliged them, and took the unusual (though perhaps prudent) step of burning their corpses on the sea so that the waves might take their remains.

The second incident concerns a disputation sponsored by the emperors Justin and Justinian in 527. Not long after the enactment of the anti-Manichaean edict of 527, which saw the public execution of prominent

160. See *Cod. Theod.* 16.5.35 (KRUEGER/MOMMSEN, ed., p. 866) issued by Arcadius and Honorius from Milan and addressed to the vicar of Africa: *Noxios Manichaeos execrabilesque eorum conventus, dudum iusta animadversione damnatos, etiam speciali praeceptione cohiberi decernimus. Quapropter quaestiti adducantur in publicum ac detestati criminosi congrua et severissima emendatione rescentur. In eos etiam auctoritatis aculei dirigantur, qui eos domibus suis damnanda provisione defendent.*; and E. H. KADEN, «Die Edikte gegen die Manichäer von Diokletian bis Justinian», *Festschrift für Hans Lewald* (Basel, 1953), pp. 55-68 and P. BESKOW, «The Theodosian Laws against Manichaeism», in *Manichaean Studies I*, Peter BRYDER, ed., pp. 1-11. On imperial persecutions against the Manichaeans in general, see LIEU, *History of Manichaeism*, pp. 154-177.

161. See BROWN, «St. Augustine's Attitude to Religious Coercion».

162. See F. NAU, «Analyse de la seconde partie inédite de l'*Histoire Ecclesiastique* de Jean d'Asie, patriarche jacobite de Constantinople (d. 585)», *Revue de l'orient chrétien* 2 (1897), pp. 455-493, esp. 478-479 (Syriac) and 481 (French).

163. On the moral duty felt by judges in witchcraft trials in early modern Europe and their sermonizing exhortations, see E. DELCAMBRE, «Les procès de sorcellerie en Lorraine: psychologie des juges», *Revue d'histoire du droit* 21 (1953), pp. 408-415.

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individuals known to be Manichaeans, a staged disputation (ἡ διάλεκτος) was held by imperial command¹⁶⁴. The principals comprised a champion of the Manichaean faith (ὁ μὲν τῆς Μανιχαϊκῆς δόξης προϊστάμενος), a teacher (διδάσκαλος) called Photeinus, and Paul the Persian, a Christian¹⁶⁵.

The debate itself went on over a period of four days. The arguments relied heavily on Aristotelian dialectic, while the Manichaean also attempted the familiar attacks on the Hebrew bible. Finally, after Paul successfully answered a baiting question from Photeinus about whether Christ upheld or destroyed the Mosaic commandments, the Manichaean became silent and could say nothing in response: σιωπήσας οὐδὲν ἀποκρίνατο.

Throughout this disputation, Photeinus can hardly be said to be standing on a similar footing with Paul the Persian: he was in chains and perhaps even under guard. Lieu is well justified in characterizing the role of Paul as less that of a partner in a debate than that of an "inquisitor"¹⁶⁶. This debate was no more than a show trial. Photeinus was put into the role of a disciple who posed questions to his teacher¹⁶⁷. Furthermore, in accordance with standard imperial procedures of assigning secular dignitaries to preside at religious debates or councils, Justin and Justinian ordered Theodore Teganistes, "the friar", to supervise the debate between Paul the Persian and Photeinus. Theodore had already been city prefect of Constantinople for the fourth time in 527¹⁶⁸. The man who had the court title of ὁ ἐνδοξότατος was, in short, someone of great authority and prestige whose presence at the debate guaranteed that imperial wishes were carried out¹⁶⁹.

Even should the legal outlawry of Manichaeism be much more impressive in theory than in its actual impact on the lives of individuals, the ideological shift it brought about was decisive in itself. With the rise of catholic and orthodox Christianities to a central position in the Roman Empire, increased social closure was needed to reflect this new identity. In this respect, Max Weber's theory on the consequences of the development of interest groups into legally privileged groups remains instructive. In his view, increased rigidity in group boundaries was necessary in order to effect social closure. This change

164. *Disputationes Photini Manichaei cum Paulo Christiano* in PG 88, 529A-551C. See discussion in Lieu, *History of Manichaeism*, pp. 172-173. See the very valuable study of this episode and discussion of the Vatican and Sinai MSS by G. MERCATI, «Per la vita e gli scritti di 'Paolo il Persiano'. Appunti de una disputa di religione sotto Giustino e Giustiniano», *Note di letteratura biblica e cristiana antica*. Studi e Testi 5 (Rome, 1901), pp. 180-206.

165. *Disputationes Photini cum Paulo* in PG 88, 529A.

166. *Disputationes Photini cum Paulo* in PG 88, 533D-535B ; LIEU, *History of Manichaeism*, p. 173.

167. See MERCATI, «Per la vita e gli scritti di 'Paolo il Persiano'», pp. 196-198.

168. See *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* II, p.1006, s.v. Theodorus qui et Teganistes 57. His nickname from John Malalas 416 suggests that he rose from the humble origins of "a friar" to an exalted status. His theological views, if any, were unknown.

169. See PG 88, 529. This important dignity sponsored Christian buildings in the capital when he was the *praefectus urbis* of Constantinople for the third time in 520, see PLRE II, p.1006.

entailed the curbing of the previous state of free-wheeling competition, and the prevention of individual movement across boundaries. In this new situation, public debates became no more than showcase exhibitions which served to demonstrate, for the edification of all Christian subjects as well as the marginalized Other, the wide gulf which separated sanctioned and illegitimate religious self-identifications.

Gradually the division between things Manichaean and things Christian became less murky and the polemical literature contributed to this process of differentiation. In John of Damascus' *Dialogus contra Manichaeos*, we find what might be called a template debate¹⁷⁰. The genre was that of Leontius of Neapolis' *Apologia contra Judaeos* (surviving in quotations by John of Damascus) which was assembled out of adaptable *florilegia* of proof-texts¹⁷¹. The two interlocutors in this dialogue were referred to as "the Orthodox" and "the Manichaean". The juxtaposition of their differences and their clear-cut opposition was reassuring to those people who were ideologically committed to maintaining a particular definition of the Christian church based on doctrinal purity and communal solidarity. Their discussion opened with a variation of a Manichaean classic after definitions of truth and falsehood have been established using dialectical arguments. "Do you say that there is one first principle (ἀρχή), or two?" the Manichaean asked John¹⁷². John of Damascus, like Paul the Persian, was trained in philosophical dialectic and would have been an unusually formidable foe in any historical debate. Thus, in the dialogue, he was all the more in a strong position to pose difficult questions to an imaginary Manichaean¹⁷³. The Manichaean was not always able to respond and consequently the dialogic principle in this writing deteriorated gradually. Soon John began to lecture in a monologic style, using καὶ πάλιν and other rather artless devices to connect disparate arguments presented sequentially.

The conflict between orthodox Christianity and Manichaeism was now conducted more and more through an anonymous pamphlet war¹⁷⁴. The Manichaean debater in the Roman Empire had, by the sixth century, become a shadowy figure, no longer having a life of his own but solely serving the purposes of others¹⁷⁵. Yet this process was only the flip side of the

170. Text in *PG* 94, 1505-1584. This text is different from the dialogue between a certain John "the Orthodox" and a Manichaean, text in *PG* 96, 1320-1336 and RICHARD, ed., *Johannis Caesariensis Presbyteri et Grammatici Opera*, pp. 109-128.

171. See V. DEROCHE, «L'authenticité de l'apologie contre les juifs», *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 110 (1986), pp. 655-669. On the *adversus Judaeos* genre as a whole, see A. LUKYN WILLIAMS, *Adversus Judaeos* (Cambridge, 1935).

172. *Dialogus contra Manichaeos* 2 ; *PG* 94, 1508B.

173. See G. RICHTER, *Die Dialektik des Johannes von Damaskos. Eine Untersuchung des Textes nach seinen Quellen und seiner Bedeutung* (Ettal, 1964), esp. pp. 262-280.

174. See Zacharias of Mytilene, *Disputatio* (*PG* 85, 1143-1144), on the refutation of a writing advancing the Manichaean two principles during the reign of Justinian. The writing was simply left on the streets, perhaps as a challenge.

175. See I. ROCHOW, «Zum Fortleben des Manichäismus im byzantinischen Reich nach Justinian I», *Byzantinoslavica* 40 (1979), pp. 13-21.

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crystallization of an orthodox tradition, for the Christian refutations of Manichaeans also assumed a nameless and timeless quality: the short pamphlet called *Syllogismi Sanctorum Patrum* against the Manichaeans parades an anonymous list of thirteen useful anti-Manichaean arguments in the form of pithy syllogisms culled from the works of Didymus the Blind and Gregory of Nyssa¹⁷⁶.

Further afield, in the less structured and more welcoming environment of Central Asia, Manichaeans continued to retain their traditional skill in arguing from set texts. In the Chinese Manichaean *Compendium* from Tunhuang, being “well versed in the seven scriptures and eminently skilled in debate” normally entitled one to respect within the Manichaean monastic community¹⁷⁷. Yet even here, new social pressures had overtaken the glamorous Manichaean debater. The broader context of the above quote from the *Compendium* makes clear that the monastic virtue of obeying the Manichaean precepts was seen as much more important than the charismatic authority which stemmed from eloquence and learning¹⁷⁸.

«If a *mu-shê* [one of the twelve teachers] be violating the commandments, no one shall accept his instructions. Even though he is well-versed in the seven scriptures and eminently skilled in debate, if he has faults and vices, the five grades will not respect him.»

The routinization of charisma took place among the Manichaeans themselves in places where their communities assumed the form of organized and hierarchical monastic institutions. A similar process was at work in the later Roman Empire, but more so within Christian communities which increasingly gravitated towards their local bishops. As a result of this growing monopoly over authority, groups such as the Anomoeans and the Manichaeans which used to have a symbiotic and close dialectical relationship with orthodox and catholic Christians were dramatically and forceably made to appear as the alien Other. Within this context, the unsupervised posing of questions and discussions between individual Manichaeans and Christians would make manifest an undesirable lack of closure. Thus emphasis was placed on the authority of written documents, many of which were closely connected with controversy and debate such as *acta* and *catenae* of prooftexts, and carefully-controlled public disputations conducted by authoritative Christian leaders.

Just as the classical Greeks, Christians in the later Empire discovered that the written word brought about a certain fettering of the dynamic λόγος and

176. See RICHARD, ed., pp. 131-133. On the use of dialectic as an “anti-heretical” weapon, see, e.g., Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 29.

177. *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 2141A, LIV 1280c8 ; English translation from G. HALOUN and W. B. HENNING, «The Compendium of the Doctrines and Styles of the Teaching of Mani, The Buddha of Light», *Asia Major* n.s. 3 (1952), p. 196. See new edition in N. TAJADOD, *Mani. Le Bouddha de Lumière*. Sources gnostiques et manichéennes 3 (Paris, 1990). Unfortunately this work is not available to me.

178. *Taishō* 2141A, LIV 1280c7-9. HALOUN/HENNING, “Compendium”, pp. 195-96.

the dialectical element of speech¹⁷⁹. Yet while such a constraint was viewed by the Greeks as largely a negative feature, to Christians who both believed in revealed truth and were concerned with achieving social closure in an increasingly hierarchical context, the written word was, in more ways than one, a god-sent gift.

179. Even in lawcourts, Athenians preferred spoken testimony to written documentation, see T. M. LENTZ, «Spoken versus Written Inartistic Proof in Athenian Courts», *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 16 (1983), pp. 242-261, esp. 247-248.

The Conversations with the Syrian Orthodox under Justinian (532)

Sebastian Brock

Probably in the spring of 532 ⁽¹⁾ — only a few months after the Nika riots ⁽²⁾ — there took place in Constantinople, under Justinian's auspices, a three day conference between five Chalcedonian bishops and five or more ⁽³⁾ Syrian Orthodox ('Severan') bishops, the aim being 'the reunion of the churches' after the disruptions caused by the Chalcedonian definition ⁽⁴⁾. We are

⁽¹⁾ The date is not quite certain: see STEIN title in note 4, pp. 378-9.

⁽²⁾ These, however, were unconnected with religious issues; see A. CAMERON, *Circus Factions* (Oxford, 1976), pp. 129-30, 278-80.

⁽³⁾ See below, pp. 117-118.

⁽⁴⁾ The more important secondary literature is as follows: E. K. CHRYSOS, *Ἡ ἐκκλησιαστικὴ πολιτικὴ τοῦ Ἰουστινιάνου* (Saloniki, 1969), p. 101; R. DEVRESSE, *Essai sur Théodore de Mopsueste* (Studi e Testi 141; 1948), pp. 194-5; F. DIEKAMP, *Analecra Patristica* (OCA 117; 1938), pp. 109-15; L. DUCHESNE, *L'Église au VI^e siècle* (Paris, 1925), pp. 81-7; W. H. C. FREND, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement* (Cambridge, 1972), pp. 263-8; R. HAACKE, in ed. A. GRILLMEIER and H. BACHT, *Das Konzil von Chalkedon* (Würzburg, 1953) II, pp. 156-8; J. HEFELE-H. LECLERCQ, *Histoire des Conciles* (Paris, 1908), II.2, pp. 1120-5; S. HELMNER, *Der Neuchalkedonismus* (diss. Bonn, 1962), pp. 132-3; E. HONIGMANN, *Évêques et Évêchés monophysites d'Asie antérieure au VI^e siècle* (CSCO 127, Subsidia 2; 1951), pp. 150-1; J. LEBON, *Le monophysisme sévérien* (Louvain, 1909), pp. 73-4; M. RICHARD, « Le néo-Chalcédonisme », *MSR* 3 (1946), pp. 158-9; E. SCHWARTZ, *Kyryllos von Skythopolis* (Texte und Untersuchungen 49.2; 1939), pp. 389-92; E. STEIN, *Histoire du Bas-Empire* (Paris, 1949) II, pp. 378-9; A. van ROEY, in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, II, pp. 351-2. Henceforth these works are cited by name of author alone.

fortunate enough to know something of the proceedings from the two summarized accounts emanating from either side (something of a rarity for antiquity): from the Chalcedonian side there is the Letter of Innocentius (⁵), bishop of Maronia (one of the participants), addressed to the priest Thomas, of Thessaloniki, while from the Syrian Orthodox there exists a short anonymous summary of the proceedings which was published in 1919 by F. NAU in *Patrologia Orientalis* 13 (⁶), from an eighth century manuscript, British Library Add. 12155. There also survives the *plerophoria* or doctrinal statement put out by the Syrian Orthodox bishops for the consideration of the emperor and his bishops (⁷). To these sources can now be added an important new one, the full account (albeit preserved only fragmentarily) of the proceedings from the Syrian Orthodox point of view. Although this text is now acephalous, it is likely that it is the work of Severus' biographer, the abbot John bar Aphtonia, who accompanied the bishops and wrote an account of the proceedings (⁸); it is also evident that it served as the source for the summary published by Nau.

The new Syriac text is to be found in Harvard syr. 22, of the eighth or ninth century; this manuscript has unfortunately suffered considerably from the ravages of time, for many folios have been lost and those that do survive are in complete disorder

(⁵) *ACO* IV.2, pp. 169-84.

(⁶) Pp. 192-6. It is astonishing that this has been almost entirely neglected in the secondary literature: only Honigmann gives (just) the reference in a footnote (p. 150 note 6; cp also p. 75). The *Collatio* is also mentioned in passing by Elias, in his *Life of John of Tella* (ed. BROOKS), pp. 59-60. (The summary is also quoted in a florilegium in Add. 14533, f. 168a).

(⁷) Preserved in Ps. Zechariah Rhetor, *Eccl. Hist.* IX.15 and in Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle* IX.22; an English translation is given by FRIEND, pp. 362-6. *Plerophoria* is the name given to it in our new document; Innocentius refers to it as a *chartula satisfactionis*, Ps. Zechariah as a *deësis* (p. 89) or *pyasa* (p. 115), while Michael calls it a *diathesis dapyasa*.

(⁸) So Ps. Zechariah, *Eccl. Hist.* IX.15 (ed. Brooks, p. 122²²⁻³). Since John's other works (*Life of Severus*, *Commentary on Song of Songs*, and some Hymns) were originally written in Greek, this work too may be a translation, although there are no obvious internal indications that this is so apart from the possible misunderstanding mentioned in note 53.

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and are often much damaged ⁽⁹⁾. Although most of the manuscript is devoted to letters from (or occasionally to) Severus, there are several other items belonging to the sixth century which have no direct connection with the patriarch; among these are ff. 67, 78 and 79, constituting a continuous text of which both the beginning and end are missing ⁽¹⁰⁾. The contents of these folios quickly indicate that we have here the central portion of a day by day account of the conversations.

The extant portion of the text ⁽¹¹⁾ opens (§1) with the ending of the second audience which the Syrian Orthodox bishops evidently had with the emperor prior to the arrival of the Chalcedonian bishops; during this they handed over to him the statement of their doctrinal position. It was only after 'a certain number of days' that the Chalcedonian bishops arrived in Constantinople and were given the statement to consider (§2). §3 gives the setting of the conference and mentions the officials present (already known from Innocentius). The first day's proceedings (§§4-10) are devoted mainly to Dioscorus' reception of Eutyches at Ephesus II (449), a point of embarrassment to the Syrian Orthodox, requiring a rather careful explanation. The question of ordinations stemming from Chalcedon is also said to have arisen, but little information is given on this point.

§§11-33 cover the second day, during which the *plerophoria* and Syrian Orthodox objections to Chalcedon were discussed; the latter centre on the council's acceptance of Theodoret and the Letter of Ibas. Ibas' letter causes the Chalcedonian delegation some embarrassment and they try to assert that a particular *praxis* had not taken place at all at Chalcedon. Discussion then turns to Cyril's letter to Eulogius, and the authority of doctrinal statements of the fathers which did not happen to be 'confirmed' by Chalcedon.

On the third day (§§34-47) the bishops met in the presence of the emperor who asks the Syrian Orthodox what they have

⁽⁹⁾ See my preliminary list of contents in "Some new letters of the Patriarch Severus", *Studia Patristica* 12 (1975), pp. 17-24.

⁽¹⁰⁾ As will be seen, the summary published by Nau gives the substance of what must have been lost at the end.

⁽¹¹⁾ See below, pp. 118-120, for a comparison of the contents with those of Innocentius' account.

achieved. The reply is that they have dispelled suspicions some had had that they were heretical (i.e. Eutychians). Justinian accepts this, but he wants practical results, in other words the ending of the Syrian Orthodox withdrawal from communion with the Chalcedonians. He tries to get them to go to discuss the doctrinal problems with the other patriarchs, but they offer various excuses, whereupon Justinian presses them to suggest some means of reunion themselves, and asks them if they are in communion with the Patriarch of Alexandria, evidently a point of some delicacy, but whose exact significance is obscure: since the bishops' guarded reply was couched in manifestly anti-Julianist language, it would seem that Timothy had at that point been won over by the Julianist faction in Alexandria. After this the text breaks off, but we have the summary of the Syrian Orthodox bishops' own proposals (and some indications of the concessions the emperor was willing to make himself) in the last paragraphs of the summary published by Nau.

The new text also gives some interesting information on certain procedural points. The Syrian Orthodox bishops repeatedly try to have the discussions taken down officially in writing, but this was turned down by the Chalcedonian bishops and, more importantly, by Strategius, the *locum tenens* for the Magister (§II). Their intention in asking for this becomes clear in §33, when, at the end of the second day, they ask that the emperor should learn of the day's proceedings with both parties present, and not just the Chalcedonian (as had happened on the first day). Although this is promised, matters turn out otherwise the next day (§34), and the Chalcedonian delegation saw the emperor before the other side, and when the latter asked the emperor for permission to give him their own account of what went on, they were refused (§37).

With these preliminaries it is time to turn to the text itself. A fuller discussion of certain aspects of the contents of our new document will be reserved until after the text and translation have been given.

The conversations with the Syrian Orthodox under Justinian 91

Text⁽¹²⁾ and translation

The orthography (often inconsistent for recurrent Greek words) of Harvard syr. 22 (= **H**) is preserved throughout. In the small number of places where I have found it necessary to correct the text I give the reading of the manuscript in each case in the apparatus.

In the translation, words in brackets are supplied for the sake of the sense. In the notes I give cross references to Innocentius' account (= **I**) and to the Syrian Orthodox summary published by NAU (= **S**)⁽¹³⁾. Since the latter text has been unduly neglected I also give a translation of this document, following the translation of Harvard syr. 22.

⁽¹²⁾ The text is published by kind permission of the Harvard College Library, and I should like here to thank the Librarian and the staff of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, for their help and kindness on my various visits to the library.

⁽¹³⁾ **H**, **I** and **S** are quoted by section number.

Translation — Harvard syr. 22

1 [...] prepared at their hands. Along with it he also gave the statement (*plerophoria*)⁽¹⁴⁾ which the bishops made after they went up to the capital. And the bishops were urging that those documents (*chartai*) be read in the presence of him (*sc.* Justinian) and the (state) officials who were there. But the emperor put off the matter, saying: 'I will read them when I have time'.

With this speech the second meeting (*syntychia*) ended.

2 After a certain number of days there arrived at the capital the bishops from the opposing faction who had been summoned by the emperor; their names are as follows: Hypatius of Ephesus, Stephan of Isaurian Seleucia, Innocentius of Amurnia, John of Bizue — these (two) towns are in Thrace — and Anthimus of Trebizond⁽¹⁵⁾. The emperor sent them the document of the statement which the orthodox bishops had given him⁽¹⁶⁾; he also sent it to the holder of the see of the capital. (His intention was) that they should read and examine it minutely and prepare themselves for discussion.

3 After this the order (came) for the two parties to assemble in the hall known as Beth Hormisdas, which is today joined to the Palace⁽¹⁷⁾. There the discussion was to take place in the presence of the *synkelloi*⁽¹⁸⁾ of the holder of the (patriarchal) throne of the capital, seeing that he himself did not come⁽¹⁹⁾. Strategius⁽²⁰⁾ the patrician was allocated to listen to the discussion and report on developments to the emperor; he took the place of the *Magistros*.

⁽¹⁴⁾ The text is preserved in Ps. Zechariah *Eccl. Hist.* IX.15 (see note 7). S 1 evidently refers to these initial audiences with the emperor.

⁽¹⁵⁾ The lists in I 6 and S 8 are identical.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Cp I 9.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Cp I 4. On the House of Hormisdas (to the SW of the Great Palace) see R. GUILLAND, *Etudes de topographie de Constantinople byzantine* (Berliner byzantinische Arbeiten 37; 1969), pp. 294-303. Procopius, *Aedif.* I.10.4, says that it was embellished and joined to the Palace by Justinian ('when he became emperor', according to I.4.2); our text implies that it had not yet been joined to the Palace in 532, but was so shortly afterwards. See also C. MANGO in *Byz.Z* 68 (1975), pp. 385-6.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Named by I 6 as Heraclianus and Laurentius. Innocentius also mentions the presence of 'Leontius apocrisarius', on the problem

4 When they had assembled ⁽²¹⁾ and sat down facing each other, Hypatius began churning over his usual old inanities, blaming the blessed Dioscorus for accepting the wicked Eutyches at the second synod of Ephesus ⁽²²⁾. It is the custom of the upholders of the heresy of Nestorius to collect together empty complaints against the orthodox fathers: since they cannot make a defence for their own flimsy teachings, they hope to cover up their own wicked beliefs and not let them be examined, by means of calumnies against the saints.

5 ⁽²³⁾ The orthodox bishops, however, were well aware of their opponents' cunning, how, by inviting them to make a defence for the blessed Dioscorus, they would go on to accuse them of the heresy of Eutyches. Accordingly, the orthodox bishops began by anathematizing Eutyches ⁽²⁴⁾, and having thus thrown off from themselves any suspicion of the heresy of Eutyches — (a suspicion) that their opponents wanted to bring upon them — having fended off from themselves this calumny, the orthodox bishops began to fight on behalf of the blessed Dioscorus, showing how Eutyches had submitted a *libellus* in which he acknowledged the orthodox faith, anathematizing Valentinus who says that our Lord brought his body down from heaven, acknowledging too the teaching of the fathers and accepting the creed of Nicea, and that it was (only) after this that Dioscorus had accepted him.

6 The opposing bishops say: 'Dioscorus was negligent in not requiring Eutyches to confess that the Word was of the same nature as us in the flesh' ⁽²⁵⁾.

7 The orthodox bishops say: 'The blessed Dioscorus was satisfied by the Acta (*pepragmena*) at Constantinople, where Eutyches agreed to confess that God the Word was of the same nature as us in the flesh' ⁽²⁶⁾.

⁽²¹⁾ For Innocentius' account of the first day's proceedings, see I 9-18.

⁽²²⁾ Dioscorus' over-hasty reception of Eutyches at Ephesus II was a recurrent point raised by the Chalcedonian side. For the Syrian Orthodox attitude, see also, for example, Severus' *Letter to the people of Tyre* (ed. BROOKS, PO 12, no 32; a larger fragment of the letter is to be found in Harvard syr. 22, f. 5).

⁽²³⁾ For H 5-9, compare S 8.

⁽²⁴⁾ Cp I 10, 16.

8 The opposing bishops say: 'What was said (only) hesitatingly is not a clear confession. For this reason it was all the more necessary for Dioscorus to make exact enquiry of Eutyches concerning the term 'of the same nature' (i.e. *homoousios*). And then they enlarged on the matter, saying: 'Dioscorus' neglect over exactitude is a betrayal of the faith, and he who neglects even one small item from matters that are obligatory is subject to censures and serious punishments'.

9 The orthodox bishops said: 'Reserve those words and the discussion of them for the proper time; but now tell us, do you hold the blessed Dioscorus to be a heretic?'

The opposing bishops say: 'We do not hold him to be a heretic, for his opinions were orthodox, but he was neglectful in matters of urgent importance'. After this they added other lines of argument, saying that the synod at Chalcedon had met very usefully on the matter of Eutyches ⁽²⁷⁾.

10 With this the first day's session was dissolved. Other things were discussed there (too), about ordinations (*cheirotoniai*) ⁽²⁸⁾: on these, the orthodox bishops said that the ordinations which were transmitted from the synod of Chalcedon were confirmed by true faith and by communion with the orthodox.

11 The next day ⁽²⁹⁾ they gathered again, and first of all the orthodox bishops asked that what was said might be taken down in writing, just as they had asked the previous day, without success. The opposing bishops did not accept this, not did the *locum tenens* for the Magistros, saying: 'I did not receive any such authorization from the serene emperor' ⁽³⁰⁾.

12 The orthodox bishops asked for the statement they had given to the emperor to be read ⁽³¹⁾. They straightway provided a copy and it was read out, after which they asked the opponents saying: 'Say if you have anything you find fault with in this statement'.

⁽²⁷⁾ Cp I 18.

⁽²⁸⁾ There is nothing on this in Innocentius. Cp *Synodicon* (ed. VÖÖBUS) §§ 20, 23.

⁽²⁹⁾ For Innocentius' account of the second day, see I 19-78.

⁽³⁰⁾ There is no mention of this in Innocentius.

⁽³¹⁾ According to Innocentius (I 9) the Syrian Orthodox bishops opened the session on the *first* day by saying that they had handed over *satisfactionis chartulam de fide nostra* to the emperor; Hypatius, the

13 The opposing bishops replied: 'We hold a moderate opinion about it'. And they returned a question to the orthodox bishops: 'Tell us if what is in the statement is all you have to find fault with the synod that gathered at Chalcedon?'⁽³²⁾.

14 The orthodox bishops said: 'That is not all; we have many more things to censure in the synod, but above all else, the fact that they accepted Ibas, and again that they accepted him on the basis of his Letter to Mari the Persian⁽³³⁾ which they accepted when it was read out before them, (despite) its being full of every wickedness; and on its basis they held (Ibas) to be orthodox. They also accepted the wicked Theodoret⁽³⁴⁾, without his having changed from his evil belief; and they gave him back the priesthood too'.

15 The opposing bishops said: '[3 lines lost] Cyril received him . . . because he had made a union with the Orientals'⁽³⁵⁾. They further added: 'The synod accepted Theodoret with greater exactitude than did the holy Cyril'⁽³⁶⁾.

16 The orthodox bishops said: 'First of all, along with the entire eastern synod (*sc.* Ephesus), the blessed Cyril also accepted Theodoret, before he had yet been deprived of his priesthood: this, on the grounds that he held the same opinions as the orientals, and gave utterance to them, and as someone who had removed himself from his utter wickedness'.

17 Then after this the orthodox bishops said: 'At that time⁽³⁷⁾ the wicked heresy of Nestorius was gaining strength and was destroying the souls of men, with the result that the bishops of the entire eastern diocese⁽³⁸⁾ did not want to sign the deposition of Nestorius, and so there was a danger that the greater portion

⁽³²⁾ Cp I 21. According to Innocentius the Syrian Orthodox had agreed that the Council of Chalcedon had 'justly' met — *si et iustum finem suscepisset* (I 20).

⁽³³⁾ ACO II.1, pp. 391-3. According to Innocentius their prime objection was to the novelty of the 'two natures'. Only later (I 74-8), after the discussion of Cyril's Letter to Eulogius (= H 25-30) and the reception of Theodoret (= H 14-17), does Innocentius mention Ibas' Letter. H passes over in silence Hypatius' allegation that the one nature testimonia adduced by the Syrian Orthodox (in their *plerophoria*) were forgeries or interpolations.

⁽³⁴⁾ Cp I 68-73.

⁽³⁵⁾ Cp I 70-71.

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(36) Cp I 78: Chalcedonense ergo concilium circa Ibam et Theodoretum districtius agit quam beatus Cyrillus.
 (37) I.e. around Ephesus I.
 (38) In the secular sense; the Greek loan word *purnasa* < *πρόνοος* is employed.

of the world would be filled with the harm brought about by Nestorius' wickedness. For this reason the blessed Cyril, like a wise doctor in an emergency, accepted all the bishops of the diocese of the Orient — even if it was without going into details (*lit.* exactly) — once they had acknowledged that Nestorius had been deposed (*lit.* ejected) by them from the priesthood, and they themselves had given an orthodox profession of faith: he did not consider Theodoret as a case (where the malady) was mingled in with and joined to the entire body. So afterwards, when he learnt that he had remained in his teachings that were hateful to [5 lines lost] Theodoret . . . and he reminded John⁽³⁹⁾ that 'Theodoret needs reprimands (*lit.* blows) from you'. Then, after a certain time, the synod at Chalcedon took place, and when the orthodox faith had been established through the grace of God, and while all peoples everywhere were rejecting the wicked heresy of Nestorius with the result that Theodoret, too, of evil name, was ejected from the priesthood⁽⁴⁰⁾ because of his failure to repent of his wickedness, (it was at that point that) the synod at Chalcedon received him without trial, (thus) putting itself under just condemnation. How are those who received him not guilty of his wickedness, since, when he had anathematized Nestorius alone, they did not (go on) to require him to anathematize his wicked writings which he wrote against the holy Cyril and against the true faith?'

18 The opposing bishops were put to shame by these (words) and kept silence, whereupon the orthodox bishops reverted to the discussion of the wicked Ibas, and they read from the Acta of the synod of Chalcedon the declaration (*dialalia*) of Pascasinus, Lucensius and Bonifatius⁽⁴¹⁾, the representatives of Leo who was bishop of the church of Rome. In this declaration they said in brief that on the basis of the letter that had been read out Ibas was orthodox.

19 The orthodox bishops then asked the Magistros to allow the Letter to be read. He did so⁽⁴²⁾, and the Letter of the wicked Ibas addressed to Mari the Persian was read out. [3½ lines lost]

⁽³⁹⁾ Patriarch of Antioch; see ACO I.4, p. 231.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ At Ephesus II, 449.

⁽⁴¹⁾ ACO II.1, p. 398 (161); also cited by Severus in a letter to Sergius the physician and sophist (*Collected Letters*, 31, in PO 12).

because they did not endure . . . the wicked things in it. In reply, the opposing bishops could find neither defence, nor (evidence of) forgery; rather, they renounced the *praxis* ⁽⁴³⁾, saying: 'This did not take place at Chalcedon'. And they demanded that the orthodox bishops demonstrate that it did.

20 At this the orthodox bishops laughed, and said: 'whence else can you show the ? ⁽⁴⁴⁾ that the synod at Chalcedon took place, except from what was written there, (documents) that are to be found all over the world?' A great argument was stirred up over this, and the opposing bishops held out in their denial.

21 The orthodox bishops said to them: 'Tell (us) now whether you accept the Letter of Ibas?' ⁽⁴⁵⁾

The opposing bishops were put out by this too, and said: 'We do not accept what was wrongly said in it' ⁽⁴⁶⁾.

22 In retort the orthodox bishops said: 'Then, in the case of Nestorius or any other heretic, you hold it is only necessary to reject what is wrongly said, and no more. It was in vain, it seems, that the all-wise fighters for the mysteries of the Church anathematized the heretics, in that the latter said a few things that were not wrong, but which are worthy of acceptance. As to your saying that the *praxis* did not take place at Chalcedon concerning [$\frac{1}{2}$ line lost] anathematize everyone who [accepts] the Letter of Ibas, for [$\frac{1}{2}$ line lost] the anathema will not transgress [1 word lost] against the synod at Chalcedon, seeing that this *praxis* did not take place there, as you assert' ⁽⁴⁷⁾.

⁽⁴³⁾ Innocentius is silent on all this. It is interesting in this connection that the Syrian Orthodox do not quote the other explicit acceptance of Ibas' Letter, by Eunomius of Nicomedia: this has been excised from the extant Greek texts (ACO II.1, p. 400 with note) of the Acts of Chalcedon and survives only in the old Latin translation quoted by Vigilius (ACO IV.2, p. 160). Although the section must still have been in the Acts in 553 (see SCHWARTZ, *Abhand. Bayer. Akad. Wiss.* 32,2 (1925), p. 12), the fact that it was not cited by the Syrian Orthodox in 532 might suggest that it had already been excised by that date in some copies of the Acta circulating in Constantinople; in the present passage we are witnessing a less successful attempt to suppress the other 'incriminating' evidence that Chalcedon accepted Ibas on the basis of his Letter to Mari. (I should like to thank the Revd. L. WICKHAM for drawing my attention to Eunomius' statement).

⁽⁴⁴⁾ KRN. I am baffled by this; the Revd. L. WICKHAM ingeniously suggests to me that this might hide χ (= 600 fathers of Chalcedon) + $\rho\nu$ (= 150 fathers of Constantinople — but in Syriac this should be *qn*), but it is hard to fit this into the Syriac sentence as it now stands. Cor-

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(c) Sic. (d) Sic.

rection to KDN ('thus' in Christian Palestinian Aramaic, but not Syriac) does not commend itself.

(45) I 75.

(46) Cp I 47 (p. 177³²⁻⁴) in a totally different context (quoted by the Chalcedonians from Cyril's Letter to Eulogius)

(47) Despite the breaks enough survives to make it quite certain that the Syrian Orthodox bishops try to get their opponents to condemn the Letter of Ibas, seeing that they alleged that the *dialalia* of the Roman delegates accepting it did not really feature in the Acts of Chalcedon.

23 The opposing bishops said: 'We will not do this'. By their refusal to anathematize (the Letter of Ibas), they testified that this *praxis* did take place. But they were unable to offer any defence for this manifest wickedness, with the result that the shame of their denial was apparent to the auditor and to all those who were present.

24 When (all) these things had been said on this topic, they came to the examination of the faith. The opposing bishops read the Letter of the oriental bishops that had been written to the blessed Cyril concerning the agreement with him ⁽⁴⁸⁾. Following this, the Letter of the allwise Cyril, which took the form of a reply to the Orientals, was read out ⁽⁴⁹⁾.

25 The orthodox bishops said: 'We acknowledge that we accept both (letters), in accordance with the understanding of the wise teacher'. They then requested, saying: 'We have in our possession letters of the blessed Cyril, one addressed to Eulogius ⁽⁵⁰⁾, and another to the blessed Acacius bishop of Melitene ⁽⁵¹⁾. Let them be read out (too)'.

26 Before they were read the (opposing) bishops said: 'We do not accept, for purposes of ecclesiastical law, those things which were not confirmed by the synod' ⁽⁵²⁾.

27 The orthodox bishops held up the discussion and demanded that this be put in writing, and that the opposing (bishops) should say openly that they do not [$\frac{1}{2}$ line lost] ⁽⁵³⁾ which was written [$\frac{1}{2}$ line lost] Cyril aft[er the sy]nod at Ephesus [1 word lost] for these things were not confirmed by the synod, and, according to their word, they necessarily hold them not to be accepted.

28 Then the orthodox bishops introduced Gregory the Theologian who called ⁽⁵⁴⁾ 'the law of the orthodox' all that had been

⁽⁴⁸⁾ In 433.

⁽⁴⁹⁾ Cp I 41.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ ACO I.1.4, pp. 35-7 (= Ep. 44).

⁽⁵¹⁾ ACO I.1.4, pp. 20-31 (= Ep. 40). I 44 mentions the letter to Eulogius, the second to Succensus, 'and others'; the discrepancy between I and H here is probably only apparent, for the end of the letter to Acacius was attached to the second letter to Succensus in Dionysius Exiguus' Latin translation of the latter (see ACO I.5, p. 303).

⁽⁵²⁾ Hypatius' words are given in I 36 as follows: *nos ea quae epistolis eius synodicis consentiunt, suscipimus; quae autem non consentiunt,*

written by Athanasius, the great fighter in support of religious doctrine, despite the fact that these (works) had not been confirmed by the synod.

29 Since the father and teacher Cyril had likewise aided the truth, his Letter to Eulogius was read⁽⁵⁵⁾. Once its contents had been seen, the orthodox bishops said: 'We are of a like opinion, and we acknowledge the single nature of God the Word incarnate⁽⁵⁶⁾, and we do not divide up the single Christ after the union into a duality of natures, even though we recognize their difference'.

30 The orthodox bishops also wanted the Letter to Acacius of Melitene to be read out⁽⁵⁷⁾, but the auditor checked them: 'Much of the day has already passed, and', he said, 'it is altogether equivalent in its sense to that addressed to Eulogius'.

31 The opposing bishops said: 'We too (will) introduce the holy fathers and show that they spoke of two natures with reference to Christ'⁽⁵⁸⁾.

32 The orthodox bishops pressed them, saying: 'Show us the God-clothed fathers who (used) these words and said that it is right to call Christ two united and inseparate natures after the union; just as we have (ourselves) shown that they taught that after the union [it is right to speak of only a single nature of God the Word incarnate']⁽⁵⁹⁾. The opposing bishops promised: 'We will show this tomorrow'.

33 The orthodox bishops asked that the emperor should not learn of the conversations from one of the sides (only), as had happened the previous day, but that this should take place with both sides present. They promised (that this should be so). Thereupon the session was dissolved⁽⁶⁰⁾.

⁽⁵⁵⁾ Cp I 44. H mentions nothing of the long discussion of this letter which ensues in I 45-9.

⁽⁵⁶⁾ Cp S 2.

⁽⁵⁷⁾ According to I 50-7 this was also discussed (he calls it the second letter to Succensus, for reasons explained above, note 51). In Innocentius' account discussion of Theodoret and Ibas takes place after that of Cyril's letters (see note 33).

⁽⁵⁸⁾ See next note.

⁽⁵⁹⁾ The whole of this statement is quoted almost verbatim in S 2. I 58-61 gives 'two nature' testimonia adduced by the Chalcedonians already on the second day. No doubt the Syrian Orthodox bishops

34 The opposing bishops, spurning the just request that the orthodox bishops had made at the end of the evening (session), went in to the emperor on their own and informed him of what they chose (to tell him). Moreover the next day⁽⁶¹⁾, without having yet provided the testimonies of the holy fathers which they had promised — indeed they could not have done so — they came together to the emperor and sent for the orthodox bishops to come too⁽⁶²⁾. They came, and the emperor asked them: 'What are you doing?'

35 They replied: 'By means of the statement supplied by us to your majesty, and by means of what has arisen in the two days' discussion, we have dispelled the opinion which, it seems, some people held of us, that we do not think in an orthodox fashion'.

36 The emperor said: 'I am not of the opinion, either, that you do not think in an orthodox fashion, but you do not want to communicate out of excessive (scruples over) detail, and because of (certain) names which have been put on the diptychs'.

37 The orthodox bishops asked if they could give an account of what had arisen in the course of the previous two days' discussions, [for] they wanted [3½ lines lost] he (*sc.* the emperor) said . . . you agreed with each other; I do not want to learn what arose between you in the dialogue'⁽⁶³⁾. So he was unwilling to listen to their account of the discussion.

38 He demanded of them, saying: 'Because you have not been able to come to an agreement, but have left the division without any solution and the schism without any healing, go off with those appointed by me to the archbishops of Rome or of Alexandria and Antioch and Jerusalem, and ask them concerning the faith'⁽⁶⁴⁾.

39 The orthodox bishops declined to undertake the journey to the above-mentioned holders of sees, on the grounds of old age and weakness of body. They added in conclusion: 'There is no propriety in our going to those who hold the opposite view to our own and asking them about the faith'.

⁽⁶¹⁾ Innocentius' account of the third day (I 79-81) contains only generalities and praise for the emperor's speech.

⁽⁶²⁾ That the Chalcedonian bishops saw the emperor first on their own is specifically stated in I 79.

⁽⁶³⁾ The sense is unclear; perhaps it should be: 'I do not wish to hear unless (or, until) you have reached an agreement'.

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 79 b. I

(g) Corrected by the first hand from *ܟܕܫܢܟܝܬܘܬܘܢ*.

(h) Ms om *waw*.

(64) Cp S 3.

40 The emperor said: 'Then suggest some means so that the union of all the patriarchs can be achieved ⁽⁶⁵⁾; or, go (yourselves) to them'.

41 The orthodox bishops say: 'The divine canons do not allow us, insignificant bishops in small towns, to provide any common (statement) on the faith ⁽⁶⁶⁾. Moreover, in the statement that we have provided and in the dialogue we have held at the emperor's orders, we do not speak for the (church) as a whole, but we have (simply) made clear the liberty of our faith, as we have said' ⁽⁶⁷⁾.

42 The emperor made the same demands, requiring them either to go to the holders of the other sees or to suggest some means [of union].

43 The orthodox bishops made further excuses, on grounds of the canons, propriety, and feebleness of body.

44 After this the emperor asked them: 'Tell me if you are in communion with the archbishop of Alexandria?' ⁽⁶⁸⁾.

The orthodox bishops say: 'If that archbishop of Alexandria remains in the orthodox faith, then we embrace communion with him'.

45 The opposing bishops who were there demanded that they should say openly if they were in communion with the archbishop of Alexandria in the same way as they themselves openly confessed that they were in close communion with the archbishop of Rome.

46 The orthodox bishops said: 'Everyone who confesses the orthodox faith and who, on the other hand, anathematizes alien and foul doctrines; who says that God the Word was incarnate, and that he suffered for us in his flesh — (flesh) that is by nature subject to suffering and death; (that he suffered) of his own will,

⁽⁶⁵⁾ Cp S 3. Their suggestions do not survive in H, but are given in S 5-7.

⁽⁶⁶⁾ Quoted almost verbatim in S 3.

⁽⁶⁷⁾ The phrase 'liberty of our faith' is indeed used in the plerophoria (Ps. Zechariah *Eccl. Hist.* IX.15 (ed. BROOKS, p. 116¹⁶⁻¹⁷).

⁽⁶⁸⁾ I.e. Timothy IV (†535). As is shown by H 47 this was evidently a matter of some delicacy, and the guarded reply of §46, using anti-Julianist language, suggests that Timothy was at that moment a supporter of the Julianists, rather than the Severans. Little is known of the course of events in Alexandria at this time, but some support for

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(1) *Sic.*

this suggestion may come from a fragment of a letter, not from or to Severus, preserved as f. 73 of Harvard syr. 22 (I hope to publish this in due course).

(both) sufferings that are natural and not in dispute, and death; (everyone who) distinguishes the time before the cross and that after the resurrection — with such a man we are in communion'.
 47 Now the bishops thought and were of the opinion that, if the emperor asked them about the (archbishop) in Alexandria, they should reply in a moderate way, judging and considering that this was the most advantageous course for the subject under consideration ⁽⁶⁹⁾. [*The rest is lost*]

⁽⁶⁹⁾ The gist of the contents of the lost portion of **H** can be found in **S** 4-7 (see translation below).

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Translation - Add. 12155 (PO 13, pp. 192-6) = S

From what the orthodox bishops said in the presence of the emperor Justinian when they were summoned by him to make an apologia concerning the true faith and to suggest a way by which the churches might be united. The bishops are as follows: Sergius of Cyrrhus⁽⁷⁰⁾, Peter of Reshaina⁽⁷¹⁾, Thomas of Germanicia⁽⁷²⁾, Thomas of Dara⁽⁷³⁾, John of Tella⁽⁷⁴⁾.

1. When the emperor blamed them for leaving their cities without (due) cause⁽⁷⁵⁾, they told him: 'A new sentence has come

⁽⁷⁰⁾ HONIGMANN, pp. 68-9.

⁽⁷¹⁾ HONIGMANN, pp. 104-5.

⁽⁷²⁾ HONIGMANN, pp. 73-4.

⁽⁷³⁾ HONIGMANN, p. 104. See below, pp. 117-118, for the discrepancy with I 3 over the list of Syrian Orthodox participants.

⁽⁷⁴⁾ HONIGMANN, pp. 51-2. John's part in the conversations is specifically mentioned by his biographer, Elias (ed. BROOKS, p. 59-60).

⁽⁷⁵⁾ This will refer to their flight in 519, after Justin's accession; on the present occasion they had been specifically summoned from 'the

on the church, and this was the cause of our departure; for *libelli* were given to us all to put our signature to, (*libelli*) in which we were required to anathematize ourselves and those who were our fathers — and indeed more or less the entire world. For to anathematize Peter, archbishop of Antioch and all who remain in communion with him, and Acacius of Constantinople and Peter of Alexandria ⁽⁷⁶⁾, as well as those who persevere ⁽⁷⁷⁾ in communion with them, (this) is nothing other than to anathematize ourselves, and, as it were, everything under the sky’.

2. When they had openly ⁽⁷⁸⁾ shown forth their true (faith) in the presence of the bishops whom the emperor had brought to discuss with them, and in the presence of the (state) officials who were listening, and stated that ‘the fathers taught us to confess a single nature of the incarnate Word after the union’ ⁽⁷⁹⁾, then they said to the opposing party: ‘Show (us) the God-clothed fathers who used the words ‘after the union we should call the one Christ two natures, united or inseparable’, in the same way that we have shown that they taught that it is right to acknowledge one nature of God the Word incarnate after the union’ ⁽⁸⁰⁾.

The opposing party said they would show (this), but they failed to do so ⁽⁸¹⁾.

3. Then the emperor tells the orthodox that, because they had not agreed to what the diphysites said, they should go again (*or* now) to the patriarch of Rome and of Antioch and of Jerusalem ⁽⁸²⁾, and offer them arguments, or provide some means for the peace of the churches ⁽⁸³⁾.

desert’ by the dux Theodotus (not otherwise known: cp P.-W. *sub nomine* (no 39)); cp Ps. Zechariah, *Ecccl. Hist.* IX.15 (ed. BROOKS, p. 116¹⁸).

⁽⁷⁶⁾ I.e. Peter the Fuller (†488), Acacius (†489) and Peter Mongus (†490). S 1 evidently refers to the two audiences which the Syrian Orthodox bishops had with Justinian prior to the arrival of the Chalcidian bishops.

⁽⁷⁷⁾ NAU misses the sense here.

⁽⁷⁸⁾ NAU mistakenly prints (and translates) ‘*ly’yt* for *gly’yt*’.

⁽⁷⁹⁾ Cp H 29.

⁽⁸⁰⁾ A direct quotation of H 32.

⁽⁸¹⁾ Cp H 34.

⁽⁸²⁾ Cp H 38.

⁽⁸³⁾ Cp H 40.

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The orthodox bishops say: 'The canon does not allow five insignificant bishops, bishops moreover of small towns, to provide any common (statement) on the faith by themselves' ⁽⁸⁴⁾.

4. ⁽⁸⁵⁾ When they asked (the emperor) if they might be dismissed to their homes (*lit.* places), the emperor said: 'Put down in writing that you will not make any ordinations, and that you will not baptize or give the sacrament to anyone apart from those who are with you' ⁽⁸⁶⁾.

They refused to put this in writing, saying: 'It would be an insult to the emperor if we were to agree with him in writing to the situation that he has ordered (i.e. the *status quo*)'.

The emperor then said: 'In that case, let each of you say that he will not do any of these things; then you can go. Otherwise you will be dismissed to Zeugma' ⁽⁸⁷⁾.

They replied: 'The divine laws do not allow priests to use oaths, nor can any man transgress an imperial order without danger'.

The emperor said: 'Either bring Severus to suggest some means for the peace of the churches, or suggest one yourselves'.

They said: 'We do not know where the holy Severus is' ⁽⁸⁸⁾.

⁽⁸⁴⁾ Cp H 41.

⁽⁸⁵⁾ S 4-7 constitute our only source for the lost ending of H.

⁽⁸⁶⁾ Cp Elias, *Life of John of Tella* (ed. BROOKS, p. 59): 'The emperor ordered them with threats not to exercise any priestly function for the benefit of those who agreed with him (*sc.* Justinian; i.e. for Chalcedonians)'. So ms A, but B has 'for those who do not agree with you (*sc.* the Syrian Orthodox bishops)'. Brooks' text and translation wrongly conflate the two readings (*... ergo eos qui ei non consentirent...*), giving the wrong sense: the text of both A and B agree with the Summary here in having Justinian seek to limit the bishops' sacerdotal functions to their own party: they were not to try to win over Chalcedonians to their point of view (presumably Justinian had cases like those of Z'ura/Zooras or Mare in mind).

⁽⁸⁷⁾ HONIGMANN (p. 75) conjectures that this was because Zeugma (= Belkis) was a Chalcedonian stronghold at the time; in view of its military importance this seems likely: Procopius (*Aedif.* II.9.18-20) informs us that its walls were renewed under Justinian; cp also J. WAGNER, *Seleukeia am Euphrat|Zeugma* (Wiesbaden, 1976), p. 96.

⁽⁸⁸⁾ From Severus' reply to the emperor, preserved in Ps. Zechariah *Eccl. Hist.* IX.16, we know that Justinian wrote to him at about this time, asking him to come to the capital; (it is possible that this letter

5. They then pressed them to suggest some means themselves by which it might be both fitting and possible to achieve the peace of the holy churches. Under this pressure the orthodox bishops said: 'We do not think that those who ⁽⁸⁹⁾ have specifically withdrawn themselves from communion with the opposite party, will be united, unless they ⁽⁹⁰⁾ anathematize those who speak of two natures after the inexplicable union, as well as the Tome of Leo, and what took place at Chalcedon in opposition to the orthodox faith'. They were silent, however, for the moment about any anathema of particular names out of consideration for the accomplishment of universal union.

6. The bishops also said this: 'First of all the *libelli* of the *Romaioi* must come to an end, to which all the bishops to-day holding sees have put their signature'.

Such was the advice of the orthodox bishops if ways were to be found of achieving the peace of the churches.

7. The emperor objected to this, (and said): 'Would (the following conditions), perhaps ⁽⁹¹⁾, be acceptable to them: they might anathematize Diodore, Theodore, Theodoret, Ibas, Nestorius and Eutyches, and accept the Twelve Chapters of the holy Cyril, while anathematizing what had been written against them; they might confess one nature of God the Word incarnate, but they should refrain from anathematizing those who speak of two natures after the inexpressible union, (anathematizing) instead those who hold Nestorian views and divide up Christ into two natures, while confessing, as a crafty device which they had discovered long ago, together with the other side 'the two united and inseparable natures' ⁽⁹²⁾; they should accept the synod at Chalcedon as far as the expulsion of Eutyches was concerned, but they need not accept the definition of the faith made there;

may have been sent at the *same* time as the summons issued to the oriental bishops through Theodotus). It was only in 535 that Severus eventually agreed to come to Constantinople.

⁽⁸⁹⁾ I.e. opponents of Chalcedon.

⁽⁹⁰⁾ I.e. supporters of Chalcedon.

⁽⁹¹⁾ NAU misses the sense here. The extent of Justinian's concessions is of great interest.

⁽⁹²⁾ I.e. the Syrian Orthodox should distinguish between the ordinary upholders of Chalcedon and those who did so as a convenient front to hide their genuinely Nestorian position.

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they should cease their anathema of the Tome of Leo; and the *libelli* of the *Romaioi* should not be suspended'.

These things failed to persuade the orthodox ⁽⁹³⁾.

8. The bishops whom the emperor had brought to speak with the orthodox bishops are as follows: Hypatius of Ephesus, Stephan of Isaurian Seleucia, Innocentius of Amorium, John of Byzie ⁽⁹⁴⁾ — the towns of these (two) are in Thrace — and Anthimus of Trebizond. These men found fault with Dioscorus because he was not (sufficiently) attentive to details in (the matter of) the reception of Eutyches, (failing) to examine him on the matter of (his) faith carefully on every point, as is right that everyone should be attentive to all the tricks of the heretics; but they had no complaint against him (Dioscorus) in matters of faith ⁽⁹⁵⁾.

The Participants

Our sources are somewhat at variance over the names of the participants:

(1) Innocentius specifically says *nos quidem eramus quinque et illi vero sex*. On the Chalcedonian side he gives (I 3) Hypatius of Ephesus, John of Vezina, Stephan of Seleucia, Anthimus of Trebizond, as well as himself. With this **H** and **S** are in agreement. Innocentius also mentions that Demetrius of Philippi was amongst those summoned by the emperor, but owing to illness he was unable to attend; the silence of **H** and **S** is thus not surprising.

On the Syrian Orthodox side Innocentius lists (I 6): Sergius of Cyrrhus, Thomas of Germanicia, Philoxenus of Dulichium, Peter of Theodosioupolis (= Resh'aina), Iohannes of Constantia (= Tella) and Nonnus of Ceresina. Neither Philoxenus ⁽⁹⁶⁾ nor

⁽⁹³⁾ It is a pity that the summary does not specify whether all or only some (as would seem likely) of these conditions were unacceptable; the matter of the *libelli* would have been an obvious stumbling block.

⁽⁹⁴⁾ Corrupted to Beroea in the manuscript; cp **H** 2 for the list. In both **H** and **S** Maronia has been corrupted.

⁽⁹⁵⁾ Cp **H** 4-9; evidently the most important outcome of the conversations from the Syrian Orthodox point of view, which is not surprising in view of Justinian's legislation against heretics.

⁽⁹⁶⁾ HONIGMANN, pp. 72-3.

Nonnus⁽⁹⁷⁾ figure in the Syriac list (for which we have only **S**); in the case of Philoxenus this is not unexpected in view of his subsequent defection.

(2) The Syriac summary agrees with Innocentius over the Chalcedonian bishops, but for the orientals it gives: Sergius of Cyrrhus, Peter of Resh'aina, Thomas of Germanicia, Thomas of Dara and John of Tella. Philoxenus is omitted and Thomas of Dara replaces Nonnus of Circessium; the order, too, is slightly different.

(3) Elijah in his *Life of John of Tella* (ed. Brooks, p. 59) specifically states that there were eight bishops on the Syrian Orthodox side, of whom John of Tella was one.

Even supposing that both Nonnus and Thomas of Dara were present, this would still only make the number up to seven. One possible solution is to suppose that the number eight included the abbot John bar Aphtonia, who is known to have accompanied the bishops (see note 8), and who may be the author of **H**.

Innocentius' letter compared with H and S.

It is instructive to compare the accounts of the proceedings as reported by either side, and it is hardly surprising to find that each gives a rather slanted picture, passing over in silence developments in the discussions that proved embarrassing; likewise each gives proportionately more space to the speeches of their own side. Here I list the main topics as given by the various accounts in order to facilitate comparison between the documents.

<i>Innocentius</i>	<i>Syrian Orthodox (H and S)</i>
—	Preliminary audiences of Syrian Orthodox with Justinian(H 1, S 1)
Preliminary audience of Chalcedonians with Justinian (4-5)	—
<i>Day 1 (I 6-18; H 4-10)</i>	
Strategius' address (7-8)	—

(97) HONIGMANN, pp. 53-4.

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chartula of Syrian Orthodox (9)	cp H 2
Reception of Eutyches by Dioscorus (10-18)	H 4-9 ⁽⁹⁸⁾
—	Ordinations stemming from Chalcedon (H 10)
<i>Day 2</i> (I 19-78; H 11-33)	
—	Procedural request (H 11)
Recapitulation of Day 1 (19-20)	—
cp 22-8	Plerophoria read (H 12)
Syrian Orthodox objections to Chalcedon	H 13-14
Their 'one nature' testimonia, allegations of forgery (22-8)	cp H 12
Discussion of technical terms <i>subsistentia</i> and <i>natura</i> (29-32)	—
Flavian's rescript to Theodosius (33)	—
Cyril's testimonia (36-63)	H 24-30 ⁽⁹⁹⁾
Purpose of Councils (64-7)	—
Theodoret (68-73)	H 14-17
Ibas (74-8) ⁽¹⁰⁰⁾	H 18-23
—	Procedural request

Day 3

For Day 3 we have from Innocentius only a very general statement, praising the emperor's speech (**I** 79-81), in contrast to the much more detailed accounts in **H** 34-47 and **S** 3-8.

The remainder of Innocentius' letter (**I** 82-90) is concerned with subsequent events not covered by **H** or **S**: the oriental bish-

⁽⁹⁸⁾ **H** has no mention of Flavian and Eusebius, who both feature in Innocentius.

⁽⁹⁹⁾ **H** omits all reference to the discussion of the Letter to Eulogius, retailed in some detail by Innocentius.

⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ Innocentius is silent on the episode of the *dialalia* of the Roman delegates concerning Ibas' Letter to Mari.

ops, he claims, have it insinuated to the emperor that the Chalcedonian bishops did not believe *deum passum carne*, but this is disclaimed by Hypatius (I 82-6) ⁽¹⁰¹⁾.

The final paragraphs (I 87-90) speak of another audience the Chalcedonian bishops had with Justinian, during which he told them how, before receiving the bishops on Day 3, he had gone to the oratory of the archangel Michael and prayed to God as follows:

si in veritate uniri habent nobis, magis autem sanctae ecclesiae tuae, compunge eos velociter consentire nobis; sin autem nolunt, praepedi eos, ut ex ipsis magis culpa nascatur et non ex nobis (I 88).

Innocentius goes on to report that of the oriental bishops only Philoxenus was won over, although subsequently some clergy and monks accepted communion with the Chalcedonians (I 89); from some of these he learnt (by way of an interpreter, since they only spoke Syriac) that the Syrian Orthodox bishops had told their flock that the Holy Spirit had left the Chalcedonian churches and their baptism (I 90) ⁽¹⁰²⁾.

Conclusion

Our document is not without contemporary interest, in view of the renewed theological discussions between the Syrian Orthodox and both Catholics ⁽¹⁰³⁾ and Orthodox ⁽¹⁰⁴⁾. Reading the accounts of the discussions of 532 as reported by the two sides one can readily enough see that each party has given a biased account of what must have taken place, dwelling on points where

⁽¹⁰¹⁾ Justinian's so-called 'Theopaschite formula' was issued on 15 March 533; this provides the *terminus ante quem* for the discussions.

⁽¹⁰²⁾ For similar claims (this time by East Syrian bishops), see *Chronicle of Seeri* §94 (PO 13, p. 572).

⁽¹⁰³⁾ High-lighted by the visit of His Holiness Mar Ignatius Jacoub III to the Vatican in October 1971; for an English translation of the common declaration of Pope Paul and Mar Ignatius Jacoub, see M. FOUYAS, *The Person of Jesus Christ in the Decisions of the Ecumenical Councils* (Addis Ababa, 1976), p. 237.

⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ Cp FOUYAS, *op. cit.*, pp. 212-32, and the various articles in *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 10 (1964/5).

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they felt they had scored, and passing over in silence awkward moments; nor is it difficult, with our hindsight, to discern certain shortcomings in the attitudes of both sides, and to detect the reasons why the conversations failed to achieve the goal which Justinian had in mind. One may conclude with the hope that the modern successors of these good bishops will learn from the mistakes of their predecessors and achieve success where these had failed ⁽¹⁰⁵⁾.

⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ For a preliminary presentation of the text published here see my "The Orthodox - Oriental Orthodox Conversations of 532", *Apostolos Varnavas* [Nicosia] 41 (1980), pp. 219-27. Justinian's conversations with Paul, the East Syrian bishop of Nisibis, probably belong to much later in his reign (562-3: see A. Guillaumont, "Justinien et l'église de Perse", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 23/4 (1969/70), pp. 39-66).



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Anti-Jewish Polemic and the Emergence of Islam

Vincent Déroche

In a previous article,¹ I carried out an initial assessment of the Byzantine anti-Jewish literature of the sixth to seventh centuries which led to a presentation of the problem of its relation to reality in general, and in particular to the crisis at the start of the seventh century. Indeed, the continuity of the series and the coincidence with conflicts attested to by historical sources implied that the artificial character of these documents did not preclude their containing the echo of a more acute religious confrontation between Jews and Christians in this period. However, on the basis of a study of the political crises in Byzantium in the seventh century,² D. Olster has suggested for his part a radically different reading of the contemporary Eastern Christian sources, polemical texts and others: the Jew would be but an ideological foil, a theatrical figure whose humiliation was highlighted in order to convey an essentially political message, the natural superiority of Christianity over all other politico-religious groups, and most particularly over the new Arab conquerors.³

¹ La polémique antijudaïque au VI^e et au VII^e siècle: un memento unique, les *Képhalaia*, *Travaux et Mémoires* (hereafter: *TM*) 11, 1991, p. 275–311 (hereafter: La polémique...). I will use the following abbreviations: *Doctrina* = *Doctrina Jacobi nuper baptizati*, ed. V. DÉROCHE, *TM* 11, 1991, p. 70–219; *Dialogus Papisci* = *Dialogus Papisci et Philonis*, ed. A. C. McGIFFERT, *Dialogue between a Christian and a Jew*, Marbourg 1889; *Dialogus Timothei* = *The Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila*, ed. R. G. ROBERTSON, Harvard 1986; *Disputatio Gregentii* = *Disputatio Gregentii cum Herbano Iudaeo*, PG 86, col. 621–784; *Quaestiones* = *Quaestiones ad Antiochum ducem*, PG 28, col. 556–708; *Trophées* = *Trophées de Damas*, ed. G. BARDY, PO 15, Paris 1927, p. 169–292.

² *The Politics of Usurpation in the Seventh Century*, Amsterdam 1993.

³ *Roman Defeat, Christian Response and the Literary Construction of the Jew*, Philadelphia 1994 (hereafter *Roman D.*). Olster's reasoning suffers from some ambiguity in the notion of 'race', or of 'racial stereotype' (*Roman D.*, p. 21): there was no theory of race in Byzantium, nor even a consciousness of a racial difference according to modern understanding; Olster incidentally takes note of this (*Roman D.*, n. 122 p. 29) by admitting that it rather has to do with cultural groups, in the modern sense of the term (claiming an ascendance and not a

Thus, the Christian's victory in these debates would take on a political rather than a religious meaning: the Jew of several polemical texts would be a mere front for a new enemy, the Muslim Arab.⁴ Moreover, Olster's textual commentaries imply that other Christian documents on the Jews, such as Strategius' tale of the fall of Jerusalem in 614, hold little value as sources because they distort the events too much for us to see anything other than ideology.⁵ It is clear that, despite being released in 1994, the major part of Olster's book had been written before he acquainted himself with my publications from 1991 onwards.⁶ Despite the inconvenience of a relative lack of information in one or the other, this presents us with the advantage of comparing two independent problematics, all the more for the fact that Olster's thesis is so clear-cut and well articulated: challenging accepted theses is always a beneficial exercise.

In this respect, Averil Cameron⁷ has already carried out a valuable assessment of the question, in which she reasserts the reality of the debate over images, and thus the reality of a purely theological debate between Jews and Christians. She also remains sceptical before the hypothesis of the Jews as substitutes for the Arabs; nevertheless, she too calls into question the reliability of the Christian documents with respect to the Jews, noting that the literary form of the dialogue, or of the questions and answers was so dominant in Christian literature then that it constituted a literary device.⁸ As becomes evident, the problems is philologically

physical type, although this unhappy word also brings him to use such strange expressions as 'universal race' for the Christians, *Roman D.*, p. 122).

⁴ The same line of reasoning can also be found in K. CORRIGAN, *Visual Polemics in the Ninth-Century Psalters*, Cambridge 1992, which interprets the Jewish figures in the Psalters as a polemic in fact directed against the Muslims: here again the Jew becomes a character of convention. In the scope of iconodule polemic, this is only partly admissible: the Jew is the natural example of the iconoclast in accordance with the well known Jewish opposition to figurative representation, so that the insult in the term *ioudaiophrôn* is thus explained without needing to suggest a complicated detour through Islam.

⁵ Olster goes as far as comparing these sources with the sadly famous *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (*Roman D.*, p.19). For Strategius, see B. FLUSIN, *Saint Anastase le Perse et l'histoire de la Palestine au début du VII^e siècle*, Paris 1992, II, p. 131-149.

⁶ In which the *Doctrina* is still quoted according to the pagination of the BONWETSCH edition, and not that of TM 11.

⁷ Byzantines and Jews, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 26, 1996, p. 249-274. Much of the argument can already be found in her article The Jews in seventh century Palestine, *Scripta Classica Israelica* 13, 1994, p. 75-93. We will finish with N. DE LANGE, Jews and Christians in the Byzantine Empire: problems and prospects, *Studies in Church History*, 1992, p. 15-32.

⁸ See Averil CAMERON, Disputations, polemical literature, and the formation of opinion in the early Byzantine Period, in: G. REININK and H. VANSTIPHOUT, ed., *Dispute Poems and Dialogues in the Ancient and Medieval Near East = Orientalia Lovanensia Analecta* 44, Louvain

and historically indissoluble: the evaluation of the written sources holds an initial implicit judgement of the facts, and vice-versa. The great merit of Olster's problematic is, most certainly with good reason, to ascribe to these texts the value of a symptom of one of Christianity's more general crises, texts which are apparently specialised in quite a marginal problem among the great events of the seventh century.

In short, the state of research leads us to ask three difficult and separate questions: 1) are the Christian sources on the Jews of this period, and in particular the polemical texts, reliable and useable? 2) can we make progress in the study of some of these texts? 3) does this study bring us a better understanding of the historical context of the first century of Islam?

1) With respect to the general connection between polemical literature and historical reality, I will simply sum up the main lines of a reasoning that has been developed elsewhere:⁹ if the Christian texts are concerned with responding to Jewish arguments, and even to Jewish counter-arguments, if polemical manuals are produced for real controversies, if anti-Jewish texts continue to be copied, translated and updated, and if the Jewish communities later produced polemical texts that were preserved along with, in the period of our study, at the very least an indirect polemic through the liturgical works, and especially apocalyptic, then there must truly have been at least a literary confrontation between the two communities. When the very sources that have been preserved supply us with the keys to their interpretation – polemical texts against the Jews were written because there was a polemic against the Jews – and when this interpretation facilitates the explanation of the rare clues that we have at our disposal, there is no reason to seek out other more complicated and therefore less justifiable hypotheses. The hypercritical theses that would shrug off the reality of the confrontation between Jews and Christians are too easily influenced by the obvious distortion of facts in favour of the Christians – but what else could be expected from Christian sources? In a somewhat comparable situation in absolutist France, no-one imagined that Pascal had really found an interlocutor in the good Dominican Father of the *Provinciales*, who essentially agreed with the Jansenist arguments; neither did anyone derive from this evident distortion the notion that the Jansenist quarrel in seventeenth-

1991, p. 91–108. The same author gave this polemical literature greater importance in a previous assessment, *The Eastern Provinces in the seventh century A. D. Hellenism and the emergence of Islam*, in: S. SAÏD, ed., *ΕΛΛΗΝΙΣΜΟΣ. Quelques jalons pour une histoire de l'identité grecque*, Leyde / New York 1991, p. 287–313, in particular p. 301–307. [See now also eadem, *Blaming the Jews: the seventh-century invasions of Palestine in context*, *Travaux et Mémoires* 14 (*Mélanges Gilbert Dagron*) (2002), 57–78].

⁹ In *Byzantinorossica*, in press.

century France was but a pure invention of modern scholars: once we identify which side the *Provinciales* took (the Jansenist), their value as a source for the contemporary debate is certain. The atmosphere of unreality that surrounds the anti-Jewish polemical texts of our period is misleading, and for the most part comes quite simply from our ignorance of the actual contemporary situations, which then leads us to judge as unreal what we find unlikely – a highly dangerous method, as we know. The indubitable fact that, at the time, the confrontation between Jews and Christians cannot, by and large, have taken the shape of the court hearing that our texts seem to ascribe to it does not imply that there was no confrontation.

The Persian invasion of the early seventh century, a privileged moment in the history of Palestine, allows us to confirm that this confrontation was not always purely literary, as for once we have Jewish sources at our disposal. The Christian sources simultaneously state the collaboration of the Jews with the Persians¹⁰ and the breaking-up of this collaboration by the Persians.¹¹ However, the fragment of the liturgical poem attributed to Qiliri,¹² with perhaps the *Book of Elias*¹³ and probably the *Signs of the Messiah*¹⁴ and the *Apocalypse of Zorobabel*¹⁵ appear to be the Jewish counterpoint of the Christian texts – indeed, several of these Christian polemical texts, in particular the *Doctrina Jacobi*, also have a very comparable apocalyptic

¹⁰ See Strategius' account, with other sources, a synthesis of which can be found in DAGRON 1991, p. 22–28.

¹¹ See patriarch Modestus' letter to the Armenian katholikos Komitas, preserved in the Armenian chronicle of Pseudo-Sebeos; A. J. BUTLER, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt*, Oxford 1902, p. 63–64; G. DAGRON, *Entre histoire et apocalypse*, *TM* 11, p. 17–46 (hereafter Dagron 1991), in particular p. 25–26. This is a crucial source: it is impossible to conceive how the Christians could have invented this Persian intervention: in turn, this latter confirms that there really was a Jewish problem of a political nature in Palestine, for the Sassanids had no religious reason to take this measure.

¹² E. FLEISCHER, *Solving the Qiliri Riddle*, *Tarbiz. A Quarterly for Jewish Studies* 54/3, 1984–1985, p. 383–427 (in Hebrew, English summary p. IV–V), mentioned by C. ZUCKERMAN in DAGRON 1991.

¹³ Ed. E. SHMUEL, *Midreshei Geulah*, Jerusalem/ Tel Aviv 1954, p. 41–48, in Hebrew (*non vidi*): see R. L. WILKEN's commentary, *The Land called Holy*, New Haven/ London 1992, p. 207–208.

¹⁴ E. MARMORSTEIN, *Les Signes du Messie*, *REJ* 52, 1906, p. 176–186.

¹⁵ Ed. I. LÉVI, *L'apocalypse de Zorobabel et le roi de Perse Siroès*, *REJ* 68, 1914, p. 129–160; 69, 1919, p. 108–121; 71, 1920, 57–65; M. HIMMELFARB, *Sefer Zerubbabel*, in D. STERN and M. MIRSKY, *Rabbinic Fantasies*, Philadelphia/ New York 1990, p. 67–90; the seventh century dating suggested by the editor is generally accepted, except by P. SPECK, *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 4, 1997, p. 183–190. The parallel between Strategius and the *Apocalypse of Zorobabel* allowed B. M. WHEELER, *Imagining the Sassanian capture of Jerusalem*, *OCP* 57, 1991, p. 69–85, to attempt a *tableau* of the events combining both texts.

dimension to them. These texts give weight to the notion that at this time there might have been a Jewish Messiah and a resumption (but under what shape?) of Jewish worship in Jerusalem.¹⁶

We must therefore reverse the sceptical reasoning in order to perceive its limits – it is clear that we cannot quantify the role of the Jewish population in the events in Palestine between 610 and 628,¹⁷ and in some cases cannot even qualify it appropriately, but we can know that it was not insignificant and thus work out its nature. Thus, we will never know what exact role the Persians ascribed to the Jews in Palestine, and even less the legal nature of this recognition;¹⁸ however, in the light of the Jewish apocalypses, the account by Strategius, Modestus' letter to Komitas and the poems of the patriarch Sophronius constitute altogether an array of clues too consistent to reject. The Jewish minority must have been very tempted to join forces with the conqueror, if only because it was already too suspect in the eyes of the Christian majority, and the Persians must have found this collaboration profitable, at least for a while;¹⁹ indeed, upon the return of the Byzantines the final military resistance was the work of Jews in Edessa. On another point in the dossier, it is probably perilous to identify the destruction of some churches in the Acre-Ptolemais region as an archaeological trace of the Jewish sedition of the early seventh century, hitherto only attested by the *Doctrina Jacobi*, or even to see the trace of systematic military operations led by Jews against Tyre in a curious passage by Eutychius, two centuries later.²⁰ Yet it is difficult not to see these Christian texts as indicating real conflicts, which as if by chance happen to correspond to the region with the greatest density of Jewish population; the temporary political void created by the Persian invasion may have ignited conflicts whose details escape us,²¹

¹⁶ On this point, see R. WILKEN, *op. cit.*, p. 212–213.

¹⁷ It is not possible to evaluate this population: M. AVI-YONAH, *The Jews under Roman and Byzantine Rule*, Jerusalem 1984, suggested that it made up 10 to 15% of the total population of Palestine, while G. ALON, *The Jews in their Land in the Talmudic Age (70–640 CE)*, II, trans. G. LEVI, Jerusalem 1984, p. 757, suggests that altogether the Jewish and Samaritan populations of Palestine were greater than the Christian population.

¹⁸ Thus, the notion of a restoration of a quasi-sovereign Jewish political entity in Jerusalem as suggested by Avi-Yonah, *op. cit.*, p. 276, is not founded on anything certain.

¹⁹ Reference should be made to R. WILKEN's prudent assessment, *op. cit.*, chap. 10, p. 193–215.

²⁰ As attempted by R. SCHICK, *The Christian Communities of Palestine from Byzantine to Islamic Rule*, Princeton 1995, p. 26–31, who strangely suggests dating these troubles under Phocas towards 608. AVI-YONAH, *op. cit.* p. 267, and who even thought to be able to reconstitute a battle plan based upon Eutychius.

²¹ The closest source to the facts, the *Doctrina Jacobi*, p. 181 and p. 203, leads us to believe in simple uprisings followed by looting for Ptolemais, and not in the constitution of a Jewish

leaving us with the memory of hostilities declared between Christians and Jews – which Eutychius does not mention for any other period.

By proposing that Jews in the Christians texts are little more than an ideological foil or a means of making events acceptable which ran counter to the ideology of the Christian Empire at the time, Olster reduces to near insignificance the possibility of real conflicts between Jews and Christians: John Chrysostom only spoke of a “Jewish peril” in Antioch in order to unite the Christian community, the polemical texts of the seventh century did not so much represent an attack against the Jews as an ideological response to the defeats of the Christian empire at the hands of the Persians, and subsequently the Arabs; Heraclius’ attempt to enforce baptism and the truly religious facet of the debate were but an epiphenomenon, obscuring what was really at stake, and the history of the anti-Jewish texts is the history of a Christian discourse on Christian identity, not that of relations between Jews and Christians: ‘the subject of these dialogues was not Judaism, but Christianity’.²² The reader will easily recognise a previously elaborated problematic on the subject of antisemitism in modern and contemporary history: the creation of a communal identity through the exclusion of a group that becomes the Other in the most absolute sense of the term. This hypothesis allows Olster to explain the seventh century flowering of polemical texts in the light of the political events: in this way he brings this correlation to the fore, which in truth is hardly called into question.²³ On the other hand, this procedure hinders him when explaining several other aspects of the phenomena, and sometimes leads him to warp the sources. Thus, it is clearly impossible to sustain that the Jews in John Chrysostom’s discourses are a mere pretext: the orator cannot have invented the examples he provides of Judaism seducing his flock, and pastoral concern is the mainspring of his homilies, just as in the parallel texts by Isaac of Antioch;²⁴ even if the memory of Julian’s attempt to rebuild the Temple with an explicitly anti-Christian aim may have amplified these concerns, they are nonetheless present. Similarly, the Persian or Arab invasions of the seventh century do not explain the signs of a sudden tension around the same period in the west between Jews and Christians: the expulsion of the Jews of

political entity: it should be compared with the passage in Strategius in which the Jews in Jerusalem target Christian places of worship in the vacuum left by the Persian conquest.

²² *Roman D.*, p. 21.

²³ See DAGRON 1991; my own article in the same volume did not address this aspect of the question because its aim was a simple presentation of sources rather than a global study of the events, such as could be found in DAGRON’s article.

²⁴ See *La polémique...*, p. 287–288; OLSTER is needlessly harsh towards R. WILKEN, whose *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late Fourth Century*, London 1983, remains a point of reference (in particular, I do not see in what way Wilken neglected the political factor).

Clermont, the initiatives of disowned clerics in Gregory the Great's correspondence, the forced baptism of Jews in Spain, and Honorius' anti-Jewish policy, whose details we lack.²⁵ Several anti-Jewish texts can only be explained by political events, such as, in particular, the *Dialogus Timothei*²⁶ and the *Dialogus anonymus*,²⁷ probably linked to Justinian's Novel legislating against the use of the translation of the Old Testament by Aquila; the simple fact of coexistence between Christians and Jews is, it would seem, enough to explain a large part of this literary production.

Anti-Jewish literature persists irrespective of crises, so that even during that of the seventh century not every text had Christian defeat²⁸ as its real subject. The flaw in Olster's interpretation lies in ascribing too much importance to a single factor, the political context, and thus misguidedly reducing the religious factor. Indeed, the crisis that we see at the beginning of the seventh century can only have taken on these dimensions between Jews and Christians because the dramatic political events of these decades followed on from a period of increasing religious tensions, and it is the chronological conjuncture of these two factors alone that may explain the intensity of the conflict. In other words, we have good reason to suspect that the Christian sources exaggerate the role of the Jews in the adversities of the Roman empire,²⁹ yet we only understand the choice of the Jews as a scapegoat because in the previous century Christian hostility had already focussed upon them in a new way, or at least compared to the fifth century. We have no better indicator of this tension than the polemical and apocalyptic texts, whose value

²⁵ For more on Gregory, see the assessment in *Quaderni Medievali* 8, 1979, p. 12–43, for more on Honorius see A. THANNER, *Papst Honorius I (625–638)*, St. Ottilien 1989, p. 154–171, and in general see DAGRON 1991, p. 32–38, and A. LINDER, *Christlich-jüdische Konfrontation im kirchlichen Frühmittelalter*, in: K. SCHÄFERDIEK, ed., *Die Kirche des frühen Mittelalters*, Munich 1978, p. 398–441.

²⁶ See *La polémique...*, p. 276; OLSTER (*Roman D.*, p. 140 and n. 6) seems to ignore ROBERTSON's edition of this text.

²⁷ *Anonymus Dialogus cum Iudaeis Saeculi ut Videtur Sexti*, ed. J. DECLERK, CCSG 30, Turnhout 1994 (we should remember that the work was still unpublished at the time when Olster was writing).

²⁸ *Pace Roman D.*, p. 19: 'not all of seventh-century anti-Jewish tracts mention icons, but all refer to Christian defeat': how can we know this for texts that only survive in fragments, such as the *Apology*? Furthermore, we will see that certain texts, such as the *Disputatio Gregentii*, ignore the theme of Christian defeat to such a point that it is difficult to assert that it is their primary subject.

²⁹ For our period there is at least one obvious case, the tales of the death of the patriarch Anastasius of Antioch: THEOPHANES, *Chron.*, ed. DE BOOR, p. 296, trans. MANGO and SCOTT, p. 425, in which it is the Jews who assassinate and violate the corpse, which quite obviously represents a rewriting of the story in relation to the contemporary source of the events, the *Chronicon Paschale*, Bonn p. 699, which attributes the murder to the soldiers.

is thus verified. Otherwise we would have to believe in a collective hallucination on the part of Christians, strangely echoed in the Jewish texts. Having said this, many essential texts must be handled with care, as they are still only available in inadequate editions.

2) It is consequently difficult to date and situate texts, and Olster's commentaries on several – *Dialogus Papisci*, the *Trophies*, the *Quaestiones*, the *Disputatio Gregentii* and the *Doctrina* – are a good example of both the potential and the difficulties of this documentation. Its interpretation depends on a clear separation of the texts that continue to bank on a Byzantine military victory (*Dialogus Papisci*, *Trophies* and *Quaestiones*), those that consider the survival of Christianity in Islamic territory independently from the political survival of the empire (Sophronius' homilies, *Disputatio Gregentii*), and finally the exception that really aimed at a *rapprochement* with the Jews, the *Doctrina*.

Olster's interpretation of the *Doctrina* as an exception of anti-Jewish literature is disappointing because it rests in part on philological misinterpretations: if it may legitimately be emphasized that the text is quite well-predisposed towards the Jews and that it genuinely aims to catechize some, this is explained by the extraordinary situation of forced baptism, which placed some Jews in a position to convert, rather than by a kind of 'Judaeo-Christianity' on the part of the author which Olster seems to sketch out, supposing, as P. Maas once did, that the author was himself one of the baptised Jews.³⁰ Contrary to what Olster thinks, the passage on the Christian readiness to denounce other Christians for heresy does not imply that the author was Jewish: there was a manifest weariness felt among some Christians over contemporary christological divisions, for example according to the historian Evagrius.³¹ Neither is Jacob's condemnation of marriages between Jews and non-Jewish women intended to assert the Jewish community's foothold among Christians: this *topos* does not refer to the seventh-century political situation, but

³⁰ See BZ 20, 1911, p. 573–578: naturally, this would imply taking the *Doctrina*'s information literally: indeed, from the example of Justus Olster deduces that forced baptisms did not take place in Palestine, but to do this is to flout the fictional transposition, probably made by a Palestinian author (see DAGRON 1991, p. 31–32 on the probable geographic extension of the measure). The use of the expression 'mamzir', which is well known to the Bible, is also part of the Jewish 'folklore' that the author introduces into the text in order to make it believable (*pace* Olster, *Roman D.*, p. 160–161): see *Doctrina* p. 128 n. 45; we find it again in the *Disputatio Gregentii*, col. 669 A, masked by the *μαυζήρη* deformation of a copyist who never understood it; it does not necessarily follow that this other text was drawn up in a Jewish milieu. We find the epithet again in the *Life of Simeon the Fool*, ed. RYDÉN, p. 163.

³¹ *Doctrina*, p. 145; *Roman D.*, p. 163. Olster wrongly translates: 'And in no way let them anathematize us as heretics!'; the defence applies to the Jews, not to the Christians.

rather to the purity of Mary's Jewish origins in order to account for Jesus being the descendant of David.³² Equally, it should not be said that: 'Jacob implies that Jewish acceptance of Christ would restore the Jewish kingdom', for Jacob does not analyse the promises of royalty that God made to the Jews in the Bible in order to announce a new Jewish state, but rather to demonstrate through the absurd (the absence of Jewish political power) that at the Incarnation these promises were transferred to the benefit of the Christians: in particular, the dereliction of the Jews after Jesus' death implies that he really was Christ, and the idea of Jewish royalty is only evoked in this context so that it may be better denied.³³ Nor does the rather complicated reasoning concerning the two *parousiai* that Justus proposes mean that, as with certain Jewish apocalypses, the author is awaiting two successive Messiahs – which would be an astonishing heresy for Christianity – but simply that the first *parousia* having already passed, the Messiah who has already come must by default be Jesus: in other words, the only way Jews can stay faithful to true Judaism is by becoming Christians.³⁴ In short, this is the common ground of the polemic between Ancient Israel and the New Israel, adapted to the very particular situation of forced baptism, in which the very real benevolence of the author towards the Jews does not at all imply that he is suggesting they preserve a Jewish identity: conversion to Christianity would at once abolish their ethnic specificity and accomplish their true theological identity, until now depraved by maintaining Judaism. Other texts such as the *Dialogus Timothei* are no less aggressive, and it is only by comparison with the pamphlet of the *Trophies* that *Doctrina* can seem fully eirenic.

On the other hand, Olster's analysis of the *Disputatio Gregentii* opens up the discussion again, even if it requires several correctives.³⁵ Let us recall that this mysterious text, which presents the conversion of Jews from Southern Arabia in the early sixth-century by archbishop Gregentius, is certainly fictitious, even if the date and place of its composition remain to be determined. For Olster, the criteria for dating³⁶ and attribution are clear-cut: this text almost ignores the survival of the Byzantine empire and instead insists upon the Christian possession of Jerusalem, and

³² *Doctrina*, p. 133; *Roman D.*, p. 159.

³³ *Doctrina*, p. 163; *Roman D.*, p. 172.

³⁴ *Doctrina*, p. 165; *Roman D.*, p. 173 – but the parallel that Olster draws between Christian and Jewish apocalypses is very instructive (*Roman D.*, p. 174). The *Doctrina* continues to list the signs of the Messiah's coming – the disappearance of prophets and especially the catastrophe experienced by Rome, before which end the Messiah must come for the first time (*Doctrina*, p. 167) – and this is also the sense of the prophecy of the priest of Sykamina (*Doctrina*, p. 63).

³⁵ *Roman D.*, p. 138–157. See *TM* 11, 1991, p. 255, p. 269–270, and p. 276–277.

³⁶ '650–680', *Roman D.*, p. 139 (dates that were probably drawn from that of the Monothelite controversy).

was therefore written in a Palestine already under the Arab domination. However, Olster rightly identified a conclusive passage mentioning two wills in Christ, so that apart from the improbable case of its being a subsequent insertion by a copyist, this leads to a *terminus post quem* of 638 with the famous *Ekthesis*, apparently the first text to mention two wills rather than two energies.³⁷ Consequently, we would have here an additional source on seventh-century Palestine – a godsend for the historian!

Unfortunately, the specifics of his argument do not hold good. Indeed, Olster sees a direct allusion to the Arabs in a passage that he translates as ‘the demonic south’.³⁸ To enable the reader to understand the context we must quote the entire passage:

‘As for the fact that he says ‘that he will be like the shade of the day sheltering from the heat’, he names ‘day’ the Spirit’s work, and ‘heat’ the inflamed features of the Evil One. For in all the days of this world it is the Lord who shades, keeps and protects all who love him, not only from the heat of the Evil One that burns the souls of men and causes them to accomplish the devil’s iniquity, but also against the incursion of the demon who is the meridian devil, and against the remnant of Satan’s tyranny – drought and malignant rain.’

The mention of the famous ‘meridian devil’ (μεσημβρινός διάβολος) is not a reference to a geographic location, but to an hour of the day, and the full context is that, well known, of the spiritual struggle of souls – any allusion to an invasion from the south should be ruled out.³⁹ Furthermore, one only has to re-read the passage in which Olster thinks he can recognise an admission of Christian political and military defeat from the mouth of Gregentius⁴⁰ to see that a more subtle interpretation is in order:

Herban (the Jew): ‘...do you not think that the Lord God will one day come to recall Israel whom he rejected, and that this latter must become a strong people and a very formidable kingdom?’

³⁷ *Disputatio Gregentii*, col. 645 D; *Roman D.*, p. 140 and no. 7. I myself had noted the passage but not published it, for reasons that the reader will easily understand over the course of the subsequent pages. Olster incidentally supports this hypothesis by making what seems to me quite a superficial parallel with the works of patriarch Sophronius.

³⁸ *Disputatio Gregentii* 688 C; *Roman D.*, p. 141.

³⁹ On the other hand, a text probably from the same period contains a clear allusion to an invasion coming from the desert (PG 10, col. 908): see A. WHEALEY, *De consummatione mundi* of Pseudo-Hippolytus: another Byzantine apocalypse from the early Islamic period, *Byz. 66*, 1996, p. 461–469.

⁴⁰ *Disputatio Gregentii* 680 CD on Micah 4, 6–7; Olster talks of a ‘Gregentius...readily admitting Christian defeat’ (*Roman D.*, p. 144).

Gregentius: 'You are mistaken, O Herban, when you appropriate the prophecy to your people. For when he said 'crushed', (the prophet) implied cohabitation with the nations, and when he said 'rejected', he referred to these same nations rejecting idolatry. And now, is the Roman kingdom not a great and strong people? Is Jerusalem not full of the churches and holy temples of the crucified Christ? Did Jesus Christ, the Son of God whom you denied, not come from Bethlehem? Does he not, from the height of mount Zion, which is to say the heavens, reign until almost the ends of all the inhabited earth?'

The ambiguities in this passage are glaring: the Empire is all-powerful, but the text does not specify to what degree:⁴¹ it is Christ's power that reaches the extremities of the earth, from the heavens rather than from Jerusalem, and the sole mention of Christian sanctuaries as proof of their victory over the Jews in Jerusalem suggests that the political power there might no longer be Christian. As control of Jerusalem and the other Holy Places plays a central role in the ideological confrontation between Jews and Christians, allusions to the nature of this control in the *Disputatio Gregentii* should enable a confirmation of this impression of doubt. However, Gregentius does not speak of the Christians' possession but rather of the Jews' dispossession: 'He (God) first took away your kingship, then the Law, the prophets, the rites and the sacrifices: in short, he took away all the privileges that you might have had and entrusted them to us, Christians.'⁴² Moreover, Jerusalem is full of Christians and not of Jews,⁴³ and the new Temple of Jerusalem is the Church of the Anastasis.⁴⁴ Let us also note in passing a possible chronological clue: Gregentius ironically invites Herban to observe with his very eyes that the Temple of Solomon has been razed to the ground and even excavated:⁴⁵ and yet, the construction on the filled-in site of the Temple of the Dome of the Rock, presented by some of Anastasius the Sinaite's contemporaries as a new Temple, should have made the use of this argument impossible – which means that at the very latest we would

⁴¹ Olster, *Roman D.*, p. 146, incidentally notes this, but without really integrating it in his argument; and yet the *Disputatio Gregentii* is far more optimistic on this point than the *Dialogus Papisci*, and even more so than the *Doctrina*. Furthermore, the *Dialogue of Athanasius and Zacchaeus*, at the very latest from the fifth century, already mentions the presence of churches and monks in Jerusalem as proof of Christianity's victory, which quite obviously does not imply a military disaster in this period.

⁴² *Disputatio Gregentii*, col. 629 BC; *Roman D.*, p. 145; the mention of Sinai and of the Burning Bush shows clearly that this list was drawn up from a Christian perspective.

⁴³ *Disputatio Gregentii*, col. 700 B.

⁴⁴ *Disputatio Gregentii*, col. 730 B D; *Roman D.*, p. 146.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, col. 730 C (χαρέσχαρται).

be around 691–692,⁴⁶ or perhaps 660, according to an enlightening Byzantine text that already testifies at the very least to the filling-in work.⁴⁷ A speech from a very close date preserved in Georgian on the dedication of Holy Sion (the Anastasis) and attributed to John of Damascus⁴⁸ clearly contrasts this church with the Muslim presence on the Temple's esplanade, a paradoxical confirmation of Jewish defeat: 'Has the Temple not been destroyed? Has Ishmael, the son of the servant, not been introduced in his place, abomination of desolation?'⁴⁹ The opposition between the Christian church and the Muslim constructions was an overworked theme at that time. Yet these criteria only hold if the text was indeed written in Jerusalem, as Olster believes it to have been: it would be easy for an author writing far from Palestine to not know of these developments. On the other hand, we may note that the description of the place in which the debate between Gregentius and Herban took place, 'the Threlleton – which is the greatest room and the first of the palace – in the presence of the entire assembled *taxis* and of the holy senate', seems to allude to the opening of the Council in Trullo in 691–692, or that of 680 in the same room, in any case reflecting a certain knowledge of Constantinople.⁵⁰ Finally, the absence of a debate over images would be better understood prior to 730. Let us then keep in mind that although there are no direct allusions to the Arab victories, a dating to the seventh century is probable without having yet been quite demonstrated.

Indeed the other clues accumulated by Olster reveal themselves to be fallacious. If Gregentius states that the Jewish converts to Christianity are better considered by

⁴⁶ See B. FLUSIN, *Démons et Sarrasins*, *TM* 11, 1991, p. 381–409, in particular p. 393, p. 408 and the additional note on p. 409.

⁴⁷ B. FLUSIN, *L'esplanade du Temple à l'arrivée des Arabes d'après deux récits byzantins*, in: J. RABY and J. JOHNS, ed., *Bayt Al-Maqdis: 'Abd al-Malik's Jerusalem*, Oxford 1992/3, p. 17–31. Let us note that these two accounts distinctly oppose the Anastasis and the Muslim works on the Temple's esplanade, as can be guessed from the *Disputatio Gregentii*. The problem of the existence of a mosque of Umar in the 640's further complicates the matter. It is worth noting that F. E. PETERS, *Jerusalem*, Princeton 1985, p. 199–201, considers that one of the *Visions of Simon ben Yohai* holds the memory of important digging work on the site of the Temple under Muawiya, around 660 – the date maintained by B. Flusin for the digging works according to one of the two Christian accounts.

⁴⁸ M. VAN ESBROECK, *Le discours de Jean Damascène pour la dédicace de l'Anastasis*, *OCP* 63, 1997, p. 53–98, which places this other essential text precisely between 690 and 692, but only because he supposes that the construction of the Dome of the Rock would have prevented John of Damascus from expressing himself in the way that he did; the argument remains weak.

⁴⁹ *Op. cit.*, par. 16, p. 80.

⁵⁰ *Disputatio Gregentii*, col. 621 A; of course, this does not stop us from supposing it was written in Constantinople: the *Life of Gregory of Agrigentum* equally evokes one of these two councils in Constantinople, even though it was certainly written in Italy.

God than Christians of gentile origin, this is not propaganda addressed to the Jews of Jerusalem of that time, but a simple reference to Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and especially in this context a means of affirming that Christians have a stake in the heritage originally promised to the Jews.⁵¹ When Gregentius uses the future tense to evoke God's gathering of Jews and Gentiles into a single people, it is a future in the past, the future of the prophecy of Isaiah 11:11, accomplished in the Incarnation, and not an allusion to the situation current at the time of the dialogue.⁵² Therefore we cannot draw an accurate picture of the concrete situation in Jerusalem at the time: Jerusalem is simply mentioned as a central stake of divine promises and as a first instance of constituting a Church regrouping Jews and pagans in the first century of our era – thus only remotely similar to the situation that the author of the text probably wishes for his time, and without being necessarily related to his contemporary Jerusalem.⁵³ Nor is there any allusion to Heraclius' expulsion of the Jews from Jerusalem, first of all because this probably never took place, the Jews having been chased out by the Persians,⁵⁴ and then because Herban speaks of the expulsion that Gregentius has just mentioned, that of the first century, which the Christian apologists make coincide with the death of Christ for reasons relating to their argumentation.⁵⁵

One passage alone seems upon first reading to recall the recent past: with respect to the exegesis of Ps. 116:1, Gregentius curiously accuses the Jews of having exerted a 'tyranny' over the 'islands' mentioned in the psalm, something which Herban indignantly refutes.⁵⁶ The text is tricky because of the common confusions due to iotacism between ἡμῶν/we and ὑμῶν/you (plural); Olster seems tacitly to suppose such an alteration in the edited text by translating: 'they (the islands) rejoice

⁵¹ *Roman D.*, p. 148; *Disputatio Gregentii*, col. 700 D.

⁵² *Disputatio Gregentii*, col. 693 B; *Roman D.*, p. 148. We find the same subject in col. 676.

⁵³ Gregentius explicitly refers back to the first Church of Jerusalem in order to explain the accomplishment of certain prophecies, *i.e.*: col. 684–685.

⁵⁴ See *supra*.

⁵⁵ *Disputatio Gregentii*, col. 701 A; *Roman D.*, p. 148; it is true that Herban said that 'we have been hunted down for a brief and short time', but it must be understood that this brevity is measured according to the scale of universal history, starting from the patriarchs, and that it is a Jewish character who presents this time interval as brief so as to defend his cause better. Similarly, Herban does say: 'If we enter, you make us leave: if we leave, you make us come back in' (*Disputatio Gregentii*, col. 729 A; *Roman D.*, p. 148), but this cannot be applied to a political measure of his time, as Olster suggests; for it is on a political level that Gregentius' (very traditional) argumentation sometimes assimilates the Jews to the Christians, the new Israel, and sometimes rejects them as adversaries of Christ, leaving them with conversion as a sole logical outcome.

⁵⁶ *Disputatio Gregentii*, col. 757 AB; *Roman D.*, p. 149.

that they are released from your tyranny when we call you brothers believers', when in fact the Migne text should be understood in this way: 'they rejoice with us in having been delivered from tyranny and at seeing us called members of the same faith (ὁμόπιστοι)⁵⁷ – which corresponds better to Herban's subsequent response. The point is not to justify 'the calling' of the Jews to baptism in the seventh century, whether forced or not, but (as always) to justify the passage from Ancient Israel to the New. Indeed, Gregentius in no way insists upon this 'tyranny' of the Jews, which he does not seek to develop, and it is not on this account that he answers Herban: the crime that he imputes to them in the following response is once more to have rejected Jesus and to have killed him – a 'tyranny' in the Byzantine sense, which is to say a rebellion against legitimate authority.⁵⁸

Another weakness in Olster's interpretation lies in the fact that it only explains with difficulty certain passages pointing to a context of forced baptism and conflict, for the Jews are presented as Christ's worst enemies, more so even than heretics.⁵⁹ Prior to the dialogue as such, the Jews threatened with forced baptism were wondering how to remain clandestinely faithful to Judaism,⁶⁰ and the conclusion predicts that the next generation of new converts would be dispersed throughout the kingdom and forced to marry those of Christian heritage, clearly so as to shatter the cohesion of the ancient Jewish community.⁶¹ Herban's insistent demand throughout the debate that each community should be allowed to remain faithful to its customs⁶² shows well that this is what is at stake. Yet this context of forced conversion to Christianity is difficult to imagine in Islamic territory. To recapitulate, the *Disputatio Gregentii* could have been written between 638 and 692, from outside Constantinople and the Empire (for the major part of this period Monothelite); however, as we cannot find any sure or substantial allusions in it relating either to the context in which it was written or to recent events, it would be premature to claim this. Accordingly, this text is utopian, a transposition into the past of an author's wishes for his own times, and as such only reveals an ideological trend and not concrete facts – herein lies its great difference from the *Doctrina*. The insistence on Jerusalem as a theological motif does not necessarily imply that it was written in this city or its vicinity.

⁵⁷ Or: 'at seeing us call them members of the same faith', which basically amounts to the same thing.

⁵⁸ The other 'tyranny' which Gregentius quotes is that of the demons over the passions of men, col. 684 C.

⁵⁹ *Disputatio Gregentii*, col. 708 D.

⁶⁰ *Disputatio Gregentii*, col. 573–576.

⁶¹ *Disputatio Gregentii*, col. 781.

⁶² *Disputatio Gregentii*, col. 666 and 740 B.

To elaborate further, it is tempting to come back to the two other constituents of the dossier, which Olster does not take into account: the *Laws of the Himyarites*⁶³ and the *Life of Gregentius*,⁶⁴ which strictly speaking comprise the two other parts of a great cycle by Gregentius in which the *Disputatio Gregentii* figures. Unfortunately, this only complicates the task at hand. Indeed, on the face of it we cannot be sure that these three texts, brought together in some manuscripts, are truly of the same origin and date; E. Patlagean⁶⁵ and R. Paret's⁶⁶ preliminary work shows that only a complete edition could prove this; basing himself upon the study of a parallel text, the *Life of Gregory of Agrigentum*, A. Berger has recently suggested that the *Life of Gregentius* may be much later (ninth century at the earliest) and an addition to the two other texts, which would predate it.⁶⁷ The data compiled by E. Patlagean imposes an approximate, but precious, *terminus post quem*: among serious criminal sanctions, the *Laws of the Himyarites* provide a complex system of mutilations that announces the presence of Byzantine customs in the medieval period, and which has no proven implementation until the mutilation of Martina and Heracleonas towards 644.⁶⁸ Furthermore, the parallels which R. Paret has noted for the hagiographic themes and language makes for a comparison between these texts and the *Pratum spirituale* by John Moschos and the hagiographic works of Leontius of Neapolis,⁶⁹ thus from

⁶³ PG 86, col. 568–620. The work by A. N. PAPATHANASSIOU, *Οι Νόμοι των Ομηριτών. Ιεραποστολική προσέγγιση και ιστορική-νομική συμβολή*, Athènes-Komotini 1994, accepts too quickly and naively the authenticity of the text to be useful in this discussion.

⁶⁴ Partial ed.: A. VASSILIEV, *VV* 14, 1907, p. 39–66.

⁶⁵ Unpublished thesis; the summary of his principal hypotheses can be found in his article *Les moines grecs d'Italie et l'apologie des thèses pontificales (VII^e–IX^e siècles)*, *Studi Medievali* 3e, s., 5, 1964, p. 579–602, published again in his *Structure sociale, famille, chrétienté à Byzance (IV^e–XI^e s.)*, Variorum Reprints, London 1981; recently updated in the Italian translation *I monaci greci d'Italia e l'apologia delle tesi pontificale (secoli VIII–IX)*, in *EADEM, Santità e potere a Bisanzio*, Milan 1992, p. 221–247.

⁶⁶ Here again an unpublished thesis, however the reader will find part of the conclusions in his *Un parallèle byzantin à Coran XVIII*, 59–81, *REB* 26, 1968, p. 137–159.

⁶⁷ A. BERGER, *Das Leben des heiligen Gregorios von Agrigent*, Berlin 1995, in particular p. 73–75 for the links with the *Vie de Grégentios*, which he considers to be dependent on that by Gregorios.

⁶⁸ É. PATLAGEAN, *Byzance et le blason pénal du corps*, in *Du châtement dans la cité. Supplices corporels et peine de mort dans le monde antique*, Rome 1984, p. 405–426. J. JUSTER, *Les Juifs dans l'Empire romain*, Paris 1914, p. 69–73, had already spotted this particularity and logically suggested reporting the date to the end of the seventh century. A. D'EMILIA, *Intorno ai 'Nomoi tôn Homeritôn'*, *Atti del congr. internaz. di diritto romano e di storia del diritto*, Milan 1951, I, p. 183–197, working from parallels in a contemporary Macedonian text.

⁶⁹ *Pratum*: PG 87/3, col. 2852–3112; Leontius, ed. A.-J. FESTUGIÈRE, *Vie de Syméon le Fou et Vie de Jean de Chypre*, Paris 1974 (who for the *Vie de Syméon* draws on the edition of L. RYDÉN,

the first half of the seventh century. The divergence over the place and date of the writing seems irreconcilable: Patlagean suggests that the work was written in Italy, at the very earliest towards the end of the eighth century (which would explain the knowledge that this author seems to have of Italy),⁷⁰ and Paret suggests it was written in Egypt or in Palestine during the seventh century (which would explain the parallels, the language and the choice of the Najrân). Having already understood that it would be premature to suggest a definitive conclusion, let us note the convergences between the different theses: Gregentius' cycle is indeed a 'hagiographic novel', written at the earliest around 640, from outside Constantinople and undoubtedly outside the Empire, by a dyothelete author of Byzantine culture, who was in one way or another preoccupied with the 'Jewish question', and who, whether directly or indirectly, knew quite well both Italy, Palestine and the sixth century conflict between Jews and Christians in Najrân. All this is not as contradictory as it seems if we recall that, from about the start of the Monothelite crisis until the start of iconoclasm, Rome, Palestine and other Chalcedonian footholds beyond the Empire's borders (Egyptian Melkites, Christians of North Africa) were to a certain point united by a common Greek culture, a common dyothelete orthodoxy and the common obligation to maintain this heritage without the direct military support of the empire of Constantinople: the monastic networks that then united Palestine and Rome, maintained by popes of eastern origin, are the prime example of this.⁷¹ While we await the further progress of research, the most likely hypothesis remains that of one of these 'Byzantines outside Byzantium', tossed between east and west (whether he wrote in Rome, Jerusalem or in another place outside the Empire, which is almost incidental), whom we might more easily imagine in the seventh century than in the eighth.⁷² The contradiction between the different chronological

Das Leben des heiligen Narren Symeon von Leontios von Neapolis, Uppsala 1963).

⁷⁰ Patlagean mentions other *Lives* of Italian origin, such as that of Pancratius of Taormina (with a debate against the Jews), and especially that of Gregory of Agrigentum, of whom Gregentius may be only a doublet; and yet although the dossier thus constituted is quite a convincing framework for the other texts, I find it difficult to place the *Life of Gregentius* in it; indeed, the author does not seem to know all of Italy very well, he is better informed on the east, advocacy for Roman primacy is hardly pronounced, almost inexistent (one appearance of Peter and then of Paul corresponding more to the Byzantine representation of Roman primacy).

⁷¹ See J.-M. SANSTERRE, *Moines grecs et orientaux à Rome aux époques byzantine et carolingienne (milieu du VI^e-fin du IX^e siècle)*, Bruxelles 1982.

⁷² This would give us a better solution to the problem of there being a small amount of apparently authentic information on Najrân in Gregentius' cycle, which is moreover solely attested by eastern sources: see I. SHAHÎD, Byzantium in South Arabia, *DOP* 33, 1979, p. 23–94 (often adventurous in the detail of his demonstrations, although other data

clues is probably due to one or several re-writings, which only a complete version will be able to determine; this is also when we will be able to judge the validity of the dating put forward by Olster.

In the complex group made up by the *Dialogus Papisci*, the *Disputatio Anastasii*, the *Trophies* and the *Quaestiones ad Antiochum ducem*, Olster enables considerable progress on several points: the hypothesis that he⁷³ proposes for a common Syrian origin for all these texts is not ruled out, but neither is it demonstrable, except of course for the *Trophies*; the emphasis which, as in the apocalypse of the Pseudo-Methodius, is placed upon the military resistance of the Byzantine Empire reveals itself an excellent interpretative key in accounting for the authors' intentions.⁷⁴

Nevertheless, the novelty lies for the most part in the new reading of the *Quaestiones*:⁷⁵ Olster sees in it a direct attack on the Muslims rather than on the Jews, which increases the number of passages pertinent to our problem, although, once again, this interesting general idea is applied with uncertain felicity through the texts. It has long been known that this collection of texts uses Anastasius the Sinaite's *Quaestiones*⁷⁶ and therefore cannot be previous to the last third of

along the same lines having been spotted by R. PARET). Furthermore, if we are before 680, it is understandable that a dyothelete author should distance himself from a Monothelite Constantinople.

⁷³ *Roman D.*, chap. The Syrian Dialogues, p. 116–137; the, justified, rehabilitation of the text of the *Disputatio Anastasii*, PG 89, col. 1203–1272, by W. KAEGI, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests*, Cambridge 1992, p. 220–227, clarifies what M. KMOŠKO had already seen sixty years ago (Das Rätsel des Pseudo-Methodius, *Byz.* 6, 1931, p. 293–294): a kernel of the text goes back to the end of the seventh century, at least before the monetary reform by Abd-el-Malik in 692.

⁷⁴ But this type of idea is not reserved to the Syrian Chalcedonians: in John of Damascus's previously mentioned homily, a very beautiful passage links the victories of the Cross to that of the emperor (par. 45, p. 95).

⁷⁵ *Op. cit.* (no.3), in particular questions 37, 38, 137; see *Roman D.* p. 118–119, 123–126 and 131–133; from the perspective of the strict anti-Jewish polemic, I only quoted numbers 42 and 137 (La polémique..., p. 279).

⁷⁶ While awaiting the upcoming edition of J. MUNITIZ, the decisive article remains that of M. RICHARD, *Les véritables Questions et Réponses d'Anastase le Sinaïte*, *Bull. IRHT* 15, 1969, p. 35–56, republished in his *Opera minora*, III, Turnhout 1977. Prudently, M. Richard established the link between the two collections inclining towards Anastasius for the original, without affirming it; however, as was also well noted by J. HALDON, *The Works of Anastasius of Sinai: a Key Source for the History of Seventh-Century East Mediterranean Society and Belief*, in: L. CONRAD and AVERIL CAMERON, eds., *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East I, Problems in the Literary Source Material*, Princeton 1992, p. 107–147, it is clearly Anastasius who is mostly plagiarised in the rival text (but this latter is probably heterogeneous, which complicates

the seventh century, even if it may contain older sections.⁷⁷ Olster demonstrates that question 38 does target Islam, criticising circumcision and the reference to the Mosaic law, and truly applies as much to the Arabs as the Jews.⁷⁸ He continues his demonstration by suggesting that the curious apostrophe to question 37 to the Jews, reproaching them for praying towards the south when Christians pray towards the east, is in fact aimed at the Muslim prayer orientation towards Mecca (roughly speaking to the south in Syria Palestina).⁷⁹ Of course this cannot be excluded, but the same question reminds us that when in Jerusalem the Jews also pray towards the east: they should then be the true target of the argument. The simplest explanation, as Olster suggested but for different reasons, is that the text was drafted in Syria: as the Jews normally turn towards Jerusalem when they pray, in this case they would turn towards the south. When the same passage of the *Quaestiones* also notes that the ‘pagans’ accuse the Christians of an at least implicit worship of the sun, as the Jews do in the *Trophies*,⁸⁰ while taking great care to notify the Christians that prayer towards the east evokes the heaven on earth that lies there, Olster is probably right to hear the echo of Arab criticisms and a true rival to certain quite materialistic Muslim conceptions of heaven.⁸¹ On the other hand, he misunderstands question 44 when he believes that it addresses the objection of an Arab and that it relates to the political control of the holy places:⁸² the text does not say that the objector claims to possess Palestine through an ‘imperial tyranny’, but rather imagines a heretical opponent (Monophysite) claiming that ‘we’ (the author and his community, thus the Chalcedonians) possess the holy places (Nazareth, etc.) through an imperial coup (the confiscation of illustrious churches in favour of the Melkites, as under Justinian).⁸³ It is only a question of Christian sanctuaries, for the author mentions next that despite numerous barbaric invasions these places never fell into the hands of the heretics: if the point were military and political the adversary would be barbarians and not heretics. We only have to refer back to

the comparison): lastly, see V. DÉROCHE, *Études sur Léontios de Néapolis*, Uppsala 1995, no. 12 p. 273.

⁷⁷ See V. DÉROCHE, *op.cit.* to the previous number, no. 3 p. 271 and no. 13 p. 274. This is the date which Olster reaches independently, *Roman D.*, p. 133.

⁷⁸ *Quaestiones* col. 620–621; *Roman D.*, p. 123–124.

⁷⁹ *Quaestiones* col. 617 D–620 AB; *Roman D.*, p. 124. Indeed, a Jewish practice of praying towards the south is unknown to me; the question also answers the ‘pagans’, who can only be the Arabs.

⁸⁰ *Trophies*, p. 250; *Roman D.*, p.124 (Olster makes a good parallel on this point).

⁸¹ *Quaestiones* col. 617–620; *Roman D.*, p. 125.

⁸² *Quaestiones* col. 625; *Roman D.*, p. 126.

⁸³ The perpetuation of this situation by the Arab invasion was painfully felt by the Monophysites: see Michael the Syrian, ed. and trans. CHABOT, II, p. 412–413.

the model, one of Anastasius' *Quaestiones*, to find this interpretation confirmed.⁸⁴ In short, the *Quaestiones* do not deny Byzantine military defeat, nor do they announce the upcoming end of Muslim political power, and in this respect are hardly distinguishable from a text such as the *Disputatio Gregentii* – and this once again calls into question the somewhat overly clear-cut distinctions that Olster draws between the different texts.

3) The specificity of the *Quaestiones*, shared with the *Trophies*, is instead that it clearly shows that the interaction is now triangular, and that the Christians consider the Jews as much closer to the Muslims than to themselves: in other words, there is no need to see the Jews merely as a stand-in for the Muslims in order to understand these texts – it is enough to posit that Christianity's pretension to inherit the promises made to Israel is no longer contested by one, but two religions directly related to the Old Testament. Let us therefore reconsider the composition of the *Quaestiones* in this light: a central group, roughly speaking from numbers 37 to 50, emerges around the definition of the Christians faced with the Jews and the 'pagans'. In the questions we have already covered, the author defines the Christians in number 40, then legitimises the distinctive Christian rite, challenges that of the other two groups and asserts the permanency of orthodox Christianity. From question 47 onwards, problems of exegesis and of defining Adam's heaven on earth are revisited, which would confirm Olster's hypothesis: this subject becomes one of the indicators of Christian identity in reaction to Muslim ideas of Allah's heaven. Thus, this quite composite text clearly shows a concern to mark the Christian difference with respect to Jews and Arabs, and as in Anastasius' work, this is explained by the problem of conversion to Islam. Why are Jews and Muslims, so to speak, put in the same category? Because from the Christian perspective these two communities can objectively be said to be allied against the Christians in their claim to inherit the Old Testament promises, and because the Jewish minority is a natural support for the dominant Arab minority faced with the Christian majority.

This brings us back to the thesis of P. Crone and M. Cook,⁸⁵ who have argued for early Islam as a religion very close to Judaism and even Christianity, founded essentially by reference to Abraham. Yet, without seeking to venture into this complicated question, several clues suggest that, faced with Christians, a certain complicity existed between Jews and Muslims, as seemed implicit in the *Trophies of Damascus* and in all the texts in which we see Jewish rabbis serve as 'theological

⁸⁴ Question 117 (69 originally), PG 89, col. 768 D – 769 AC: Anastasius notes the Arab occupation and adds that the Orthodox had held the holy places 'for seven hundred years' – but we cannot deduce a certain date around the year 700: this could be the result of a copyist's addition or of a new edition of Anastasius.

⁸⁵ *Hagarism. The Making of the Islamic World*, Cambridge 1977.

experts' to Arab leaders.⁸⁶ Beyond the traditional Christian invectives against the Jews, there are traces of ambiguity towards Islam in its early days: many Christians (and probably Jews) believed that the future Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem would be like the reconstruction of Solomon's Temple.⁸⁷ Initial Jewish hopes of Arab victories are manifest in at least one apocalypse, the *Secrets of Rabbi ben-Yoha*,⁸⁸ and a text such as the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* is as it were the Christian response to this hope. If the apocalypse by a 'Pseudo-Hippolytus' is indeed an anti-Muslim text of the end of the seventh century, as A. Whealey⁸⁹ suggests with good reason, it should be noted that in his re-editing of Hippolytus's *De Antichristo*, this unknown author was careful not to delete the passage in which the Antichrist favours the Jewish people in all things: it probably seemed to him appropriate to his times. It is clear in the *Doctrina* that the first to be seduced by the new religion were the Jews of Palestine, against which the author sets the figure of Justus, a sincere Jewish convert to Christianity ready to face martyrdom; for the Jews, Islam seems to have been the new shape of opposition to Christianity, something which Maximus Confessor relates to us in a 'diabolised' version in his famous letter about the Arab invasions, in which responsibility for the disaster mysteriously falls upon the Jews, 'a mad and apostate people, this incorrigible nation'.⁹⁰ Similarly, emerging Islam

⁸⁶ As with the colloquy between a Syrian patriarch and an Arab emir with the assistance of a Jewish 'expert', which does seem to date back to the first decades of the conquest: ed. F. NAU, Un colloque du patriarche Jean avec l'émir des Agaréens, *Journal Asiatique* 11^e série, 5, 1915, p. 225–279: lastly see KH. SAMIR, Qui est l'interlocuteur musulman du patriarche syrien Jean III (631–648)?, 4. *Symposium Syriacum* = OCA 229, 1987, p. 387–400, but also H. J. DRIJVERS' negative opinion in: P. CANIVET and J.-P. REY-COQUAIS, ed., *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam*, Damascus 1992, (hereafter: *La Syrie...*), no. 29 p. 74. If we are to believe the *Passion de Michel le Sabaïte*, it is not very reliable, for it is once again a Jew that the caliph would compare as a theological expert with Peter the Sabaïte, towards 700: *An. Boll.* 48, 1930, p. 70.

⁸⁷ See B. FLUSIN, *op.cit.*, p. 408.

⁸⁸ B. LEWIS, An Apocalyptic Vision of Islamic History, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 13, 1950, p. 308–338, and On that Day. A Jewish apocalyptic poem on the Arab Conquests, in *Mélanges d'Islamologie dédiés à la mémoire d'Armand Abel*, Leiden 1974, p. 197–200 (the two texts reprinted in B. LEWIS, *Studies in Classical and Ottoman Islam (7th–16th centuries)*, London 1976).

⁸⁹ *De consummatione mundi* of Pseudo-Hippolytus: another Byzantine apocalypse from the early Islamic Period, *Byz.* 66, 1996, p. 461–469.

⁹⁰ Ep. 14, PG 91, col. 537–541 (between 634 and 640). The *Dialogus Papisci* p. 75 also notes the frequency of Jewish conversions to Islam (D. Olster, *Roman D.* p. 13, was well aware of this but only drew out consequences for the Christians). Sophronius' famous homily of Christmas 634 also inserted a long diatribe against the Jews into allusions to the Arab invasion: see C. LAGA, Judaism and Jews in Maximus Confessor's Works, Theoretical Controversy and Practical Attitude, *ByzSlav* 51, 1990, p. 177–188.

seems to have had difficulties in marking its difference with Judaism and affirming its religious identity.⁹¹ This situation explains the famous fable of the 'Jewish plot' at the origin of iconoclasm: we will refrain from giving credit to it, but the situation created by the Arab invasions in the east explains this Christian obsession with a natural connivance between Jews and Arabs, and the Arab version of the affair simply turns the Christian polemic on its head.⁹²

In this case one might expect texts testifying to friction between Muslims and Christians, just as we have for friction between Christians and Jews. Thus Olster derives an argument from the absence of specifically anti-Muslim texts until around the middle of the eighth century, stating that in fact the anti-Judaic texts between 630 and this period act as an ideological response to Islam.⁹³ This is only partly true: the simplest explanation is that the new conquerors, at this stage incapable of supplying a formal argumentation consequently do not give rise to a formal response from the Christians.⁹⁴ This does not prevent an ideological debate being quickly launched between Muslims and Christians: Olster himself demonstrates this with respect to the *Quaestiones*,⁹⁵ and the texts of Anastasius the Sinaite show this too, particularly in his enlightening tales with respect to the Dome of the Rock, but also in his *Hodegos* with respect to the purely theological debates;⁹⁶ in recommending Christians not to discuss the Scriptures in depth with infidels, a *sūrah* of the Qur'an (6,91) involuntarily attests to debates with Jews and Christians, which attitude *sūrah* 29,46 confirms. The *Passion* of Peter of Capitolias insists, with perhaps some exaggeration, on the verbal challenge launched by Peter

⁹¹ See I. GOLDZIJER, Usages juifs d'après la littérature religieuse des Musulmans, *REJ* 28, 1894, p. 75–94, which quotes the *hadith* 'Distinguish yourselves from them' attributed to Muhammad in order to justify the decreeing of distinctive Muslim practices. Several Syriac sources along with Ps.-Sebeos see Islam as being born of a kind of prolongation of Judaism (see H. J. DRIJVERS, *La Syrie...*, p. 74).

⁹² See S. H. GRIFFITH, Bushîr- Bêsêra: Boon Companion of the Byzantine Emperor Leo III: the Islamic recension of historical story, *Le Muséon* 103, 1990, p. 293–327 (note on p. 307 the argument of Jesus being tainted by Mary's menstrual cycle, which was borrowed from the Jewish polemic).

⁹³ *Roman D.* p. 12–13.

⁹⁴ This is G. J. REININK's hypothesis, The Beginnings of Syriac Apologetic Literature in Response to Islam, *Oriens Christianus* 77, 1993, p. 165–187, for whom the Arabs are merely witnesses of the seventh century controversies with the Jews; the specific anti-Muslim polemic would only appear in the eighth century which causes him to bring back to the beginning of this last century the much disputed date of the patriarch John's famous colloquy.

⁹⁵ See *supra*.

⁹⁶ S. H. GRIFFITH, Anastasius of Sinai, the *Hodegos*, and the Muslims, *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 32, 1987, p. 341–358.

to the Muslim authorities.⁹⁷ Accordingly, the first Christian texts seem to fall into a different genre from that of explicit polemical dialogue, somewhat as we saw with the productions of Jewish communities previously.⁹⁸ There is consequently more of a continuity with the specifically anti-Muslim texts of the eighth century, some of which appear early on,⁹⁹ and the delay in the Christian reaction is probably related to the delay in the affirmation of Muslim religious identity, which we increasingly tend to place under 'Abd al-Malik at the very end of the seventh century. G. Stroumsa well noted that the difficulty that Islam experienced in defining itself created a space for dialogue,¹⁰⁰ but he is probably overly optimistic in supposing that this dialogue was accompanied by a high degree of tolerance: on the contrary, the instability of the situation cannot but have exacerbated competition. On the other hand, when Islam became religiously and institutionally stable towards the end of the eighth century, the polemic would lose some of its intensity – just as with the messianic movements and apocalyptic literature some time before.

Here is another clear result: a textual analysis of the anti-Jewish texts according to the perspective initiated by Olster tends to lower the dates of several texts towards the end of the seventh century, or even the beginning of the eighth, and consequently to realise a degree of chronological continuity up to the iconoclastic crisis, until now almost solely attested by the *Disputatio Sergii*.¹⁰¹ As a result, the crisis of the beginning of the seventh century with the Persian invasion and forced baptism no longer seems exceptional: rather, it opens a good century's worth of very tense relations. Once the fable of the 'Jewish plot' found in Theophanes is set aside, it is difficult not to make the connection between the reform of Leo III and the tension maintained for over a century with the Jews over figurative representation,

⁹⁷ P. PEETERS, La passion de S. Pierre de Capitolias († 13 January 715), *An. Boll.* 57, 1939, p. 299–333.

⁹⁸ See D. J. SAHAS, Eighth-century Byzantine anti-Islamic Literature. Context and Forces, *ByzSlav* 57 (1990), p. 229–238 (I was not able to gain access to his article The Seventh Century in Byzantine-Muslim relations, *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 2, 1991, p. 3–22).

⁹⁹ S. H. GRIFFITH, Images, Islam and Christian Icons, in *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam*, *op. cit.*, p. 121–138; IDEM, Disputes with Muslims in Syriac Christian Texts: from Patriarch John (d. 648) to Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286), in *Religionsgespräche im Mittelalter*, Berlin 1993, p. 251–273; L. S. B. MACCOULL, The Paschal Letters of Alexander II, Patriarch of Alexandria: a Greek Defence of Coptic Theology under Arab Rule, *DOP* 42, 1990, p. 26–40. As is already the case for the Greek texts, plagiarism brings the dates under suspicion: see the list drawn up by P. PEETERS and his reservations, *An. Boll.* 48, 1930, p. 94–97.

¹⁰⁰ Religious Contacts in Byzantine Palestine, *Numen*, 1989, p. 16–42.

¹⁰¹ Ed. A. P. HAYMAN, *The Disputation of Sergius the Stylite against a Jew*, Louvain 1973: the text is probably from the early eighth century. By tending towards restoring the *Disputatio Anastasii* to Anastasius the Sinaite, W. Kaegi completes this chronological continuity.

all the more since recent archaeological work in Jordan has confirmed the reality of the famous iconoclast edict of caliph Yazid II, which until recently was still doubted.¹⁰² Although iconoclasm is outside the scope of this article, I will take the liberty of drawing attention to two points concerning the original context for this movement: Jewish and Muslim criticism of images, and the Byzantine tendency to consider the Christian empire as the reiteration of the elect kingdom of Israel in a new sacred history.¹⁰³ In both cases, the relation to the Old Testament throws up all the more problems in that, at the moment at which the Christian empire claims to be *the* elect people of God in its truest sense, the elect people of the Old Covenant vigorously reminds it of its own pretensions to the title. The Scriptural flavour of iconoclasm cannot be explained without this accumulation of controversies with the Jews, from which historians have still not drawn all the possible information.

It is true that accomplishing this would require having reliable editions at our disposal: we are still far from this, and the difficulty lies especially in the chronology. For the Greek sources, the *Trophies of Damascus* and the complex dossier of the *Dialogus Paisci* and the *Disputatio Anastasii* remain to be revised, as does that by Gregentius; the dating and interpretation of the Syriac texts are still not yet certain; the Jewish sources and Christian Arab texts are still a little sparse. Nothing but a work of edition and inventory will enable the confirmation of an assessment reduced by necessity to hypotheses.

¹⁰² In particular the mutilated mosaics of Umm el Rassas, recently discussed by BOWERSOCK: see R. SCHICK, *op.cit.*

¹⁰³ Héraclius nouveau David, etc.: we owe the best recent presentation to G. DAGRON in J.-M. MAYEUR, Ch. ET L. PIÉTRI, A. VAUCHEZ and M. VENARD, ed., *Histoire du christianisme* 4, Paris 1993, p. 19–20.



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Byzantine Accounts of Islam

Wolfgang Eichner

Introduction

We use the term 'Byzantines' to refer to the orthodox theologians who, based in Byzantium or Syria, wrote in Greek about Islam. This Byzantine literature is the only literary expression in Greek in this field known to us. It is a separate genre: Christian-Byzantine polemic against Islam written in Greek.¹

For more than 800 years, people wrote about Islam from the point of view of Byzantium. It seems to me that the main subject of this study must be the question of what knowledge the Byzantines had of Islam. The value of Byzantine information can only be decided once we have consulted the Islamic sources which may have been known to the respective author.

The study of the Greek reports has concerned itself with the Prophet's life in the first place and with Islamic doctrine in the second place. The following excursus will treat the second issue in order to give a self-contained picture of the knowledge of Islam among the Byzantines.

Overview of the sources: [134]

<i>Century</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Text</i>	<i>Dependent</i>	<i>Edition</i>
VIII	John of Damascus	De haeresibus Disputatio	Abū Qurra	M. 94, 764–73 M. 96, 1336–48
IX	Abū Qurra	Opuscula		M. 97, 1504–1605
IX	Theophanes	Chronographia		ed. de Boor 333–35
IX	Hamartolos	Chronicon breve	Theoph.	ed. de Boor II, 697–707

¹ A nearly complete list of the texts may be found in the index of the *Series Graeca* of Migne's *Patrologia* under the heading: *adversus Mahumetanos*. With a few exceptions there are no critical editions of individual treatises, and consequently we had to take Migne's printed edition as our basis. We consulted the *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* (Bonn Corpus) with reference to the Byzantine chronographers. Theophanes' *Chronographie* and Hamartolos' *Chronicon* are quoted after de Boor's edition (Leipzig 1883 and 1904). We did not use any manuscript material. [More recently see the studies of A.T. Khoury listed in the bibliography given in the introduction to this volume].

<i>Century</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Text</i>	<i>Dependent</i>	<i>Edition</i>
IX	Dekapolitanos	De sar. mar. vis.		M. 100, 1201-12
IX	Leo	Epist. ad Omarum		M. 107, 315-24
IX	Niketas	Refutatio Moh.		M. 105, 669-842.
IX	Samonas	Disceptatio	Abū Qurra	M. 120, 821-32
IX?	Anonymous I	Confut. Moh.	Theoph. Ham.	M. 104, 1448-57
XI	Euthymios	Panoplia dogm. Disputatio	Dam. Nik. An. I id.	M. 130, 1332-60 M. 131, 20-37.
XI	Kedrenos	Hist. Comp.	Theoph. Ham.	B. C. I, 738-45
XII	Zonaras	Annales	Theoph	du Fresne-C. II, 68f.
XII	Glykas	Annales	Theoph	B. C. 513-15
XII	Akominatos	Thesaurus	Dam. Nik. Euth. An. I	M. 140, 105-36
XIII	Bartholomaios	Conf. Agarenis		M. 104, 1384-1448
XIV	Kydones	Contra Mah. Ass.		M. 154, 1035-1152
XIV	Kantakuzenos	Contra Mah.	Kyd.	M. 154, 372-692
XV	Manuel	Dialogus	Kant.	M. 156, 126-73
XV	Phrantzes	Chronicon	Theoph. Zon. Kant.	B. C. 294ff.
XV	Chalkondyles	De rebus turc.		B. C. 121-25
XV	Gennadios	Disp. Conf.		Gass II, 3-30
XV	Anonymous II	Narratio	Theoph.	Gass II, 145-52
?	Anonymous III	Vita	Theoph.	M. 105, 842
?	Anonymous	Dialogus		M. 131, 37-40
?	Anonymous	Confessio		M. 154, 1151-70

Sources concerning Muhammad's life besides the chronographers: Euthymios, Akominatos, Anonymous I and II, and Bartholomaios.

Chronographers writing on Muhammad's teachings: Hamartolos, Kedrenos, Zonaras, Phrantzes, and Chalkondyles.

N.B.: the texts have been quoted after the most accessible printed editions. M = Migne's *Patrologie*, B. C. = Bonner Corpus.

{[134-35] Eichner gives here a list of secondary sources, but these are now somewhat dated and we refer the reader to the relevant items in the bibliography appended to the introduction to this volume}.

[136] I. *The Sources*

The sources consist of polemic and chronographic texts, the latter being of only secondary importance, as they nearly exclusively contain information concerning Muhammad's life. When arranging the former, thematic considerations would appear to recommend dividing them into three sub-sections.

1. *Texts from Syria and Mesopotamia*

The first one to write in Greek against Islam was John of Damascus (d. before 754).² His magnum opus, 'Πηγὴ Γνώστεως' contains a long section 'περὶ αἱρέσεων'. This section lists and refutes around a hundred Christian heresies. After presenting Greek-philosophical, Jewish and Christian sects, John turns his attention to 'the latest Christian heresy', that found among Ismaelites and Saracens. He discusses briefly the doctrine of God, Christ and Paradise, and quotes a few instances of Islamic Law.³ Besides this brief summary of Muhammad's teachings, the only other text of John's that has come down to us is a dialogue,⁴ 'Διάλεξις Σαρρακηνοῦ καὶ Χριστιανοῦ'; it is, however, doubtful whether he is actually the author.⁵ This dialogue discusses the questions of free will and hypostatic union.

Theodore Abū Qurra (740–820)⁶ is seen as John's pupil – if not in the flesh, certainly in spirit, as Becker put it.⁷ Of his works forty-two smaller texts survive,⁸ among them thirteen dialogues with Muslims. The heading of *opusculum* IV allows us to conclude that some of these dialogues were originally written in Arabic.⁹ The contents of the dialogues with Muslims are consistently apologetic [137] with occasional references to Muhammad and his teachings. The author intends to present the Christian truths of salvation to the Muslims in a plausible manner and consequently devotes several dialogues to free will and hypostatic union. We do find

² M. 94, 429ff.

³ Ibid., 764–73.

⁴ M. 96, 1336–48.

⁵ The editor in Migne remarks that he prefaced this dialogue with 'Ἰωάννου τοῦ Δαμασκηνοῦ (M. 96, 1336).

⁶ Graf, G., *Die arabischen Schriften des Theodor Abu Qurra* (Forsch. zur christl. Literatur und Dogmengeschichte X, 1910), 25. [On Theodore and his writings see the studies listed in the bibliography in the introduction to this volume].

⁷ Becker, C.H., *Christliche Polemik und islamische Dogmenbildung*, *Islamstudien*, 1924, I, 434; a personal teacher-pupil-relationship has been deduced from the heading of one dialogue (M. 94, 1596): διὰ φωνῆς Ἰωάννου τοῦ Δαμασκηνοῦ.

⁸ M. 97, 1504ff.

⁹ 'Αραβιστὶ μὲν ὑπὸ Θεοδώρου τοῦ τὸ ἐπίκλην Ἀβουκαρᾶ, τοῦ Καρῶν ἐπισκόπου' (M. 97, 1504).

a nearly word-for-word correspondence between *opuscula* 35–38 and the Dialogue in John’s name. Abū Qurra’s style is tauter and more straightforward, which has led Güterbock¹⁰ to conclude with some justification that the Dialogue attributed to the Damascene is likely to be a later revision and summary of Abū Qurra’s four *opuscula*.

Of works from the East we know, besides the works of John of Damascus and Abū Qurra, a text by an otherwise unknown monk named Bartholomaios of Edessa: ‘βαρθολομαιος τοῦ Ἐδεσσήνου ἔλεγχος Ἀγαρηνοῦ’.¹¹ He calls himself the most ignorant of the Christians;¹² his writings, however, show that he had exceptional knowledge of Islam, and of Muhammad’s life in particular. His text is directed against an imaginary opponent and frequently refers to the writings of the Chaldaeans in which he claims to have found a number of pieces of curious information concerning the Prophet and his teachings.¹³ It is particularly noticeable that Bartholomaios writes in a very strident tone and occasionally exaggerates quite considerably. It has been assumed that he was a contemporary of Photios (ninth century).¹⁴ Güterbock, however, has pointed out stylistic as well as factual features as proof that the text was composed rather later (certainly no earlier than 1100).¹⁵ Further characteristics of this text are worth pointing out: 1. Bartholomaios refers to his opponents as Μουσουλμανοί (= Muslims), a term which is elsewhere used only by the Byzantine polemicists of the fourteenth century. 2. He compares Muhammad’s illness to the behaviour of the Phorakides (Φορακίδες), whom he describes as dancing dervishes. If the name Phorakides is related to *fuqarā’*, we must presume a point in time by which [138] the dervish orders had adopted this name.¹⁶ 3. He mentions the consumption of hemp (= *hashīsh*) which only became popular in the East (i.e. Syria, Iraq) around the middle of the thirteenth century.¹⁷ Going by its principal thrust and its style of presentation, such as the wealth of literary illustration, I should date Bartholomaios’ text to the thirteenth century.

¹⁰ Güterbock, K., *Der Islam im Lichte der byzantinischen Polemik*, 1912, 15.

¹¹ M. 104, 1384–1448.

¹² *Ibid.*, 1385.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 1389, 1420 etc.

¹⁴ Krumbacher, K., *Geschichte der byzantinischen Literatur*, 1897, 78.

¹⁵ *Loc. cit.*, 22f. His reasons are: 1. Bartholomaios uses a number of expressions which are foreign to ninth-century Vulgar Greek, such as φούσατον = army, κατοῦδιον = cat, μανδήλιον = outer garment, etc. (cf. du Cange, *Lexic. Med. Et. Infim. Graecitatis*). 2. He mentions the title Sultan (Σουλτανός M. 104, 1389), which does not occur before the eleventh century (cf. EI IV, 587ff.) 3. The tone of the text suggests that it was composed at a time when Edessa was not in Muslim hands (the time of the Crusades).

¹⁶ It is not possible exactly to determine when the name *fuqarā’* was first used for the dervishes. It is, however, unlikely to have been before 1200.

¹⁷ Maqrīzī (de Sacy, *Chrestomathie Arabe*, 1826, I, 212) reports that the consumption of hemp was introduced by a Shaykh Ḥaydar who died 618 (= 1221 CE). Cf. Meyerhof in EI, Suppl. s.v. Ḥashīsh.

2. *Texts from Byzantium during the era of Macedonian and Komnenos Rulers (ninth to twelfth centuries)*

It was probably at the instance of the Emperor Basileios (d. 886) that the first polemic in Byzantium against Islam was written in the ninth century by Niketas the Philosopher, entitled 'Ανατροπή τῆς παρὰ τοῦ Ἀραβος Μωάμετ πλαστογραφηθείσης βίβλου'.¹⁸ The text, preceded by a long introduction on the dogma of the Trinity, devotes its first seventeen chapters to a detailed discussion of suras 2–18. The other suras are discussed in an ἐλεγκτιὸς κοινή (ch. 18). Chapters 19–30 focus on some individual aspects of Muhammad's doctrine and contrast it with the Christian idea. Niketas is an Aristotelian and attempts to base his refutation on¹⁹ 'general terms and dialectical method, on natural evidence and multi-faceted syllogistical virtuosity', all of which leads to a certain rigidity which sometimes results in pure formalism. Niketas appears to have mastered the Qur'an in its entirety and quotes it quite correctly (with the exception of some exceedingly minor errors). Of further works surviving in this author's hand we know two letters, which purport to be replies by Emperor Michael III to an Agarene (i.e. a Muslim).²⁰ They only contain a justification of tenets of the Christian faith.

Under Alexios Komnenos (1081–1119) the monk Euthymios Zigabenos wrote at the Emperor's behest a summary of dogmatics entitled 'Πανοπλία δογματική', which [139] expresses opinions on the subject of Islam.²¹ Euthymios closely follows his predecessors John and Niketas, which prompted Güterbock to say, with some justification, that the reader would put this part of the great book down in disappointment.²² It does indeed contribute hardly any new information, and the same is true of a debate Euthymios claims to have had with a Muslim philosopher in the city of Melitene.²³

Around a century later, the third text against Islam is written in Byzantium. Niketas Akominatos or Choniatas includes in his magnum opus 'Θησαυρὸς ὀρθοδοξίας' a short passage about Muhammad's teachings 'Περὶ τῆς θρησκείας τῶν Ἀγαρηνῶν'.²⁴ It is not difficult to trace back every single passage of this text to a corresponding parallel in John's or Euthymios' texts; consequently Akominatos

¹⁸ M. 105, 669–805.

¹⁹ M. 105, 674.

²⁰ M. 105, 808–41.

²¹ M. 130, 1332–60.

²² Loc. cit., 35.

²³ M. 131, 20–37.

²⁴ M. 140, 105–21.

cannot claim any independence.²⁵ Rather more remarkable is a formula of abjuration which follows book 20 of the *Thesaurus*, to be recited by the converting Muslim.²⁶

3. *Texts from Byzantium in the Time of the Palaiologos Dynasty (1261-1453)*

First of all we must mention a Latin speaker in this context, who gained importance in Greek lands because he was translated and consulted by later authors. Towards the end of the thirteenth century a Dominican, Ricoldus de Monte Crucis, went on a pilgrimage to Palestine and from there onwards to Baghdad.²⁷ In Baghdad he had the opportunity to conduct religious discussions with leading Muslim scholars. He also made a thorough study of the Arabic language, intending to translate the Qur'an into Latin. He used his exact knowledge of conditions in Baghdad as well as Islamic sects in a refutation of the Prophet's doctrine. This text in 17 chapters, whose title may have been something like *Confutatio Alcorani*, survives only in the translation by Demetrios Kydones (ca. 1350). Thus ideas current in the Latin world were transferred to the East where they were adopted and used by the successors of Kydones. Reports on [140] conditions in Baghdad, about his study of the Qur'an and Islamic theology, about his own experiences, furthermore his quoting of suras in their Arabic names and a history of the Qur'an: all this shows that Ricoldus took great pains to familiarise himself with contemporary Islam.²⁸ This 'Italian in Greek clothing', as Kydones is called by Güterbock,²⁹ was later used as a model by the first Emperor who wrote against Islam. After being overthrown, John Kantakuzenos (d. 1383) retired to a monastery as Joasaph the monk. When the friar Meletios, previously a noble Persian of the name of Achaimenides, received a letter from an old friend, the Persian Sampsatas from Isfahan, asking him to return to his previous religion, Meletios felt that he would not be able to refute his countryman's arguments against Christianity, and asked his imperial friend for help.³⁰ Kantakuzenos then composed an extensive work³¹ consisting of four *Apologies* and four *Orations* (λόγοι). At first the doctrine of the Christian faith is presented *in extenso* (*Apology* 1-3), then the opponent's doctrine is attacked (*Apol.* 4 and *Orations* 1-4). The two parts belong together, as can be seen from the fact that the second part refers to the *Apologies*

²⁵ Güterbock loc. cit., 37.

²⁶ M. 140, 124-36.

²⁷ Laurent, J.C.M., *Peregrinatores medii aevi quatuor*, 1864, 103-41.

²⁸ The text is printed in M. 154, 1035-1152: *Translatio libri fratris Richardi, ordinis Praedicatorum, contra Mahometi asseclas*.

²⁹ Loc. cit., 39.

³⁰ M. 154, 372-77.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 372-692.

several times.³² The *Orations*, which are on the whole based on Kydones' writings,³³ betray in some places that the author was considering the idea of converting his Muslim readers. Consequently the crassly polemic tone is occasionally replaced by a more missionary one.³⁴ Kantakuzenos' text shows no indebtedness to his Byzantine predecessors. His knowledge of Islam does not appear to go beyond what he learned from the Dominican's writings by way of Kydones.³⁵

In the codex which was used by the first editor of [141] Bartholomaios' polemic,³⁶ this text was followed by a short treatise on Muhammad's life and teachings entitled 'Κατὰ Μοάμεδ'.³⁷ As there is no date, we must deduce the time of composition from the contents of the text. A comparison with other Byzantine polemicists shows that every passage of this text (in the following referred to as Anonymous I) has a parallel somewhere. The sketch of Muhammad's life with which Anonymous I begins is found nearly verbatim in Euthymios.³⁸ Information on Muslim eschatology, the Arabic wording of the creed etc. can be traced back to Hamartolos (who shall be discussed below).³⁹ The remaining passages, which mainly contain Arabic names, a thorough description of Paradise and information on the Ka'ba, are found in nearly exactly the same form in Akominatos' *Exorcism*.⁴⁰ At the end there are some notes on the origins of the Qur'an and a synchronism on the appearance of Muhammad, which literally correspond to Kydones' passages on the subjects.⁴¹ Thus in Anonymous I we see an author who has collated a treatise on Muhammad out of passages taken from various sources. As some of these are dependent on Kydones, the text cannot have been written earlier than the fourteenth century. Seen from the point of view of literary criticism, however, it would be possible to date the text considerably earlier, if we assume that the passages copied from Kydones are insertions by a later editor. In that case, while Anonymous I would indeed be dependent on Hamartolos, Euthymios would have been Akominatos' particular model. This is supported by the fact that Arabic names are considerably more reliably transmitted in Anonymous I than in Akominatos' text,⁴² which could be explained by Akominatos having

³² Ibid., 596, 600 etc.

³³ Ibid., 601, Kantakuzenos mentions his predecessor Ricoldus: 'In the year 1210 (!) ... one of the Dominican Order named Rikaldos went to Babylon.'

³⁴ M. 154, 584.

³⁵ Güterbock loc. cit., 58.

³⁶ Le Moyne, *Varia Sacra*, Leiden 1685, I, 302–428; cf. Krumbacher loc. cit., 78.

³⁷ M. 104, 1448–57.

³⁸ M. 104, 1448f. corresponds to M. 130, 1332f.

³⁹ M. 104, 1556f. corresponds to de Boor II, 700, 01, 06.

⁴⁰ M. 104, 1452, 53, 56 correspond to M. 140, 128, 132.

⁴¹ M. 104, 1457 corresponds to M. 154, 1117–20.

⁴² Thus Akominatos mentions some of Muhammad's wives: Ζαδόζε (= Khadīja), Ἀῖσε (= 'Ā'isha), Ζεδεῖνεπ (+ Zaynab) and Ὁμκελδεῖμ (= Umm Kulthūm [the Prophet's daughter!]);

copied incorrectly those names which were incomprehensible to him. There is no definite [142] answer to this question. The two possibilities remain: either we are looking at a fourteenth-century collation of information about Muhammad and his teachings, or at a good description of Muhammad's life together with a summary of his teachings which originated in the time between Hamartolos and Euthymios (ninth to eleventh centuries).

The final scholar in this line of authors is Manuel Palaiologos, who conducted long talks with a respected Turk while he was in the winter quarter in Ankyra (1390). He mentions the Emperor Kantakuzenos as his predecessor in the field of polemics.⁴³ According to Krumbacher,⁴⁴ his work 'Διάλογος περὶ τῆς τῶν Χριστιανῶν θρησκείας πρὸς τινὰ Πέρσην' is the greatest Byzantine apology against Islam. Of the 26 dialogues only two have been edited; these do not contain any information about Islam except for one detailed eschatological description.⁴⁵ Islam is only touched upon in the following minor texts:

1. Gregorios Dekapolitanos: Περὶ ὀπτασίας ἣν τις Σαρρακηνός ποτε ἰδὼν ἐπίστευσε, μαρτυρήσας διὰ τὸν Κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, composed around 815.⁴⁶
2. Leo Imperator: *Ad Omarum Saracenorum regem de fidei Christianae veritate et mysteriis et de variis Saracenorum haeresibus et blasphemis epistola*, comp. around 900.⁴⁷
3. Samonas, Bishop of Gaza: Διάλεξις πρὸς Ἄχμεδ τὸν Σαρακηνόν, comp. around 1036.⁴⁸
4. Gennadios: Ὁμιλία περὶ τῆς ὀρθῆς καὶ ἀληθοῦς πίστεως and Περὶ τῆς ὁδοῦ τῆς σωτηρίας ἀνθρώπων, comp. after 1453.⁴⁹
5. Two anonymous texts: Διάλεξις Χριστιανοῦ καὶ Ἰσμαηλιτοῦ δι' ἐρωταποκρίσεων περὶ τῆς ἀνωμήτου πίστεως τῶν Χριστιανῶν⁵⁰ and *Christianae fidei confessio facta Saracenis*.⁵¹

Anonymous I has : Ζαδιζέ, Ἄϊσέ, Ζεινέπ, Ὁμειελδείμ. A further argument is that Anonymous I gives the duration of the Day of Judgment correctly as being 50,000 years, whereas Akominatos writes 500,000.

⁴³ M. 156, 119.

⁴⁴ Loc. cit., 111.

⁴⁵ M. 156, 126–73; concerning the contents of the remaining dialogues cf. *ibid.*, 111–126.

⁴⁶ M. 100, 1201–12; cf. Krumbacher loc. cit. 81f.

⁴⁷ M. 107, 315–32; cf. Krumbacher loc. cit. 168. The letter survives only in the Latin version. [though see R.G. Hoyland: 'The Correspondence of Leo III (717–41) and 'Umar II (717–20)', *Aram* 6 (1994), 165–77].

⁴⁸ M. 120, 821–32; cf. Krumbacher loc. cit., 81f.

⁴⁹ Gass, W., *Gennadius und Pletho, Aristotelismus und Platonismus in der griechischen Kirche nebst einer Abhandlung über die Bestreitung des Islam im Mittelalter*, 1844, II, 3–39; cf. Krumbacher loc. cit., 119ff.

⁵⁰ M. 131, 37–40.

⁵¹ M. 154, 1151–70. The heading is by Migne's editor.

[143] Besides the polemicists, there are also chronographers and historiographers who include the Arab Prophet, his life and his teachings in their studies of the seventh century.

Theophanes Confessor (d. 817) included a short summary of Muhammad's life in his *Χρονογραφία*.⁵² Like nearly all of his oeuvre, this text was copied almost literally by his successors in many instances, such as e.g. in the fourth book of the chronicle of the world by Georgios Monachos, called Hamartolos (842–67).⁵³ Hamartolos adds to this report a short and remarkable description of Muhammad's doctrine. Kedrenos' compendium of history (eleventh to twelfth century) does not contain an independent representation of Muhammad or his teachings, as Kedrenos merely copies Theophanes and Hamartolos.⁵⁴ Zonaras' (he lived in the time of Manuel Komnenos 1134–80) handbook of history needs to be mentioned in passing only, as it mentions Muhammad in no more than a few words. It does already report a meeting between Muhammad and Herakleios.⁵⁵ Zonaras' book is quoted in Glykas' (around 1164) popular chronicle of the world, which also contains a shortened version of Theophanes' information.⁵⁶ An extensive treatise concerning Muhammad's teachings is included in the history of Georgios Phrantzes (ca. 1477).⁵⁷ If we look at it more closely, we find that his depiction is a verbatim copy of the orations of Emperor Kantakuzenos. The last author we must mention is the Athenian Laonikos Chalkondyles (after 1461), who intended to write a history of all peoples. However, he was not able to study all of them in depth, and consequently his book contains some serious and manifest infringements of historical truths: thus he claims that Muhammad – whom he calls by his Turkish name Mehmet – was a son of 'Alī's etc. Even so, his remarks about Muhammad's doctrine, which are free from every kind of polemic and criticism, appear to be based on sound tradition.⁵⁸ Two anonymous texts must be mentioned, if only in passing: *Narratio de vita Mahomedis*, a little novel about Muhammad's life from a very late date (to be called Anonymous II)⁵⁹ [144], as well as a *Vita Muhammedis* in the appendix of Niketas' work, which really is an excerpt from Theophanes' writings (to be called Anonymous III).⁶⁰ Both of these are insignificant.

⁵² Ed. de Boor, loc. cit., 333–35; cf. Krumbacher loc. cit., 342ff.

⁵³ Ed. de Boor, loc. cit., II, 697–707; cf. Krumbacher loc. cit., 352ff.

⁵⁴ B.C. I, 738–45; cf. Krumbacher loc. cit. 368f.

⁵⁵ du Fresne-Cange (ed.), 1729, vol. 2, 68f.; cf. Krumbacher, loc. cit. 370ff.

⁵⁶ B.C. I, 513–15; cf. Krumbacher loc. cit. 380ff.

⁵⁷ B.C. 294ff.; cf. Krumbacher loc. cit. 109, 307.

⁵⁸ B.C. 121–25; cf. Krumbacher loc. cit. 307ff.

⁵⁹ Gass, loc. cit. II, 147–52. The title is by Gass.

⁶⁰ M. 105, 842. No heading.

II. Islamic Doctrine

1. The Revealed Book

A. History of the Qur'an

In his description of Muhammad's life Bartholomaios says that when Muhammad was reciting his revelations before all the people, they were writing down exactly what he said and paid attention that he should not leave anything out or prophesy anything false.⁶¹ Having reported Muhammad's death in the land of Marada (I), Bartholomaios continues:⁶² 'Apopakres (Abū Bakr) waited for a long time for him (Muhammad) to return. When the people saw that he was not coming back, they remembered him and said to the crowd: bring all the written texts here that Moukhamet gave to you, that we may collect them and unite them in a book. And Apopakres sat as the Caliph in Moukhamet's stead. Othmanes was a well-known man of learning, and Apopakres instructed him to collect all Moukhamet's writings and turn them into a book, the so-called Kouranion. He completed the task as well as it was possible, and the prototype of this Book in Othmanes' hand is kept in a receptacle in the Church of the Forerunner [John the Baptist] in Damascus in the so-called 'tseme'en' (τζεμεήν), i.e. meeting place.'

Bartholomaios integrated two Islamic traditions in his report. According to a tradition by al-Zuhrī, Abū Bakr instructed Zayd b. Thābit to write down the revelations of the Prophet.⁶³ Besides this we have the tradition of the official edition of the Qur'an under the Caliph 'Uthmān,⁶⁴ according to which he appointed a committee of four men who produced four copies. It is most widely believed that one codex was retained in Medina whereas the other three were sent to Kufa, Basra and Damascus.⁶⁵ It is certainly possible that the last copy was kept in the [145] Church of the Baptist in Damascus, more exactly – according to Bartholomaios – in the 'tseme'en', which he elucidates as meaning 'meeting place',⁶⁶ giving exactly the meaning of Arabic *jāmi'*. His description makes it clear that the Church of the Baptist and the Mosque are one and the same building.

Besides this account by Bartholomaios we have a little literary history of the Qur'an by Kydones. His notes on the development of the Qur'an were copied by Kantakuzenos and Anonymous I.⁶⁷ Kydones writes a long section on the development and fate of the Qur'an, entitled 'On the writing of the Alkoranon and who is the

⁶¹ M. 104, 1432.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 1444.

⁶³ Nöldeke-Schwally loc. cit. II, 12ff.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 47ff.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁶⁶ Concerning *al-jāmi'* cf. EI I, 1055.

⁶⁷ M. 154, 601ff.; 104, 1457.

author and originator of this law'.⁶⁸ After Khosroes had been overcome by the abovementioned Herakleios and the Holy Cross had been carried to Jerusalem in triumph, in the year 626 of the incarnation of the Lord, in the fifteenth year of the Emperor Herakleios, Makhoumet appeared (here follows a short description of Muhammad and summary of his life). As he was a simple man and did not know how to write, ὁ διάβολος provided for him like-minded companions: some few heretics, Jews and Christians as well. A particularly devoted follower was Jacobit Baeira (Βαειρά = Bahīrā), who stayed with Muhammad nearly until his death.⁶⁹ It seems as if Makhoumet later killed him. There were also some Jews among his followers: Phinees (Φινεές = Finhās), Audia named Salon, later called Audala (Αὐδιά-Σαλῶν-Αὔδαλλα = 'Abdallāh ibn Sallām), and Selem (Σελέμ = Salmān);⁷⁰ these became Saracens. Besides them there were some Nestorians, who are most closely related to the Saracens, for they claim that Jesus Christ was not born a God but a man out of the Virgin Mary. With help from the others, Moameth composed something in the semblance of a law, by adopting some pieces from the Old Testament and some from the [146] New Testament. In those days the people did not yet have the Alkoranon (τὸ Ἀλκόρανον). They do, however, mention in their books of history that Makhoumet said: "The Alkoranon came down to me via seven men, and what is enough, is enough". In their view, these men were: Naphe (Ναφέ), Eon (Ἐόν), Omar (Ὀμάρ), Ombra (Ὀμβρά), Elresar (Ἐλρεσάρ), Aser (Ἀσήρ), the son of Keter (Κετήρ) and the son of Amer (Ἀμέρ). If we ask them if they have ever read this to Moameth, they all say, not to him, but to the elders, and so on to Moameth. It is certain that these do not correspond to the first elders in the reading they have now. This becomes clear from the fact that the reading of the first part is different from that of the second. From the time of Moameth onwards no one knew the Alkoranon except for Audalla (Αὔδαλλα), son of Mesetoud (Μεσετούδ), Zeith (Ζεῖθ), son of Tampeth (Ταμπέθ), Kanan (Κανάν), son of Ophen (Ὀφήν) and Empe (Ἐμπή), son of Tap (Τάπ). As for Ale (Ἀλή), the son of Abitelem (Ἀβιτέλεμ), some say that he knew a part of it, but others deny this. Each of those named above collated an Alkoranon that was different from the others' Alkoranon. They fought to the death, but still did not manage to seize one another's property. After the death of these men, the peoples were divided about the Alkoranon until the day of Perpan (Περπάν) the son of Elekem (Ἐλεκέμ), who composed for the people the Alkoranon

⁶⁸ M. 154, 1116–20.

⁶⁹ The Prophet's name is written in different ways by the same author.

⁷⁰ The interpretation of the names refers to well-known figures from the Prophet's biography. As for Arabic names in Greek transcription, we must bear in mind that i is often transcribed as αι, ει, η or υ (itacism) and b usually as μπ or π, d as δ or ντ, etc. Consequently Latin transcription can never be quite exact. Besides these seeming changes which can be explained through phonetics we also find forms of names which must be due to misspellings.

which they have now. In those days the abovementioned seven rulers of the cities disagreed about the way of writing and their dialects. In their books of history we read that the chapter on the release (sura 4) came before the chapter on the cow. It is said to have been made up out of 230 sentences, while now the whole chapter is only 12 sentences long. Others say that the chapter on the cow used to have a thousand sentences, while today it only has 287. There is a tradition concerning a ruler Elgan (Ἐλγάν) claiming that he cut 85 sentences from the Alkoranon and then inserted others with an opposite meaning. What then can we say about the truth of the divine proclamation about the Alkoranon: We have made the divine book come down, and we shall protect them? There are some among them who tell the story that, after Makhoumet lost his life, the people did not have the Alkoranon. The Alkoranon that we now hold in hands was collated after Empeoumpeker (Ἐμπεουμπεκέρ = Abū Bakr) became the ruler and ordered that everybody must remember to the best of his ability. [147] In the chapter Ἐλαμράν (= Āl Imrān, sura 3) he (Muhammad) says about the Alkoranon that none but God could understand its interpretation, and those who possess the depths of wisdom say: we believe him; everything comes from our God ... It so happened that they agreed that this should be the Alkoranon that they now owned: God revealed it to Muhammad who then wrote it according to God's words. The Elphikaa (Ἐλφικαά), the great teachers and exegetes, have never agreed on the interpretation of the Alkoranon, and will not agree in all eternity.

Not only are the Orientals opposed to the Occidentals, but the Orientals among themselves disagree, and the Occidentals just the same. In their schools we find any number of sects which are so different that one condemns the next one. Some – indeed most – follow Makhoumet, others Ale; these are fewer and also less evil, for they claim that Makhoumet usurped through the power of tyranny what should have been Ale's. Some Saracens are opposed to both these groups; they are well-versed in philosophy and have employed their time reading the books of Aristotle and Plato; they curse all the sects of the Saracens, even the Alkoranon. All of this becomes clear due to the fact that a Caliph in Babylon named [missing] built the Academy and the Menstanzeria School (Μενστανζερία) in Babylon, both of which are entirely excellent. He changed the reading of the Alkoranon. He further ordered that those who came from the provinces to Babylon in order to hear the Alkoranon should be given board and lodging from the public purse. He also decreed that the Saracens and followers of the Alkoranon must in no way devote themselves to philosophy; which was why he believed that those who adhered to philosophy could not be good Saracens'.

It is characteristic of Kydones' text that in three places he mentions that he gained his information out of books of history or from stories. The colourful image he paints finds a parallel in the variety of Islamic traditions concerning the history of the Qur'an. Any analysis of Kydones' text will have to distinguish between three descriptions which are not only interwoven but also less than clear when studied

individually: 1. Muhammad and his mentors collated a law that was not yet the Qur'an. This emphasises correctly that in Muhammad's day the Qur'an did not yet exist as a book. [148] 2. Seven men are mentioned to whom the Qur'an was sent down. According to Islamic tradition, in accordance with the Prophet's alleged word on the Qur'an having been revealed in the form of seven *aḥruf*, seven original readers of the Qur'an made the selection in the fourth century AH. This was necessary because of the inadequacy of the Arabic script, as it has been said that the earliest variants of the Qur'an contained readings in seven different dialects, while 'Uthmān's edition used only the Qurayshi dialect.⁷¹ In the fourth century AH the definitive readers of the Qur'an were recognised to be Nāfi', Ibn Kathīr, Abū 'Amr al-'Alā, Ibn 'Āmir, Abū Bakr 'Āṣim, Ḥamza and al-Kisā'ī.⁷² In Kydones' account we find: Naphe (Nāfi'), Eon Omar (Abū 'Amr?), Ombra (Ḥamza?), Elreasar (al-Kisā'ī?), Aser ('Āṣim), the son of Keter (Ibn Kathīr) and the son of Amer (Ibn 'Āmir). While joining Eon Omar and separating Aser and the son of Keter does not correspond to the punctuation in the Greek text, it offers the best possible interpretation. When Kydones mentions four men who knew the Qur'an in Muhammad's time, he is referring to the tradition which speaks of the first four editions of the Qur'an. This tradition lists⁷³ Ubayy b. Ka'b, 'Abdallāh b. Mas'ūd, Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī and Miqdād b. Aswad.⁷⁴ Collators of the Qur'an who are often mentioned besides them are Zayd b. Thābit and 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.⁷⁵ I would assume that Kydones' Empe son of Tap is meant to be Ubayy b. Ka'b and Kanan son of Ophen, 'Uthmān b. 'Affān (in which case the names Ubayy and 'Uthmān are in very corrupted form). The remaining names Audalla, Zeith and Ale correspond to 'Abdallāh b. Mas'ūd (Μεσετούδ), Zayd b. Thābit (Ζαμπέθ) and 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (Αβιτέλεμ). In the Islamic sources we do not find any reports of bitter struggles between these experts on the Qur'an. Kydones' subsequent remarks are not clear. He refers to the seven *aḥruf* again. It is possible that the name Perpan son of Elekem is meant to represent al-Ḥajjāj (b. Yūsuf) b. al-Ḥakam (Elekem = al-Ḥakam). This famous statesman (b. AH 41) has been accused of having mutilated the Qur'an. According to Lammens⁷⁶ his contribution to the Qur'an consisted in a critical review and the introduction of orthographic [149] marks to prevent faulty recitation. Al-Ḥajjāj's work on the Qur'an is already mentioned in al-Kindī's *Apology*.⁷⁷ As for the rearrangement of passages within the Qur'an mentioned by Kydones, we know that at first there was some disagreement concerning the arrangement of the

⁷¹ Nöldeke-Schwally II, 58; EI II, 1149f.; Islamica VI, 230ff., 290ff.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Nöldeke-Schwally II, 27.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 8–12.

⁷⁶ EI II, 215.

⁷⁷ *Apology* 77.

verses.⁷⁸ However, this applies only to the earliest time. We have no knowledge of a ruler named Elgam (unless this is a further reference to al-Ḥakām) who had any decisive say in the composition of the Qur'an. 3. At the end of his reports on the Qur'an Kydones goes back to the tradition of the collation of the Qur'an under Abū Bakr's direction, the tradition on which Bartholomaios based his text exclusively.⁷⁹

Kydones calls the representatives of the Fiqh schools Elphikaa (= *al-fuqahā'*). Bartholomaios tells us the names of the four great schools of law:⁸⁰ ἀπὸ Χανιφά (= Abū Ḥanīfa), Σεφί (= Shāfi'ī), Μελκί (= Mālik) and Ἀχμάτ χαμπίλ (Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal). Kydones subsequently only characterises the religious groups within Islam as: those who follow Muhammad (= Sunni) and those who follow 'Alī (= Shī'ī). Besides these two there are the philosophers who study Plato and Aristotle. The Menstanzeria School was built as a stronghold against philosophy. Kydones omits the name of the founder, which may be a sign that he is referring to an immediately contemporary event. We do know that the Caliph al-Mustanṣir had the magnificent Mustanṣiriya built in 1234, a school for the four rites with one teacher and 75 students each. The Caliph furthermore appointed one teacher of the Qur'an, one of ḥadīth, and one physician. There was a library, a bath, a hospital and kitchens connected to the school.⁸¹ Kydones' information about this school is so exact that we must assume that his knowledge must have come from trustworthy Islamic sources. His remark that those who follow 'Alī are less evil than the others allows us to assume that he himself was more favourably inclined towards the Shī'īs.⁸² It is even possible that some of his statements on the doctrine of Islam were informed by Shī'ī circles!

[150] Besides the Qur'an Kydones made use of other Muslim writings in his *Confutatio*. Above all he frequently refers to the *Book of Makhoumet's teachings*, whose contents he claims were held in high esteem among the Muslims.⁸³ According to what we read in Kydones' text, this book must have contained mostly eschatological descriptions. It talks of the life of the blessed in Paradise, of the food and other delights there, of the day of resurrection and so forth.⁸⁴ When he interprets Qur'anic passages, Kydones furthermore relies on a book about *narratives*,⁸⁵ a kind of commentary not limited to Qur'anic rulings. Thus the book contained, for example, reasons for the prohibition of wine and pork, a description of Muhammad's journey

⁷⁸ EI II, 1148f.

⁷⁹ A detailed history of the Qur'an can be found in al-Kindī (*Apology* 70ff.) In some ways it corresponds to what we read in Kydones. On the whole, though, this is too unclear to allow us to conclude that there was a connection between the two authors.

⁸⁰ M. 104, 1401.

⁸¹ EI III, 413.

⁸² Looking at Kydones' description he is probably referring to the extreme Shī'a.

⁸³ M. 154, 1081: βιβλίον τῆς διδασκαλίας τοῦ Μαχοῦμετ.

⁸⁴ M. 154, 1081, 1084f.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 1081: βιβλίον τῶν διηγήσεων.

to heaven and his moon miracle, information on the end of the world and on the interpretation of individual verses in the Qur'an.⁸⁶ We may assume that when he was writing Kydones had before him not only a copy of the Qur'an but also a collection of traditions and a Qur'anic commentary.

B. *The Qur'an as a Holy Book*

Even the first Greek accounts assume that Muhammad's doctrine was written down in a book which the Muslims regard as a book of divine revelation. This was so much taken for granted that John of Damascus calls the Qur'an 'that which is written' (ἡ γραφή).⁸⁷ Niketas speaks of the book or the little book of the Agarenes.⁸⁸ The term Qur'an is first found in Akominatos' *Exorcism: Kouran* (Κουράν).⁸⁹ Later polemic nearly always uses it. Kydones writes *Alkoranon*.⁹⁰ Kantakuzenos, *Korran* (Κορράν) and Bartholomaios, *Kouranion* (Κουράνιον). This list shows that during the first centuries of Islam the term Qur'an was either not known to the Christians or, at least, was not in common use. When John uses the term 'that which is written' for Qur'an [151] and Niketas, *Book*, they do it with reference to the Arabic term *al-Kitāb*, which had been in use from the very first.

There are only a few Byzantines whose verdict is based on actual study of the Qur'an. This is especially true of those who wrote against the Qur'an and argued against it using its own statements. Besides Niketas' text *The refutation of the false book which the Arab Moamet made up* particularly worthy of consideration is Kydones' *Confutatio Alcorani*. In order to understand the Byzantines' attitude towards the Qur'an we must pay close attention to the relation which they saw between it and the texts of the Old and New Testaments. The Byzantines take it for granted that this book of revelation makes the same claim as the holy texts of Jews and Christians. After sura 2:3 Niketas remarks that Muhammad himself saw his work in a succession of other testimonies of faith.⁹¹ 'This little book', he says, 'has 113 (!) chapters; in the first of these – which appears to take the place of a proem – he orders that this written text should be accepted together with and equal to the earlier holy books'. Muhammad's book is intended to be a complement to the Torah and the Gospel.⁹² Then Niketas asks:⁹³ 'What is it about Jesus that you condemn that

⁸⁶ Ibid. 1061, 1100f., 1120f.

⁸⁷ M. 94, 768.

⁸⁸ M. 105, 704, 709.

⁸⁹ M. 140, 128.

⁹⁰ Kydones usually speaks of the law of the Saracens; in one instance (M. 154, 1104) he adds: the Saracens call it (the law) with reference to the linguistic derivation Ἐλεσαλέμ, i.e. σωτηρίας νόμος. Elesalem corresponds to Arabic al-salām.

⁹¹ M. 105, 708f.

⁹² Ibid., 716.

⁹³ Ibid.

you have brought this new, third book? (cf. sura 2:84)'. Similarly Kydones ends his refutation of the Qur'an in a comparison between the Qur'an and the Gospel.⁹⁴ In his view, the Muslims hold the following opinion:⁹⁵ 'As it was not possible to keep the laws, and as God had looked after the world by means of the law of salvation, he eased the commandments by giving the world the Alkoranon. It did not contain the difficult laws but was easy, that the people might be saved through it'. Kydones continues: 'They say that the Alkoranon took the place of the Gospel, and everything that was good in the Gospel is now in the Alkoranon, so that now the Gospel is not needed anymore'. The other Byzantine polemicists do not emphasise so explicitly that the Qur'an occupies the same position within the doctrinal system of Islam as the Gospel within Christianity. They do, however, appear to presuppose this assumption, as they would ask the Muslims the same questions that one revealed religion customarily asks the other.

[152] John of Damascus had asked the Muslims about the revelation of the Qur'an:⁹⁶ 'We are asking', he said, 'how the Book came down upon your prophet, and they replied that the Book descended upon him while he was asleep'. Niketas also expresses his opinion:⁹⁷ 'When we see that his (Muhammad's) actions are different in those things to which all people adhere, how then can he maintain the unusual and superhuman view that it (that Book), as I say, was sent down from Heaven?' Just as questions are asked repeatedly regarding the confirmation of Muhammad's prophetic mission, so the Qur'an requires a similar confirmation. 'Who is a witness that it was God who gave him the Book?'⁹⁸ asks John, pointing to Moses who received the divine revelation before the eyes of the entire Israelite people. Niketas requires proof straightaway:⁹⁹ 'He is not able to prove that it was God who wrote this Book for him by means of what he wrote in it; (furthermore he is not able to show) when and how, whether in a dream or another divine apparition, and before what witnesses, such as the more than 600,000 in the case of Moses...' Niketas even finds a contradiction in Muhammad's statements on the subject of the revelation. He quotes sura 12:2: 'This we reveal to you of the stories of the ancients in Arabic letters'.¹⁰⁰ Niketas remarks: 'In another passage, however, he states that he received these *τερθρεΐαι* in unwritten form.' In this instance the mistake is Niketas', as he quotes the verse incorrectly. Sura 12:2 does speak of an Arabic Qur'an, but in this way Muhammad intends to emphasise that the revelation in question is an original passage from the Heavenly Book. When the Byzantines ask after the revelation of

⁹⁴ M. 154, 1140–48.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* 1148.

⁹⁶ M. 94, 768; 765.

⁹⁷ M. 105, 705.

⁹⁸ M. 94, 769.

⁹⁹ M. 105, 705.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 756f.

the Qur'an they do not clearly distinguish between the revelation as such and the book of the revelation. To us it is remarkable that they readily categorise the Qur'an as revelation, thus entirely accepting Muhammad's claim, even though they, being Christians, have to deny the Islamic faith their acceptance.

If the Byzantines were convinced that in the view of the Muslims the Qur'an was God's word, they, being its opponents, could not simply accept this; on the contrary, they endeavoured [153] to discover where the new doctrine presented in the Qur'an might have come from. For the Byzantines, solving the question of the origins of Qur'anic doctrine was not the result of historical study but purely a polemical construct. Following Hamartolos' example the Byzantine chronographers have Muhammad meet Jews, Arians and Nestorians. In this way they explain how Muhammad came to emphasise God's sole reign, the createdness of Logos and Pneuma, and to his claim of the Christians' anthropolatry.¹⁰¹ Kydones' writings show clearly where this method of drawing conclusions from the doctrine to its historical origins can lead: he reduces Islamic doctrine in all its details to Christian heresies. The examples he adduces are:¹⁰² in the place of the triad, he has a Platonic duad: in this, he follows Sabellius. He has Christ appear as less than God: in this, he follows Arius. Muhammad ranks knowledge higher than the soul: in this he agrees with Abinsena (Ἀβινοσένα = Avicenna; this is obviously anachronistic). He believes Christ to be the holiest and best of all men: in this, he follows Karpokrates and the Manichaeans. He claims that the demons will be saved: in this, he follows Origen. He describes the end of time in terms of debauchery: in this, he follows Kerinth and some old heretics. At the time when Niketas of Byzantium was writing, everything foreign and incomprehensible appears to have been seen as a spiritual product of Manichaeism. In several passages of his *Confutatio* we find the claim:¹⁰³ 'Most of it he has collected from the Μανιχαϊκῆς ἰλύω'. Niketas is here referring in particular to the oath formulae, the invocation of demons, the stories of the prophets, the mysterious letters at the beginning of some suras, and to some other things which to him are part of the realm of the incomprehensible.

What knowledge the Byzantines had of the Book that is the Qur'an, we can discern in the passages of suras they quote in their treatises. As for the question of when the names of the individual suras were known to wider circles, Islamicists cite the fact that some suras are already quoted with their correct names by John of Damascus.¹⁰⁴ In his book against the heresies John refers to the chapters (= suras) *concerning woman*, *concerning the table* and *concerning the cow*. [154] Besides these suras (4, 5 and 2) he mentions a text *concerning God's she-camel*, which is not a sura title known to us. According to the summary given by John, this text concerns Ṣāliḥ's

¹⁰¹ Ed. de Boor, loc. cit. II. 700 and Par.

¹⁰² M. 154, 1044f.

¹⁰³ M. 105, 712, 756, 820f.

¹⁰⁴ EI II, 1149.

she-camel; maybe a section of sura 7 was originally known by this title.¹⁰⁵ The titles of suras with which Niketas prefaces his *Confutations* are in a similar form to those quoted by John: εἰς τοὺς τοῦ Ἀμράν (= sura 3), εἰς τὰς γυναῖκας κτλ. Some suras he mentions with their Arabic name: εἰς τὸ Ἀκκά = *al-hāqqa* (sura 69) and εἰς τὸ καρά = *al-qārī'a* (sura 101). Kydones and, based on him, Kantakuzenos, give the suras they quote their Arabic names and a Greek translation.¹⁰⁶ [155] Only Niketas (Euthymios, Akominatos) and Kydones (Kantakuzenos) include literal quotations of individual sura verses.¹⁰⁷ Here are two examples to illustrate how the Arabic words were rendered in the Greek translation. For sura 4:169 Niketas has:¹⁰⁸ Ὁ Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς υἱὸς Μαρίας ἀπόστολος θεοῦ ἐστὶ καὶ λόγος αὐτοῦ, ὃ ἔρριψεν πρὸς τὴν Μαρίαν καὶ πνεῦμα ἐξ αὐτοῦ. Kydones renders the same verse as: Ὁ Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς, ὁ υἱὸς τῆς Μαρίας ἀπόστολός ἐστὶ τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ, ὃ αὐτὸς ἔθηκεν ἐν αὐτῇ διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου. If we compare these to the Arabic text, we find that we have here nearly literal translations; we are then able to deduce from this that the knowledge the Byzantines had of the Qur'an was in many cases based on the actual text. On the whole, however, they only give the contents of a Qur'anic passage.

The attitude of the Byzantines can usually be deduced from the passages they prefer to quote. Their selection is aimed at mentioning only those passages of the Book which must appear reprehensible to a Christian. They primarily quote instances of marriage rules, [156] free will, Christ, anachronisms and eschatology. Besides these factual delimitations we find judgments which are aimed at the character of the opponents' book of revelation. Niketas had already something to say about the lack of – as he calls it – any kind of sensible order within the Qur'an.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Becker, loc. cit., 436.

¹⁰⁶ The names of suras as found in Kydones: *al-baqara* (sura 2): impakara, elpakeram, elimpakeram, elmpakara (translated as *damalis*, *bous*); *Āl 'Imrān* (4): elamram, amram (not translated); *al-nisā'* (4): elnesa (*gynaikes*); *al-mā'ida* (5): elmaida, elmaide, elmoide, elmeidē, elmeinte (*trapeza*); *al-a'rāf*(7): elaraph (not translated); *al-anfāl* (8): elemphaal (*kerdī*); *al-tauba* (9): telteoumpe (*metanoia*); *Yūnus* (10): lōna (not translated); *al-hajar* (15): elagar (*lithos*); *al-naḥl* (16): elnael (*phoenix*); *banū Isrā'īl* (17): tōn uiōn Isrāēl; *Maryam* (19): Mariēl, Mariem; *al-anbiyā'* (21): elemphis, elpia (*prophētai*); *al-mu'minūn* (23): elmoumēnin (not translated); *al-nūr* (24): elnour, elinēr (*phōs*); *al-naml* (27): nemele (*myia*); *al-aḥzāb* (33): elazeb, elezap (not translated); *Saba'* (34): Sebē; *al-malā'ika* (35): elmelaike (not translated); *ṣād* (38): sad; *al-aḥqāf* (46): elakaph (not translated); *qāf* (50): elkaph; *al-qamar* (54): elkamar, elkanimar, kamar (*selēnē*); *al-raḥmān* (55): elragman (*eleēmōn*); *al-taḥrīm* (66): elmetearem, almetaare (translated as *epochē* and *anathema*); *al-jinn* (72): elgem (translated as *daimones*); *al-ḥin* (95): eltim (*sykē*); *al-aṣr* (103): elastar (not translated); *al-kāfirūn* (109): elkapherim, elkaphereim (*hairetikoi*).

¹⁰⁷ A list of the passages quoted by Niketas is superfluous as his editor in Migne has listed them clearly in the notes. Kydones includes few literal quotations.

¹⁰⁸ M. 105, 736.

¹⁰⁹ M. 105, 704.

Kydones has collected everything which according to him must be criticised:¹¹⁰ the Qur'an does not come from God, because 1. there is no witness to it in either the Old or the New Testament, 2. it does not correspond to the other Books in either its style (which is rhythmical and metrical) or its contents, 3. it contradicts itself, 4. it is not confirmed by a miracle, 5. it is against reason, 6. it contains obvious errors, 7. it is vehement, disorderly, evil and treacherous.¹¹¹ The first chapters of Kydones' *Confutatio* collect the instances for these claims from the Qur'an and the tradition. They are based on, among others, this fact:¹¹² 'He (Muhammad) says in many passages that God does not lead those who are in error onto the right way; at the same time, however, he teaches that they should pray to be led from darkness towards the light, from the wilderness to the right way'. The juxtaposition of these two sentences ought really to have led Kydones to the conclusion that the Qur'an does not represent an absolute determinism. However, rather than proposing a positive statement, he accuses Muhammad of contradicting himself within the Qur'an. Kydones does not limit his criticism to the Qur'an but also attacks Muslim theology, as can be seen from the following sentence:¹¹³ 'If the Saracens say that Makhoumet worked many and great miracles, such as splitting the moon, making a spring of water break forth from his fingers, this is falsehood and contradicts the Alkoranon itself. Makhoumet forbids believing anything of him that is not written in the Alkoranon'. Here Kydones is confronting especially the Islamic traditions which painted such a magnificent picture of their Prophet. That the entire Islamic doctrine is occasionally sweepingly called 'Qur'an' can be seen from the writings of Bartholomaios of Edessa, who claims to have found information concerning, among other things, Muhammad's age, his early life, his journey to Heaven, and the 72 condemned sects in the Qur'an.¹¹⁴

[157] The Byzantines are neither willing nor able to do justice to the Qur'an's claim to a divine origin. Their polemic against this book leads again and again to its complete condemnation.¹¹⁵ A comment by Euthymios, reflecting the spirit of all the texts, shows this quite clearly:¹¹⁶ Ὦν ἀπάντως τὴν ἀκαθαρσίαν καὶ τὴν πρόδηλον φλυαρίαν τὸ καὶ διηγῆσασθαι καὶ ἀνατρέψαι ἴσον ἐστὶ τῷ τὴν Αὐγείου κόπρον ἐκκομίσαι κατὰ τὸν Ἡρακλέα. [For even to tell and refute all their depravity and their evident nonsense is equal to the clearing of the dung of Augeas by Hercules].

¹¹⁰ M. 154, 1141.

¹¹¹ The entire *Confutatio* is set out according to these aspects.

¹¹² M. 154, 1065.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 1069.

¹¹⁴ M. 104, 1388, 1392, 1401 etc.

¹¹⁵ M. 105, 705, 721, 740, 777; 140, 128; 154, 1040.

¹¹⁶ M. 130, 1341.

2. Contents of the Doctrine

A. The Doctrine of Faith

Questions of dogma are the true concern of polemics and apologetics. Consequently this is where the Byzantine theologians feel at home. At first they strive so hard to present the merits of their own doctrine compared to the flaws of the opponent's concepts and ideas that they seem to be apologists of their own Byzantine Christianity rather than warriors against the foreign religion. The subjects of controversy we find are the same with which they would fight against Christian heresies. However, polemic against Islam is generally based on the Qur'an, and it is there that the theologians look for controversial subjects. The doctrinal system of Islam, which the Byzantines were intending to destroy, was in their view determined by the following points requiring discussion:

- a) the conception of God
- b) Christology
- c) the belief in the 'one' God and the Trinity
- d) the problem of free will
- e) the stories of the prophets
- f) the doctrine of angels and demons
- g) natural history
- h) eschatology

At the centre of the debate, in the place where the Byzantines believed they perceived the religious contrast most acutely, where they were involved to the highest degree and with all their enthusiasm and passion, was Christian soteriology, the question of salvation through the actions of the Son of God. The fact that the Qur'an did not have a clear-cut answer to precisely this matter occasioned the Greeks not only amazement but also at the same time annoyance. As they recognised that [158] Christ's divine nature was rejected, their most noble task was to defend Christ and the soteriology.

Consequently their first question was: Within the Islamic doctrinal system, what takes the place of professing the θεός ἐνοσαρκόμενος? The answer was the profession of belief in the one and only God and his Prophet. Already Abū Qurra informs us of their profession of faith:¹¹⁷ 'It is the custom of the [...] Saracens when they meet a Christian that they do not greet him but say: Christian, this is the profession of faith: God is one, without a companion, whose servant and messenger is Muhammad.' When a Christian speaks of Christ, the Saracen appears to speak of God and the Prophet – this is a sign that in this way both profess the central dogma of their doctrine. Kydones contrasts the formula of the Muslim creed and

¹¹⁷ M. 87, 1544.

the Christian soteriology:¹¹⁸ 'It does not contribute to their salvation when they say: there is no god but God, and Makhoumet is the messenger of God'. Bartholomaios sees the Muslim profession of faith 'there is no god but God, and Mouchamet is God's messenger'¹¹⁹ in line with the holy formula that precedes every Qur'anic sura 'in the name of God the merciful and all-compassionate'.¹²⁰ Like Kydones¹²¹ he is of the opinion that the second part of the profession of faith does not necessarily belong with the first one, as this creed 'was known earlier among the Arabs before Moukhamet, with the exception of the phrase that Moukhamet is God's messenger'.¹²² This conclusion is erroneous, for Muhammad's creed is directed precisely against the pre-Islamic Allah, who was not the only God.

a) *The Conception of God* Over the course of time, Muhammad's God has been accorded a variety of characteristics by the Byzantines. The accusation of Tritheism levelled against them by the Islamic side was countered by pointing out Islam's unbearably heavy emphasis on God's oneness. John of Damascus provides a definition of Muhammad's God:¹²³ 'He (Muhammad) says that God is one of the creators of the universe, who has not been begotten and has not begotten'. His pupil Abū Qurra is not content with this [159] denotation εἷς θεός but defines this God with the terms 'one and only' and 'wrought' (μουνάξ, σφυρόπηκτος).¹²⁴ However, it is not until Niketas that we find the term ὀλόσφυρος (in one instance even ὀλόσφαιρος)¹²⁵ which he explains with reference to sura 112¹²⁶ [in particular, the enigmatic Arabic term *ṣamad*]: 'While it is obvious that the ὀλόσφυρος is not shaped like a sphere, he is solid and firmly made, which is the essence of a body'. Euthymios copied this claim and Akominatos adopted it into his *Exorcism*.¹²⁷ He says: 'A God ὀλόσφυρος, who has not begotten and has not been begotten and has no equal'. Like Niketas, Kantakuzenos knows the term ὀλόσφαιρος and uses it to describe God.¹²⁸ 'He (Muhammad) worships and proclaims a God who is ὀλόσφαιρος and entirely cold (lifeless), he prays to a God who has not been begotten and has not begotten; the unfortunate man does not realise that he is worshipping something physical and not God. The sphere is the shape of this body'. The explanations given for ὀλόσφυρος

¹¹⁸ M. 154, 1064, 1080, 1109.

¹¹⁹ M. 104, 1401, 1445.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1401.

¹²¹ M. 154, 1080.

¹²² M. 104, 1445.

¹²³ M. 94, 765.

¹²⁴ M. 97, 1545.

¹²⁵ M. 105, 705–08.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 776.

¹²⁷ M. 140, 133.

¹²⁸ M. 154, 692.

indicate what the Byzantines imagined it to be: a firmly wrought, dense and solid body. The question that arises for us is how the Byzantines came by this definite term which is not likely to have been based on an Islamic original, even though Niketas claims that Muhammad himself gave his God this name. It is remarkable that Abū Qurra already linked his σφυρόπηκτος to sura 112.¹²⁹ He says: 'God is unique, God is wrought, he did not beget and was not begotten, and he has no companion by his side'. Niketas' translation of the sura reads:¹³⁰ 'He is one God, θεός ὀλόσφυρος, he did not beget and was not begotten, and none was his equal'. Following Niketas, Euthymios, Akominatos, Anonymous I and Kantakuzenos base their statements about Muhammad's God on the same Qur'anic passage. Bartholomaios clarifies the question of the origins of the ὀλόσφυρος in this passage, quoted here in comparison:¹³¹ 'These (the pre-Islamic gods) are they who you call in your language Alakh (Ἀλάχ), Samet (Σαμέτ) and Tzamet (Τζαμέτ), i.e. obviously ὀλόσφυρος and ὀλόβολος, something which may [160] be grasped and has a shape.' This shows clearly – as Reland has already remarked¹³² – that Greek ὀλόσφυρος corresponds to Arabic *ṣamad*.¹³³ As an epithet of God, *ṣamad* means 'eternal' and occurs only in sura 112. Muslim exegetes had also explained the phrase *allāh ṣamad* in verse 2 with the following verses 3–4 [*lam yalid wa-lam yūlad*]. In this way they arrive at the idea of a God who does not beget, does not have an organism, does not pass away and does not change. The negation which the Qur'an intended to convey by means of this bold epithet was converted by the Greeks into the three-dimensional image of a God who is seen as a compact and solid figure. They all have in common that the word *ṣamad* – which also entails the positive meaning 'solid' – and sura 112 are their starting points. This sura could easily have been familiar to the Greeks, as it is frequently used in Muslim professions of faith.¹³⁴ On the occasion of the drawing up of a profession of faith for Muslim catechumens, Emperor Manuel Komnenos (d. 1180)¹³⁵ and his theologians argued when they came to the definition and denotation of Muhammad's God. This argument shows us that the Greeks were well aware that the phrase θεός ὀλόσφυρος had very pejorative overtones. As we have already heard, Akominatos' formula of abjuration contained, among other points, an anathema of Muhammad's God as θεός ὀλόσφυρος. Akominatos adds the note that the Emperor understood this expression as a condemnation of God himself and therefore demanded the removal of this phrase from the formula. The Byzantine

¹²⁹ M. 97, 1545.

¹³⁰ M. 105, 776.

¹³¹ M. 104, 1385.

¹³² Gass, loc. cit. I, 142.

¹³³ *ṣamad* = not hollow, not hollowed out; later also = solid, compact (Sprenger, A, *Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohamamad*, 1869, II, 33A.2)

¹³⁴ Hell, J, *Die Religion des Islam in Urkunden*, 1923 (2nd ed.), 29, 39.

¹³⁵ Krumbacher loc. cit., 1022ff.

theologians at first resisted this demand, but gave in in the end by interpreting the verse to the effect that this anathema was not directed against Muhammad's God but against Muhammad himself.¹³⁶ Even so, Manuel was unable to remove the expression from the text altogether, for it keeps reappearing later. And how insulting it must have been to the opponent if even a Christian found it offensive, and how little would it have helped towards enthusing Muslim catechumens.

The Byzantines were to encounter a further definition of Muhammad's God in the Qur'an in those passages which refer to the God of Abraham. [161] Niketas renders sura 16:121 with the words:¹³⁷ 'And he (Muhammad) asks the faithful to trust in the one God of Abraham'. Niketas claims to know that 'the Barbarians are desirous to make Abraham's God their God'. However, in his opinion they are very far from possessing Abraham's true religion.¹³⁸ We learn from a number of statements by Byzantine scholars that thanks to their study of the Qur'an they knew that Muhammad identified his God with Abraham's God.¹³⁹ Their rejection was based on their very definite idea that Muhammad's God was θεός ὁλόσφουρος.

While Niketas calls Muhammad's God a different God, Bartholomaios speaks of the 'new' God of Muhammad:¹⁴⁰ 'Firstly I wish to ask you concerning your new God and your faith'. 'No-one has ever seen the God of the Christians ... and he has never shown himself to any man dwelling on earth in the way that you are babbling that God visited and still visits Moukhamet daily'. In order to emphasise the anthropomorphism he perceives in Muhammad's concept of God, Bartholomaios points to Muhammad's journey to Heaven, remarking:¹⁴¹ 'Then again you say that Moukhamet rested one foot in Jerusalem and stepped with the other one into Heaven near to God, and all this while wearing shoes. So he was sitting near God, "as one eyebrow next to the other" and conversed with God and recognised him, and God recognised Muhammad'. Katakuzenos states explicitly what the target of this accusation is:¹⁴² 'He (Muhammad) tells us of how he went to see God when Gabriel was sent for this reason; God laid his hand upon him and at the touch of his hand he felt such a cold that ran down the length of his spine. This says quite clearly that he is companion to the anthropomorphists who say that God is physical'.

The fact that the Islamic theologians felt compelled to make statements concerning God in the first place led to the question of the qualities of God. According to Becker,¹⁴³ the question of the qualities and attributes of God within

¹³⁶ M 140, 132 A. 17.

¹³⁷ M. 105, 761.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 792, 796.

¹³⁹ M. 154, 532f.; 104, 1385.

¹⁴⁰ M. 104, 1385, 1388.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 1392.

¹⁴² M. 154, 677; cf. Kydones *ibid.*, 1045.

¹⁴³ *Loc. cit.*, 443ff.

Islam only came about because of the Christian discussion of whether or not Christ was the son of God; [162] it led to the internal Islamic debate concerning the 99 names of Allah. The later Byzantine polemicists never base their arguments on this debate, which tells us that they did not see God's unity endangered in this respect. Only Kydones refers in one instance to the Islamic idea of the qualities of God. He finds it most irritating that in the Qur'an God speaks in the plural, and says:¹⁴⁴ 'It is not possible to claim that God speaks in the plural because of the different qualities embodied in him, such as power, wisdom, justice etc., called *ṣifa* by the Arabs. These are not accidents of God, things that are separate from him, but rather the divine essence itself'. Kydones provides us with the keyword which developed the Islamic dogma of the *ṣifāt Allāh*.¹⁴⁵ The *ṣifāt Allāh* are in the strictest sense the abstract qualities at the basis of the epithets.¹⁴⁶ Kydones correctly gives as examples power, wisdom and justice, which are also part of the divine essence according to Islamic doctrine. Rather than advancing the accusation that Muhammad's God is divided into an infinite number of hypostases, Kydones' verdict is the exact opposite:¹⁴⁷ 'In the Alkoranon, Moameth introduces God who speaks in the plural without giving a reason why. Thereby the first question becomes clear, that we together with him profess the one God, who is one only and unique'.

We can hear a reconciliatory tone in these last words by Kydones. Such a verdict concerning Muhammad's God was also possible, as we can see in the report of an unknown writer (probably of a later date). He tells us:¹⁴⁸ The Alkoranon transmits concerning God that he is one, non-physical, not material, invisible, incomprehensible, that he has no partner or companion. In his hands are life and death, he is the most powerful, the most praised, creator, guide and just'. This unknown author regrets only that Muhammad denies God the father. Even though this is a lone voice within Byzantine polemic, it does tell us that this understanding of Muhammad's God was possible in those days. However, the idea of Muhammad's God that was predominant in Byzantium was not this one of an immaterial merciful God, but that of the θεός ὀλόσφυρος!

b) *Christology* What the Byzantines must have noticed was the fact that in the Qur'an Muhammad spoke of Christ not only in the historical but also in the religious sense, albeit without recognising him as the son of God. With reference to the passages discussing Christ, the Byzantines drew up an extensive Christology of the Qur'an. John of Damascus gives us an outline:¹⁴⁹ He (Muhammad) says: 'Christ is the word

¹⁴⁴ M. 154, 1125.

¹⁴⁵ EI I, 321.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., IV, 435.

¹⁴⁷ M. 154, 1128.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 1157.

¹⁴⁹ M. 94, 768; cf. Euthymios M. 130, 1336 and Akominatos M. 140, 105–08.

and spirit of God, his creation and servant, born without seed out of Mary, the sister of Moses and Aaron. God's word, he says, and the spirit entered Mary and begat Jesus, who was a prophet and servant of God. And the Jews, who were acting against the Law, wanted to crucify him, and when they captured him, they crucified his shadow. Christ himself, he says, was not crucified, nor did he die. God took him to himself in Heaven, because he loved him. He says the following: when Christ ascended to Heaven, God spoke to him and asked: O Jesus, did you say: I am the son of God and God? Jesus answered: Have mercy on me, o Lord, you know I did not say this, and I never wished to appear anything but your servant. The godless people wrote that I said this, but they lie and are in error. And God answered him: I know that you did not say this word.'

In order to discover on what exactly John bases his statements, and what other Byzantines' attitudes to them were, we must divide the account into the points at issue: 1. God's word and spirit, 2. the virgin birth, 3. the attributes of Jesus, 4. the death of Jesus, 5. the rejection of the title of son of God, 6. the works of Jesus.

[198] 1. *Word and Spirit of God*

During a debate Abū Qurra asks his opponent:¹⁵⁰ 'Who, in your view, is Christ?' 'I say that Christ is God's word and spirit', is the reply. Niketas already knows the sura to which this Muslim proposition refers:¹⁵¹ 'Christ, the son of Mary, messenger of God, is also his word which he poured into Mary, and his spirit'. This translation of sura 4:169 renders Arabic *kalima* as λόγος and *rūḥ* as πνεῦμα. Thus the very two hypostatic terms which play the largest part within Christian theology were found within the Qur'an. The question of what meaning Muhammad might have understood these words to have was simply not asked by the Byzantines; they were just pleased that now they would be able to debate with Muslims on the createdness or non-createdness of God's word (cf. John and Abū Qurra). The 'spirit' is always mentioned as well in these debates, even though the Byzantines themselves were not able to provide a reliable definition of it. Thus for Kydonos it was a matter of course that Muhammad must mean the Holy Spirit when he used the term *rūḥ*. He cites the instance of sura 2:81, stating that Muhammad said God perfected Christ through the Holy Spirit.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ M. 97, 1592.

¹⁵¹ M. 105, 736; cf. Kydonos M. 154, 1097; Kantakuzenos *ibid.* 652.

¹⁵² M. 154, 1128.

2. *The Virgin Birth*

Abū Qurra, has the Christian say to the Saracen:¹⁵³ 'Your holy text says that God cleansed the Virgin Mary of all that was female and that the spirit and the word of God descended into her'. The Qur'anic passage Abū Qurra is referring to is sura 3:37, which we also find quoted by Niketas¹⁵⁴ and Kydones. Kydones writes:¹⁵⁵ 'The angels said to the blessed Mary: God has raised you above all women'; then he adduces verse 40: 'O Mary, God is announcing to you glad tidings, announcing his word whose name shall be: Messiah Jesus, Son of Mary'. With a degree of exuberance, the anonymous declaration speaks of sending the Spirit into the Virgin Mary as the Qur'an describes it:¹⁵⁶ 'Many other things that are true, radiant and great does the Qur'an transmit about our Lord Jesus Christ, that our Lord Jesus [199] Christ is the son of the Virgin Mary, the best of all women, that he is an angel of God, his spirit, his word, sent from Heaven into Mary'. These statements of the Byzantines allow us to deduce that they had exact knowledge of the Qur'anic passage which postulates the virgin birth.

3. *The Attributes of Jesus*

To describe the special character Christ possesses in the Qur'an, the Byzantines quote the attributes: servant, creature and messenger.¹⁵⁷ Kantakuzenos extends this list by adding, with reference to Kydones:¹⁵⁸ 'Muhammad calls Christ a saint, a prophet above all prophets and a man above all men, but not God'. The attributes prophet and messenger correspond to Qur'anic *rasūl* and *nabī* (cf. sura 4: 169, 19: 31). Greek δοῦλος equals Arabic 'abd (sura 43:59). The term creature originates presumably in the Qur'an's equating Christ and the first created being (Adam). When Kantakuzenos states that the Qur'an places Christ above all prophets and men, he may be referring to the special part played by Christ later in Islamic eschatology.

4. *The Death of Jesus*

John's sentence 'the Jews crucified his shadow' clearly refers to sura 4:156; however, he did not understand the passage. Niketas attempts to translate the verse:¹⁵⁹ 'They (the Jews) did not kill him (Jesus) or crucify him; it only appeared to them to be

¹⁵³ M. 96, 1344.

¹⁵⁴ M. 105, 725.

¹⁵⁵ M. 154, 1129.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. 1160.

¹⁵⁷ M. 105, 733 and elsewhere.

¹⁵⁸ M. 154, 660.

¹⁵⁹ M. 105, 733.

so'. Akominatos assumes a proposition corresponding to this translation in his *Exorcism*:¹⁶⁰ 'He was not crucified and did not actually die like a human being, but they only imagined this'. Bartholomaios believes that the reason why the Qur'an states that Christ was not crucified and did not die is that the resurrection was not made visible.¹⁶¹ The belief of later Muslim exegetes that another man was crucified in Christ's stead¹⁶² is expressed in Byzantium for the first time by Kantakuzenos, who says:¹⁶³ 'And [200] neither do you believe that Christ was crucified, for as the Muslims held him in high esteem, they say that the Jews crucified another in Christ's stead, believing him to be Christ'. Kantakuzenos admits that Muhammad did not, however, agree with the Docetes who thought that the incarnation as such was unreal.¹⁶⁴ He accuses Muhammad of wishing to keep the Messiah's death a secret and consequently to abolish the entire Christian soteriology.¹⁶⁵

5. *Rejecting the Title of son of God*

The conversation between God and Christ concerning how Christ presented himself on earth can be found in sura 5:116–8. John developed it in more detail. When discussing the same passage, Niketas says:¹⁶⁶ 'It is obvious in this place that he (Muhammad) uses a ruse, for clearly he simply wishes to mock him (Christ); he says that he was asked by the Father whether he is God and represented himself as God, and he denied it'. Kydones also knows that according to the words of the Qur'an Christ did not represent himself as being God's son, and that he apologised to God for it.¹⁶⁷

6. *The Works of Jesus*

In order to complete the image of Christ which the Byzantines painted after the information they found in the Qur'an, it is important to add what they found in the Qur'an concerning Christ's actions. According to John of Damascus the chapter 'Concerning the table' (sura 5) narrates¹⁶⁸ that Christ asked God for a table which was then given to him. 'God said to him: I have given to you and yours an everlasting table'. It is debatable whether John of Damascus made the connection between

¹⁶⁰ M. 140, 132.

¹⁶¹ M. 104, 1396.

¹⁶² EI II, 559ff.

¹⁶³ M. 154, 476f.

¹⁶⁴ M. 154, 669.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 672.

¹⁶⁶ M. 105, 712.

¹⁶⁷ M. 154, 1069.

¹⁶⁸ M. 94, 772.

this passage from sura 5 (vv. 114–5) and the Eucharist, as Muslims themselves later would. Akominatos' *Exorcism* presents a summary of the actions of Christ mentioned in the Qur'an, saying¹⁶⁹ 'that the Lord and God Jesus Christ ... when a child modelled birds in clay, breathed on them and made them live; he healed the blind and resurrected the dead; and at the apostles' request he prayed to God who made a table [201] descend from Heaven and fed them'. This summary of Christ's works is quoted after sura 3:43. Niketas quotes sura 5:50, 51 in order to show the true meaning Muhammad ascribed to the coming of Christ.¹⁷⁰

The Byzantines presented exhaustively all that the Qur'an knew about Christ. Reports in John's and Abū Qurra's accounts show that Qur'anic statements concerning Christ were always adduced as evidence in discussions with Muslims. Consequently it was necessary to have thorough knowledge of what Muhammad had said about Christ. John's summarising account may well have been composed in order to be used as a basis in debates with Muslims. Later Byzantine polemicists, who based themselves directly on the Qur'an, quickly found the few passages about Christ and abstracted the Islamic Christology from them in order to prove its inadequacies to the Muslims.

c) *Belief in the 'one' God and in the Trinity* The Byzantines accused Islam of emphasising so much the oneness of God that it was in danger of revering a God that was completely separate from the world and seemed lifeless. Islam on the other hand maintained that the Christians' God was a divided God. John describes this situation in the hope of saving his Trinitarian notion of God:¹⁷¹ 'They call us *Hetairiastai* (*Ἑταιριασταί*) because, as he (Muhammad) says, we give God a companion when we say Christ is the son of God and God... The word and the spirit are inseparably joined to that which brought them forth. Thus, if the word is in God, it is clear that it is God. If it is not within God, then your God is not sensible and lifeless. If you refrain from giving God a companion, you are restricting him. It would be better to say that he has a companion than to mutilate him and represent him as a rock, stone block or any other dead thing. Thus you are not speaking the truth if you call us *Ἑταιριασταί*. We, however, will call you mutilators of God.' Niketas knows the terms *κοινωνηταί* and *ἑταιριασταί* (cf. Akominatos: *ἀρνηταί*) for Christians and explains them as the Muslims intending to express that the Christians introduced a further God from outside, the son of [202] God the Father, besides the one God.¹⁷² On the whole the Byzantines do not mention the accusations levelled at them by the Muslims with regards to the concept of God. Abū Qurra replaced the passage from sura 112 'and equal to him is not any one' with the well-known formula 'and he had

¹⁶⁹ M. 140, 129.

¹⁷⁰ M. 105, 737.

¹⁷¹ M. 94, 768.

¹⁷² M. 105, 685.

no companion', which was definitely interpreted as anti-Trinitarian polemic.¹⁷³ At a later date Bartholomaios reports an objection he heard from the Muslims:¹⁷⁴ 'As the God of the Universe has existed for all time, and is one and not three, it follows that he has one shared name, not shared names. And if you say he has shared names, how can you then state that he has one joint name?, for it follows that the three hypostases also have their individual nature and essence'. As Gass has pointed out, the opponent means to say that 'the unity of the name of God contradicts the separate nature of the hypostases, each of which must be named separately',¹⁷⁵ And it is pointed out to Kantakuzenos that if something has been thus divided into several persons, it cannot be joined as a unity anymore.¹⁷⁶

The Muslim denial of the Trinity prompted the Greeks to try and make it in some way comprehensible to the Muslims, and consequently they would attempt to demonstrate the Trinity within the Unity adducing numerous analogies all of which are found already in the writings of the Early Church Fathers.

d) *The Problem of Free Will* The Islamic concept of God and the absence of a doctrine of salvation led the Byzantines to a last contentious issue, the doctrine of predestination. One of the main problems in the debates of John and Abū Qurra was the question of free will. The dialogues follow a standard formula. Discussions are introduced by the words 'Who do you consider to be the creator of good and evil'.¹⁷⁷ The Christian's answer is: 'God is the creator of all that is good, but not of what is evil'. Evil, in his view, comes 'from our thoughtlessness and the devil's wickedness'. When the Saracen asks whether [203] man has the ability to do as he wishes, the Christian replies: 'I was created by God with free will (ατεξούσιος)'. If God, the Christian reasons, is responsible for good and evil, he would have to be called unjust, which is impossible. In order to grasp the problem by its roots, the Saracen poses the question: 'Who creates the foetus within its mother's womb?' If we postulate God as the creator, the Christian points out, 'then behold, he is the helper of fornicators and adulterers'. In the Christian's view, God – as taught in scripture – did not create or form anything after the first seven days. All further development must be seen as subsequent reproduction in the course of which one human being is begotten by another without any intervention by God. The entire human population of the future was already contained in Adam's seed. 'As regards evil, whether I embed my seed into my wife or another woman, in that I act according to my own will.' Those who know the dogmatic disputes of the early years of Islam will find that even the oldest theologians of Islam studied diligently the

¹⁷³ M. 97, 1545; the expression chosen by Abū Qurra is found in sura 6:163.

¹⁷⁴ M. 104, 1384.

¹⁷⁵ Gass, loc. cit., I, 140.

¹⁷⁶ M. 154, 436.

¹⁷⁷ M. 97, 1588ff.; M. 96, 1336ff.; M. 94, 1586ff.

question of the *liberum arbitrium* (free will).¹⁷⁸ We even find details of the problem on the Islamic side. Tracing the destiny of a human being as far back as his state within the womb is, according to Goldziher, sound Islamic thinking.¹⁷⁹ The view that all future generations were already contained in Adam's seed has been used by orthodox Islam as an example of determinism.¹⁸⁰ Byzantine Christianity would have been the influencing side, as we can see, on the one hand in the fact that free will had always been part of its doctrine and, on the other, in the Byzantines' – as theologians well-versed in dialectics – forcing, as it were, their questions on an Islam entirely uneducated in these matters. Becker found confirmation of there having been direct influence in a *ḥadīth* which has the Prophet say:¹⁸¹ 'Maybe you will live for a long time after me, so you will meet people who deny Allah's *qadar* and blame the sins on his servants. They have adopted this talk from Christianity'.

Later polemicists would not see the question of the freedom of human will as a genuine problem anymore. [204] They content themselves with indicating the Qur'anic statements on the subject. Niketas quotes sura 4:90:¹⁸² 'Whom God leads astray, for him no way will be found'. Sura 17:17–18 he finds even more remarkable:¹⁸³ 'When we desire to lay waste to a land, we command its inhabitants to indulge themselves. Thus the judgment on them will become manifest. We chastise them thoroughly, and thus we have destroyed many a generation since Noah'. In another passage, however, Niketas admits that Muhammad says in an auspicious moment that Satan corrupts people¹⁸⁴ (referring to sura 17:29). The condemnation of determinism expressed in the *Exorcism* states:¹⁸⁵ 'that God leads astray whom he wishes, and leads whom he wishes on the right way and that, should God so wish, there would be no wars between men; God himself does as he wishes, is the origin of good and evil and holds in his hand the destiny and fortunes of all'. The last sentence may be an allusion to the Muslims' belief in predestination.

Bartholomaios expresses the consequences of the idea of predestination in strong words:¹⁸⁶ 'Your *Kouranion* says at the beginning of the 'Table' (sura 5) that it is God who sends good and evil to humans. Thus you postulate God as the creator of all that is good and evil. The fates of robbers, poisoners, murderers and those who die a violent death, should all be predetermined by God?' How, Bartholomaios

¹⁷⁸ Goldziher, I: *Vorlesungen über den Islam*, second edition 1925, 89; A. v. Kremer, *Kulturgeschichtliche Streifzüge* 7.

¹⁷⁹ Goldziher, ZDMG, 57, 398.

¹⁸⁰ Goldziher, *Vorlesungen*, loc.cit. 89.

¹⁸¹ Loc. cit. 441 (*Kanz al-'ummāl*, I, 35)

¹⁸² M. 105, 732, 757.

¹⁸³ Ibid. 764.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. 764.

¹⁸⁵ M. 140, 129.

¹⁸⁶ M. 104, 1393.

wonders, will this God be able to judge between the just and the unjust when the Day of Judgment comes?

We can see that the Greeks' interest in the problem of predestination waned in later times, as Kydones and Kantakuzenos devote hardly any attention to the subject. In order to point out the contradiction in the Qur'an, Kydones points out:¹⁸⁷ 'It says in many passages that God does not lead those who are in error onto the right way; at the same time, however, it teaches that they should pray to be led from darkness towards the light, from the wilderness to the right way'. Kantakuzenos simply sets himself apart from Muhammad's doctrine with the words:¹⁸⁸ 'God wished to save man through man's own free will, not through violence and force as Moameth preaches'.

[205] *e) The Stories of the Prophets* In his refutation of sura 7 Niketas comes across the names of prophets who are said to have lived before Noah. He remarks¹⁸⁹ that Holy Scripture has no knowledge of these obscure and nameless people. 'Insofar as they were believed, they conveyed God's blessing, insofar as they were disbelieved, great chastisement. After Noah, he (Muhammad) mentions Zalet (Ζάλετ), a prophet and apostle, the brother of Thamoth (Θαμώθ); he never existed and is not mentioned by anyone else. He came in order to proclaim, and those who believed him embraced God, and those who did not, he says, perished in their homes during an earthquake. After these, he mentions another prophet, apostle and preacher named Saik (Σαϊκ) of Midian, who was sent to his people. He is said to have borne witness and acted like his predecessors'. Sura 7:71 says: 'And to Thamood (we sent) their brother Šāliḥ'. Thamood is understood to be the people to whom Šāliḥ was sent as a threatening prophet, as Shu'ayb (= Saik or Soaep¹⁹⁰) was to Madyan (= Midian), which is mentioned in verse 83. With reference to sura 11 Niketas remarks:¹⁹¹ 'He introduces Salet, the prophet and teacher of an unknown people; he commanded them not to hurt a she-camel grazing in the field. They, however, disobeyed and killed her, and because of this she-camel God's wrath locked them inside their huts so they never came out again'. John of Damascus reports in more detail about this wondrous she-camel. He says:¹⁹² 'The writings about the *she-camel of God*, on the other hand, of whom he (Muhammad) says that she was God's she-camel, drank the entire river and could not pass between two mountains. There were many people in this place, he says, and on one day they would drink the water, and on the next, the she-camel. When she had drunk the water, she in turn would then give the people to drink by producing

¹⁸⁷ M. 154, 1065 = Kantakuzenos *ibid.* 617.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 557.

¹⁸⁹ M. 105, 741.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.* 756.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² M. 94, 769–72.

milk instead of water. The men who were evil rose up and killed the she-camel. The she-camel had given birth to a baby camel who, he says, called to God when its mother was killed, and God took it unto himself.' This is the legend Akominatos is referring to in his *Exorcism*. He speaks out against 'Moamed's teachings of the she-camel, of whom he says that it was [206] sacred to God and then killed by the people in those days; this is why God is said to remain distant from them'.¹⁹³ The words of sura 11:67 (7:71; 17:71) 'this she-camel of God is a sign sent to you' led to the story of the miraculous origin of Šālih's she-camel in the tradition,¹⁹⁴ a story which became known to the Greeks very early on and which John recounted nearly completely.

Besides Thamout and Madiam Niketas finds Mateuchamat (Ματευχαμάτ) in sura 9, a country to which the messengers brought revelation.¹⁹⁵ Mateuchamat corresponds to Arabic *al-Mu'tafikāt* (sura 9:71), i.e. the subverted cities (Sodom and Gomorrah). Akominatos has a list of the prophets unknown to Christian polemicists:¹⁹⁶ Khoud (Χούδ), Tzalet (Τζάλετ) or Salekh (Σάλεχ), Sunaip (Σύναιπ), Hedres (Ἑδρης), Doualkiphil (Δουαλκιφίλ) and Lokman (Λοκμάν). These are the Qur'anic prophets: 'Hūd (sura 11), Šālih, Shu'ayb, Idrīs (sura 19:57), Dhu'l-Kifl (sura 21:85) and Luqmān (sura 31).¹⁹⁷ In the course of their investigations the Byzantines discovered that Muhammad not only created new prophetic figures, but that he also referred to those already known from the Old Testament. Once again it is the *Exorcism* that tells us which men these were in particular:¹⁹⁸ Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Moses, Aaron, David, Salomon, Elijah, Jonah and Zachariah the father of John. The accusation of falsification of the Scripture was a handy one, and the authors would try to prove it through comparison between the two scriptures. With reference to sura 2:96 Niketas adds:¹⁹⁹ 'Then he mentions Solomon and says that he never erred, even though Holy Scripture admits frankly that he became an idolater in his old age'. Kydones remarks, with reference to the chapter Σαβῆ (= *Saba'*), that a worm announced the death of Solomon. He adds:²⁰⁰ 'The exegesis mentions here that Solomon, while leaning on his own staff, was suddenly struck by great pain [207] and died instantly. The demons who saw him standing there, however, believed him to be asleep. A worm came out of the earth, and started to bore into the staff on which he was leaning. His staff ground to dust, Solomon fell. Then the

¹⁹³ M. 140, 132; cf. Euthymios M. 130, 1353; Anonymus I M, 104, 1456.

¹⁹⁴ Ṭabarī (*Tafsīr* on sura 7:71), Mas'ūdī (*Murūj* III, 85–91).

¹⁹⁵ M. 105, 752.

¹⁹⁶ M. 140, 129 = Anonymus I M, 104, 1452.

¹⁹⁷ Concerning the Qur'anic stories of the prophets cf. Grimme, G., *Mohammed*, II (1895), 79ff. and Sidersky, D., *Les origines des legends musulmanes dans le Coran et dans les vies des prophètes*, Paris 1933.

¹⁹⁸ M. 140, 129.

¹⁹⁹ M. 105, 717.

²⁰⁰ M. 154, 1061.

demons came running and saw that he had died.' Kydones presents the well-known interpretation of sura 34:13. Niketas contributes a list of Muhammad's so-called historical errors in the Qur'an: Abraham and Ishmael build the temple;²⁰¹ Abraham discusses the resurrection with God;²⁰² Joshua's and Gideon's works are confused;²⁰³ similarly, Gideon's works are confused with those of Saul;²⁰⁴ Christ is assumed to have been born under a fig tree;²⁰⁵ Alexander the Great reaches the sunset, finds the sun setting in the warm water and builds a wall in the North against Gog and Magog (= Yājūj and Mājūj); he, the pious Alexander, is a monotheist like Abraham, not a Hellene;²⁰⁶ seven youths take refuge in a cave in Ephesus,²⁰⁷ and many more. The other Byzantine polemicists did not dwell on these Qur'anic details; in order to prove Muhammad's idiosyncratic approach to historical fact they only point out that he believed Mary, the mother of Jesus, to be identical with Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron.

A last problem is that of the number of Muslim prophets. Euthymios claims it was 124,000;²⁰⁸ Bartholomaios also inquired about this among the Muslims:²⁰⁹ 'Now I ask you about the 24,000 prophets about whom you taught us; what are their names, what did they prophesy in detail, what did they do and under whose rule did they live? You cannot list the names of even a hundred prophets'. The Emperor Manuel II refers to an infinite number of Muslim prophets.²¹⁰ Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and other collections of Muslim traditions claim, like Euthymios, that the number of their prophets was 124,000.²¹¹ This figure appears to have been the definitive one on the Muslim side, [208] and it is possible that the figure quoted by Bartholomaios was a simple slip of the pen.

f) The Doctrine of Angels and Demons In Niketas' view the intercession of angels will be fruitless.²¹² When discussing this question, Kydones refers to the chapter 'Ελεζάπ (= *al-aḥzāb* = sura 33:42) which says that God and his angels will intercede on behalf of Muhammad and the other Muslims.²¹³ Niketas and Kydones both note

²⁰¹ M. 105, 720; cf. sura 2:121.

²⁰² Ibid. 724; cf. sura 2:262.

²⁰³ Ibid.; cf. sura 2:248–50.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.; cf. sura 2:250.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. 768; cf. sura 19:23.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.; cf. sura 18.

²⁰⁷ Ibid. 765; cf. sura 18.

²⁰⁸ M. 131, 36.

²⁰⁹ M. 104, 1416.

²¹⁰ M. 156, 164.

²¹¹ Wensinck, A. J., *A Handbook of Early Muhammedan tradition*, 1927, 196.

²¹² M. 105, 784; cf. sura 53:26.

²¹³ M. 154, 1100.

the doctrine of the Qur'an which states that the angels obeyed God's order and prostrated themselves before Adam and worshipped him. Referring to sura 7:10, Niketas remarks:²¹⁴ 'For he (Muhammad) taught that the first person was created from mud in God's image, and that God ordered the angels to worship Adam, and while all the others prostrated themselves, Beliar (Satan) alone did not worship him, his reason being that they were made out of mud but he out of fire'. Similarly Kydones elaborates that according to chapter Σάδ (= *ṣād* = sura 38), the angels were created out of fire and the humans out of dust. When God ordered the angels to worship Adam, those who refused became demons but the obedient ones remained angels.²¹⁵ Both Byzantine authors endeavour to give a depiction of what they found written in sura 38:71. Furthermore, Manuel II also argued with his Muslim host on the nature of angels. In this case the Muslim maintained that they were mortal and created, whereas the Greek claimed that they were immortal.²¹⁶ The Byzantines devote particular attention to the angels Hārūt and Mārūt mentioned in sura 2:96. Niketas says about them:²¹⁷ 'He (Muhammad) mentions two angels which were said to have come to Babylon, named Arioth (Ἀριώθ) and Maroth (Μαρώθ); they were said to have taught evil things to those who were willing'. Their names Ἀριώθ and Μαρώθ are found in Akominatos' *Exorcism* as well.²¹⁸ Islam knows a tradition about these two characters [209] which we find reported in Kydones.²¹⁹ He reports: 'In the 'book of stories' Makhoumet himself provides the reason why wine is forbidden: God had sent two angels down to earth who were meant to rule well and judge justly. They were the holy angels Ἀριώθ and Μαρώθ. There came a woman who had a legal case, called them to dinner and offered them wine, which they should not have drunk according to God's order. When they were drunk they tried in their exuberance to win her favours, and she consented. Then one of them is said to have taught her how to ascend to Heaven, the other, how to descend from Heaven. She ascended to Heaven, and when God saw her and heard her request, he turned her into the morning star, so that she is now as beautiful among the stars of the skies as she was among the women on earth. The erring angels were allowed to choose if they wished to be chastised now or later and, as they chose to be chastised now, he (God) hung them by the iron laces on their feet in a well in Babylon until the Day of Judgment'. The Islamic tradition itself about these two angels is composed of the following elements:²²⁰ In order to understand how the children of man would fall,

²¹⁴ M. 105, 740f.

²¹⁵ M. 154, 1045, 1077, 1093, 1096.

²¹⁶ M. 156, 140–49. It is not entirely clear whether Islam teaches the createdness and mortality of angels (EI III, 210).

²¹⁷ M. 105, 717.

²¹⁸ M140, 129.

²¹⁹ M. 154, 1061; Kantakuzenos *ibid.* 628.

²²⁰ EI II, 289.

the angels sent two from among their number, Hārūt and Mārūt, down to earth. They were commanded to abstain from idolatry, fornication, murder and wine, but a beautiful woman soon seduced them. They killed the man who surprised them, whereupon God gave them the choice of punishment in this world or in the next. They chose the first punishment and were imprisoned in Babylon (inside a well in Damavand), and have since then been tortured with all the choicest torments. According to some authors the woman was an ordinary woman who pressed them to tell her the word of power that allowed them to ascend and descend. Once she knew the word, she used it herself, but when she arrived on high, God made her forget it again and turned her into a star (Venus).

Kydonos says on the subject of demons that Muhammad's teachings allow them to be saved as well. In this he follows Origen, who also said that demons would be saved.²²¹ Kydonos refers to the chapters 'Ελ άφ (= *al-ahqāf* = sura 46) and 'Ελγέμ (= *al-jinn* – sura 72), where he read that the Qur'an pleased the demons as well, who rejoiced in it. He says:²²² 'They [210] heard the Alkoranon, rejoiced and affirmed that they might be saved through it. They called themselves Saracens and were saved'. According to Islamic understanding Muhammad's mission was just as much to the jinn as it was to men. One of them will enter Paradise, the others will be thrown into the fires of hell.²²³

g) Natural History I will preface this with Niketas' verdict:²²⁴ 'He (Muhammad) has no knowledge of natural history, and when he dares to reveal any of it, he will say that man grows out of a leech (βδέλλα!)²²⁵ and that in the evening the sun sinks into warm water'. We must compare this to sura 94:2 and 18:84. The formula of abjuration gets all worked up about Muhammad's take on natural history as well:²²⁶ 'He (Muhammad) said that human beings were created from earth, drops, leeches and dough ...I refute everything he says about the nature of God's other creations, about the sun and the moon, of whom he says they are horsemen'. Niketas had also referred to sun and moon as *καβαλαρίοι* according to Muhammad, which is an erroneous interpretation of sura 21:34, which says that they are rolling within their spheres.

h) Eschatology The wealth of information we have from the Byzantines on Islam with reference to this subject in particular is, as we shall see, not drawn primarily

²²¹ M. 154, 1045.

²²² *Ibid.*, 1093.

²²³ Bukhārī (quoted as Bu), *Islamische Traditionen*, 10, 105; EI I, 1091.

²²⁴ M. 105, 708.

²²⁵ Niketas is here quoting an erroneous translation of sura 94:2: 'he created man from clotted blood'.

²²⁶ M. 140, 132f.

from the Qur'an but from Islamic theological literature. Accounts can be divided into those that discuss the Judgment and the Resurrection and those that envision the Muslim Paradise.

1. Resurrection and Judgment

The oldest account, on which most of the other Byzantines base theirs, can be found in Hamartolos the Chronographer's writings:²²⁷ 'He (Muhammad) calls himself the Key of Paradise, for on the Day of Judgment, when Moses and the Israelites will have risen [211] and, having transgressed against the Law, been condemned to annihilation by fire, Jesus will rise before God, for he did not say that he was the son of God. The Christians will be thrown into the fires of hell, because they dared to give to him (Jesus) the name of Messiah and dared to exalt him into dogma as God, son of God, the Word, the Incarnation, and as Christ Crucified. Afterwards he (Muhammad) will, he said, be called by God, praised as a devout man and the originator of all the nation's devoutness, and because of this be designated the Key of Paradise. Once he opened Paradise, there will be definitely and irrefutably 70,000 who will enter Paradise with him: all those who were able to advance this far; the others, he says, will be judged. The just will undoubtedly reach bliss, while those who have been found to be sinners will have little papers put around their necks and be allowed to enter Paradise. They are called the freedmen of God and Muhammad'. Before we analyse this passage from Hamartolos, we must consider what Kydones transmits about the Day of Judgment. He says:²²⁸ 'Furthermore, Makhoumet determines one single day for the Resurrection, namely at the end of the world on the Day of Judgment'. In another place Kydones adds:²²⁹ 'He (Muhammad) also claims that God will call Christ to come before him, and will let him appear again at the end of the world. Then God will kill the Antichrist, and then he will let Christ die'. He illustrates these events by interpolating a passage from the *Book of stories about Makhoumet*:²³⁰ 'And then again he (Muhammad) says in the *Book of stories about Makhoumet* that at the end of the world God will kill all created beings, the angels and archangels, so that in the end nothing remains living except for God and Death. The latter is an angel named Adriel (Ἀδριήλ). Then the Lord will order Adriel to kill himself. After this, the Lord will call with a loud voice: where are the governors and rulers of the world? And then all will be resurrected'.

According to the Qur'an the Judgment begins with the opening of the Heavenly Book, within which all human deeds and actions are recorded. Once everyone has read

²²⁷ Ed. de Boor, loc. cit., II, 701f.

²²⁸ M. 154, 1085.

²²⁹ Ibid., 1045 = Kantakuzenos, *ibid.*, 673.

²³⁰ Ibid., 1101 = Kantakuzenos, *ibid.* 629.

his own document,²³¹ the verdict is followed instantly by reward and punishment.²³² Tradition deduced Christ's return on this [212] day from sura 4:157 and 19:34.²³³ Hamartolos' information corresponds to this tradition. Later Islamic tradition, on which Kydones appears to be basing his writings, reports that 'Īsā (Jesus) would descend in Syria and kill the Dajjāl (a kind of antichrist in Islamic eschatology); after forty years he would die as well.²³⁴ Adriel, the angel of death named by Kydones, is called Azrā'īl in the tradition.²³⁵ Hamartolos' version makes us wonder who will be allowed into Paradise after the Judgment. According to Hamartolos there are 70,000 who will enter Paradise, beyond those who, although marked as sinners, will be allowed to enter as 'freedmen of God and Mokhoumed'. It is a well-known Islamic tradition that 70,000 of Muhammad's followers will share in the joys of Paradise.²³⁶ The people Hamartolos calls 'freedmen' are the Arabic '*utaqā'* Allāh, who are already mentioned by Muslim, A. b. Ḥanbal and others.²³⁷ Hamartolos adds the name of the Prophet. He lets the Israelites and Moses be resurrected before Muhammad, and then commits them to the fires of Hell. According to Bukhārī, Muhammad will be the first to be awakened after Moses on the day of the Resurrection.²³⁸ The Jews and Christian who do not believe in Muhammad will go to Hell,²³⁹ only Muslims will be saved.²⁴⁰ And, according to Hamartolos, the fate of Jews and Christians after Islam will be to be set aside as fuel for the fires of Hell.²⁴¹ This is clearly polemic hyperbole.

According to Bartholomaios, only one *madhhab* of Muslims will be accorded entry into Paradise.²⁴² He elaborates: 'How can it be possible that of the 72 tribes of the Muslim clans only one, as you say, will enter Paradise, while all the others will be sent to perdition?' According to Kydones, Muhammad himself is supposed to have said:²⁴³ 'After me, you will be divided into 73 parts, of which [213] one shall be saved, and all the others will be destroyed by fire'. This idea is already known to early Islamic tradition.²⁴⁴ Paradise is awarded to fallen warriors first of

²³¹ According to sura 17:14 all humans have their lot tied round their necks.

²³² Grimme, loc. cit., II, 156ff.

²³³ Bu, *Mazālim*, 31.

²³⁴ Wensinck, loc. cit., 113; EI II, 568.

²³⁵ EI II, 609 ff. The passage quoted here has a parallel in Ghazālī (*Iḥyā'* IV, 367).

²³⁶ Bu, *Bad' al-Khalq*, 8; *Riqāq*, 51.

²³⁷ Muslim, *Īmān*, trad. 302; A. b. Ḥanbal III, 95, 326.

²³⁸ Bu, *Khuṣūmāt*, 1.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, *Tawhīd*, 24.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ Ed. de Boor, loc. cit., II, 701.

²⁴² M. 104, 1393.

²⁴³ M. 154, 1064f.; Kantakuzenos, *ibid.*, 616.

²⁴⁴ Wensinck, loc. cit., 47.

all.²⁴⁵ Abū Qurra knows of this when he asks his opponent:²⁴⁶ ‘If you invade the land of the Byzantines, and one of you is killed during it, will he not enter Paradise with certainty, according to your doctrine?’ The Saracen can only answer in the affirmative. Niketas states in a similar vein:²⁴⁷ ‘Those who go to war against them (the Christians) will be rewarded with Paradise’.

Kydones informs us that professing the oneness of God is another condition of achieving Paradise:²⁴⁸ ‘They announce that everyone who says that there is no God but God will enter into Paradise, even if he were a fornicator and a thief’. Bukhārī remarks on the subject:²⁴⁹ ‘God, said the messenger of God, will save from fire and hell him who has professed; there is no God but God’.

2. Paradise

In their polemic against Islamic eschatology the Byzantine opponents looked particularly at the fact that Muhammad showed the delights of Paradise as being of a sensual nature, and took this as the starting point of their criticism. When it comes to this topic, nearly all the Byzantines join in the fray, as there is no other point in which the contrast between the Islamic and the Christian eschatologies was more impressively visible.

John of Damascus was among the earliest to mention the Muslim Paradise with reference to the story of Ṣāliḥ’s she-camel, whose calf God is said to have invited into Paradise.²⁵⁰ We can deduce from his brief outline that he had heard some details about the Muslim Paradise (rivers in Paradise, fires crackling loudly), but that he used and elaborated them with an entirely polemic intention.

Niketas quoted some of the well-known Qur’anic passages (with the exception of suras 55 and 56) on the subject of Paradise in their entirety (suras 2 and 18). With reference to sura 2:23 he writes:²⁵¹ ‘They are said to be together with radiant women with beautiful eyes in that place, [214] in the sight of God, and God is not ashamed’. Niketas added verse 24 erroneously into this context, which reads: ‘Behold, God is not ashamed to draw a parable with a gnat’. Niketas is mistaken when he states in this context that the inhabitants of Paradise will be looking at God. Later Islamic tradition, however, tells us that the true believer will see God on the day of the resurrection or in Paradise.²⁵² Niketas expresses his verdict as

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 182.

²⁴⁶ M. 97, 1529.

²⁴⁷ M. 105, 744.

²⁴⁸ M. 154, 1072.

²⁴⁹ Bu *Ṣalāt*, 46.

²⁵⁰ M. 94, 772; Euthymios M. 131, 36f.

²⁵¹ M. 105, 712.

²⁵² Bu *Adhān*, 129.

follows:²⁵³ ‘Physical, altogether material, and in no way different from present life is how the resurrection is described, including eating, drinking and also metabolism’.

The chronographer Theophanes describes the Muslim Paradise as consisting of:²⁵⁴ ‘Physical eating and drinking, companionship of women, a river of wine, honey and milk; the women are not the present ones but different; the companionship lasts over a long time and the enjoyment is permanent’. These few details are found in sura 56.

Theophanes’ pupil Hamartolos gives a more detailed description:²⁵⁵ ‘There are three rivers in Paradise, he says, one of honey, the other of milk, the third of wine; everyone may drink his fill of whatever he wishes (and everyone may partake of whatever he wishes). There are women with them who adorn their hair and look after all their physical needs... The Jews and Christians will be kept as wood to fuel the fires. The Samaritans, he says, are charged with excrement, and throw the manure out of Paradise, so it should not stink; everyone on earth, be he rich or poor or dishonoured, they all live in the same way there’. Hamartolos uses several details from sura 56 in his account. The Samaritans’ lot must be his own contribution, for tradition teaches that the inhabitants of Paradise – as Bukhārī says – ‘ne rendreront pas d’excréments (will not produce excrement)’.²⁵⁶

Akominatos’ *Exorcism* deals with Paradise in a dedicated section:²⁵⁷ ‘In it, he (Muhammad) says, there are four rivers, of clear water, of milk whose [215] pristine flavour never weakens, of sweet wine and honey. Until the latter day, which he calculates to exactly 500,000 years, the Saracens will live there with their own women, bodies and emotions, in the shade of several trees which he names Sedre (Σέδρη) and Talekh (Τάλεχ). They lie there and eat the meat of birds which they crave, as well as autumn fruits. They drink from a camphor spring (καφουρά πηγή) and a ginger spring (ζιγγίβερ πηγή) named Salsabila (Σαλσάβιλα). They are drinking wine mixed in the spring Thesneim (θεςνείμ). Their bodies grow tall as the sky, men as well as women; their limbs grow to forty cubits long. They enjoy one another’s company and never tire of it, in the sight of God, for God is not ashamed, as he says’. This description of Paradise is based on the following Qur’anic passages: sura 47:16, 17 mentions the four rivers of Paradise. According to sura 56:19ff. the blessed eat the fruits they choose and the meat they crave (vv. 20 and 21). They are lying in the shade of thornless lotus trees (*sidr* = lotus = Σέδρη) and acacias (*talh* = acacia = Τάλεχ) with layers of blossoms (v. 27–30). According to sura 76:5 they drink

²⁵³ M. 105, 712.

²⁵⁴ Ed. de Boor, loc.cit., 334.

²⁵⁵ Ed. de Boor II, 700.

²⁵⁶ Bu *Bad’ al-Khalq*, 8.

²⁵⁷ M. 140, 128 = Anonymous I M. 104, 1456f. There are a few deviations: Σίδρη instead of Σέδρη, ζογγίβερ instead of ζιγγίβερ; it is remarkable that he states the duration of the Day of Judgment as 50,000 years.

water from the spring Kāfūr (= camphor), and according to sura 76:17 a concoction with ginger from the spring Salsabīl. They enjoy a different concoction from the spring Tasnīm (sura 83:27). The statement that the blessed gain physical weight in Paradise may well be an addition by Akominatos. In a later tradition, however, we hear that a man in Paradise attained the strength of a hundred men.²⁵⁸ Early Islamic tradition has no information, however, on the duration and calculation of the Day of Judgment.²⁵⁹ The tradition found in Akominatos' text has a parallel version in the following tradition:²⁶⁰ 'The Prophet was asked about the day that will last for 50,000 years. He replied: What a terrifyingly long day that will be.' Euthymios copied this phrasing of the accusation that God does not feel shame at seeing the blessed from Niketas; Akominatos in turn copied it from Euthymios.

Kydones summarises his knowledge of Paradise as follows:²⁶¹ 'He (Muhammad) constantly says in the Alkoranon that to the [216] Saracens' bliss is to own a Paradise with flowing water, many new wives and concubines who are all virtuous and beautiful and dressed in purple garments. (It is) gold and silver tableware which covers the table, and sweet foods. He talks about it mostly in the chapter Ἐλαγγμάν (*al-rahmān* = sura 55). In the book of *Makhoumet's Teachings*, whose words are held in high esteem among them, he details the order of the dishes. Firstly there would be a tray for everything to be served: the liver of the almpapout (ἀλμπαπουτ) fish, a sweet dish. Afterwards fruit from the various trees'. For the foods we can adduce a tradition quoted by Bukhārī, which states that the first meal of which the blessed will partake in Paradise will be the growth on a fish's liver.²⁶² The Arabic phrase used by Bukhārī, 'kabd al-ḥūt, is presumably the origin of the word almpapout.

While the Byzantine depictions quoted so far orientate themselves more or less towards the Qur'an and its doctrine of perfection, the second dialogue between Manuel II and his Turkish host in the Ankyra winter quarter is a picture of the Islamic ideas of the Latter Day as found in post-Qur'anic Islamic eschatology. Manuel addresses the Turkish moutrizes (Μουτρίτζης = *mudarris*):²⁶³ 'I would have you know that only a few will have a part in the life of bliss and the delights of Paradise, when Christ asks for meticulous accounting of our actions. He will sit as the just judge over everyone. This we know for certain. He is spirit, soul and word of the living God, born of a virgin who retained her virginity even after he was born. But he loves Moameth most, who intercedes for the fallen; he will feel shame and he (Christ) will not let him go without hope. Thus nearly all of us will be saved, I say. The

²⁵⁸ Wolff, M.: *Muhammedanische Eschatologie nach der Leipziger und Dresdener Handschrift*, 1872, 204.

²⁵⁹ Cf. Wensinck.

²⁶⁰ *Mishkāt* (A.N. Matthews), II, 606.

²⁶¹ M. 154, 1081.

²⁶² *Bu Anbiyā'*, 1; *Manāqib al-Anṣār*, 51.

²⁶³ M. 156, 157–61.

place of salvation, Paradise, is set out as follows: a deep ditch surrounds Paradise, which appeared by itself and is impassable to everyone. It is full of pitch which burns continuously with an inextinguishable flame and flows around in the ditch, making a noise that is terrifying to the ears and a sight that horrifies the eyes. One gate only leads into Paradise, and one single bridge. The latter, it seems, is a hair-thin blade, which anyone who would enter Paradise must cross on bare feet. [217] It is impossible to get there in any other way. Those who have a light body, and walk on, as it were, winged feet, will not suffer when crossing the bridge and will enter the land of bliss. Those, however, who are bearing a load of sin (and those are the majority), will be cut by the iron and fall down. The Prophet, however, will intercede on their behalf with the judge who loves him, and he will be given what he wishes. Now I will say what happens then. After everything has been prepared for the judgment, Jesus, who loves Moameth with a love that has no equal, will give the latter a choice: either he could save those who are of his faith, even if they came from a different tribe and a different religion, and pull them out of the ditch and have them partake of the delights of Paradise, or those who are of his tribe, even if they do not profess his religion. He will choose the disciples rather than the kinsfolk. He receives permission and quickly runs to the ditch where he stands on the raised bank, leans his head forward, has them grasp his hair and (I know that you will marvel at hearing this) with each of the hairs on his head he pulls out an infinite number of his own, who had fallen in in punishment for their actions. This is how everyone who honestly trusts in Moameth will be saved, and blessed in immortality and honour, blessed enjoying Paradise. We must speak of this now. What shall I relate first of the things found there? They are all very beautiful. Every language teaches to say first what comes to mind first. A multitude of flowers, an abundance of fruit, the most delicious of every kind of fruit, the charm of evergreen plants, grass that never wilts, flowing clear water with a sound as gentle as the song of the sirens touching the ears. Everything, indeed, that beguiles the senses and destroys comprehension, everything altogether that is charming, great, radiant and created by the hand of God, all this serves as ornament of Paradise. Everything is adornment it seems, and the place of mourning is elsewhere (?). And there are two rivers there, forever flowing and immeasurably large, their flow surrounding it (Paradise) and ringing with a perfect and divine melody. Then they separate in the middle and spread into many arms; now they meet again and jump towards one another, like living beings in an eternal jump; thus they delight all who see them. Neither runs with water; like a sweet fruit you will see and hear them both disport themselves. One runs with honey, [218] the other with milk. They are the reward for those who abstained from wine here. What bliss! Those who rejected a brief and immoderate desire here below, will enjoy eternal temperance there'. Manuel adds: 'Whoever appreciates horses, loves the hunt, shooting and dogs, enjoys birds or sets store by clothing, whoever enjoys the company of girls, every possible delight imaginable is here present at wish ... and all this they receive as reward from God'.

The eschatological image drawn here by Manuel contains two characteristic moments, which play an important part in Islamic eschatology: the bridge of Hell and Muhammad's intercession at the Last Judgment. Goldziher writes about this bridge²⁶⁴ that Islamic tradition refers to the 'Şirāt-bridge which one must cross before entering Paradise, which is as thin as a hair and as sharp as the cutting edge of a sword and across which the blessed float with lightning speed, while those condemned to perdition go with uncertain steps and are precipitated into the gaping pit of hell beneath'. The bridge leads across Hell, described by Manuel, possibly with reference to sura 84:4, as a ditch filled with a fiery blaze. Later Islamic traditions speak of the powerful sizzling and crackling of the fires of hell which terrify everyone.²⁶⁵ Those true believers who were not able to cross the Şirāt-bridge do not, however, lose all chance of having a part in Paradise: the Prophet will intercede for them. Bukhārī quotes Muhammad as saying his last quality was 'le pouvoir d'intercéder' (the power of intercession).²⁶⁶ A tradition found in Murtaḍā²⁶⁷ speaks of the special part played by Jesus and confirms that Muhammad will prostrate himself before the throne of God at Jesus' request, and receives the promise of forgiveness for many of his followers. After studying the Islamic sources I am not able to confirm the manner of his intercession or how he frees his own from purgatory. The broad descriptions of Paradise cannot necessarily be traced back to one particular Islamic tradition, either. We do, however, see, that they were written in the same spirit which lies at the basis of Islamic traditions. [219] Maybe we are permitted to say that Manuel provides us with an Islamic depiction of the Last Judgment and of Paradise, but in Greek.

Appendix: Dervishes and Veneration of Saints

In the same context where Bartholomaios speaks of Muhammad's illness, he also mentions the dervishes. He writes:²⁶⁸ 'One day he (Muhammad) found a number of Arabs sitting together, and he sat and talked with them - when suddenly he fell to the ground, rolled about gnashing his teeth and foaming at the mouth; you Muslims do this frequently between prayers, especially the Phorakides (Φορακίδες), who collect a mob, carry musical instruments such as zithers and drums; they eat the tips of cannabis and drink boiled wine; then they stand up straight, the musicians beat their instruments and the Phorakides dance uncovered like mad people. Worldly people and lay persons together with their children will clap their hands and yell loudly, the mad ones dance, fall to the ground foaming and gnashing their

²⁶⁴ *Vorlesungen*, loc. cit. 97.

²⁶⁵ Wolff, loc. cit., 182.

²⁶⁶ *Bu Şalāt*, 56.

²⁶⁷ *İthāf* (Commentary on Ghazālī's *Iḥyā'*) X, 491.

²⁶⁸ M. 104, 1428.

teeth in imitation of Moukhamet'. As we indicated earlier, the term Phorakides is derived from the Arabic *Fuqarā'*. The demeanour of the Phorakides is unlikely to be an indication of one particular order of dervishes, even though some details, such as the musical instruments and the dancing, recall the Mawlawiyya order. Bartholomaios is simply visualising the ceremonies of dancing dervishes, without wishing to name a particular group of them.²⁶⁹

Only Kydones and Kantakuzenos have information about the veneration of saints among the Muslims. Kydones says:²⁷⁰ 'Not only the Jews and Christians say that after them (the prophets of the Bible) there were prophets among them with the spirits of the prophets, but these (the Saracens) accepted a prophet in Babylon, named Solem (Σολεμ), i.e. translated κλίμαξ (ladder); the Tartars killed him and many more Saracens with him'. This refers to a saint named Sullam, about whom we have no detailed information, who was killed by the Mongols (Tartars) at the capture of Baghdad (Babylon) in 1258 – this is the only event the passage can possibly refer to.

[220] Kantakuzenos recounts a miracle of the Christian martyr Georgios who was, as far as he knows, venerated as Kheter Eliaz (Χετήρ Ἐλιάζ) by the Muslims.²⁷¹ The name recalls the rather mythical figure of the Muslim al-Khādir, who was known under all kinds of names, among them and especially that of Elias, and who was venerated as a saint appearing at various times.²⁷² According to du Mesnil du Buisson,²⁷³ the mosque of al-Khuḍr in Beirut was originally a Christian chapel erected in honour of St George. Even though the context here is his victory over the dragon, the reference quite clearly shows the link between the names al-Khuḍr and George.

B. The Commandments

1. Ethical Commandments

a) *Marriage* In his chapter concerning Islam, John of Damascus proves that he has some knowledge of Islamic marriage law. He tells us that in the chapter *On women* (sura 4) Muhammad laid down that it should be permitted 'to take four wives officially, and, if a man can afford it, a thousand concubines, i.e. as many as his

²⁶⁹ As for the dervishes, cf. the article *Ṭarīqa* in EI IV, 722f.

²⁷⁰ M. 154, 1089.

²⁷¹ M. 154, 512F.

²⁷² EI II, 925.

²⁷³ *Le lieu du combat de St. Georges à Beyrouth in Mélanges de la faculté orientale de l'université Saint-Joseph à Beyrouth*, XII (1927), 251–65.

hand may hold besides his four wives'.²⁷⁴ This is a rendition of the contents of the third verse of this sura, with the number thousand having been added at random. John's specifications were copied by Euthymios, Akominatos and Anonymous I.²⁷⁵ In his brief summary of Islamic law Chalkondyles claims Muhammad had ruled to be permitted:²⁷⁶ 'Concubines from among prisoners of war, as many as anyone should wish and would be able to support; as many as five girls may be taken as wives'. He continues: 'They are of the opinion that the children of prisoners of war are theirs, not orphans. If, however, children were to be born of a free maidservant, they would be considered orphans with no title to inherit any of the father's property'. Children born within the concubinage of a master with a female slave are free according to Islamic law [221] and in no way inferior to children born within marriage.²⁷⁷ Children fathered in adultery, however, cannot be legally recognised. In law, there is no kinship tie between such children and their father, neither in inheritance law nor in respect of child support.²⁷⁸ Muslims were furthermore preoccupied with the question of with which women a man might have congress, and with which others not. Emperor Leo²⁷⁹ has the following information: 'I have been told... that your law forbids you to marry women of a different faith'. Kydones also knows of this law, and says:²⁸⁰ 'He (Muhammad) told the Saracens that they must not sully themselves with unbelievers before they have become believers',²⁸¹ Sura 2:220f. (to which Kydones refers explicitly) says: 'Do not marry heathen women before they have become believers', indeed forbidding Muslims to marry those of other faiths.²⁸² Concerning further associations with women, Kydones writes that in the chapter Ἐλνοῦρ (*al-nūr* = sura 24) Muhammad forbade to force women to renounce their chastity, but permitted men to enter into relations with those who were willing.²⁸³ Kydones' statement partly corresponds to sura 24:33: 'And coerce not your slave-girls to fornication if they desire to live in chastity'. In this context the Byzantines were fond also of referring to sura 2:223. John paraphrases it as:²⁸⁴ 'Plough the field

²⁷⁴ M. 94, 769.

²⁷⁵ M. 130, 1349; 140, 109; 104, 1452.

²⁷⁶ B.C. 122.

²⁷⁷ Juynboll, Th. W.: *Handbuch des islamischen Rechtes nach der Lehre der schafītischen Schule*, 1910, 236.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 193f.

²⁷⁹ M. 107, 322f.

²⁸⁰ M. 154, 1068.

²⁸¹ This is Shi'ite doctrine. Tornauw, N. v., *Das Moslemische Recht*, 1855, p. 65.

²⁸² According to Fiqh doctrine, marriage to heathen women is forbidden, marriage to people of the book (Jewish and Christian women), however, is permitted. Juynboll, loc. cit., 221.

²⁸³ M. 154, 1065.

²⁸⁴ M. 94, 769.

God has given you, love it, and do as you wish'. According to Niketas, the verse is:²⁸⁵ 'Your women are your field, go visit your fields whenever you wish and be content in your heart'. And according to Kydones:²⁸⁶ 'Your women are your field, go visit it as often as you wish'.

[222] With regards to the impediments to marriage, Niketas remarks quite generally on sura 4:26ff.:²⁸⁷ 'He (Muhammad) decreed with whom one may enter into marriage, and with whom it is prohibited because of kinship'. In Niketas' opinion 'he is not very far away from the old laws'. Chalkondyles appears to assume that a marriage contract will only be agreed on the basis of a dowry, as he says:²⁸⁸ 'They buy the girls when someone wishes to sell his daughter'. A marriage must be contracted in the presence of at least two witnesses,²⁸⁹ to which John refers in a general way:²⁹⁰ 'One may not marry a woman without witnesses'. Bartholomaios writes:²⁹¹ 'He who wishes to marry a woman must have ten witnesses', which corresponds to the custom of having more than the two required witnesses.²⁹²

Another question, to which the Byzantines devoted much more interest and which also engaged the Muslims themselves thoroughly, is that of divorce. The best-known manner of dissolving a marriage is for a man to release his wife (*ṭalāq*). The law of divorce is known already to John. After relating the well-known story of Muhammad and the wife of Zayd, he has Muhammad decree the following rule:²⁹³ 'If a man wishes to release his wife, he shall do so. If, having released her, he feels drawn to her again, another must marry her. It is not permitted to take her back unless another had married her. If a brother releases his wife, his brother, if he wishes, should marry her'. The custom, mentioned by John, that a Muslim may only remarry his (three times) released wife after an interim marriage to another man, is based on sura 2:230. With reference to this passage Niketas remarks:²⁹⁴ 'If someone releases his wife, she will be forbidden to him after being released until she has been joined to another man. If the second one releases her, then it is not a crime anymore among them if they are joined again'. Leo claims to have heard of this Muslim custom as well:²⁹⁵ 'If one of you [223] has repudiated his wife for any reason,

²⁸⁵ M. 105, 721.

²⁸⁶ M. 154, 1068.

²⁸⁷ M. 105, 729.

²⁸⁸ B.C. 122.

²⁸⁹ Juynboll, loc. cit., 209.

²⁹⁰ M. 94, 768.

²⁹¹ M. 104, 1394.

²⁹² Cf. e.g. the marriage contract published by Grohmann in *Islam* XXII (1934), 41f.

²⁹³ M. 94, 769. Euthymios M. 130, 1349; Akominatos M. 140, 109f., Kydones M. 154, 1077, 1113.

²⁹⁴ M. 105, 721.

²⁹⁵ M. 107, 322f.

he is then not allowed to unite with her again until another has been with her'. A thorough description of *ṭalāq*, and correct in every detail, is found in Kydones; his intention, however, is polemical:²⁹⁶ 'The Saracen may throw his wife out and make peace with her however often he pleases or not; in such a way, however, that after the third time he may not take her back unless another has been with her and she is not in her periods anymore.²⁹⁷ If, however, the latter did not lie with her with sufficiently extended αἰδώς, this will also become necessary... If they want to make peace with their wives, they will pay a blind man or someone of ugly aspect a sum of money so he will be joined to the wife and afterwards declare publicly his intention to repudiate her. After this has happened, the first one will then be able to make peace with her again. Occasionally they please the second men so much that these will say that they cannot possibly be separated from them, in which case the first man, having lost his money and his wife, will now lose his hope (of reunion)'. The law that a man may release his wife three times was established with reference to sura 2:228–30. After the third *ṭalāq* he is permitted to reunite with her only if she has had a different husband in the meantime, who must have released her in turn (the triple *ṭalāq* was obviously not known to John and those who copied from him). This institution resulted in the well-known custom of *muḥallil*, correctly described by Kydones. The latter's information concerning the second man's intercourse with the woman corresponds approximately to the remarks found in later Islamic law texts.²⁹⁸

b) *The Oath* In his *Confutatio* Kydones quotes the Qur'an's instructions on the oath:²⁹⁹ 'God will not take you to task for errors when swearing an oath ...In the case of a violation [of the oath] it is sufficient to feed ten poor people, or provide them with clothing, or to set free a [224] prisoner of war. He who has not the means to do so must fast three times'. This sentence is an exact copy of sura 5: 91. Kydones illustrates the possibility of being released from an oath with a story by Mary the Copt,³⁰⁰ according to which Muhammad swore an oath to his two wives Anese (= 'Ā'isha) and Aasa (Ḥafsa), from which he was allowed to release himself on God's orders. Kydones connects this narrative quite correctly with sura 64 (Ἐλμετεαρέμ = *al-tahrīm*).³⁰¹

²⁹⁶ M. 154, 1081.

²⁹⁷ μὴ οὐδσας ἐν τοῖς ἐμμήνοις The slightly unclear expression τὰ ἐμμηνῶα is a paraphrase of 'waiting time' (*'idda*), which is prescribed for the woman after the triple *ṭalāq*, and amounts to three periods.

²⁹⁸ EI IV, 692ff.; cf. *Hidāya* (Hamilton) I, 302.

²⁹⁹ M. 154, 1113 = Kantakuzenos *ibid.*, 620.

³⁰⁰ M. 154, 1076f. = Kantakuzenos *ibid.*, 620; cf. 1113 (variant of this story).

³⁰¹ The Islamic tradition is printed in Sale II, 430ff.

c) *Holy War (Jihād)* Abū Qurra has Muhammad say these words:³⁰² 'God sent me to shed the blood of those who say that the nature of the divine is made up out of three hypostases.' Niketas received a letter from a Persian, which says:³⁰³ 'As for homicide, this is permitted in some cases, forbidden in others. It is forbidden, i.e. prohibited by God, to kill a believer deliberately. It is lawful and permitted to kill someone who believes God has a companion, and that the latter possesses the same power as God'. I would assume that both Abū Qurra and Niketas are basing these passages on an apocryphal saying of Muhammad's which may have been:³⁰⁴ 'I give you the order to fight those people until they profess that there is no God but God and that Muhammad is God's messenger'. The Qur'an itself hints at the call to holy war in sura 2:212–13. The Byzantines, however, did not stop at the claim that Muhammad required the death of all unbelievers. Niketas and Kydones adduce sura 2:257. Niketas translates it as:³⁰⁵ 'Do not force them to believe, for what is pleasant will be seen in what is seductive'. Remarkable are Niketas' own remarks on this rule:³⁰⁶ 'Moamet admonishes the Barbarians to watch the Christians for a while, in case they might wish to accept their cause. If however, the Christians should become powerful in their own right and secede from the dominion of the Barbarians, war should be waged against them. If, however, they were to do penitence and accept his (Muhammad's) form of worship, [225] they should be accepted as brothers. He admonishes the Christians that it is better to repent and be alive than to remain Christian and be killed'. We should compare these remarks of Niketas' with the harsh and polemical opinion on the subject of holy war as expressed in Kydones' text:³⁰⁷ 'About virtues Makhoumet says hardly anything at all, only about war, theft ...' In another passage he says:³⁰⁸ 'The laws of God prohibit murder, theft, desires, everything which the Alkoranon either commands or (at least) accepts'. Kydones goes as far as claiming that Muhammad's law commands that every enemy who is not a believer must be killed:³⁰⁹ 'And this is why he says not in one chapter only but throughout the entire book the general command: kill, kill!' Having made plain his views on this part of Muslim doctrine, Kydones then shines a positive light on the Muslim idea of war:³¹⁰ 'Those who have accepted Muhammad's commands will be protected by him and his followers. This is why the Saracens may also be called

³⁰² M. 97, 1545.

³⁰³ M. 105, 836.

³⁰⁴ Juynboll loc. cit., 338.

³⁰⁵ M. 105, 724; 130, 1352; 154, 1068.

³⁰⁶ M. 105, 745; 130, 1352.

³⁰⁷ M. 154, 1064.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 1065.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 1104.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 1072.

not Saracens but *Νεσελαμίν*, i.e. saved people'.³¹¹ In a different place he adds with regards to the Muslims' conquest practice:³¹² 'Then he commands in many places that all those who do not embrace the faith must be killed, or robbed until they should believe or pay tribute'. The Byzantines' information on holy war is based not only on sura 2: 257 but also 9:29. However, Kydones' and Niketas' words go beyond simply quoting what the Qur'an has to say on the *Jihād*, and indeed recall what we know of Muslim war practice in later times. In clarification I shall adduce a few rules of engagement from the compendium *Wiqāya* (ca. 1280), which are, however, already found in the oldest works on law dating back to the second century AH. Here we read:³¹³ 'Besieged enemies are invited to convert to Islam; if they refuse, they shall be invited to pay the poll tax. If they agree to this, they shall have a part in our rights and responsibilities. It is not permitted to attack an enemy [226] before he has been invited (to convert to Islam or pay the poll tax). The invitation is extended (and repeated) out of magnanimity towards those who had already received one. If they refuse, war shall be waged on them with engines and with fire.'

From sura 8:42 Niketas knows that a fifth of the booty belongs to God and his messenger.³¹⁴ Kydones points out this passage as well and asks:³¹⁵ 'Can God be so unjust, and wish to enrich himself through theft?'

Kydones attempts to support his knowledge of those fighting a holy war by relating³¹⁶ the following: 'The Saracens finance the Assyrians to murder humans. Those among them who kill someone or are themselves killed are promised eternal life. They send them everywhere in order to kill the rulers of the world. These Asesenoi (ἄσσηνοί) have strong camps and fortresses around Mount Lilton (Λίλτον); they serve the Sultan of Babylon who is the head of the Saracens. They are part of the Saracens' law and order and are not called ἄσσηνοί by the Saracens but Ismaelites (Ἰσμαηλίται), the root and stem of the Saracens, as it were, foremost defenders and preservers of Makhoumet's law. This heinous act is condemned not only by the Christians, but also by the Tatars, who have only the natural law'. Kydones clearly has rather confused information on the Assassins,³¹⁷ without knowing that the Sunni Muslims are themselves their fiercest opponents.

³¹¹ The meaning given by the Byzantines is based on *musallamīn*. In actual fact they are referring to a written, and consequently misunderstood *m-s-l-mīn* (= *muslimīn*) (in the accusative form). This proves that Kydones had written sources to work from.

³¹² M. 154, 1068 = Kantakuzenos *ibid.*, 544.

³¹³ Haneberg, B. v. *Das muslimische Kriegsrecht*, 1870, 217.

³¹⁴ M. 105, 744; 130, 1352; 140, 117.

³¹⁵ M. 154, 1112.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1108.

³¹⁷ EI I, 510f. The mountain is said to be called Λίλτον, which is probably misspelt for Lebanon. It is possible, however, that the mountain referred to is mount Alamūt.

The Byzantines' emphatic criticism of *jihād* is summarised in Akominatos' *Exorcism*:³¹⁸ 'He (Muhammad) encourages the Saracens to evil and to murder and calls the war against Christians "God's way". The Saracens who fall in this war he calls the sons of God and the heirs to Paradise'.

2. Ritual Commandments

a) *Circumcision* John of Damascus claims that Muhammad had passed the law that men and women must be circumcised.³¹⁹ Besides him [227] only Hamartolos and Chalkondyles mention circumcision,³²⁰ the latter emphasising that among the Muslims it is necessary to excise all the pudenda.³²¹

b) *Cleansing and Prayer* The polemicists of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are the first to touch upon the problem of ritual cleansing and prayer (*ṣalāt*). Bartholomaios relates an alleged announcement of Muhammad's concerning the rules of cleansing.³²² 'If you wish to pray, take a large and tall jug of water, put one finger of your right hand εἰς τὴν καθέδραν σου, and with your left hand sprinkle the water, then wash. And with the finger, ᾧ ἔπλυνας τὴν καθέδραν σου, wash your mouth, face, both hands as far as the elbows, eyebrows, ears and feet. If you are presiding, you must clean your shoes on the outside, lest you have difficulties putting them on and taking them off and, if you are wearing a gold ring on your finger, take it off and then pray; if you do not have one, you may pray immediately. If you are wearing a garment made from the fur of a cat, do not pray until you have taken it off. And if the Muslim were drinking wine all day and wishes to pray he must look at his clothes, and if any wine may be seen on his clothes, he must wash it with water and soap and only pray afterwards'. Kydones says:³²³ 'And also the law he passed concerning ablutions, ἄλογός ἐστι παντελῶς. For he commands that when they wish to pray they must wash their hands, their face, τὸν προικτόν, their private parts, the soles of their feet and their arms up to the elbows.'

The Greeks' accounts refer to ablutions and, as they are very detailed, clearly to the so-called major purification (*ghusl*).³²⁴ Some of the information appears to refer to the rules for washing after relieving oneself, which were then linked to the rules for *ghusl* with polemical intentions. One tradition which must have seemed opportune to the polemicists says that after intercourse with women, Muhammad

³¹⁸ M. 140, 32.

³¹⁹ M. 94, 772f.

³²⁰ Ed. de Boor, loc. cit., II, 700; B. C. 123.

³²¹ Concerning the practice among the Muslims cf. EI II, 1028f.

³²² M. 104, 1405.

³²³ M. 154, 1080f.

³²⁴ Juynboll, loc. cit., 73f.; cf. Hell, loc. cit., 82-5.

washed his right and left hands twice, and then his right and left sides, 'and then washed his private parts both before and behind, then struck his left hand in the ground and rubbed it, then washed it, [228] then took water in his mouth (according to Ibn 'Abbās)'.³²⁵ We can easily understand what a polemicist might make out of this tradition! In order to clarify further the account of Bartholomaios I shall adduce the following tradition in comparison:³²⁶ 'Abū Rāfi' said: When the Prophet performed the *wuḍū'* before praying, he took the ring off his finger, so that the water should touch even that part of the finger usually covered by the ring'. Another rule is:³²⁷ 'If wearing sufficiently strong and impervious shoes, these do not need to be removed before the *wuḍū'* every time. In this case it is sufficient to moisten the shoes rather than the feet'. We may safely assume that the rule, mentioned by Bartholomaios, that all garments made from cat fur must be removed, is untrue, as Abū Qatāda quotes the Prophet as saying that cats are not unclean.³²⁸ Drinking wine is entirely prohibited to Muslims; what is correct is that a Muslim may only prepare to pray after cleaning his garments.³²⁹

Islamic law knows five *ṣalāts* which must be performed daily.³³⁰ Bartholomaios knows this correct number, while Chalkondyles claims the believers have a law stating that they must pray four times a day.³³¹ The explanation for this statement is probably that the fifth prayer does not take place during the daylight hours but at night time.

Niketas already knows Muhammad's rule that fine sand may be used in order to perform the *wuḍū'* if there is no water at hand (sura 5:9).³³² Akominatos relates this rule by having Muhammad say:³³³ 'If one does not find water immediately, one should use fine sand. This may be used to rub the face and hands'. Kydonos says:³³⁴ 'If they cannot find water, they must dip their hands into dust and then rub the dirty hands over the face'. These statements correspond exactly to sura 5:9: If you cannot find water, take good sand and use it to rub your face and hands. Bartholomaios, who is well aware of this rule,³³⁵ shows how a polemicist can easily capitalise on it by simply translating 'sand' as 'dirt', as he does.

³²⁵ *Mishkāt* I, ch. 7.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, 97.

³²⁷ Juynboll loc. cit., 73.

³²⁸ *Mishkāt* I, 108.

³²⁹ Juynboll, loc. cit., 71.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, 67.

³³¹ M. 104, 1408; B.C. 121.

³³² M. 105, 736.

³³³ M. 140, 132.

³³⁴ M. 154, 1081.

³³⁵ M. 104, 1408f.

[229] The question of the direction of prayer was also discussed by the Byzantines. Niketas says:³³⁶ 'If his followers are asked why they turn their faces to the south when they pray, they must say nothing but that it is in order to show reverence to Moamet and in order to distinguish themselves from those who do not do it'. Euthymios adds to Niketas' passage by providing a reason:³³⁷ 'So that they may be distinct from those who turn towards the sunrise'.³³⁸ It is self-evident that the Byzantines should speak of 'south', as seen from Byzantium Mecca is in the south. The exact place is indicated by Niketas:³³⁹ 'If you are there (in Mecca), you will turn your faces towards the middle of the place of worship'.

Bartholomaios is the only one of the Byzantines who has some information on the ceremonies which must be observed when praying:³⁴⁰ 'If you are near your mosque (μασγίδιον), take your outer garment and spread it out before you, so your face does not become soiled with the dust of the mosque. If you are outside the mosque but do not have an outer garment, remove your coat, spread it out before you and pray this prayer: is there any God as great as our God, there is no God but you and Maomed is the messenger of God, amen. Then you must proceed to performing three genuflections and speak: we thank you, God and ruler of the universe, font of all mercy, who shall be the judge and incorruptible king on the latter day; guide us along the right road on which you in your mercy let the saints walk, (do) not (lead us) with those who through wrath and error have gone astray, amen. Then genuflect three times in a sitting position, then speak standing up: is there any God as great as our God, (this three times). Sit again, and praise God three times. Salute those on your right and speak: Peace be with us, and also to the left side: with God the all-merciful. The leave. This is your entire prayer, the teachings and wisdom of your Moamed'.

A detailed comparison between the Greek account and the order of the *ṣalāt*³⁴¹ results in the conclusion that in all Bartholomaios recounts one *rak'a* and the *taslīma* [230]; he also mentions a number of correct details of the prayer ritual. However, he sprinkles the latter at random into the context of the entire prayer, so that every serious ritual becomes artificial ceremonial in his account.

Bartholomaios renders the words of the *takbīr* as τίς θεὸς μέγας ὡς ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν; Hamartolos and others transmit a version in corrupted Arabic: 'Ἀλλᾶ, Ἀλλᾶ, οὐά, κουβάρ, Ἀλλᾶ'. These sentences written by the Greeks are, strictly speaking, a conflation of *takbīr* and creed: There is no God but God.

³³⁶ M. 105, 720.

³³⁷ M. 130, 1348; Akominatos M. 140, 132.

³³⁸ The Syrian Christians and Edessenes turned eastwards (Andrae, T., *Der Ursprung des Islam und das Christentum*, 1923–25, 4).

³³⁹ M. 105, 720.

³⁴⁰ M. 104, 1405.

³⁴¹ Cf. Juynboll, loc. cit., 75–80.

c) *The Holiday* 'He (Muhammad) commands them', John points out in his text, 'not to celebrate the Sabbath and not to baptise'.³⁴² Niketas enlarges on the first of these commandments.³⁴³ 'He (Muhammad) instructs them to believe in the one God of Abraham, for it was he who instituted the Sabbath for those who disagreed about it. Abraham, however, did not know the Sabbath. This allows us to deduce that he intended to introduce the Sabbath among the Barbarians as well, but maybe they did not pay attention to him in this respect, and he did not dare to determine something of this kind'. Niketas is clearly referring to sura 16:125. Friday was possessed of a special character in the Muslims' eyes, but it was not an explicit holiday and consequently – as the Byzantines interpreted correctly – not comparable to the Jewish Sabbath.

Another trait from the proclamation of the Muslim doctrine is mentioned by Kydonēs:³⁴⁴ 'When they congregate for instruction, the teacher of the Saracens, who is the speaker, draws his sword and holds the naked blade in his hand, or puts it down in a prominent place in order to frighten the others. During the Christians' instructions they do not raise a sword but a cross'. This remark refers to Friday worship, during which it was the custom that the preacher would ascend the pulpit bearing a staff, sword, bow or lance in his right hand.³⁴⁵ Chalkondyles has this to say on the Muslims' worship:³⁴⁶ 'He (Muhammad) commands them to congregate in the temple on the day [231] of Aphrodite (= Friday) and pray there. There is, indeed, no image or any writings they might consult when praying in the temple. They have priests, one of whom must climb to the top of a tower that can be seen from far away, where he will invoke God at the top of his voice. They must always speak the set prayers until they are hoarse'. Here we find out that the time of prayer is announced to the Muslims by the call to *ṣalāt* from the minaret. The name of the house of prayer is given as μαγίδιον by Euthymios,³⁴⁷ as μασγίδιον by Bartholomaios.³⁴⁸ this is the Arabic *maṣjid*. Bartholomaios also tells us that the floors of the mosques are covered with rugs like a bed, in order that they should not be spoiled by all the people walking over them. In particular, however, he describes the washing facilities attached to the mosque, though not without some mean vituperation.³⁴⁹ Besides these exaggerations he points out correctly how important the water supply was for the Muslims when building a mosque.³⁵⁰ The custom of

³⁴² M. 94, 773.

³⁴³ M. 105, 761.

³⁴⁴ M. 154, 1108.

³⁴⁵ Becker, C.H., *Die Kanzel im Kultus des alten Islam*, in *Islamstudien* I, 451.

³⁴⁶ B.C. 121.

³⁴⁷ M. 131, 37.

³⁴⁸ M. 104, 1443.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁰ EI III, 403.

decorating a mosque with rugs first appeared during Mu'āwiya's reign; later it became universal practice.³⁵¹

d) Fasting and Dietary Laws The Byzantines are silent on this point of Islamic law. Niketas, and after him Euthymios and Akominatos, limit themselves to quote from sura 2:181, 183:³⁵² 'On the subject of fasting ... It was in the month of 'Ραμίδα (*Ramaḍān*) that the Qur'an was sent down to you. During this month you must fast. During the night time of the fast you are permitted to go in to your wives; they are your garment and you are their garment. For God knows that you are moving in danger inside your hearts during the fast, and he is merciful. Lie with your wives for your consolation. Eat and drink at night until the thread which looked black because of the darkness will appear white in the dawning day. And again: perform the fast until the evening, and do not lie with them but remain in the house of prayer. This is the law given to you by God; do not transgress'. This is not a literal quotation but rather a summarising paraphrase of the relevant [232] verses. Chalkondyles states furthermore:³⁵³ 'One tenth of the year he (Muhammad) chose for God, and he commands them to fast for thirty and more days. All day long they must neither eat nor drink; at night, when the star rises, they may eat'. These accounts by the Byzantines contain approximately everything that is enjoined upon the Muslims with respect to fasting during the month of Ramaḍān.³⁵⁴

With reference to the dietary laws, which stand beside the rules of fasting in Muslim law, Niketas remarks on sura 2:168.³⁵⁵ 'The only animal he does not allow as food is the pig'. Hamartolos, Bartholomaios and Chalkondyles mention the same prohibition.³⁵⁶ The Byzantines consider most remarkable that Muhammad forbade drinking wine. According to John he ruled:³⁵⁷ 'Partly to eat what is forbidden by law, and partly to abstain from it. The drinking of wine is entirely forbidden'. Niketas also notes the requirement of ritual slaughter.³⁵⁸

e) Charity There is one single note of the commandment to give alms (*zakāt*) in the Byzantines' writings. Kydones writes:³⁵⁹ 'It is difficult for them to fulfil everything

³⁵¹ Ibid. 401.

³⁵² M. 105, 721; 130, 1349; 140, 116.

³⁵³ B.C. 123.

³⁵⁴ Juynboll, loc. cit., 113–26.

³⁵⁵ M. 105, 728; 130, 1346; 140, 116.

³⁵⁶ Ed. de Boor, loc. cit. II, 700; M. 104, 1393; B. C. 123. In order to give a reason for the prohibition of pork, Kydones quotes a lengthy tale according to which pigs are unclean because they emerged from the dung of an elephant: M. 154, 1100f.

³⁵⁷ M. 94, 773.

³⁵⁸ M. 105, 736; cf. Chalkondyles B.C. 123.

³⁵⁹ M. 154, 1152.

...especially with regards to the contribution everyone has to make, relative to the wealth given to him by God'. The silence of the other Byzantines lets us conclude that they were not interested in emphasising this aspect, which would have shone a positive light on the enemy. We may safely assume that they were aware of the commandment, as the preacher–friar Ricoldus, whose *Confutatio* was translated by Kydones, has a separate chapter in his *Peregrinatio* dealing with this subject, 'De elemosina et misericordia Saracenorum ad pauperes' (Of the Saracens' alms and charity towards the poor).³⁶⁰

[233] f) *The pilgrimage* Niketas claims to have heard from a Muslim proselyte that in the centre of Mecca there is a stone idol which the Muslims have to worship in the following way:³⁶¹ 'They bow their necks, reach out with their right hand to touch it (the stone), cover their ear with the other hand and run in circles until they collapse in a faint'. Euthymios, Akominatos and Anonymous I included this description of the circumambulation of the Ka'ba (*ṭawāf*) in their writings and used it with polemic intent.³⁶² Islamic law commands that during the *ḥajj* the seven circumambulations of the Ka'ba must be performed without interruptions, and the first three with faster steps. If, because of the crowd, one is not able to kiss the stone, one must reach out one's hand to touch it and kiss the hand.³⁶³ Covering one's ear may be a misunderstanding of the custom according to which the believer, having kissed the stone, rubs his hand over his face.³⁶⁴

Concerning the ceremonial passage between Şafa and Marwa Niketas only mentions the information found in sura 2:153:³⁶⁵ 'Two barbaric names, Zapha (Ζαφά) and Maroua (Μαρουά) are said to be among the number of the reverend names of God'.

Akominatos ensures that his catechumens express themselves in harsh rejection against 'Meka (Mecca) and all its surroundings, and the seven stones the Saracens throw at the Christians there, against the entire prayer, all the worship and all of their customs'.³⁶⁶ The ritual of casting stones, which is part of the *ḥajj*, is also mentioned by Bartholomaïos. In the context of his remarks on Apoutalepe's (Abū Ṭālib's) death, he writes:³⁶⁷ 'That I speak nothing but the truth is clearly evident from the fact that up until now, they counted this place (where Apoutalepe is said to have been killed) among the most abhorrent of places. And another sign: you

³⁶⁰ Laurent, loc. cit., 132f.

³⁶¹ M. 105, 720.

³⁶² M. 130, 1341; 140, 132; 104, 1453f.

³⁶³ Juynboll, loc. cit., 148.

³⁶⁴ Godefroy-Demobynes, *Le pèlerinage à la Mekke*, 1923, 208.

³⁶⁵ M. 105, 720; Euthymios M. 130, 1340; Akominatos M. 140, 132.

³⁶⁶ M. 140, 132.

³⁶⁷ M. 104, 1437.

say that when you go to Maka (Mecca) to pray, you cast stones on this place; you say that it was here that Apoutalepe did not believe Moamed. I shall make another sign known to you: near [234] that place is a well called ζουνζούμην (= Zamzam) which has a lot of water, and they threw the fugitives into it. And you are entirely in error. You cast stones upon a holy place and, when you leave Maka behind, you take water from that well and take it home and elsewhere in the place of a blessing. When I ask you, what is this water, and where does its power of blessing come from, you tell me: this is the water ζουνζούμην, for once upon a time Abraham's son was sleeping there and, as he was thirsty in his sleep and could find no water, he beat his heel upon the ground and made water well up. Near the well is a mound on which your people rest for three days, calling and praying to God: 'what are your commandments!' This is where God is said to have reunited Adam and Eve'.

Bartholomaios' account is in places rather legendary in character (the death of Abū Ṭālib, throwing fugitives into the well), but in other parts it reflects actual customs. In order to perform the *hajj* correctly, in three particular places one must cast seven pebbles onto a heap of pebbles.³⁶⁸ In the eastern corner of the Ka'ba is indeed the Zamzam well, whose water possesses miraculous healing properties according to Muslim doctrine and is consequently taken back home by the pilgrims.³⁶⁹ On the origins of the well Islamic legend says that Ishmael made the water well up, while his mother Hagar was running between Ṣafa and Marwa in the hope of finding water there.³⁷⁰ When Bartholomaios mentions a mound near the well where people would rest for three days, he is thinking of the ceremonies in 'Arafa (there is a hill called Jabal al-Raḥma) and Minā, which take place from the ninth to the thirteenth of the Dhū'l-Hijja. These ceremonies may be shortened to three days, as it is permitted to leave Minā as early as the twelfth day.³⁷¹ An Islamic legend about 'Arafa narrates that this was the place where God reunited Adam and Eve after they had been expelled from Paradise.³⁷²

Appendix: The Stone (Ka'ba) and the Morning Star

One subject which the Christian theologians were able to use exhaustively in the interest of polemic was the veneration of the black stone and the rites associated with this worship. They saw all this as remnants of idolatry. [235] It was also the starting point for their attempts at determining Arabian religion before Muhammad and thus providing explicit proof of Muhammad's idolatry. In order to acquire a clearer

³⁶⁸ Juynboll, loc. cit., 155.

³⁶⁹ Snouck Hurgronje, *Verspreide Geschriften*, 1924, IV, 2, 191.

³⁷⁰ Juynboll, loc. cit., 137.

³⁷¹ *ibid.*, 152–57.

³⁷² EI I, 435.

picture of the Byzantines' idea of worship among the pagan Arabs, we will compile all their remarks on the subject, taking into account their interdependences.

A set and formulaic account of idolatry before Muhammad's time is already found in John of Damascus' text:³⁷³ "These worshipped idols and prayed to the morning star and to Aphrodite, whom they called Khabar (Χαβάρ) in their language, which means "great". John links the worship of the rock to Aphrodite.³⁷⁴ "They suspect us of being idolaters, because we worship the cross which they revile, so we say to them: why do you adhere to the stone which is your Khabathan (Χαβαθάν) (variant reading: Bakhtan [Βαχθάν] or Khabothan [Χαβοθάν]), and kiss it by embracing it? Some say that upon this stone Abraham lay with Hagar, others (say) that he tied his camel in this place when he was about to sacrifice Isaac. We reply to them: as Scripture tell us that the mountain was covered with trees and shrubs, and that Abraham cut some wood for the altar on which he meant to place Isaac, and that he left the donkeys with his servants, why then do you speak so foolishly? There is no wood in Mecca, and there is no path for donkeys. They have been shamed, but still they persist in calling it Abraham's stone. To which we reply: this stone is the head of Aphrodite whom they used to worship and called Khaber (Χαβέρ); until this day, if you look carefully at the stone, you may perceive a hewn head'. The same account is also found in Euthymios' and Akominatos' writings.³⁷⁵ The latter has the variant spellings Gabathan instead of Khabathan and Khamar instead of Khaber.

Niketas declares:³⁷⁶ 'In order for his falsehood to become manifest, he (Muhammad) commands the unfortunate barbarians to worship the idol, which he calls προσκύνημα παρατηρήματος, found in Baka (= Mecca) ...As we know from one of them who converted to the Christians, there is a stone idol at the centre of the house... I believe that this idol is, as they say, an image of Aphrodite'. With reference to sura 3:90 Niketas contrasts Abraham's religion with that of Muhammad:³⁷⁷ [236] 'God spoke to Abraham: do not serve any God but the Lord your God. Maomet does not accept this. He worships Khoubar (Χουβάρ), an ancient idol in the Ethribon (Ἐθριβον = Yathrib) plain, and Makakh (Μάκαχ);³⁷⁸ it is said that the idol is made in the image of Aphrodite'.

Euthymios calls the rock Brakhthan (Βραχθάν) and claims that this stone is the head of Aphrodite whom the Ishmaelites had worshipped since time immemorial. The idol he calls Bakkha Ismakekh (Βακχὰ Ἴσμακέχ).

The formula of abjuration, which is directed against the Saracens, has Muhammad say 'that God had a prayer house erected for him by Abraham and Ishmael in Bakkha

³⁷³ M. 94, 764; Euthymios M. 130, 1333; Akominatos M. 140, 105.

³⁷⁴ M. 94, 769.

³⁷⁵ M. 130, 1340; 140, 109.

³⁷⁶ M. 105, 720.

³⁷⁷ M. 105, 793.

³⁷⁸ Text: καὶ τῷ Μάκαχ; might possibly be translated as 'at Mecca'.

(Μάκχα) or Makë (Μάκε) or Makekh (Μάκεχ), in the middle of which there was a large stone showing an image of Aphrodite'. The catechumen must turn against those 'who worship the morning star or Ἐωσφόρος and Aphrodite, whom in their Arabic language they call Khabar, meaning 'the great one'.³⁷⁹

While Kydones and Kantakuzenos do not mention either the morning star or the rock with a single word, Bartholomaios writes:³⁸⁰ 'This is why you call God the Compassionate and All-Merciful, and this is certainly the one whom you Arabs have made your dogma, whom you call morning star, Zebo (Ζέβω), Aphrodite, Kronos (Κρόνος) and Khamar (Χαμάρ). These you call Gods'.³⁸¹

In these accounts by Byzantine scholars we must distinguish between a) statements concerning the morning star and Aphrodite and b) those regarding the worship of the stone.

According to John of Damascus and those who copied from him (Euthymios and Akominatos), the idolatry of the ancient Arabs consisted in worshipping the morning star and Aphrodite. The Byzantines' idea of the connection between morning star and Aphrodite becomes completely clear when we adduce this passage from Hamartolos:³⁸² 'They have performed idolatry since time immemorial and worshipped the goddess known as Aphrodite by the Greeks, i.e. the [237] joys of love, and they have stories that the morning star was her star. In their terrible language they call her Koubar (Κουβάρ), i.e. 'the great one'; until this day they recognise Aphrodite as God'. Hamartolos claims that the Arabs saw the morning star as the star of Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love. He is, however, of the opinion that this is unjustified. In the last sentence Aphrodite is called God, i.e. the morning star as a male Venus star is seen as God.

These are two points which must be clearly separated: the cult of the morning star (Venus) in ancient Arabia and the worship of Aphrodite, the goddess of love.

The cult of the morning star is mentioned already by Nilus the Elder and his son Theodoulos (ca. 400 AD). The latter tells us that the Arabs worshipped the morning star and sacrificed to him – as a male God – by slaughtering the best beasts from among the booty.³⁸³ The cult of Venus (Aphrodite) occurred in Ancient Arabia side by side with that of the morning star. Hieronymus tells us about Elusa, where the people 'colunt illam (Venerem) ob Luciferum, cuius cultui Saracenorum nation dedita est' (they worship her [Venus] for Lucifer's sake, to whose worship the Saracen nation is devoted).³⁸⁴ He means to say that Venus was worshipped because of her connection with the morning star. Wellhausen understands the passage to

³⁷⁹ M. 143, 132.

³⁸⁰ M. 104, 1385.

³⁸¹ Zebo probably refers to Sabazios, Kronos of course to the Greek Kronos.

³⁸² Ed. de Boor, loc. cit., 705f. = B. C. I, 744.

³⁸³ Wellhausen, J. *Reste arabischen Heidentums*, 1887, 37.

³⁸⁴ Wellhausen, loc. cit., 38.

mean that Lucifer (the morning star) had the name Venus, and was thus a female deity.³⁸⁵ W R Smith, on the other hand, determined that the cult of the morning star as a goddess was not found anywhere else in Arabia, except among Western tribes.³⁸⁶

There is an inherent connection between Aphrodite and morning star because of the shared name Venus (Aphrodite). This is at the root of all confusion and ambiguity. Having looked at the material quoted above we can state: the Byzantines are justified in naming the morning star as well as Aphrodite as deities worshipped by the heathen Arabs. They regarded the morning star as male (Hamartolos); Aphrodite, whose head might be seen in the stone in Mecca, may be the Greek name of al-Lāt,³⁸⁷ the Arab goddess corresponding to the Greek goddess of love. We know that in those days she was worshipped diligently in the sanctuary in Mecca, together with the god Hubal. We may safely assume [238] a connection between the morning star and Aphrodite (al-Lāt or al-'Uzzā; cf. Hieronymus) in the sense that both deities were worshipped in the same place, but not because they were one and the same, as Wellhausen believes.

John of Damascus and his followers give Aphrodite the name Khabar (Khaber, Khamar, Koubar), a term said to mean 'great' or 'the great one'. In the word forms quoted we recognise Arabic *kabīr* (= great).³⁸⁸ What remains is the question of how this term *kabīr* was transferred onto Aphrodite (as a goddess of the heathen Arabs). The answer to this question can be found in the Muslim *takbīr* transmitted by Hamartolos:³⁸⁹ Ἄλλά, Ἄλλά, Οὐά, Κουβάρ, Ἄλλά, καὶ τὸ μὲν Ἄλλά, Ἄλλά ἐρμηνεύεται ὁ θεὸς ὁ θεός, τὸ δὲ Οὐά μείζων, τὸ δὲ Κουβάρ μεγάλη ἤτοι σελήνη καὶ Ἀφροδίτη, ὄρερ ἔστιν οὕτως. ὁ θεὸς ὁ θεός μείζων καὶ ἡ μεγάλη, εἶτ' οὖν σελήνη καὶ Ἀφροδίτη, θεός. How did the invocation *allāhu akbar* come to be rendered in this form? It was known that the formula which the Muslims constantly reiterated was a glorification of God. The meaning was also known, for *akbar* is translated correctly as μείζων

³⁸⁵ Ibid. 40.

³⁸⁶ *Die Religion der Semiten* 1899, 40A. 35.

³⁸⁷ The details given by the Greeks, however, rather appear to indicate the Arab goddess al-'Uzzā.

³⁸⁸ It is also possible to explain the various word forms differently. Equating the forms Χαβέρ = Χαβάρ = Χαμέρ = Χουβάρ might be seen as the designation of the Ancient Arabian god Hubal, whose image stood in the Ka'ba, where it was worshipped. Later the Byzantines could have confused this word with Κουβάρ = *akbar*, meaning 'greater'. It is also possible that, if we take the term Χουβάρ–Κουβάρ as our starting point, we may find Arabic *kubrā*. This is a title of al-'Uzzā. I do, however, believe that the most likely explanation is that this term refers to the Ka'ba, the black stone. Furthermore it is necessary to be aware that all these word forms may be corrupt, and consequently nothing may be stated with complete certainty.

³⁸⁹ Ed. de Boor, loc. cit. II, para. 706.

(greater); however, Greek transcription had separated the word into two parts, and Hamartolos believed that the second half, Κουβάρ, remained untranslated. In the context of an invocation of the deity, this incomprehensible word had to refer to a or the deity invoked. The Byzantines recollected that the rock which was part of the Arabs' worship and represented the head of the deity had a similar name: Khabatan (Khoubar, according to Niketas). Thus in the Muslims' sacred formula they seemed to perceive remnants of the ancient idolatry, and the word Koubar was their most convincing proof that the deity [239] here invoked was Aphrodite. In the case of John of Damascus we must assume the same derivation for equating Aphrodite and Koubar, for the crucial moment is the translation of Koubar (Khabar) as 'great', which can only refer to the *takbīr*. Another problem is how the connection between Aphrodite and the rock in Mecca came about. In this context we must go back to the statements of pre-Islamic Greek authors who might have influenced John of Damascus' ideas. In Epiphanius' writings³⁹⁰ we read that the rock in Petra which was sacred to Dushara was said to have a virgin mother. 'Around the same time when the Christians celebrate their Epiphany, the birth of the messiah from a virgin, the heathens celebrate a similar feast in Alexandria. They also celebrate it in Petra, in their idolatrous worship, and in Arabic they praise the virgin whom they call Khaabou (Χααβου) or Khaamou (Χααμου) in Arabic, that is maiden or virgin, and they praise Dushara born of her, namely the firstborn of the Lord'. This passage led to an animated debate between R. Smith and Wellhausen. It was emphasised that Khaabou referred to the cube, the holy stone (thus already according to G. Rösch); the virgin goddess who is identified with the stone may be interpreted as the Arabian Venus.³⁹¹

If John, as we may assume with certainty, knew Epiphanius' account, this is where he would have found the connection between Aphrodite and worship of the stone; he only had to move it from Petra to Mecca, and the stone in Mecca became the head of Aphrodite.

We have followed the way in which John and Hamartolos reached their ideas. Maybe we should say that they might also be a source for our investigation of Ancient Arabian heathenism, as they were very close chronologically, and because their information is generally most reliable. It is important that they regard the morning star as a male deity and have him worshipped besides the goddess of love. The latter is immediately connected to the veneration of the stone and her name is the same as that of the stone: Khabar.

b) John of Damascus refutes the accusation of worshipping the cross by comparing the ceremonies when praying before a cross [240] with those linked to the cult of the stone in Mecca. He calls the stone Khabathan (Bakhthan and Khabothan),

³⁹⁰ Haer. 51, quoted in Wellhausen, loc. cit., 46.

³⁹¹ Concerning this discussion cf. R. Smith, *Kinship and marriage in early Arabia*, 1885, 292ff.; id. *Religion der Semiten*, 40 A, 35.

while Euthymios uses the reading Brakhtan and Akominatos Gabathan.³⁹² It is immediately clear that these words are intended to denote one and the same thing: the Ka'ba in Mecca. It is difficult to say how the individual readings or spellings developed. I suspect that most of them present a conflation of the word Khabar and the name of Mecca, as the name Mecca is transmitted in many different variants: Βάκχε, Μῆκε, Μάκεχ, Μακάχ, Βάκα (thus Niketas and Akominatos). Euthymios states that the idol in Mecca did indeed bear the name of the city itself: the idol is called Bakkha Ismakekh. If we furthermore look at Niketas' account: 'he worships Khoubar, an ancient idol in the Ethribon plain', we can see what associations of the various names would suggest themselves to a Greek in this case.

The legends John links to the stone have, as Becker pointed out,³⁹³ no foundation in ḥadīth. However, the link between Abraham and the Ka'ba is already mentioned in Sura 2:121.³⁹⁴

In his letter to Omar, the Emperor and philosopher Leo writes a coherent description of pre-Islamic idolatry, which is of great interest to us:³⁹⁵ 'Numquid est melius eum (sc. verbum) adorare, quam petram surdam quam adoratis, ubi scimus aliquid remansisse de idolatria illa qua adorabant Jaoh (= Yaghūth), Joac (= Ya'ūq), Nazara (= Nasr) et Allac (al-Lāt) et Allogei (al-'Uzzā?) et Mena (Manāt)? Quidam ex eis errant dii in similitudine virorum, quaedam in in similitudine feminarum. Majores horum [241] dicebantur Alleubre (= *al-kubrā?*), unde et sermo iste derivatur, Alacuiber (= *Allāhu akbar*), inter vos immolantes eis pecora et camelos in uno die, prop unoque anno; et secuti estis consuetudinem paganorum super lapide illo, in Mecha, in angulo domus ipsius idolatriae, cui serviebat antiquitas paganorum, et immolabat' [Surely it is better to worship it (i.e. the word) than the deaf rock which you worship, in which we know remains some of that idolatry with which they worshipped Jaoh, Joac, Nazara, and Allac, and Allogei and Mena? Some of these were gods in the likeness of men, others in the likeness of women. The greatest among them were called Alleubre, from which derives your invocation Alacuiber,

³⁹² As for the ending '-than' ('Khaba' or 'Khabo' is certainly identical with 'Ka'ba'), it is possible that we can explain it out of the form of the word found in Akominatos. He calls the idol, the stone, Gabathan. I am inclined to assume that Akominatos recalls a passage from the Gospel of John (19, 13) where Pontius Pilate takes his seat, εἰς τόπον λεγόμενον Λιόστρωτον, Ἑβραϊστί [the first iota should carry a diaeresis; unfortunately, the sign is not among my Greek symbols, G.G.] δὲ Γαββαθα. The Greek word with the Hebrew explanation indicates that the text is referring to a place which might have had a connection to some stone worship. It is safe to assume that the theologian John of Damascus was already referring to this passage. Or could the words Bakhthan etc. be linked to Arabic *wathan* (= idol)?

³⁹³ *Islamstudien* I, 437.

³⁹⁴ EI II, 630f.

³⁹⁵ M. 107, 320. The Greek original has been lost.

to whom you sacrifice one-year old cattle and camels on one day. And (thus) you follow the idolatry of the pagans by this stone in Mecca, in a corner of this house of idolatry, which was worshipped by the pagans of antiquity, and to which they made sacrifices]. What Leo tells us about the gods and goddesses before Muhammad, about the annual feast and the sacrifices, is reliably transmitted.³⁹⁶

III. Conclusions

To what degree was Islam known to the Byzantine Church?

Of all the Byzantine authors there were five personalities and their followers who were the most prominent: John of Damascus (together with Abū Qurra), Theophanes (together with Hamartolos), Niketas of Byzantium (together with Euthymios and Akominatos), Bartholomaios of Edessa and Kydones (together with Kantakuzenos). Chronologically they belong to the eighth/ninth and thirteenth/fourteenth centuries. Consequently we can mainly discover what the Greeks knew of Islam during these two periods. We shall now summarise briefly what these representatives of Byzantium tell us of Islam, concentrating in particular on the question of where their information came from and how they used it within the framework of their polemic.

1. Byzantine Polemicists of the Eighth and Ninth Centuries

Throughout their debates John of Damascus and Abū Qurra discuss the doctrine of hypostatic union and the question of free will. They argue against the strict determinism of Islamic doctrine. In order to find out about their knowledge of Islam, however, John's little treatise is more important than these purely apologetic dialogues. This section from the book against the heresies displays a certain systematic structure: first it mentions the cult before Muhammad, namely the worship of a stone in Mecca, then John discusses the origins of Muhammad's teaching (Arian monk!), and finally the doctrine itself. He clearly describes the strict monotheism, the rejection of Christ's divine nature and the absence of a testimony to the Qur'an as a book of revelation [242] and Muhammad's prophethood. At the end, John gives a few instances of Islamic law concerning divorce, circumcision, prohibition of Sabbath and wine. We have seen that on the whole John's depiction of Islamic doctrine is based on the Qur'an. It is remarkable that he already knew the names of some of the suras. In some places, however, he referred to ḥadīth (*tafsīr*

³⁹⁶ Wellhausen, loc. cit. 11ff., 21ff., 64ff.

and *sīra*); once in the section on legends linked to the veneration of the stone (which could not be verified), and also in the passage on Zayd's wife and Ṣāliḥ's she-camel.

John of Damascus and Abū Qurra wrote their texts as arguments against Islam in Syria. We know that John enjoyed a confidential position with Caliph Hishām; Abū Qurra's name alone tells us that he had close ties to the Arab world. As he was certainly, and John probably, fluent in Arabic, it seems safe to assume that they would have got their information directly from the sources themselves, or that they could refer to direct oral tradition.

Niketas wrote his refutation of the Qur'an in Byzantium. The only really remarkable thing about his text is that he already knows the entire Qur'an (the names of all the suras). However, of individual suras he only quotes certain passages, thus sura 4: v. 90 (free will), v. 152 (falsifying transmission of history), v. 153f. (against the Jews), v. 156 (crucifixion of Jesus) and v. 169 (Jesus is the word and spirit of God). He uses the problems contained in these verses as the starting point for his polemic. There are only two instances in his refutation where Niketas appears to refer back to oral tradition or extra-Qur'anic source material. On the subject of the Ka'ba he writes:³⁹⁷ 'As we know from one of them who converted to the Christians, there is a stone idol at the centre of the house'. In another instance, when he is discussing Abraham's religion, he remarks:³⁹⁸ 'Nothing of the kind is found (among them) to this day, as those of them who have been baptised will profess'. After his refutation of the Qur'an Niketas adds a discussion of some particular aspects of Islamic religious doctrine which appear to him to be the most important: God as the creator of good and evil, [243] the θεὸς ὀλόσφουρος, marital life in Paradise, female angels and their intercession, the God of Abraham etc. However, there is no detailed information about Islamic religious doctrine.

Theophanes' follower Hamartolos used the indications of Muhammad's doctrine found in the former's text in order to compose a short character study of the system of Islamic doctrine. As far as religious doctrine is concerned, he only mentions the emphasis on the one God and the description of Jesus as 'word and spirit' in the Qur'an (and his crucifixion). Furthermore he mentions a few Islamic prohibitions: of the Sabbath, of pork, of wine. Remarkable in Hamartolos' work is his description of the Latter Day for which he draws exclusively on post-Qur'anic sources. With regards to the history leading up to Islam, it is interesting what he has to say on the worship of Venus and the morning star in connection with the Muslim creed *allāhu akbar*.

³⁹⁷ M. 105, 720.

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 729.

2. Byzantine Polemicist in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries

In the field of polemic, Bartholomaios' and Kydones' writings differ from those of their predecessors in that they do not emphasise questions of dogma but of the form of worship and ethics. Bartholomaios' remarks on purification, prayer, pilgrimage and mosques show detailed knowledge of Islamic worship.

It is not difficult to deduce the personality of the author from Kydones' writings.³⁹⁹ In order to exemplify his statements, he quotes each time either from the Qur'an or from extra-Qur'anic writings. Thus under the heading 'That Muhammad's law is unreasonable' he quotes Muhammad's actions in the case of Mary the Copt and in the case of Zayd's wife, the law on purification and divorce, the doctrine of Paradise and the last things, formulae for oaths and the prohibition of wine. The detail in which he presents the Muslim statements and stories proves that he had excellent knowledge of the Qur'an and other Islamic writing. Speaking of the prohibition of wine he immediately proposes an aetiological motivation: the fall of the two angels. When he wishes to show that 'the law of the Saracens is harsh', he narrates a [244] few conversion scenes during which people were converted to Islam by force. In particular he cites the example of the murderous Assassins, which does not, of course, actually attack Islamic doctrine. He furthermore struggles with the Qur'an against Muslim theology. Islam, he finds, attributes a number of miracles to the Prophet, while the Prophet himself clearly stated in the Qur'an that he was not able to perform miracles. Most relevant in the present context is that when he discusses the question, Kydones adduces a number of Muhammad's miracles, proving perfectly his familiarity with late Islamic legends. All in all, Kydones provides us with an image of the religion of Islam as it would have been found during the fourteenth century in Baghdad.

³⁹⁹ For the evaluation of Kydones' writings, we must consult Ricoldus' *Peregrinatio*.



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Disputes with Muslims in Syriac Christian Texts: from Patriarch John (d. 648) to Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286)

Sidney H. Griffith

When the Muslims came to power in Mesopotamia (al-Jazīrah and al-ʿIrāq) in the heart of the territories of the Syriac-speaking Christian communities of the patriarchate of Antioch, and established at Baṣrah and Kufa the Arab communities that would be the centers of Islamic power in the vast territories of the former Persian empire, the stage was set for confrontations over religion to erupt between Christian and Muslim intellectuals¹. For Baṣrah and Kufa, together with Baghdad somewhat later, were to become intellectual centers of the first order in the academic awakening of Islam, especially during the first Abbasid century². And these metropolises were all within the territory of the Nestorian *catholicos* of Seleucia/Ctesiphon and the Jacobite metropolitan (later *maphrian*) of Tagrit, the two Christian regional hierarchs in the Syriac-speaking communities of the area with the most over-all influence³. Within these ecclesiastical jurisdictions in the seventh century there were already in place those institutions of the scholarly life that could not but be both magnet and foil for the first generations of Muslim intellectuals in Iraq⁴. Logic, science, philosophy, and religious dialectics all came

1 See F. McGraw Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton, 1981); M. G. Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest* (Princeton, 1984). For guidance to the earlier Christian history of the area see J. M. Fiey, *Jalons pour une Histoire de l'Église en Iraq* (CSCO, vol. 310; Louvain, 1970), and for northern Mesopotamia, *idem*, *Assyrie Chrétienne* (3 vols.; Louvain, 1965 - 1968).

2 Still classic studies are L. Massignon, *La Passion d'al-Hosayn ibn Mansour al-Hallāj, martyr mystique de l'Islam* (2 vols.; Paris, 1922); C. Pellat, *Le milieu baṣrien et la formation de Ḡāḥiz* (Paris, 1953); W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Edinburgh, 1973).

3 See J. M. Fiey, "Tagrit, esquisse d'histoire chrétienne", *L'Orient Syrien* 8 (1963), pp. 289 - 342; *idem*, "Les étapes de la prise de conscience de son identité patriarcale par l'église syrienne orientale", *L'Orient Syrien* 12 (1967), pp. 1 - 22. See the collection of this author's studies in J. M. Fiey, *Communautés syriaques en Iran et Irak des origines à 1552* (London, 1979). See also J. M. Fiey, *Chrétiens syriaques sous les Abbasides* (CSCO, vol. 420; Louvain, 1980).

4 On the school system within the Syriac-speaking communities, see A. Vööbus, *History of the School of Nisibis* (CSCO, vol. 266; Louvain, 1965); R. Macina, "L'homme à l'école de Dieu, d'Antioche à Nisibe ...", *Proche Orient Chrétien* 32 (1982), pp. 86 - 124, 263 - 301; 33 (1983), pp. 39 - 103. See also A. Mingana (ed.),

to their first flowering in Arabic in this milieu⁵. Altogether they posed the most comprehensive intellectual challenge to Christians since the days of Galen, Porphyry, Celsus, and the Roman emperor Julian⁶.

Responses to the Islamic challenge from the Christian communities who spoke Syriac appear in the surviving documents of a number of genres of writing. Historians chronicled the conquests and military occupation of the Arabs, and gave some accounts of the origins and basic tenets of Islam⁷. Preachers, epistolographers and Bible commentators took such notice of the teachings of Islam as their own topics seemed to require⁸. Some writers composed apocalyptic treatises that tried to make sense of the hegemony of Islam from the perspective of the traditional Christian readings of the prophecies of Daniel⁹. And some controversialists wrote apologetic and

Encyclopaedia of Philosophical and Natural Sciences as Taught in Baghdad about A. D. 817; or, a Book of Treasures by Job of Edessa (Cambridge, 1935).

- 5 Among the many sources one might cite, the following will be useful: M. Meyerhof, "New Light on Hunain ibn Ishâq and his Period", *Isis* 8 (1926), pp. 685 - 724; D. E. O'Leary, *How Greek Science Passed to the Arabs* (London, 1949); R. Walzer, *Greek into Arabic; Essays in Islamic Philosophy* (Oxford, 1962); D. Gutas, "Paul the Persian on the Classification of the Parts of Aristotle's Philosophy: a Milestone between Alexandria and Baghdad", *Der Islam* 60 (1983), pp. 231 - 267.
- 6 P. de Labriolle, *Le réaction païenne; étude sur la polémique antichrétienne du I^{er} au VI^e siècle* (2nd ed.; Paris, 1948); R. L. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven, 1984).
- 7 See C. Cahen, "Fiscalité, propriété, antagonismes sociaux en Haute-Mesopotamie au temps des premiers 'Abbâsides d'après Denys de Tell-Mahré", *Arabica* 1 (1954), pp. 136 - 152; J. B. Segal, "Syriac Chronicles as Source Material for the History of Islamic Peoples", in B. Lewis & P. M. Holt (eds.), *Historians of the Middle East* (London, 1962), pp. 246 - 258; M. Benedicte Landron, "Les relations originelles entre Chrétiens de l'est (Nestoriens) et Musulmans", *Parole de l'Orient* 10 (1981 - 1982), pp. 191 - 222; J. Moorhead, "The Monophysite Response to the Arab Invasions", *Byzantion* 51 (1981), pp. 579 - 591; S. P. Brock, "Syriac Views of Emergent Islam", in G. H. A. Juynboll (ed.), *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society* (Carbondale, Ill., 1982), pp. 9 - 21, 199 - 203 (notes); B. Spuler, "La 'Sira' du prophète Mahomet et les conquêtes des arabes dans le Proche-Orient d'après les sources syriaques", in T. Fahd (ed.), *La vie du prophète Mahomet; colloque de Strasbourg, octobre 1980* (Paris, 1983), pp. 87 - 97; S. P. Brock, "North Mesopotamia in the Late Seventh Century; Book XV of John bar Penkâyê's *Rîš Mellê*", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 9 (1987), pp. 51 - 75.
- 8 For example, Jacob of Edessa (633 - 708), refers to the Muslims in a letter on the genealogy of the Virgin Mary. See F. Nau, "Traduction des lettres XII et XIII de Jacques d'Édesse", *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 10 (1905), pp. 197 - 208, 258 - 282. Isho' yaw the Great (580 - 659) speaks briefly of the Muslims in a letter. See H. Suermann, "Orientalische Christen und der Islam; christliche Texte aus der Zeit von 632 - 750", *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft* 67 (1983), pp. 128 - 131.
- 9 See the following works, in which copious bibliographies appear: A. Abel, "L'apo-

polemical tracts in Syriac that addressed themselves to arguments about religion between Christians and Muslims¹⁰. This latter genre of writing is the subject of the present essay.

Dialogue with Muslims, at least as a literary form of Christian apologetics, was not so popular a genre with Syriac writers as it was to become among Arabophone Christian scholars, who in tandem with the Muslim *mutakalimūn* developed their own rather carefully constructed *‘ilm al-kalām* in defense of Christian doctrines¹¹. Nevertheless, from just after the time of the Islamic conquest, up to the days of Gregory Abū l-Farāj, Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286), after which Syriac virtually disappeared as a literary language, some Syriac writers did compose apologetical tracts in response to the challenge of Islam. Here we may give a brief account of the most important ones among those that have survived, several of which are still unpublished. Then we shall discuss the general features of the disputes with Muslims in these works, with a view to comparing them with similar texts in the other language communities of medieval Christianity in which disputes with Muslims also appear.

calyse de Bahīra et la notion islamique de Mahdī”, *Annuaire de l’Institut de Philologie et d’Histoire Orientales* 3 (1935), pp. 1 - 12; F. J. Martinez, “Eastern Christian Apocalyptic in the Early Muslim Period: Pseudo-Methodius and Pseudo-Athanasius”, (Ph.D. Dissertation, The Catholic University of America; Washington, D.C., 1985); *idem*, “The Apocalyptic Genre in Syriac: the World of Pseudo-Methodius”, in H. J. W. Drijvers *et al.* (eds.), *IV Symposium Syriacum 1984* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta, 229; Rome, 1987), pp. 337 - 352; H. Suermann, *Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion auf die einfallenden Muslime in der edessenischen Apokalyphtik des 7. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt a. M., 1985); *idem*, “Der byzantinische Endkaiser bei Pseudo-Methodios”, *Oriens Christianus* 71 (1987), pp. 140 - 155; G. J. Reinink, “Pseudo-Methodius und die Legende vom römischen Endkaiser”, in W. Verbeke *et al.* (eds.), *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages* (Leuven, 1988), pp. 82 - 111.

10 See L. Sākō, “Bibliographie du dialogue islamo-chrétien: auteurs chrétiens de langue syriaque”, *Islamochristiana* 10 (1984), pp. 273 - 292. One must use this essay with care, due to a number of errors in the reporting of the bibliographical information.

11 See the bibliographical surveys in successive issues of *Islamochristiana*, starting with R. Caspar *et al.*, “Bibliographie du dialogue islamo-chrétien; auteurs et œuvres du VII^e au X^e siècle”, *Islamochristiana* 1 (1975), pp. 131 - 181. Two general essays that survey Christian Arabic *kalām* are: Samir Khalil, “La tradition arabe chrétienne et la chrétienté de Terre-Sainte”, in D.-M. A. Jaeger (ed.), *Tantur Papers on Christianity in the Holy Land* (Jerusalem, 1981), pp. 343 - 432; R. Haddad, *La Trinité divine chez les théologiens arabes (750 - 1050)* (Paris, 1985).

I. *The Apologists and their Works*

There are eight Syriac writers whose apologetical compositions will repay closer study for the purposes of the present essay. It will be helpful to introduce these texts, with a brief review of each one of them. But first a general statement is in order about the topics they discuss and the genres in which they appear¹². Since the topics in particular quickly became standard, one may mention them at the outset to avoid the necessity of repeating them eight times over. The real interest in each work is then to observe how the individual writer deals with the topics.

A. Topics and Genres

The topical agenda of the religious disputes with Muslims in Syriac are set under two basic headings: doctrinal claims and religious practices. In the area of doctrinal claims the writers are first of all concerned to provide a defense from scripture and from reason in favor of the veracity of the two basic Christian teachings the *Qur'ān* seems manifestly to deny: the Trinity and the Incarnation¹³. Secondly, there are several doctrinal issues important to Christians that statements in the *Qur'ān* or early Muslim teaching seem to compromise, or that early Muslim polemicists attacked. These are such matters as the integrity and the authenticity of the Old and the New Testaments as the Christian communities actually have them in hand¹⁴; the Christian doctrine of the moral freedom of the will to choose good and to avoid evil; the true significance and the real effects of Christian sacraments, such as Baptism and the Eucharist. Also in the area of doctrinal issues are questions about Muhammad's status as a prophet, and the position of the *Qur'ān* as a scripture, or book of revelations from God. Christians in the Syriac-speaking world had to have ready to hand clear answers to queries from Muslims on the latter two points, without lapsing into polemics or disrespectful language, and yet remain true to their own convictions¹⁵.

12 See the brief statement by Louis R. Sako, "Les genres littéraires syriaques dans l'apologétique chrétienne vis-à-vis des musulmans", in Drijvers, *IV Symposium Syriacum 1984*, pp. 383 - 385.

13 *Qur'ān* passages cited in the Christian texts are such as *an-Nisā'* IV: 171; *al-Mā'idah* V: 73 & 75.

14 This issue reflects the Islamic claim that Jews and Christians have distorted the scriptures. See now J.-M. Gaudeul & R. Caspar, "Textes de la tradition concernant le *tahrif* (falsification) des écritures", *Islamochristiana* 6 (1980), pp. 61 - 104.

15 See S. H. Griffith, "The Prophet Muḥammad, his Scripture and his Message according to the Christian Apologies in Arabic and Syriac from the First Abbasid Century", in T. Fahd (ed.), *La vie du prophète Mahomet; colloque de Strasbourg - 1980* (Paris, 1983), pp. 99 - 146. Insults to the prophet or the *Qur'ān* were serious offenses. See A. S. Tritton, *The Caliphs and their Non-Muslim Subjects; a Critical Study of the Covenant of 'Umar* (London, 1930), p. 12.

Public liturgical actions and other religious practices or ecclesiastical arrangements common among Christians that regularly appear as topics in the disputes are: the issue of the direction one should face to pray (*al-qiblah*)¹⁶; the Christian practice of venerating crosses and icons; marriage customs, such as monogamy versus polygamy; the matter of the several Christian denominations in the Islamic world, the Nestorians, the Jacobites, and the Melkites¹⁷. Almost all of these topics find some place in most of the disputes under review here.

It is clear from the mere list of them, and from the appearance of these same topics in all the works under discussion, that the disputed questions in these Syriac texts reflect the religious objections Muslims most commonly and most consistently voiced to Christians¹⁸. The writers composed their apologies to assure their Christian readers that there were effective answers to these objections, and to supply them with replies they might use in their own arguments about religion with neighboring Muslims, or perhaps to support wavering Christians on the point of conversion to Islam¹⁹. All the texts have about them the air of practical affairs. They supply ready answers rather than scholarly disquisitions on the subjects they discuss.

- 16 Questions about the *qiblah* are among the earliest issues between Muslims and Christians of which we have record. Jacob of Edessa (633 - 708) talked about it in a letter to a fellow Christian, preserved in MS BM Add. 12172, ff. 124r & v. See the entry in W. Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum* (3 vols.; London, 1870 - 1872), vol. II, p. 604.
- 17 Some Muslims tried to classify and describe the Christian communities. See A. Abel, "Abū 'Isā Muḥammad b. Harūn al-Warrāq, le livre pour la réfutation des trois sectes chrétienne", (Mimeo ed.; Bruxelles, 1949); J. Van Ess, *Frühe mu'tazilitische Häresiographie; zwei Werke des Nāsi' al-Akbar* (Beirut, 1971).
- 18 On Muslim, anti-Christian apologetics and polemics see E. Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum im Mittelalter* (Breslau, 1930); D. Sourdel, "Un pamphlet musulman anonyme d'époque 'Abbaside contre les chrétiens", *Revue des Études Islamiques* 34 (1966), pp. 1 - 34. In connection with this Muslim pamphlet see also J. M. Gaudeul, "The Correspondence between Leo and 'Umar: 'Umar's Letter Re-discovered?" *Islamochristiana* 10 (1984), pp. 109 - 157. See also S. M. Stern, "Quotations from Apocryphal Gospels in 'Abd al-Jabbār", *The Journal of Theological Studies* 18 (1967), pp. 34 - 57; *idem*, "'Abd al-Jabbār's Account of How Christ's Religion was Falsified by the Adoption of Roman Customs", *The Journal of Theological Studies* 19 (1968), pp. 128 - 185; D. Thomas, "Two Muslim-Christian Debates from the Early Shī'ite Tradition", *Journal of Semitic Studies* 33 (1988), pp. 53 - 80.
- 19 Some Christians did waver, and some Muslims did try to induce doubt in the minds of Christians. Such was the avowed purpose of the Syriac-speaking convert to Islam, 'Alī ibn-Rabbān aṭ-Ṭabarī, a former Nestorian who became a Muslim between 838 and 848. See A. Khalifé & W. Kutsch, "Ar-radd 'ala-n-Naṣārā de 'Alī aṭ-Ṭabarī", *Mélanges de l'Université de Saint-Joseph* 36 (1959), pp. 115 - 148. See Griffith, "The Prophet Muḥammad", pp. 112 - 113.

The literary forms of the dispute texts are basically two. First, there are accounts of dialogues or debates in which a Christian churchman responds to provocative questions put to him by a Muslim official, or alternatively there is a dialogue between a master and his pupil in which the latter poses the questions a Muslim might ask. Secondly, there are the letter-treatises or essays on the standard topics of controversy that a writer has composed in a more discursive style, usually in response to the request of someone else. The writer commonly introduces the composition in a preface that explains the circumstances that prompted him to write it. And from such a preface the modern researcher can sometimes glean useful historical information about relations between Christians and Muslims at a particular time and place²⁰.

On the subject of the literary genres of the dispute texts, one of the most interesting questions concerns the historicity of the dialogues or debates the texts report. While the debate scenario is not of itself an unlikely *Sitz im Leben* for controversies between Muslim and Christian scholars²¹, or even between a Christian religious leader and a Muslim official, one can hardly maintain that the Syriac texts are verbatim transcripts of such dialogues. The Syriac language itself precludes this possibility. Christians spoke Arabic, but one knows of no Muslims who learned Syriac for the purpose of arguing with Christians²². Furthermore, the very likelihood of actual arguments about religion between Muslims and Christians, be they official or not, is the social circumstance that stands behind the popularity of the dialogue as a literary form. But even in those instances in which one does find grounds for upholding the historicity of a particular dialogue encounter, the report of it as a piece of Syriac religious literature came to have a life of its own that went well beyond the parameters of any likely historical conversation. The account of the debate was a piece of apologetic literature that in Syriac was intended

20 See the interesting study by Eva Riad, *Studies in the Syriac Preface* (Uppsala, 1988), in which she discusses the work of Theodore bar Kônî on pp. 157 - 172.

21 One thinks of the *ʿilm al-kalâm* in this context, not an undertaking limited to Muslims. For further remarks and bibliography, see S. H. Griffith, "The First Christian *Summa Theologiae* in Arabic: Christian *Kalâm* in Ninth Century Palestine", in M. Gervers & R. J. Bikhazi (eds.), *Conversion and Continuity; Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands, Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries* (papers in Mediaeval Studies, 9; (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990), pp. 15 - 31. The *ʿilm al-kalâm* had one of its ancestors in the Syriac-speaking world. See M. Cook, "The Origins of Kalâm", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 43 (1980), pp. 32 - 43.

22 It is not to be assumed that no Muslims learned enough Syriac to consult the Bible in that language. See S. H. Griffith, "The Gospel in Arabic: an Inquiry into its Appearance in the First Abbasid Century", *Oriens Christianus* 69 (1985), pp. 126 - 167. There is a report that one companion of the prophet, ʿAbd Allâh ibn ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ, read Syriac. See the citations in N. Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri* (vol. II, Qurʾānic Commentary and Tradition; Chicago, 1967), p. 9 & n. 43.

for Christian eyes alone. The Christian spokesman does all the significant talking, while the Muslim partner asks leading questions.

Finally, one must note that there are no real polemics in the Syriac dispute texts under review here. The purpose of the writers was to commend the Christian faith, not to attack Islam. The coming of Muslim rule is often portrayed in Syriac texts, particularly histories, as due to sins in the Christian community²³. Some works explain distinctive Islamic teachings that are objectionable to Christians as due to the influences of Jews or errant Christian monks on Muḥammad or the early Muslims²⁴. Other passages attempt to offer a positive assessment of Muḥammad or the *Qurʾān*, without admitting that the former is a prophet or God's messenger or that the latter is divine revelation²⁵. But there is no advice given in the dispute texts on how the reader might discredit Islam.

B. Texts

1. Patriarch John and ʿUmayr ibn Saʿd al-Anṣarī (c. 644)

The earliest Syriac dispute text is the one that gives an account of the interrogation of the Jacobite patriarch of Antioch John III (d. 648) by the Muslim emir ʿUmayr ibn Saʿd, in the environs of Ḥomṣ on Sunday, 9 May 644²⁶. The emir questioned the patriarch about the one Gospel and the several communities of Christians, about the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, and about how one determines the laws that govern behavior in the Christian community.

The account of this interrogation is preserved in a collection of Syriac documents assembled in a single manuscript under the date of 17 August 874²⁷. Otherwise, one hears nothing of it in Syriac sources until the 12th/13th

23 In Jacobite and Nestorian texts the sins are usually ascribed to Byzantine rulers and churchmen. See Brock, "Syriac Views"; *idem*, "North Mesopotamia".

24 See, e. g., R. Gottheil, "A Christian Bahira Legend", *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 13 (1898), pp. 189 - 242; 14 (1899), pp. 203 - 268; 15 (1900), pp. 56 - 102; 17 (1903), pp. 125 - 166.

25 See Griffith, "The Prophet Muḥammad".

26 For the text and a French translation, see F. Nau, "Un colloque du patriarche Jean avec l'émir des Agaréens", *Journal Asiatique* 11th series 5 (1915), pp. 225 - 279. A German translation and commentary is available in H. Suermann, "Orientalische Christen und der Islam; christliche Texte aus der Zeit von 632 - 750", *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft* 67 (1983), pp. 122 - 128. On the date and the *dramatis personae* see Kh. Samir, "Qui est l'interlocuteur musulman du patriarche syrien Jean III (631 - 648)?" in Drijvers, *IV Symposium Syriacum - 1984*, pp. 387 - 400. Independently of Kh. Samir, two British scholars identified ʿUmayr b. Saʿd al-Anṣarī as the emir and dated the colloquy to 644. See P. Crone & M. Cook, *Hagarism, the Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 162, n. 11.

27 See the description of the MS and its contents in W. Wright, *Catalogue*, vol. II, pp. 989 - 1002. The colloquy text is no. 88, p. 998.

century, when the west Syrian historians, Michael the Syrian and Bar Hebraeus among them, tell the story of the meeting. In the MS the account appears under the following heading, "The Letter of Mār John the Patriarch about the conversation he had with the emir of the *Mhaggrāyē*."²⁸ In fact the letter is by someone else who is reporting the conversation. He seems to speak in behalf of the patriarch's Holy Synod²⁹.

The immediate occasion of the letter is the writer's desire to allay the church's anxiety about the patriarch's summons to appear before the emir. The introductory paragraph says:

Because we know you are apprehensive and fearful for us, due to this business for the sake of which we were summoned to this district ... we are informing you, beloved Sirs, that on the 9th of this month of *Iyyōr* (May), on Sunday, we entered the presence of the illustrious commander, the emir, and the blessed father of the community was interrogated by him.³⁰

Then comes the account of the emir's questions and the patriarch's replies. There is nothing unexpected in the apologetic stance the patriarch adopts. But there are several interesting details in the account to repay the historian's attention. For example, the text says that in addition to the patriarch's entourage there were some Muslims present who were prepared to inspect the Greek and Syriac scriptures the patriarch had put forward in evidence to support his arguments. And the emir is said to have summoned a Jew to testify that these texts in no way distorted the Torah³¹. Furthermore, the text notes that Christians from three Arab groups were present: Tanūkh, Ṭayy, and people from ʿAqūl (Kūfa, near Hīra)³². Right after this notice the emir says: "I want you to do one of three things: either show me your own proper laws that

28 See Nau, "Un colloque", p. 248; Wright, *Catalogue*, vol. II, p. 998. On the term *Mhaggrāyē* see below, n. 72.

29 Members of the synod are named at the end of the text. See Nau, "Un colloque", p. 253. Among them is a certain Severus, whom Syriac sources claim was the patriarch's secretary. See Samir, "Qui est l'interlocuteur", p. 388 & n. 4.

30 Nau, "Un colloque", p. 248. In the text, the patriarch's name and honorifics appear intrusively in the space where the ellipsis appears in the quotation.

31 Nau, "Un colloque", p. 251. In the 12th century Michael the Syrian reported that the emir on this occasion ordered an Arabic translation of the Gospel, to be done with the help of bi-lingual Christian Arab tribesmen, concerning whom see below, n. 32. See Griffith, "The Gospel in Arabic", pp. 135 - 137. On the *topos* of the Jewish testimony to the integrity of the text of Christian Bible citations, see S. H. Griffith, "Jews and Muslims in Christian Syriac and Arabic Texts of the Ninth Century CE", *Jewish History*, 3 (1988), pp. 65 - 94.

32 Nau, "Un colloque", p. 251. A century earlier, the Jacobite metropolitan Aḥudem-meh had evangelized these same tribes. See F. Nau, "Histoires d'Ahoudemmeh et de Marouta", *Patrologia Orientalis* 3 (1909), p. 28. See I. Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century* (Washington, 1984), pp. 420 - 422; J. B. Segal, "Arabs in Syriac Literature Before the Rise of Islam", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 4 (1984), pp. 89 - 123, esp. 103 - 105.

are written in the Gospel and be governed by them, or submit to the law of Islam.”³³

Finally, the text mentions the Chalcedonians in the Syriac-speaking community, whom the writer claims were also praying for the patriarch, and who asked him to speak on behalf of the whole Christian community in the face of the threatening danger³⁴.

2. *The Monk of Bēt Hālê and an Arab Notable (c. 720)*

Scholars have long known of an account of a “Disputation against the Arabs” featuring a monk named Abraham of the monastery of Bēt Hālê answering the questions and objections of a Muslim Arab about Christian doctrines and practices³⁵. Until recently the text of the account has been inaccessible to the scholarly community. However, a microfilm copy of it was secured in the mid-seventies, and soon a scientific edition, translation and commentary on the text will appear under the direction of Prof. Han J. W. Drijvers of Groningen University, the Netherlands³⁶.

There are two uncertainties about the encounter the text reports, assuming the authenticity and the integrity of the text in the rather late manuscript copy of it that is available: the location of Bēt Hālê, and the date of the encounter. The present writer is inclined to the view that the most likely location is the site known as Dayr Mār ʿAbdâ near Kufa and Hira in Iraq³⁷. For in the preface, the monk says that his Muslim dialogue partner was an Arab notable in the entourage of the emir Maslama. One thinks immediately of Maslama ibn ʿAbd al-Malik, who was governor for a brief time in Iraq in the early 720’s, a circumstance that suggests both a place and a date for the encounter, both of which are plausible³⁸.

33 One notices that only two options are given, although three are mentioned. Perhaps the writer has in mind the three conditions said to have been put to the *ahl al-kitâb* at the conquest: to convert, to pay the *ġizyah* and become *ahl adh-dhimmah*, or to fight to the finish. See the introductory discussion in A. Fattal, *Le statut légal des non-musulmans en pays d’islam* (Beyrouth, 1958), pp. 5 - 18.

34 Nau, “Un colloque”, pp. 252 - 253.

35 See the notice of ʿAbdîshôʿ bar Brîkâ in J. S. Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* (vol. III, pt. 1; Rome, 1735), p. 205. Diyarbekir Syriac MS 95, a MS of the early 18th century containing a copy of the ‘Disputation’ is described in A. Scher, “Notice sur les manuscrits syriaques et arabes conservés à l’archevêché chaldéen de Diyarbekir”, *Journal Asiatique* 10th series 10 (1907), pp. 395 - 398. The “Disputation” is no. 35 of 43 entries, p. 398.

36 See P. Jager, “Intended Edition of a Disputation between a Monk of the Monastery of Bet Hale and One of the Tayoye”, in Drijvers, *IV Symposium Syriacum - 1984*, pp. 401 - 402. Through the kindness of Prof. Drijvers I have been able to read a copy of the text of the “Disputation” from Diyarbekir MS 95.

37 See J. M. Fiey, *Assyrie Chrétienne* (vol. III; Beyrouth, 1968), p. 223.

38 See H. Lammens, “Maslama ibn ʿAbd al-Malik”, *ET*, vol. III, pp. 447 - 448.

The topics of the dialogue are the standard ones for the most part, but the text is very interesting because of its unique features. The writer shows an unusual familiarity with Islam. He quotes the *Qur'ān* and names several *surabs*, although he seems to think the latter are separate from the *Qur'ān*³⁹. He quotes a tradition from Muḥammad that speaks favorably of monks and hermits⁴⁰. He knows the story of Baḥīrā, whom the Christians call Sargīs⁴¹. There is an extended discussion of the Christian practice of venerating icons, crosses and martyrs' bones that is unusual in the surviving Syriac dispute texts. The author even explicitly mentions the icon of Christ in Edessa that tradition claimed Jesus sent to king Abgar⁴².

The circumstances of the dialogue that the author mentions in the preface are instructive. The Muslim notable was in the monastery for ten days because of sickness. He was a man interested in religion, "learned in our scriptures as well as in their *Qur'ān*", the author says. At first he spoke with the monks only through an interpreter, as was proper because of his high position in government. And the monk reports that for his part, in discussions about religion with such people, his own custom was to prefer silence to forthrightness. But in this discussion, honesty and love for the truth was to prevail, the author says, and the dialogue went forward without the services of the interpreter. One supposes the conversation was in Arabic, although the account of it is in Syriac.

The text is Christian apologetics pure and simple. In the preface the author says that he is responding to the request of a certain Father Jacob for an account of:

our investigation into the apostolic faith at the instance of a son of Ishmael. And since it seems to me it would be profitable to you to bring it to the attention of your brethren, and because I know it will be useful to you, I am going to set it down in 'Question' and 'Answer' format⁴³.

The Arab notable then poses the questions, and the monk answers with long explanations of Christian beliefs and practices. At the end, the Arab says, "I

39 He alludes to *an-Nisā'* IV:171. He mentions *ṣūrat al-Baqarah* II, *G-y-g-y*, presumably the 'Spider', *ʿAnkabūt* XXIX, and *T-w-r-h*. On the significance of the apparent distinction between these *surabs* and the *Qur'ān* see Crone & Cook, *Hagarism*, pp. 17 - 18.

40 "Even Muḥammad our prophet said about the inhabitants of monasteries and the mountain dwellers that they will enjoy the kingdom". Diyarbekir MS 95, private typescript, p. 15. So far I have not found this tradition in an Islamic text.

41 See n. 24 above.

42 In these particulars the author's approach resembles that of Theodore Abū Qurrah. See Sidney H. Griffith, "Theodore Abū Qurrah's Arabic Tract on the Christian Practice of Venerating Images", *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 105 (1985), pp. 53 - 73.

43 All the quotations from the preface are from Diyarbekir MS 95, private typescript, pp. 1 - 2.

testify that were it not for the fear of the government and of shame before men, many would become Christians.”⁴⁴

3. *Theodore bar Kônî* (c. 792)

Theodore bar Kônî's *Scholion* is a summary presentation of Nestorian doctrine in the form of an extended commentary on the whole Christian Bible, the Old Testament and the New Testament. In the full edition of the work there are eleven chapters, the first nine of which follow the order of the biblical books, presenting doctrine in the catechetical style of questions posed by a student and answered by a master. The same literary style appears in chapter 10, which is in fact a Christian response to objections to Christian doctrines and practices customarily posed by Muslims. Chapter 11 is an appendix to the *Scholion*, being a list of heresies and heresiarchs, along with brief statements of their teachings⁴⁵.

Chapter 10 of the *Scholion* is an apology for Christianity in response to Islam⁴⁶. In the preface to the chapter the writer states his purpose quite clearly. He provides the following title:

An encounter (*ʿarūʿtā*) in question and answer against those who while professing to accept the Old Testament, and acknowledging the coming of Christ our Lord, are far removed from both of them, and who demand from us an apology (*mappaqrūhā*) for our faith, not from all of the scriptures, but from those which they acknowledge.⁴⁷

The preface goes on to address the chapter to the same ‘Brother John’ to whom the whole *Scholion* is dedicated. The writer says that in the new chapter 10 he will employ the same literary form he used in the earlier chapters. He says of the new chapter that

Although it is a full refutation against the *hanpē*, and a ratification of the faith, we are putting it in questions [and answers] according to our custom in the whole book; the student takes the part of the *hanpē*, and the teacher the part of the Christians.⁴⁸

44 *Ibid.*, p. 16.

45 Text: A. Scher, *Theodorus bar Kônî Liber Scholiorum* (CSCO, vols. 55 & 69; Paris, 1910 & 1912). Versions: R. Hespel & R. Draguet, *Théodore Bar Koni Livre des Scolies* (2 vols., CSCO vols. 431 & 432; Louvain, 1981 & 1982). For the *Scholion* in another text tradition see R. Hespel, *Théodore Bar Koni, livre des scolies* (CSCO, vols. 447 & 448; Louvain, 1983). See also S. H. Griffith, “Theodore bar Kônî's *Scholion*: a Nestorian *Summa Contra Gentiles* from the First Abbasid Century”, in N. Garsoïan et al. (eds.), *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period* (Washington, 1982), pp. 53 - 72.

46 See S. H. Griffith, “Chapter Ten of the *Scholion*: Theodore bar Kônî's Apology for Christianity”, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 47 (1981), pp. 158 - 188.

47 Scher, *Liber Scholiorum*, CSCO, vol. 69, p. 231.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 232. The *hanpē* here are the Muslims. The word usually means ‘pagans’ in Syriac. It is cognate to the Arabic term *hanīf* (pl. *ḥunafāʾ*). On the *double entendre* in Syriac see Griffith, “The Prophet Muḥammad”, pp. 118 - 122.

One notices immediately that the author says that the disputation is a literary genre. He is not reporting an actual debate. He adopted this style, he explained earlier, to make things easier for beginning students. And this circumstantial detail calls attention to the fact that for the author of the *Scholion* a reasoned reply to the challenge of Islam was in his day a topic not to be missed in an introductory manual of theology. The dialogue style there fitted what one might call the writer's pastoral purpose.

The topics under discussion in chapter 10 are the standard ones and I have studied them elsewhere⁴⁹. Here one might usefully call attention to the fact that Theodore bar Kônî presents Islam's challenge to Christians as being essentially a 'beclouded notion'⁵⁰ about what the Bible means. The proper meaning of the scriptures and the estimation of the status of God's messengers to mankind are in fact the *terminus a quo* of the disagreements between Muslims and Christians.

4. Patriarch Timothy I (780 - 823)

The most well known Syriac dispute text is no doubt the one that contains Patriarch Timothy's account of the replies he says he gave to the questions of the caliph al-Mahdî (775 - 785) on the occasion of two consecutive audiences the patriarch had with the caliph⁵¹. The questions all had to do with the standard topics of conversation between Muslims and Christians on religious matters. The caliph raises the standard Islamic objections to Christian doctrines and practices, and the patriarch provides suitable apologetic replies. In literary form, the patriarch's Syriac text is a letter to an unnamed correspondent⁵². The preface is in a florid style, and it is highly rhetorical, but not devoid of interest. In it Timothy voices some diffidence about the "vain labor" involved in such a composition, and he complains that he is carrying out the task of writing it, "not without difficulty, nor without unwillingness."⁵³

What may have proved daunting to the patriarch was the knowledge that his best apologetic efforts would carry little conviction for Muslims, nor

49 See n. 46 above.

50 Scher, *Liber Scholiorum*, CSCO, vol. 69, p. 231.

51 A. Mingana, *Woodbrooke Studies; Christian Documents in Syriac, Arabic, and Garshuni*, Edited and Translated with a Critical Apparatus (vol. II; Cambridge, 1928), pp. 1 - 162. For a general study of Timothy and this dialogue, along with an edition, translation, and commentary on the Arabic translation, see Hans Putnam, *L'église et l'islam sous Timothée I (780 - 823)* (Beyrouth, 1975).

52 The letter-treatise was Timothy's preferred literary form. See O. Braun, *Timothei Patriarchea I Epistulae* (CSCO, vols. 74 & 75; Paris, 1914); R. Bidawid, *Les lettres du patriarche nestorien Timothy I* (Studi e Testi, 187; Citta del Vaticano, 1956). The dialogue with al-Mahdî is not published in these collections, although it is generally reckoned as letter no. 59.

53 Mingana, *Woodbrooke Studies*, II, p. 91.

would they do much to prevent upwardly mobile Christians from converting to Islam, especially from within the Nestorian community⁵⁴. Several times in the report of the two sessions during which Timothy says he answered the caliph's questions, the writer alludes to the Muslim's desire for arguments from nature or from the scriptures, and his wariness of arguments based on reasoning processes, or of what one might call the logic-chopping rebuttals in debate style that were the apologists' stock in trade⁵⁵.

Nevertheless, Timothy's apologetical catechism was a success in the Christian community. Arabic versions of it were in wide circulation, and there was even a Syriac epitome of the report of the first session, in a simple question and answer format, that later came to be attributed to a certain Elias of Nisibis⁵⁶. Still, there is something contrived about the dialogue. One need not doubt that Patriarch Timothy was in fact queried by the caliph about the tenets of Christianity to notice at the same time that the patriarch's account of his audience with al-Mahdī belongs to a familiar literary genre. It has an apologetical purpose that allows Timothy to relegate the caliph to the role of posing concise leading questions in the style of a disciple, while the patriarch answers them with a master's more discursive reply. It was already a familiar didactical literary genre in Syriac religious texts.

Together with the dialogue with al-Mahdī one must consider other compositions by Patriarch Timothy that also have the form of the epistolary treatise and that also answer the challenge of Islam⁵⁷. Of particular importance in this regard is Letter 40 in the collected works of the patriarch⁵⁸. Ostensibly it is an account of a discussion Timothy had with an Aristotelian philosopher at the caliph's court about the definitions of logical terms and their proper deployment in Christian theology. In fact the letter is an exercise in *kalām* of a sort that any *mutakallim*, Muslim or Christian, would readily recognize if it were in Arabic. In the introduction Timothy describes the Muslims as the "new Jews" in a passage that also fairly well describes his apologetic purpose. He says,

54 See L. Massignon, "La politique islamo-chrétienne des scribes nestoriens de Deir Qunna à la cour de Bagdad au IX s. de notre ère", in Y. Moubarac, *Opera Minora* t. I, pp. 250 - 257. See also Landron, "Les relations originelles".

55 See e. g., Mingana, *Woodbrooke Studies*, II, pp. 154 & 156.

56 See Putnam, *L'église et l'islam*; A. Van Roey, "Une apologie syriaque attribuée à Elie de Nisibe", *Le Muséon* 59 (1946), pp. 381 - 397.

57 See T. R. Hurst, "The Syriac Letters of Timothy I (727 - 823): a Study in Christian-Muslim Controversy", (Ph.D. Dissertation, The Catholic University of America; Washington, D. C., 1986).

58 See T. R. Hurst, "Letter 40 of the Nestorian Patriarch Timothy I (727 - 823): an edition and translation", (M. A. Thesis, The Catholic University of America; Washington, D. C., 1981); Hanna Cheikho, *Dialectique du langage sur Dieu de Timothée I (728 - 823) à Serge* (Rome, 1983).

In the days of Herod, Pilate, and the old Jews there was both defeat and victory, and truth and falsehood. So also, now, in the days of the present princes, in our own time, and in the days of the new Jews among us, there is the same struggle and the same contest to distinguish falsehood and truth.⁵⁹

What makes Letter 40 especially important in the present context is its topical outline. Not only are there a number of the standard topics of religious controversy between Muslims and Christians, but here one notices that the conversation begins with a discussion of the modes of human knowledge in general, and then moves on to a disquisition on the terms one uses to express his knowledge about God. In short, what one would much later call theodicy and the theory of knowledge have become important issues in the Christian response to Islam. In this approach one sees the ground-work not only of the typical *kalām* treatise⁶⁰, but it reveals Patriarch Timothy as a thinker on the order of John of Damascus or Theodore bar Kônî, who realize that the challenge of Islam requires a return to the basics. One sees here the apologetic origins of the *summae theologiae* in Christian literature.

A topic of particular importance to Timothy was the significance of Jesus' traditional title, 'Servant' (*ʿabdâ, al-ʿabd*). In Arabic, and in the *Qurʾân* in particular, this title indicates Jesus' full humanity, to the exclusion of any proper divinity (cf. *az-Zuhrûf* (43):57 - 61). Timothy was one of the few Christian apologists to address this issue. He devoted the bulk of his *Letter 34* to it, explicating the several senses of the term 'servant', and explaining how Christians use the title in a way that is fully compatible with their affirmation of Jesus' divinity⁶¹.

Patriarch Timothy's letter-treatises are dispute texts for all practical purposes, but in fact only one person is really speaking – the author himself. This is a feature of the Syriac dispute texts in general that is particularly evident in Timothy's 'letters'. And it is a feature that nevertheless very well highlights the essentially dialectical character of apologetics, especially when there is no personally identifiable dialogue partner (e. g., an Aristotelian philosopher). Even when the partner is identifiable (e. g., the caliph al-Mahdî) one realizes that the author's voice is still paramount. The dialogue is not between individuals but between religious communities. The Syriac dispute texts are intended for the Christian participants in a much wider argument about religion than any given debate between scholars or churchmen and Muslim officials might indicate.

59 Hurst, "Letter 40", p. 48. On the epithet, "the new Jews", see Griffith, *Jews and Muslims*.

60 See S. Pines, "Some Traits of Christian Theological Writing in Relation to Moslem *Kalām* and to Jewish Thought", *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of the Sciences and the Humanities* 5 (1976), pp. 105 - 125.

61 See Hurst, "The Syriac Letters", pp. 43 - 60, 197 - 200.

5. *Nonnus of Nisibis (d.c. 870)*

Nonnus was a bilingual writer, with compositions in both Syriac and Arabic to his credit. He was an ecclesiastical controversialist in the service of the Monophysite community, whose characteristic teachings he energetically defended not only against Muslims, but against Melkites and Nestorians as well. The work in which he addressed himself to the intellectual challenge of Islam is a Syriac treatise that its modern editor calls simply "Le Traité Apologétique."⁶² On internal, literary critical grounds, one must date the composition to a point between 850 and 870. A. Van Roey chose the narrower period between 858 and 862 as a more likely time frame within which Nonnus wrote the treatise, because during these years he was in prison in Samarra on the orders of the caliph al-Mutawakkil (d. 862). This caliph's relative intolerance for Christian controversialists, as well as for Muslim *mutakallimūn*, is the circumstance that for Van Roey most likely explains both why Nonnus' presumably Muslim interlocutor is anonymous, and why Nonnus adopts a notably conciliatory attitude toward Islam in the treatise⁶³.

Nonnus' treatise is not in the literary form of a dialogue, in spite of certain epistolary conventions at the outset. Rather, the work is an apologetical essay on the themes of monotheism, the doctrine of the Trinity, and the doctrine of the incarnation. The Islamic milieu in which the writer operates becomes evident in his manifest references to Islam, and in light of the general concerns of Christian and Muslim *mutakallimūn* of the period. By comparison to the Syriac dispute texts reviewed earlier, Nonnus' essay is almost in the style of a standard *kalām* text, including the typical phraseology left over from more blatantly dialectical times, "If someone should say ..., to him it should be said"⁶⁴

The scope of the work is clearly stated in the title paragraph a later scribe set at the beginning of the text in the unique Syriac manuscript that contains the work, a manuscript brought to Egypt by Moses of Nisibis in the year 932, less than a century after its composition. The title paragraph says,

An essay of Nonnus ... to a man who did not make known his name, who asked on what grounds do Christians prove to polytheists and renouncers of the holy scriptures that God is one, not many, and on what grounds they say this one is three and at the same time one – that is, one is three and three is one, not one and

62 See A. Van Roey, *Nonnus de Nisibe; traité apologétique* (Bibliothèque du Muséon, 21; Louvain, 1948). The fullest modern study of the life and works of Nonnus is the introduction to this edition and Latin translation of the apologetical treatise. See also, D. D. Bundy, "The Commentary of Nonnus of Nisibis on the Prologue of John", in Kh. Samir (ed.), *Actes du premier congrès international d'études arabes chrétiennes* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta, 218; Rome, 1982), pp. 123 - 133.

63 See Van Roey, *Nonnus de Nisibe*, pp. 45 - 46.

64 See, e. g., *ibid.*, p. 6'. On the significance of this terminology see Cook, "The Origins of *Kalām*".

three, or three and one. Also, whether they can prove that the incarnation of the Word God, one of the holy Trinity, follows divinely appropriately.⁶⁵

The title not only states the topics discussed in the treatise, but it also gives one a sense of the theological style. In fact, the doctrine of the incarnation is the principal topic. And it is in this connection that one finds the following statement referring to Islamic doctrine about Christ:

The recent *Hanpê* are much more fair minded than the others, for they too acknowledge that he was born of the virgin, she being utterly chaste; that he is the word and the spirit of God. They add many more miracles, even that he is a creator, who created birds of clay, just as he was creator for Adam originally. They acknowledge that he has ascended into heaven and that he is ready to come into the world again. And as giving special honor, they do not accept the fact that he was crucified and died.⁶⁶

One notices clear echoes of passages in the *Qur'ân* in this quotation. Subsequently in the treatise Nonnus brings up other matters that are clear allusions to Islam. In one place, for example, he calls attention both to the Gospel's affirmation that Jesus is God and to what the disciples called him in reference to his humanity, "a Nazarene (*nāsrāyā*) and a man sent by God."⁶⁷ A little later Nonnus has more to say about Jesus' name, "the Nazarene." And here one is reminded of the *Qur'ân*'s name for the Christians, who are more than a dozen times called "the Nazarenes" (*an-Nāsrā* > *nāsrāyê*) in what seems to be an obvious reference to this name for Jesus. It seems likely that Nonnus had the *Qur'ân*'s name for Christians in mind when he set out to explain the name, "the Nazarene."⁶⁸

Finally, Nonnus caricatures the *Qur'ân*'s description of paradise when he refers to the promises for the afterlife by which, he says, some adversaries seek to attract the allegiance of the simple minded, in contrast to the Gospel's sober promises for the future life. The false promises, says Nonnus, are of

Rivers of fattening foods, along with time in bed, that do not satiate; a new creation of women whose birth is not from Adam and Eve - things known and acknowledged to incite carnal people.⁶⁹

65 Van Roey, *Nonnus de Nisibe*, p. 1'.

66 *Ibid.*, p. 12'. On the term *hanpê* for Muslims, see n. 48 above. The asterisks in the quotation refer to allusions to the following passages in the *Qur'ân*, in the order in which they appear in the text: III 'Āl 'Imrān 47; IV *an-Nisā*' 171; III 'Āl 'Imrān 49; IV *an-Nisā*' 157.

67 Van Roey, *Nonnus de Nisibe*, p. 30'. The line is an allusion to Acts 2:22. As stated, in reference to Jesus' humanity, the line could express the Islamic point of view.

68 See Van Roey, *Nonnus de Nisibe*, p. 32'. In the *Qur'ân* the term *an-Nāsrā* occurs some 15 times to designate Christians.

69 *Ibid.*, p. 31'. The reference is to the *Qur'ân*'s descriptions of the garden of paradise and of the *houris*. See e. g., II *al-Baqarah* 25; LVI *al-Wāqī'ah* 15 - 26.

In short, although Nonnus never explicitly addresses the Muslims in this apologetical treatise, the topics of the Islamic *‘ilm al-kalām* appear in it, and he occasionally alludes to the *Qur’ān* or to Islamic teaching. The treatise is meant for the eyes of a Christian participant in the *kalām*.

6. *Moshe bar Kepha (d. 903)*

Moshe bar Kepha was an important figure in the life of the Monophysite community in Iraq in the ninth century, both as a Syriac writer and teacher, and as an ecclesiastical official. Although he did not write a dispute text against the Muslims, there has survived in the manuscripts attributed to him a work on free will and predestination that includes a chapter, full of arguments “Against the *Mhaggrāyē*, who also take away freedom, and say that good or evil is prescribed for us by God.”⁷⁰

In fact there is some doubt about the authenticity of this work attributed to Moshe bar Kepha. He lived at a time when scholarly churchmen devoted much of their effort to salvaging their intellectual and theological heritage by putting together large compilations of previously available texts. Scholars after his time engaged in the same activity. So it is not at all impossible that Moshe bar Kepha himself, or someone after his time, put together this collection of texts on free will, and it has come down to us under Moshe bar Kepha’s name by an accident of the processes of text transmission⁷¹. What is important for present purposes is to take notice of the dispute text contained in it directed against the Muslims, here called *Mhaggrāyē*, a polemical name for Muslims, often found in Syriac texts⁷².

Free will as a topic for debate between Christians and Muslims has not come up for discussion thus far in the Syriac dispute texts under review here. Nevertheless, the topic was an important one in *kalām* works, both Christian and Muslim, especially in the eighth and ninth centuries. What is notable about its appearance in the work attributed to Moshe bar Kepha is the evidence it provides for the conclusion that by his day Syriac-speaking churchmen were including the Muslims together with the ancient pagans, the Marcionites, and the Manichaeans, as adversaries of record in the matter of the traditional Christian doctrine of the moral freedom of the human act of will. One supposes, therefore, that by Moshe bar Kepha’s day the active

70 British Library Syriac MS 827, add. 14731, f. 11^r. See W. Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts*, vol. II, p. 854. See also S. H. Griffith, “Free Will in Christian *Kalām*: Moshe bar Kepha against the Teachings of the Muslims”, *Le Muséon* 100 (1987), pp. 143 - 159.

71 On the authenticity of the text, see Griffith, “Free Will: Moshe bar Kepha”, p. 148. One must also consider the fact that much of the work attributed to Moshe bar Kepha may come from the earlier book of Anthony of Tagrit on God’s providence. See the forthcoming work of Prof. Han J. W. Drijvers on this text.

72 See the discussion in Griffith, “Free Will: Moshe bar Kepha”, pp. 151 - 154, with further bibliography.

argument with Muslims about free will was over, and the issue had become a text book topic, rather than a subject of live debate⁷³.

7. *Dionysius bar Ṣalībī (d. 1171)*

By far the longest and the fullest text in Syriac to do with disputation with Muslims is the one written by Dionysius bar Ṣalībī, the scholarly monophysite bishop of Amida who was one of the three bright lights in the world of late Syriac letters, the other two being patriarch Michael the Syrian (d. 1199), Dionysius' younger contemporary and Gregory bar Hebraeus (d. 1286), who flourished about a century later. Dionysius' work is magisterial in both tone and scope. And his discussion of the Muslims, as extensive as it is, is included within a much larger review of the intellectual and religious adversaries of the Syrian Orthodox church⁷⁴.

The treatise against the Muslims is a true dispute text in the sense that the author's purpose is to acquaint the reader with the truth about Islam and to provide him with arguments deemed fit to reject Islamic challenges to the veracity of Christian doctrines and practices. All of the standard dispute topics are here, in summary form, as if the writer's purpose was the comprehensive one of gathering into one place the best apologetic arguments of the past. In addition, Dionysius has much more to say about the Muslims, their history and their doctrines than any of the earlier dispute texts already reviewed. And the final third of his treatise consists of extensive quotations from the *Qur'ān* in Syriac translation, with Bar Ṣalībī's comments on the side.

In format Bar Ṣalībī's treatise against the Muslims is composed of thirty chapters, distributed consecutively within three general discourses (*mēmre*). Broadly speaking, the first discourse, in eight chapters, concerns the doctrine of the Trinity. The second discourse, comprising chapters nine to twenty-four, discusses the doctrine of the Incarnation and associated issues, including the Islamic claim that the scriptures foretell the prophecy of Muḥammad. The third discourse, chapters twenty-five to thirty, includes the translations from the *Qur'ān*, to which reference has already been made⁷⁵.

In style the treatise follows the question and answer format already familiar from earlier dispute texts. However, Bar Ṣalībī makes no pretense

73 See S. H. Griffith, "Free Will in Christian *Kalām*: the Doctrine of Theodore Abū Qurrah", *Parole de l'Orient* 14 (1987), pp. 79 - 107.

74 For an overview of the work and its significance, see S. H. Griffith, "Dionysius bar Ṣalībī on the Muslims", in Drijvers, *IV Symposium Syriacum - 1984*, pp. 353 - 365. Only a portion of the text has been published by A. Mingana, "An Ancient Syriac Translation of the Kur'ān Exhibiting New Verses and Variants", *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 9 (1925), pp. 188 - 235. See also G. G. Blum, "Dionysius bar Ṣalībī (gest. 1171)", *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 9 (1982), pp. 6 - 9.

75 This is the portion of the text published in Mingana, "An Ancient Syriac Translation".

that his text reflects an actual dialogue, even a literary one. Rather, the questions, when they are not simple interrogative sentences, are designated simply as “their objections”, followed by “our answers”. Clearly the treatise is part of a manual of theology, and more specifically it is a portion of the manual’s heresiography⁷⁶. Nevertheless, there is some reference to actual dialogue in it, or to arguments about religion between Christians and Muslims, in that one of the questions in the third chapter asks, “With whom is disputation (*būḥānā*) appropriate?” And the very next one asks, “About what might we dispute?”⁷⁷ The answers are instructive.

Dionysius bar Ṣalībī says that it is appropriate to debate with Muslim *mutakallimūn*. He puts it this way,

Our advice is that it is unproductive to converse with those among them who are not knowledgeable, but only with the articulate and the intelligent (*mlīlē wḥakīmē*). It is most productive to excuse oneself from meeting with the ‘legitimists’, because they are very wily and they think that God the Word is a creature, and the Holy Spirit too, just like Arius.⁷⁸

By invoking Arius’ name, Bar Ṣalībī straightaway provides a known place in the Christian scheme of things for most Muslims. For by the ‘legitimists’ he means the *ahl as-sunnah*, who by his day were in the majority. Suitable dialogue partners would therefore have been presumably only such people as academics, *mu^ctazilī mutakallimūn* and philosophers. As for an appropriate topic for a disputation, Bar Ṣalībī gives his answer by immediately launching into a defense of the doctrine of the Trinity on the basis of the Scriptures. And throughout his argument on this topic, as on other topics, he takes every opportunity to cite an apt quotation from the *Qur’ān*.

What makes Dionysius bar Ṣalībī’s dispute text distinctive, apart from its length and comprehensiveness, is the amount of information about Muslims it contains, about their history, about the *Qur’ān*, and about the various schools of Islamic thought. This feature of the work makes it unique not only among Syriac dispute texts, but among Christian works on Islam in general from the medieval period.

8. Gregory bar Hebraeus (d. 1286)

It would be difficult to overstate the importance of Bar Hebraeus in the history of Syriac literature, or in the history of the Syrian Orthodox Church. He was a polymath scholar who composed important works in both Syriac

⁷⁶ In earlier portions of the larger work Bar Ṣalībī had presented arguments against the Jews, the Nestorians, the Chalcedonians, and the Armenians. See Griffith, “Dionysius bar Ṣalībī”, pp. 354 u. 360.

⁷⁷ Harvard Syriac MS 53, f. 2v. On this manuscript see M. H. Goshen Gottstein, *Syriac Manuscripts in the Harvard College Library, a Catalogue* (Missoula, Mont., 1979), p. 59.

⁷⁸ Harvard Syriac MS 53, f. 2v.

and Arabic. He was well known not only among his co-religionists, but he was known and respected among Muslim intellectuals as well⁷⁹. He did not compose a separate work that one could characterize as a disputation with Muslims. But there are several extended passages in works of his on broader themes that do in fact contain such dispute texts. For completeness' sake, and because of Bar Hebraeus' own personal importance, one might give a brief account of two of these dispute passages here.

Bar Hebraeus' *Candelabra of the Sanctuary* is an encyclopaedic work of theology that amounts to a veritable *Summa Theologiae*. He composed it in 1264, the year in which he became the *Maphrian* of Tagrīt, the titular head of the Syrian Orthodox churches in the east. It is in the Christological portion of this work, in the section that deals with the objections of the adversaries to the doctrine of the incarnation, that Bar Hebraeus takes up the objection of the Muslims (*mašlmānē*), who say,

The Messiah was expected, and the prophets in fact prophesied about him. But he was neither God nor the son of God. Rather, he was only God's prophet and servant.⁸⁰

Following this accurate statement of Islamic beliefs about Christ, Bar Hebraeus goes on to list eight objections that Muslims customarily registered against the doctrine of the incarnation. Then he provides eight Christian rebuttals to the foregoing objections. Of them all, it is the eighth Islamic objection, and the Christian response, that are the most interesting. The Islamic objection concerns the *Qur'an* and its rejection of Christian doctrines, and it cites the evidentiary miracles that in the Islamic view should testify to the *Qur'an*'s veracity. The argument includes the Islamic doctrine of the inimitability of the Arabic diction in the *Qur'an*, coming as it does from the mouth of an illiterate man (*dlā yāda^c seprā*), that not even Arabic scholars could match⁸¹. The objection then goes on to lay claim to Biblical prophecies about Muḥammad that in the Islamic view should warrant his acceptance as a messenger of God.

In his response, Bar Hebraeus cites Muslims themselves, naming the Shi'ites as a group, against the reality of any evidentiary miracles outside of the *Qur'an*, and he refers by name to the teachings of Muslim scholars such as Fahr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī, al-Ġaḥīz, and al-Ghazālī to support his arguments⁸².

79 See Wolfgang Hage, "Gregor Barhebraeus (1225/26 - 1286)", *Theologische Real-encyklopädie* 14 (1985), pp. 158 - 164, for a succinct introduction and bibliography.

80 J. Khoury (ed.), "Le candélabre du sanctuaire de Grégoire Abou'l Faradj dit Barhebraeus; quatrième base: de l'incarnation", *Patrologia Orientalis* 31 (1964), p. 104.

81 *Ibid.*, p. 110.

82 *Ibid.*, pp. 116 - 120.

This is the only Syriac dispute text one knows, in which the writer shows first hand evidence of his familiarity with Islamic texts, other than the *Qur'ān*.

Bar Hebraeus provided an epitome of these same arguments in a brief work, the *Book of Light Rays*, he composed some time later in his life as an abbreviation of the *Candelabra*. In it he adds to what he said earlier about the *Qur'ān* and in the process he gives further evidence of his familiarity with the scholarship of Muslims. For in response to the Islamic claim that Christians have altered their scriptures to suppress any mention of Muḥammad, Bar Hebraeus argues that while there have been no changes of sense in the transmission of the text of the Bible, the same cannot be said for the *Qur'ān*. And he goes on to cite changes or additions to the text of the *Qur'ān* that he found mentioned in the work of Ibn Mas'ūd, the Muslim authority on the collection of the *Qur'ān*, involving the activity of Zayd ibn Thābit, Muḥammad's amanuensis, when the text was first collected in writing⁸³.

Bar Hebraeus, therefore, comes the closest of all the writers of Syriac dispute texts to something like a real dialogue with Islam. But since the texts are in Syriac it is clear they are for Christian eyes alone. Nevertheless, in his work there is a concern for scholarly objectivity that sets it apart from the earlier dispute texts, where the clear purpose was to help Christians achieve at least a rhetorical advantage in any argument about religion with Muslims.

II. The Significance of Syriac Dispute Texts

Eight writers are not many as the sole witnesses over a six hundred year period for a whole genre of Syriac literature – dispute texts against Muslims. One could extend the list somewhat by including reference to texts in which Muslims are mentioned in passing, or where some of the broader topics common in the dispute texts are discussed without any apparent reference to Muslims⁸⁴. Nevertheless, the list would still be surprisingly short. And this relative paucity of texts calls one's attention to the fact that in the world of mediaeval Islam, Syriac was not the only language in which even the Christians of the traditionally Syriac-speaking churches had to wage a campaign for the religious allegiance of peoples' minds. For Syriac quickly became a minority language in a world in which Arabic was the idiom of almost all public discourse. And Arabic was in fact the language in whose terms even the very topics of the disputes were set. It is significant that of the eight writers whose dispute texts are reviewed here, three of them also have

83 See the pertinent selections from the text published and translated into French in M. F. Nau, "Deux Textes de Bar Hébraeus sur Mahomet et le Qoran", *Journal Asiatique* 211 (1927), pp. 318 - 323.

84 This is the inclusive approach adopted by L. Sākō, "Bibliographie du dialogue", n. 10 above.

Arabic works to their credit: Patriarch Timothy, Nonnus of Nisibis, and Gregory bar Hebraeus.

Many of the Christian *mutakallimūn* whose Arabic works of Christian apologetics have survived also had their own intellectual roots in the Syriac-speaking world. These include not only Jacobites like Ḥabīb ibn Ḥidmah Abū Rā'īṭah, and Nestorians like 'Ammār al-Baṣrī, but even Melkites like Theodore Abū Qurrah⁸⁵. They realized that the real argument about religion in the territories of the caliphate was being conducted in Arabic. And the circumstance that provoked the composition of Christian apologetical works in Arabic was not only the doctrinal challenge of the *Qur'ān*, but the sociological fact of the conversion of Christians to Islam. The fact of conversion was a circumstance that made it desirable for there to be an intellectually convincing presentation of Christian teaching in Arabic, with which to strengthen the waverers. For the waverers were, in the words of one Arabophone apologist of the ninth century, the *munāfiqīn* of the Christian community⁸⁶.

Christian apologetic texts in Arabic were accessible to Christians and Muslims alike, not to mention the Arabophone Jews, who developed a *kalām* of their own at roughly the same time as the Christians did⁸⁷. And there is some evidence that Muslim *mutakallimūn* took the trouble to answer the arguments of their Christian opposite numbers. But one function of the texts in Arabic was not so much to encourage interconfessional dialogue, but to draw the lines of disagreement more clearly. The same writer who spoke of the Christian *munāfiqīn*, was also adamantly opposed to Christians who tried to use Islamic religious phrases in a Christian way, or who modified Christian devotional behavior in response to Islamic criticism.

As for the dispute texts in Syriac, they necessarily served only the internal purposes of the Christian communities in the caliphate, being largely unintelligible to anyone else. In all of them it is Christian doctrine that the writers expound with a care for accuracy. Islamic positions are stated only for the purpose of eliciting a clear and convincing Christian reply. The writers do not

85 See the bibliography in Griffith, "The Prophet Muḥammad".

86 See S. H. Griffith, "Greek into Arabic: Life and Letters in the Monasteries of Palestine in the Ninth Century; the Example of the *Summa Theologiae Arabica*", *Byzantion* 56 (1986), pp. 117 - 138. The author of the *Summa* speaks of the Christian *munāfiqīn* in BL Arabic MS 4950, f. 6v. See S. H. Griffith, "The First Christian *Summa Theologiae* in Arabic: Christian *Kalām* in Ninth Century Palestine", in M. Gervers & R. J. Bikhazi (eds.), *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands, Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990), pp. 15 - 31.

87 See S. Stroumsa, "Dawūd ibn Marwān al-Muqammiṣ and his 'Ishrūn Maqāla", (Ph. D. Dissertation, The Hebrew University; Jerusalem, 1983); *idem*, "From Muslim Heresy to Jewish Muslim polemics: Ibn al-Rāwandī's Kitāb al-Dāmigh", *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 107 (1987), pp. 767 - 772.

attempt fairly to portray Islam, except as it challenges Christians. Nevertheless, the dominant mood of the dispute texts is a defensive one. There is virtually no attempt to falsify Islamic doctrines. Even in regard to topics such as the prophethood of Muḥammad, or the status of the *Qur'ān* as a book of divine revelation, this is the case. And even Dionysius bar Ṣalībī with his numerous translations of *Qur'ān* passages, seems more bent on helping the Christian reader to understand the challenge of Islam, than he is in rejecting the Islamic scripture. There are no overt polemics here.

The case is otherwise with Greek and Latin tracts on Islam written by Christian churchmen⁸⁸. They are offensive in character, their purpose is polemical, and their writers' intentions are to discredit Islam. They often have a role to play in the wider theatre of military campaigns against the Muslims⁸⁹. The difference becomes clear when one compares the translations of *Qur'ān* passages done by Dionysius bar Ṣalībī into Syriac, and those done by Niketas of Byzantium (c. 850) into Greek⁹⁰. The latter writer intends basically to ridicule the *Qur'ān*, and to highlight those aspects of the work that Greek eyes can perceive only as barbaric. In Latin the first translations of the *Qur'ān* seem to have had basically a missionary purpose, and to help crusaders better understand their enemies⁹¹. But here one wanders off into another subject.

Suffice it now to say that the Syriac dispute texts against Muslims are apologetic documents. And they are not the only response of Syriac-speaking churchmen to the challenge of Islam. Rather, it seems to the present writer that this global religious challenge that is Islam is behind the appearance of comprehensive biblical commentaries and the summary presentations of philosophy and theology text books in Syriac during this same six hundred year period. But this too is a topic for another day.

88 For the Greeks see T. Adel Khoury, *Les théologiens byzantins et l'islam, textes et auteurs (viii^e - xiii^e s.)* (Louvain, 1969); *idem*, "Polémique byzantine contre Islam (viii - xiii siècle)", *Proche Orient Chrétien* 29 (1979), pp. 242 - 300; 30 (1980), pp. 132 - 174; 32 (1982), pp. 14 - 49; D. J. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam, the "Heresy of the Ishmaelites"* (Leiden, 1972); N. M. Vaporis (ed.), *Orthodox Christians and Muslims* (Brookline, Mass., 1986). For the Latins see N. Daniel, *Islam and the West, the Making of an Image* (2nd rev. ed.; Edinburgh, 1962); *idem*, *The Arabs and Medieval Europe* (London, 1975).

89 See B. Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission; European Approaches toward the Muslims* (Princeton, 1984).

90 See Khoury, *Polémique byzantine*, pp. 141 ff.

91 See J. Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam* (Princeton, 1964).



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The Signs of Prophecy: The Emergence and Early Development of a Theme in Arabic Theological Literature

Sarah Stroumsa

In the ongoing scholarly search for the roots of Islamic theology, students of *Kalām* are entrenched in two main camps: those who see early Islamic theology as a product of the encounter with Christian theology,¹ and those who, without denying certain influences, emphasize the independence of Muslim thought and regard *Kalām* as a genuine, original reflection of the inner development of Islam.² Until now, the arguments of one group of scholars have done little to convince the other.³ Indeed the scarcity of sources from the formative period of *Kalām* renders any evidence inconclusive. Yet it is not only the paucity of material, but the very nature of the question, which makes a definite answer practically impossible. For it can always be argued that interest in questions such as God's unity, theodicy, and anthropomorphism might appear within any monotheistic system. Thus, although Islamic theology can often be shown to be strikingly similar to Christian theology of an earlier period, it is often easier to speak about parallels than about sources.⁴

¹ See, e.g., Michael A. Cook, "The Origins of Kalam," *BSO(A)S* 43 (1980) 32 n. 7.

² See, e.g., Michel Allard, *Le Problème des Attribus Divins dans la doctrine d'al-aṣṣ'ari et de ses premiers grands disciples* (Beyrouth: Imprimerie Catholique, 1965) 164–65, 169–71; Richard M. Frank, *Beings and Their Attributes: The Teaching of the Basrian School of the Mu'tazila in the Classical Period* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1978) 5; Josef Van Ess, "The Beginnings of Islamic Theology," in John E. Murdoch and Edith Dudley Sylla, eds., *The Cultural Context of Medieval Learning* (Dordrecht/Boston: Reidel, 1975) 87–111.

³ For an apt description of the stalemate concerning a closely related question—the dating of early Muslim theological works—see M. A. Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981) 144, 158.

⁴ To illustrate this point, one could mention the controversy over the (un)created *Qur'an*, which immediately calls to mind the Christian Logos. See Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976) 23ff.; John

One possible way out of the deadlock is to focus on themes introduced in Christian theology only after the rise of Islam; we may thus be able to define some specific relationships between Christian and Islamic theology.

In a recently published article Sidney Griffith has isolated one such theme, namely, the discussion of the "unworthy incentives to religious faith." Since "no such argument seems to have been used by earlier Christian apologists," Griffith was able to conclude that the argument was "an original contribution to apologetics on the part of the anti-Muslim apologists of the first Abbassid century."⁵

The present article will attempt an analysis of the background of this argument, of the conditions of its emergence within the interreligious debate over prophetology, and of its early development in Arabic theology, Muslim, Christian, and Jewish.

Among the standard components of comprehensive *Kalām* works one finds the discussion of prophecy, which figures as a prominent part of any *summa theologica*.⁶ Moreover, many entire works were dedicated solely and specifically to this question, usually bearing such titles as "signs of Prophecy" (*Aḥlām al-nubuwwa*), "Establishment of Prophecy" (*Ithbāt al-nubuwwa*), and the like. What normally comes under these titles is twofold: (a) an attempt to prove the human need for a prophet, and (b) a list of arguments meant to support the claim of one particular prophet, and his superiority over other prophets.⁷ Contributions to this theme in Arabic literature were made by authors from

Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978) 113–14. However, W. Madelung has recently argued that originally this Muslim debate was unrelated to Christian theology, and has shown that at its origin the argument pivoted around the question of anthropomorphism (*tashbīh*); see "The origins of the controversy concerning the creation of the Koran," in J. M. Barral, ed., *Orientalia Hispanica Sive Studia F. M. Pareja Octogenario Dicata* 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1974) 504–25. Now, the question remains whether this very antianthropomorphist concern was not in its turn influenced by the encounter with Christianity—since *tashbīh* figures as one of the major faults Muslims find with Christianity; see, e.g., al-Balkh's *al-radd ʿalā al-naṣārā* quoted by Ibn Zurʿa, in Paul Sbath, *Vingt traités philosophiques et apologetiques d'auteurs arabes chrétiens* (Cairo: Friedrich, 1929) 52; al-Jāhiz, *al-radd ʿalā al-naṣārā, thalāth rasāʾil* (ed. J. Finkel; Cairo: al-matbaʿa al-ʿalāfiyya, 1926) 25. In such a complex issue, however, no argument can be totally conclusive, and one's view of the topic must remain a matter of personal impression.

⁵ Sidney H. Griffith, "Comparative Religion in the Apologetics of the First Christian Arabic Theologians," *Proceedings of the Patristic, Medieval and Renaissance Conference* (Villanova, PA, 1979) 75.

⁶ ʿAbd al-Jabbar dedicated to this complex no less than three volumes of his *Mughnī* (vols. 15, 16, and also vol. 7 in the Cairo edition).

⁷ See, e.g., ʿAbd al-Jabbar's *Mughnī*, 15. 7–8.

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various religious affiliations. Among Muslims we find Mu'tazilites⁸ and Ash'arite theologians,⁹ Sunnites and Isma'flis;¹⁰ among the Christians, Melchites,¹¹ Jacobites,¹² and Nestorians¹³ dedicated works to this subject; and Jewish theologians, both Rabbanites and Karaites, dealt with it in their writings.¹⁴

In comparison with the abundance of Arabic literature dealing with this question, the meager part allotted to it in pre-Islamic literature is indeed striking. Although the book of Deuteronomy explicitly defines the criteria by which a true prophet is to be distinguished from a false one,¹⁵ these criteria had not elicited more than a few occasional comments among either Jewish or Christian thinkers before the Islamic period. When Philo, for example, refers to the relevant biblical passage, he sums up its content in a concise, matter-of-fact way, without any elaboration.¹⁶

Another biblical story, the miracles performed by Moses in Egypt and in the desert, later served Arabic writers as a favored piece of reference for their "signs of prophecy."¹⁷ But where a Mu'tazilite would analyze the characteristics of real miracles as opposed to those contrived by sleight of hand, Philo prefers to draw a colorful and vivid picture of the various afflictions that befell the Egyptians.¹⁸ Philo

⁸ From al-Jahiz (Kitab hujaj al-nubuwwa, *Rasa'il al-Jahiz* [ed. Hasan al-Sandubf, Cairo: al-maktaba al-tijariyya al-kubra, 1933] to 'Abd al-Jabbār (*Tathbit dalal il al-nubuwwa* [ed. 'Abd al-Karim 'Uthmān; Beirut: Dār al-'Arabiyya, 1966–67]).

⁹ Like al-Māwardī (*As'ām al-nubuwwa* [ed. 'Abd al-Ra'ūf Sa'd; Cairo: Maktabat al-Kuliyyāt al-Azhariyya, 1971]) or al-Māturīdī (*Kitāb al-Tawhīd* [ed. Fathullah Khuleif, Beirut: Dār al-Machreq, 1970] 176–210).

¹⁰ Like Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī's *Kitāb ithbat al-nubuwwat* (ed. 'Arif Tamir; Beirut, 1966).

¹¹ Like Abū Qurra; see Qustantīn Bāsha, "Maimar fī shihhat al-dīn al-masfiḥ lil-ab . . . abī Qurra usqūf Ḥarrān," *al-Machriq* 6 (1903) 633–43, 693–707, 800–809.

¹² *Die Schriften des Jacobiten Habib ibn Hidna Abū Rā'ita* (ed. Georg Graf; Louvain: Durbeq, 1951) 131ff.

¹³ 'Ammār al-Baṣrī, *Kitāb al-burhān* in 'Ammār al-Baṣrī: *Apologie et controverses* (ed. Michel Hayek; Beirut: Dār al-Machreq, 1977) 32ff; idem, *Kitāb al-masā'il* in *ibid.*, 136ff.

¹⁴ To mention just two examples, see chap. 3 of Sa'adya's *Kitāb al-Amānāt wa'l-i'tiqādāt* (ed. Qafih; Jerusalem/New York: Sūra, 1970) 117ff; Ya'qūb al-Qirqisānī, *Kitāb al-anwār wa'l-marāqib*, *Code of Karaite Law* (ed. Leon Nemoj; New York: A. Kohut Memorial Foundation, 1939–43) 3. 576, 583.

¹⁵ Deut 12:2–7; 18:15–22.

¹⁶ Philo *Spec. leg.* 1.315–18 (LCL 7. 283–84).

¹⁷ See, e.g., Abū-Qurra, 639–40; Abū Rā'ita, 137:12–18; Baqilānī, *Al-bayān 'an al-farq bayna al-mur'ijāt wa'l-karamāt wa'l-naranjāt* (ed. Richard Joseph McCarthy; Beirut: Librairie Orientale, 1957) 59–60; Sa'adya, *Amānāt*, 127–28.

¹⁸ Philo *Vit. Mos.* 1.96 (LCL 6. 325ff.).

certainly had a strong feeling for the difference between a sophist or trickster and a prophet.¹⁹ One can occasionally recognize in his writings elements that later writers would include in their "signs" (like the duration of a miracle, or the moral qualities and the intentions of the performer). But Philo does not underline these elements, let alone isolate or regroup them systematically.²⁰

In the same biblical passage, describing the plagues in Egypt, the Christian Gregory of Nyssa saw only an allegorical representation of the virtuous soul's striving for perfection.²¹

When Arabic-speaking theologians, both Jews and Muslims, set out to establish the legitimacy of prophecy in general, the polemical edge of their writings is directed against the *Barāhima*,²² or else against the hellenizing philosophers, the *Falāsifa*.²³ Pre-Islamic Christian writers do not seem to have so much as heard of the "brahmans" in this context. Now the absence of these *Barāhima* in pre-Islamic Christian literature is easy enough to explain.²⁴ But, unlike the "Brahmans," representatives

¹⁹ See esp. *Spec. leg.* 6.50–51 (LCL 7. 39) and *Vit. Mos.* 2.185ff. (LCL 6. 541ff.).

²⁰ On Philo's view of prophecy, see H. A. Wolfson, "The veracity of scripture in Philo, Halevi, Maimonides and Spinoza," *Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1950) 604; Harry A. A. Kennedy, *Philo's Contribution to Religion* (London, 1919) 226–30; Emile Bréhier, *Les idées philosophiques et religieuses de Philon d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Vrin, 1950) 180ff. One should, however, note the tendency of these works to articulate and systematize Philo's remarks more than he might have cared for.

²¹ Gregory of Nyssa, *La vie de Moïse ou traité de la perfection en matière de vertu* (trans. Jean Daniélou; SC 1; Paris: Cerf, 1955) 48ff.

²² See, e.g., Baqilānī, *Bayān*, 26:9–11.

²³ Sometimes referred to as the *dahriyya*; see al-Jāhīz, *ḥujaj*, 119:7. See also Māturīdī, *Tawḥīd*, 187:19 (cf. Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, 3. 578:6–7); Paul Kraus, "Raziana," *Or* n.s. 5 (1936) 369:22–25; Salomon Pines, *Beiträge zur islamischen Atomlehre* (Berlin: Heine, 1936) 90 n. 2.

²⁴ It could be interpreted as another proof for the late, fictitious nature of the *Barāhima*. See Paul Kraus, "Beiträge zur islamischen Ketzergeschichte, Das *Kitāb al-Zumurrud* des Ibn ar-Rāwandī," *RSO* 14 (1933) 93–129; 14 (1934) 335–79; but it can also be seen as further circumstantial evidence for the argument that the *Barāhima* theme reflects the impact on Islam of real encounters with Indian religions, as I have argued in my article, "The *Barāhima* in Early Kalām," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 6 (1985). On the other hand, the absence of the *Barāhima* from later, post-Islamic Christian (and, in particular, Christian Arabic) texts, remains puzzling. As a tentative explanation I would suggest that, although often incorporated in Muslim prophetology, the *Barāhima* theme was still perceived as part of Muslim heresiography. Generally speaking, Christian writers showed little interest in Muslim heresiography; they turned to it mainly when it served their own polemical anti-Muslim purposes. The *Barāhima* were of no use for the Christians in their debate with Islam, and since the Christians already had their own traditional pattern for proving the idea of prophecy, they did not feel the need to change it by adding the *Barāhima*.

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of Greek philosophy were readily available to the Church Fathers, and yet the fight against pagan philosophy hardly touches upon prophetology. To cite just one example: in his polemical treatise against Celsus, Origen does mention the role of miracles, and argues that, unlike the trickster, the true prophet is not lost in ecstasy.²⁵ But this is clearly a marginal issue in his defense of Christianity against pagan philosophy.

A plausible explanation of this phenomenon seems to be that from an early date in mainstream Christian theology Jesus was not considered to be a prophet. Those who spoke of Jesus as “a righteous man” and a prophet were definitely in the minority, and their views were pushed aside by the predominant christology. Prophets were thus usually given a secondary role; they are those who announce the coming of Jesus;²⁶ who are, in some respects, his *figura*;²⁷ or even those who propagate his gospel.²⁸ In any case, the signs that mark a true prophet had become the problem of bygone generations.

This Christian attitude had its effect on the Jewish approach. The Christians readily admitted the prophecy of Moses, although they saw it as an outdated issue. Therefore, for contemporary Jews the encounter with Christianity did not require that they should dwell on the proofs of prophecy.²⁹

With the rise of Islam the scene changed drastically. Since Muhammad had claimed to be a prophet, and since this claim had been rejected by both Jews and Christians, the traits that distinguish a true prophet from a false one at once became a key issue. And although by the ninth century we find this topic elaborated by Muslims, Christians, and Jews alike, it is a safe assumption that in the first round it was Islam which had to come up with “proofs of prophecy,” in response to Christian and Jewish incredulity. Already John of Damascus (d. 724) challenges the Muslims to substantiate Muhammad’s claim to

²⁵ Origen *C. Cel.* 7.3. The same argument was brought up against the Montanists by Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 5.16.7–9, referred to in *TDNT* s.v. *προφήτης*, 861). On other early Christian references to true prophecy, or true religion, see Wolfson, “Veracity of Religion,” 604–5.

²⁶ See, e.g., Origen *C. Cel.* 1.51ff; see also *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* s.v. “prophétie,” 711.

²⁷ See the classic work of Jean Daniélou, *Sacramentum Futuri: Études sur les origines de la typologie biblique* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1950).

²⁸ See *TDNT*, 861. See also the intriguing passage in Abū Qurra’s defense of orthodoxy, 669–70, esp. 670 1.22

²⁹ The rabbinic interest in miracles versus magic was rarely linked to prophetology. See E. E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem, 1971) 81–102, 502–13; idem, “When Did Prophecy End in Judaism?” *Tarbiz* 17 (1946) 1–11 (in Hebrew).

revelation, calling him a "false prophet."³⁰

The earliest "signs of prophecy" books written by Muslim *mutakal-limūn* are, unfortunately, lost.³¹ What we find in the ninth century is already a well shaped prophetology. In the discussion, old "biblical" arguments were adduced together with new ones, which were shaped and reshaped in the course of the interreligious debate.

The general frame of the discussion, as well as the particular "signs," seem, at first sight, to be one and the same for the three religions. However, a closer look reveals characteristic components for every religion. I shall not draw up here a list of the "signs" that were alluded to;³² rather, in what follows I shall try to point out some of the above mentioned components and to analyze them.

We shall begin at the beginning, which in this case means the Muslims. Among the earliest preserved works wholly dedicated to the "signs of prophecy" is Jāḥiẓ's *Proofs of Prophecy* (*ḥujaj al-nubuwwa*).³³ In this text, Jāḥiẓ enumerates two categories of proofs: those belonging to sense experience (*ʿiyān zāhir*) and those based on indisputable tradition (*ḵabar qāhir*).³⁴ Jāḥiẓ regards both these proofs as dependent upon the intellect (*ʿaql*).³⁵ The "sense experience" in this context is, first of all, the miracle performed by the prophet.³⁶ The "tradition" was understood as referring to the historical traditions about the prophet and his miracles and to the transmission of the revealed Book.³⁷ Now for Muslims, of course, the revealed Book was also, in itself, a miracle.

In fact, al-Jāḥiẓ goes to great length to show that the miraculous beauty of the Qurʾān, which leaves humans unable to imitate it (*iʿjāz*),

³⁰ John of Damascus *De haer.* 101 in *Saint John of Damascus: Writings* (trans. F. H. Chase, Jr.; FC; Washington: Catholic University Press, 1981) 153–54; Daniel J. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam: The "Hereseys of the Ishmaelites"* (Leiden: Brill, 1972) 79ff.

³¹ For a few examples see *Fihrist* (ed. Gustav Flügel; reprinted Beirut, 1964) 162:15 (Bishr b. al-Muʿtāmir); 177:3 (Abū Sahl al-nubakhtī); 259:15 (al-Kindī)—all from the ninth century. Of earlier books dedicated to this subject we have no knowledge.

³² For examples of various criteria of true prophecy and their place in the discussion, see George Vajda, "La prophétologie de Dawūd ibn Marwān al-Raqqī al-Muqammiš, théologien Juif arabophone du IX^e siècle," *Journal Asiatique* 265 (1977) 227–35.

³³ See n. 8 above.

³⁴ al-Jāḥiẓ, *ḥujaj al-nubuwwa*, 118:16.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 118:17–22.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 139:19ff., 143:5.

³⁷ Wolfson remarks that when Saʿadya refers to tradition "he means knowledge based upon revelation as recorded in Scripture" (*Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947] 62–63).

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is as good a miracle as any other.³⁸ The apologetic, defensive vein of his words is unmistakable.

It has been suggested that the doctrine of *iʿjāz al-qurʾān* might be seen as an eventual outcome of the importance of Arabic grammar in early Islam.³⁹ Admittedly, this doctrine could not have developed without the importance attached to the Qurʾān and to linguistics. But the transformation of this linguistic interest into a doctrine cannot be explained solely as an inner development, the result of a purely scholarly interest. Rather, the incentive for the shift came from an external factor: the impact of the encounter with both Christians and Jews. Relying on the Deuteronomic criteria of true prophecy, Jews and Christians had challenged the Muslims to adduce a miracle of some sort to buttress their claims, thus driving the latter to ascribe to the Qurʾān a role "comparable to the role of the theory of evidentiary miracles in Christian apologetics."⁴⁰

Moreover, another distinctly Islamic science must also be taken into consideration in this context. Besides the miraculous beauty of the Qurʾān, Jāhiz emphasizes the miraculous transmission of all traditions about Muhammad's prophecy. He sets out to prove that such unanimous transmission cannot be mistaken, or result from purely natural circumstances.⁴¹ In this argument, Jāhiz relies heavily on the criteria developed in *ʿIlm al-ḥadīth*.⁴² Elsewhere, Jāhiz quotes Wāsil b. ʿatā, who had listed four ways through which truth can be reached: (1) a revealed book (*kitāb nātiq*);⁴³ (2) a widely accepted tradition (*khabar mujtamaʿ ʿalayhi*); (3) intellectual argument (*ḥujjat ʿaql*); (4) the consensus of the people (*ijmāʿ* or *ijmāʿ min al-umma*).⁴⁴ This schema is, in fact, "the quaternion Koran, Sunna, consensus, and qiyās, which comprises the recognized sources or principles (*uṣūl*) of law in the

³⁸ al-Jāhiz, *ḥujaj al-nubuwwa*, 136:1-7, 11-14; 138:14-17; 141:20ff; 143:4ff.

³⁹ Griffith, "Comparative Religion," 80.

⁴⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, and see *idem*, "ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī's Kitāb al-Burhān: Christian Kalām in the First Abbasid Century," *Le Muséon* 96 (1983) 165.

In fact, al-Jāhiz's epistle, which addresses itself at first broadly to many opposing religious beliefs (see *ḥujaj al-nubuwwa*, 119), eventually narrows its scope and concentrates on the vindication of Islam against Christianity (*ibid.*, esp. 125:23-126:1; 128:19-23; 131:15ff.). On this literary technique see Tarif Khalidi, *Islamic Historiography: The Histories of Masʿūdī* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1975) 22-23.

⁴¹ al-Jāhiz, *ḥujaj al-nubuwwa*, 129:22-130:5; 136:2-8, 11-12; 138:14-17.

⁴² See, e.g., *ibid.*, 132:3-4: "mā naqalathu al-jamāʿat ʿan al-jamāʿat"; cf. Josef Schacht, *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979) 42, 51. See below, n. 45.

⁴³ Cf. Matūrīdī, *Tawḥīd*, 209:4: "wajada kitāb Allah nātiqan bi-izhār dīnihi."

⁴⁴ See Abu-Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, *al-Awāʾil* (ed. Muḥammad al-Miṣrī and Walid Qaṣṣāb; Damascus, 1975) 2. 134:6-7; Pines, *Atomlehre*, 126 n. 2.

classical theory” of Islamic jurisprudence.⁴⁵ But it is also easy to see the similarity between this list and Jāhiz’s two categories of proofs and what they stand for.⁴⁶

J. Van Ess has argued that the adoption of this schema by Muʿtazilite theologians is a late phenomenon (appearing around the mid-ninth century), the result of the *mutakallimūn*’s succumbing to the stronger orthodoxy, and giving up their former rejection of traditions. Van Ess sees here a “shift in the polemical accent,” in which “the Muʿtazilites, instead of attacking the *muḥaddithūn*, turn now . . . against non-Muslims.”⁴⁷

It is more plausible to see here two facets, very possibly contemporary, of the same theological phenomenon, rather than two stages of a theological development. Again, evidence from the seventh and eighth centuries is too scarce, and usually comes from secondary sources. But we do know that the intellectual religious encounter with Christianity had started not in the ninth century, but much earlier. The spokesmen for Christianity did not wait politely until the Muʿtazilites and orthodox Muslims had settled their disagreements. Early Muʿtazilites could not afford the luxury of dealing only with *muḥaddithūn* while ignoring *ahl al-kitāb*, leaving the arduous task of refuting them to their heirs. Thus the same early *mutakallimūn* may at one and the same time have opposed the proliferation of *ḥadīth*, and yet applied to the scrutiny of religious criteria originally developed to check the

⁴⁵ See Schacht, *Origins*, 134–35. The supposition that this list had its origin in a traditionalist setting, from which it was passed over to *Kalām* (rather than the other way around) is established by the very nature of the criteria in the list. Three of the four criteria are of a nonintellectual character. It is, therefore, more plausible to see the origin of these three criteria in a traditionalist setting, than in the intellectually oriented early *Kalām*. This supposition is strengthened by another such list, in which the intellectual argument is absent altogether. Al-Dārimī (*al-radd ʿalā al-Jahmiyya* [ed. Gösta Vitestam; Lund/Leiden: Gleerup, 1960] 93) mentions only a revealed book (*kitāb nāiq*), tradition (*athar*), and consensus (*ijmāʿ*).

⁴⁶ See above, nn. 34–37.

⁴⁷ J. Van Ess, “L’*autorité de la tradition prophétique dans la théologie muʿtazilite*,” *La notion d’autorité au Moyen Age: Islam, Byzance, Occident* (Paris: P.U.F., 1980) 221–22. On the Muʿtazilite rejection of tradition, see Schacht, *Origins*, 4–42, and 258; Michael A. Cook, “Anan and Islam: The Origins of Karaite Scripturalism,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* (forthcoming). I wish to thank Professor Cook for making this paper available to me before publication. For all we know, however, what the Muʿtazilites rejected was not the very idea of tradition (for they did accept *ijmāʿ*, a concept which implies some nonscriptural source of knowledge). Their objections seem to have been limited to “traditions” in the sense of *ḥadīth*, separate traditions about the *Sunna* of the prophet as a basis for legal judgment. Considering the profusion of spurious and contradictory *ḥadīths*, such a skeptical attitude is hardly surprising.

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authenticity of ḥadīth.⁴⁸ It seems to me quite untenable to claim that the "truth" (*al-ḥaqq*) which Wāṣil tries to achieve in his fourfold schema referred only to the veracity of *ḥadīth*.⁴⁹ Already for Wāṣil, in all probability, the "truth" this list endeavors to establish ultimately refers to the truth of one religion, over against the others.

This analysis, and in particular the affinity of the "proofs of prophecy" with *ʿilm al-ḥadīth*, corroborates the suggestion⁵⁰ that it was the Muslims who had developed the disparate Jewish and Christian criteria of true prophecy into a crystallized system.

Nevertheless, the Christians were quick to pick up the challenge. Already in the ninth century one finds a Christian version of this "Signs of Prophecy" complex, with a peculiar Christian twist. Like their Muslim contemporaries, the Christians built their religious apologetics on the evidence of scriptures, traditions, and intellectual reflection, referring often to miracles and to consensus. But in its Christian garb, this complex is not formulated as referring to the prophet and to the way in which his authenticity can be evaluated in his lifetime. Rather, Christian writers in Arabic usually assemble the criteria by which an unbiased observer should be able to judge whether the success and propagation of an established religion is, in itself, a proof of its authenticity.⁵¹ One can discern here the old Christian reluctance to overemphasize the role of the prophet,⁵² as well as a defensive note: the success of Islam results from this-worldly circumstances (*al-asbāb*

⁴⁸ The phenomenon is not uncommon; Muʿtazilites also use in their discussions with the *mujibira* arguments which according to their own testimony were hurled at the *muʿtazila* by Manichaeans. The same practice is found also among Christians. See, e.g., K. Vollers, "Das Religionsgespräch von Jerusalem (um 800 D)," *ZKG* 24 (1908) 65, 11.7–13, 69, 11.10–14.

⁴⁹ Cf. Van Ess, "L'autorité," 213. Other quotations of Wāṣil by Al-ʿaskarī, which do refer specifically to *ḥadīth*, do so explicitly; see *Awāʾil*, 134:8ff.

⁵⁰ See above p. 105.

⁵¹ For a detailed description and analysis of this theme see Samir Khalil, "La liberté religieuse chez les théologiens arabes chrétiens du 9^e siècle," *Witness of Faith in Life and Worship* (Tantur Yearbook, 1980–81; Jerusalem, 1982) 93–160; Griffith, "Comparative Religion," 63–87.

⁵² Sometimes the differences between Jesus and the prophets are clearly spelled out. See Vollers, "Religionsgespräch," 45–46, 61, and 64, 11.20–22 (where, for argument's sake, the monk includes Muhammad with all the prophets); I. A. Khalifé and M. Kutsch, "Ar-Radd ʿala-n-naṣārā de ʿAlī-at-ṭabarī," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph* 37 (1959) 139:7–8, where the juxtaposition of Jesus and the prophets, stressing the prophets' weakness (*ʿAsjaz*), might be a pun designed to play down their miracles (*muʿjizāt*); and Abū-Rāʾita, 38.

al-arḍiyya, asbāb al-dunyā).⁵³ On the other hand, the spread of Christianity is depicted as defying any normal expectations;⁵⁴ it is, therefore, a divinely sent miraculous proof of the authenticity of the Christian religion.

Instead of positive “ways” to truth, it is thus on “negative attributes” that the Christian Arabs rely in the search for the true religion.⁵⁵ In this line of argumentation, the events that take place after the prophet’s death gain major importance. These events (i.e., the success of the religious campaign and the means by which this success is achieved) become the staple proof put forward by Christian Arabs. The Nestorian ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī even claims that a continuation of miracles in all generations would have constituted a compulsion (*ijbār*) that would have limited the free choice of humanity.⁵⁶ What is implied in ‘Ammār’s statement is that evidentiary miracles, although necessary in the establishment of a new religion, have a theoretical drawback. For him, intellectual reflection on history in later generations, can provide a religion with a proof of a higher value than miracles. For Muslims, on the contrary, the recourse to traditions from the prophet, after his death, is usually seen as a necessary technical device to bridge the time gap between the actual miracle and later generations. Thus, the superior value of miracles is generally admitted on the Muslim side.⁵⁷ At best, the postprophetic propagation of traditions is granted the role of an auxiliary miracle.⁵⁸

It is thus the Christians who introduced into the discussion this set of “negative attributes” of the true religion. But this original contribution⁵⁹ was not a totally new invention; rather it was the Chris-

⁵³ The fear of the sword, ethnic or familial ties, and the hope for worldly gains (wealth or sexual pleasure, both in this world and the next) are regularly mentioned in this context. See, e.g., ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī, *Burhān*, 32; idem, *Masā’il*, 136.

⁵⁴ Because of Jesus’ humble birth, and because of his teaching which rejects accumulation of wealth and imposes sexual restrictions, the growth of Christianity was surprising. See, e.g., Vollers, “Religionsgespräch,” 62–63; ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī, *Burhān*, 36–38.

⁵⁵ See the references in nn. 11–13 above.

⁵⁶ ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī, *Burhān*, 27.

⁵⁷ See, e.g., ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī* 15, 148:3: “Nothing but miracles is a proper proof for the sending of (divine) messengers”; the traditions are accepted as proofs for past events only (*māḍiyāt*), *faute de mieux*. The same view, which technically relies only on traditions, but ultimately gives a theoretical preference to the miracle, was probably held by ‘Abbād b. Sulaimān (*Mughnī*, 15, 257–58; 312–38; 16, 242.8–10). Cf. Van Ess, “L’*autorité*,” 220.

⁵⁸ This sometimes appears to be Jāhiz’s view; see above, n. 41.

⁵⁹ See above, n. 5.

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tian version of—and response to—the Muslims' "signs of prophecy."⁶⁰ In this Christian version, one can discern a few adaptations of the theme for Christian use. Against the Muslim emphasis on the marvelous nature of the Qurʾān's Arabic, Christians repeatedly emphasize the multilingual spread of the Gospels.⁶¹ This is for them an additional proof of the divinely sponsored propagation of Christianity, as well as an argument against the possible fabrication through conspiracy (*tawāṭūʿ*) or falsification (*tahrīf*) of the Bible.

Another important Christian development concerns the role of the intellect. ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī opens his discussion by paying his tribute to the twin proof of miracles (*āyāt*) and an intellectually tested proof (*dalālat ʿaql*).⁶² Immediately thereafter he sets out to strip this "intellect" of its important role. For him, intellectual judgment refers not to reflection upon the content of religious teaching, but, again, to its spreading.⁶³ ʿAmmār is anxious to emphasize that the logical content, however appealing, of a given religion (*istiḥsān*) has no bearing on the question of its authenticity.⁶⁴ On the contrary, only a religion which is widely accepted in spite of its abhorrent illogical claims can be the true one.⁶⁵ On several occasions ʿAmmār argues that knowledge of God does not come naturally to human beings. It is not inherent to their constitution, it is not part of their instinctive, inborn knowledge, and since it is also not part of their sense experience, only revelation can give them the right knowledge of God.⁶⁶

If we consider the long Christian tradition of "natural knowledge of God,"⁶⁷ the prevailing contemporary muʿtazilite belief in inborn religiosity (*fiṭra*),⁶⁸ and also ʿAmmār's overall intellectual inclination, then

⁶⁰ The development of the Christian version out of the Muslim one can be witnessed in al-Muqammi's version of this theme; see below, pp. 112–13.

⁶¹ See ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī, *Burhān*, 32, 41, 72; idem, *Masāʾil*, 141; Abū Qurra, "maymar fī taḥqīq al-Infjū," *Mayāmīr Thaudūrtūs Abī Qurra* (ed. Q. Bāsha; Beirut) 74; Ignace Dick, "Deux écrits inédits de Théodore Abū Qurra," *Le Muséon* 72 (1959) 64:11ff.; Abū Rāʾita, *Rasāʾil*, 136. Al-Bāqilānī sees this argument as typical of Jews and Christians (*Kitāb al-tamhīd* [ed. R. J. McCarthy; Beirut: Librairie Orientale, 1957] 160ff. and esp. 161:14–17; 173:1–6; 385:13–20).

⁶² ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī, *Burhān*, 26:10–13. Cf. al-Jāhiz's proof, above, pp. 106–7.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 31–32.

⁶⁴ The proof thereof is the logical pretense of Manichaeism, which might seem congenial to the human intellect, but (as all ʿAmmār's readers are supposed to know) is Falsehood Incarnate. *Ibid.*, 31, 35; idem, *Masāʾil*, 136.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 136, 138.

⁶⁶ ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī, *Burhān*, 25:19–20; 64–65.

⁶⁷ See Henri de Lubac, "Les religions humaines chez les Pères de l'Église," in his *Paradoxe et Mystère de l'Église* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1967) 120–40.

⁶⁸ See Louis Gardet and M.-M. Anawati, *Introduction à la théologie musulmane* (Paris:

his statement is somewhat surprising. It would seem that this position was meant to enable him to respond to Muslim and Jewish attacks on what was regarded as the illogical Christian doctrine of the Divinity.⁶⁹

A Jewish contemporary of ʿAmmār and of al-Jāḥiẓ, Dawūd b. Marwān al-Raqqf al-Muqammiṣ, allows us a glimpse into the intricacy of the debate between religions. His “twenty chapters” (*ʿIshrūn Maqāla*) is the earliest surviving work of Jewish theology in Arabic.⁷⁰ Chapter fourteen of *ʿIshrūn Maqāla* deals with the “signs of prophecy,” referring constantly to the biblical passages concerning Moses’ miracles.⁷¹ Technically, however, this chapter is presented as concerned with the ways of verifying a tradition (*Khabar*) about a prophet after his death. As we have seen, this preference for miracles, complemented by a resigned reliance on traditions for the use of later generations, has its equivalent—and probable origin—in Muslim argumentation.⁷² Another component of al-Muqammiṣ’s propheticology, similar to Muslim conceptions, is the demand for logical content (*al-ṣaḥīḥ fi al-qiyās*) in the prophecy. Al-Muqammiṣ explicitly interprets this condition as excluding Christianity, together with other false religions.

However, some of the other “signs of prophecy” listed by al-Muqammiṣ point to a different direction. He insists that the tradition about the prophet’s first victory over his enemies should recount a victory miraculously achieved, rather than a military one (“*lā bi-ḥarb walā bi-sayf*”). This demand is clearly intended to play down Islam and its success. He also asks that the tradition (which, in this case, is identical with the revealed book) be transmitted by several nations in many

Vrin, 1970) 350; D. B. MacDonald, s.v. *fiṭra*, *EP* 2. 932 and cf. Griffith, “Comparative Religion,” 80.

⁶⁹ This doctrine is understood to contain both the trinitarian and the christological aspects of Christian theology. See, e.g., al-Jāḥiẓ, *ḥujaj*, 131:19–132:7. We have no indication that ʿAmmār was already aware of the “intellectual,” “anti-prophecy” *Barāhima*. However, if he was, this position would have the additional benefit of avoiding the “*Barāhima*-catch”: for, if it is openly stated that the human intellect is not the proper vehicle for religious knowledge, the *Izām* used by the *Barāhima* becomes void.

⁷⁰ For biographical outline, see George Vajda, “La finalité de la création de l’homme selon un théologien juif du IX^e siècle,” *Oriens* 15 (1962) 61–85. For the text and analysis of *ʿIshrūn Maqāla*, see my “Dawūd ibn Marwān al-Muqammiṣ and his *ʿIshrūn Maqāla* (in Hebrew; Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1983).

⁷¹ The first lines of this chapter are, unfortunately, missing in the only extant manuscript. A French summary and partial paraphrase of chap. 14 was published by Vajda (see n. 32 above).

⁷² See above, n. 57.

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languages (“*wa-lā min umma wāḥida wa-lisān wāḥid*”), a typical Christian requirement.⁷³ (Al-Muqammiṣ conveniently ignores the reference to tribal or familial links—*‘aṣ’abiyya*—which Christians directed also against Judaism.)⁷⁴

Altogether, al-Muqammiṣ lists ten characteristics of the authentic tradition about the true prophet, all of them presented in the form of quotations from some unidentified book (“and as to his saying” . . . “*wa-ammā qawluhu*”). Now we know that al-Muqammiṣ had received his education from Christians, and was familiar with their writings;⁷⁵ and we can be fairly confident that it is some early Christian list of the “signs of prophecy” that he quotes.⁷⁶ It is noteworthy that this early Christian work also incorporated some elements of Muslim prophetology. Like its Muslim models, this Christian list is specifically intended to evaluate a prophet, not a religion (“and the tradition about *him* should relate”—“*wa-an yakūna fī khabarihi*”). However, it also includes some of the negative characteristics of the true religion, typical of Christian texts. Unexpected as it may seem, it is thus a Jewish text which enables us actually to see how the Christians turned the Muslim “signs of prophecy” theme into their own “negative description” of the true religion.

The attempt made above to isolate typical Christian or Muslim arguments is a reconstruction of the earliest encounters, for which we have no reliable records. All we can do is to discern arguments that were favored by a given religion, or that fit best into the framework of a particular prophetology. But we should also bear in mind that the argu-

⁷³ See n. 61 above. For later, more sensitive adaptations of the Christian argument in Jewish texts, see Sarah Stroumsa, “Jewish-Muslim and Jewish-Christian Polemics in Light of the Judaeo-Arabic Texts,” in Norman Golb, ed., *Proceedings of the First Conference on Judaeo-Arabic* (Chicago, May 1984), forthcoming.

⁷⁴ See, e.g., ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī, *Burhān*, 31.

⁷⁵ Al-Qirīqisānī, *Anwār*, 1. 44:10–16. According to Qirīqisānī, al-Muqammiṣ had actually converted to Christianity. His *‘Ishrīn Maqāla*, however, was clearly written after his return to Judaism.

⁷⁶ A Muslim source is excluded by the above mentioned antimilitary remark. The possibility of a Jewish source, earlier than al-Muqammiṣ and yet so well structured, is improbable. The reference to the transmission of scriptures by “many nations” renders the possibility of a Jewish source even more unlikely. The “source” enumerates only the conditions; it is clearly al-Muqammiṣ who applies the conditions to Moses, and thus adapts the general frame provided by his source to Jewish theology. Moreover, the Christian identity of al-Muqammiṣ’s source is apparent also in his use of “covenant” (*‘hd*) to designate the revealed book. See J. Schach, *El² s.v.* ‘*Ahd*, 1. 255.

ments and “signs” introduced by Muslims directly influenced those used by Christians; and vice versa.

Thus, the eleventh-century mu‘tazilite master ‘Abd al-Jabbār goes out of his way to demonstrate that Muhammad’s victories were indeed miraculous, and not at all military; that Muhammad came from a humble family and that, consequently, it was not for earthly gains that his followers joined him; that his rejection by his tribe invalidates the accusation of *tashā‘ub*; and even that Muhammad’s message spread in all languages.⁷⁷ Together, these contentions put forward an uncommonly Christian, “Jesus-like” portrait of Muhammad’s prophecy.

It appears that here again we can capture one moment in the process of the interreligious debate in which each side helped to shape and remodel the theological edifice of the other. Muhammad’s claim for prophecy triggered a Jewish and Christian attack on his prophetic qualifications, which forced the Muslims to establish a system of vindication of Muhammad’s prophecy. The existence of this system obliged the Christians to respond with “the (negative) signs of a true religion,” their own version of the “signs of prophecy”; this response in its turn influenced later Muslim depiction of Muhammad and of early Islamic history.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Taḥbīt*, 8:16–17, 24:4–5; idem, *Mughnī* 16, 21:13–14, 27:5–6. Although some of these elements appear already in Jāḥiz’s *ḥujaj al-mubīn*, Qaḍī stands out in his consistent depiction of the meekness of the Prophet.

⁷⁸ I wish to thank Professor Sidney H. Griffith, Professor Michael A. Cook, and Dr. G. Stroumsa for reading a draft of this paper and for their valuable comments.

Reopening the Muslim–Christian Dialogue of the 13th–14th Centuries: Critical Reflections on Ibn Taymiyyah’s Response to Christianity

Nancy N. Roberts

I. Introduction

In his article entitled “Ibn Taymiyyah: A Ṣūfī of the Qādiriyyah Order,”¹ George Makdisi draws attention to the fact that beginning in the 19th century, Western scholars began propagating an image of the 13th century Muslim theologian Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 726/1328) which was “not . . . very charitable.”² This image was based in part on the way in which certain scholars picked up on Ibn Baṭṭūṭah’s (c. 779/1377) statement that despite the great esteem in which Ibn Taymiyyah was held, he also “had a screw loose” (*illa anna fi ‘aqlihi shay’an*)³ One of these scholars, D. B. Macdonald, went so far as to describe him as having “no use for mystics, philosophers, Ash‘arite theologians, or in fact, for anyone but himself.”⁴ Makdisi then cites as a possible reason for the development of such a negative image of Ibn Taymiyyah that “we did not feel too charitable toward a man who, in his vast polemical output, found time away from Islamic heresies to write works in refutation of Christians and Jews.”⁵

It is to one of such works by Ibn Taymiyyah that I would like to devote attention in the present study, namely, his four-volume work entitled *Al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ li man Baddala Dīn al-Masīḥ*,⁶ or *The Correct Reply to Those Who Have Altered the Religion of Christ!* My aim here

¹ George Makdisi, “Ibn Taymiyyah: a Ṣūfī of the Qādiriyyah Order,” *American Journal of Arabic Studies* 1 (1973), pp. 118-29.

² *Ibid.*, p. 118.

³ Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *Riḥlah* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1964), p. 95; cited by Makdisi, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

⁴ D. B. Macdonald, “Developments of Muslim Theology,” *Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory* (New York, 1903), p. 273; cited by Makdisi, *op. cit.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 118-119.

⁶ Taqī al-Dīn Abī al-‘Abbās Ahmad ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm ibn ‘Abd al-Salām ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Jawāb al-Ṣaḥīḥ li man Baddala Dīn al-Masīḥ*, 4 vols., ed. Faraj Allāh Zakī al-Kurdi and Muṣṭafā al-Qabbānī (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Nīl, 1905). For an English translation of this work, see *A Muslim Theologian’s Response to Christianity: Ibn Taymiyyah’s “Al-Jawāb al-Ṣaḥīḥ,”* ed. and trans. Thomas F. Michel (Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1984). All quotations from *Al-Jawāb* in the present study will be based on my own translations.

⁷ Other polemical works attributed to Ibn Taymiyyah include *Takhjīl Ahl al-Injīl*, *Mukhtasar Takhjīl man Harrafa al-Injīl*, *Mas‘alat al-Kanā‘is*, and *Iqtida’ (Iqtifa’) al-Sirāt al-Mustaza‘im wa Mujānabat Ashāb al-Jahīm*; see C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, Supplement II (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1938), p. 123.

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is not to investigate the validity of Ibn Baṭṭūṭah's claim,⁸ and certainly not to perpetuate the attitude of antagonism represented by Macdonald and others. Nor will I attempt to deal with the arguments which Ibn Taymiyyah puts forth to demonstrate the prophethood of Muḥammad, or related discussions of Jewish and/or Christian scriptures the intent of which is to reinterpret such texts as prophecies of Muḥammad's coming.⁹ Rather, the focus of the following discussion will be upon the major conceptual and philosophical arguments which Ibn Taymiyyah presents in *Al-Jawāb* against Christian beliefs concerning the Trinity and the incarnation of the Divine in Jesus Christ, bearing in mind, of course, that such arguments will inevitably overlap at points with others which rest explicitly on the Qur'ān, or on Muslim articles of faith based therein.¹⁰

Ibn Taymiyyah states near the beginning of *Al-Jawāb* that he has composed it in response to a book which appeared in Cyprus containing arguments in favor of Christianity. Written in the form of an epistle, this Christian apologetic work is attributed by Ibn Taymiyyah to Būlus al-Rāhib, or Paul the Monk, the bishop of Sidon from Antioch, who was a 12th-century Melkite theologian.¹¹ Ibn Taymiyyah also mentions that other apologetic works have been attributed to the same writer, though he does not cite them by name.¹² As for the epistolary work to which *Al-Jawāb* is a response, it is entitled *Al-Kitāb al-Mantiqī . . . al-Mubarhin 'an al-'Itiqād al-ṣaḥīḥ wa'l-Ra'y al-Mustaqīm*, or *The Book of Sound Reason . . . in Proof of Correct Belief and Upright Opinion*.¹³ It is referred to elsewhere as *Risālah ilā Ba'ḍ Aṣḍiqā'ihi al-Muslimīn*, or *A Letter to Some of His Muslim Friends*.¹⁴ Ibn Taymiyyah summarizes the main points of each of the book's six chapters, which contain arguments to the effect that: (1) Muḥammad was not sent to the Christians, but "to the Arabs of the

⁸ For a treatment of this topic, see Donald P. Little, "Did Ibn Taymiyyah Have a Screw Loose?" *Studia Islamica* 41 (1975), pp. 93-111.

⁹ Cf. *Al-Jawāb*: pp. 117-81, 361-71; III: pp. 245-95 and all of IV.

¹⁰ For a more general discussion of the theological issues raised in *Al-Jawāb*, see Muzammil H. Siddiqi, "Muslim and Byzantine Christian Relations: Letter of Paul of Antioch and Ibn Taymiyyah's Response," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 31 (1986), pp. 33-45.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, I: p. 19; cf. Siddiqi, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

¹² Approximately twenty-four theological treatises have been attributed to him. However, Paul Khoury, who translated into French the epistle to which Ibn Taymiyyah has written in response, believes only five of these works to be authentic writings of Paul of Antioch. (Siddiqi, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-4; citing Paul Khoury, *Paul d'Antioch Eveque Melkite de Sidon* [Beirut, 1964], pp. 1-101.)

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁴ Siddiqi, *op. cit.*, p. 33. Siddiqi also notes that Ibn Taymiyyah was one of three Muslim writers to respond to Paul of Antioch's epistle, the other two being Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfi (d. 682/1285) in *Al-Ajwibat al-Fākhīrah 'an al-As'īlat al-Fajīrah* [on the margin of 'Abd al-Raḥmān Bashizadeh, *Kitāb al-Farg bayna al-Khālīq wa'l-Makhlūq* (Egypt, n.d.)] and Shams al-Dīn al-Ansāri (d. 727/1327) in *Jawāb Risālat Ahl Jazīrat Qubrus* (Ms. Utrecht: Cod. Mss. Oriental 40). (*Ibid.*, pp. 36-7.)

Era of Ignorance;" (2) Muḥammad praised the Christians' religion in such a way that they are obliged to cling to it; (3) the doctrine of the Trinity is supported by the Old Testament prophets, the Torah and the Psalms; (4) the belief in the Trinity is consistent with both reason and established religious law and principles; (5) Christians are indeed monotheists, while Christian expressions which might appear to suggest polytheism should be viewed in light of their similarity to Qur'anic expressions which are suggestive of anthropomorphism; and (6) Christ came manifesting the perfect religion such that there was no need for any later religion or law.¹⁵

Before proceeding to a discussion of Ibn Taymiyyah's objections to such Christian claims, a word should be said about the prevailing socio-religious milieu in which Ibn Taymiyyah lived and wrote, as well as relevant theological and doctrinal developments which Eastern Christianity had witnessed prior to his time. The Syrian and Egyptian societies of Ibn Taymiyyah's day were characterized by religious pluralism, marked by the existence of numerous sects within Islam as well as the presence of Christians and Jews. One author notes that "religious sentiment at that time was far stronger than nationalistic sentiment. . . ." This fact may serve to explain the enmity which some Christians felt toward Muslims during Ibn Taymiyyah's era, so much so that they rejoiced at the invasion of their homelands by the Mongols and Europeans.¹⁶ A reflection of Ibn Taymiyyah's personal attitude toward Christians may be seen in the fact that his first imprisonment at the age of 30 is said to have come about as a result of his intransigence toward one 'Assāf al-Naṣrānī, a Christian of Suwaydā' who had been accused of insulting the Prophet. It was during this period of incarceration that Ibn Taymiyyah composed *Kitāb al-Ṣārim al-Maslūl 'alā Shātim al-Rasūl* (which, loosely translated, reads, *A Stern Rebuke Against One Who Would Curse the Apostle [of God]*).¹⁷ Such an attitude on Ibn Taymiyyah's part would not have been surprising, of course, given the atmosphere of antagonism which prevailed between Christians and Muslims of the Byzantine era. It is worthy of note in this regard that unlike a number of other Byzantine authors,¹⁸ Paul of Antioch did not charge Muḥammad with being "an imposter or liar or warrior who waged wars and used the sword. . . ."¹⁹ Rather, he simply rejected the notion that Muḥammad's prophethood applied to Christians.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Muḥammad Yūsuf Mūsā, *Ibn Taymiyyah* (Cairo: al-Mu'assasah al-'Ammah li'l-Ta'lif wa'l-Nashr, n. d.), pp. 36-7.

¹⁷ Edited by Muḥammad Muhyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Hamid (Tanṭā: Maktabat Tāj, 1960); see *Encyclopedia of Islam*, first edition (henceforth EI), s.v. "Ibn Taymiyyah," H. Laoust, p. 951.

¹⁸ See in this regard Adel Theodore Khoury, *Les théologiens byzantins et l'Islam* (Louvain, 1969).

¹⁹ Siddiqi, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-5.

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As for doctrinal differences and developments within Christianity of relevance to our treatment of Ibn Taymiyyah's anti-Christian polemic, Ibn Taymiyyah himself reveals his awareness of the widely divergent views held by Christian theologians on the nature of the Incarnation, which he refers to variously as *al-tadarru'*, or "clothing oneself with armor," *al-itti-hād*, or "union," and *al-ḥulūl*, or "indwelling." He refers to the Jacobites' belief that the person of the Word "became a single essence, one nature and one Person, like water in milk;" the Nestorians' insistence that in Christ there were two essences, two natures and two wills, and that the divine indwelt the human as water rests in a receptacle;" and the Melchites' view (represented by Paul of Antioch) "that Christ had one essence, but two wills and two natures. . . ." ²⁰ In spite of their differences, however, Ibn Taymiyyah notes that "all three groups share in the belief that Christ is God, and also the Son of God, very God of very God." ²¹ Moreover, he derides all three groups for espousing doctrines which he insists are "not taken from a revealed book or prophets sent [by God], nor are they acceptable to the minds of the reasonable." ²² Hence, it is not Ibn Taymiyyah's aim to argue against any one Christian sect in particular, but against Christianity itself, however variously interpreted.

The questions which I would like to address in the following analysis are: On what assumptions does Ibn Taymiyyah base his arguments and which of these could be said to be specifically "Islamic," that is, based upon Muslim articles of faith? How accurately does he represent Christian doctrines? What criteria for determining theological truth does he espouse, and how does he apply such criteria to his interpretation of Islam and his polemic against Christians?

II. A Case Against Christianity: Ibn Taymiyyah's Objections to the Doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation

Although the primary focus of this study is upon conceptual arguments, it is of course impossible, given that the debate centers on religious beliefs based on particular bodies of holy writ, to manage a neat separation between "purely" conceptual arguments on one hand, and controversies over the meaning of Qur'anic or Biblical verses on the other. Thus, it will be helpful to examine points raised by Ibn Taymiyyah in

²⁰ Ahmad ibn 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Ibn Taymiyyah, *Tafsīr Sūrat al-ʾIkhlāṣ*, ed. Tāhā Yūsuf Shāhīn (Cairo: Maktabat Ansār al-Sunnah al-Muḥammadiyyah, 1954), p. 42.

²¹ *Ibid.*; cf. Robert L. Wilken, "Nestorianism," *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1987), Vol. 10, pp. 369-73.

²² *Ibid.*

connection with particular Biblical or Qur^ʿanic passages which serve to highlight presuppositions and criteria to which Ibn Taymiyyah adheres. One such instance is the attention which he devotes to the New Testament verse in which Christ says to his disciples, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. . . ." ²³ This, in Ibn Taymiyyah's estimation, is the only Gospel text which could legitimately be taken as alluding to the existence of a Trinity. ²⁴

In commenting on this verse, Ibn Taymiyyah engages in a somewhat involved discussion, the upshot of which is that: (a) Christians have failed to abide by an exegetical principle which Ibn Taymiyyah holds to be sacred, namely, that of interpreting the words of a prophet on the basis of that which was spoken by prophets who preceded him; and (b) they have, as a consequence, misinterpreted the straightforward meaning of the text (*al-zāhir*), attributing to it a sense which contradicts not only the message of former prophets, but sound reason as well. For Ibn Taymiyyah, it amounts to a cardinal rule that whatever "has been correctly transmitted [from the prophets] will never be contradicted by sound reason." ²⁵ Among those beliefs which he considers to conflict irreconcilably with "sound reason" is the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. To believe that One is Three or that Three are One is no more reasonable (and therefore, no more acceptable) than to believe that something simultaneously exists and does not exist, or that an entity is moving and stationary at the same time. He asks: "If you believe it possible for three 'Persons' (*aqānīm*) to be a single essence, then why would it not also be possible for three gods to be one essence, or three actors, . . . or three things," etc. ²⁶ Hence he addresses Christians with the question:

Why do you not leave Christ's words as they are rather than distorting them in this way [i. e., by taking them to mean that God is Three in One]. . . ? Well spoke the virtuous one who said, "If you were to ask a Christian, his son, and his grandson what they believe, each one would relate to you a doctrine which contradicted those of the others" . . . If you adhered to the straightforward meaning of this verse, you would not go astray. . . . ²⁷

²³ Matthew 28:19; all Biblical references will be taken from *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version* (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1953).

²⁴ *Al-jawāb* III: 153.

²⁵ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Bayān Muwāfaqat Sharīh al-Ma'qūl*, (Place and publisher not cited), Vol. I, 10; cited by Muḥammad Yūsuf, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

²⁶ *Al-jawāb* III: pp. 157, 159.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

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As has been mentioned, Ibn Taymiyyah maintains that the straightforward meaning of a genuine prophetic saying will never conflict either with reason or with the messages brought by previous prophets. Therefore, Christians who take the straightforward sense of Matthew 28:19 as indicating polytheism—like those Muslims who understand certain expressions in the Qurʾān as suggesting anthropomorphism (e.g., references to God speaking, having a “hand,” ascending the throne, etc.)—are simply mistaken.²⁸ On the basis of the supposition that this verse does suggest polytheism, Christians have resorted to a type of allegorical interpretation based on which they affirm “three Persons (*aqānīm*) . . . the Word of God which is His Son, a creative essence who equals [the Father] in substance, identifying Christ with this Son who is equal to the Father in substance . . . while the Spirit also is a third god, these three gods being One.”²⁹ Instead, he insists, we ought to remember that “nowhere in the words of the prophets—neither Christ nor any other—will one find any mention of God being ‘Persons’ . . . nor any reference to God’s life as being a spirit. . . .”³⁰ The Old Testament prophets never spoke of the Father except as referring to “the Lord,” nor of the “Son” except in the sense of “beloved chosen one;” as for the term “Holy Spirit,” they employed it only as an appellation for “the one whom God sends down upon the prophets and the righteous to uphold them. . . .” To interpret the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in any other sense is, he states, “a blatant lie about Christ.”³¹ His own interpretation of the text, then, is that:

by the Son he [Christ] meant himself, i. e., humanity, not an attribute of God; by the Holy Spirit he meant the One by whom God had upheld him, or the Spirit which was breathed into Christ’s mother at his conception. . . . So how can you claim that you limit yourselves to the straightforward meaning of Christ’s words?³²

Elsewhere, however, Ibn Taymiyyah acknowledges the reason given by Christians for considering Christ’s sonship to be unique:

They say, “We have referred to God’s knowledge as being begotten of Him because of its having been generated from Him as a word is generated from the mind. This knowledge was then united with humanity, and we have called the sum of this union ‘a son.’”

²⁸ *Ibid.*, II: p. 156.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 134, 152.

³¹ *Ibid.*, III: pp. 181-2; cf. III: p. 155.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 157.

In this way Christians distinguish between Christ's "sonship" and that of any of the other prophets.

For they say, "These others are sons by position (*bi'l-waḍf*), while Christ is a son by nature (*bi'l-ṭabīʿ*). That is, other prophets were called sons by God's will and power because He had chosen them, while the Word which they consider to have been united with Christ was, in their view, begotten of God eternally in a manner which did not result from an act of divine will and power; therefore, they say, 'begotten not made.'³³

Ibn Taymiyyah replies to this by pointing out that in the Old Testament, the children of Israel are all called "sons of God," while in the Psalms God says to David, "You are my son, ask of Me and I will give it to you" [Ps. 2:7-8];³⁴ in the Gospel Christ says, "I am going to my Father and your Father, my God and your God. . . ." [John 20:17] and, "When you pray, say 'Our Father. . . ." [Luke 11:2]. The Christians also say that the Holy Spirit indwells the saints, indeed, that God indwells all the righteous. Hence, he concludes, "if the indwelling [of] the Son and of the Holy Spirit requires the union of divinity and humanity, then every Christian, as well as every prophet, must be divine and human. . . ."³⁵ which we know, of course, to be untrue. As for "union,"³⁶ no prophet refers to such a thing with regard to Christ or anyone else, just as we do not find reference to the terms "Trinity," "Persons," etc.³⁷

However, if we supposed that there were more than one sense in which one could be termed a "son" of God, it would not be necessary to leap to the conclusion that everyone referred to as a "son" of God is both divine and human. As for the "indwelling" of the Holy Spirit, Christians have never claimed that this was what made Christ uniquely the Son of God. He himself told his disciples that the Holy Spirit would indwell them as well;³⁸ the Holy Spirit's indwelling is also affirmed of prophets other than Christ.³⁹ Thus, Ibn Taymiyyah is actually in agreement with

³³ *Ibid.*, III: p. 184.

³⁴ For a discussion of this particular theme, see S. Pines, "Israel, my firstborn and the sonship of Jesus: a theme of Moslem anti-Christian polemics," pp. 177-90, in *Studies in Mysticism and Religion* (place unknown, 1967).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, III: 186.

³⁶ Ibn Taymiyyah seems to distinguish in this passage between *ḥulūl* and *ittiḥād*, the former being a mere indwelling and the latter referring to a more radical union. However, as used by Ibn Taymiyyah elsewhere, and by some Muslim apologists and mystics, the two terms are by and large synonymous. See *Et.*, s. v. "Ittiḥād," R. Nicholson and G. C. Anawati, p. 283; see also *ibid.*, s. v. "Ḥulūl," Louis Massignon.

³⁷ *Al-jawāb* III: 188.

³⁸ John 14:16-17.

³⁹ Cf. I Samuel 11:6, ". . . the Spirit of God came mightily upon Saul when he heard these words. . . ." The phrase "and the Spirit of God came upon. . ." is an expression used frequently with regard to Old Testament prophets, implying a temporary "filling" at moments of challenge

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Christian belief in stating that Christ has no special claim to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

As we have mentioned, Ibn Taymiyyah also insists that if the concept of divine-human union is not found among Old Testament prophets, it therefore must be ruled out. However, such a conclusion is based on a questionable assumption, namely that God is not permitted to do anything for which no historical precedent has been established! In contrast to this, we read in the book of Isaiah God's declaration that:

From this time forth I will make you hear new things, hidden things which you have not known.
They are created now, not long ago; before today you have never heard of them
Lest you should say, "Behold, I knew them."⁴⁰

In a further objection to the notion that the divine indwelt Christ in some unique way, Ibn Taymiyyah refers to a tradition related by al-Bukhārī on the authority of Abū Hurayrah, on the authority of the Prophet:

God says, "If anyone shows enmity toward one of my saints, I shall declare war against him . . . while my servant continues to draw near to me through supererogatory acts of piety in order that I might love him. And if I love him, I shall be the hearing by which he hears, the sight by which he sees, the hand with which he strikes, and the leg on which he walks."

Ibn Taymiyyah notes that this tradition has been cited as evidence in favor of the possibility of divine indwelling or union with humanity.⁴¹ Against such an interpretation, he points out that God distinguishes in this *ḥadīth* between Himself and His saint, between the servant who draws near and the Lord to whom he draws near, which of course is inconsistent with the notion that they are actually one. As for the expression that God is the hearing by which the servant hears, the sight by which he sees, etc., Ibn Taymiyyah likens it to the close identification which can occur between two human beings such that one says to the other, "You are in my heart. . . ," which does not mean, of course, that the very self or essence of the other is in the heart of the lover. However, a lover may be so absorbed in the beloved as to say, as Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī did, "Praise be to

or revelation (see I Samuel 10:10; 19:23; 19:20). In the case of Christ, we read of the Holy Spirit descending upon him "like a dove" (Matthew 3:16); following this there is no mention of the Spirit "coming upon" him, the implication being that the Spirit thenceforth indwelt him continuously.

⁴⁰ Isaiah 48:6-8; cf. Numbers 16:30.

⁴¹ *Al-Jawāb* II: 173-174.

me!," having confused himself with God, the divine Beloved.⁴² Of interest in this connection is al-Ghazzālī's understanding of *ḥu/ū/* as presented in the gospels, according to which the statements of Christ in which he identified himself with God were not intended to be taken literally. Rather, they were a manifestation of a special privilege given to him by virtue of his prophetic mission, namely, that of "theopathic locution," that is, the use of metaphorical expressions in which he only *appears* to be attributing divinity to himself.⁴³ The parallel between Christ and a mystic like al-Biṣṭāmī is brought out by the following paraphrase of al-Ghazzālī's view offered by Massignon:

It is through a poetic exaggeration that certain enamored mystics, dazzled by the reflection of God glistening in the mirror of their consciousness, believe themselves to be identified with God, saying "I am the truth." *In which they commit the same error as the Christians, who consider this [divine reflection] in the person of Jesus and say, "this is God."*⁴⁴

Ibn Taymiyyah speculates that "those who have said that Christ or any other human being is God, or that God indwells him, may have fallen into an error of this type,"⁴⁵ that is, the type to which al-Biṣṭāmī fell victim.

Ibn Taymiyyah goes on to say that people may easily misinterpret language which makes an intimate identification between human and divine roles in earthly experience, as in the Qur'anic saying, "Whoever obeys the prophet has obeyed God." Such a statement means neither that the prophet is God nor that God indwells the Prophet, but simply that he "commands what God commands, forbids what God forbids, loves what God loves," etc. The same could be said about Christ and all the rest of God's messengers, such that if one obeys them or is hostile toward them, he has done so to God. Ibn Taymiyyah concludes that "whoever reflects on these matters will realize that the term 'indwelling' could express a valid meaning or an invalid one. . . ." ⁴⁶ It is in this way that Ibn Taymiyyah understands Christ's statements that "whoever has seen me has seen my Father" (John 14:19) and, "I and my Father are One" (John 10:30).⁴⁷

The question of whether the divine can "indwell" a human being is of course closely linked with the question of whether the divine might also,

⁴² *Ibid.*, II: 175.

⁴³ Don Wismer, "Jesus as Word: Islam," *Milla wā Milla* 15 (1975), 17.

⁴⁴ Louis Massignon, "Le Christ dans les évangiles selon al-Ghazālī," *Opera Minora*, Vol. 2, pp. 523-36 (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'ārif, Liban S. A. L., 1963), p. 533; cited by Wishers, *op. cit.*, p. 17. Emphasis in original.

⁴⁵ *Al-Jawāb* II: 176.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, II: p. 178.

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going one step further, be actually "united" with a human being. It is this question which confronts us in the Christian doctrine of the incarnation of the Word of God in Christ. Against this doctrine Ibn Taymiyyah raises a number of arguments, some of which are based solely on logical considerations, and others of which involve an appeal to Muslim and/or Christian scriptures. The first type of objection in its most basic form is expressed by Ibn Taymiyyah as follows: that "the incarnation of the creating Word of God in a created human being . . . which is expressed by saying the union of divinity with humanity, is ruled out on the basis of reason (*mumtani' fi sharih al-'aql*). Whatever is known to be thus ruled out on the basis of reason could not possibly be stated by a [divine] messenger. . . ."⁴⁸

Knowing Ibn Taymiyyah to be a devout, convinced Muslim believer who does not declare impossible the occurrence of supernatural intervention such as that affirmed by Muslims to have occurred at Jesus' conception—events which by some would be "ruled out on the basis of reason"—one might question whether Ibn Taymiyyah can validly maintain the presupposition that whatever messages the prophets bring must necessarily be comprehensible to the human mind. Such a stance would seem to be inconsistent with faith in a supernatural Being whom the finite human cannot fully comprehend. However, Ibn Taymiyyah makes the following reply to Christians who claim that the union between divine and human "cannot be understood, indeed is beyond all understanding." First of all, he insists, "one must distinguish between that which the mind knows to be senseless and impossible (*ma ya'lamu al-'aqlu butlānuhū wā imtinā'ihū*), and that which the mind is incapable of imagining or knowing. . . . The prophets may report the second; however, no one but a liar would state the first."⁴⁹ Christians hold that their claims concerning Christ being the Word of God incarnate belong in the second category. Given this fact, Ibn Taymiyyah derides Christian sects which, when faced with disagreements among themselves, appeal to reason in defense of their respective views. For if such matters are truly "beyond reason," then no theological questions should be discussed on this basis to begin with. Instead, every propagator of error should be allowed to state whatever falsehoods he so chooses, claiming that it is "beyond reason."⁵⁰

Secondly, Ibn Taymiyyah accuses Christians of forming their own opinions on theological matters and then claiming to have deduced them from statements in revealed scriptures. If they admit to not understanding the claims they are making (e.g., concerning the Trinity or the Incarnation), they are guilty of a heinous crime against God, that of making

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, II: p. 157.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, III: pp. 123-124.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, III: p. 124.

statements concerning the Divine based on ignorance. If, on the other hand, they claim to understand what they are saying, then it is their responsibility to make their beliefs clear to others rather than simply declaring that they are not subject to human comprehension.⁵¹ However, Ibn Taymiyyah concedes that

if one is transmitting established sayings of the prophets, it is not necessary for him to comprehend what he is saying. . . . For if anyone reports what is written in the Torah, the Gospel or the Qurʾān, or in the sayings of any of the prophets, we do not demand that he clarify its meaning, unlike the person who claims to have understood what the prophets said and expressed this in different words. . . .⁵²

In saying this, Ibn Taymiyyah has raised—though not resolved—difficult issues concerning the ways we are to interact with holy writ. Why, one might ask, is human understanding required when one is paraphrasing the words of the prophets, but not if he is quoting them verbatim? What would Ibn Taymiyyah's position be on texts from the New Testament which Christians affirm to be "established" as from Christ himself and yet which cannot be fully comprehended by the mind, especially those which, like Matthew 28:19, suggest a trinitarian view of God? Where does one draw the line between "that which the mind knows to be senseless and impossible" on one hand, and "that which the mind is incapable of knowing or imagining" on the other? Is this distinction a fully valid one? If one acknowledges limitations to human reason, it would appear not to be. And how shall we approach texts, whether Biblical or Qurʾanic, which people claim to understand, but in mutually exclusive ways? Adhering to their words verbatim has never yet been known to solve the problem! If it had, we might have been spared endless controversies over ambiguous verses, both Biblical and Qurʾanic. Ibn Taymiyyah argues elsewhere that we have been given the capacity to understand *all* of the Qurʾanic revelation (and, one might safely assume by implication, all revealed scriptures); otherwise, he asks, how could the Qurʾān be described as being "guidance, revelation, healing," etc.?⁵³ Surely if we understood none of the revelation, it could not be a source of guidance or healing for us. But does that leave no room for mystery, for the humbling of our intellectual hubris? As Ibn Taymiyyah himself would say, the believer is obligated to accept by faith that God "sat down upon the throne"⁵⁴ without presuming

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, III: pp. 124-125.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Al-Ikhlās*, pp. 119-24.

⁵⁴ Sūrah VII, p. 54. All Qurʾanic references will be based on *The Holy Qurʾān: Text, Translation and Commentary*, ʿAbdullah Aḥī Yūsuf (New York: Tarsile Tahrike Qurʾān, Inc., 1988).

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to ask how. Is there no parallel between this mystery and that affirmed by Christians in the doctrine of the Trinity?

Ibn Taymiyyah deals with the Christian doctrine of the Trinity elsewhere in *Al-jawāb* as well. In a paraphrase of Paul of Antioch's presentation of this teaching, he states that there is:

one God, one Lord, one Creator . . . which always has been and still is speaking, living. That is, [there is] the Essence (*al-dhāt*), the Word or Utterance (*al-naṭq*), and the Life (*al-ḥayāh*). The Essence, in our belief, is the Father, who is the source of the other two (*ibtidā' al-ithnayn*), the Word is the Son, who is born of [the Father] as speech is born of the mind, and the Life is the Holy Spirit.⁵⁵

In addition, Ibn Taymiyyah quotes in full the Nicene Creed,⁵⁶ part of which states that the Son is "equal in substance with the Father." This belief is untenable in his view because in order for the Word to be equal to the Father in substance, or essence (*fi'l-jawhar*), the Word must itself be an independently existing essence: "nothing could equal the Father in substance except another substance; it would thus be necessary for the Son to be a second essence and the Holy Spirit a third . . . and this is a statement of [the existence of] three essences, three gods. . . ." ⁵⁷ Elsewhere Ibn Taymiyyah criticizes Christians for employing the term "essence"—a term which he says is not of Arabic origin—to refer to God, since not only was it never used by the prophets, but its originator was Aristotle, a pagan! ⁵⁸ Regarding Christian beliefs about the Holy Spirit, Ibn Taymiyyah notes that, as stated in the Nicene Creed, the Holy Spirit "has spoken by the prophets." He also refers to Paul of Antioch's description of the Holy Spirit as "the life of God."⁵⁹ However, "the life of God is an attribute which inheres in God [alone] and does not indwell any other, "and therefore it could not have been this Spirit which spoke through him . . . And if the Holy Spirit who was in the prophets was one of the three Persons of the Trinity, then every one of the prophets would be a god to be worshipped, his humanity joined to divinity. . . . But you acknowledge divine indwelling and union only of Christ." ⁶⁰

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, II, pp. 114-19.

⁵⁶ *Al-jawāb* II: pp. 109-10.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, II: p. 115.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, III: 195-8; it is of interest in this regard that the Nestorians, who moved their see in 762 A.H. to Baghdad, the 'Abbāsīd capital where they were held in esteem by the 'Abbāsīd caliphs, were the first to promote Greek philosophy and science in the Islamic empire by translating Greek texts into Syrian and then into Arabic. (See Matti Moosa, "Nestorian Church," *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade [New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1987], Vol. 10, p. 370.)

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, II: pp. 116-17.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, II: pp. 117-18.

Furthermore, he objects, as an attribute of God inhering in Him (i. e., God's "life"), the Holy Spirit cannot be said, as the Creed states, to "proceed" (*yanbathiqu*) from God anymore than do other attributes such as God's knowledge or power.⁶¹ Or if one did speak of "proceeding," then it would be more applicable to God's speech than to God's life. Thus, if there were among God's attributes that which could be described as "proceeding" from God, it would be what they refer to as "the Son," which they describe as being divine knowledge, speech, expression or wisdom. Ibn Taymiyyah's objection to the notion of anything "coming forth" from God is linked to his understanding of the Qur'anic description of God as *al-Ṣamad*, namely "the One from whom nothing proceeds."⁶² However, this does not, he says, refer to speech, based on the *ḥadīth* which states that, "Human beings have not drawn near to God via anything superior to that which has proceeded from Him,"⁶³ i. e., the Qur'an; for when God speaks, no part of His essence departs from Him. However, if 'proceeding' means 'coming forth' (*khurūj*), then it cannot be said with regard to God, because such a process would, in Ibn Taymiyyah's view, entail partitioning (*tabṣīḍ, tajzi'ah*) of the divine Being,⁶⁴ for another meaning of *al-Ṣamad* is "the One who is not subject to partition (*al-tajazzi*) in His essence."⁶⁵

A briefer but somewhat odd argument which Ibn Taymiyyah makes against the Christian notion of the Incarnation is that if Christ "was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary," then He is both the Word of God and the Life of God. In other words, Christ is then both the Son and the Holy Spirit, which means that he is identified with two Persons of the Trinity rather than only one. "And if the Holy Spirit is not in fact the Life of God, then Christians' explanation of the Holy Spirit is false."⁶⁶ Here, for the sake of argument, Ibn Taymiyyah accepts the possibility of God being thought of as existing both as one Essence and three Persons (*aqānīm*). However, he gives a distorted representation of the roles of Mary and the Holy Spirit in the Incarnation, roles which are generally taken by Christians to be those of "catalytic agents," as it were, in the process of incarnation, but not that of "subject," which was the Word of God.

Ibn Taymiyyah's statement thus reflects neither the Christian doctrine which he is criticizing, nor the Muslim understanding of Jesus Christ's relationship to the Word of God, according to which he was created by God's Word. He was called a "word from God" because he was, like Adam,

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, II: p. 155.

⁶² *Al-Ikhlās*, p. 4; this definition is attributed to 'Ikrimah.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁶⁴ *Al-Jawāb* II: p. 156.

⁶⁵ *Al-Ikhlās*, pp. 5-6; citing al-Tirmidhī.

⁶⁶ *Al-Jawāb* II: pp. 116-17.

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created by God's mere command to "Be!". "The similitude of Jesus before God is as that of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him: 'Be!' and he was."⁶⁷ The role of the Holy Spirit—identified in Islam with the angel Gabriel—is clearly that of agency (or instrumentality) in that Jesus' conception occurred through God's inbreathing (*nafkh*) into Mary via the angel.⁶⁸ In regard to this aspect of how Christ entered the world, Christians and Muslims appear to be in agreement. However, as in the Christian affirmation that Jesus was himself the divine Word, there is no confusion between Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Hence, the image on which Ibn Taymiyyah bases this particular objection is consistent with neither the Christian nor the Muslim understanding of Christ's relationship to the Holy Spirit.

One particular theme to which Ibn Taymiyyah gives attention in a number of his arguments against the Trinity is that of the three Persons (*aqānīm*) of the Trinity being described as divine attributes (*ṣifāt*). Referring to this notion, he mentions at one point that "the Christians claim that three of God's attributes are alone essential (*jawhariyyah*) among the rest. . . ."⁶⁹ One of the reasons for his objection to such a claim is his rejection of attempts—begun by Greek philosophers—to distinguish between essential and non-essential attributes.⁷⁰ In addition, he notes that based on the notion that God consists of three Persons, Christians have disputed endlessly over which three divine attributes, corresponding to the three Persons, are "essential". Should God be described as "Existing, Living and Knowing" (corresponding to the Father, the Holy Spirit and the Son respectively)? Or as "Existing, Almighty and Knowing," such that the Holy Spirit is identified with God's power rather than with God's life? God's Word is variously identified as divine knowledge, divine wisdom, and divine expression, the latter term being used in particular by Paul of Antioch. All of this, he says, simply reveals the Christians' error and confusion, for "they cannot find three meanings which merit being considered 'essential' apart from God's other attributes. . . ."⁷¹ Moreover, he notes that there is a close semantic link between attributes and names, since the latter often imply the former; e.g., the name "Living" (*al-ḥayy*) implies the attribute of life (*al-ḥayāh*), the name "Knowing" (*al-ʿalīm*) implies knowledge, etc. Hence, "the names by which people know God are both names and attributes. . . . [The names] indicate meanings which are the attributes inhering in God. . . ." ⁷² Not only so, but "the names of

⁶⁷ Sūrah III, p. 59.

⁶⁸ See Wismer, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.

⁶⁹ *Al-jawāb* II: p. 147.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, II: pp. 148-9.

⁷² *Ibid.*

God are numerous and varied. . . .” But if God’s names—and hence, God’s attributes—are so numerous, “then limiting them to three to the exclusion of the rest is invalid.”⁷³

Based on the conceptualization of the Trinity presented above, Ibn Taymiyyah offers the following objection: If, on one hand, the Word, or knowledge, of God which was united to Christ refers to the very Essence or Self which knows and speaks, then Christ himself is the Father, while he is also the Son and the Holy Spirit, which Christians would deny to be the case. Suppose, on the other hand, that the being united to Christ was simply the Word, or knowledge itself. In this case it would have to be remembered that speech and knowledge are attributes; moreover, an attribute has no existence apart from the being to which it is attributed. It would follow from this that: (a) such speech or knowledge could not be united to Christ apart from the Essence [to which it is attributed], which brings us back to the first possibility proposed above, and (b) since a divine attribute is not itself the creating, knowing God, then it would be false to claim that Christ was actually the Divine Being to whom we attribute the acts of creating, sustaining, etc. Hence, in either case, the Christians’ claim that the Divine was incarnated in Christ is shown to be unsound.⁷⁴

The conception of the Trinity upon which Ibn Taymiyyah bases this objection—namely, that: (a) the Father is the Essence from which the Holy Spirit and the Word proceed and to which they are related as attributes, and, (b) that each of these three ‘Persons’ is itself an attribute of God (who would then have to be the Essence encompassing all three)—is clearly confused. The difficulty may be resolved, however, by noting that the identification of each member of the Trinity with a single attribute of God, although Ibn Taymiyyah portrays it as representing Christian belief, does not in fact correspond to the Biblical representation of God. Rather than each “Person” of the Trinity embodying a single attribute, each one is depicted as embodying all qualities of the Divine: the “Father” and “Holy Spirit” speak just as does the “Word” or “Son;”⁷⁵ the “Son” gives life (e.g., by resurrecting Lazarus) just as do the Father and the Holy Spirit,⁷⁶ and so on. Hence, what Ibn Taymiyyah criticizes here as being a Biblical view, although it may have been espoused by some Christian thinkers, is nevertheless challenged by Biblical teaching itself. This being the case, the premise on which Ibn Taymiyyah bases this objection is subject to question.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, II: pp. 110-11; cf. *Ikhlas*, 44.

⁷⁴ *Al-Jawab* II: pp. 112-13, 157-8; cf. *Ikhlas*, pp. 43-4.

⁷⁵ See Matthew 3:17; Acts 13:2.

⁷⁶ See John 11:43-44; Romans 8:11; Acts 2:23-24.

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A further argument proposed by Ibn Taymiyyah is based on an analogy between the unification of divinity and humanity, and the union of soul and body. If one draws such an analogy, he states, one must remember that whatever suffering afflicts the body affects the soul as well. It follows, then, that when Christ was crucified and suffered bodily pain, his divinity would also have suffered.⁷⁷ Let us assume that Ibn Taymiyyah's premises and conclusion are sound, and that indeed, the divine suffered in Christ. To take such a conclusion as grounds for rejecting the possibility of the Incarnation is to betray a particular preconception concerning God, namely that it is incompatible with God's being "God" for Him to experience pain. This notion is reminiscent of that held by Greek philosophers such as Aristotle,⁷⁸ according to whom the Perfect Being, as the "Unmoved Mover," could not under any circumstances be a "patient," but only an "agent," i.e. the actor rather than the one acted upon or subject to influence. This, however, is inconsistent with Jewish, Christian and even Muslim scriptures. In the Old Testament, for example, God is depicted as yearning for and grieving over His wayward people as a parent agonizes over a child gone astray, even to the point of appearing to be subject to change:

Every evil of theirs is in Gilgal;
there I began to hate them.
Because of the wickedness of their deeds . . .
I will love them no more.⁷⁹

When Israel was a child, I loved him,
and out of Egypt I called my son.
The more I called them,
the more they went from me . . .
How can I give you up, O Ephraim!
How can I hand you over, O Israel!
. . . My heart recoils within me, my compassion
grows warm and tender.
I will not execute my fierce anger,
I will not again destroy Ephraim;
for I am God and not man,
the Holy One in your midst,
and I will not come to destroy.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ *Al-Jawāb* II: pp. 169-70.

⁷⁸ See, for example, Werner Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), p. 45.

⁷⁹ Hosea 9:15.

⁸⁰ Hosea 11:1-2, 8-9.

In the New Testament, the notion of Christ's suffering as both human and divine is based on the same notion as that which underlies Hosea's message, namely that God's love for humankind—a reflection of the utmost perfection—is so great that He willingly subjects Himself to the possibility of suffering the pain of rejection on their account. According to the Qur'anic message also, God places Himself in relation to human beings first by bringing them into existence, and then by taking the initiative to communicate with humankind through the creation, the prophets, the conscience, and so forth, commanding the good and prohibiting the harmful.⁸¹ The recognition that God could possibly "react" to human beings' decisions or actions is probably greatest among those with a "*Qadariyyah*" bent, i. e., those sympathetic with the view that humans enjoy a degree of free will and therefore, by what they do, elicit responses from God which were not foreordained from eternity. Given such a view, the very fact that God would engage in the acts of creating, revealing, commanding, prohibiting, warning, etc. reflects a divine concern implicit within which is the capacity to be affected by human actions.⁸² In another argument based on the appeal to reason, Ibn Taymiyyah insists that the idea of a union between the Divine and the human involves an irreconcilable contradiction. For if the Divine and the human remained two essences, then there was no actual union. If, on the other hand, they became a single essence, this would require change to have occurred in the eternally unchanging Being.⁸³ Moreover, he continues, it does no good to posit an analogy between the relationship between the soul and the body on one hand, and the Divine and human on the other. For the soul and body profoundly affect one another. What could be more profound, he asks, than the difference between life and death, i. e., between the state of the body when the spirit "indwells" it, and its condition after the spirit has departed? Similarly, the soul suffers and experiences pleasure along with the body's pleasure and suffering. If one follows through with this analogy, the result

⁸¹ Sūrahs II, 117; XLV, 12-13; IX, 71-2; XVI, 43-4.

⁸² Cf. *Īdā*, s.v. "Kadariyyah," J. Van Ess, 369. This author notes that "occasionally in polemic the Kadarite doctrine was attributed to Christian influence. . . ." Ghaylān al-Dimashqī (d. ?), who developed a nonconformist political program based on the Kadarite notion that the Caliph (like everyone else) is responsible for his actions and should therefore be deposed if he fails to live by the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, was a mawlā of Coptic origin, and built his thought upon Christian ideas. (*Ibid.*, pp. 370-1; cf. M. S. Seale, *Muslim Theology* [London, 1964], 18ff.) However, Van Ess also observes that the notion of free will is no less Qur'anic than that of predestination. Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, an early proponent of a moderate Kadarite view, based his thought on careful Qur'anic exegesis, as "deterministic and non-deterministic sayings stand side by side" in the Qur'ān. (M. Watt, *Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam* [London: Luzac, 1948], 12ff., cited by Van Ess, *op. cit.*, p. 371.)

⁸³ *Al-Jawāb* II: p. 158.

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remains that a change has occurred in the eternal, unchanging Participant in this union, which of course is not possible.⁸⁴

Finally, in a further application of the soul-body analogy, Ibn Taymiyyah notes that the relationship between soul and body is such that they are "partners in good works and bad, while they both receive reward and punishment." Hence, just as everything done voluntarily by the body is attributable to the soul, so (according to the analogy), everything Christ did would also be God's action.⁸⁵

And since, according to Christians, "the union between the divine and human is more perfect and complete than the soul's union with the body, then would any reasonable person—given such a union as this—say that they remain two essences, each of which performs voluntary acts in which the other does not share? Nevertheless, [the Christians] say, despite their claim of such a union—that the one who prayed, fasted, made supplication, learned, suffered, and was beaten and crucified was the counterpart of the body, while the one who commands and prohibits, creates and sustains was the counterpart of the soul. . . ."⁸⁶

In response to this last argument, one might first point out that not all Christians would agree with the statement that it was only Christ's humanity that prayed, fasted, suffered, etc., while only his divinity commanded, prohibited, and so forth. In fact, the suffering of the Divine in the person of Christ was explicitly affirmed by theologians such as Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444 C.E.), who taught that "all the actions predicated of Jesus (e.g., of human birth, growth in wisdom, suffering and death) were predicated of the divine logos as well."⁸⁷ It is also important to bear in mind that when speaking of divine mysteries, even the best of analogies will break down sooner or later; the failure of the analogy does not therefore necessitate the absurdity or impossibility of the phenomenon which it is intended to illustrate or explicate—in this case, the possibility of an eternal, immutable Being uniting with an entity which is time-bound and subject to change.

Another aspect of the Trinity to which Ibn Taymiyyah devotes a great deal of energy is the Christian claim, as stated in the Nicene Creed, that Christ was "begotten not made" (*mawlūd ghayru makhlūq*). Ibn Taymiyyah insists that for a process to be called "birth" (*wilādah, tawallud*), it must: (1) involve two sources, (2) entail a separation of some part of these two

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, II: pp. 102-3.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, III: p. 105

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, III: p. 106.

⁸⁷ Wilkin, *op. cit.*, p. 373.

sources, and (3) occur in time.⁸⁸ As an illustration of "birth" or "generation," he cites the example of fire generated by two flints which give off a spark. However, he says, the permanent attributes of something—be it created or untreated—can never be said to be "born" or generated. One could not say, for example, that "the color of the sky . . . is generated from it, nor the power and light of the sun which inhere in it. . . ." ⁸⁹ Rather, he says, we speak of "birth" regarding:

something which inheres in something else, or of that which comes to be in time after it was not, such as the rays found in the earth or on the walls, which inhere not in these, but in [the sun], and are generated from two sources, not one. . . .⁹⁰

What Ibn Taymiyyah means by the second "source," then, is simply the locus in which something like the rays of sunlight come to rest after proceeding from the sun. Based on this understanding of what "begetting" entails, Ibn Taymiyyah states that if, as the Christians claim, the divine Word is co-eternal with God, then it cannot also be said to have been "begotten," since begetting is by definition something which occurs in time, and cannot be predicated of an eternal being. Therefore, Christians are correct in not claiming that the Holy Spirit is likewise begotten; however, in Ibn Taymiyyah's view this is simply another inconsistency on their part, for if they claim that one of God's eternal attributes (the Word) is His "son," then they should, for the sake of consistency, claim the same for all of them.⁹¹

Based on the assumption that birth necessitates the separation of some part of the "parent," Ibn Taymiyyah appeals to the Qur'anic description of God as *al-Samad*, one meaning of which is the Being "from whom nothing proceeds."⁹² However, as we have seen, he does not consider this statement to apply to God's speech, which is said to "proceed" from God yet without being separated from Him in any way. Moreover, assuming that birth requires two sources, Ibn Taymiyyah appeals to the Qur'anic verses which vigorously deny that God could have a son because He has no consort, or "companion." Thus we read: "How could He have a son when He has not had a companion. . . ?"

What one comes up against in responding to such arguments is, as has been noted, the inherent inadequacy of analogies drawn from earthly experience in our attempts to speak of heavenly realities, and the ease with

⁸⁸ *Al-Jawāb* II: p. 170.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, III: p. 171

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, III: p. 172; cf. III: p. 176.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, III: p. 172; cf. *Al-Ikhlās*, pp. 45-6

⁹² *Al-Ikhlās*, p. 19.

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which, in our zeal to avoid anthropomorphism, we fall into the equally serious error of denying "that with which God has described Himself." In setting forth his basic approach, Ibn Taymiyyah states his commitment to describing God "as He has described Himself in His [revealed] books and as His messengers have described Him, without distorting the intent of their words, denying God's attributes, demanding an explanation of how these matters are as they are, or likening God to His creatures."⁹³ He roundly condemns those Muslims who, in their determination to avoid the dangers of anthropomorphic thinking about God, reject the straightforward meaning of Qur'anic statements such as that God "sat down upon the throne," or that God created Adam with His "hands." To this end they resort to allegorical interpretations of their own. By doing so, however, they are actually engaging in a kind of covert anthropomorphism, since such allegorical interpretation rests on the assumption that God's "hand" or "sitting" must necessarily mean what it would to us based on our human, earthly experience.⁹⁴

Now, if the same reasoning were applied to the Christian scriptures when they speak of God's "only begotten Son,"⁹⁵ we would have to say, with Ibn Taymiyyah, that we are bound to describe God "as He has described Himself" and assume that when the prophets speak of God having a "begotten Son," this must have a meaning which we cannot fully comprehend (and which must not be assumed to correspond exactly to what earthly experience would tell us about "begetting"), in which case we refrain from interpretation and leave its meaning to God. Ibn Taymiyyah is adamant in his insistence that it is not permissible to employ terminology foreign to that of the prophets, or to force the prophets' language into conformity with ours.⁹⁶ However, if we adopt this criterion laid down by Ibn Taymiyyah for arriving at theological truth, i.e., that of describing God only "as He has described Himself in His [revealed] books," and attempt to apply it equally to both Muslim and Christian scriptures, we are reminded once again of the inescapable fact that, alas, the two Holy Books with which we are dealing do not describe God in ways fully consistent with one another. But more about this conundrum later.

Meanwhile, in the realm of conceptually based arguments which nevertheless also involve some appeal to Muslim and/or Christian scriptures, we find a group of objections which one might term Ibn Taymiyyah's "more fitting" arguments. In one of these he contends that, given the frequency

⁹³ *Al-Jawāb* III: p. 132.

⁹⁴ See Majmu' Fatawā Shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad ibn Taymiyyah, ed. *ʿAbd Al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Qāsim* (Riḥāḥ: al-Maktab al-Thaʿlabī al-Saʿūdī bi'l-Maghrib, 1964), Vol. III, pp. 165-9, 178, 185, and 188-91.

⁹⁵ John 1:14; 3:16.

⁹⁶ *Al-Jawāb* III: p. 179.

with which God has employed angels in bringing revelation to His prophets, it must be "more fitting" for divine revelation to appear in spiritual form (*fi'l-laḥīf*) than in bodily form (*fi'l-kathīf*). Moreover, "if it were possible for the Lord—praised be He to indwell and be united with some other living being, it would be more fitting for Him to indwell or be united with an angel than a human being."⁹⁷ However, one might ask: Does it necessarily follow that since God has done such-and-such on a number of occasions, that it is "more fitting" that He do the same on all subsequent occasions? Is it not equally plausible to suppose that by appearing in the form of a mere human God "chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise . . . what is weak in the world to shame the strong . . . so that no human being might boast in the presence of God"?⁹⁸ In a similar vein, Ibn Taymiyyah states that "if it was possible for God to unite himself with a human being, then His uniting Himself with an angel would have been more proper and fitting. Hence, it would have been better for Him to be incarnated in Gabriel whom He sent to the prophets than to be incarnate in a human being who speaks to the Jews and to the Christian masses."⁹⁹ Given the fact that God once commanded a host of angels to bow down before Adam,¹⁰⁰ it strikes one as odd that Ibn Taymiyyah assumes without question that angels are superior to human beings and therefore, fitter vessels for potential divine indwelling. Besides, even if it were somehow possible to demonstrate who is superior to whom, would it thereby become any human being's prerogative to set himself up as judge of what God should or should not have done?

The final argument to be examined against the doctrine of the Incarnation runs as follows: We know, says Ibn Taymiyyah, that Christ had an ordinary human body. Given this fact, then the Divine could just as easily have been incarnated in Moses, or any other prophet for that matter. The mere fact that no other prophet has claimed to be the incarnation of God does not constitute proof that no other prophet was in fact such an incarnation, since "non-existence of knowledge is not knowledge of non-existence" (*ʿadam al-ʿilmi laysa ʿilman biʿl-ʿadam*). After all, Christians believe God to have been incarnate in Christ for 30 years without manifesting outwardly anything but his humanity. Therefore, He could surely have done the same with other prophets of whom we know nothing. And whoever accepts Christians' claim that God was incarnate in Christ must admit this possibility as well. Moreover, if one holds that it would have been

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, II: pp. 169-170.

⁹⁸ I Corinthians 1:27-29.

⁹⁹ *Al-Jawāb* II: p. 172.

¹⁰⁰ Sūrah II, 34.

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possible for God to be united with any material body whatsoever, then we have no right to condemn the Israelites who worshipped the golden calf, or any idol-worshippers for that matter. However, the prophet Moses did condemn them. Therefore, Christians' claim concerning Christ's divinity must be false.¹⁰¹

In response to this argument, a number of points may be made. First of all, assuming that Christ did indeed possess a physical body about which there was nothing unusual, does it follow necessarily that God could just as easily have been incarnated in anyone or anything else? The answer to such a question would seem to depend on what we mean when we speak of the Divine—and specifically, the Divine as depicted in the Jewish scriptures—becoming incarnate. That is, was it simply a matter of taking on a body, or did it involve the manifestation of particular qualities which had long been associated with God's self-revelation, and which go far beyond mere physicality? The answer is indubitably the latter. The "signs" of Christ's divinity included his power to heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out evil spirits, and to overcome death through resurrection.¹⁰² Hence, even if God "could have" manifested Himself in a body other than that of Christ, it does not follow that we have any reason to believe that He did.

As for Ibn Taymiyyah's suggestion that God might have chosen to become incarnate in some prophet other than Christ without "announcing" it, is it reasonable to suppose that God would have gone to all the trouble to unite Himself with a lowly human being unless there were some reason for us to know about it? The notion that there was indeed good reason for such an event not to be kept a secret forms the basis for Christian missionary activity from its very inception. As the Apostle Paul writes, "how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?"¹⁰³ And although Christ did not manifest signs of his divinity during the first 30 years of his brief life, the fact remains that he did manifest such signs eventually. Hence, this is not a convincing argument for the view that God might have been incarnated "anonymously" in innumerable earthlings without any attempt to let this be known to us. And since there is virtually no commensurability between the belief that God was incarnate in a prophet the likes of Jesus Christ on one hand, and the worship of inanimate objects on the other, Moses' condemnation of the Israelites for their idolatry remains valid, yet without thereby undermining the validity of Christian claims of Christ's divinity.

¹⁰¹ *Al-Jawāb* III: 165-6.

¹⁰² See Matthew 8:13, 29; John 11:43-44; Matthew 28:6; and John 20:30.

¹⁰³ Romans 10:14.

III. Conclusion

It is evident from this work of Ibn Taymiyyah that he is conversant with the Old and New Testaments, as well as with Christian doctrinal statements such as the Nicene Creed. As has been noted, there are points at which he appears to be misrepresenting Christian beliefs. However, given the doctrinal ferment and controversy which the Eastern church had witnessed throughout the centuries of its history prior to Ibn Taymiyyah's time, even some "Christian" formulations of Christian doctrine might be rightly deemed misrepresentative of actual Biblical teaching. Hence, throughout the work as a whole, it is apparent that Ibn Taymiyyah is attempting to present Christian doctrines in an accurate and straightforward manner, while any distortions which do appear are more likely due to distortions in Christians' own formulations of doctrine than to any deliberate attempt on his part at misrepresentation. Moreover, it is noteworthy that while Ibn Taymiyyah denounces Christians whom he charges with having "changed the religion of Christ," e.g., through the introduction of practices like monasticism which the Gospel does not mandate,¹⁰⁴ he does not, however, accuse them of changing their scriptures. Hence, unlike a number of other Muslim apologists, he appears to share with Christians the assumption that their holy book is basically intact. Moreover, we have noted his clearly stated assumptions that: (1) no genuine prophetic saying will ever conflict with sound human reason, or vice-versa; (2) we have been given the capacity to understand the revelation given to us (although he does acknowledge that there are verses the interpretation of which we must simply leave to God);¹⁰⁵ and (3) the true meaning of any revealed speech can be determined only by interpreting it in light of previous revelation.

In the above assumptions, Ibn Taymiyyah remains on common ground with the majority of Christian thinkers (granting differences of viewpoint over the exact role played by "reason" in confirming one's belief). However, as a Muslim apologist, Ibn Taymiyyah also holds to the premise that wherever the witness of the Qur'an or Prophetic traditions comes into conflict with that of the Old or New Testament, the former is to be given clear priority over the latter. Here, of course, Ibn Taymiyyah parts ways with his Christian counterparts. This presupposition, however, though it is to be expected from a convinced Muslim believer, stands in conflict with another of his stated assumptions, i.e., that the words of any prophet are to be interpreted solely on the basis of the words of former messen-

¹⁰⁴ *Al-Jawāb* I: pp. 268-73.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, III: p. 160.

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gers of God—an exegetical principle the violation of which he repeatedly charges Christians in the interpretation of their own scriptures. Hence, the question arises: which is to be the touchstone of theological truth—the earlier or the later revelation?

When Ibn Taymiyyah insists on interpreting Matthew 28:19, for example, strictly in terms of Old Testament prophets' usages of appellations such as "son" of God, Holy Spirit, etc. is he not overlooking the Muslim belief that one revelation can supersede and abrogate another?¹⁰⁶ The possibility of abrogation, while consonant with the insistence that the Islamic revelation is to be given priority over previous revelations whenever there is a conflict among them, simultaneously precludes the claim that each new genuine prophetic message must have a meaning absolutely consistent with previous prophetic words. This being the case, why must the meaning of Christian revelation be perfectly and completely contained within that of the Old Testament scriptures? That is, could not God go beyond what He had said before in unexpected ways?

It appears, then, that there is some degree of inconsistency both in the criteria which Ibn Taymiyyah espouses for determining theological truth, and in his application of these to Islam and Christianity. It is indeed difficult, if one values certainty and consistency on one hand, and religious tolerance on the other, to live with the tension which results from holding simultaneously that one's own beliefs as a Muslim or as a Christian are "true," and that they stand in conflict with the holy writ accepted and venerated by adherents of the other faith. As has been noted, Ibn Taymiyyah does not resort to the easy out of accusing Christians of changing the words of their scriptures, and for this he is to be commended. As a result, however, he—and we—are bound to live with the above-named tension and not seek too facilely to explain it away. The inevitable conclusion seems to be that given the presupposition that Islam is "true" in an objective, historical sense, one will not—indeed cannot—accept Christianity as likewise and equally "true," and vice-versa. What is one to say then? Perhaps simply that: "With Him [alone] is the knowledge of the secrets of the heavens and the earth . . ." ¹⁰⁷ We would likewise do well to remember God's declaration, conveyed through the prophet Isaiah, that:

[M]y thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,
says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are

¹⁰⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, I: p. 280.

¹⁰⁷ Sūrah XVIII, 26.

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my ways higher than your ways, And my thoughts than your thoughts.¹⁰⁸



¹⁰⁸ Isaiah 55:9.



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A Dark-Age Crisis: Aspects of the Iconoclastic Controversy

Peter Brown

LIKE the religious reform of the Pharaoh Akhnaton (Amenhotep IV, 1385–1358 B.C.), to which it has been likened, the Iconoclast controversy in the eighth-century Byzantine empire has long tantalized the historian: for he seems to be confronted with a rare phenomenon – with a sudden break in the even flow of a society with a reputation for unswerving traditionalism.¹ This view of the Iconoclast controversy dates back to the attitude of the Iconodules in the Council of Nicaea of 787 and the triumph of Orthodoxy of 843.² On these occasions it was stated that the icons had been preserved in the church since the days of the Apostles, and so that their removal, between 730 and 787, had been an abrupt hiatus in the continuum of the Christian religion. Iconodule historians were quick to present the Iconoclast movement as a thoroughly un-Byzantine interlude. The Emperors Leo III and Constantine V and their advisers were said to have acted under the influence of persons and of ideas alien to the core of Byzantine civilization.³ Modern research has removed the more spectacular examples of non-Byzantine scapegoats. Renegade Muslims and Jewish sorcerers have been definitively ousted: in the period between 726 and 730, Leo III took his decisions through the advice of sober provincial bishops, in a thoroughly Byzantine attempt to placate God, Whose anger with the Christian people had been shown by Arab invasions and by volcanic eruptions.⁴ Careful study of Byzantine-Arab relations in the eighth century⁵; a re-examination of the Muslim attitude to images in the same

1 By Eduard Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*, ii, 2 (1953), 414

2 See the masterly study of J. Gouillard, 'Le Synodikon de l'Orthodoxie: édition et commentaire', *Travaux et Mémoires du Centre de Recherche d'Histoire et Civilisation byzantines*, ii (1967), 1–316.

3. P. J. Alexander, *The Patriarch Nicophorus of Constantinople. Ecclesiastical Policy and Image Worship in the Byzantine Empire* (1958), pp. 6–22 discusses the evidence customarily advanced for such views.

4. G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (trans. J. M. Hussey, 1968), pp. 160 ff.

5. A. Grabar, *L'iconoclasm byzantin. Dossier archéologique* (1957), pp. 101–10 and P. Lemerle, *Le premier humanisme byzantin* (1971), pp. 31–33.

century¹; re-assessment of the position of the Jews in the Byzantine empire² – these converging studies have led to the greatest caution in invoking the influence of any non-Christian culture in the genesis of the Iconoclast movement. A consideration of the attitude of the early church to images³ and the discovery of an Iconoclast movement in the totally Christian environment of seventh-century Armenia⁴ have led almost all scholars to regard Iconoclasm as endogenic: it was a crisis within Byzantine Christianity itself.

Nevertheless, the perspective of the triumph of Orthodoxy lingers tenaciously in its central tenet. Iconoclasm is still treated in most accounts as representing the momentary emergence of elements in Byzantine culture that were, if not totally alien, at least provincial or non-Hellenic, and the triumph of Orthodoxy is presented as the assertion of the mainstream of the Byzantine tradition over a deviant tributary. Somewhat nostalgically, the re-instatement of the icons is hailed as a victory of the representational traditions of Greece over the non-representational piety of the oriental provinces of the empire.⁵ Two recent interpretations have been taken to support this impression. In the first place, Ostrogorsky was able to isolate a strong Monophysite streak in the iconoclastic theology of Constantine V. This discovery has been held sufficient, in itself, to lay the Iconoclast movement under the *praeiudicium* of having originated among an oriental population that was either hostile or indifferent to the Chalcedonian synthesis of the divine and the human in Christ and, consequently, to the showing of Christ in human form.⁶ In the second place, it is assumed that the social changes of the late seventh and eighth centuries shifted the centre of gravity of the Byzantine state towards the oriental populations of the countryside of Anatolia, at the expense of the traditional urban culture of the Aegean. These changes were sharpened by the military reforms of the same time. It has been assumed that the armies of the newly-instituted Themes were recruited locally; and, so, in supporting the Iconoclast emperors

1. K. A. C. Gresswell, 'The Lawfulness of Painting in Early Islam', *Ars Islamica*, xi-xii (1946), 159-66 and U. Monneret de Villard, *Introduzione allo Studio dell' Archeologia islamica* (1966), pp. 249-75.

2. A. Sharf, *Byzantine Jewry. From Julian to the Fourth Crusade* (1971), pp. 61-81.

3. N. H. Baynes, 'Idolatry and the Early Church', *Byzantine Studies and other Essays* (1960), pp. 116-43 and 'The Icons before Iconoclasm', *Harvard Theological Review*, xlv (1951), 93-106 in *Byzantine Studies*, pp. 226-39.

4. S. Der Nersessian, 'Une Apologie des Images au septième siècle', *Byzantion*, xvii (1945), 58-87 and P. J. Alexander, 'An Ascetic Sect of Iconoclasts in Seventh Century Armenia', *Late Classical and Medieval Studies in Honor of Albert Matthias Friend, Jr.* (1955), pp. 151-150.

5. Karl Schwarzlose, *Der Bilderstreit. Ein Kampf der griechischen Kirche um ihre Eigenart und um ihre Freiheit* (1890). Note the subtitle.

6. G. Ostrogorsky, *Studien zur Geschichte des byzantinischen Bilderstreites* (1929; photographic reprint 1964), pp. 5, 25-28, 40. This thesis is examined with further elaborations by Alexander, *ubi supra*, pp. 44 ff. Baynes (*Byzantine Studies*, p. 136) was unconvinced: 'there is little if anything to be said for the view and there is no need for us to accept their contention.'

who had originated from the same provinces, the eastern armies are held to have been expressing the sullen hostility of a whole provincial culture towards the alien, Iconodule piety of its capital.¹

Altogether, the Iconoclast controversy is in the grip of a crisis of over-explanation. It is necessary to raise some *prima facie* objections to the views just stated, if only to free the subject for further investigation along different lines. First: the Christological background of Iconoclasm is far from certain. The *Queries* of Constantine V were alarmingly intelligent²; but, on the whole, the discussion of the Christological issues involved in the worship or rejection of icons was remarkably desultory throughout the eighth century. Far away, across the Arab frontier, John of Damascus had seen and stated clearly the Christological background to the controversy. But John's *On Images* was written at a safe distance from the world, in the *wadis* of the convent of Saint Sabas. There is little evidence that the Byzantine clergy knew of it at the Council of Nicaea in 787. The proceedings at Nicaea show none of that certainty of touch, the smooth mobilization of *catenae* of authorities, with which Byzantine prelates had resolved those Christological controversies to which they had become only too well accustomed.³ As we read about it in eighth-century sources, there is nothing *déjà vu* about Iconoclasm.

Second: in the early eighth-century Byzantine empire, how far east is 'east'? The Iconoclast bishops came from Phrygia. In the sixth century, Phrygia had been thought of as 'a province that naturally loved culture and had a great taste for the study of letters'.⁴ Professor Louis Robert has this to say of the countryside around Nacoleia, the see of a leading Iconoclast bishop: 'C'est une épigraphie de la campagne, et elle est grecque autant qu'abondante... Les dédicaces si nombreuses et intéressantes et les épitaphes n'ont pas été rédigées pour une mince couche de citoyens riches des villes, mais, du haut en bas, pour les paysans, aisés ou pauvres, des villages et des hameaux'.⁵ Thus the idea that Asia Minor was a vast, undifferentiated backlands and a seed-bed of 'oriental' religiosity⁶ is contradicted by most of what we know of the immediate Late Roman past of those provinces in which the leading Iconoclast bishops had their sees.

Third: most current explanations of the Iconoclast controversy implicitly ignore the role of Constantinople as the hub of the eighth

1. H. Ahrweiler, 'L'Asie Mineure et les invasions arabes', *Revue historique*, ccxxvii (1962), 1-32 at p. 23, and *Byzance et la Mer* (1966), pp. 40-41; Lemerle, *Le premier humanisme*, pp. 34-36.

2. Ostrogorsky, *Studien*, p. 226 and Alexander, *ubi supra*, pp. 47-49: 'an act of genius' (p. 48).

3. P. Van den Ven, 'La patristique et l'hagiographie du Concile de Nicée de 787', *Byzantion*, xxv-xxvii (1955-7), 325-62 at pp. 332-8.

4. Callinicus, *Vita Hypatii*, c. 1 (Teubner, 1895), p. 58.

5. L. Robert, *Hellenica*, xiii (1965), 54.

6. As Schwarzlose, *ubi supra*, pp. 44 ff.

century Byzantine world. Whatever his eastern origins, the career of Leo before he became emperor radiated from Constantinople; wherever their sees may have lain, the Iconoclast bishops probably got all their culture at Constantinople, conducted most of their business at Constantinople,¹ and regarded their duties as local bishops as taking them from Constantinople 'into the country'.² The whole unforgettable 'style' of Constantine V – the tone of an Ivan the Terrible *à la* Eisenstein – is inconceivable against any other backdrop than the crowded Hippodrome of the capital.³

Fourth: it has now been shown conclusively that the role of the Byzantine Theme armies in the Iconoclast controversy was far from simple. Their behaviour in the eighth century was not determined by any sense of local loyalties among the troops; least of all did the eastern Themes consistently support the Iconoclast party.⁴

Generally, the study of the Iconoclast controversy has tended to become a study of the origin of Iconoclast ideas, and this study has, in turn, been incapsulated in a search for a local, provincial setting for such ideas. As a result, attempts to assess the significance of the Iconoclast controversy show a strange mixture of the melodramatic and the parochial. Melodramatic, for it is neither certain that the victory of the Iconoclasts would have led to the triumph of a non-representational art in the Eastern empire, nor that their momentary success was a victory of the Eastern over the European provinces of the empire. The heady alternative *Orient oder Rom?* was not for a moment at stake in the course of the eighth century.⁵ Parochial, because it is assumed that the crisis, seen in the terms just outlined, concerned only the Byzantine empire. As a result, the Carolingian contribution to this debate – the *Libri Carolini* – is treated as an ill-tempered and irrelevant intervention.⁶ It is one of the secondary aims of this paper to show that the other great Christian state, the Frankish empire, had also been challenged to take up an attitude to its own religious traditions in a way that synchronized with the Iconoclast movement in Byzantium. For the alternative between East and West within the Byzantine empire was trivial compared with the burning problem shared by all Christian states in the eighth century – how to adjust to the crevasse that had opened between their rich Late Antique

1. [J. D.] Mansi, [*Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, 1759 ff.], xiii. 33CD (the bishop of Myrai); 108D (Thomas, Iconoclast bishop of Claudiopolis); 430CD and 434CD (canons 10 and 15 of Nicaea). 2. Mansi, xii. 115E.

3. E.g. *Vita Stephani Iunioris*, P[atrologia] G[ræca], c. 1136B.

4. W. Kaegi, 'The Byzantine Armies and Iconoclasm', *Byzantinoslavica*, xxvii (1966), 48–70.

5. Lemerle, *Le premier humanisme* p. 107 exaggerates: 'Les iconodules sont dans la ligne du christianisme "humaniste", infléchi par la tradition gréco-romaine; les iconoclastes (comme avant eux les monophysites), dans celle du christianisme sémite et asiatique. Ce fut le dernier grand choix que les chrétiens eurent à faire.'

6. G. Haendler, *Epochen karolingischer Theologie. Eine Untersuchung über die karolingische Gutachten zum byzantinischen Bilderstreit* (1958) is no more than a beginning.

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past and an anxious present overshadowed by the armies of Islam. The first part of this paper, therefore, must concentrate on the problem of why icons were considered so vulnerable in the eighth century, the second, why they had achieved sufficient prominence in the Late Antique period to have drawn attack upon themselves; the third part will suggest some possible implications for an understanding of the changes in eighth-century Byzantine society.

I

We should begin again with the considerable and explicit body of evidence for the religious views of the Iconoclasts¹ – most notably the *Queries* of Constantine V² and the *Horos* of the Iconoclast Council of 754³ – and for the repercussion of these views among the Iconoclasts at the Council of Nicaea in 787. Let us propose a definition of the Iconoclast controversy in the light of this evidence: the Iconoclast controversy was a debate on the position of the holy in Byzantine society. On the issue of what was holy and what was not the Iconoclasts were firm and unambiguous. Certain material objects were holy because they had been solemnly blessed by ordained priests. This blessing had raised them from the material to the supernatural: such was the Eucharistic bread – *ὁ διὰ τῆς ἱερατικῆς τελετῆς ἀναφερόμενος ἐκ τοῦ χειροποιήτου πρὸς τὸ ἀχειροποιήτου*.⁴ Only objects so raised were entitled to the attitudes demanded by the presence of the holy; they could be objects of worship in the full sense. For the Iconoclasts, there were only three such objects: the Eucharist, which was both given by Christ and consecrated by the clergy⁵; the church building, which was consecrated by the bishop⁶; the sign of the Cross.⁷ This last was not only a traditional sacramental gesture, whose power was shown in the rite of exorcism; for an eighth-century Byzantine, it was a sign given directly by God to men, when it first appeared in the sky to the Emperor Constantine. On this view, no other object could claim to be holy. It appeared to the Iconoclasts that icons had, at a comparatively recent time, sidled over the firmly-demarcated frontier separating the holy from the profane. The Iconoclast bishops of 754 meant to put them firmly

1. Now available in [*Textus byzantinos ad Iconomachiam pertinentes in usum academicum, edidit Herman*] Hennephof (1969).

2. Hennephof, nos. 141–87, pp. 52–57, extracted from Niceph[orus], *Antirrhetici*, P. G. c.] 205–553, also edited with commentary by Ostrogorsky, *Bilderstreit*, pp. 11–45.

3. Hennephof, nos. 200–64, pp. 61–78, extracted from Mansi, xiii. 205–364.

4. Hennephof, no. 168, p. 55 (Niceph. 337C): ‘which is raised by rites performed by a priest from being a material object to become a vehicle of the supernatural.’

5. Hennephof, no. 226, pp. 67–68 (Mansi, xiii. 261DE).

6. Hennephof, no. 184, p. 57 (Niceph. 477C).

7. G. Millet, ‘Les Iconoclastes et la Croix. À propos d’une inscription de Cappadoce’, *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*, xxxiv (1910), 96–109.

back in their place: οὐτε εὐχὴν ἱερὰν ἀγιάζουσαν αὐτήν [*Ἡ τῶν ψευδωνύμων εἰκόνων κακωνυμία*], ἵν' ἐκ τούτου πρὸς τὸ ἅγιον ἐκ τοῦ κοινοῦ μετενεχθῆ, ἀλλὰ μένει κοινὴ καὶ ἄτιμος, ὡς ἀπήρτισεν αὐτήν ὁ ξωγράφος.¹

Icons could not be holy because they had received no consecration from above. They had received only an illegitimate consecration from below. They were merely thought to be holy, and this for the same deeply sinister reason as pagan cult images were thought to be holy: the devil had taken advantage of the simplicity of the masses to reintroduce into the Christian people the error of idolatry.² Icons, therefore, could suffer the same fate as any pagan cult objects: they could be burnt.³

It is on this central issue of the holy that the authors of the Carolingian *Libri Carolini* can be seen, over a generation later, to be moving along exactly the same orbit as Constantine V and his bishops. For this author knows exactly where the holy lies, and that it has little to do with icons, For the people of Israel, for instance, it lay in the awesome Ark of the Covenant – ‘siquidem illa condita est Domino imperante, istae [the icons] conduntur artis industria iuvante; illa a sancto viro Moyse, istae a quolibet opifice; illa a Legislatore, istae a pictore; illa redundat mysteriis, istae colorum tantummodo fucis’.⁴ For the Christians of the present, it tended to lie in the great consecrated basilica. The succession of miracle stories ascribed to icons by the Iconodule bishops at Nicaea leave this author cold; but Gregory the Great had described how the oil lamps of a great basilica had remained unquenched in a torrential flood – that, he concludes, is a *real* miracle!⁵ Even the Iconodules were unable to wrench themselves free from the gravitational pull of this central problem. Their attitude to icons is incoherent precisely because they accept the terms of their opponents. Iconoclasts and Iconodules of the eighth century are closer to each other, in their obsession with a common problem of the holy, than are the Iconodules of that century to their more refined and cautious successors in the ninth century.

The Iconodules wanted to have their cake and eat it. They had inherited from Late Antiquity a solution of their difficulties that was both impressive (as part of the imagined unalterable tradition of the

1. Hennephof, no. 227, p. 68 (Mansi xiii. 268BC, 269CD): ‘For the ill-omened name of “holy” for the icons is misplaced. No prayer of any priest has blessed the icon, so that, through such consecration, it passes beyond ordinary matter to become a holy thing; but it remains common and without honour, just as it leaves the hands of the painter.’ (This free translation attempts to render the argument of the whole passage from which the citation is taken.)

2. Hennephof, no. 207, pp. 62ff. (Mansi, xiii. 221CD).

3. *V. Steph. Iun.* P.G. c. 1085.

4. *Lib[ri] Carol[ini]* [ed. H. Bastgen, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Legum Sectio III, Concilia, II (1924)], II, 26, p. 85.

5. *Lib. Carol.* IV, 12, p. 192.

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church) and clear. If pictures can move the beholder, can record, can narrate, can bring faces and deeds to his memory, then they can communicate the Christian message. Standing on the cool walls of the churches, pictures were more permanent reminders to the passer-by than were the liturgy and reading of the gospels of the story of Jesus and the passions of the saints.¹ Because we regard this view as so eminently reasonable we assume that the Iconodules regarded it as eminently natural. For all that, the Iconodules were not deeply concerned to present icons as merely useful. They presented them consistently as holy.² An icon, or a wall painting, might be known to have made Saint Gregory of Nyssa weep³; it had reminded St Anastasius, at a crucial moment, of the courage of the martyrs⁴; it might lead the mystical devotee, in a more subtle way, 'by the hand' to contemplate the incarnation of Christ⁵; but it could do more than this. The icon was a hole in the dyke separating the visible world from the divine, and through this hole there oozed precious dribbles from the great sea of God's mercy: icons were active, *πόσαι, εἰπέ μοι, ἐπισκιάσεις, πόσαι ἀναβλύσεις, πολλὰκις δὲ καὶ αἱμάτων ρύσεις ἐξ εἰκόνων καὶ λευφάνων μαρτύρων γεγονάσι*;⁶

The Iconodules wandered even deeper into the gravitational field of the Iconoclasts. They plainly accepted without question the major criterion of the holy laid down by the Iconoclasts – the criterion of consecration. Their roundabout solutions on this issue betray how important a concern it was for them. For the Iconodules could not claim that an icon produced by an artisan was holy because it had been blessed in the same solemn manner as had the Eucharistic bread or the basilica.⁷ Though frequently accused by modern scholars of magical habits of mind, the Iconodule, in fact, had omitted the one element which any self-respecting magician of the time knew to be obligatory – the occult consecration of the image.⁸ (For this reason alone, the term 'magical', so lavishly applied by modern scholars to the use of icons, lacks any real meaning, when dealing with the habits of men who lived in an age that knew what real, professional magic was like.) Yet they could not break out of the gravitational field of the problem by denying the relevance of the need for consecration. Some icons, the Iconodules insisted, were of immediate divine origin. They were 'not made with human hands'.⁹ They stood above mere

1. Mansi, xiii, 361A.

2. Mansi, xiii, 39A: 'the venerable icons have the same spiritual status, the same power – *ἰσοδυναμοῦσιν* – as the Gospel-book and the venerable Cross'.

3. *Ibid.* 9DE

4. *Ibid.* 21A.

5. *Ibid.* 116A.

6. *Ibid.* 48C.

7. *Lib. Carol.* i, 27, p. 87: 'Imagines vero nullius manus impositionis vel consecrationis mysterio indigentes...'

8. M.P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*, ii (1950), 502–5 and T. Pekáry, 'Der römische Bilderstreit', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, iii (1969), 18.

9. E. von Dobschütz, *Christusbilder*, Texte und Untersuchungen, xviii (1899) is fundamental.

art.¹ They were given by God to men in a manner that fulfilled the criteria laid down for the holy by the Iconoclasts. Other icons that did not enjoy the awesome privileges of a direct other-worldly origin nevertheless enjoyed a consecration from the past. They were thought to have originated in the immediate environment of the holy person that they represented, or to have been miraculously produced by physical contact with such a person.² The *Mandylion* of Edessa, on which Christ impressed His face on a handkerchief, was the prototype of such an icon.³ We should take this idea of consecration by the past very seriously. Eighth-century Iconodules believed that the icon and the gospel were strictly contemporaneous: St. Luke had sent to Theophilus not only his gospel, but his portrait of the Virgin, painted from the life, and copious illustrations of scenes from the life of Christ, as they had happened.⁴ Icons of the Virgin, therefore, could well be thought of as continuations of St. Luke's original, much as the clear-cut gargoyles on an Oxford college are fondly imagined to be medieval, when they are, in fact, the work of an unbroken chain of cutters who, ever since the fifteenth century, have renewed the original in soft Cotswold stone.⁵ Nothing else would do. What the icons so palpably lacked in consecration from above, they made up for by consecration from the past. Taken altogether, Iconoclast, Carolingian, Iconodule were asking the same question throughout the eighth century: where is the holy? what belongs to it and what does not? The Iconoclasts and the author of the *Libri Carolini* could offer a group of holy objects that were neither unduly spiritualized nor devoid of strong visual potency: they could offer the great liturgy of the Eucharist; the basilica with its solemn association with the Temple of Jerusalem and with the heavenly city⁶; the age-old focus of the figure of the Cross; and — for the Carolingians — the fearsome compactness of the Ark of the Covenant, 'welling over with mystic meaning'.⁷ For them, Iconodule superstition was simply a haemorrhage of the holy from these great symbols into a hundred little paintings.⁸ Iconoclasm, therefore, is a centripetal

1. E. Kitzinger, 'The Cult of Images in the Age before Iconoclasm', *Dumbarion Oaks Papers*, viii (1954), 83-149, at p. 143, n. 257 sees this clearly.

2. Dobschütz, *ubi supra*, p. 269.

3. Evidence collected in Dobschütz, *ubi supra*, pp. 158*-289*.

4. *The Admonition of the Old Man*, [ed. B. Melioransky, *Georgii Kiprianin i Ioann Ierusalmitianin, dva maloizvestnykh borisa za pravoslavie v VIII veki*, Zapiski Istor.-Filolog. Fakulteta Imp. S. Peterburgskago Universiteta, lix (1901)], pp. xxviii-xxx, cf. pp. xxvi-xxvii: see Gouillard, 'Synodikon', *Travaux et Mémoires*, ii, 178.

5. Dobschütz, *ubi supra*, p. 271.

6. Grabar, *Iconoclasm*, pp. 153-4.

7. V. H. Elbern, 'Liturgisches Gerät in edlen Materiellen zur Zeit Karls des Grossen' *Karl der Grosse* (1965), iii, 115-67; Peter Bloch, 'Das Apsismosaik von Germigny-des-Près. Karl der Grosse und das Alte Bund', *ibid.* pp. 234-61; M. Veillard-Troiekouff, 'Nouvelles études sur les mosaïques de S. Germigny-des-Près', *Cahiers Archéologiques*, xvii (1967), 103 ff.

8. Hennepf, no. 102, pp. 38 ff. (Mansi, xiv, 417-22.) Letter of Michael II and Theophilus to Louis of 824.

reaction: it asserts the unique value of a few central symbols of the Christian community that enjoyed consecration from above against the centrifugal tendencies of the piety that had spread the charge of the holy on to a multiplicity of unconsecrated objects. Seeing that what a society considers holy and what profane is very much a precipitate of that society's needs and structure, it may perhaps prove fruitful to examine what a centripetal reaction of this kind could mean in the social and religious life of eighth-century Byzantium, and so what the centrifugal tendencies of the previous centuries had implied.

We can at least set aside certain problems: a debate on the holy need have nothing whatsoever to do with art. Indeed, the only two men in the Dark Ages whom we know to have been deeply interested in art – the Emperor Theophilus¹ and Bishop Theodulf of Orléans (if Theodulf is the author of the *Libri Carolini*, as is very likely)² – were Iconoclast or at least, anti-Iconodule. To love art meant knowing artists; and every ancient man knew what artists were like; they slept with their models³; they designed theatre posters⁴; in 692 they had been caught still painting classical pornographic scenes.⁵ To the author of the *Libri Carolini*, indeed, the artist was free to do what he liked (for this reason he has been acclaimed as one of the first exponents of Art for Art's sake),⁶ but provided that he remained irremediably profane.⁷ For a cultivated man of the eighth century, whether he was a western European, a Byzantine or a Muslim, art was part of a man's comfort: Byzantine and Ummayyad baths and pleasure palaces show this clearly.⁸ Furthermore, in Byzantium and in the West, art had also become a branch of Classics. The works of art most appreciated in Carolingian and Byzantine court circles at this time were those manuscripts and ivories that faithfully preserved the art of the Classical world, with a heavy *décor* of pagan deities and personified natural forces.⁹ The works of the artist, therefore, that were most sought at the time of the Iconoclast controversy were precisely those which had least to do with the idea of the holy in the minds of any west European, Byzantine or Muslim.

II

It is the identification of the icon with the holy and the rejection of this claim by the Iconoclasts, and not the status of the arts in

1 Grabar, *Iconoclasm*, pp. 143 ff.

2. Ann Freeman, 'Theodulf of Orleans', *Speculum*, xxxij (1957), 663–705, esp. pp. 695–703.

3. Justin, *Apologia*, I, ix, 4.

4. Mansi, xiii. 241B.

5. *Concilium Quinisextum*, canon 100.

6. Freeman, *ubi supra*, p. 695.

7. *Lib. Carol.* I, 16, p. 39; III, 22, p. 149; III, 23, pp. 151–2.

8. F. Rosenthal, *Das Fortleben der Antike im Islam* (1965), pp. 357 on paintings in bath-houses.

9. E. Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art* (Paladin, 1970), pp. 49–52.

Byzantine society, that was at stake in the eighth century. Two masterly treatments by Professor André Grabar and Professor Erwin Kitzinger,¹ have drawn attention to the comparatively rapid, and piecemeal, nature of the rise of the icon to holiness: Grabar begins with one of those irrefutable surprises such as only the archaeologist and the art historian can hold in store for us: some of the greatest shrines of the Byzantine period, most notably the Hagia Sophia itself, would have struck any eighth-century worshipper as almost entirely an-iconic.² Even if we accept the Iconodule argument, that icons had come to stay, we must think of their presence in the churches as more atomized, as less integrated in the overall decoration and meaning of the building than in later centuries.³ The rise of the cult of icons, therefore, in the sixth and seventh centuries, and not the origins of Iconoclasm — this is the central problem of the Iconoclast controversy. It is the singular merit of Kitzinger to have made this clear, and to have suggested an explanation. At the risk of simplifying a study of great richness and differentiation, the explanation of the rise of the worship of icons that he proposes is as follows.

A tendency to worship the individual icon had always existed among Mediterranean people. Up to the late sixth century, however, the élite of the Christian church had offered a constant resistance to 'the naïve, animistic ideas of the masses'.⁴ In the late sixth century, 'the resistance to such pressure on the part of the authorities decreased . . . and this relaxation of counter pressure from above was at least a major factor in the development'.⁵ It was the imperial court rather than the bishops who were responsible for this change. For Kitzinger emphasizes that one privileged oasis of religious feeling for an image had survived intact since pagan times — the veneration of the imperial images.⁶ Religious images began to receive marks of veneration analogous to the imperial images in the sixth century or even earlier; but, at the end of the sixth century, the emperors, in Kitzinger's opinion, took the final conscious step in fostering these practices. They allowed icons of Christ and of the Virgin to stand in the place of the imperial images, and so to receive the same frankly pagan worship as their own images had always received.⁷ By the seventh century, such icons were firmly established as part of the public cultus of the Byzantine empire.⁸ This study

1. Grabar, *Iconoclasm*; Kitzinger, 'Cult of Images'.

2. Grabar, *Martyrium. Recherches sur le culte des reliques et l'art chrétien antique*, II (1946), 284 and *Iconoclasm*, pp. 153 and 166.

3. But Nicole Thierry, 'Un décor pré-iconoclaste de Cappadoce: Açikel ağa Kilisesi', *Cahiers archéologiques*, xviii (1968), 33–65, is a warning against generalizing from the apparent absence of such decoration. E. Kitzinger, 'Byzantine Art in the Period between Justinian and Iconoclasm', *Berichte zum XI. internationalen Byzantinistenkongress* (1958), pp. 41–50 is the best treatment of a delicate matter.

4. Kitzinger, 'Cult of Images', p. 146.

5. *Ibid.* pp. 119–20.

6. *Ibid.* p. 91

7. *Ibid.* pp. 125–6.

8. Grabar, *Iconoclasm*, pp. 45 and 70–77.

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would disagree through pointing away from analogies to the cult of the imperial icons to other, sizeable areas of the social life of the Late Antique world. The taking up of the icon into the public ceremonial of the empire is one pillar only, on which the edifice of Iconodule piety came to rest. This study would suggest that it was neither the most profoundly rooted nor the most enduring. Put bluntly: Byzantines of the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries were getting from the icons what they never expected to get from an imperial image – they got the miracle of healing and the greater miracle of a flood of tears of repentance for their sins.¹

Imperial images could be surrounded by impressive ceremonies, that stressed the emperor's presence and his symbolic 'arrival' in town.² Again, disrespect for the imperial image released a very real charge of feeling. (Did not the good soldier Schweik share his first prison cell with an unfortunate who had allowed a photograph of the Emperor Franz Josef to become flyblown?) Iconodule texts should be interpreted in the light of this release of feeling. When they appealed to the respect due to the imperial images the centre of gravity is usually negative: they argue, *a fortiori*, from the dire consequences of *dis*respect for the imperial image to be impiety of *dis*respect for the image of Christ the Emperor.³ What they envisage is less the psychology of worship than the psychological mechanisms of contempt for a figure of authority, and the very real mixture of horror and delight which an attack on his picture does indeed stir up. The 'psychodrama' of attacks on the images of emperor and bishops was very common in the great towns of the Eastern empire.⁴ Yet it would be wrong to conclude that, when the emperor's images were not being either welcomed or pelted, they were being worshipped. Far from it. They were being taken absolutely for granted. They were in constant danger of being obscured, in the public places, by great portraits of more exciting figures – by portraits of great pantomime actors, charioteers and wild beast fighters.⁵ To the best of my knowledge, no man, on catching the eye of the emperor in his portrait, burst into tears 'like a cloud-burst from a rain-ladensky'⁶: and this is what a man of the eighth century was supposed to do

1. Mansi, xiii, 12A 'for spiritual profit and an outflowing of tears'.

2. S. G. MacCormack, 'Change and Continuity in late Antiquity: the Ceremony of *Adventus*', *Historia* (to appear).

3. Mansi, xii 1067 and xiii, 161AB; *V. Steph. Iun.*, P. G. c. 1157D; Severianus of Gabala, *de mundi creatione*, P. G. liv, 489. For a Near Eastern example: G. Strohmaier, 'Ḥunain ibn Ishaq und die Bilder', *Klio*, xliii (1965), 527.

4. See evidence collected in R. Browning, 'The Riot of 387 in Antioch', *Journal of Roman Studies*, xiii (1952), 23–20 at p. 20. Also Kazimierz Majewski, 'Bezobrozowość oraz burzenie świątyn, posągów bogów i pomników władców w świecie grecko-rzymskim', *Archeologia*, xvi (1965), 63–82, at p. 69.

5. *Codex Theodosianus*, xv, xvii, 12 (394) = *Codex Justinianus*, xi, xli, 4.

6. The supposed letter of Gregory II to Leo III, ed. J. Gouillard ['Aux origines de l'iconoclasme: le témoignage de Grégoire II', *Travaux et Mémoires du Centre de Recherche d'histoire et civilisation byzantines*, iii (1968)], 285, line 114.

when faced by an icon. We should look more closely, therefore, at another area of the religious life of the Late Antique world in order to find the remainder of that charge of feeling that had come, by the eighth century, to make an icon appear holy.

I would suggest that we look more closely at the holy man. From the fourth century onwards, the holy man was a living icon. To the theologian he was man at its height, man as first made 'in the image of God'.¹ One of three hermits who used to visit St. Anthony came every year and sat there while the others talked, without saying a word: 'It is sufficient for me, Father', he explained, 'just to look at you'.² Merely to see a holy man could be enough for a visitor.³ At his death, he instantly became an icon: 'for by the archbishop's orders the plank was stood upright — the body [of Daniel the Stylite, died 493] had been fixed to it so that it could not fall — and thus, like an icon, the holy man was displayed to all from every side; and for many hours the people all looked at him and also with cries and tears besought him to be an advocate with God on behalf of them all'.⁴ The holy man was a clearly-defined *locus* of the holy on earth. The 'presence of the Lord' overshadowed him.⁵ A long social and religious history lies behind the position of the holy man in the Late Antique period.⁶ What is relevant to our purpose are those psychological needs which the holy man had long met, that might find satisfaction, also, in the icon.

The holy man's position in the collective mentality of the Byzantine world of the sixth and seventh centuries rested on a deeply-embedded mechanism: one might call it a focusing mechanism. Put briefly: it was possible to bring to bear on a single object (in this case, on the silent figure of the hermit) hopes and fears that would otherwise have been scattered and lost on the distant vault of heaven. For the holy man could be approached directly; he could receive unflinchingly a heavy charge of entreaty, cajolery, even threats; and the prayers that he sent up to heaven were thought capable of rendering precise and relevant to his individual petitioner the inscrutable workings of God's providence.⁷ Thus the core of the holy man's

1. Leontius of Neapolis, *P. G.* cxiii, 1064CD: 'An image of God is man, man created after His image and especially that man who is worthy to be the dwellingplace of the Holy Spirit'; Mansi, xiii. 49B. He cites Leviticus 26, 12 in the LXX: 'Ἐνοικήσω ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐμπεριπατήσω in the literal meaning: 'I (God) will dwell in them (the individual holy men) and will walk around in them.'

2. *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Antonios 27, *P. G.* lxxv. 84D.

3. E.g. Cassian, *Collationes*, xi. 2 (*C.S.E.L.* xiii. 315).

4. *Vita Danielis Stylitae*, c.99, ed. H. Delehaye, *Les saints Stylites*, Subsidia Hagiographica, 14 (1923), 92. It is not even certain that the original manuscript contained the comment 'like an icon'.

5. On ἐνοκλασις, see *Vita Symeonis Iunioris* c. 118, ed. P. van den Ven, *La vie ancienne de S. Syméon le Jeune* (pp. 521–92), Subsidia Hagiographica, 32 (1962), 97–98, and *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, ed. G. W. H. Lampe (1961), s.v., p. 531.

6. Peter Brown, 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Roman society', *Journal of Roman Studies*, lxxi (1971), 80–101.

7. Brown, *ubi supra*, pp. 69–97.

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power in Late Antique society was the belief that he was there to act as an intercessor with God. Whether living or dead he was a favoured courtier in the distant empire of heaven: he had gained a 'boldness' to speak up successfully for his protegés before the throne of Christ.¹

If Byzantines had not believed that it was possible for created beings to sway the will of God by their intercessions, then the rise of the holy man and the rise of the icon would not have happened. For the icon merely filled a gap left by the physical absence of the holy man, whether this was due to distance or to death. The same mechanisms that had focused on the figure of the holy man (who was often as silent or as far removed above the beholder, as would have been the case with St. Symeon Stylites, as was any icon²) could be brought to bear on the icon: they could even be heightened by the capacity of the silent portrait of the dead to take an even heavier charge of urgency and idealization without answering back. The figures of the saints at Saqqara, in Egypt, standing with outstretched arms in the traditional pose of the praying holy man, actually have scratched upon them the prayers which the believer wished them to address, on his behalf, to God.³

As a religious system, early Islam consciously rejected these pre-occupations. Unlike the Byzantine Christ, Allah was an absolute monarch whose will was untrammelled by the pressures of his heavenly bureaucracy. To admit angelic powers as intercessors with Allah had been the last temptation of Mohammad. He had resisted it.⁴ At the time of the Iconoclast controversy, the idea that any created being – angel or dead saint – could intercede with Allah was out of the question: 'cry ever again, There is no power nor might but through Allah; for this comes from the very treasure that is hidden beneath the throne of God'.⁵ At a stroke, the icon became unnecessary. The whole drama of focusing on a particular figure was pointless if this figure had no power to move the will of God on your behalf. The Muslim rejected icons, just as he rejected the building of churches over the tombs of Christian saints⁶ and the offering

1. The idea is central to the letters of the Patriarch Germanos in the opening phase of the Iconoclast controversy: to John of Symnada (Mansi, xiii. 104A) and to the Iconoclast Thomas of Claudiopolis (Mansi, xiii. 132C); compare *Adversus Constantinum Caballinum*, P. G. xciv. 340C. See Brown, *ubi supra*, p. 94, on the Late Roman background.

2. One should remember that the ideal holy man was thought of as immobile as a statue: Gregory Nazianzenos, *Eulogy on Basil of Caesarea*, 52, 2. P. G. xxxvi. 569A – at a moment of crisis, Basil had stood in church 'his body, his gaze, his whole attention fixed rigid, like a statue set up in honour of God and His altar'. See Brown, *ubi supra*, p. 93, n. 163 and p. 97, n. 206.

3. David Howell, 'Saint George as Intercessor', *Byzantion*, xxxix (1969), 133.

4. Tor Andrae, *Mohammed. The Man and his Faith* (1936), p. 28.

5. I. Goldziher, *Vorlesungen über den Islam* (1910), p. 45. Compare A. J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed* (1932), p. 61.

6. Monneret de Villard, *ubi supra*, p. 272.

of incense in their names,¹ not because he disliked the human face (which we know not to have been the case in many of the monuments of the eighth century), but because his heaven was without human intercessors.

The belief in intercession, and the consequent psychological need to focus one's attention and hopes on the face of the intercessor, was the lever that shifted the religious art of the early Byzantine world. The earliest icons are those that make plain the mechanism of intercession: from the late fifth century, *ex-voto* icons published scenes from the court-life of heaven — the Virgin and Child enthroned, flanked by angels, with little donors supported by towering saintly patrons.² Angels appear early, despite genuine theological scruples about giving them a human form.³ They appear not because they were faded relics of winged victories. They had been men's guardian spirits from time immemorial, and they were those courtiers whose rank placed them nearest to the ear of God.⁴ The Virgin is of crucial importance. For she represented the acme of a mortal's intercession in heaven. She was invariably portrayed with Christ sitting on her lap. For her intercessions had the infallible efficacy of a blood-relative. This is what the icon of the Virgin meant that was set up on the gate of Constantinople at the time of the Avar attack of 626: let 'the brood of darkness' beware: 'for she is indeed the mother of Him who drowned Pharaoh and all his hosts in the depths of the Red Sea'.⁵ Icons also showed the saints interceding with Christ placed on the lap of the Virgin⁶ or being acknowledged, in the familiar yet solemn gesture of the arm placed over the shoulder that we can see on statues of Diocletian and his colleagues, as the intimates of Christ in the government of the universe.⁷

The holy man, therefore, was the impresario of the piety that focused on the icon, as it had focused on himself, as the tangible presence of an intercessor before God. He had been the impresario,

1. Grabar, *Martyrium*, ii, 83 notes 2 and 3 and S. M. Stern, 'Abd al-Jabbār's Account of how Christ's Religion was falsified by the Adoption of Roman Customs', *Journal of Theological Studies*, xix (1968), 128–85, at p. 147.

2. See Grabar, *Martyrium*, ii, 81: some of the earliest religious icons of public importance were in the form of *ex-votos* set up by members of the imperial family. Now see R. Cormack, 'The Mosaic Decoration of S. Demetrios of Thessaloniki', *Annals of the British School at Athens*, lxiv (1969), 17–52, a most important study.

3. Raised by John, bishop of Thessalonica (610–649): Mansi, xiii, 164D.

4. Averil Cameron, *Agathias* (1970), p. 5 and n. 3; *Antibologia Palatina*, I 35 and 36: poems on *ex-voto* icons of angels marking successes in the careers of lawyers.

5. A. Mai, *Patrum Nova Bibliotheca*, vi, 2 (1853), 427. Compare *Adversus Constantinum Caballinum*, P. G. xcvi, 340A.

6. Mansi, xiii, 57E and 64D. Of the Byzantine signet-rings and pectoral crosses on show in the British Museum, all those of the fifth to seventh centuries show either the human protégé with his supernatural protectors or these protectors interceding with Christ. See E. Kantorowicz, 'Ivories and Litanies', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, v (1942), 70–72.

7. Icon of St Menas, Bawit, illustrated, with comment, in Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity* (1971), p. 102, pl. 72.

also, of parallel development: the tendency to regard a material object as the vehicle of cures. Objects blessed by the holy man had been the vehicles of cures since the fourth century. These *placebos* (often no more than drinking a cup of blessed cold water) had made divine protection for the sufferer tangible and so efficacious.¹ By the end of the sixth century, icons associated with holy men, or blessed by them, had joined the more impersonal blessed objects.² A woman cured by St. Symeon the Younger carried his portrait back home with her. But the very mechanism of focusing, which had made possible the first cure in the face-to-face encounter with the living holy man, could be brought to bear equally efficaciously around the silent portrait. Another woman came to the icon, confident that 'if I can only see his face, I shall be saved'.³ Altogether, the role of the holy man in Late Antique society – whether speaking, blessing or just being seen to be standing in prayer – had been to translate the awesomely distant loving-kindness of God into the reassuring precision of a human face.⁴

The momentum of the search for a face made itself felt throughout the sixth century in changes in the traditional type of relics. Icons came to join the relics. In relation to the relic they played a psychological role strictly analogous to the holy man. They were human figures filling the gap between awesome holy things and the frail believer. In Rome, a saint's sarcophagus could kill the workmen who had dislodged it.⁵ In Thessalonica, the deep-buried grave of St. Demetrius could flash out tongues of fire with an unearthly smell.⁶ Understandably, the sufferer preferred to press his face against the handsome, idealized face on the casing of the relics of St. Demetrius⁷; and the inscrutable, deep-buried power of the martyr became bearable, in dreams, by appearing to the believer 'as he appears on ancient icons'.⁸ The icon was the go-between. St. Mary the Egyptian, a prostitute, was pushed away from the Holy Sepulchre by an invisible force surging up against her in the vast impersonal throng of the congregation; but she was able to turn to an icon of the Mother of God that hung near the door, to promise that she would repent. Faced by too crushing a sense of the holy Late Roman men had turned to the homely figure of the holy man in the same way as St. Mary had turned to the icon. The holy man was prepared to act as a guarantor with God for the forgiveness of their sins. So, having prayed, gazing unflinchingly into the face of the Virgin, Mary went back into the

1. Brown, 'Holy Man', p. 96.

2. Mansi, xiii. 81B, with the commentary of Kitzinger, 'Cult of Images', pp. 108 ff.

3. *V. Symeon, Iun.* c. 118, ed. P. van den Ven, 98; cited in Mansi, xiii. 76C. The passage makes plain that the power of God that 'overshadows' the living holy man 'overshadowed' the icon.

4. Brown, 'Holy Man', p. 97.

5. Gregory I, Ep. iv, 30.

6. *Miracula Sancti Demetrii*, ii [P. G. cxvi.], 1241C.

7. *Mirac. S. Dem.*, 1217D; see Grabar, *Martyrium*, ii, 25–26.

8. *Mirac. S. Dem.* 1317BC.

crush.¹ She had gained from the icon precisely what the Byzantine layman gained from an interview with the holy man — confidence in approaching the Holy of Holies.

Altogether it is as well to linger on the psychological needs that sought resolution through investing the icon with that same charge of holiness as had previously surrounded the living holy man. For until these needs are stated with precision, the historian cannot go forward with a historical explanation. The idea that the rise of icons can be explained as a resurgence of the animistic beliefs of the masses² seems to lack just this element of precision, both psychological and, so, historical. Animism is a concept that was first put into circulation among historians of religion by the anthropological theorists of the nineteenth century. Few modern anthropologists would now treat it as valid currency. Nor is it wise to label in an easy — and dismissive — manner mechanisms of focusing on a single ‘vested’ object which had been observed still to play an essential role in the healing processes of patients in the most modern of modern hospitals.³ We may safely leave to any surviving Byzantines the delicate task of deciding whether their beliefs were superstitious, animistic or backward. Yet it is necessary for the historian to question this attitude to the religious beliefs of the Byzantine world. Just such an attitude has provided the *deus ex machina* that underlies Kitzinger’s account of the rise and establishment of icons in the late sixth and seventh centuries. For his explanation of the public ‘reception’ of icons in terms of changes in official circles in the late sixth and seventh centuries can carry full conviction only if we are prepared to accept his presupposition, that these changes must have been a concession to an ineluctable, and ill-defined, popular pressure.⁴ It can be clearly shown that the holy man did not rise to influence in Late Roman society in so simple a way.⁵ No more did icons. Rather than assume that the worship of icons rose like a damp stain from the masses, we should look into the needs which the piety of Late Antique men sought to satisfy in looking at them. These needs were ‘human’, not ‘popular’. They have no very precise location in any one stratum of Byzantine society, nor do they affect only those of a low level of education. The two-tiered model of ancient society,

1. Mansi xiii. 88A; compare Brown, ‘Holy Man’, p. 98.

2. Kitzinger, ‘Cult of Images’, p. 146: ‘the naive animistic ideas of the masses’; p. 147 ‘a last minute withdrawal from the abyss of sheer animism’.

3. E.g. C. Binger, *The Doctor’s Job* (1946), p. 48.

4. Kitzinger, ‘Cult of Images’, pp. 119–20: ‘to try to identify with any precision the forces which seem to have pressed from below could only be guesswork. What can be suggested is that the resistance to such pressure on the part of the authorities decreased in that period. . . .’

5. Brown, ‘Holy Man’, pp. 81–82. For an acute and instructive criticism of similar views long held by scholars of Western hagiography, see František Graus, *Volle, Herrscher und Heiliger im Reich der Merowinger. Studien zur Hagiographie der Merowingerzeit*, Česká akademie věd (1965), esp. pp. 31–36.

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by which any notable change in belief can be ascribed to the upward pressure of popular superstition on a Greco-Roman élite fits few cases – and least of all this one. If anything, it was the élite of the Byzantine world whose needs were more effectively satisfied by the cult of icons than were those of the supposed masses of the population.¹ The great prominence given to the icon in the late sixth and seventh centuries does not represent a final, ineluctable triumph of popular feeling; still less does the Iconoclastic reaction represent an ineffective attempt to control the superstition of the emotional lower classes – as has been frequently suggested, with the unpleasant rider that Byzantine women are, automatically, to be treated by the historian as a ‘lower class’.² The concluding words of a lecture by a great connoisseur of the ancient world could well serve as a warning to the religious historian of this period also:

Thus my inquest into popular religious beliefs in the late Roman historians ends in reporting that there were no such beliefs. In the fourth and fifth centuries there were of course plenty of beliefs which we historians of the twentieth century would gladly call popular, but the historians of the fourth and fifth centuries never treated any belief as characteristic of the masses and consequently discredited among the élite. Lectures on popular religious beliefs and the Late Roman historians should be severely discouraged.³

We should look for changes in a different direction.

The most influential single feature of the religious life of the sixth century was the new effervescence of civic patriotism in the Eastern empire.⁴ It was in this century that the Christian church was finally established as the focus of collective feeling.⁵ The alarms of warfare alone heightened the need for common symbols of loyalty and protection.⁶ The cult of the civic saints of the empire provided such symbols. At least St. Demetrius (and the clergy who fostered his cult and recorded his interventions in long sermons) was interested in maintaining the ancient civic ideals of harmony in the demoralized city of Thessalonica.⁷ The icon became the visible expression of the invisible bond that linked the community with the intercessions of

1. See Cameron, *ubi supra*, p. 5: ‘Agathias either had money to spare or was desperate enough about his examination chances to dedicate to the Archangel an *ex voto* mosaic...’

2. D. Savramis, ‘Der abergläubliche Missbrauch der Bilder in Byzanz’, *Ostkirchliche Studien*, ix (1960), 174–92 at p. 180: ‘Die Rolle die die Frauen in der Bilderverehrung spielten, spricht auch für das Eindringen dieser Gewohnheit von unten her, aus den Massen.’

3. A. D. Momigliano, ‘Popular Religious Beliefs and the Late Roman Historians’, *Studies in Church History*, viii (1971), 18.

4. Dietrich Claude, *Die byzantinische Stadt im 6. Jahrhundert*, Byzantinisches Archiv, 13 (1969).

5. Claude, *ubi supra*, p. 95 and A. Grabar, ‘La mosaïque de pavement de Quasr el-Lebya’, *Comptes Rendus de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*, June 1969, p. 264–82.

6. Claude, *ubi supra*, pp. 139 ff.

7. *Mirac. S. Dem.* 1225B, 1232A, 1252C, 1268A, 1301A, 1324B, 1341BC.

its patron saint. In this way, icons come to appear on the walls of a Syrian town,¹ and the *Mandylion* of Edessa, its great Christ icon, was said to have destroyed the siege-works of Khusro I in 544.² The shift to the icon is most revealing in this case. Two centuries previously, it was believed that Nisibis had been saved from Shapur II through the curse of the local holy man.³ Now, in Edessa, it was the direct pledge of Christ, given to King Abgar in the form of a miraculous impression of His face, that reassured the citizens that their town, at least, would never fall: and even in Edessa, His face was thought a more suitable pledge than His letter to Abgar, which had satisfied earlier centuries. In exactly the same way, the icon of the Virgin, placed on the gate of Constantinople in 626, was a tangible reminder of the manner in which the absent Emperor Heraclius had pledged the city to her protection.⁴

The need to express collective feeling went beyond the occasional emergency. The prosperous and potentially fissile villages of Asia Minor also found a similar focus in great intercessory processions and solemn junketing, among which icons began to play a part.⁵ In the western Mediterranean, the plague replaced the Slav and the Persian as the catalyst of the same development.⁶ When the monks of St. Augustine entered Canterbury in 598 'carrying a holy cross and the image of a great King, the Lord Jesus Christ'⁷ they were bringing to heathen Kent a method of supernatural prophylaxis that had been developed, comparatively rapidly, from one end of the Mediterranean to the other. In the late sixth century, therefore, the icon was not only a successor of the imperial image. It was a new dialect for the ancient language — for good or ill, the Roman Empire had remained a 'commonwealth of cities': and the icon was there to show that, in this commonwealth, the civic saints did their job.⁸

The diffusion of the icon in the sixth century demonstrates this. Many Byzantines travelled widely throughout the cities of the Mediterranean, as had their Greek forebears in the age of the Antonines.⁹ They felt quite as homesick. For them, the icon was a

1. Claude, *ubi supra*, pp. 140ff.

2. Evagrius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, IV, 27, cited in Mansi, XIII, 192A, speaks of the *Mandylion* Christ-Icon; Procopius, *Bella*, I, XII, 26, still of the letter of Christ to Abgar, not of an icon.

3. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Historia Religiosa*, P. G. LXXXII, 1304D.

4. Mai, *Bibliotheca Nova Patrum*, VI, 2, 426.

5. The icon 'not made with human hands', in the possession of the village of Diboulton, was carried in procession through the other villages of the province in order to raise funds; Dobschütz, *Christusbilder*, pp. 5**–7**. On the general evolution Brown, 'Holy Man', p. 90.

6. S. N. Biraben — J. Le Goff, 'La peste du haut moyen-âge', *Annales*, XXIV (1969), 1498.

7. Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, I, 25.

8. *Adversus Constantinum Caballinum*, P. G. XCV, 340D.

9. See L. Robert, *Hellenica*, XIII (1965), 120–4 on copies of the statues of the home town in the second century A.D.

reminder of the saint of their homeland.¹ Furthermore, the sense of living in a world with frequent interchange pushed to the fore the standardized images of universal figures – icons of Christ and the Virgin.² Yet local associations remained very strong. There is no more touching story than that of the citizen of Thessalonica who went blind in Constantinople. Pious reminders that God was everywhere meant little to him. His cure came only when a voice told him in which church he could find a portrait of Demetrius. He stumbled in, crying, ‘where is the great Demetrius?’ – and looked up to see on the wall the beloved well-known face of Demetrius – *his* saint.³

Though the renewed civic sense of the sixth century made icons public and put them into rapid circulation in the Mediterranean, it was the holy man who kept them beloved and gave them a more intimate and permanent religious status. The icons of the city avoided some problems. They faced the profane world from the arcades of churches, on town gates.⁴ It was the monks who helped to bring them into the church, the preserve of the holy. In the cult of icons, scholars have surely been right to see the monks as the *Tonangebende*. For the secret of the holy man’s popularity was precisely that he had remained, for all his awesome sanctity, very much an average Byzantine. Monastic piety was the piety of the Byzantine layman writ large – hence its enormous appeal. The desperate need of the lonely hermit to focus his attention on some enduring and resilient figure had, also, found a resolution in the icon hanging in his monastic cell. There is a deep psychological authenticity in the account of the monk who felt tempted to rid himself of the ‘spirit of fornication’ that tormented him, by trampling on the beautiful idealized portrait of the Virgin with which he lived.⁵ There was more to this perhaps than the case of individual monks. The mystical theology of the monks articulated a more sophisticated, psychological theory

1. Compare A. Deubner, *Kosmas und Damian* (1907), 13, pp. 132 ff, cited in Mansi, xiii. 65C, where the icon consoles a lady whose husband had been transferred from Constantinople, that the saints of this quintessentially Constantinopolitan shrine would still be able to ‘visit’ her even at Laodicea. The icon enables a ship’s captain to recognize that it was St. Demetrius who spoke to him in a dream: *Mirac. S. Dem.* 1253B. Two Galatians, stranded in the desert, recognize ‘Plato, the martyr of their home-town’, who had led them in a vision, by comparing his face with their icon: Mansi, xiii. 32E. In the shrine of St. Cyrus and John (Aboukir, Egypt), an inhabitant of Damascus is not fully cured until he dreams that the patron-saint of Damascus had shared in the cure administered by the two Egyptian saints: *Miracula Sanctorum Cyri et Iohannis*, P. G. lxxxvii, 3664B ff. at 3672C.

2. Grabar, *Iconoclasm*, pp. 90 ff. Compare L. Robert, *Hellenica*, xiii (1965), 124: ‘De plus en plus, au cours de l’époque hellénistique et de l’époque romaine, il y a des transferts de culte, des transferts de copies de statues divines. En face des cultes locaux s’établit le grand dieu, aux pouvoirs éprouvés, sous la forme canonique de son idole’.

3. *Mirac. S. Dem.* 1384C – 1385A.

4. *Mirac. S. Dem.* 1220B; Th. Nissen, ‘Unbekannte Erzählungen aus dem Pratum Spirituale’, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, xxxviii (1938), 367, on the Christ Icon at Antioch.

5. John Moschus, *Pratum Spirituale* cited in Mansi, xiii. 193A–D. The Iconoclasts apparently cut out these passages in the *Pratum Spirituale*: Mansi, xiii. 192D.

of the function of the image as an aid to contemplation.¹ The monastic church may well have been the first milieu in which this contemplative theory was put into practice. In such a church, the icon gained meaning through being part of the liturgy, and became a chosen vehicle for expressing the majestic rhythms of the divine plan of salvation.² The fundamental presupposition of a theory of the contemplative function of the icon — which is, quite crudely, that the worshipper should be able to spend long hours at his ease before the visible images of invisible presences,³ was best met in the precincts of a monastery, just as pagan apologists of images had, also, envisaged the continued lingering of the devotee among the statues of the gods in a cherished holy spot.⁴ Furthermore, monastic craftsmanship in producing icons would raise the icon above the suspicions that, as we have seen, still clung so heavily to the artist in any urban secular context.⁵

Perhaps the monks contributed more to the cult of icons than through the example of individual religious habits. For the holy man had become the arbiter of Christian discipline in the community. It was to the holy man, and not to the bishop, that the early Byzantine layman instinctively turned to find out how he should behave.⁶ When visiting Constantinople, Theodore of Sykeon laid down the law about the propriety of going to the baths after church; the ruling caused quite a stir; the clergy of the Hagia Sophia sent a delegation to him — had the holy man derived his ruling from the Scriptures?⁷ The propriety of icons belonged to the same penumbra of Christian behaviour as having a bath. In the early fifth century, a courtier would approach the holy man Neilos, to ask where in his new church he should place the cross, and where the delightful foliage and hunting scenes of fashionable mosaics.⁸ The holy man retained this role up to the eighth century. When the Iconoclast bishop appeared in a provincial town, the locals promptly trooped off to their local holy man to ask what they should think. 'With tears',

1. Kitzinger, 'Cult of Images', pp. 139 ff. on the arguments.

2. See, for example, the role of the mosaic of the Transfiguration, in the church in the Monastery of St. Catherine at Sinai: G. H. Forsyth, 'The Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai: the Church and Fortress of Justinian', *Dunbarton Oaks Papers*, xxii (1968), 14: 'To the ordinary pilgrim the Burning Bush [where the monastery was supposed to stand] was a numinous object which he viewed with awe and wonder. . . . For the monks in their nave, however, the Burning Bush was evidently just a local memento, a reminder of the unfolding of God's plan of salvation, so subtly and profoundly set forth in the mosaic [of the Transfiguration] over their main altar. Between the relic and the mosaic is only a wall, the wall of the main apse, but in idea they are very far apart.'

3. Mansi, xiii. 304E.

4. Porphyry, *Against the Christians*, cited in Alexander, *ubi supra*, p. 27.

5. Theodore of Stoudion, Ep. 1, 13, P. G. xcix. 957C.

6. Brown, 'Holy Man', p. 98

7. *Vita Theodori Syceotae*, c. 137, ed. Festugiére, *Subsidia Hagiographica*, 48 (1970), 109.

8. Nilus, Ep. *ad Olympiodorum*, P. G. lxxix. 577D.

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the old man proceeded to tell them (for the next 34 pages of Melioransky's printed text!), to the great annoyance of the Iconoclast bishop.¹

Holy men and icons were implicated on an even deeper level. For both were, technically, unconsecrated objects. Not only was the holy man not ordained as a priest or a bishop: his appeal was precisely that he stood outside the vested hierarchy of the Byzantine church.² He was holy because he was held to be holy by his clientele, not because any bishop had conferred holy orders on him. By the end of the sixth century, the exceptional position of the holy man was made explicit in formal gesture: a mystique of its own surrounded the monastic dress, the *schema*.³ It was the *schema*, and not consecration by the bishop, that conferred spiritual powers on the holy man. Like the icon, therefore, the monastic *schema* could only claim indirect consecration from the past: it was said to have derived its holiness from being the same garment as that which angels had conferred on St. John the Baptist in the wilderness.⁴

Icons were invested with holiness in the late sixth and seventh centuries because they still expressed the continuing needs of the ancient city; they were backed up by continued loyalty to particular cult-sites, which still boasted the physical remains of supernatural protectors; they entered circulation, also, as part of the relationship between the holy man and his largely urban clientele. They had inherited, therefore, both the strength and weakness of the religion of the ancient city. These weaknesses proved their undoing.

First: The public use of icons depended on a close association with intense feelings of local patriotism. In the seventh century these feelings had become dangerously centrifugal. Byzantium did have to face a crisis of 'regionalism and independence' in the face of the first Slav and the first Arab attacks.⁵ In Thessalonica, for instance, St. Demetrius tended to eclipse the emperor and his officials. In the *Miracles of Saint Demetrius* we see local opinion viewing imperial governors of the seventh century with the same misgivings as had the town council of Antioch in the fourth century, as we see it through the writings of Libanius. Like Libanius, St. Demetrius knew a difficult governor when he saw one. Like Libanius, St. Demetrius (and the clergy who reported his actions) could make or break a foreign official's reputation in the city.⁶ Some never learnt. When the town

1. *The Admonition of the Old Man*, ed. Melioransky, p. v.

2. Brown, 'Holy Man', pp. 91-92 and 95.

3. See K. Holl, *Enthusiasmus und Bussgewalt beim griechischen Mönchtum*, (1898), 205 f.

4. See, especially, the long and passionate digression on the holiness of the monastic *schema*, in a text concerned, ostensibly, with the holiness of icons: P. Peeters, 'Saint Romain le néomartyr († 1. mai 780) d'après un document géorgien', *Analecta Bollandiana*, xxx (1911), 417.

5. See now A. Guillou, *Régionalisme et indépendance dans l'empire byzantin au vii. ème siècle* (1969), pp. 248-52.

6. *Mirac S. Dem.* 1204A - for a 'good testimonial' on a governor, couched in entirely traditional terms.

council swore on the grave of St. Demetrius that they were innocent of cooking their tax accounts this was too much for the governor: 'He said that the most glorious martyr was hand in glove with the townsmen.' The council trooped out, covering their ears lest they hear further blasphemies. In two days the governor was down with a stroke.¹ This essentially Late Antique friction was suddenly magnified in the crisis of the seventh century. When there was a rumour that the town would have to be evacuated, a citizen dreamt that St. Demetrius had refused the imperial mandate of God to leave his city: he would not desert his 'fellow citizens' for any emperor.² Similar feelings had crystallized in the smaller towns of Asia Minor and Syria. They could either be disruptive to the unity of the empire, or they would have their bluff called in any really serious crisis.³

Second: while the icon focused strong collective feelings, it also bore the brunt of that urge for privacy, for a special relationship with the divine, for advice and blessing in competitive situations, that had existed in the great Mediterranean cities since Roman times.⁴ Hence the growing popularity of the icon among the upper classes of the Byzantine world. The courtiers and the educated clergy of the sixth and seventh centuries are the direct descendants of Aelius Aristides. Like him, they needed the constant special attentions of private protectors in a competitive world.⁵ Some of the first references to icons come from just such men, facing such difficulties.⁶ In every class, the icon overcame the great loneliness of men and women in an urban setting. Its well-known face, rather than the crowded, frighteningly impersonal shrines, ministered to the day-to-day needs of the *Quartier*.⁷

Hence an important shift in the religious topography of the Late Antique city. The great Christian basilicas of the previous centuries tended to stand empty, except for great occasions. In these, the solemn liturgy of the Eucharist was celebrated. But this liturgy had become awesome and distant. In it, Christ was withdrawn from the masses in a deliberate attempt to surround the Eucharist with the trappings of an imperial ceremonial.⁸ Personal piety, therefore, leaked away towards the icons. For the icons were the way to the

1. *Ibid.* 1272BC.

2. *Ibid.* 1352A

3. Claude, *ubi supra*, 127-144.

4. E. R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety* (1965), p. 45.

5. St. Demetrius is represented as the 'intimate friend' (with all the political overtones of such designation - 'a friend at court') of the bishop and of individual leading figures of Thessalonica: *Mirac. S. Dem.* 1212A; 1213A; 1336A.

6. The Patriarch Germanus appealed to his own experiences of cures, of the resolution of difficulties, of dreams, all connected with icons: Mansi, xiii 125A.

7. On the role of the icon of the Virgin at Blachernae in the conception and childhood of St. Stephen: *V. Steph. Inv.* P. G. c. 1176B - 1080A.

8. K. Holl, 'Die Entstehung der Bilderwand in der griechischen Kirche', *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, ii (1928), 225-37, if he exaggerates the speed with which the monumental chancel became the fully-fledged iconostasis, separating the faithful from the altar, is nevertheless right on the growing solemnity of the ceremonies surrounding the Eucharist in the late 6th century (at pp. 231-2).

intercessions of the saints who formed the back-stairs government of that awesome throne.¹ Even when the basilica remained the focus of attention, as in Thessalonica, its collective meaning was increasingly blurred by the encroachment of *ex-voto* icons. Plainly to have St. Demetrius as one's personal protector, by making him the god-father of one's children and by recording the transaction in a votive icon, meant more to individuals than did the imposing collective liturgy of the Eucharist. 'Released from the serried ranks of a narrative cycle or of a pictorial litany or calendar and no longer part of a universal scheme, an objective, supra-personal order, the sacred representation may become the object of a more intimate rapport, a more personal relationship'.² Not every age can afford such luxury. The untidiness implicit in the need for 'a more intimate rapport' might strike a more orderly and militant age as superstition.

III

The Arab raids of the late seventh century fell like a hammer-blow on the rich and loosely-knit world that we have described. They created a deep demoralization. Only one city, Nicæa, felt that it could convincingly ascribe its deliverance to its local icons.³ Pergamon, by contrast, fell after a resort to the most grisly form of pagan sorcery.⁴ Incidents such as this show that the problem of morale was too big to handle by traditional methods.⁵ Loss of confidence is not a feeling that we can expect to find on the surface of the official historiography of the Byzantine empire; but in the course of the seventh century, this human fact can be felt pressing in on every facet of the Byzantine world.

Yet demoralization, in itself, cannot explain why any particular society chooses a particular scapegoat. This is true of Byzantine society in the eighth century. Byzantines had faced enough crises to know what to do. They knew that God was frequently angry with them for their sins. They knew what these sins were: homosexuality, blasphemy, tolerance of pagans, Jews and heretics.⁶ They had frequently punished such sins. Even Leo III had done his best in a tradition inherited directly from Justinian. He had ordered the forcible baptism of all Jews within the empire.⁷ Plainly, however, this time it was not thought enough. What the Iconoclasts were intent

1. *V. Steph. Iun.* P. G. c. 1080A - the icon of the Virgin is, for the mother of Stephen, 'my surety, my patron, my helper'.

2. Kitzinger, 'Byzantine Art', *Sitzungsberichte* (1957), p. 44. Compare Grabar, *Martyrium*, ii. 87 f.; *Iconoclasm*, 84-88 and 203.

3. Theophanes, *Chronographia*, A. M. 6217, ed. de Boor, pp. 404-6; Hennephof, no. 3, p. 3.

4. Theophanes, *Chronographia*, A. M. 6208, de Boor, p. 390.

5. E.g. Theophanes, *Chronographia*, A. M. 6201, de Boor, p. 377.

6. Theodosius II, *Novella*, iii, 8 (438) - Jews, Samaritans, pagans, and heretics; Justinian *Novella*, cxli (559) - homosexuals.

7. Sharf, *ubi supra*, 61.

on removing and punishing was not particular sins but something more serious: the root sin of the human race, the deep stain of the error of idolatry.¹ Only a change in the mental climate of the age can account for such a drastic shift of emphasis.

Muslim propaganda can be discounted. Even if the Arab armies contained a high proportion of Syrian and Egyptian adventurers who might have been renegades and so could have provided Greek-speaking propagandists of Islam, it is unlikely that the Muslims used such methods and, in any case, that they would have been listened to by those at the receiving end.² (If we wish to find debates about icons between Christians and Muslims, we must go to the humdrum life of the Syrian coast, where Cypriot merchants still frequented Gabala and passed the time of day by arguing with the customs officers.³) Islamic propaganda was unnecessary. The influence of the Old Testament upon the public image of the Byzantine empire had grown steadily since the reign of Heraclius: the Byzantines were the 'true Israel'.⁴ The post-Justinianic law was presented, by Leo III in the preface to his *Ecloga*, as no more than an elaborate implementation of the law of Moses.⁵ This evolution gave the Byzantine clergy what they sorely needed in a time of crisis. It provided them with a body of ideas that, to quote an anthropologist 'allows the verbalisation of anxiety in a framework that is understandable and that implies the possibility of doing something about it'.⁶

The savage and raw mood of the Iconoclasts, and the determination with which they attacked images as idolatrous, owes most to their ability to verbalize their anxiety. It is our first impression of them. When in the 720s the Patriarch Germanos wrote to Thomas of Claudiopolis, the worship of icons was an issue on which he was quite prepared to compromise. It was a practice which, like the taking of wine among the sages of the Book of Proverbs, should be treated 'μετὰ βουλήs'.⁷ What shocked Germanos was that, as a provincial bishop, Thomas was formulating the public mood in unusually stark terms⁸: Thomas had been saying that 'the Christian people have gone astray'.⁹ It was the presupposition that 'the Christian people' could err so seriously as to lapse back into idolatry, and not the attack on icons themselves, that shocked the

1. Horos of 754: Hennephof, no. 205, p. 62.

2. P. G. xcii. 1365D — an Arab insulted the inhabitants in the siege of 717: 'calling the city "Constantia" and the Great Church merely "Sofia"'.
3. Mansi, xiii. 80A.

4. E.g. George of Pisidia, *In restitutionem S. Crucis*, line 25 f., ed. A. Pertusi, *Giorgio di Pisidia, Panegirici epi*, *Studia Patristica et Byzantina*, 7 (1960), 226.

5. *Ecloga, Proemion*, transl. E. H. Freshfield, *A Manual of Roman Law* (1926), pp. 66–70.

6. Clyde Kluckhohn, cited in G. Lienhardt, *Social Anthropology* (1966), p. 125.

7. Mansi, xiii, 109B.

8. *Ibid.* 105A. Thomas of Claudiopolis is told that he would be better occupied praying that the empire should have peace.

9. Mansi, xiii. 124D. Thomas preached this 'as if it was a matter of common and irrefutable doctrine' — *ibid.* 109E.

patriarch.¹ It was a presupposition which the Iconoclasts found writ large in the Bible. In the Old Testament, Israel had apostasized on many occasions; according to St. Paul, the 'wrath of God' was 'poured out' over the human race for its idolatrous tendencies.² Such a perspective stated nothing less than the truth. The Arab invasions had come to assume proportions of 'a great aboriginal catastrophe'; only national apostasy, and no amount of individual laxity, could explain them. The apostasy of Israel had always taken the form of a return to idols,³ and the slow decline of mankind into the mire of sin had taken the form of a steady increase in idolatry.⁴ Thus Iconoclasts could appeal to a fact which even the most elementary historical awareness could discover about their immediate past – there had been an apparent increase in the use and prominence accorded to images. Last, like all melodramatic verbalizations of anxiety, its appeal lay in an implicit optimism. Blasphemy and homosexuality were likely to be always with the people of God; but it had been known that the pious kings in Judah⁵ and pious Christian emperors after Constantine had effectively extirpated idolatry.⁶ A quite unmistakable streak of reforming zeal, a frank admission that institutions can get worse and a confidence that they can be made better, is one of the most tantalizing features of the Iconoclast movement.⁷ But it is perhaps not as isolated as we had thought. All over Europe, Christians were drawing concrete historical and political conclusions from the Old Testament. In Northumbria, Bede was meditating on the account of Gildas of how the Britons had once lost their promised land to the Saxons, with an anxious sense that perhaps the turn of the Saxons might come round.⁸ His exact contemporary, Thomas of Claudiopolis, was drawing equally bleak conclusions 'from too straightforward a rumination on the Holy Scriptures'.⁹ The elemental and stark theme of the apostasy, dereliction and repentance of the people of Israel had become contemporary to men who were beginning to feel the cold chill of the advance of Islam.

The Iconoclasts could not, perhaps, have gone so far if they had not been able to state their case with such irrefutable clarity. The anxieties they mobilized were less tidy. Savage disillusionment and

1. *Ibid* 109B–D; 121D – 'that the accusation of the Scriptures on the fate of idolaters is not applicable to us'; 128D – the critics are 'accusers of the Christians'.

2. *Ibid*. 121D and *Admonition of the Old Man*, ed. Melioransky, p. xviii: the Iconoclast bishop, 'raising his voice, asked the people directly: "What think you of the Wisdom of God?"' and pp. xxiii–xxiv.

3. *The Admonition of the Old Man*, ed. Melioransky, p. xxiv. Cf. *Adversus Constantinum Caballinum*, P. G. xcvi. 320C.

4. Mansi, xiii, 121D and *The Admonition of the Old Man*, p. xvi quoting *Wisdom*, xiv.

5. Gouillard, *ubi supra*, p. 287, lines 138–40, also in Hennephof, no. 79, p. 34.

6. Letter of Epiphanius of Salamis to Theodosius II: Hennephof, no. 111, p. 45.

7. Mansi, xiii, 228B. Compare *Adversus Constantinum Caballinum*, P. G. xcvi. 341B.

8. J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent* (1971), p. 74.

9. Germanos, *de haeresibus*, c. 40 P. G. xcvi. 77A.

contempt for failed gods are important factors in the Iconoclast movement. They are neither surprising nor peripheral. Faced by real distress, the Byzantine Age of Faith was as skin-deep as any other. An old man who had failed to receive a cure from the shrines of St. Cosmas and Damian stormed out: *ἐπιθετας ἁποκαλῶν τοὺς ἁγίους καὶ μηδεμίαν ἐνέργειαν εὐεργεσίας κεκτημένους, ἀλλὰ μάτην καὶ ἔκ τινος προλήψεως τὴν δόξαν τοῦ δύνασθαι παρὰ θεῶν ἔχοντας*.¹

The Iconoclast controversy has a blustering inconclusive character. The Arab invasions of the late seventh century account for this. For these invasions marked the end of the ancient world in Asia Minor: 'in the days of old cities were numerous in Rūm (Anatolia) but now they have become few.'² At a stroke, therefore, the icons lost half their backing. We have seen to what an extent the icons of the immediately previous age had owed their charge of holiness to acting as the focus of very real civic patriotism. By the eighth century, this had vanished. The morale of the towns was broken. The pilgrimage-sites that had dotted Asia Minor were deserted.³ The relics of the saints were abandoned or hurriedly transferred.⁴ The icon had circulated largely on the security of these firm local associations. Now icons were in danger of a giddy inflation. Refugees were bringing, from all corners of the empire, icons that lacked local approval.⁵ Craftsmen were turning out increasingly standardized images of Christ and of the Virgin that had none of the homely familiarity of the image of one's local martyr.⁶ It is not surprising that the crisis was first felt in the western provinces of Asia Minor. This was not because Iconoclasm had strong local roots in these areas. Far from it: it was Iconodulism which had the local roots;⁷ but these roots had been shaken by the Muslim invasions.

Icons suffered, in part, because they were the symbols of a style of political life that was out of date. The Byzantine empire could no longer afford the luxury of remaining a 'commonwealth of cities'. Self-help had proved to be either treasonable or ineffective. The emperor had to be omniscient, and be seen to be omniscient.⁸

1. Deubner, *Kosmas und Damian*, p. 145, 32: 'calling the saints impostors, who possessed no real power to do anybody any good, but who enjoyed an imagined reputation for power to move God, due to prejudice.'

2. *Ἡσυχία αἰ Ἀλαμ: the Regions of the World*, transl. V. Minorsky (1937), p. 157. H. Ahrweiler, *ubi supra*, pp. 28-32.

3. Mansi xiii. 125AB - recognizes the decline in the powers of the icon of the Virgin at Sozopolis. See H. Ahrweiler, *ubi supra*, p. 3, n. 4 on how numerous such cult-sites had been.

4. Grabar, *Martyrium*, ii, 351, 354-5.

5. E.g. Mansi, xiii, 21D - on the resistance of a woman of Caesarea to the relic and icon of a new saint.

6. Grabar, *Iconoclasm*, pp. 90 ff.

7. As seen by Dobschütz, *Christusbilder*, p. 265, n. 3.

8. Thus the Emperors Leo III and Constantine V took over the building of local town walls: Theophanes, *Chronographia*, A. M. 6232, de Boor p. 412. These were marked only by traditional prophylactic signs of the Cross: A. Frolov, 'IC XC NIKA', *Byzantinoslavica*, xvii (1956), 106.

For the collapse of the city left a void in men's view of the empire. A new patriotism had to be created. The void was filled by more concrete emphasis than ever previously on the Byzantines as a people of God, whose political imagery was borrowed from the Old Testament. We have already seen the repercussion of this grave awareness on the ideology of the Iconoclasts. This was decisive. What was at stake was not only that images had been forbidden in the second Commandment (this everyone knew, and the patriarch's copy of the Old Testament even had a marginal note at the place),¹ but that the Byzantines were the people of God to whom this holy law had been delivered. Therefore, the idea of the church as the core of Byzantine identity hardened. From the seventh century onwards, Byzantines thought of themselves as the 'baptized people'.² It was an attitude that had spasmodic repercussions in forcible attempts to baptize Jewish communities on Byzantine territory.³ They found that they were not only all baptized, but, also, far more united than previously. The Christological rancours of the sixth century had diffracted the religious life of the towns.⁴ Now this religious life could fall into place: and it fell into place around the basilica and the liturgy of the Eucharist.⁵ The Eucharist, as we have seen, was one of the potent symbols of the holy which the Iconoclasts presented as the correct alternative to icons. How very potent it was to men of the early eighth century can be appreciated in a sculpture of a colleague and contemporary of the Iconoclast bishops — the cross of Bishop Acca of Hexham of 740. 'Acca's cross and its decorations are distinguished by an almost iconoclastic dismissal of figural panel . . . The vine scroll, the symbol of the church in union with Christ, or Christ's sacramental presence in the Eucharist, covers the whole surface. . .'.⁶ Such a symbol had not been shared by the urban populations of the great towns of the sixth century. In the Little Byzantium left over by the Arabs, it could regain its position.⁷

The emperors had to win in battle if they were to survive at all. For this purpose the sign of the cross, with its unbroken association with victory over four centuries, was a more ancient and compact symbol than any Christ-icon could be.⁸ When it came to winning

1. Mansi, xiii. 188B.

2. The Jews are juxtaposed with 'the baptised people': *Mirac. S. Dem.* 1332B.

3. Sharf, *ubi supra*, pp. 53 and 61.

4. E.g. John Moschus, *Pratum Spirituale*, P. G. lxxxvii 2877C, where the Eucharistic elements pass between a wife and her Chalcedonian woman neighbour, to the predictable annoyance of the Monophysite husband.

5. *Mirac. S. Dem.* 1349A — it is assumed that in Thessalonica everyone is present at the Eucharist.

6. Rosemary Cramp, *Early Northumbrian Sculpture*, Jarrow Lecture 1965, p. 7.

7. Mansi xiii. 124B. Germanos appeals to the solidarity of the solemn celebration of the Eucharist, which he has in common with the Iconoclasts.

8. Grabar, *Iconoclasm*, p— 153: 'Sainte-Sophie n'offrait primitivement aucune figuration chrétienne en dehors de la croix répétée maintes fois, et cet exemple illustre rappelle la tradition à laquelle se rattachaient les iconoclastes.'

battles, the cross was stronger medicine: Heraclius,¹ Oswald of Northumbria,² the Armenians³ all realized this; and the Arabs repaid the compliment — for them, Christians were not icon-worshippers, they were ‘worshippers of the wood’ (of the cross).⁴ In a word: by asserting that only a limited number of symbols were invested with the idea of the holy, the Iconoclasts were choosing just those symbols that best suited a more collective and more highly centralized society. Norman Baynes has talked of the ‘steel framework’ of the Byzantine state.⁵ Leo III and Constantine V attempted to ensure that this ‘steel framework’ stood out with a streamlined austerity, after generations of cluttering up by the traditions of a more affluent and easy-going age. Let us examine how the Iconoclast controversy reflects this change.

In the first place, it may explain the inconclusive quality of the Iconoclastic controversy. Iconoclast persecutions of Iconodules amount to very little. One might easily dismiss them as a ‘chopping at twigs’.⁶ But this is just the point. The Iconoclasts were only faced with twigs. Their policy had a firm, traditional basis, very much in tune with the average sentiments of the Byzantine secular clergy. It amounted to strengthening the backbone of the Byzantine church at the expense of pockets of centrifugal and illegitimate spiritual power. Their measures, therefore, though histrionic and brutal, were more like the clearing away of undergrowth in a well-established forest. The symbols to which the Iconoclasts appealed as the true repository of the holy carried implications that summed up a system of strong centralized government. It was Iconodulism rather than Iconoclasm that polarized strong local feelings. This is suggested by the fact that it was only after the reversal of Iconoclasm that some provincial cities regained, from the Empress Irene, a shadow of those lavish exemptions and privileges, which, in the seventh century, had been granted on the pretext of honouring the patron saints of these cities.⁷ There was indeed a radical wing in Iconoclasm that denied the intercession of the saints, and so denied their role as the special protectors of individuals and localities.⁸ There could have been no

1. Grabar, *Iconoclasm*, pp. 29 and 155, and ‘La précieuse Croix de la Lavra de S. Athanase au Mont Athos’, *Cahiers Archéologiques*, xix (1969), 113 — on the revival of the use of the simple Cross at the time of the Byzantine military successes of the tenth century. See also Frolov, *ubi supra*, pp. 98–110.

2. Rosemary Cramp, *ubi supra*, p. 5.

3. B. Arakelian, *Armenian Reliefs of the IVth to VIIIth centuries* (1949) — in Armenian, pp. 60–61. Fig. 49.

4. Mansi, xiii, 357D.

5. N. H. Baynes, ‘The Decline of the Roman Power in Western Europe’, *Byzantine Studies*, p. 94.

6. Examined by Melioransky, in his preface to *The Admonition of the Old Man*, pp. 25–29.

7. A. A. Vasiliev, ‘An Edict of the Emperor Justinian II’, *Speculum*, xviii (1943), 1–13. See G. I. Bratianu, *Privilèges et franchises municipales dans l’Empire byzantin* (1936), 88–98 and H. Ahrweiler, *ubi supra*, 25, n. 4.

8. G. Ostrogorsky, *Studien*, 29–40 — for a differentiated account of this evidence.

more drastic rebuttal of the ideology of the civic saints than such a categorical denial. There was an Iconoclast Jacobinism that ruthlessly sacked local cult-sites.¹ In Constantinople itself pockets of 'illegitimate' power were, spasmodically, mopped-up.²

It would be misleading to regard the Iconoclasts as anti-urban.³ Rather, Constantine V acted as the midwife of a new style of urban life, by which the cities, from being pockets of local autonomy, became centres for the operation of the central government.⁴ The success of Constantine V in Constantinople was spectacular. He did nothing less than recreate a city and its morale when it had been emptied by plague.⁵ The immigration caused by the aftermath of this plague was an opportunity which Constantine V grasped with both hands. And he did so in the ancient, resolutely secular manner of an emperor such as Anastasius I. The images of the six Oecumenical Councils disappeared from the Milion, the hub of the city.⁶ They were replaced by portraits of the emperor's favourite charioteer.⁷ In so doing, Constantine V revived the full-blooded and concrete mystique of the Hippodrome, with its associations of the victory of the good luck of the city and of its emperor.⁸ This was, perhaps, a welcome change from anxious dependence on the invisible Virgin.⁹ It contrasts with Heraclius, who was prepared to leave the city in pledge to an icon of the Virgin. Constantine, by contrast, stayed put. And he reaped a reward of almost mystical popularity.¹⁰ In making Constantinople the unchallenged hub of the empire, Constantine V, rather than Heraclius, deserves the title of the founder of medieval Byzantium.

1. The Iconoclast bishops in 754 feared extensive looting: Mansi, xiii. 332DE, Hennephof, no. 247, p. 73. See also Germanus, *de haeresibus*, c. 41, P. G. xcviij, 80AC.

2. On the fate of the relics of S. Euphemia see the material in R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin: Le siège de Constantinople* (1953), pp. 126-36, and F. Halkin, *Euphémie de Chalcédoine*, *Subsidia Hagiographica*, 41 (1965), 81-106. The shrine in question was near the Hippodrome, of comparatively recent origin (the relics were translated from Chalcedon at the time of the Persian invasion in 615), and credited with miraculous powers. It was eminently vulnerable according to the criteria we have discussed: it had only popular recognition. By contrast, Constantine V appears to have used the more securely 'vested' relic of the Cross for formal occasions, such as the swearing of oaths: Theophanes, A. M. 6257, de Boor, p. 437, 13f.

3. As H. Ahrweiler, *ubi supra*, p. 24 implies.

4. M. J. Sjusjumov, 'Vizantijskij gorod (seredina vii - seredina ix. vv.)', *Vizantijskij Vremennik*, xxvii (1967), 38-70 is the most recent treatment of this aspect of town life.

5. P. J. Alexander, *ubi supra*, pp. 123-4: 'It does seem that Constantine V made the city population prosperous at the expense of the peasants.'

6. *V. Steph. Im. P. G. c. 1113A.*

7. *Ibid.* c. 1169B, on the celebration of the Brumalia.

8. Grabar, *Iconoclasm*, pp. 156-60. Now see Alan Cameron, *Porphyrius the Charioteer*, 1972.

9. Grabar, *Iconoclasm*, p. 35.

10. See the remarkable incident in the tense mood before the defeat of the Byzantine army by the Bulgars: Theophanes, *Chronographia*, A. M. 6304, ed. de Boor, p. 501. The crowd surged round the tomb of Constantine V calling on him to arise and save the Roman state.

In this obscure and rancorous debate on the fate of the Byzantine town, the bishops almost invariably sided with the centralized hierarchy of the empire. Their tastes had kept them within the firm horizon of the town. In their consecrated basilicas they celebrated the Eucharistic liturgy that was the symbol of the unity of the Christian city. In their palaces (which, frequently, were no more than a wing of the governor's palace)¹ they imposed the stern disciplinary norms of the ancient Christian penitential system on the townsfolk. They had their jails for recalcitrant country clergymen.² They were so used to participating with the governor in the secular ceremonial of city life that a bishop of seventh-century Thessalonica found it only too easy to dream that he was sitting in the theatre watching a tragedy.³ When in the fifth century monks had protested to the bishop of Chalcedon that the governor was staging pagan games in the Hippodrome, the bishop told these zealots to mind their own business.⁴ The situation plainly continued, and was reactivated in the course of the eighth century.⁵ It is very significant that we should see the urban reforms of Constantine V in high relief, by the oblique light of monastic disapproval. For bishop and governor stood together, in the Iconoclast period, against the holy man of monastic background. *Cherchez le moine*: this remains the key to most Iconoclast policy, to all Iconoclast persecution, and to the overwhelming bulk of the contemporary Iconodule evidence from which we draw our impression of the period. Iconomachy in action is monachomachy. What was at stake, however, was not the dissolution of the Byzantine monasteries. It was, rather, a singularly consequential, if spasmodic, determination to break the power of the holy man in Byzantine society, both as a principal bulwark of the power of the icon and, so one might suggest, as a force in itself.

The holy man, of course, was a monk. He wore the badge of the monastic *schema* and, often, he practised from the shelter of a great monastery or great traditional grouping of hermits in single place.⁶ But the Iconoclast attacks on monasteries are incidental to their main purpose. This was the severing of the links between the individual holy man and his clientele. The attack is a final illustration of the variety of the issues at stake in the eighth century. The evidence allows us to appreciate the situation very fully. We are faced with a situation strictly analogous to the notorious sorcery purges of the fourth century. These purges had happened at a time when two

1. Claude, *ubi supra*, p. 82.

2. John Moschus, *Pratum Spirituale*, P. G. lxxxvii. 2969D.

3. *Mirac. S. Dem.* 1296B.

4. *Vita Hypatii*, c. 33, p. 108.

5. *V. Steph. Iun.* P. G. c. 1120A; 'Vic de S. Romain', *Analecta Bollandiana*, xxx (1911),

413.

6. E.g. Theophanes, *Chronographia*, A. M. 6256, ed. de Boot, p. 442: Hennephof, no. 12, p. 9. *V. Steph. Iun.* P. G. c. 1092D — the mountain of St. Auxentios, a notorious lair of holy men, was turned into an imperial hunting reserve.

structures of power were sensed to conflict: the explicit, articulated vested power of the Imperial servants conflicting with the inarticulate power of the traditional classes of the Roman world – with the *je ne sais quoi* of their prestige and education, and the labyrinthine tentacles of their actual political and social influence. The sorcery accusations of that period were a way of ferreting out and destroying hard nuclei of such inarticulate, un-vested power. It is the same with the holy men of the reigns of Leo III and especially of Constantine V.¹ We have already seen the extent to which the Iconoclast clergy were committed to a structure of vested power. It was implicit in their contention that only objects that had been properly blessed by the appropriate authority could be treated as holy. We have seen how a whole set of social and administrative developments in the eighth century clustered behind this statement. We have seen, also, how, up to that century, holy man and icon had developed concomitantly. They were the foci of a totally different form of unvested inarticulate power. They were not blessed by anybody.² Both met needs that were private and not collective. Both very often lay outside the very horizon of the city – in suburban monasteries or on the tops of the nearest mountains. Both icon and holy man were consecrated from below. This meant, in practice, that both stood at the centre of a whole world of needs and relationships that were not included in the vested structure of the church and its collective rites.

The conflict latent in this situation was brought into the open by the events of the late seventh century. The equilibrium between collective overtones of the civic cult of the icon and the private ministrations of the holy man and of the miraculous icon, which had been perfectly maintained in a previous age, was brutally upset by the depletion of the cities. This meant that the centrifugal, the ascetic, and the non-collective and potentially non-urban elements in the worship of icons were suddenly exaggerated. It became brutally plain for the first time that either the bishop or the holy man must be the moral arbiter of Byzantium.³ The holy man had tended to bless and foster the growth of the icon; the bishop, as the famous *Admonition of the Old Man* showed clearly, now found that this was against the law of God as he and his emperor interpreted it.⁴ The holy man had played a large role in lightening the load of the early Christian penitential system; the bishop felt more strongly than ever previously that if the Byzantine empire was a new Israel living under a single

1. *V. Steph. Isa.* P. G. c. 1129B: 'that sorcerer', is Constantine V's view of Stephen the Younger. See P. Brown, 'Sorcery, Demons and the Rise of Christianity', *Witchcraft Confessions and Accusations* (A. S. A. Monographs 9), 1970, pp. 20–25: (*Religion and Society in the Age of St. Augustine*, 1972, pp. 123–31).

2. Hence the constant pairing of arguments on the holiness and supernatural origin of the monastic *schema* with arguments for the similar position of the holy icons.

3. *Adversus Constantinum Caballinum*, P. G. xcvi. 329D and 332A.

4. *The Admonition of the Old Man*, ed. Melioransky, p. xviii. 'We should believe what has been said by God (in the Scriptures) and commanded by our holy Emperor.'

divine law, then it was he who should be its leader and the administrator of its laws for the believer.¹ The holy man had drawn his prestige largely from having opted out of urban society for the desert, while remaining within comfortable travelling distance for his urban clientele;² bishop and governor were committed to ensuring that many a small town did not sink back into the surrounding countryside.³ The holy man, like the icon, was holy without having had this holiness delegated to him by the bishop. All this was no purely symbolic debate in eighth-century Byzantium: for, in Byzantium, as in other early medieval societies, holiness was power; and the symbol of the holy could cover a very real nexus of social influence. Hence the concern of Constantine V. We can follow it in the fully-documented account of the life and martyrdom of St. Stephen the Younger. Once established on the mountain of Auxentios on the Chalcedon side of the Bosphorus, Stephen became the focus of a large clientele from Constantinople.⁴ He was approached to handle large sums of money.⁵ Aristocratic ladies were attached to him as their spiritual father. Later, his clientele included army officers, and his consultations involved the worship of two private icons.⁶ The presence of these icons in Stephen's cell was rather less important than Stephen himself. Like the supposed sorcerer of the fourth century Stephen was the nucleus of inarticulate power: 'Sitting on top of his mountain', wrote the Imperial spies, 'he is digging pits for you'.⁷ Constantine V and his agents were right to be suspicious. The Byzantine upper class had remained, for all its new emphasis on centralized power, a singularly fluid and competitive body of men. The holy man as spiritual father (joined in the seventh and eighth centuries by the private collection of icons and by the icon of the patron saint as protector and godfather) was but one figure in a tangled skein of alternative and conflicting power structures. A politician's success depended on his ability to manipulate these alternative power structures.⁸ Put crudely, success needed constant personal blessing: there is hardly a single emperor from the fifth century onwards whose career to the throne did not involve an interview with either a holy

1. *Adversus Constantinum Caballinum*, P. G. xcvi. 329D.

2. As with *V. Steph. Iun.* 1088A f.

3. On the profoundly non-urban quality of the position of the holy man see E. Patlagean, 'À Byzance: ancienne hagiographie et histoire sociale', *Annales*, xxiii (1968), 120-3.

4. *V. Steph. Iun.* P. G. c. 1088A; 1104.

5. *Ibid.* 1105B.

6. *Ibid.* 1153A - 1156C. The degree to which Stephen continued an older tradition of the ministrations of the holy man, or was seen in that light, is shown by the use made by his biographer of the *Vita Euthymii* of Cyril of Scythopolis: J. Gill, 'The Life of Stephen the Younger by Stephen the Deacon: Debts and Loans', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, vi (1940), 115.

7. *V. Steph. Iun.* P. G. c. 1164A and 1169A.

8. H. G. Beck, 'Byzantinische Gefolgschaftswesen', *Sitzungsberichte der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1965, no. 5 shows this very clearly.

man or, for his opponents, with a sorcerer.¹ The circumstantial attention which Iconodule writers lavished on the seances of Iconoclast emperors with sorcerers, and on the influence on the careers of these emperors of the engagements entered into at such seances, is only the obverse of the readiness with which Iconodule holy men blessed would-be emperors.

Political prophecies by holy men are particularly rife in the literature of the eighth and ninth centuries. Whether these prophecies were made in answer to direct consultations with the holy man conceived of as an oracle, or whether (as is much more likely) the remark of the holy man in the course of a conversation was seized upon as significant in the light of what later happened, or was interpreted as tacit permission to act on the intentions of the group, politics were being talked on the top of the mountains around Constantinople.²

Nothing illustrates more vividly the determination of Constantine V and his agents to avoid a confusion of authority than the way in which he handled these insidious links between the holy man and the society around the imperial court.³ Those holy men who are executed are those whose clientele had become the most tenacious.⁴ Execution was the fate of the spiritual father of the courtier who had heard all the details of the courtier's homosexual love affair with the emperor.⁵ Nothing if not consequential and histrionic, Constantine V deconsecrated the potential holy man quite as thoroughly as he deconsecrated the icons.⁶ His measures were designed to cut the links between the monastic spiritual adviser and the laity. The books of *Sayings of the Fathers*, from which monks drew on a huge reservoir of ascetic anecdotes to guide their charges through life's great casuistry, were burnt.⁷ It was forbidden to visit an *Abba*. It was forbidden to take communion from him (which process might have involved the sort of embarrassing revelations to which we have just referred).⁸ With an unflinching eye for the symbolic significance of great public gestures, Constantine V attacked the monastic *schema*. He performed a solemn deconsecration ceremony in the Hippodrome of Constantinople.⁹

1. Brown, 'Holy Man', p. 98, for Late Roman evidence. See Theophanes, *Chronographia*, A. M. 6198, de Boor, p. 375, 14 and A. M. 6203, de Boor, p. 381, 6 for two vivid examples.

2. *Vita Iobannicii*, c. 15, 25, 28, 30, 33, *Acta Sanctorum*, 4 Nov, II, 1 (1894), 346B - 347B; 355C; 357C - 358A; 361C.

3. On the fate of the settlements on the Mountain of St. Auxentius: *V. Steph. Iun.* P. G. c. 1092D.

4. Theophanes, *Chronographia*, A. M. 6257, de Boor, p. 438: 'on the charge that they had been in the habit of visiting the above-mentioned recluse' (Stephen).

5. Theophanes, *Chronographia*, A. M. 6259, de Boor, p. 442.

6. *V. Steph. Iun.* P. G. c. 1112A sq; 1136A f; 1140A; 1148B.

7. Theophanes, *Chronographia*, A. M. 6263 ec. de Boor, pp. 445-6; Hennephof, no. 13, p. 10.

8. *V. Steph. Iun.* P. G. c. 1109B - 1112B.

9. *Ibid.* 1137BD; 1164B; Theophanes, *Chronographia*, A. M. 6257, ed. de Boor, p. 438: Hennephof, no. 10, p. 8.

His intimate agent at Ephesus, Michael Lachonodracon understood his master's theatrical gifts only too well. He made the monks in his province parade in the robe of a bridegroom.¹ The *schema* that had symbolized the holy man's position as standing outside normal human relations, as had been the case when this *schema* had first been conferred by angels on St. John the Baptist in the Judæan desert, was replaced by that garment which a man wore when he was finally and irrevocably committed by marriage to the world of human kin-relationships. This clear and witty comment by an Iconoclast governor reinforces the impression with which we began, that the Iconoclast controversy was a debate on the holy in Byzantine society. But only the historian of the social evolution of the Late Antique and Early Byzantine worlds can appreciate what a variety of factors lie behind such a debate. The scene in the Hippodrome of Ephesus, quite as much as the destruction of the icons, is no less than an attempt by a group of Byzantines to challenge three centuries of unofficial leadership in the Christian community.

1. Theophanes, *Chronographia*, A.7. 6263, de Boor, p. 446.

Texts as Weapons: Polemical in the Byzantine Dark Ages

Averil Cameron

The so-called Byzantine 'dark ages', that is, the period which runs from the later seventh to the ninth century, are characterised both by profound social change and by a striking concern for texts and their authority. In the sixth century, Justinian was burning the books of suspected pagans and closing the Academy at Athens;¹ in AD 843, the so-called 'triumph of orthodoxy' marked the official ending of the Iconoclast controversy and released a considerable recovery of learning and a flowering of encyclopaedism and codification. A parallel process took place in visual art, licensing the liturgical use of icons and permitting the development of the classic Middle Byzantine scheme of church decoration.² Historians remain divided as to the extent of urban breakdown or continuity during these centuries, which had seen the dramatic loss of two-thirds of the territories of the Empire, and the reasons behind the imperial policy of Iconoclasm which split Byzantium for more than a hundred years from the reign of Leo III, but the extent of the social, military and administrative change taking place in the Byzantine state is well recognised.³ The military system, the mode of taxation and the constitution of the élite were all undergoing a process of transformation, even if the surviving evidence does not allow us to trace it in detail.⁴ Out of this period of change emerged the 'Middle Byzantine state', different in many important ways from its early Byzantine predecessor. In part for that very reason, contemporaries liked to gloss over the unlovely record of the Macedonian dynasty itself and emphasise the alleged order and continuity of Byzantine institutions; just one of the literary productions of the tenth century which does so, while affirming the social and administrative hierarchy which had by now emerged, is the *Book of Ceremonies* of the Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus,

¹ Malalas, *Chronographia*, p. 491. Bonn; Lemerle (1986: 76).

² Schulz (1986: 55–6); Brubaker (1989a, 1989b).

³ See Haldon (1990). Discussions of the social and economic transformation abound: see for example Kazhdan and Epstein (1985: ch. 1); Harvey (1989: ch. 1).

⁴ The 'themes': Haldon (1990: ch. 6); tax system: Oikonomides (1987); administrative class: Winkelmann (1985, 1987a).

with its constant stress on the importance of *taxis* ('order') in the state.⁵

During the 'dark' centuries of Byzantium one thing that was at stake was the role – even the very existence – of the state. Catastrophic loss of revenue-bearing territory to the Arabs, the removal of the court to Sicily for a time during the seventh century, repeated and dangerous Arab sieges of Constantinople culminating in that of AD 717–18, all put the state's very survival in jeopardy. The population of the capital city shrank dramatically, reaching on one recent estimate a low of scarcely more than 40,000.⁶ Against this background came the Iconoclast controversy, following soon after the last, and only narrowly averted, Arab siege. This long internal struggle (it did not end until AD 843) prominently displayed that tension between church and state which was to characterise much of the later history of Byzantium,⁷ reflected potential or actual fissures between the army and their leaders and the rest of the population, and brought to the fore the monasteries from which some of the resistance to Iconoclasm was led. Questions of the location of power in society at large, and of the authority of church and state, were therefore contested during this period on a variety of different levels; this must be borne in mind throughout as forming the background to the texts and issues that form the subject of this chapter.

As traditionally defined by historians, 'dark ages' are usually those we don't know much about, and this is certainly true of the later seventh and eighth centuries in relation to traditional secular historiography. The sources for what we might call the political history of the period are exceptionally sparse. Recent work has made it clear once again how little there is of substance in either the *Short History* of the Patriarch Nicephorus or the *Chronicle* of Theophanes, our two main historical sources, and how little historical material was actually available in Constantinople for the period in question.⁸ Virtually nothing was written in Constantinople itself up to the 780s.⁹ The cost and rarity of books, especially outside a very limited number of centres, have also been emphasised, and the consequences for literacy in the period have received some discussion, with emphasis on the paucity of available information.¹⁰ Yet the sheer volume of religious and ecclesiastical writing is simply enormous. Literally millions of words were pouring out. Some of the most important writers in Byzantine or orthodox theology belong to this period. Others less well-known but

⁵ Cameron (1987). ⁶ Mango (1985: 54).

⁷ See Brown (1973) for Iconoclasm as an assertion of imperial authority.

⁸ Mango (1978, 1990); see also Whitby (1992: 66–74).

⁹ Mango (1992: 149); the *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* is put c. 800 by Berger (1988: 40–9), as 'ein typisches Werk der ersten Phase der byzantinischen Renaissance' (ibid.: 47).

¹⁰ Mango (1975) is basic; on literacy see Mullett (1990), with earlier bibliography.

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equally voluminous are becoming more accessible thanks to modern critical editions, among them Anastasius of Sinai, author of a wide range of polemical and catechetical writings in the late seventh century.¹¹ The beginnings of the Byzantine commentaries on the liturgy also lie in this period. So do several important collections of miracle stories attached to shrines of particular saints – which are, among other things, a prime source for the study of popular culture, ‘rationality’ and the survival of paganism, magic and other non-Christian elements. Naturally these are not at all necessarily the artless compilations they may appear: the stories attached to the Egyptian shrine of SS Cyrus and John, for instance, were edited by Sophronius, the future patriarch of Jerusalem and a highly learned man.¹² The *Miracles of St Demetrius*, to take another example, are an extremely important source for the history of early mediaeval Thessaloniki and exist in two parts, the first put together by an early seventh-century archbishop of the city and the second a later supplement.¹³ The huge range and quantity of available material can also be seen within the large *œuvre* of individual writers; Maximus Confessor and John of Damascus are exceptional, perhaps, but others have also left very extensive writings.

These works are all to a greater or less extent ecclesiastical or religious in character, a fact which has tended to prevent them from receiving the full attention of historians. What we note in the present context, however, is that this literature and its exponents, and indeed, the whole religious history of the period, show an extraordinary awareness of the importance of texts, in particular in relation to the many bitter religious divisions. Texts not only carried authority; they could also be, and indeed were, used as weapons. The religious polemic of the period is worth studying in itself in terms of the attitudes displayed towards textual authority, and the techniques used – in terms, in fact, of its contribution to the sociology of knowledge; but it may also illumine a dark period of Byzantine history. At any rate, it deserves not to be marginalised because it is the wrong kind of literature.

A high proportion of the surviving works, as also of those known only indirectly, consists of material written with a polemical purpose. Iconoclasm itself, a policy initiated by the imperial court, and which objected to the veneration of religious images, was actively implemented, by physical force, by the whitewashing of church walls and the imprisonment of monks; but it was also hotly fought over in words, and inspired large quantities of ‘hate’ literature, of which most of that extant comes from the iconophile side, i.e. from the victorious party. Nowhere is this polemical tendency more clearly seen than in the surviving proceedings of the Second

¹¹ See Cameron (1992).

¹² Ed. N. Fernandez-Marcos (Madrid, 1975).

¹³ Ed. Lemerle (1979–81); see Cormack (1985: ch. 2).

Council of Nicaea in AD 787, which temporarily vindicated images. But the eighth-century Iconoclast emperor Constantine V himself wrote a polemical attack on images in which he showed himself to be a considerable theologian,¹⁴ and the Iconoclastic council of Hieria, called by him in AD 754, argued out its side of the matter in detail. Typically, its records having been efficiently suppressed by the winning side, we know of it only through iconophile condemnation; the 'Horos' ('definition') of the Council of AD 754 was formally read out and as formally refuted at the Second Council of Nicaea in AD 787.¹⁵ As will be seen, this and the other councils of the period placed a quite exceptional stress on textual proof and on the authenticity of the texts cited. Predictably, therefore, the Iconoclastic controversy led not only to the 'discovery' of hitherto unknown texts, but even to actual falsification. Once this was noticed, it was everywhere suspected, and measures introduced to guard against it, for Iconoclasm also acted as a stimulus to a certain kind of 'research'. Already the Sixth Ecumenical Council of AD 680–1, which had formally condemned the doctrine of Monothelism supported by several seventh-century emperors, had been much concerned with the authentication of the citations adduced during its proceedings.¹⁶ Books were brought out under seal, by imperial order, and so high did suspicion run that eventually the emperor decreed that no more written testimonies could be admitted, only oral evidence; the documents that were submitted were subjected to comparison with copies kept in the patriarchal library, only to be found wanting in completeness.¹⁷ In AD 649, a meeting in Rome attended by many Easterners, which came to be known as the Lateran Synod, incorporated into its acts a whole range of quoted statements and documents attacking Monothelism and attempting to anathematise its originators.¹⁸ As the emperor Constans was a supporter of Monothelism, Maximus Confessor, who was one of the leading spokesmen in Rome, and his supporters, were in practice setting themselves up as the true upholders of orthodoxy against the imperial church. Both Pope Martin and Maximus himself were eventually put on trial in Constantinople and both died in exile (AD 655 and 662). All these events, like the complicated narrative of the promulgation of and resistance to Monothelism in the 630s and 640s, placed the status of certain texts at a premium, and gave rise to a deluge of writing, and especially of polemic.

¹⁴ The so-called *Peuseis* ('Inquiries'), known through the *Antirrhетиci* of Nicephorus. Text: Hennepf (1969) 52ff., with Mondzain-Baudinet (1989) 10, 301; see also Gero (1974, 1975). The *Peuseis* had an iconoclastic *florilegium* attached, also preserved by Nicephorus.

¹⁵ G. Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio* (53 vols., Paris–Leipzig, 1901–27) XIII 202–364. ¹⁶ On this see Herrin (1987: 277–9), and further below.

¹⁷ Ed. Riedinger (1990: 179.2–3, 208.20–1, 232.11–12); the issue turned partly on the testimonies produced in a Monothelite *florilegium*, which was eventually ruled out of court (ibid.: 276). ¹⁸ Ed. Riedinger (1984: 425–36) for the dyothelite *florilegium*; below, 209.

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The proceedings of the trials themselves provide yet another example.¹⁹ To take only one further example, we may turn to the public debate held in Carthage in AD 645, on the very eve of the defeat of the exarch Gregory by the Arabs, between the same Maximus Confessor and Pyrrhus, the controversial former patriarch of Constantinople. Though this was not to be the end of the story, on this occasion Pyrrhus acknowledged defeat and travelled to Rome with Maximus, where he asked forgiveness from the pope for his error. But the debate – in Greek – remains, another example of this zeal for the marshalling of theological argument in a polemical context.²⁰

Even these few examples give some idea of the importance of debate and polemical argument in this context. They may also hint at a certain kind of scholasticism in regard to ecclesiastical texts, which is already becoming characteristic in the period.²¹ Yet another process can be traced, that of the steady production of various kinds of didactic literature for the purpose of Christian instruction. Some of this material has been surveyed in an important article by J. Munitiz, which surveys Byzantine methods of religious instruction, and classifies some of it as ‘catechetical’, in particular the religious treatises, the sets of questions and answers on religious topics and the collections of edifying stories.²² But my emphasis here is rather a different one. For behind the desire to instruct lay the insistence on orthodoxy and the appeal to authority, while correct belief was itself defined by attacking what was held to be incorrect. Very often, therefore, instruction itself proceeded by means of polemic. The recently edited *Hodegos*, or ‘Guide’, by Anastasius of Sinai (late seventh century) is a lengthy, and at times even impassioned, attack on Monophysites, cast, like many such works, in the form of a dialogue or debate.²³ And while they also belong in a long preceding tradition of such works, the treatises from this period listing and attacking heresies, such as the *De haeresibus et synodis* attributed to the patriarch Germanos I of Constantinople (resigned AD 730), and of course John of Damascus’ *De Haeresibus*, fulfil a similar function.²⁴ Exiled as an iconophile by Leo V in the early ninth century, the Patriarch Nicephorus used his time in composing a series of violent attacks on the strain in Iconoclast thought represented by Constantine V, and in developing a whole language and typology of condemnation.²⁵

¹⁹ See Winkelmann (1987b) for the sources for the Monothelite controversy, fragmentary enough in their present state, but indicative of intense activity involving letters, treatises, meetings, debates and polemical tracts.

²⁰ *Patrologia Graeca* 91.287–354; see Haldon (1990: 306–8); Van Dieten (1972).

²¹ Alexander (1957) traces this tendency during the second phase of Iconoclasm in the early ninth century, but it can be seen developing earlier: Cameron (1990).

²² Munitiz (1988).

²³ Ed. K.-J. Uthemann, *Corpus Christianorum series graeca* 8 (1981).

²⁴ Germanos: *Patrologia Graeca* 98.40–88; John of Damascus, *De Haer*, ed. Kottler IV (1981).

²⁵ Mondzain-Baudinet (1989: 327–50) provides a lexicon of Nicephorus’ polemical vocabulary.

Thus the Byzantine 'dark ages', I want to argue, were a period which saw an enormous amount of polemical argument, marshalling of proof texts, collecting of citations and refinement of the techniques of controversy. Now the collection of citations and polemical argument had admittedly been features of Christian writing since a very early stage. All the same, I would point in this period to two particular features: first, the very frequency, not to say dominance, of such material, which in the absence of secular alternatives comes to occupy the centre stage, and second, the strong tendency towards synthesis and codification that we find in many of these texts. In what follows I want to look first at the weapons themselves – the armoury of polemic – and then to raise some of the questions which they suggest.

I want to point first to some of the particular types of polemical writing employed by authors in the period; these are, in turn, disputations, *florilegia*, heresiologies, catecheseis, and syntheses. While we are not on the whole in the presence of new phenomena in Christian writing, their sheer frequency during this period does seem to mark out these forms for special attention, the more so since there is so little secular material against which to set them. It is worth asking what general conclusions if any can be drawn from the prevalence of such material.

The first phenomenon to be noted, then, is one to which I have drawn attention elsewhere, namely that of the very frequency of disputation or debate – argument set in dialectical, and often in polemical form. By 'disputation' I mean formal debate between real or imaginary interlocutors, either mentioned in the sources, or, as often, preserved in literary form. Such debates range from highly scholastic literary exercises to informal conversations mentioned but not written down, or at least, not preserved. Thus St Symeon the Younger (late sixth-century) is said to have debated with astrologers, and Anastasius of Sinai refers to 'debating' with Arabs (*διαλέγεσθαι*).²⁶ Maximus' debate with Pyrrhus in Carthage is an example of a public debate which does survive. The proceedings at the church councils also belong to this category, as in the sixth session of the Seventh Council of AD 787, when each clause of the Definition of the Iconoclast council of 754 was formally read out, followed by its iconophile refutation ('the refutation of the fabricated and falsely called "Definition" of the mob assembly of the accusers of the Christians', as its supporters called it).²⁷ Debates are recorded on many subjects, and on many levels. Clearly these were sometimes real, and indeed, major, confrontations; thus there were, from the sixth century onwards, several large-scale debates between

²⁶ On the latter, see Griffith (1987); Symeon the Stylite: *Vita Symeonis iun*, ed. P. Van den Ven (Brussels, 1962–70), 157, 138–9. ²⁷ Mansi 13.205a, transl. Sahas (1986: 49).

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Chalcedonians and Monophysites. In addition we also have literary debates against Manichaeans and Nestorians, while a particular sub-category among the literary debates consists of those between Christians and Jews, or more properly, works purporting to be discussions but actually consisting of Christian polemic against the Jews.²⁸ Very many literary works written in the period on theological issues were themselves cast in the form of a dialogue. Thus the Patriarch Germanos' dialogue *On the Terms of Life*, dealing with the question of predestination,²⁹ and several disputations no longer surviving on the subject of Monothelism, two ascribed to the emperor Heraclius.³⁰ It was both conventional and natural, therefore, to cast the major concerns of the day into the genre of a formal debate instead of a continuous argument; another example was the so-called *Nouthesia*, a disputation about religious images which allegedly took place in the reign of Constantine V between an Iconoclast bishop and an iconophile monk.³¹ Now dialogue had already had a long history in Christian literature, and the Christian/Jewish disputations in particular reach back as far as the second century. What is impressive here is rather the very large number and wide range of known examples from the period. The works attributed to John of Damascus alone included a whole range of such disputes, among them his treatise against the Manichaeans, which consists of a mechanical dialogue, described as a λογική συζήτησις (a 'theoretical', or 'philosophical' discussion),³² and the genre continued to be practised by his successors at the monastery of Mar Saba near Jerusalem. It was to become the standard vehicle for the later Christian *apologiae* against Muslims, in the production of which Mar Saba played a vital role.³³

Within the structure of the surviving dispute texts, a characteristic technique consisted in the marshalling of citations and the exegesis of proof texts. Again, *florilegia*, or collections of such texts designed to prove a particular point, had already emerged at an earlier stage in Christian controversy. In our present period many collections of such proof texts were in circulation, some overlapping in content, of which a number are incorporated into the texts of the disputes themselves. These polemical or doctrinal *florilegia* (as distinct from the spiritual *florilegia* which were also developing during this period)³⁴ tended to draw on Scriptural citations (in

²⁸ On debates and disputations in general, Cameron (1991); Christian/Jewish disputations: Déroche (1991).

²⁹ Garton and Westerink (1979); Speck (1986: 226) dates the work to the ninth century on stylistic grounds.

³⁰ See Winkelmann (1987b). ³¹ For this see Herrin (1987: 366).

³² Ed. Kotter (1969–88: IV 333–98); the fact that works on this theme might form part of the repertoire during a dialectical/rhetorical training (Lieu 1992: 216) does not preclude them from also having a wider contemporary significance.

³³ See e.g. Griffith (1990). ³⁴ Richard (1964); Chadwick (1966).

particular in the case of the Christian/Jewish disputes) or citations from the Fathers. In either case the aim was twofold: first, to appeal to authority and tradition, and second, in case of a challenge, to provide a correct exegesis. Thus the anti-Jewish disputes, among them the so-called *Trophies of Damascus*, probably of AD 681,³⁵ strive to show that Jesus was indeed the Messiah foretold in the Old Testament; the repertoire of available quotations was already traditional – it is the technique which is of interest. There were also ready collections of Scriptural texts with which to rebut Jewish objections to Christian belief, especially to the doctrine of the Trinity and the belief that Jesus was the Son of God. One of the main charges allegedly imputed by Jews against Christians in the seventh century was the accusation that they were idolaters through their worship of the Cross, and, later, icons; against these charges Christian controversialists collected passages from the Scriptures which showed Jews venerating material objects. Leontius of Neapolis is one author of an apology against the Jews who included a *florilegium* in his dialogue.³⁶ Monothelite *florilegia* also existed, as did Monophysite ones; at the Sixth Council in AD 680–1, Macarius of Antioch produced a Monothelite patristic *florilegium* whose status the Council discussed in much detail.³⁷ Anastasius of Sinai's *Hodegos*, already mentioned, incorporates a range of extracts from the Fathers directed against Monophysites, and his other works include a *florilegium* against the Monothelites;³⁸ lost doctrinal *florilegia* feature among the works attributed to Sophronius and Maximus. Hitherto unknown texts were introduced into the debate: the Iconoclasts produced a letter of Eusebius of Caesarea to the Empress Constantia and part of a letter attributed to Nilus of Ancyra.³⁹ In his treatise on the *trisagion*,⁴⁰ John of Damascus explicitly argues against a patristic *florilegium* compiled by an 'abbot Anastasius' in order to justify the opposing cause. It was therefore inevitable that iconophile and Iconoclast *florilegia* would also be developed. The *Horos* ('Definition') of the Iconoclastic council of 754 came together with its attached *florilegium* of extracts held to justify Iconoclasm, among them Eusebius' letter.⁴¹ In contrast, and very deliberately, the Council of AD 787 did not itself make use of *florilegia*, but drew its citations only from complete books, precisely because the use of *florilegia* had been so discredited by misuse.⁴² On the other hand, the brief to the committee

³⁵ Ed. Bardy, *Patrologia Orientalis* 15 (Paris, 1927) 169–292; see Déroche (1991: 280).

³⁶ See also Déroche (1986). ³⁷ Chadwick (1992: 631).

³⁸ Ed. K.-H. Uthemann, *Corpus Christianorum series graeca* 12 (1985) 87–96.

³⁹ Mansi 13.292B–324C; see Maraval (1987). Letter to Constantia: Mansi 13.313A; Gero (1981). The effect of the citation of Eusebius was to revive his Arianism as a live issue: Mansi 13.316A. ⁴⁰ Ed. Kotter (1969–88) IV 289–332.

⁴¹ See Anastos (1955); Alexander (1958); Maraval (1987).

⁴² See Van den Ven (1957), especially at 360, citing the account of the fourth session, where

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charged by Leo V with the task of preparing the Iconoclastic council of AD 815 included yet again the task of putting together an Iconoclastic *florilegium*.⁴³ It was a long tradition: Theodoret's *Eranistes* provides a fifth-century model both for the dialogue form and for the use of *florilegia*, and *florilegia* were already in use at the councils of Constantinople (AD 381) and Chalcedon (AD 451). But in our period such works enjoyed a veritable boom.

Heresiologies, works which we may call 'catalogues' of wrong belief, also flourished. Again, the term serves to designate a range of works, one among which is the treatise *De Haeresibus et Synodis* attributed to Germanos I.⁴⁴ This is at first sight simply an unoriginal listing of heresies, with their refutations, following earlier works such as Epiphanius' *Panarion* (fourth-century), a work which by now was cited as a classic of the genre. Ironically, Epiphanius, included in the Iconoclastic *florilegium* of AD 754, was an author especially favoured by the Iconoclasts, who claimed him as an opponent of images – to which the iconophiles at II Nicaea retorted that the texts they attributed to Epiphanius were actually by someone else.⁴⁵ He had already been cited at the Sixth Council for his attack on Arianism.⁴⁶ But heresiologies are not innocent lists, and Germanos' treatise had a strongly contemporary purpose, in that it supports the claims of the Sixth Council in relation to conciliar tradition generally, which, assuming that part to be genuine, it then accuses the Iconoclasts of abandoning. There are difficulties about Germanos' authorship, and about his own position *vis-à-vis* Monothelitism. Munitiz has shown however that in addition to its denunciation of heresies, the argument of the work represents an important early stage in the development of the synopses of the councils, which later proliferated into a full-blown genre in their own right.⁴⁷ From a later perspective, it was essential that the Sixth Council be recognised as official, and similar issues were to arise over that of AD 787, whose status was challenged in turn in AD 815.⁴⁸ Finally, the victory of the iconophiles in AD 843 would authorise the evolution of an 'official' version of the first seven councils as constitutive of correct belief. As part of this development, the iconophile seventh council was now commemorated in religious art

this is made explicit. This article investigates in detail the citations used at the council of 787, and discusses the contribution of the Acts of the Council to the manuscript tradition of the works it cites; see also Mango (1975).⁴³ Mondzain-Baudinet (1989: 16).

⁴⁴ *Patrologia Graeca* 98.40–88; Gouillard (1965: 306–7). On the question of authenticity of the chapters about images see Stein (1980: 262–8), dating them just before AD 754, and in general see also Munitiz (1988: 78), with the observation that the longer treatises, such as Epiphanius', must have been 'intended for professional theologians'.

⁴⁵ See Gouillard (1965). Epiphanius and images: Maraval (1987).

⁴⁶ Riedinger (1990: 328–9).⁴⁷ Munitiz (1974).⁴⁸ Alexander (1953, 1958).

along with the six earlier councils, of which it could now be presented as the culmination.⁴⁹ As for the *De Haeresibus et Synodis*, the argument leads logically to Iconoclasm as the greatest heresy of all, while icons are defended in turn by reference to the tradition of the Fathers and the councils: the human representation of Christ was ordained by the Sixth Council and is therefore itself part of that tradition.⁵⁰

John of Damascus' *De Haeresibus*, in which he develops Epiphanius' *Panarion*, is another example of these listings of heresies and their refutations. The technique of counting Islam a 'heresy', assuming the final chapter on the Arabs to be genuine,⁵¹ was already traditional in the case of Judaism and 'Hellenism', and is here yet another device designed to bring a problem under control, by demonstrating that Islam too was merely another departure from the tradition of the Scriptures and the Fathers. Other such works included a certain Timothy's *De Receptione Haereticorum* and Theodore of Raithu's *Praeparatio*.⁵² Their polemical intent is obvious enough; we can also point to the *Synodical Letter* of Sophronius of Jerusalem (AD 634), presumably one of many such, in which the new patriarch announced his orthodoxy by long lists of anathemas, pronounced first against all individual heretics from Simon Magus to John Philoponus and those living in Sophronius' own day, and then against thirty-odd named sects.⁵³ Later in the seventh century, the anonymous author of the anti-Jewish disputation known as the *Trophies of Damascus* composed a companion piece, directed against Monophysites, in which he first lists and attacks all heresies, beginning with that of 'the famous Arius'.⁵⁴ By the ninth century, Nicephorus' works written in exile included a heresiological work known as the *Apologeticus Maior*.⁵⁵ These and similar texts engage in a crucially important activity in terms of the development of belief-systems, that is, classification, or the naming of parts;⁵⁶ in a context of intense argument over belief, their role becomes all the more significant.

Up to a point, the heresiological treatises also fall within the scope of catechetical literature, designed to inform the faithful, or to tell the clerical how to inform the faithful, about the constituents of correct belief. More obviously instructive at this level however are the several surviving sets of questions and answers, which might, like the so-called *Quaestiones* of

⁴⁹ Walter (1987). ⁵⁰ *Patrologia Graeca* 98.80A.

⁵¹ See now Le Coz (1992). John's treatise reaches a total of one hundred heresies, whereas in the fourth century Epiphanius had managed to count eighty-seven.

⁵² *Praeparatio*, ed. Diekamp (1938); Timothy: *Patrologia Graeca* 86.40–45.

⁵³ *Patrologia Graeca* 87.3189–92, 3193, also included in the documents of the Sixth Council; see Munitiz (1974: 152n.).

⁵⁴ Ed. Bonwetsch (1909); the prologue is published by Bardy, *Patrologia Orientalis* 15 (1927) 277ff. ⁵⁵ *Patrologia Graeca* 100.533–831. ⁵⁶ See e.g. Douglas (1987).

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Pseudo-Athanasius,⁵⁷ themselves contain material from *florilegia*, and even passages of traditional disputation material. The types of 'questions' answered in these texts range from correct procedure in relation to the Eucharist, through moral and sexual matters, to beliefs about fate and paradise. Much of this material is pastoral in character, and the canons of the Quinisext Council of AD 691, which was mainly concerned with pastoral matters and questions of church discipline, certainly suggest that such material may have filled a gap. In contrast, some of Maximus Confessor's collections of questions and problems (*Quaestiones, Ambigua, Aporiai*), also containing many earlier extracts, are far more abstruse and scholastic, and belong probably in more monastic milieux.⁵⁸ All sorts of issues thus suggest themselves in relation to this material: what is popular and what scholastic, how did such writings circulate, what was the oral component and what connection is there if any between the sets of questions, the collections of miracle stories and the 'edifying tales', also being put together at this time? Any answers would be premature, as these works are for the most part only just beginning to receive critical editions. But in total this material too points in the same directions as the other kinds of works that we have already surveyed.

Catechesis shades easily into synthesis, another genre whose purpose is to provide the correct answers. Collections of material from conciliar canons fall into this category, but so does the compendium of John of Damascus, the *Fount of Knowledge*, and, earlier, Maximus' scholia on Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and the commentaries on the liturgy by Maximus (*Mystagogia*) and Germanos (*Historia Ecclesiastica*).⁵⁹ The sheer volume of these works is overwhelming; but, again, they have a contemporary point to make, and here too it is ultimately a polemical one. This is not encyclopaedism simply for its own sake; it always has an argumentative object in view. It is there to prove a case.

Finally, some of these authors and controversialists resorted to outright forgery. So much depended on authoritative texts that the temptation to manufacture them was very great. So great in fact that although several scholars have recently written about the use of forgeries in this period, and about its corollary, the concern for verification, I think we are only just

⁵⁷ *Patrologia Graeca* 28.597–699.

⁵⁸ *Ambigua ad Iohannem iuxta Iohannis Scotti Eriugena latinam interpretationem*, ed. E. Jeanneau, *Corpus Christianorum series graeca* 18 (Louvain, 1988); *Quaestiones et dubia*, ed. J. H. Declerck, *Corpus Christianorum series graeca* 10 (Louvain, 1982) (miscellaneous questions, many Scriptural, much cited in later collections); *Quaestiones and Thalassium I–II*, ed. C. Laga and C. Steel, *Corpus Christianorum series graeca* 7, 22 (Louvain, 1980, 1990) (similar).

⁵⁹ See Taft (1980–1), with Cameron (1992: 37–8); Schulz (1986: 43ff., 184ff.). Taft sees Maximus's work as directed at a monastic audience.

beginning to realise the full implications. Again, forgery and tampering with texts were already traditional in ecclesiastical conflicts; to take only one example, Rufinus' Latin translation of the controversial writer Origen's *De Principiis* was attacked by Jerome and others on these grounds, and their accusations accepted by modern scholars.⁶⁰ A main instrument for such tampering was precisely the *florilegium*, a type of composition whose frequency in our period has already been noted, and which offered an all too easy repository for bogus texts. By the sixth century the occurrence of this kind of forgery has even been described as 'a universal phenomenon'.⁶¹ The accusation of forgery was also tactically useful; after a day of discussion, the Fifth Ecumenical Council of AD 553 resolved the troublesome question of the Letter of Ibas, for example, by simply declaring it to be a forgery.⁶² It is now clear that the 'acts' of the so-called Lateran Synod held in Rome in AD 649 were originally composed in Greek, at the instigation of Maximus Confessor and his eastern supporters, whence the question arises how far if at all we can count on the authenticity of their record, especially as far as concerns their reporting of opinion in Rome and Italy.⁶³ At the Sixth Council of AD 680–1 the Roman delegation challenged the official version of the acts of the Fifth Council produced in Constantinople and found that it had been tampered with by the Monothelite side.⁶⁴ It was after this that all documents subsequently produced were checked from copies in the patriarchal library, and supporting documents brought by the various parties actually sealed until they were due to be officially discussed. The extent of falsification, if not of outright forgery in the later texts relating to Iconoclasm is well known, and has recently been emphasised yet again in a detailed consideration of the famous 'event' which traditionally began official Iconoclasm, namely the destruction of the icon of Christ on the Chalce gate of the imperial palace by Leo III.⁶⁵ It was a tactic which even extended to official inscriptions.⁶⁶

The attention to texts already evident in the seventh century increased as time went on: the Iconoclastic council of AD 754 was preceded by days of library work, and at the Second Council of Nicaea in 787, some fifty books, on Mango's count, were produced for the Council's use by the 'organisers' and another twenty or so by various bishops and others attending.

⁶⁰ See Scott (1992: 169).

⁶¹ Henry (1988); see also Bardy (1936); Wilson (1983: 61–2); Brubaker (1989a: 28–9). Works wrongly attributed, which are equally rife during this period, are in theory a different matter, though the categories often overlap.

⁶² Henry (1988: 286).

⁶³ See Riedinger (1979: 9ff.); cf. 11 'Die Akten der Lateransynode sind also als Konzilsakten in mehrerer Hinsicht eine Fiktion.'

⁶⁴ Mansi 11.225Bff.; Herrin (1987: 276); Chadwick (1992).

⁶⁵ Auzépy (1990). ⁶⁶ Mango (1963), cited by Auzépy (1990: 445).

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Incidentally, this gives precious information not only about the spread of libraries in the period, especially monastic ones, but also about their deficiencies, and in particular about the apparent scarcity even of some very important texts.⁶⁷ Some key works are known only through their citation in the course of these arguments, and it was not uncommon for more than one version to be produced of the same text. One curious question which arises is whether the Council of 787, which vindicated John of Damascus after his anathematisation in 754, actually had any of his writings before it. If it did not, as suggested by Van den Ven,⁶⁸ many further questions are raised about circulation of writings in general, and about contacts between Constantinople and the East, not to mention about the genesis of John's own writings on images, and it remains odd that John's works were not explicitly cited. Finally, it is worth repeating what has already been said by others, namely that the very reliance that had come to be placed on *florilegia*, that is on collections of extracts rather than on complete books, no doubt itself contributed to the loss of the original texts, and added markedly to the danger of wrong attribution, even if not to actual falsification.

We can now begin to draw together some of the threads and to address the issues posed by this material. These can be divided into the general and the particular, for there are cognitive issues at stake as well as problems of detail.

It is not a legitimate move for historians to relegate texts like these to the realms of theology, or to select from them merely those works which seem to have a directly historical bearing. The church councils of the period were undoubtedly political events of the first order. They were called by emperors, and attended by lay officials in prominent positions. An earlier meeting before the Second Council of Nicaea was broken up by an alliance of the church and the military, and the humiliation of patriarchs by emperors was a feature of the Iconoclast period; the marital plans of Constantine VI having played a major role in the relations between emperor and patriarch at the end of the eighth century, the patriarch Nicephorus, raised from lay status by imperial intervention and against ecclesiastical opposition, found himself exiled in turn by a later emperor.⁶⁹ The patriarchate itself stood to gain from the creation of a suitable official version of recent history, as also from its control of access to texts.⁷⁰ The role of the monks of Studios, more purist than some others in the church, was another major factor during this phase, and indeed, it was the monks and monasteries who did well out of Iconoclasm in terms of later influence and prosperity. Many no doubt remained untouched by the finer points of

⁶⁷ Mango (1975: 31–3); Herrin (1987: 421–2).

⁶⁸ Van den Ven (1957: 336–8).

⁶⁹ Auzépy (1990: 476ff.) emphasises the political context of the second phase of Iconoclasm.

⁷⁰ Auzépy (*ibid.*: 488–9).

controversy, or even unaware of the actual issues being contested – the *Life of Philaretos*, for instance, dating from AD 821–2, conspicuously fails to make Iconoclasm an issue. But Iconoclasm at any rate touched public life at many points, as with the public humiliation of monks under Constantine V. In broader terms, the main issue during this period was the nature of the Byzantine state, and specifically of the future location of power within it. To return to the point from which we began, the military, administrative and economic systems were all undergoing basic, though to us still often mysterious, processes of change. Even more fundamentally, the status of Byzantium as a world-empire (in ancient Mediterranean terms) had been put at risk. In the late seventh century it recognised for the first time the status of the caliphate as a legitimate power, with what implications for its own sense of self we can easily guess.⁷¹ A new mental geography would be needed to match the changed political map.

Nor should we ignore how far the situation had changed by the early ninth century. The issues debated in the time of Germanus I, deposed under Leo III in AD 730, had moved on by the time of Nicephorus, exiled almost a century later, also for his iconophile views, and the case was argued on somewhat different terms. But the vocabulary of hatred and condemnation had meanwhile intensified. Nicephorus' *Antirrheticci*, the work of someone who became an ecclesiastic at a late stage in his life and was criticised by the more aggressive monastic element, demonologised iconoclasts as never before.

One way of looking at the polemics of the period is in terms of increased attempts by state and society to control deviance.⁷² While hostile contemporaries saw Iconoclasm as the most recent and most dangerous heresy, it was in fact simply the most energetically pursued of several such moves. Though it was ultimately unsuccessful as an imperial strategy, the danger which this posed to imperial authority was averted in the late eighth century by the successful imperial expedient of changing to the winning side, and aided by the high turnover in occupants of the imperial throne which was characteristic of Byzantine history in general. Later, a lively rewriting of the history of the Iconoclast period assisted the authorities to turn it to their own advantage. On this deviance model, heretics – dualists, Monothelites, Monophysites – join pagans (Hellenes), Jews and Muslims, as far as the texts are concerned, as stereotypes of the 'bad guy'. It is no accident that during this period the construction of the stereotyped image of the Jew underwent a particularly flourishing development,⁷³ or that Constantine V, the most active Iconoclast emperor, received the blackest possible portrayal⁷⁴ (according to Theophanes, Constantine was an

⁷¹ Chrysos (1992: 27).

⁷² So Haldon (1990: esp. ch. 9).

⁷³ I propose to treat this separately elsewhere.

⁷⁴ By Nicephorus (see Mondzain-Baudinet 1989), and others (see Speck 1990).

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accursed wretch, God's enemy, impious, arrogant, unholy, jealous, evilly-named, beastlike and savage, to take only some examples). In the case of heresy, as with other topics, the corollary of such image-making is that the historian is often unable on the basis of these sources to distinguish the real from the imaginary or the literary construct.⁷⁵ Setting up an authoritarian discourse is an important technique, and demonologising one's opponents, dealing with real or potential enemies by subsuming them into old familiar categories of abuse, or even setting up imaginary opponents, are all good ways of dealing with the perceived threat.

What then were these polemics about? I have argued elsewhere that it was one function of icons – to iconophiles at any rate – that they constituted a sign-system through which absolute truth could be perceived, and this is in fact the way in which they are presented by their defenders in the first stage of Iconoclasm, such as John of Damascus.⁷⁶ The Iconoclasts challenged the application, not the principle; they restricted the accepted 'signs' without attacking the conception of an absolute truth which could be known. It was an argument about detail, or about interpretation, not about principles. In the light of the material and institutional change characteristic of the period, I have also argued that this was – at least temporarily – a reformulation of the past in Christian rather than classical terms, at a time when the classical past had rather rapidly receded from view.⁷⁷ It is worth remembering that the ending of Iconoclasm brought with it not only legitimation for iconic church decoration, a new lease of life for figural art and increased influence for monasteries, but also a return of interest in recovering the classical past.

Clearly this material also raises many important questions about education, literacy and book production as such in the period of the Byzantine 'dark ages'. One such issue, recently emphasised by Cyril Mango, is the role played by the monasteries of Palestine, particularly Mar Saba near Jerusalem, home to John of Damascus and others, and a particularly active centre in the first half of the seventh century also. A related one, also stressed by Mango, is the impact of Greek-speaking emigrants from Palestine in Sicily and south Italy,⁷⁸ something which can also be seen in the Greek acts of the Lateran Synod. Individual 'wandering monks' like Maximus, Sophronius, John Moschus, Anastasius of Sinai, crossed political boundaries and carried culture with them, engaging in polemics as they did so. During the Monothelite controversy, Cyprus was a particularly favoured location for such meetings and discussions, and

⁷⁵ Gouillard (1965: 302–3); Haldon (1990: 341–2).

⁷⁶ Cameron (1992).

⁷⁷ See on this also Dagron (1984). The question of classical images in relation to Byzantine Iconoclasm would repay further investigation.

⁷⁸ Mango (1974, 1992).

many letters went to and fro in the interests of controversy and argument. But we are not here in the environment of the great Western monastic scriptoria. Ecclesiastical, monastic and lay culture were not discrete spheres, and it would be a mistake to regard these phenomena as devoid of direct effect on the lay world. It was not so surprising, given the 'dark age' context, if at this time it was primarily among ecclesiastics that texts and their preservation, recovery and verification, acquired such intense importance. But the interplay of lay and clerical is apparent at all levels — after all, both Nicephorus and Photius were patriarchs raised from lay status, and Constantine V was no mean theologian. The encyclopaedism and scholasticism of these theologians is different in scope, but not in type, from the secular encyclopaedism of the tenth-century world of Constantine Porphyrogenitus.

However, I have been concerned in this paper with broader cognitive issues. We surely have here a much wider phenomenon, not one that is concerned only with Iconoclasm. Debate, polemic, the systematisation and collection of authoritative texts, are employed in a wide variety of contexts; when Iconoclasm came it merely intensified an existing development. The arguments over Monothelism in the seventh century provided a stimulus and a pattern for many of these techniques, so that the weaponry was already prepared when Iconoclasm did become a major issue in the eighth century. In particular, orthodoxy was a matter of imperial policy as well as something for church councils; emperors too would issue documents (*Ekthesis*, *Typos*), to which writing was also the appropriate counter-move. However, this is not the whole story. I would like to consider together the whole range of systematising and polemical productions in the period, and to see in them a degree of scholasticism and even encyclopaedism, such as did indeed flourish after the final ending of Iconoclasm.

An alternative way of looking at the same developments is in terms of their cognitive function. Sharper definition of opposites, together with a clearly defined linear (and orthodox) view of history enabled contemporaries to make sense of their own world and especially of its fluidity. They were in other words busy creating for themselves an imagined world of certainty and strong boundaries.

The ending of Iconoclasm and the formal dedication of an apse mosaic of the Virgin and Child in St Sophia, praised in a famous homily of the Patriarch Photius delivered on 29 March AD 867, were followed in the same year by the establishment of a new dynasty, that of the Macedonians, in particularly bloody circumstances, and by the deposition of the same Photius. The Emperor Basil I, who had obtained the throne for himself by murdering his colleague, was spectacularly whitewashed at the instigation of his descendant Constantine Porphyrogenitus, the same emperor whose

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Book of Ceremonies claimed to glorify the 'order' and appointed rhythm of the imperial court. Contemporary lists of officials according to their elaborately graded order of precedence⁷⁹ testify to the extent of the administrative and institutional change which had taken place in the preceding period; bishops, and even metropolitans, are listed together with the lay officials, and rank below military commanders. The same Patriarch Photius produced works including a *Lexikon* and the *Bibliotheca*,⁸⁰ in which the encyclopaedic tendency visible in much of our material was extended to classical texts. Already in the ninth century other figures, such as the deacon Ignatius and John the grammarian, were demonstrating the beginnings of the scholarly and academic side of what was to turn into a real revival of learning.⁸¹ I would argue that rather than positing a sharp break in continuity, as has often been the case, the textual polemics of the dark ages should be read in this developing historical context.

If texts can be weapons, so can pictures. Basil I was a church builder and restorer who also had himself and his large family depicted in the palace in contentious style, for a murderer married to the mistress of the man he had murdered, in juxtaposition with the Cross.⁸² A question often raised during the Iconoclast arguments was that of the respective claims of writing and pictures in relation to their capacity for expressing the truth.⁸³ John of Damascus cited St Basil on the equivalence of words and pictures. Both could be, and often were in this period, deeply tendentious. But a deeper issue was also that of exegesis, how to attain knowledge: written versus unwritten tradition, literalism versus symbolism, pictures versus words, the 'Old and New Testaments and the words of the holy and elect Fathers' versus 'the foul, loathsome and unclean writings of the accursed Manichaeans, Gnostics and the rest of the heretics'.⁸⁴ No one doubted that the proper way to attain knowledge was by collection, preservation and synthesis. After the victory of the iconophiles and the formal ending of Iconoclasm in AD 843, a statement known as the Synodikon of Orthodoxy came to be read each year on the first Sunday of Lent, the Feast of Orthodoxy; among its later anathemas was one directed at 'those who believe in Plato, and those who cling to τὰ ἑλληνικά, and do not read them only for instruction' (διὰ παίδευσιν μόνον).⁸⁵

Possibly very soon after AD 843, the *Bibliotheca* of Photius was put together, and preserved for us the knowledge of a not inconsiderable

⁷⁹ Oikonomides (1972).

⁸⁰ Often dated, though without certainty, to the period before his first patriarchate.

⁸¹ Wilson (1983); Lemerle (1986).

⁸² Texts in translation: Mango (1972: 102–202).

⁸³ Brubaker (1989a: 70–1, 1989b: 28–9); Dagron (1991).

⁸⁴ Joh. Dam. *Or.* 2.10, trans. D. Anderson (Crestwood, New York, 1980) 57.

⁸⁵ Ed. Gouillard (1967: lines 214–24).

amount of otherwise lost works of classical literature. The polemics of the 'dark ages' were a way of defining new groups or defending existing ones during a period of change and upheaval on many fronts. But they also represent a way of reformulating knowledge, at a time when the old norms had been disrupted. While their subject matter differed in range and content, they can fairly be linked with the broader encyclopaedism of the ninth and tenth centuries, by which time grammar, mathematics, philosophy and classical literature were all back on the agenda. Their polemical technique enabled the arguments to be sharpened and the supporting material collected and marshalled. But it too can be linked to a broader context, that of the combativeness and rivalry that was never far below the surface emphasis in Byzantine culture on 'order' and 'harmony'. The calm, dignity and order of imperial Byzantium are the outward signs which Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus most wanted to demonstrate through works such as the *Book of Ceremonies* and the *De Administrando Imperio*. As his own life showed, the reality was different. The dark-age polemics show us just that underside which Constantine knew so well and which he most wanted to conceal.

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Byzantine Perceptions of Latin Religious ‘Errors’

Tia M. Kolbaba

In 1339 Emperor Andronikos III Palaiologos (1328–41) sent the bilingual Calabrian monk Barlaam (ca. 1290–1348) to Avignon. There Barlaam delivered two speeches to Pope Benedict XII (1332–42) about the necessity of a united Christian front against the Turks and the ways in which a reunion of the churches might be achieved. To the pope’s demand that reunion of the churches precede military aid from the West, Barlaam gave the following reply: “It is not so much difference in dogma that alienates the hearts of the Greeks from you, as the hatred that has entered their souls against the Latins,¹ because of the many great evils that at different times the Greeks have suffered at the hands of Latins and are still suffering every day. Until this hatred has been removed from them, there cannot be union. In truth, until you have done them some very great benefit, neither will that hatred be dispelled nor will anyone dare to breathe a word to them about union. . . . Know this too, that it was not the people of Greece that sent me to seek your help and union, but the Emperor alone and secretly. Until help is sent to these parts, he cannot let his people see that he wants union with you.”²

Barlaam thus highlighted the most obvious impact of the Crusades—especially the Fourth Crusade and the Latin occupation of Constantinople from 1204 to 1261—on religious life and religious literature in Byzantium. Everyone agreed that the union of the churches was, in principle, desirable, because everyone knew that Christ’s body, the church, should not be dismembered. But the violent conflict of the Crusades and attempts to force papal primacy on Greeks after 1204 meant that few Byzantine churchmen could negotiate for such a union with any measure of trust and goodwill. So, too, it comes as no surprise that the most scurrilous, least sophisticated kinds of anti-Latin literature increased over time. When Constantine Stilbes (fl. 1182–1204) connects his seventy-five-item list of Latin errors to a list of the atrocities committed in the sack of 1204, the connection seems natural.³ Such a reaction makes sense. That the Crusades

¹ As do most Greek writers of his time, Barlaam uses the term *Latin* as a general term for Westerners. I use the term *Latins* throughout this paper to refer to Western Europeans who were members of the church that used Latin as its liturgical language. This does *not* mean that Byzantines themselves always called Westerners “Latins”; see Alexander Kazhdan’s contribution to this volume.

² *Acta Benedicti XII, 1334–1342*, ed. A. L. Taŭtu, *Fontes* 3, vol. 8 (Vatican City, 1958), doc. 43. Cited and translated in J. Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1979), 197–98.

³ J. Darrouzès, “Le mémoire de Constantin Stilbès contre les Latins,” *REB* 21 (1963): 50–100.

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led to an increase in the number of virulently anti-Latin texts and in the number of people who agreed with them has been recognized at least since Barlaam's time.

This study, then, goes beyond that obvious effect to investigate whether the Crusades had an impact on more moderate religious texts written by churchmen who negotiated or debated with the Latins. Because there are many Byzantine responses to the Crusades in secular texts, from Anna Komnene's *Alexiad* to Doukas' chronicle of the fall of the City, one might expect to find direct responses to the Crusades in theological literature as well. But a survey of religious discussions with and polemic against the Latins from the middle of the eleventh century through the end of the empire unearthed no reasoned refutation of the idea of holy war and no theological discourses against such Western innovations as the crusade indulgence or monastic knights.⁴ In short, if the Crusades altered religious literature, they did so indirectly. This study attempts to identify such indirect influence by analyzing some characteristics of Byzantine theological material contemporary with the Crusades. The conclusion will return to the question of whether and how these traits are related to the Crusades.

My primary thesis is that Byzantine religious texts that discuss Western Europeans emphasize different issues at different times. To many historians, such a claim may seem obvious, even trite. After all, the cultural gap between Byzantine East and Latin West; the kinds and degree of contact Byzantines had with Latins; the relative wealth, poverty, military power, and sophistication of the two cultures—all of these things changed immeasurably in a millennium or so. Yet an assumption of eternal verities pervades the history of Byzantine religious disagreements with the Western church. For example, many studies assume that the Filioque⁵ is always the central issue for moderate, reasonable men. But it was not. Concerns changed as the times changed.

Furthermore, when placed in their historical context, the issues raised are often related less to the explicit targets of the polemic, the Latins, than to the polemicists themselves and their world. An issue becomes one of the crucial issues in the Greek theological literature only when it becomes a matter for debate within the Orthodox world. This connection removes the Latins from the center of the picture and reveals the extent to which debates explicitly about Latins were implicitly about Byzantines. In other words, a difference between Greeks and Latins became a source of anxiety and the subject of numerous treatises and debates only when Byzantine opinion was divided. Debates about Latin practices and beliefs grew fierce and polarized less because of the intrinsic importance of the issue being debated than because of fundamental doubts about what

⁴ Such issues do arise rarely in the unreasonable polemic. See, e.g., Darrouzès, "Mémoire," para. 27, 38, 60, 61.

⁵ Starting in Spain in the 6th century, various Western churches added a phrase to the Nicene Creed. Where the creed originally stated, "We believe in the Holy Spirit . . . who proceeds from the Father," these churches added "and the Son" (Latin: Filioque). This addition was accepted in Frankish areas by the 8th century and in Rome in the early 11th century. Eastern theologians objected both to the unilateral addition to the creed (which could not, they maintained, be amended without an ecumenical council) and to the theological implications of that addition. Discussions of the theology, including theological polemic from both East and West, can be found easily. Good introductions: J. Pelikan, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600–1700): The Christian Tradition 2* (Chicago, 1974), 183–98, and J. Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York, 1974), 91–94, 180–90.

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it meant to be an orthodox, imperial Christian—what it meant to be, as they would have put it, a pious Roman.⁶ Negotiations and debates within the Empire of the Romans about how to distinguish “us” from “them” were not new in the tenth, or even the eighth, century. From the beginning, Christians were defining themselves against other groups, distinguishing “followers of Christ” from “Jews”; “Orthodox” from Arians, Nestorians, and Monophysites; righteous and orthodox venerator of icons from heretical iconoclasts. None of these distinctions between “us” and “them” was established in a day or even in a decade. All of them took some time and caused some casualties. Some people who considered themselves orthodox Christians had to be thrown out of the church; the tares could not, after all, be allowed to grow with the wheat. In the period of the Crusades, it became important to distinguish “us” Christians of the empire from “them” Latins from the West. But that distinction did not come easily, either. People argued about it for centuries, and their arguments can be partially reconstructed from the materials studied here.

The second part of this study discusses the tone of anti-Latin texts. This, too, changes over time, but the change is not a simple descent from moderate, intelligent discussion to hateful, radical polemic. Moderate works exist and exert some influence down to the end, revealing a growing ambivalence about Latin culture and the western world.

What this study presents as a matter-of-fact outline still has gaps, and other scholars who study these texts will correct and refine it on points of detail and interpretation. Still, it is time to attempt a survey of the theological literature from these centuries precisely because a great body of work makes it possible to do so with some assurance. We need to draw together what we already know before we can make further progress. The current level of knowledge owes much to the works of Jean Darrouzès, Joseph Gill, and a long list of other scholars. The sources cited below should indicate my debt to their erudition and painstaking labor. Darrouzès noted thirty-two years ago that “the history of dogma can only profit from a more exact knowledge of historical context.”⁷ He spent most of his life establishing that context, and his work especially has taught us a great deal about which issues dividing East and West were important in which period. Without it, this study would be impossible.

Changing Issues

The Ninth Century

Photios (patriarch of Constantinople, 858–867 and 877–886) introduces this study, but not because anyone accepts that the “Photian Schism” was permanent and irrevocable; Francis Dvornik refuted that idea fifty years ago. Rather, Photios’ era can reveal the

⁶ Vocabulary is a problem here—these were debates about what it meant to be Byzantine and Orthodox. Still, we need to keep in mind that these are modern terms; people at the time called themselves “Romans,” “Orthodox,” “pious” (εὐσεβής)—never “Byzantine,” unless they were distinguishing residents of the capital from other “Romans.”

⁷ J. Darrouzès, “Les documents byzantins du XIIe siècle sur la primauté romaine,” *REB* 23 (1965): 43.

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possibilities for a relationship between Rome and Constantinople which was, if not exactly peaceful, certainly different in kind from the relationship of the later Middle Ages.

Most importantly, differences with the Western church were not the crucial canonical or theological issues during Photios' patriarchate. The burning issue was still iconoclasm. From our perspective, a kind of foreshortening makes it obvious that iconoclasm was dead and not to be resurrected. But Photios and his contemporaries knew how the first "restoration of Orthodoxy" had been followed by a revival of iconoclasm. Most had personal memories of that revival. All were still being dragged into arguments about how to punish iconoclasts—some advocating severe sanctions, while others called for *oikonomia* and forgiveness.⁸ The quarrels over this issue affect every other quarrel of the period, including the "Photian Schism" with Rome. Beyond iconoclasm, Photios himself joined many other men in writing about other "heretics": Paulicians, Armenians, Muslims, Bogomils, Monophysites, and others.⁹ So the quarrel with Rome is only one issue among many in ninth-century Byzantium.

Moreover, the Photian Schism did not arise from differences over dogma. Nobody claimed that the pope was not qualified to render a judgment because he was a heretic. Instead, the issue was the canonical authority of the pope within the Eastern church—a question that neither began nor ended with Photios. His predecessor, Ignatios, had had similar problems during his first patriarchate (847–858).¹⁰ In the controversy over the legitimacy of Ignatios' deposition (or resignation) and Photios' elevation to the patriarchate, both sides appealed to the pope. Photios' refusal to accept the pope's judgment was based not on some challenge to the pope's legal authority, but rather on the pope's failure to hear any representative of Photios' side of the case before he made his decision.¹¹ This recognition of Rome's jurisdiction, with its assumption of Rome's orthodoxy, is more like the church of the iconoclast period or even of John Chrysostom's time, than like the church of Michael VIII Palaiologos. In the later period, Rome's jurisdiction will be challenged on the grounds that the popes, who used to have the authority of a first among equals, lost that authority when they fell into heresy.¹²

Nevertheless, Photios and some of his contemporaries did object to the Filioque (and other Latin "errors"). Those who maintain that the Filioque has always been the most important issue for thoughtful, moderate men begin with Photios, for he did explicitly state that the Filioque was a heresy and the weightiest issue outstanding between Constantinople and some Westerners: "Moreover, they have not only been discovered transgressing the law in all the above, but they have progressed to the crown of all evils, if there is such a thing. . . . They have also tried, with spurious reasoning, interpolated argument, and an excess of impudence, to adulterate the divine and holy creed which has its impregnable strength from all the synodical and ecumenical decrees (Oh, the subtle deceptions of the Evil One!), for they have added new words, that the Holy Spirit

⁸ F. Dvornik, *The Photian Schism: History and Legend* (Cambridge, 1948; repr. 1970), 6 ff.

⁹ H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich* (Munich, 1959), 520–30.

¹⁰ Dvornik, *Photian Schism*, 19–32.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, part 1, chaps. 2–8.

¹² E.g., see the polemicists cited by F. Dvornik, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy*, trans. E. A. Quain (New York, 1966), 159–62.

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proceeds not from the Father alone, but also from the Son."¹³ But before we portray this statement as the earliest example of Byzantine awareness of Roman heresy, we need to look carefully at its context. Photios discussed the Filioque in an encyclical letter to the Eastern patriarchs (quoted above) and in his *Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*. These texts were not attacks on the whole Western church, but refutations of the teaching of Frankish missionaries in Bulgaria. The latter had taught the Bulgars the addition to the creed and quarreled with Byzantine missionaries about it. In fact, the Filioque was not yet being chanted in Rome. When Photios wrote his treatises against the double procession of the Holy Spirit, he had good reason to think that the popes did not accept the doctrine.¹⁴ Nor did he challenge the pope's authority on the grounds that he was a heretic. Both of these things differentiate his position from later opinions.

Finally, anti-Latin arguments do not develop sequentially from Photios to 1453. An examination of the transmission of texts shows that Photios' writings against the Frankish missionaries had little impact. Nobody adopts his arguments on these issues, and few people even refer to his opinions, until late in the thirteenth century. At that time, the Filioque is central to Byzantine polemic for other reasons, to be discussed below.¹⁵

The Eleventh Century

Anti-Latin arguments do, however, have a continuous life from 1054 on. In the middle of the eleventh century, Byzantine polemicists raised many issues, some of which already had a history. Photios had complained, for example, about Latin Lenten observances and the Latin rite of confirmation, and Michael Keroularios (patriarch of Constantinople, 1043–58) raised these same issues.¹⁶ But the most prominent complaint of the middle of the eleventh century had not surfaced in Photios' period. Among the "Roman" errors Keroularios mentioned is the use of unleavened bread (azymes) in the eucharist. Other texts of the period echoed the theme. In terms of number of words written, or number of treatises written, azymes far outstrip the procession of the Holy Spirit.¹⁷ Some who mentioned the Filioque—Peter III of Antioch (1052–56), for example—maintained that the addition was more important than unleavened bread, but their actions belied these words. Peter wrote far more about azymes than about the Filioque.

To explain this emphasis, one needs to look behind Byzantine relations with the Western church to stresses within the empire. In general, the eleventh century saw a number of challenges to the definitions of "orthodox" and "Roman." These were not purely external challenges—enemy attacks on the outer boundaries of Byzantium—but civil wars, causing disagreements among the powerful even at the heart of the empire. In

¹³ Photios, *Epistulae et Amphilochia*, ed. B. Laourdas and L. G. Westerink (Leipzig, 1988), 1:43.

¹⁴ Dvornik, *Photian Schism*, 122.

¹⁵ This is one of the themes of Dvornik, *Photian Schism*; see esp. part 2, chaps. 5–6.

¹⁶ Details of the complaints about Lenten observance, confirmation, and other issues can be found in T. M. Kolbaba, "Meletios Homologetes 'On the Customs of the Italians,'" *REB* 55 (1997): 137–68.

¹⁷ J. H. Erickson, "Leavened and Unleavened: Some Theological Implications of the Schism of 1054," *SVThQ* 14.3 (1970): 156–58. The best introductions to the azyme controversy are *ibid.*, 155–76, and M. H. Smith III, *And Taking Bread . . . Cerularius and the Azyme Controversy of 1054* (Paris, 1978).

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other words, this was one of those periods in Byzantine history, like the sixth century and the iconoclast period, in which people fought over who had the right to define "orthodox" and "Roman."

Ironically, success had caused these fierce fights—the success of Byzantine armies, which had reconquered parts of southern Italy and huge areas of Asia Minor and Mesopotamia in the ninth and tenth centuries. These victories brought peoples into the empire who had been beyond its borders for a century or more. Their reintegration "posed a demographic problem, which the eleventh century transcribed and prolonged into a religious problem—that is to say, into a crisis of identity (for such is certainly the ultimate sense of Orthodoxy for the Byzantines)."¹⁸ The groups who reentered the empire considered themselves orthodox, catholic, apostolic Christians, but theologians in the great capital on the Bosphoros tended to label some of them as heretics. Others, considered orthodox, were not quite "Roman." Armenians and Syrians, for example, might be neither "Roman" nor "orthodox" (meaning, to a Constantinopolitan, Chalcedonian in their theology). Then again, they might be "orthodox" but not Roman. Some Armenians had even become both "Roman" and "orthodox," although this group probably did not include the recent immigrants. Only time would answer questions about the identity of these people—"foreign" or "Roman," "orthodox" or "heretical," "us" or "them." Meanwhile, fierce struggles ensued. Most importantly for the evolution of Byzantine views of Latins, three of these questionable groups in the empire raised the issue of unleavened bread.

The Armenians were the most important of the three. Armenia had been under Muslim rule until the ninth century. Then the decline of Abbasid power had allowed a period of independence. Then, in the second half of the tenth century, as Byzantium expanded eastward, Armenia was annexed to the empire, becoming the theme of Iberia in the early eleventh century. From 1045 to 1071 (battle of Manzikert), Armenia was ruled by the Byzantine Empire. Initially, the emperors involved in the annexation and integration of Armenia and Armenians into the empire were fairly tolerant of religious differences. Because Nikephoros II Phokas (963–969) and John Tzimiskes (969–976) wanted to repopulate eastern regions of Anatolia, they welcomed Armenian noble families who migrated into Cappadocia and southeastern Anatolia. These Armenians settled themselves and their ecclesiastical hierarchy within the empire.¹⁹ But this sort of tolerance would not last. After the annexation of Ani in 1045, when the last independent Armenian area fell to the armies of Constantine IX Monomachos (1042–55), relations between Armenian communities and their Greek Chalcedonian neighbors worsened. Very soon after the conquest, Monomachos began to crack down on Armenian heterodoxy. In 1048 Peter I, katholikos of the Armenian church, traveled to Constantinople for discussions. Discussions were friendly enough (at least the katholikos managed to stay out of prison), but in general both the emperor and his patriarch, Michael Keroularios, were

¹⁸ G. Dagron, "Minorités ethniques et religieuses dans l'orient byzantin à la fin du Xe et au XIe siècle: L'immigration syrienne," *TM* 6 (1976): 177–79.

¹⁹ G. Dédéyan, "L'immigration arménienne en Cappadoce au XIe siècle," *Byzantion* 45 (1975): 41–116.

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determined to wipe out the Armenian species of Monophysitism (as they saw it). They would soon begin to act on that determination.²⁰

Thus, in the decade before the more famous events of 1054, a group of anti-Chalcedonian, "azymite" Christians debated with Chalcedonian, leavened-bread Christians. From these debates came some of the first treatises against azymes.²¹ This battle with the Armenians had a negative impact on discussions with Latins, for when the Greeks discovered that Latins were using unleavened bread, they "often seem[ed] too preoccupied with contemporary Armenian and Jewish polemics to evaluate properly the Latin position."²²

The same series of tenth-century conquests that made Armenia part of the empire also reintegrated Syria and its capital, Antioch, a competitor with Constantinople for ecclesiastical and even imperial preeminence.²³ As they had encouraged the Armenians, the emperors also encouraged the Syrian Monophysites to repopulate imperial territories, especially northern Syria.²⁴ This influx of foreign heretics was decried by Chalcedonian churchmen, and conflict ensued between those who advocated or at least practiced tolerance and coexistence and those who would not tolerate the "heretics." The history of competition between Chalcedonians and Monophysites in these territories was ancient and bloody. As it had with the Armenians, imperial tolerance dissolved after the death of Basil II (976–1025). In 1029 the non-Chalcedonian patriarch John VIII Bar Abdoun was summoned to Constantinople. After a chance to state his views, he was condemned, excommunicated, and exiled by the synod. But worries about heterodoxy in the region of Melitene continued for some years.²⁵ In Antioch in the 1050s, there were some fearful fights, including the burning of Orthodox churches.²⁶

The link between Syrian Monophysites and the azyme controversy is not direct, for they use leavened bread in the eucharist. Still, their presence in the empire influenced the eleventh-century azyme controversy in two ways. First, the conflict with these heterodox Christians added to the general crisis of identity within the empire. Indeed, the documents regarding their status open for us one of the few windows onto such a crisis, through which we get not only a clear view of those whose definitions of "orthodox" and "Roman" won in the end, but also a fleeting glimpse of their opponents. Those opponents seem to have acted more than they spoke. We can only guess at their motives.

²⁰ J. Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford, 1986), 131.

²¹ Knowledge of later events has often led to the conclusion that these treatises originate with the Latin-Byzantine conflicts of the 1050s. As Mahlon Smith, Jean Darrouzès, and John Erickson have pointed out, however, the earliest anti-azyme treatises were ammunition in the debates with the Armenians. J. Darrouzès, "Trois documents de la controverse gréco-arménienne," *REB* 48 (1990): 89–153; idem, "Notes: Un faux Περὶ τῶν ἀζύμων de Michel Cérulaire," *REB* 25 (1967): 288–90; Smith, *And Taking Bread*, 128 ff, 173; Erickson, "Leavened and Unleavened," 175.

²² Erickson, "Leavened and Unleavened," 175.

²³ Dagron, "Minorités," 205–7.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, passim.

²⁵ V. Grumel, *Les registres des actes du patriarcat de Constantinople*, rev. ed. J. Darrouzès, vol. 1, fasc. 2–3 (Paris, 1989), nos. 838–40, 846. Dagron, "Minorités," 200–204.

²⁶ *The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*, trans. A. E. Dostourian, *Armenia and the Crusades, Tenth to Twelfth Centuries* (Lanham, Md., 1993), 2.2, 84–86; Dagron, "Minorités," 208; Smith, *And Taking Bread*, 111.

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Some emperors, for example, apparently conceived of the empire as an ecumenical body, capable of integrating heterodox Christians in the short run and of converting them to Chalcedonian orthodoxy later. On this side of the debate, too, were the bishops and imperial officials around Melitene whom the patriarchal synod reprimanded for excessive tolerance of the "Jacobites," as they called the Syrians. Among other things, these officials were accused of tolerating marriages between orthodox people and heretics and of accepting the testimony of heretics in court.²⁷ One would like to know more about this largely unrecorded segment of the population for whom, it seems, the lines between "orthodox" and "heretic" were less clear or less important than they were for the members of the synod. On the other side of the debate were those whose voices have come to us in a multitude of texts. These men thought that the heretics would never convert. It was a self-fulfilling prophecy, especially since, as time passed, they tended to give heresy "a definition more geographic and ethnic than dogmatic."²⁸ For these men, the definition of orthodox Romans included not only a Chalcedonian dyophysite creed, but also a set of rituals and customs that were, in fact, the rituals and customs of only part of the empire. Latins, Armenians, Syrians, and many others who might consider themselves both orthodox and Roman were excluded.²⁹

The second link between Syrian Monophysites and the azyme controversy was in the minds of these same orthodox adherents of the Council of Chalcedon, for they did not always distinguish Armenians from "Jacobites." They were encouraged in this conflation by the actions of the groups themselves, who sometimes forgot their differences in their common hatred of the imperial-orthodox establishment and its attempts to enforce conformity.³⁰ So, for example, Syrians and Armenians did occasionally collaborate in violent opposition to imperial attempts to shut down their churches. Thus, although a direct link between Jacobites, who use leavened bread, and polemic against users of unleavened bread is questionable, it is significant that the first eleventh-century figure to write a treatise against azymes was Patriarch Peter III of Antioch, a city where clashes between non-Chalcedonians and Chalcedonians had recently resulted in the burning of several Chalcedonian churches.

Meanwhile, Jews, the group with the longest history of challenging Christian identity and self-definition, had not disappeared either. The number of Jews within the empire was increased by the return of areas of southern Italy to imperial control in the ninth century. Bari and Oria, for example, had substantial Jewish communities.³¹ After sporadic persecutions in the same century, renewed imperial tolerance for Jews encouraged many to migrate into the cities of the empire, especially into Constantinople, from further east.³² The status of these Jews in the empire remained ambiguous. On the one hand,

²⁷ Grumel, *Regestes*, no. 846.

²⁸ Dagron, "Minorités," 213.

²⁹ Dagron, "Minorités," 204: "The synod is alarmed, and we sense that there is a complete divorce between the orthodox, centralizing ideas of Constantinople and the political, social, and economic life of a region that is perhaps also 'Byzantine' but in a way different from the capital."

³⁰ Smith, *And Taking Bread*, 110–11.

³¹ A. Sharf, *Byzantine Jewry from Justinian to the Fourth Crusade* (London, 1971), 2.

³² *Ibid.*, 107–16.

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imperial laws from the period continued the Byzantine tradition by which Jews were second-class citizens. For example, the laws spelled out the penalties a Jew should suffer if he should manage—by influence or bribery, for he could not do it legally—to attain a civil or military office in the government. On the other hand, such laws indicate that some Jews had sufficient influence and wealth to circumvent the laws and that some Christians were willing to help them do so.³³ In the years leading up to the quarrel between Cardinal Humbert and Keroularios in 1054, Jews had also come to the attention of imperial authorities in more negative ways. In 1042 they had participated, with Armenians and other “foreigners,” in the riots that accompanied an attempt to depose the empresses, Zoe and Theodora.³⁴ In 1051 the Jews of Bari revolted, and the Christian citizens of the town retaliated by burning down the Jewish quarter.³⁵

All of this is relevant to the azyme issue because Byzantines associated unleavened bread with the Jewish commemoration of Passover. Here Byzantines made all sorts of connections that modern historians find unconvincing, but our skepticism does not mean that the Byzantines themselves were not honestly convinced. Byzantine polemicists argued that using unleavened bread was in itself a “Judaizing” practice, indicating a lack of recognition that the New Testament had, in all ways, superseded the Old. From this perspective, Christians who used unleavened bread in the eucharist revealed that they were too attached to the Old Testament world of shadows and types, and not convinced of the grace of the new dispensation.³⁶ Byzantine conviction on this point was reinforced by their belief that Armenians “Judaized” in other ways as well. They maintained a hereditary priesthood and they offered sacrificed meat within the sanctuary of the church—both practices that the Council in Trullo had condemned as “Jewish customs.”³⁷ Although these arguments are not accepted by modern historians and were not accepted by Jews, Armenians, and Latins at the time, they were nonetheless strongly felt by some Byzantines.

So we see that the early eleventh century had been a period of debate about orthodox identity, especially about who was to be excluded from the category of “orthodoxy.” In that debate, unleavened bread had been used as a marker—the symbol that distinguished nonorthodox “them” from orthodox “us.” When some of the same men who had excluded Armenians for this reason became aware that Latins, too, used unleavened bread, they concluded that Latins, too, were heretics. But other orthodox churchmen did not agree. Thus Leo of Ohrid’s letter against azymes, which is usually seen as the first volley in the war between Michael Keroularios and Humbert of Silva Candida, was addressed *not* to the pope or his cardinal, but rather to one of Leo’s acquaintances, John, bishop of Trani. Trani is in southern Italy and was at that time under Byzantine authority. John

³³ *Ibid.*, 112–13.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 116–17.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 123.

³⁶ Erickson, “Leavened and Unleavened,” 165–69.

³⁷ Trullo 33 and Trullo 99—P.-P. Joannou, *Fonti. Fascicolo IX: Discipline générale antique (IIe–IXe s.)*, vol. 1.1, *Les canons des conciles œcuméniques* (Rome, 1962), 166–67, 235–36 [= G. A. Rhalles and M. Potles, *Σύνταγμα τῶν θείων καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων* (Athens, 1852–59), 2:379, 2:543]. See also G. Dagron, “Judaiser,” *TM* 11 (1991): 365.

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was "a Byzantine sympathizer" and "an honorary member of the hierarchy of the Great Church in Constantinople." Leo wrote to John because he had heard that this otherwise orthodox bishop was accepting azymites in his church.³⁸

In sum, the quarrel about azymes and Latins became fierce because it was internal—not a simple matter of "us" versus "them," but a debate about the very definition of "us."

The Twelfth Century

In the early years of the Komnenoi, the main concern remained azymes, even for those whose lives were disrupted by the Crusades.³⁹ Patriarch John IV of Antioch (1089–98) saw the First Crusade capture his city. Initially he stayed in Antioch, where he presided over both Greek and Latin clergy, but he later quarreled with the Latin rulers, fled to Constantinople, and abdicated. Around 1112 he wrote a tract on azymes in which he explicitly stated that he saw azymes as the most important error of the Latins: "The principal cause of the division between them and us is in the matter of azymes. . . . The matter of azymes involves in summary form the whole question of true piety; if it is not cured, the disease of the church cannot be cured."⁴⁰ John represents Byzantine churchmen who were convinced that the use of azymes was itself heretical. Other Orthodox theologians disagreed. Around 1090, Theophylact, archbishop of Ohrid (1088/89–post 1126), reproached those who raised trivial issues, including azymes, against the Latins: "It seems to me," he wrote, "that a man versed in church tradition and aware that no custom is important enough to divide the churches, except for that which leads to the destruction of dogma, will not" agree that the Westerners "commit unpardonable sins" in matters such as azymes.⁴¹ This issue, then, was still debated because it was still not settled.

Taking second place after azymes in the twelfth century was the issue of papal primacy.⁴² For example, in one of his texts written for debates with papal envoys in the capital in 1112, Niketas Seides (fl. first half of the 12th century) named twelve Latin errors, but insisted that only three were truly important: the procession of the Holy Spirit, azymes, and not calling Mary Theotokos. The importance of primacy is demonstrated by his first treatise, for although he began by saying that his concern was the three doctrinal issues, he ended up writing a refutation of the claims of the papal legates that Rome is the Mother of the churches.⁴³ From that refutation, he moved to doctrinal matters by arguing that even if Rome were the Mother of the churches, mothers deserve to be followed only if they are faithful to God. His example of how Rome had not been faithful, and the subject of his second discourse, was azymes. The emphasis on papal

³⁸ Smith, *And Taking Bread*, 91, 91 n. 47, 114–18.

³⁹ Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur*, 610.

⁴⁰ B. Leib, *Deux inédits byzantins sur les azymes au début du XIIe siècle* (Rome, 1924), 245 [113], cited and trans. in Pelikan, *Spirit of Eastern Christendom*, 177.

⁴¹ Theophylact of Bulgaria, Προσλαλία τιμι τῶν αὐτοῦ ὁμιλιῶν περὶ ὧν ἐγκαλοῦνται Λατῖνοι, ed. P. Gautier, *Theophylacte d'Achrida: Discours, traités, poésies. Introduction, texte, traduction et notes* (Thessaloniki, 1980), 279.

⁴² Darrouzès, "Documents," passim.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 55.

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primacy in Seides' work, and in that of his contemporary, Theodore Smyrnaios (fl. 1080–1112), had two roots. First, it was a direct response to papal pretensions. In a letter to Emperor Alexios I, Pope Pascal II (1099–1118) had indicated that acceptance of Rome's primacy, in matters of doctrine as in all else, was a prerequisite for ecclesiastical peace.⁴⁴ Seides, Smyrnaios, and others had been assigned by the emperor to refute such claims. So, too, Patriarch John X Kamateros' (1198–1206) later refutation of papal primacy was a direct response to Innocent III's (1198–1216) assertion of that primacy.⁴⁵

The second reason for Byzantine interest in papal primacy in the twelfth century relates directly to the Crusades. When Latin Crusaders conquered Antioch (1098) and Jerusalem (1099), they installed Latin patriarchs in both places. Those patriarchs owed at least nominal allegiance to the pope; at most, as was often the case, they were actually appointed by the pope. Constantinopolitans had not exactly been enthusiastic about the independence of the other Eastern patriarchs before the Crusades, and the patriarchs of Constantinople had been known to interfere in the other patriarchates. Nevertheless, they were quick to denounce Rome's attempts to control them.

Still, Joseph Gill's assessment of Byzantine denials of papal primacy before 1204 rings true: they lack heat. John Kamateros' debate with Innocent III is "largely academic" in tone, with "little sense of urgency."⁴⁶ Lists of Latin errors, the lowest and most rabid kind of polemic, do not raise the issue of papal authority until after 1204.⁴⁷ The question is crucial in high-level negotiations with Rome, but it is not contested *within* the Byzantine church. Debates about papal primacy have Greek-speaking, Orthodox people on one side, Latins on the other. Even if the Latins score points in a debate, papal primacy is not going to be applied to the East. There is no identity crisis here. "They" believe in papal primacy; "we" do not. As with other issues, it is only when papal primacy becomes an issue within Greek circles that it generates some heat, and that happens only after 1204.

Finally, the Filioque reemerges in the Komnenian period. It scarcely seemed important in the furor about azymes around 1054, but by the late eleventh century Theophylact of Ohrid and others returned to Photios' claim that this was the truly horrible error. A century later, Innocent III called for the return of the Greek "daughter" church to her "mother," the Roman church. Patriarch John Kamateros responded that it was the Roman church, in fact, that left, by teaching a heresy and adding to the creed.⁴⁸

In sum, Byzantines in the Komnenian period worried about many of the same issues as in the time of Keroularios, especially azymes. They were also increasingly troubled by papal claims to *plenitudo potestatis* and all that that meant. Among other things, the

⁴⁴ Letter 437, PL 163:588–89. Darrouzès, "Documents," 51–54, 57.

⁴⁵ A. Papadakis and A.-M. Talbot, "John X Kamateros Confronts Innocent III: An Unpublished Correspondence," *BSI* 33 (1972): 26–41. Also published in part in PL 214:325–29, 756–72, and in J. Spiteris, *La critica bizantina del Primato Romano nel secolo XII* (Rome, 1979), 324–31. Discussion of these letters, with further bibliography: T. M. Kolbaba, "Barlaam the Calabrian: Three Treatises on Papal Primacy," *REB* 53 (1995): 43–44.

⁴⁶ Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 12.

⁴⁷ The first reference to papal primacy in such texts is in Constantine Stilbes' list, compiled after 1204: Darrouzès, "Mémoire," para. 4, 44.

⁴⁸ Papadakis and Talbot, "John X Kamateros," 34–35.

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Byzantines were beginning to realize that they could not openly discuss differences with the Latins if the Latins were not willing to give up the idea that the pope could do things alone, without the approval of the other patriarchs.

1204–1261

The next major development in Greco-Latin relations was traumatic and unlikely to endear Latins to theologians or any other Byzantines. The Fourth Crusade ended in the Latin army's sack of Constantinople on 12 April 1204. Pope Innocent III hoped that the establishment of a Latin emperor in Constantinople might lead to reunion of the churches. On the contrary, it stiffened resistance to Latins within the Greek-speaking churches of Nicaea and Epiros. The Latin conquest did, however, change the priorities of Byzantines who criticized Latin doctrines and practices. Although azymes remained important and the Filioque was growing in importance,⁴⁹ the dominant issue was now papal primacy.⁵⁰

Texts from this period emphasize the role of the pope in the church and do so in ways that are not at all "academic." For example, in discussions held between Greeks and Latins in the capital after the appointment of Thomas Morosini as Latin patriarch in 1204, the issue of papal primacy was central. In December 1204, the papal legate Peter Capuano held discussions with Greek clergy. He asked them to submit to the pope, but most of them refused. In 1206 most of the Greek clergy in the capital were still refusing to accept Morosini as their patriarch. In August, September, and October of that year, Patriarch Morosini and the papal legate Benedict, Cardinal of St. Susanna, debated with Greek clergy. The discussion laid out the arguments for and against papal primacy in what had, by then, become a formula. The Greeks remained adamant. They wanted their own, Greek patriarch.⁵¹

These events from early in the period of Latin rule reveal the first reason for the centrality of papal primacy in this period: in the areas they controlled after 1204, the Latins insisted that Greek clergy and bishops take an oath of obedience to the pope or be deposed from their churches. Moreover, they were quite open about the implications of that oath, for they refused to separate theological issues from papal primacy. If the pope was indeed the head of the church, if Rome was the mother of all the other churches—if, in short, all the Western claims for papal primacy in law and doctrine were true—then the only solution to the schism was for the daughter church to return to the mother, the schismatics to return to the catholic church. All other issues were subsumed

⁴⁹ For example, in discussions between Greek theologians and papal legates in 1234, the Greek representatives insisted that the Filioque was the most important issue, while the Latins condemned the Greek refusal to accept unleavened bread in the eucharist. Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 65–72.

⁵⁰ See, e.g., the letter of Patriarch Germanos II to the clergy on Cyprus (1229), PG 140:613–21; summary in Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 60. It might be possible to count up the number of references to any given topic in all the extant texts of the era, but it would not be particularly useful. Most texts that survive do so because later eras are interested in their content. Based on my reading of surviving theological texts and on the accounts of historians, I have reached the conclusion that papal primacy is the central issue in most debates; that judgment, while defensible, remains subjective.

⁵¹ Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 32–34. For typical Greek arguments against papal primacy, the best summaries are Darrouzès, "Documents," 42–88, and Spiteris, *La critica bizantina*.

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under the issue of papal primacy.⁵² So the Latins gave the Greeks good reasons to think that this issue must be settled before any others could be. The Greeks learned the lesson well. When, in 1253, John III Vatatzes (1221–54) sent an embassy to the pope, seeking reunion of the churches, his proposals began with an acknowledgment of papal primacy, including the right of appeal to Rome in all church matters.⁵³

But some Greek clergy and people were less adamant than the debaters of 1204 or 1206. Around 1205 the bishops of Rodosto and Negroponte submitted to papal authority.⁵⁴ Papal letters from the pontificates of Innocent III and Honorius III (1216–27) reveal a number of monasteries that submitted to the pope and received, in return, papal protection for their rights and properties.⁵⁵ In 1214 Patriarch Theodore Irenikos of Nicaea (1214–16) wrote to the people of Constantinople, exhorting them to remain true to their faith and not to vow obedience to the pope: “For how would your faith be preserved and safe-guarded, if you should agree to be one of the pope’s faithful?”⁵⁶ Often cited as an example of Greek resistance, this letter is equally an indication that some of the people were wavering, possibly because of the “conciliatory policy towards the Greeks” that the second Latin emperor of Constantinople followed.⁵⁷ Later, the case of the clergy of Cyprus reveals a similar ambivalence within the Orthodox community outside the City. Cyprus had been under Latin rule since 1191, and the Greek clergy there could not agree among themselves about the best way to coexist with the Latins. To what extent should they compromise? Could they take an oath of obedience to the pope and/or to the Latin bishop without compromising their orthodoxy? They quarreled about this issue for years, arguing about the limits of *oikonomia*. Asked for guidance, Patriarch Germanos II (1223–40) and his synod in Nicaea also failed to agree. They first ruled that the clergy of Cyprus could compromise with the Latin archbishop in various ways without betraying their faith, but later, under pressure from a more radical element from Constantinople, they modified this decision. Thus they added confusion to the situation instead of alleviating it.⁵⁸

In light of this evidence, it is fair to say that past scholarship has often overemphasized the Greek clergy and bishops who fled to Nicaea and Epiros rather than take an oath of obedience to the pope. Most Greeks did resist the Latins, but some did so passively, while others compromised. The important point is that the compromisers existed; they must have had reasons for their actions. When their opponents admit that they exist, they

⁵² Examples of this Latin emphasis on Roman primacy can be found in nearly every piece of papal correspondence from the period. For examples, see Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 65, 67, 89, 93.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 92–95.

⁵⁴ J. Richard, “The Establishment of the Latin Church in the Empire of Constantinople (1204–1227),” in *Latins and Greeks in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204*, ed. B. Arbel, B. Hamilton, and D. Jacoby (London, 1989), 47–48.

⁵⁵ Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 52–53; Richard, “Establishment of the Latin Church,” 54.

⁵⁶ Cited in Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 40.

⁵⁷ Henry of Hainault reigned from 1206 to 1216 in Constantinople. See G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, trans. J. Hussey (New Brunswick, N.J., 1957), 381.

⁵⁸ J. Gill, “The Tribulations of the Greek Church in Cyprus, 1196–c. 1280,” *ByzF* 5 (1977): 78–80; Hussey, *Orthodox Church*, 201–6; M. Angold, “Greeks and Latins after 1204: The Perspective of Exile,” in *Latins and Greeks in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204* (as in note 54), 72–75.

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claim that they were merely weak or evil, willing to sell their souls for safety or political preference. Maybe some were craven traitors, but we need not take their opponents' word for it. It is equally likely that some men honestly believed that an oath of obedience to the pope was no stain on their orthodoxy. That belief, however, made their definition of orthodoxy quite different from that of the anti-Latin, anti-papal rigorists. Their compromise goes a long way toward explaining the heat with which other men attacked papal pretensions. Those who opposed Western ideas and Western authority—whether we call them intransigent or steadfast—were so fierce in their opposition because their definition of the boundaries of orthodoxy was not universally accepted. They were trying either to convince the compromisers that they were wrong or, failing that, to convince the rest of their contemporaries that the compromisers should be anathematized.

The Palaiologan Period

In 1261, in a serendipitous accident that many considered miraculous, a small army from Nicaea recaptured the city of Constantinople. No longer in exile, Michael VIII (1259–82) and the other leaders from Nicaea proceeded to reestablish the Roman Empire of Constantinople. But the question of reunion of the churches of Rome and Constantinople would not evaporate along with the Latin Empire. In fact, for Michael VIII, the question was perhaps more urgent than for any of his predecessors because various Western enemies proposed a "crusade" against the "schismatic Greeks" to recover the empire for catholic Christendom. To fend off these attackers, Michael opened and maintained negotiations with the papacy for reunion of the churches. For these negotiations, even more than for those during the Empire of Nicaea, papal primacy was the dominant theme, and for many of the same reasons. The popes still insisted that this was the fundamental issue,⁵⁹ and Byzantines still disagreed among themselves about compromise. In the collection of documents related to the Second Council of Lyons (1274) published by Vitalien Laurent and Jean Darrouzès, the dominant issues remain papal primacy, the right of appeal to the papacy, and the commemoration of the pope in the Byzantine liturgy.⁶⁰

But the Filioque continued to grow in importance. It became the central issue sometime around the Second Council of Lyons. Many will challenge the idea that it was around 1274—and *only* then—that the Filioque became the crucial issue. After all, it was the most important issue for Photios, for Theophylact of Ohrid, for Greek theologians at Nicaea in 1234, and for theologians of the Palaiologan period. It remains the most important issue for many theologians today. It is quite natural to conclude that it has always been the most important issue, at least for thoughtful Christians. But it has not. The disputants of the 1050s hardly mentioned it. Treatises on the topic, including the statement composed by the Nicene synod in 1234,⁶¹ appear in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but they are far less common than discussions of azymes and papal prim-

⁵⁹ See Kolbaba, "Barlaam the Calabrian," 43–48, esp. the letter of Clement IV quoted there.

⁶⁰ V. Laurent and J. Darrouzès, *Dossier grec de l'Union de Lyon (1273–1277)*, Archives de l'Orient chrétien 15 (Paris, 1976).

⁶¹ Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 72.

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acy.⁶² This does *not* mean that the Filioque was not important to many people and at some times before 1274. Certain men of a philosophical bent seem always to have been troubled by the implications of double procession, while men who were concerned with authority within the church often challenged the unilateral character of the addition to the creed. But the Filioque was not the subject of more treatises, more debates, or more invective than papal primacy or azymes before 1274.

So we should be more surprised than we are when we see how the issue dominated the Palaiologan period. This dominance can be seen in a number of ways. For example, a rough count of the authored works listed in the Greek Index Project reveals that about 70 percent of all the polemical works written in the Palaiologan period were against the Latins. Of those, about half were about the procession of the Holy Spirit.⁶³ For another example, Barlaam the Calabrian wrote twenty-one anti-Latin treatises. Fifteen of these are concerned in some way with the relations of the persons in the Trinity; ten explicitly mention the procession of the Holy Spirit in their titles.⁶⁴ This dominance needs explaining. We cannot simply claim that the Filioque is the most important issue in an absolute, philosophical sense; such a claim cannot be proven or verified. More to the point, even if it is the most important issue, it was not always seen and treated as such in Byzantium.

As was true of azymes and papal primacy, the Filioque became a burning issue only when it became an issue within the Eastern church. There were no Byzantine defenders of the Filioque before the 1270s. It was not necessary to write treatises to convince other Byzantines that the addition to the creed was illegitimate and possibly heretical. Within Byzantium—and therefore within most theological discussions in Byzantium—the belief that the Spirit proceeded from the Father alone could be assumed; it did not have to be defended.

Moreover, in general, when the question did come up in arguments with the Latins, its theology was seldom discussed systematically. The error of the Latins in this matter came primarily from their unilateral addition to the creed, as Theophylact of Ohrid expressed so clearly: “But the Symbol of the faithful must be the Symbol freed from all alteration . . . for not even the axe-wielders of Ezekiel spared those marked with the sign if they did not observe that their sign was not counterfeit.”⁶⁵ Perhaps the Latins had simply not thought through or were not capable of thinking through the theological implications of this novelty. Theophylact surmised that the Latin language had no way of distinguishing the “procession” of the Holy Spirit from the Father from his “having been sent” by the Son. He assumed that if he simply showed the Latins their misunder-

⁶² I base this statement on a close study of the polemical works catalogued in H.-G. Beck's *Kirche und theologische Literatur*, as well as on more recent studies of the theological debates of the period.

⁶³ R. E. Sinkewicz and W. M. Hayes, *Manuscript Listings for the Authored Works of the Palaeologan Period* (Toronto, 1989). The other half is divided among the following, in roughly descending order: treatises entitled generally “Contra Latinos” or “De unione” or something similar; treatises against purgatory; against azymes, against papal primacy; and miscellaneous single occurrences, such as a treatise “Against Thomas [Aquinas].”

⁶⁴ For a list of Barlaam's works, see R. E. Sinkewicz, “The Solutions Addressed to George Lapithes by Barlaam the Calabrian and Their Philosophical Context,” *MedSt* 43 (1981): 185–94.

⁶⁵ Theophylact, Περὶ ὧν ἐγκαλοῦνται Λατίνοι, 251.

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standing and explained how dangerous the theological implications of this addition were, they would concede the point.⁶⁶ During the discussions held at Nicaea and Nymphaeum in the period of the Latin Empire of Constantinople, that condescension was less evident. Latins came to discussions armed with both a knowledge of Greek and manuscripts of the writings of the Greek fathers of the church. Still, the Greek theologians involved in those debates stressed the Filioque precisely because it was the area where they felt the firmest ground beneath their feet. They were utterly convinced of the rightness of their position, and nothing the Latins said changed any of their minds.

But the firm ground began to shake in the period around the Council of Lyons. In late 1273 or early 1274, John Bekkos (born ca. 1230, patriarch of Constantinople 1275–82), an important Constantinopolitan churchman, became convinced that the Latin position on the Filioque was theologically defensible. From his time on, there was a debate *within* Byzantium about the Latin position. The unionist defenders of the Filioque adduced quite sophisticated arguments, based not only on logic but also on the writings of Greek and Latin church fathers. The anti-unionist, anti-Filioque people were caught off-guard by this, at first, and did not always do a good job of defending their position. Although some partisan historians still dismiss him with a few scathing words, Bekkos was *not* obviously and self-evidently wrong. He may not have been the most subtle theologian in history, but he convinced many other men of his position. He also became patriarch after the Council of Lyons and the union manufactured there. Later, when that union was repudiated, the first synod convened to condemn Bekkos and the other unionists was more a lynch-mob than a thoughtful discussion. The second synod, convened years later, was unable to convert Bekkos and his supporters to the anti-Filioque opinion.⁶⁷ Patriarch Gregory II of Cyprus (1283–89) produced strong, reasoned refutations,⁶⁸ but Bekkos had his supporters, both at the time and down to the end of the empire.

Changing Tone

John Bekkos did not convert to Roman Catholicism; he merely believed that the theologians who argued in favor of the double procession of the Holy Spirit were correct and in agreement with the fathers of the church. In the centuries after his death, several prominent Byzantine intellectuals would reach a broader conclusion: that Latin theologians and philosophers were right about many things. Some of these intellectuals would convert; the most famous example is Cardinal Bessarion (ca. 1399–1472).⁶⁹ Demetrios Kydones, a fourteenth-century convert to Catholicism, put it best when describing how,

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 253–55.

⁶⁷ Hussey, *Orthodox Church*, 247.

⁶⁸ Hussey, *Orthodox Church*, 247–49; A. Papadakis, *Crisis in Byzantium: The 'Filioque' Controversy in the Patriarchate of Gregory II of Cyprus (1283–1289)* (New York, 1984).

⁶⁹ The most thorough study of his life and work is L. Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion als Theologe, Humanist und Staatsmann*, 3 vols. (Paderborn, 1923–42). A more accessible and up-to-date survey is J. Gill, *Personalities of the Council of Florence* (New York, 1964), 45–54.

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in his youth, he began to study Thomas Aquinas and other Latin theologians: "Now it would become apparent that the Latins too had people capable of the highest intellectual attainments—something that had not been widely known in the past among the Byzantines. . . . For too long, my Byzantine countrymen had been content to hold on to the staid old notion that mankind was divided into two groups: Greeks and Barbarians. . . . The Latins could not be credited as being capable of anything worthy of human beings."⁷⁰ This awareness of Latin theological sophistication brings us to the second major point of this paper: between Photios and Bekkos there had been a fundamental shift in how Byzantine intellectuals perceived their Western European brethren, a shift reflected in the changing tone of anti-Latin texts.

The Ninth Century

Photios and others after him manifested the classic middle Byzantine attitude toward Western "barbarians." Photios claimed that Pope Leo (III?) had made Christians in Rome say the creed in Greek because Latin was such an inferior language that it "often render[s] false notions of the doctrines of the faith."⁷¹ Photios was willing to blame most Western errors on ignorance and lack of education. Even when he descended to name-calling and aspersions, his epithets did not resemble later polemic. Rather, he used the classic terminology of heresy and heretics: arrogance, rashness, insolence, impudence, pride. In *The Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*, for example, he described the advocates of the Filioque in ways that echo talk about heretics throughout history. For example, he wrote of "the arrogance of those contentious men who hold fast to unrighteousness and strive against the truth."⁷² He referred to their "rash impudence," "brutal and insolent attacks," and "lawlessness."⁷³ "When all is said and done," he wrote, "it comes down to the same unending pride."⁷⁴ We would err if we put too much weight on these descriptions as indications of what Photios thought of "Latins." If we compare these epithets to Photios' synopsis of the ecumenical synods in his letter to the Khan of Bulgaria, we see striking parallels. Arios was also proud; he had "an overweening attitude" and refused to "see something that is true of everything and self-evident."⁷⁵ Makedonios, too, ignored the obvious and was "arrogant" and "insolent."⁷⁶ This is an old story: heretics are proud and devil-inspired, refusing to see what any honest, humble, praying man would see. They are mad, arrogant, insolent, blasphemous, and willfully blind. When Photios described

⁷⁰ Demetrios Kydones, *Apologia 1*, ed. G. Mercati, in *Notizie di Procoro e Demetrio Cidone, Manuele Caleza e Teodoro Meliteniota ed altri appunti per la storia della teologia e della letteratura bizantina del secolo XIV*, ST 56 (Vatican City, 1931), 364; trans. J. Likoudis, *Ending the Byzantine Greek Schism* (New Rochelle, N.Y., 1983), 26. See also F. Kianka, "The Apology of Demetrios Cydones: A Fourteenth-Century Autobiographical Source," *ByzSt* 7.1 (1980), 57–71; eadem, "Demetrios Cydones and Thomas Aquinas," *Byzantion* 52 (1982): 264–86.

⁷¹ Photios, *Λόγος περὶ τῆς τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος μυσταγωγίας*, PG 102:376, trans. J. P. Farrell, *Saint Photios: The Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit* (Brookline, Mass., 1987), 103.

⁷² PG 120:280; trans. Farrell, 59.

⁷³ E.g., see PG 120:297–301; trans. Farrell, 66–68.

⁷⁴ PG 120:324; trans. Farrell, 80.

⁷⁵ Photios, *Epistulae et Amphilochia*, 1:5; trans. D. S. White and J. R. Berngan Jr., *The Patriarch and the Prince* (Brookline, Mass., 1982), 42.

⁷⁶ Photios, *Epistulae et Amphilochia*, 1:6; trans. White and Berngan, 43–44.

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Frankish missionaries in Bulgaria in such terms, he was not commenting on the ethnic or racial characteristics of Westerners; he was describing heretics.

The Eleventh Century

The tone of the arguments in 1054 was a bit worse than at the time of Photios. Yet it was nowhere near as acrimonious as generally assumed. That general assumption rests on a reading of only what Humbert of Silva Candida and Michael Keroularios wrote. In the balance against these writings we need to put not only the oft-noted irenic position of Peter of Antioch, but also a multitude of other texts from the period. In these texts, Byzantine writers still condescended to their Western brothers. Both Peter of Antioch and Leo of Ohrid assumed that the Latins had wandered from the true path out of ignorance, and that if they were corrected by their more learned, wiser Eastern brethren, they would return to the straight and narrow.⁷⁷ Latins were barbarians, ignorant of doctrine. The superior orthodox Christians must be patient with them.

Byzantine disputants also limited their instruction to a part of the Western church; they did not maintain that the whole Western church had fallen into error. Keroularios, for example, although he was inconsistent on this point, usually insisted that the pope was not to blame for the errors of the West or for his dispute with Humbert. He distinguished between the pope, with whom he wanted an alliance, and the "Franks," including his archenemy and the Byzantine governor in southern Italy, the Lombard Argyros. Keroularios' synod in 1054 did not condemn the pope or Westerners in general, but claimed that Humbert and the other legates were impostors bearing forged letters altered by Argyros.⁷⁸ Peter of Antioch defended Westerners on the basis of his knowledge of them, and insisted that if some Westerners were violating canon law (by eating strangled things or marrying within forbidden degrees), they must be doing so without the knowledge of the pope.⁷⁹

Behind this last comment, and fundamental to our understanding of the events of 1054, was an awareness that the West was not a monolith. Peter of Antioch, Leo of Ohrid, and Michael Keroularios did not live in a world where the division of East from West was clear and all-important. Instead of that bipolar world—Rome facing Constantinople—that dominates modern accounts of 1054, we find different groups, with different interests, involved in ecclesiastical negotiations and disputes. In Italy alone the actors included the pope, the German emperor, the Normans in southern Italy, the Lombards in southern and central Italy, and the indigenous Italians of the same region, some of whom still considered themselves subjects of the emperor in Constantinople. Sometimes a single individual embodied this complex world: Argyros, whom Keroularios blames for the whole fiasco, was a Lombard of the Latin rite. He had lived in Constantinople. In 1054 he was the Byzantine imperial governor in southern Italy. Other examples

⁷⁷ E.g., Peter of Antioch, Letter to Michael Keroularios, PG 120:805: "For they are our brothers, even if it happens that, through rusticity and lack of education, they have often fallen from what is proper."

⁷⁸ Synodal Judgment, PG 120:741.

⁷⁹ Letter to Keroularios, PG 120:808.

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of this multilateral world include the recipients of two of the earliest and most important anti-azyme texts: Dominic of Grado and John of Trani.

Peter of Antioch wrote to Dominic, bishop of Grado, probably in the spring of 1054.⁸⁰ No one who studies the events of 1054 overlooks this text, for it is one of the earliest.⁸¹ One aspect of its context, however, is seldom explicitly noted. As a result, it is generally presented as a straightforward example of a letter from an "Eastern" patriarch to a "Western" bishop, as if the distinction were as clear-cut as it would be in the thirteenth or fourteenth century. But history had made Grado an odd sort of liminal place. For reasons too complicated to discuss here, the metropolitans (or patriarchs, as they came to call themselves) of Grado sat on a cathedra not on the island of Grado but in Venice. Now, in hindsight, we see clearly that Venice had gained political independence from Constantinople in the course of the tenth century. But its cultural independence could not have been so clear. Dominic of Grado, the recipient of Peter's letter, built the "new" church of San Marco, the one we see today. He imported architects and skilled craftsmen from the East to do so, which explains the fundamentally Byzantine character of San Marco.⁸² So the geography of Venice, between Byzantium and the West, was reflected in its culture, as it always has been. Leo of Ohrid's treatise on azymes illuminates another section of this multicultural world. Leo's addressee, John, bishop of Trani, was a representative of the Byzantine church in southern Italy, and he was "asked to call these matters to the pope's attention only after he [had] 'corrected himself.'"⁸³

Aware of the ethnic and religious diversity of Western Europe, eleventh-century authors of Byzantine religious texts did not yet engage in the kind of name-calling that would characterize later anti-Latin polemic. For them (if not for the contemporary historians),⁸⁴ Westerners were not barbarian "Franks" or "Kelts." Usually they were called "Romans," even when they erred. Thus Keroularios told Peter of Antioch about Roman errors (Ῥωμαϊκῶν σφαλμάτων).⁸⁵ Peter replied, speaking also of "Romans," whom he distinguished from "Vandals," although he feared that the Romans might have been influenced by the Vandals.⁸⁶ When tribal names of barbarians appear, it tends to be in what we would call secular contexts. Keroularios, for example, wrote about his desire to form an alliance with the pope against the "Franks," by which he meant the men we call "Normans."⁸⁷

Put simply, Byzantines were not yet constructing a world in which the "Latins" or "Franks" from the West were a monolithic, threatening group. Keroularios was the only person to imply that the Western church as a whole was in a state of schism. Although

⁸⁰ PG 120:755–82.

⁸¹ Smith, *And Taking Bread*, 54–59, 134, 157, 173, 178–79.

⁸² *DHGE* 21 (1986), s.v. "Grado."

⁸³ Leo of Ohrid, Letter to John of Trani, PG 120:835–44. Quote from Smith, *And Taking Bread*, 114. For other information regarding Leo's letter, see Smith, 106–8, 156–57, 173, 174.

⁸⁴ See Alexander Kazhdan's contribution to this volume.

⁸⁵ PG 120:789.

⁸⁶ PG 120:805.

⁸⁷ Letter to Peter of Antioch, PG 120:784.

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he usually maintained that they had nothing against the popes, and that his only quarrel was with the "false" envoys and their "forged" papers, Keroularios did tell Peter of Antioch that: "From the sixth holy and ecumenical council to the present, the commemoration of the pope has been excised from the sacred diptychs of our holy churches. [This is] because the pope of that time, Vigilius, did not want to come to that council, nor to anathematize what Theodoritos wrote against the orthodox faith and against the twelve chapters of St. Cyril, or the letter of Ibas. And from that time to the present the pope has been cut off from our holy and catholic church."⁸⁸ But Peter rebuked Keroularios for this statement, pointing out that it was wrong both in its central point and in its knowledge of history:

I was ashamed of these latter things contained in the letter of Your Honor, nor do I know what to say, believe me. . . . For before examination and complete understanding, from vain rumor you have set forth that which never happened as if it had happened. . . . For Vigilius was at the fifth council . . . , but he was not at the sixth council. The interval between these two synods was 139 years. It did happen, for a brief while, that commemoration was cut off on account of [Vigilius] contending with the most holy patriarch Menas and subjecting him to demotion. [This schism lasted] until the archbishops made peace and were reconciled with one another. At the sixth holy synod, the pope was the priest Agathon, a worthy and divine man, wise in divine things. Read the acts of the sixth council, as it is customary to do on the Sunday after the Exaltation of the Venerable Cross. For you will find there that the aforementioned Agathon was gloriously acclaimed in that holy council.⁸⁹

Even later writers who copied and expanded Keroularios' list of Latin errors tended to leave off his erroneous introduction. The idea that the popes were heretics who had been in error for centuries was not commonly accepted in 1054. Keroularios' claim that they were was idiosyncratic.

Two other pieces of evidence are often adduced in support of the idea that something radically different and more hostile took place around 1054. First, it is often asserted that Keroularios closed the Latin churches in Constantinople.⁹⁰ However, as Mahlon Smith has noted, this statement is based on slim evidence. Humbert of Silva Candida alleged on several occasions that Keroularios persecuted Latin churches. This persecution seems mostly to have taken the form of "mocking" the Latins by calling them "azymites."⁹¹ Humbert claimed only once that Keroularios actually closed Latin churches in the capital, and even then he qualified his statement as hearsay. Later, when he was in Constantinople, he reformed the practices of certain churches there. These must have been churches founded for the Westerners in the city; neither Keroularios nor any other

⁸⁸ PG 120:788–89.

⁸⁹ PG 120:797–800.

⁹⁰ For example, it is stated in passing as a fact by Hussey, *Orthodox Church*, 132. Grumel, *Regestes*, no. 863, "Ordre de fermer les églises Latines de la capitale," assumes that such a document once existed but notes that no such document is extant.

⁹¹ PL 143:759.

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Greek in the city would have let him “reform” a Greek church. If Humbert “reformed” Latin churches in Constantinople, those churches must have been open.⁹²

Second, it is often asserted that Keroularios stirred the common people up to join his conflict with the emperor and Western envoys, and that he found it easy to do so because the people harbored a xenophobic hatred for Westerners.⁹³ A closer look makes this assertion even more questionable than the first. Evidence for popular anti-Latin sentiment in this period is meager. Keroularios did indeed raise the rabble on more than one occasion, but the people’s rage seems to have had other roots: unhappiness with Constantine IX Monomachos, as well as the general malaise of this period of instability in Byzantium.⁹⁴

In sum, the events of 1054 were insignificant for the short run. They received little attention in the empire at the time. The first known references to a “schism” between Keroularios and Humbert date from the early twelfth century.⁹⁵ As in the time of Photios, much of the conflict was more individual than general—Humbert versus Keroularios, rather than Rome versus Constantinople. Many of the features of later relations between Byzantium and Latins were not yet evident. Perception of the West as a unity and a threat; anxiety about Latin theological sophistication; popular antipathy—all of these would emerge later.

The Twelfth Century

During the Komnenian period (1081–1204), Latin penetration of the empire grew exponentially. This has been discussed too often and too well by other scholars to need elaboration here.⁹⁶ But this was *not* the impact of an active, vibrant, potent, masculine Western force on a passive, decadent, impotent, effeminate Eastern despotism. Byzantine emperors and their subjects reacted to Western pressures and exerted their own pressures on Westerners. To read Paul Magdalino’s account of Manuel I’s empire (1143–80) or Ralph-Johannes Lilie’s account of Byzantine relations with the Crusader kingdoms of Syria and Palestine is to see Byzantine emperors both exerting great influence on Westerners and adopting Western ideas and methods.⁹⁷ The central dichotomy of Alexios I’s (1081–1118) or his grandson’s world was not as much between “Rhomaioi” and “Latinoi” as between “those who are for me” and “those who are against me”; not between “Roman” ways of doing things and “Latin” ones, but between “what works” and “what does not.” The borders were permeable, and both sides were changed by extended contact.

⁹² For a fuller statement of this argument, with citations of the primary texts, see Smith, *And Taking Bread*, 119–21.

⁹³ Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 297; Hussey, *Orthodox Church*, 134.

⁹⁴ Héléne Ahrweiler concurs: “Recherches sur la société byzantine au XIe siècle: Nouvelles hiérarchies et nouvelles solidarités,” *TM* 6 (1976): 121.

⁹⁵ A. Michel, *Humbert und Kerullarios, Studien*, vol. 1 (Paderborn, 1924), 30–33.

⁹⁶ Even to survey the bibliography of this topic would be a monumental task. See the bibliography in P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180* (Cambridge, 1993), or in M. Angold, *Church and Society under the Comneni, 1081–1261* (Cambridge, 1995).

⁹⁷ Magdalino, *Manuel I*; R.-J. Lilie, *Byzantium and the Crusader States, 1096–1204*, trans. J. C. Morris and J. E. Ridings (Oxford, 1993).

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This two-way flow of men and ideas is a recurring theme in recent histories of the politics, economy, and warfare of the empire. In contrast, the theological sphere in this period is generally portrayed as impermeable. Adopting the view our Byzantine sources would like us to adopt, we tend to see Orthodoxy as a kind of fortress with outer walls of slippery-smooth marble. Latin theological ideas, recognized as novelties and dangerous heresies, bounced off this marble without so much as leaving a smudge. In the end, however, the same sources inadvertently show us a rather different Byzantium, and we cannot quite believe their explicit message of a faith untouched by Western ideas. Perhaps Byzantine theologians remained truly unaffected by Latin ideas in the time of Photios, for at that time their theological and philosophical training was superior to that of anyone in the West. By the twelfth century, however, such superiority was melting away. The Latins were catching up, and some Greeks knew they were. Given the acrimonious *ad hominem* attacks of 1054, it is unlikely that Humbert's logic impressed them. In contrast, when Alexios I listened to debates regarding the procession of the Holy Spirit between a Latin bishop and some Greek theologians (1112), he was convinced by the Latin arguments and sent his own theologians back to the drawing board. The extant account of this debate was written by the Latin bishop, so we should be skeptical. Yet it is true that various Greek theologians worked very hard at refuting Latin arguments around 1112. One senses that their confident condescension had been shaken.⁹⁸

Still more interesting is the controversy, in the time of Manuel I, over the Gospel phrase, "The Father is greater than I." The trouble began when an imperial ambassador, Demetrios of Lampe, returning from the Latin West, brought with him ideas about the relations of the persons in the Trinity. He reported that he had heard Latins say that the Son was at the same time inferior to and equal to the Father, and he proclaimed that opinion ridiculous. Emperor Manuel differed with Demetrios and deputed Hugo Eteriano, a Pisan theologian and friend, to argue against him. Probably most of the churchmen of Constantinople supported Demetrios, in part because they believed that his opinion was the traditional, native one, while Hugo's was a Latin innovation.⁹⁹ However that may be, the emperor dominated the council that decided the matter in 1166, and so Demetrios' position was anathematized in the Synodikon of Orthodoxy and Hugo's inscribed on enormous marble tablets attached to the walls of the Great Church.¹⁰⁰ The doctrine that had been criticized by a Greek and defended by a Latin became official dogma within the Greek church.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur*, 616; *ODB*, s.v. "Grossolano, Peter," 2:885.

⁹⁹ Magdalino, *Manuel I*, 287–90.

¹⁰⁰ On the tablets, see C. Mango, "The Conciliar Edict of 1166," *DOP* 17 (1963): 317–30.

¹⁰¹ The sources for this controversy have been studied very carefully, and much has been learned from rather scanty material. Still, it may be worthy of another study; ideas about the import of Latin influence in the Komnenian period have changed a great deal since the last careful study of the origins and meaning of this conflict. My analysis of the events is based on a quick reading of the primary sources and on reflections inspired by Magdalino's version of the events in P. Magdalino, "The Phenomenon of Manuel I Komnenos," in *Byzantium and the West, c. 850–c. 1200*, ed. J. D. Howard-Johnston (= *ByzF* 13; Amsterdam, 1988); repr. in *Tradition and Transformation in Medieval Byzantium* (Aldershot, 1991), no. IV, 196–98. The most thorough article on the controversy, with publication of texts, is P. Classen, "Das Konzil von Konstantinopel und die Lateiner," *BZ* 48 (1955): 338–68. See also G. Thetford, "The Christological Councils of 1166 and 1170 in Constantinople,"

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Although many details of the case elude historians, its broad outlines reveal three important features of Byzantine relations with Latins in the twelfth century. First, the intellectual boundaries between East and West were permeable. Demetrios traveled west and picked up a controversy there. Hugo Eteriano, an Italian, lived in Constantinople and entered the lists as the emperor's champion. This permeability complicates historical reconstruction of the boundaries between East and West, Greek and Latin, Orthodox and Catholic. Even what initially seems like the simplest question has no answer: Which was the "Latin" position here? At first glance, it seems clear that Hugo's was the "Latin" opinion. But the answer is probably more complex than that. According to the historian John Kinnamos, Demetrios' position was imported, for he had "returned from [the West] full of drivel."¹⁰² We cannot unquestioningly believe Kinnamos, however, who was ever-supportive of the emperor and ever-contemptuous of Latins; he omitted any mention of Hugo's role and presented the emperor's opinion as wholly self-generated. In the end, it seems that both sides of the debate were inspired by Western concerns, but that their accounts after the fact were anxious to hide Western influences.¹⁰³ When we read between the lines, Orthodox Constantinople's walls look more like a cellular membrane than a marble castle.

Second, Byzantines continued to disagree among themselves about the definition of orthodoxy and specifically about whether that definition included Latins. On the one hand, around this time a list of Latin "errors," which had probably been circulating for a while, surfaces in the historical record. This, the most scurrilous kind of anti-Latin polemic, reveals the existence of a virulently anti-Latin contingent in Constantinople.¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, there is obviously a problem with concentrating too much on the anti-Latin crowd. At least in the controversy surrounding Demetrios of Lampe, they seem to have lost. Hugo and Manuel won; it was their position that became the orthodox position. The marble tablets in the Great Church remained there until 1567.¹⁰⁵ Besides, that list of Latin errors was written to convince fellow Byzantines, not to convince Latins. In other words, the list reveals the existence of Byzantines who were *not* convinced that Latins were filthy heretics, as well as the existence of those who were.

Third, it was necessary for each side to downplay the role of Western influence in these events. Demetrios and his supporters saw and portrayed themselves as diligent polishers of the smooth marble walls of Orthodoxy, trying to rebuff all things Latin, while

SVThQ 31 (1987): 143–61; A. Dondaine, "Hugues Ethérien et la concile de CP de 1166," *HJ* 77 (1958): 473–83; J. Gouillard, "Le Synodikon de l'Orthodoxie," *TM* 2 (1967): 76–80, 216–26; L. Petit, "Documents inédits sur le concile de 1166 et ses derniers adversaires," *VizVrem* 11 (1904): 465–93.

¹⁰² John Kinnamos, *Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenis*, trans. C. M. Brand (New York, 1976), 189, book 6.2; Ioannes Kinnamos, *Epitome rerum ab Ioanne et Alexio Comnenis gestarum*, ed. A. Meineke, CSHB (Bonn, 1836), 251.

¹⁰³ Magdalino, "Phenomenon," 196–97.

¹⁰⁴ Hugo Eteriano translated such a list into Latin sometime before 1178. Hergenroether published both Hugo's translation and a Greek list that mostly corresponded to it, entitled: Περὶ τῶν φράγγων καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν λατίνων: J. Hergenroether, *Monumenta graeca ad Photium eiusque Historiam Pertinentia* (Ratisbon, 1869), 62–71. See also A. Argyriou, "Remarques sur quelques listes grecques énumérant les hérésies latines," *ByzF* 4 (1972): 13–15; Darrouzès, "Mémoire," 54–55.

¹⁰⁵ Mango, "Conciliar Edict," 317–21.

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Kinnamos did not mention Hugo Eteriano's role and portrayed Demetrios' heresy as an imported product.

A summary of these mixed messages is difficult. Given that it was desirable for both sides to hide any "Latin" connection in their teaching, it seems that anti-Latin sentiment was strong and getting stronger. Yet the presence of Latins in the empire and frequent embassies of Greeks to the West allowed both friendly and unfriendly interaction, as well as mutual influences that usually went unrecorded in contemporary sources. This was still the empire of the Komnenoi, with their ties of blood and friendship to Latins, and with subjects who had not yet experienced the traumatic events of 1204.

1204–1261

After 1204 the opinion that Latins are Christian brothers was modified, even in the most pro-Latin circles. Everyone took the separation of the churches for granted. The period was characterized by one attempt after another to reunite the churches. It also saw both violent resistance to these efforts and a kind of openness to Western ideas. Paradoxically, the openness was often a result of the division. Some Byzantine scholars thought they had to learn more about the Latins before they could refute them. In the end, these trends led to a wide spectrum of opinion.

At one end of the spectrum is the most scurrilous kind of polemic against the Latins, which became popular. Lists of Latin "customs" or "errors" circulated widely. These included not only theological issues such as the Filioque and liturgical issues such as azymes, but also disgust at the things Latins ate and the clothes they wore.¹⁰⁶ In this way, opponents of church union sought to undermine the advocates of union by associating them with filthy heretics. For example, the anti-unionists could not acknowledge that John Bekkos might have reached a conviction of the orthodoxy of the Filioque by reading patristic texts. He must, rather, be a servant of the pope. One of the most infamous anti-Latin texts, the "Dialogue of Panagiotes with an Azymite," dates to around the Second Council of Lyons. It begins with a description of the arrival of a papal envoy in Constantinople. He is met by John Bekkos, who wears a miter and a ring, which, the author assures us, are symbols of the pope. The papal envoy is leading a mule with a basket on its back. In the basket is an image of the pope. Both Bekkos and Emperor Michael VIII perform acts of submission in front of this mule. Michael actually leads it by its bridle, an idea familiar to Western medievalists and an allusion to Michael's earlier, hypocritical submission to Patriarch Arsenios.¹⁰⁷ An even more striking example of this sort of condemnation-by-association is the case of Patriarch Gregory II of Cyprus. In spite of being the person who finally defeated Bekkos, in spite of his sophisticated elucidation of the Greek doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit, he ran into trouble. His enemies accused him of heresy in that very elucidation, and more than one of them

¹⁰⁶ See, e.g., Darrouzès, "Mémoire," para. 30, 63, 65, 66, 75.

¹⁰⁷ D. J. Geanakoplos, *Interaction of the 'Sibling' Byzantine and Western Cultures in the Middle Ages and Italian Renaissance, 330–1600* (New Haven, Conn., 1976), 158. Greek text ed. A. Vasiliev, *Anecdota graeco-byzantina* (Moscow, 1893), 179.

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implied that his error came from his origins on Latin-dominated Cyprus.¹⁰⁸ He may have been deposed from the patriarchate for entirely political reasons, but a good way to justify such a deposition was to portray him as a “Latin.”

At the other end of the spectrum, some intellectuals of the Palaiologan period admired Latin learning and considered it superior to Greek. This shift is symbolized most vividly by the year 1274, for 1274 is not only the date of the Second Council of Lyons but also the date of the death of St. Thomas Aquinas. In other words, Latin theologians were reaching their peak. Popular opposition to the Latins was not significantly changed by this, but the opposition of intellectuals took on a different tone. Unlike Photios, Theophylact of Ohrid, or Peter of Antioch, intellectuals of the Palaiologan period were not certain of their own superior theological reasoning. Some among them even decided that the Latins had surpassed them.¹⁰⁹ The Greek delegation at the Council of Florence (1438–39) was not condescending; it was defensive. The complaint used to be Latin barbarism; for the opponents of reunion at Florence, the complaint was that the Latins were oversubtle.¹¹⁰

Conclusion

Byzantine identity was not a simple matter. Modern historians struggle for ways to describe what made Byzantine people Byzantine. Was theirs an “ethnic” identity? a religious identity? an imperial identity? Perhaps, instead of searching for a single definition that works once and for all, we need to acknowledge that our confusion is justified. A group of people defines itself and is defined as much by whom it excludes as by whom it includes. In both senses, the people we misleadingly call Byzantines did not always agree on a definition of themselves. Even where they did agree, the definition had to be refined more than once in their thousand-year history. That refinement of definition was always contested. Despite histories written by the victors, which often pretend that

¹⁰⁸ Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, ed. L. Schopen, CSHB 19, vol. 1 (Bonn, 1829), 165. German trans. and comm., *Römische Geschichte*, J. L. van Dielen, Bibliothek der griechischen Literatur 4, vol. 1 (Stuttgart, 1973), 148. Hussey, *Orthodox Church*, 248–49.

¹⁰⁹ I. Ševčenko, “Intellectual Repercussions of the Council of Florence,” *ChHist* 24 (1955): 294; repr. in idem, *Ideology, Letters and Culture of the Byzantine World* (London, 1982), no. ix, with new pagination, 6. Since Ševčenko’s seminal article, a great deal has been published regarding Greek reception of Latin theology in the Palaiologan period. A full bibliography is not possible here, but the interested reader might begin with the following: H. Hunger, *Prochoros Kydones, Übersetzung von acht Briefen des Hl. Augustinus* (Vienna, 1984); F. Kianka’s articles on Demetrios Kydones (note 70 above); R. Flogaus, “Der heimliche Blick nach Westen: Zur Rezeption von Augustins *De trinitate* durch Gregorios Palamas,” *JÖB* 46 (1996): 275–97.

¹¹⁰ Ševčenko, “Repercussions,” 298 (repr. 10). Demetrios Kydones complained that his fellow Greeks, rather than learn Latin positions and refute them intelligently, said, “The Latins are sophists. They attack us with sophistry, and when one refutes their sophisms, then there is nothing left but blasphemy and absurdity. We, however, stand by the folly of the evangelical message and the simplicity of fishermen. We did not receive Divine Revelation clad in worldly wisdom and we do not intend to surrender it to such wisdom, lest we strip the Cross of its Christ” (ed. Mercati, 388; trans. Likoudis, 53).

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the challenge came from without, the crucial problems were debates within the empire, among those who considered themselves heirs of Rome and children of Christ.

The iconoclast controversy, for example, despite all efforts to attribute it to Jewish or Islamic influences, seems most likely to have originated within the Christian Roman Empire. Doubts about the use of icons were certainly related to external influences, especially to the Arab invasions that threatened the very existence of the empire in the early eighth century. Still, the earliest iconoclasts were Christian bishops in Asia Minor. The history written a century later by the victorious iconodules portrays a true church, staunchly in favor of icons, oppressed by a minority of evil men who tried to force an alien doctrine and practice upon the orthodox, but modern historians doubt such an account, pointing to evidence that the iconoclasts were popular and that their beliefs were sincerely held and theologically justified. If iconoclasm had been, as its opponents claimed, an alien and obviously heinous belief, it would not have caused more than a century of strife within the empire. Nor would icon veneration have been enshrined at the center of the Orthodox definition of themselves if it had been uncontested.¹¹¹

Western European Christians presented another sort of question of identity, for they had been citizens of the Roman Empire as recently as the time of Justinian I (527–565) and they were Christians. Nominally, then, they were included in the Byzantine definition of "us." Minimal contact with Westerners in the eighth to tenth centuries enabled this status to stand. It was recognized that Westerners were not quite up to Constantinopolitan standards. They were rustic cousins, baptized barbarians—but, then, so were people in other provinces of the empire. Contact with mercenary soldiers from Scandinavia simply reinforced this comfortable semi-inclusion and superiority.

But then these rustic cousins began to penetrate the empire in other ways—not just as mercenary soldiers overawed by the empire's wealth and as occasional papal or imperial legates, who had contact with few Byzantines. The Crusades and the ambitious ventures of Italian merchants revealed to the Byzantines that their country cousins were strong and self-confident ("arrogant," the Byzantines tended to say). Sometimes they acted like enemies. Even when they did not, they had ideas above their station: they actually claimed to have their own emperor of the Romans! This awareness of Latin difference brought Latins into the center of the ongoing debates about the boundaries of Byzantine society. It did so at a time when other groups were presenting similar challenges, especially the Armenians and Syrians who reentered the empire with the conquests of the tenth century.

If all Byzantines had agreed that Westerners were excluded from the ecumenical empire and church, there would have been relatively little Greek literature about Latin beliefs and customs. Probably for the average Constantinopolitan going about his daily business, it was taken for granted that Westerners were different simply because they spoke different languages and wore different clothes. For the hierarchy of the church, however, the problem was more profound. They could not merely adduce the obvious ethnic differences. The church, as Christ's body, is not supposed to make distinctions

¹¹¹ For a recent account of the iconoclast controversy that involves this sort of analysis, see J. Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom* (Princeton, 1987), 306–43, esp. 331–43.

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based on ethnicity, "for you are all one in Christ Jesus."¹¹² Within the church, then, the status of Latins needed clarification. Were they included in the orthodox, catholic Christian church, in spite of their strange customs and odd clothing? Or were they excluded by their own beliefs? Were they, in a word, heretics? It was not an easy question to answer. As a result, the literature for and against Latin heresy began to pile up. Not surprisingly, that literature began with issues and definitions that had been used earlier on other groups, hence the centrality of azymes in the 1050s.

The impact of the Crusades on the evolution of Byzantine attitudes toward Latins was indirect but important. The Crusades made Western Europeans and one's attitude toward them crucial issues for all Byzantines, from highly educated Constantinopolitan theologians to peasants in the Morea. Eastern hostility toward the Latins, including their status as the favorite target of religious polemic, is a result of the Crusades, a "radicalization" caused by the behavior of their Latin "brothers." For most people, the Latins became a threat to body before they were a threat to soul; religious aversion followed violent conflict. It is a paradoxical conclusion, but it seems to fit the facts: anti-Latin polemic in the period of the Crusades is intimately linked to the Crusades, and yet it hardly ever mentions them.

¹¹² Gal. 3:28.



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Dyophysite Florilegia of the Fifth and Sixth Centuries CE

Marcel Richard

Patristic argumentation was not entirely unknown to theologians at the time of the outbreak of the Nestorian scandal. However, it is in the course of this affair that we see it appearing for the first time on a major scale in theological discussions, and triggering the birth of substantial dogmatic florilegia in the different Schools. Until the end of the fourth century, this line of argument had remained something entirely exceptional. We may note that the Arians made use of citations from Dionysius of Alexandria, a circumstance which provided us with the *De sententia Dionysii*, by Athanasius, a limited essay by the latter on the Acts of the council of Antioch of 268, summoned by the Homoousians,¹ the short florilegium *De Spiritu sancto* by Basil, and a few citations from the *Historia Ecclesiastica* by Eusebius quoted by Theodore of Mopsuestia in his treatise *De incarnatione*.² This is not much. In addition, we must also consider the evasions: that of the Arians, who, when invited by Nectarius of Constantinople to appeal to the Ante-Nicene Fathers as authorities in doctrinal disagreements, refused to do so;³ that of Gregory of Nyssa, who when faced with Eunomius' claim to have before him the usage of the saints, answered that he knew of no other authority than that of the divinely inspired writers.⁴

This timidity, which contrasts with the already more common use of argument from the Fathers in the Pelagian affair, and especially with its rapid and universal development in the christological disputes of the fifth and sixth centuries, can be explained by the qualitative difference between the range of Christian texts to which the fourth-century theologians had access and that from which their successors benefited. One only has to consider the list of authors quoted in the florilegium *De Spiritu sancto* by Basil: Dionysius of Alexandria, Clement of Rome, Irenaeus of Lyons, Eusebius of Caesarea, Origen and Julius Africanus. Only two of these six authors

¹ Athanasius, *De synodis* 41–45; PG 26,764D–776A

² *Theodori Mopsuesteni Fragmenta syriaca*, ed. E. Sachau (Leipzig 1869) 67 ff. (syr.); 41 ff. (trans.).

³ Socrates, *H. eccl.* 5,10; PG 67,583–84. It must be noted that the idea did not come from Nectarius, but from a dissident, the Novatian reader Sisinnius.

⁴ Greg. Nyss., *Adv. Eunomium* III 1,7; ed. W. Jaeger, 2 (1921) 4; see also III 9,54; *ibid.*, 269 f..

enjoyed unquestioned authority: Clement of Rome, whose letter to the Corinthians could not provide much help in the struggle against Arianism, and Irenaeus.

By providing the church with copious theological writings, fourth-century scholars made possible an intensive use of patristic argumentation and the composition of ample dogmatic florilegia. It is therefore no accident that the flowering of this literary genre coincided with the misadventures of the unfortunate Nestorius.

This flowering is evident from the very beginning of this affair. Already the *Contestatio* of the lawyer Eusebius invoked the witness of Eustathius of Antioch and of the baptismal symbol in use in the same city.⁵ Cyril of Alexandria's letter to the monks of Egypt quoted two texts by Athanasius.⁶ This letter to the monks is probably what inspired Cassian with the idea of inserting a short patristic florilegium into the seventh book of his treaty *De incarnatione Domini*.⁷ Indeed, it contains the very same two texts from Athanasius. At around the same time, at the Roman council of August, 430, Pope Celestine invoked Ambrose, Hilary and Pope Damasus against Nestorius.⁸ Moreover, it seems likely that Cyril was no stranger either to the initiative of the good Pope. Indeed, we know that he had sent him a collection of patristic texts in order to support his suggestion that Nestorius should be condemned.⁹

The bishop of Alexandria had immediately seen the importance of tradition as an argument against Nestorius' misuse of language. We no longer have the florilegium which he had entrusted to the deacon Posidonius for Pope Celestine; however, at around the same time, Cyril was writing his *Oratio ad Dominas* and inserting thirteen patristic texts,¹⁰ which must give us a reasonably accurate picture of the lost collection. In the following year, 431, we see him produce two new florilegia, that of the *Apologia XII Capitulum contra Orientales*¹¹ and that of the first session of the council of Ephesus,¹² reproduced in the account of the session of 22nd July with a supplement of four texts.¹³

⁵ *Acta Conciliorum Oecumen.*, ed. E. Schwartz (Berlin 1927 ff.) (= ACO) I, 1, 1, p. 101 f.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁷ John Cassian, *Contra Nestorium* 7,24–30: ed. M. Petschenig: CSEL 17,382–89.

⁸ Arnobius jun., *Conflictus*, 2,13: PL 53,288C–290B.

⁹ ACO I, 1,5, p.12.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 65–68. Strictly speaking, the florilegia of Cyril of Alexandria belong to the history of Monophysite florilegia. However, as they played a significant role in the diffusion of patristic argument over the course of the Nestorian affair, and were furthermore exploited by Chalcedonian theologians in the sixth century, albeit to a lesser extent than by their Monophysite associates, they are impossible to overlook.

¹¹ ACO I, 1,7, p. 36 sq. 45.60.64.

¹² ACO I, 1,2, pp. 39–45.

¹³ ACO I,1,7, pp. 89–95.

Clearly the Easterners could not allow their great adversary to have a monopoly on this form of argument. This was all the more the case since they were convinced that Cyril was not playing fair in his choice of texts, and that his choice gave a warped picture of the teaching of the Fathers.

This is why, as from September 431, the opposition delegates to the discussions at Chalcedon had a patristic florilegium in their dossier, which quoted Eustathius of Antioch, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom, Athanasius and Theophilus of Alexandria, Damasus of Rome, and Ambrose of Milan.¹⁴ We may note in passing that it is thanks to the emperor, who had handed them a copy of the *De incarnationis sacramento* by Ambrose, sent to the council by bishop Martin of Milan, that they were able to include in their armoury of texts several extracts from the great western theologian. By this gesture, Theodosius II had sought to show whom he believed was truly responsible for the schism.

However, the ammunition prepared by the opposition to use against the anathemas, notably the first, fourth and twelfth,¹⁵ was never to come into use, due to the obstinate refusal displayed by the representatives of the majority to discuss this embarrassing document.¹⁶ Nevertheless, they were not to be completely lost. Once back in his diocese, Theodoret, the principal author of the dossier, edited them and made them into the long five-book attack on Cyril and the council that was to prove so harmful to his memory.

Nothing remains of this work, condemned in 553, apart from a few fragments¹⁷ and a meagre summary in Photius's *Bibliotheca*.¹⁸ At least we know that its fourth book contained a patristic florilegium directed against Monophysitism and Theopaschism. By a rather extraordinary stroke of luck the florilegium was preserved, possibly complete but in great part at least, in an appendix to the treatise *De duabus naturis* by Pope Gelasius.¹⁹ This allows us to observe that the bishop of Cyrrhus had conserved the tripartite plan and no doubt the content of

¹⁴ Letter to Rufus of Thessalonica: ACO I, 1,3 p. 41.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* The three anathemas were discussed in the following order: first, twelfth, fourth.

¹⁶ The position of the delegates was that the council had in no way approved the anathemas. Therefore they remained Cyril's personal doing.

¹⁷ See especially ACO I, 5, pp. 165–69.

¹⁸ Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 46, PG 103, 80BC.

¹⁹ E. Schwartz, 'Publizistische Sammlungen zum Acacianischen Schisma', *Abhandlungen d. Bayer. Akademie d. Wiss. (AbhMünchAk)*, Philos.-histor. Abtlg. NF 10 (München 1934) 96–106. The florilegium was not preserved in any of the surviving manuscripts of the letter *De duabus naturis*. Schwartz's edition reproduced that of Sichard, *Antidotum contra diversas omnium fere saeculorum haereses* (Basel 1528). A text that has come to us in such bad condition must be used with caution.

the Chalcedonian florilegium, though with notable additions and having modified the original order.

In this same year, 432, that saw the appearance of the *Pentalogos* by Theodoret, another Eastern bishop, Andrew of Samosata, also composed a florilegium and sent a copy of his work to Rabbula of Edessa, a renegade from the group of John of Antioch. Unfortunately nothing remains of it but the list of authors quoted in the collection.²⁰ Naturally, it included the eight names from the Chalcedonian florilegium, to which all the authors added by Theodoret to this original collection, with the exception of Ignatius, were added, with ten more, including some, such as Serapion of Thmuis, Diodorus of Tarsus, Epiphanius of Cyprus and Didymus of Alexandria, who never appeared in the collections of texts made by the bishop of Cyrrhus.²¹ This is an interesting finding, for it demonstrates well the personal and independent character of the research done by the two bishops.

The agreement entered upon between Antioch and Alexandria in spring, 433, was, if not to restore peace to all minds, at the very least to put a temporary end to this polemic consisting of rival citations from the Fathers. We do not find any new florilegia until the year 438 and the first dispute surrounding the memory of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Diodorus of Tarsus. Unfortunately nothing remains of it but its memory. With respect to Cyril of Alexandria's treatises *Contra Diodorum et Theodorum*, as with the apology for these two men by Theodoret, we have nothing left beyond a few fragments, and of *testimonia patrum* only four texts quoted by the bishop of Alexandria. All four moreover are drawn from his previous florilegia.²²

From here we may proceed directly to the council of Chalcedon and its antecedents and its consequences. We can associate four florilegia with this period: that in three parts in the *Eranistes* by Theodoret (448), that connected with the Tome sent by Pope Leo to Flavian of Constantinople (450), that of the council itself (451), and finally that of Pope Leo's letter to the Emperor Leo (458).

Of all the fifth-century florilegia, the most precious and substantial is undoubtedly that of the *Eranistes*,²³ with its 238 citations, drawn from 88 works. It is therefore extremely regrettable that all that we have of this important work are rather mediocre editions, which all appear to be derived from a single manuscript,

²⁰ See A. Baumstark, 'Ein Brief des Andreas v. Samosata an Rabbula von Edessa und eine verlorene dogmatische Katene', *OriensChr* 1 (1901) pp. 179–81, and I. Rucker, *Florilegium Edessenum anonymum, Sitzgs-Ber. d. Bayer. Akademie d. Wiss.* (cit.: *SBMünchAk*) (München 1933) H. 5, pp. xv–xvi.

²¹ The *Eranistes* nevertheless quotes Didymus' commentary on Psalm 15, but under the name of Eustathius of Antioch. See M. Spanneut, *Recherches sur les écrits d'Eustathe d'Antioche* (Lille 1948) 27 ff.

²² See *Mélanges F. Grat* 1 (Paris 1946) 115 f.

²³ Theodoret, *Eranistes*, PG 83,2 8–336.

which is not the best.²⁴ Furthermore, probably in the fifth century, or a little after, a well-meaning but clumsy copyist had the unfortunate idea of inserting the Greek version of the florilegium of Pope Leo's Tome into that of the second book.²⁵

When the bishop of Cyrrhus composed this work, he made use of around thirty of the texts he had quoted in the fourth book of his treatise against the council of Ephesus. This becomes apparent from a comparison of the contents of the *Eranistes* with those in Pope Gelasius' florilegium. Moreover, he undoubtedly borrowed several quotations from acquaintances who cultivated the same genre. Thus it is certain that the *De incarnationis sacramento* by Ambrose was analysed on his behalf, since he did not know Latin. Generally speaking, however, the florilegia of the *Eranistes* represent the fruit of his personal reading.

Next to this extensive work, the three other collections yet to be discussed cut much less of a figure. Apart from a quotation from Proclus of Constantinople, the florilegium attached by the Fathers of the council of Chalcedon to the *Adlocutio* which they addressed to the Emperor Marcian after the closing of the council,²⁶ is a modest extract from the collection in the *Eranistes*. However, a passage from Ambrose (*De fide ad Gratianum* 2,77) has been the subject of a new translation from the original Latin text quoted in the council of Ephesus.

Pope Leo composed his first florilegium to justify the doctrine of his Tome to Flavian, but only on the occasion of the second dispatch of this document to the East, during negotiations undertaken between Rome and the new patriarch of Constantinople, Anatolius. The Tome was received with much honour in the capital, and was immediately translated into Greek with the utmost care, as was its accompanying florilegium. Here ends the official history of this florilegium. At the council of Chalcedon the Tome was read without its appendix, and the latter was never mentioned in the controversies which were to surround the work of Pope Leo over the course of the subsequent centuries.

Its original Latin text has disappeared, or more precisely, was preserved only as integrated into the second florilegium of the great pope. On the other hand, the Greek version drawn up in Constantinople was preserved in one of the collections of letters which in certain manuscripts accompany the Acts of the council of Chalcedon.²⁷ Furthermore, and as we have previously said, this version was inserted into the second florilegium of the *Eranistes*.

²⁴ Cod. Vatic. gr. 624 (12th century). [See now the critical edition by G.H. Ettliger (Oxford, 1975).]

²⁵ This has been highlighted by Mgr L. Saltet, 'Les sources de l'*Eranistes* de Théodoret', *RHE* 6 (1905) 289-303, 513-36, 741-54. However, this eminent scholar was mistaken in attributing this fault to Theodoret (*ibid.*, 290-98).

²⁶ ACO II 1,3, p. 114-16. See the remarks of Schwarz, *ibid.*, pp. xiii-xv and of Saltet, 'Sources de l'*Eranistes*' 298-301.

²⁷ ACO II, 1,1, 20-25. For the history of these two florilegia, see E. Schwartz, 'Codex Vaticanus gr. 1431', *AbhMünchAk* 32,6 (1927), 137-41.

Pope Leo's other florilegium is merely a second and augmented edition of the first. To the eighteen texts quoted, he added twelve new extracts. The pope attached it to his letter 165 to the emperor,²⁸ written in 458 in the hope, soon disappointed, of bringing the Egyptian Monophysites back to reason. Its use by the Chalcedonian polemicists of the sixth century shows that it too was translated into Greek. However, unlike that of the Tome, it has only been preserved in Latin.²⁹

Aside from the three great Latin doctors, Hilary, Ambrose and Augustine, these two florilegia quoted from Greek authors. The first mentioned only Gregory, John Chrysostom and Cyril of Alexandria. The second added Basil of Caesarea, Athanasius and Theophilus of Alexandria. Plainly the pope did not use the original texts of these authors, but instead contented himself with the Latin versions that existed of some of their works. However, an exception must be made for the *Scholia de incarnatione Unigeniti* by Cyril of Alexandria. Leo presumably chose the three extracts from this work which he supplies us from the ancient Latin version, which was preserved in the Palatine Collection of the Acts of Ephesus.³⁰ Yet he also joined to it the original Greek text, taking care to have a sentence from the third extract retranslated from the Latin, as unfortunately the Greek original differed from the text of this version.³¹ We may note that this had been produced in Alexandria and dispatched to Rome, along with the Greek text, by Cyril himself. Leo was thus justified in believing that it too well represented the authentic thought of the bishop of Alexandria.

At around the same period, Peter, bishop of Myra, published a treatise against Apollinaris, in fact directed against Monophysitism, just as the monk Gennadius, the future patriarch of Constantinople (458–71), published a work on the Incarnation. We know that both quoted from the Fathers, but the meagre fragments that attest to the existence of these works³² do not tell us much more.

Pope Leo's failed attempt marks the beginning of a lull in the history of Diophysite theological literature. The collapse, on the very morrow of its victory, of the School of Antioch, which from Diodorus to Theodoret had shown itself so prolific in every area of ecclesiastical scholarship, allowed the expansion of Monophysitism free rein

²⁸ Letter 104 in Schwartz's edition: ACO II, 4, pp. 113–31.

²⁹ ACO II, 4, p. 119–31; or even E. Schwartz, ACO II, 4, 'Cod. Vat. gr. 1431' pp. 71–85.

³⁰ ACO I, 5, pp. 184–215; PL 48, 1005–40; PG 75, 1370–1412 reproduces Aubert's edition, who made the error of touching up the Latin version in places, in order to make it closer to the Greek text of which we have nothing left other than a large number of fragments.

³¹ Schwartz suggested a different solution ('Cod. Vat. gr. 1431', 140), although clearly unacceptable. He wrongly believed that the entire second part of this extract had been translated from Latin. In fact, the alteration only affected one sentence: ἐν δέ γε τῇ φύσει τοῦ λόγου καὶ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος μόνην ἡμῖν σημαίνει διαφορὰν τῶν φύσεων τὸ διάφορον. The rest uses the original text again.

³² F. Diekamp, 'Analecta patr.', *OrChrAn* 117 (1938) 50 (Peter of Myra) and pp. 77 ff (Gennadius).

throughout the East. It therefore comes as no surprise that for the last forty years of the fifth century we can only name two Diophysite florilegia: the Alexandrian collection of extracts from Cyril's works, and the florilegium of Pope Gelasius which we have previously encountered.

The Cyrillian Diophysite florilegium contains no less than 244 chapters of very unequal length, drawn from about thirty of the works of the bishop of Alexandria; this is without taking into account the dozen short texts quoted in the preamble with respect to the articles of the formula of Chalcedon.³³ According to the testimony of Severus of Antioch, this collection of extracts is not the sole work of one author, contrary to what some of his contemporaries believed, who attributed it to the scribe Dorotheus, and was not completed all at once, but in successive stages. It already existed in 428 in a more or less complete form, since John Talaia, an unfortunate rival of Peter Mongus, was able to take it with him whether whole or in part in his flight to Rome. This document should therefore be recognised as a work of the Alexandrian chancery, begun, if not completed, under one of John's Chalcedonian predecessors, Proterius (451–57) or Timothy Salofaciol (460–82).

It was in Constantinople, in the course of his first sojourn in the capital, that Severus came across it. The powerful monk was sufficiently impressed by his reading to immediately compose a copious commentary, which he entitled *Philalethes*.³⁴ Some fifteen or twenty years later, this work was to give rise to a quarrel within the Monophysite party. In the course of their controversies with Severus, the partisans of Julian of Halicarnassus invoked several passages from it in order to prove that their great adversary had once thought as they did. The exiled patriarch could not overlook such allegations, and answered them in an *Apology* for the *Philalethes*, to which we owe the best of our information on the history of our florilegium.³⁵ Severus of Antioch had inserted this document at the beginning of the *Philalethes*, and this is the only reason that we still have it.

The florilegium from the letter *De duabus naturis*³⁶ did not give Pope Gelasius (492–96) as much trouble. As we previously pointed out, it is a simple borrowing from the fourth book of Theodoret's *Pentalogos*. One may question why Gelasius, an African, who would most certainly have been able to compose an original florilegium from the resources of the pontifical library, preferred to copy a Greek collection. The answer is simple: the letter *De duabus naturis* was aimed at readers of the Greek language. The pope thought that its credibility would be enhanced if

³³ Schwarz also gives a good description of this florilegium: *ACO* I, 1, 1, p. XVII–XV. See also R. Draguet, 'Pour l'édition du *Philalèthe* de Severus d'Antioche', *ByzZ* 30 (1929/30) 274–79.

³⁴ Severus of Antioch, *Philalethes*, ed. A. Sanda (Beyrouth 1928).

³⁵ The principal text is quoted by Draguet, *Julien d'Halicarnasse* 52 ff. Merit goes to M. Draguet for having untangled this complicated story.

³⁶ See n. 19.

accompanied by a florilegium taken from Greek theologians, not in a Latin version but in the original. This was clearly not feasible in Rome, so he asked his Eastern correspondents – no doubt the monks of Constantinople known as the *Akoimetæ* – to undertake this work on his behalf. The latter were perhaps not particularly inspired in choosing for this purpose a work by Theodoret, who was not exactly popular in Monophysite regions.

In the fifth century we are present, if not at the genesis, then at the early stages of the patristic line of argument. As the genre was new, theologians who wanted to compose a florilegium had to search for the quotations they needed in the original patristic works, which is incidentally what constitutes the value of these collections. It is obviously possible, even perhaps probable, that these bishops were assisted in their research. But in any case, and with few exceptions, what is not the fruit of their personal reading is owed by them to people they knew. This direct method was bound to result in the compilation of collections distinctly different one from the other. We have undoubtedly come across some that were closely related, yet, with the exception of the case of Pope Gelasius, this connection can in every instance be explained by single authorship.

Another sign of the youth of the genre is the relatively small number of apocrypha it contains, except when it comes to the work of Cyril of Alexandria, a constant victim of Apollinarist fraud. With Theodoret, and aside from two dubious cases in which one would be inclined to trust him, one only uncovers two Athanasian pseudepigrapha and a quotation of Didymus given under the name of Eustathius of Antioch. Finally, Pope Leo provides us with a quotation from Origen given under the name of Basil. It is not much. This general reliability is what makes fifth-century florilegia precious sources for the history of texts.

Conversely, from the early years of the sixth century onwards, at least in the Chalcedonian camp, we observe a highly marked decline in the genre of dogmatic florilegia. At first glance this rapid decay is conspicuous by two indications: the multiplication of pseudepigraphic quotations, and the fact that all the Diophysite florilegia are related, with the exception of a few small collections composed for a specific purpose. They are inter-connected by hard to define, yet clearly apparent, ties. This widespread kinship, which contrasts with the fifth-century separation of florilegia into autonomous groups, plainly suggests a change in method. Thus, from among the Chalcedonian collections that we will later describe, it is rare to find texts borrowed directly from the works cited; they are almost entirely drawn from previous florilegia. This incontestably diminishes their worth. Indeed, it is highly regrettable that the orthodox theologians should not have listened to the reproaches of Severus of Antioch, who personally remained faithful to the sound method of direct recourse to the works he heard quoted.

This decline was inevitable. As and when the number of dogmatic florilegia increased, so the temptation of theologians to make use of their predecessors' work must necessarily have intensified. However, we would argue that this decay was much accelerated by the particular conditions of the period of the *Henotikon*.

It is indeed remarkable that by and large the sixth-century Chalcedonian florilegia owe very little to what we have so far studied; we have noted beyond doubt that our documentation holds great lacunae. Had we still in our possession all the florilegia born of the Nestorian dispute composed between the council of Chalcedon and the *Henotikon*, the number of these borrowings would probably prove itself much greater. Nevertheless, we hold that even were this the case we would not have to alter our judgement by much.

Let us consider Leontius of Byzantium. Of the 122 patristic texts he quotes – putting aside the examples from the group of Theodorus, Diodorus of Tarsus and Paul of Samosata, which pose different problems – two are borrowed from the *Florilegium Ephesinum*, seven from Pope Leo, and another seven from the Gelasius-Theodoret-Chalcedon group, that is sixteen texts. Even were our documentation more complete, this number would most probably not double. Similar results could be obtained for any other sixth-century Diophysite theologian.

If we now consider the borrowings made by the sixth-century florilegia as a whole from one or other of the fifth-century texts, we can say that they are nearly always from the same texts (and among them, Ambrose, Augustine and Hilary are generally in the majority), and that they completely neglect entire areas in these sources, in particular any dedicated to the Ante-Nicene Fathers. For example, Theodoret's *Eranistes* quotes 11 passages from Ignatius of Antioch, 16 from Irenaeus, 17 from Hippolytus and 27 from Eustathius of Antioch. None of these 71 quotations re-appears in any of the florilegia that we will consider. This quasi-unanimity of authorial choices and texts cited encourages us to believe that the theologians of the age of Justinian read the *Eranistes* hardly at all, and that what they quoted from it came to them through an intermediary.

One might expect that the great Cyrillian florilegium that we mentioned would have been in great vogue in the sixth century. Yet, of the significant volume of citations from Cyril quoted by our authors, very few seem to have any likelihood of stemming from this source: only three from John of Caesarea, seven or eight from Ephraem of Amida, four from Leontius of Byzantium, and perhaps a few more from Justinian. In none of these cases would we dare assume a direct use of these works.

Once we set aside the certain or merely possible borrowings from known fifth-century florilegia, there still remains a quantity of parallelisms to explain, for the connection between the collections which we will present extends far beyond this initial group.

Up until now, historians have not gone much beyond addressing the problem posed by similarities between Leontius of Byzantium's first florilegium and this

or that other. They have provided simple solutions. Fr. Loofs sought to prove that the very striking relationship between this collection and certain parts of that of Leontius of Jerusalem could be explained only by single authorship. Junglas and Mgr R. Devreesse thought they could recognise one of Leontius of Byzantium's sources in the works of Ephraem of Amida. These solutions must be relinquished. The cases of direct dependence that we have been able to discern are extremely rare. For example, it is certain that Leontius of Jerusalem borrowed three or four patristic (or pseudo-patristic) texts from Severus of Antioch's *Contra Grammaticum*, and that Pamphilus and the *Liber de sectis* owe something of their documentation to Leontius of Byzantium. But this is exceptional. As a rule of thumb, sixth-century florilegia, even if seemingly closely related, are independent from each other. The use of a series of common texts by two authors must nearly always be explained by a lost source.

If we knew more about sixth-century Chalcedonian literature, notably regarding its first witnesses, the scribe Dorotheus, John of Scythopolis, and perhaps others whose memory is now lost, we would doubtless find the very origin of some of the other texts in surviving florilegia. However, we believe that for most of these cases such an increase in our documentation would merely encumber the issue.

Indeed, a number of indications show that in order to explain the common elements in our sixth-century florilegia it is necessary to admit the existence, from the end of the period of the *Henotikon*, of probably anonymous collections of patristic Diophysite texts. For example, the disdain showed by our theologians towards the fifth-century florilegia can only be explained by the fact that they had access to a more convenient way of obtaining the *testimonia Patrum* that they needed. We must also allow that a collection of independent texts was much more economical for them, and easier to deal with than the writings of Theodoret, Cyril or Pope Leo. Furthermore, the existence of such collections was more or less postulated by the very policy behind the *Henotikon*. Since 482, under the reigns of Zeno and Anastasius, defence of the council of Chalcedon and the Tome of Pope Leo was not allowed. The only means of defence left available to the champions of Diophysite theology, whether willingly or unwillingly subjected to the imperial religious policy, against encroaching Monophysitism was research into the teaching of the Fathers, which is to say in practice, the composition of florilegia.

The disappearance of these collections is in no way surprising. Indeed, it is natural that the more closely a florilegium was associated with a written work the better it was preserved. Most of those which we will go on to consider fall into this category. If placed in appendices they were already at more risk. The original text of Leo's first florilegium was not preserved, and neither was the Greek version of the second. The surviving manuscripts of Pope Gelasius' letter *De duabus naturis* have also lost the accompanying florilegium. Yet it is the independent florilegia that suffered the most. Even the great Cyrillian florilegium was only preserved because

Severus inserted it at the beginning of his *Philalethes*. Created for the purpose of defending such and such a contemporary thesis, and after having sometimes been very useful, they were bound one day no longer to find copyists. In relation more specifically to our Diophysite florilegia, christological dispute would evolve rapidly in the seventh and eighth centuries, and later on give way to other key issues. It is easy to understand why the Middle Byzantine copyists paid them only scant attention. Furthermore, the appearance as from the seventh century of the great patristic encyclopedias, such as the *Doctrina Patrum*, which incidentally absorbed a large amount, probably precipitated their decline. However, they survived long enough to leave their mark on many an anti-Monophysite polemical treatise or opusculum of the sixth century and beyond.

Our documentation is too full of gaps for us to be able to imagine that we could reconstitute these lost collections, but it does allow us to recognise many elements, and teaches us, among other things, that it was not unusual for them to contain pseudepigraphic texts. This fact accords with our hypothesis that the origin of these collections was connected with the *Henotikon*, for false doctrine is usually the weapon of persecuted minorities. Part of the interest in carrying out this research into the sources is to allow us to determine with sufficient certitude the personal and original role played by our theologians in the constitution of their patristic sources. This role is generally quite limited, but it nearly always existed, and in some special cases could even be quite considerable.

Finally, let us note that in addition to patristic florilegia as such, four other types of extracts are also to be found among the sixth-century theologians: 1. texts adduced by the Monophysites; 2. texts discussed by the Monophysites (Cyril of Alexandria, Acts of Chalcedon, Theodoret, Leo); 3. heretical texts; 4. historical texts.

The Chalcedonian renaissance, which followed the death of the Emperor Anastasius (518) and the accession of Justin, had been prepared during the last years of the period following the *Henotikon* by a certain renewal of literary activity among the champions of the council. Because of the harshness of the time and the precautions that the partisans of Diophysite theology had to take, it was difficult for its output to attain the kind of quality that would have allowed it to weather the centuries. Hardly any of it remains, and if, at that time, there had not been in the Monophysite church a polemicist of great class, who let nothing escape among the rival party's attempts to reverse the *Henotikon* – we mean Severus of Antioch – it might very nearly have been entirely lost to memory.

The Alexandrian monk Nephalius³⁷ is the first Chalcedonian theologian against whom Severus measured himself. It does not seem that he composed any treatise

³⁷ See Ch. Moeller, 'Nephalius', *RHE* 40 (1944/45) 73-140.

as such. Instead, it was more probably a speech delivered by him in the course of his campaign against the monastery of Peter of Iberia at Maiouma, of which a copy would have fallen into the hands of Severus, one of his victims, which allowed the latter to compose his two books *Ad Nephaliium*.³⁸ At any rate, the Monophysite monk was able to discuss in this work several texts by Gregory of Nazianzus, Proclus of Constantinople, John Chrysostom, Pope Leo, and probably also Cyril of Alexandria,³⁹ adduced by his adversary in favour of Diophysite theology.

It was subsequent to Nephalius' intrigues against his convent that Severus went up to Constantinople. He was to live there for three years, from 509 to 511, with great harm to orthodoxy. He easily won the trust of the Emperor Anastasius, and took advantage of this to extract from him the deposition of Macedonius, the patriarch of the capital. Later, when he was to go back over this business, it would be especially to reproach his unfortunate victim with the composition of two collections of texts. The first quoted in parallel Arius, Eunomius, Apollinaris and Cyril of Alexandria on the one hand, and on the other Ambrose, Cyrus of Aegea, Euthерius of Tyana and Nestorius. Severus quoted a passage from it, which provides us with the opinions held by the previously named four on the duality of the hypostases in Christ.⁴⁰ As for the second, it was made up of extracts of authentic and pseudepigraphic works of Athanasius. Severus describes it for us in the course of a quotation from the *Sermo maior de fide* presented by John of Caesarea:

This very treatise, which our good Grammarian entitles *δογματικός*, Macedonius, who was bishop of the imperial city, entitled *περὶ πίστεως*. For with those who shared in his impiety he composed a book of this sort [made up] of corrupted texts. He spread among other authentic works by St Athanasius many passages [drawn] from this invented 'dogmatic treatise'. And he laid them out and indicated by titles that they were [drawn] from these [authentic works], so that it would appear that so famous a scholar as this had uttered in many diverse writings these abominable words, which exhale a stench of anthropolatry.⁴¹

Thereupon, Severus quotes and comments with erudition and not without finesse upon ten extracts⁴² from the *Sermo maior de fide* borrowed from Macedonius' collection.

³⁸ *Severi Antiocheni Orationes ad Nephaliium. Eiusdem ac Sergii Grammatici Epistulae mutuae*, ed. J. Lebon, CSCO syr. ser. 4, 7 (Louvain 1949).

³⁹ See Moeller, 'Nephalius', 108 f.

⁴⁰ Severus Antioch, *Contra Grammaticum* 3, 17; ed. J. Lebon (1–3, in CSCO syr. ser. 4, 4–6, Paris–Louvain 1929. 1933. 1938) 2, p. 206 f. The *Liber contra impium Grammaticum* by Severus is our best source for the whole of this period. We recommend Mgr J. Lebon's Latin version.

⁴¹ *Ibid* 3,33, trans. Lebon, 3, p 99.

⁴² *Ibid*: trans. Lebon, 3, pp 99–115. Cf. J. Lebon, 'Le *Sermo maior de fide* Ps. Athanasien' *Mus.* 38 (1925) 245–60. In actual fact, only nine of these ten quotations are drawn from the

This description and these quotations show that this collection of *Excerpta Athanasiana* was closely related to the first part (fragments 1–53) of the Athanasian florilegium of the *Codex Laurentianus* IV, 23, which was well edited but poorly interpreted by E. Schwartz.⁴³ In fact we have two similar versions of one and the same florilegium. We hope shortly to be able to demonstrate that Macedonius cannot have been the author of this document, whose pre-Ephesian style is evident. It must hark back to the time when the Eustathians of Antioch and the Apollinarists of Laodicea were fighting each other over the memory of Athanasius. The only reproach we may levy against Macedonius is to have had this work in his library, or to have tolerated it in that of his clerics. The same can be said of the first collection of texts, whose origin must presumably be sought for among the entourage of the Nestorian John of Aegea, or else be attributed to him⁴⁴.

It was also in Constantinople that Severus discovered the ‘Tragedy’ by the Alexandrian monk Dorotheus the scribe. His judgement of this work is hardly flattering:

Indeed, the scribe Dorotheus compiled another book, overflowing, one might say, or not limiting itself to extracting testimonies of St Cyril, but instead, based on his own understanding, zealously making, according to numerous Fathers, a bold and foolish defence of Diodorus, Theodorus, Nestorius, and of all the impieties in their persons and in their doctrines.⁴⁵

This work was to survive for some time the anathemas of Severus and the misfortunes of its author, whom the Emperor Anastasius had sent to the Oasis to meditate on his imprudence. At the time of Theodore Lector, some still owned copies.⁴⁶

The loss of this ‘Tragedy’ is regrettable. That of the works of John Scholasticus of Scythopolis is even more so, for the little that we know of this author’s work is enough to show that he was not lacking in erudition and that he knew how to put it to good use.

At the time when bishop Flavian was struggling to govern the church of Antioch (498–512), he had already composed a work in three books on the doctrine of the Incarnation, whose publication caused quite a stir. Indeed, the Scholasticus joined to his Chalcedonian sentiments a fervour for the doctrine of Cyril that was then very rare in his party, and which he took so far as to admit theses such as that according

Sermo maior de fide.

⁴³ E. Schwartz, ‘Der sogenannte *Sermo maior de fide* des Athanasius’, *SBMünchAk* (1924) H. 6.

⁴⁴ For John of Aegea, see my note: *RevScPhTh* (1941/42) 415–23.

⁴⁵ Text quoted by R. Draguet, *Julien d’Halicarnasse* (Louvain 1924) 53.

⁴⁶ See *RevArchéol* 26 (1873) 397.

to which 'the Word suffered in the flesh'. A priest of Antioch, Basil of Cilicia, better known as the author of an ecclesiastical history, took up the challenge and refuted in sixteen books the three by John of Scythopolis. Like the one it attacked, this work has disappeared; however, Photius read it and left us an interesting summary, sadly too brief.⁴⁷ The patristic argumentation must have played a central role in this dispute, but our sources unfortunately tell us nothing of it.

It is perhaps to prove the sincerity of his Chalcedonianism in the wake of this adventure that John risked writing a substantial work in favour of the council, at a time when such an enterprise was not without risk. Severus had replaced Flavian at Antioch (512–18), and was not disposed towards tolerance. Naturally, the Scholasticus's audacious attempt did not escape his vigilant attention. But the latter had taken his precautions, and not being able to lay hands on his work, the Monophysite patriarch had to fall back on that by the grammarian John of Caesarea. He had nearly finished his *Contra Grammaticum* when he finally received a copy of the Scythopolitan's work. Upon opening it, he immediately lighted upon quotations from Ambrose, which, if he is to be believed, had been surreptitiously altered.⁴⁸ He quotes two,⁴⁹ both drawn from fifth-century florilegia. This is all that we know of the patristic documentation of this substantial work.

We finally reach more solid ground with the grammarian John of Caesarea. This zealous partisan of the council thought, as did John of Scythopolis, that Chalcedonian doctrine could, with a little good will, accommodate the most daring Cyrillian formulas. His *Apology* for the council of Chalcedon was in three parts. In the first the author presented his conciliatory doctrine. The second studied Cyril's attitude subsequent to his reconciliation with the Easterners. The third criticised the *Ad Nephthium* by Severus. A patristic florilegium appeared as an appendix, quoting Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, Athanasius of Alexandria, Ambrose of Milan, Amphilochius of Iconium, Cyril of Jerusalem, Ephraem the Syrian, Cyriacus of Paphos, Isidore of Pelusium, Julius of Rome and Irenaeus of Lyons. This work is now lost, but the *Contra impium Grammaticum* by Severus has preserved ample fragments from it for us, along with 70 of the texts quoted both in the body of the work and the florilegium.

These extracts are sufficient proof that the Grammarian held at his disposal a collection of conciliar and theological documents similar to that of *Codex Vaticanus* gr. 1431, studied in detail and partially edited by E. Schwartz. He drew from

⁴⁷ Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 107, PG 103.376–81.

⁴⁸ Ambrose represents one of the most vulnerable areas in Severus's erudition. The patriarch of Antioch never sought to know more from the work of the bishop of Milan than fragments 12 and 13 in the *Florilegium Ephesinum*, or more precisely, the corrupt Greek version which had replaced the original of these two texts in the manuscripts of the *Acts of Ephesus* (at the council of Ephesus they had been quoted in Latin).

⁴⁹ Severus Antioch, *Contra Grammaticum* 1,17, trans. Lebon, 2, pp 202, 204.

it most of the texts quoted in his work, and several elements of the florilegium were also derived from it. Otherwise, this florilegium is almost entirely second-hand, as Severus rightly suspected, even though he was never able to discover his adversary's sources. Only seven or eight texts originate from known fifth-century collections. John's personal contribution does not go beyond a few extracts by Cyril of Alexandria and the Cappadocians, to which one should perhaps add those by Isidore of Pelusium.

Interestingly, it was only twenty-odd years after the triumph of Chalcedonian orthodoxy in 518 that we can observe a new upsurge in Diophysite literature. It seems that initially the imperial protection granted to orthodoxy, and the energetic measures taken against the Monophysite episcopate at Justinian's impetus snuffed out any of the partisans' polemical instincts. The only thing we have to fill this void is the desultory activity of the Scythian monks in favour of the formula 'Unus de Trinitate passus est carne' on the very morrow of Justin's accession; also, Innocent of Maronia's opuscles, that must be seen in relation to the conferences held in the year 532 between Chalcedonians and Monophysites. Ephraem of Amida's literary activity can hardly have developed much before this date, for it was only in 527 that he relinquished his position as *comes Orientis* for the patriarchal seat of Antioch. As for the writings of Justinian, Leontius of Byzantium and Leontius of Jerusalem, which constitute the *pièce de résistance* of our documentation, they are all date from after 540.

The Scythian monk John Maxentius wrote in Latin. His *Libellus fidei*,⁵⁰ penned to justify his group's adoption of the Theopaschite Monophysite formulas, contains a small florilegium of fifteen texts. Besides a few extracts from Augustine and the Tome of Leo sent to Flavian, chosen by the author, there is also a series of texts by Gregory of Nazianzus, Athanasius and Cyril of Alexandria, and by Proclus and Flavian of Constantinople, which were obviously communicated to our monk by his connections in Constantinople. With one exception (the third of Cyril's anathemas, already quoted by John of Caesarea), none of these texts appear in previous Diophysite florilegia. This small collection represents one part of the dossier that the Neo-Chalcedonians had added to the Diophysite documentation in order to defend their new position; it was a collection made up in part of borrowings from Monophysite florilegia and in part from new contributions (the *Tome to the Armenians* by Proclus and the *Professions of faith* by Flavian).

The accounts contained in the letter *De collatione cum Severianis habita* by Innocent of Maronia⁵¹ are only indirectly relevant to our study, as this contains no Diophysite florilegia. However, over the course of the discussion of the Monophysite citations

⁵⁰ ACO IV, 2, pp. 3–10.

⁵¹ Ibid 167–84.

which took up the second session of the *Collatio*, we see Hypatius of Ephesus denouncing Apollinarist forgeries and Ps. Dionysius the Areopagite, invoking certain passages from letters by Cyril of Alexandria and the *Ephesinum Florilegium*, and discussing the authenticity of the letters to Succensus.

The treatise *De his qui unum ex Trinitate vel unam subsistentiam seu personam dominum nostrum Iesum Christum dubitant confiteri*⁵² was written by Innocent to convince the Roman church to ratify the imperial decree imposing on the faithful acceptance of the formula 'Unus de Trinitate passus est carne'⁵³. This explains how the short florilegium of fifteen texts it contains quotes the original text of the Tome of Leo, and the Tome of Proclus from the version by Dionysius Exiguus. As for the rest, quotations from John of Antioch (*Letter to Nestorius*), Proclus of Constantinople, Nestorius and Theodore of Mopsuestia, it seems likely that Innocent would have drawn them in full from the material gathered by the archimandrite (and forger) Basil against Theodore of Mopsuestia, in the fifth century.

A prolific polemicist who was nevertheless a latecomer to theology, Ephraem of Amida, patriarch of Antioch (527–44), does not appear to have been a builder of systems.⁵⁴ His favourite argument was that from the Fathers which figures prominently in his works, which unfortunately have not reached us. Yet in the ninth century Photius could still read three volumes of the patriarch's letters, sermons and theological treatises. He analysed two in codices 228 and 229 of his *Bibliotheca*.⁵⁵

Codex 228 includes letters and sermons. The first were mostly dedicated to discussing theological problems, and often invoked the testimony of the Fathers. A few names and a few citations from Pope Leo are all that remain of this documentation.

Codex 229 is of far greater value to our study. It contains four theological treatises which Photius summarises in some detail. In his description we not only find the list of authors invoked by Ephraem to defend this or that theological thesis, but also often the titles of quoted works, and finally a hundred or so *testimonia Patrum* reproduced more or less in their entirety.

This analysis thus gives us quite a precise, albeit incomplete, image of the patristic documentation of the patriarch of Antioch. We may note that he quoted from 38 authors (including heretics) and no less than 30 works by Cyril of Alexandria, who was admittedly the great favourite. However, this great abundance should not delude us. The greater part of this document is clearly secondhand. Furthermore,

⁵² Ibid 68–74.

⁵³ See E. Schwartz, 'Konzilstudien, Schriften der Wissenschaftl. Ges. Straßburg' (1914) H. 20, pp. 36–53; ACO IV, 2, XVI.

⁵⁴ See J. Lebon, 'Ephrem d'Amid, patriarche d'Antioche', *Mélanges d'Histoire offerts à Ch. Moeller* 1 (Louvain–Paris 1914) 197–214.

⁵⁵ Photius, *Bibliotheca*, codd. 228, 229, PG 103,957–1014.

Ephraem does not seem to have been endowed with an astute critical sense.⁵⁶ Surprisingly, he was not aware of the Apollinarist forgeries, though they had long since been denounced.⁵⁷

The florilegia that Leontius of Byzantium placed as an appendix to his three books *Adversus nestorianos et eutychianos*⁵⁸ are of far superior quality and have the advantage of having reached us complete. It is all the more regrettable that they should still not yet have been edited, and that we remain dependent on the Latin version by Torres,⁵⁹ with the useful, but insufficient, descriptions by J. P. Junglas⁶⁰ and Mgr R. Devreesse.⁶¹

With its 89 texts, the first of these three florilegia is by far the most important. It can be divided into three parts:

1. nos. 1–9 (1–7). This short collection aims to show that for the Fathers the meaning of the words φύσις and ὑπόστασις agrees with the Chalcedonian definition of ‘a hypostasis in two natures’. It can also be found in part (nos 1–6) in the Letter 15 of Maximus the Confessor⁶² and chapter 6 of the *Doctrina Patrum*. F. Diekamp proved that these three witnesses were all dependent on a common non-identified source.⁶³ 2. nos 10–64 (8–56) quote in chronological order 22 authors from Justin to Isidore of Pelusium. Most of these extracts can be found in one or the other florilegium of the fifth and sixth century, and often in several. This documentation is therefore secondhand. But at least Leontius seems to have applied himself to reproducing his examples carefully. Taking into account the common pseudepigrapha of the time, of which he would inevitably become a victim given his working methods, it can be said that he contributed no mistakes to those of his predecessors. 3. nos 65–89 (57–80) provide us with a collection of extracts from Cyril of Alexandria, which, when compared with the Cyrillian

⁵⁶ See my note, *Mélanges E. Pödechard* (Lyon 1944) 202.

⁵⁷ Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 229, PG 103, 1000C–1004A.

⁵⁸ A. Mai’s edition (*Spicileg. Rom.* 10, 2, pp. 1–151) reproduced by Migne, PG 86, 1268–1396, only gives a few extracts from the florilegia.

⁵⁹ Edited by H. Canisius, *Antiquae lectiones* 4, pp 1–171, then by Basnage, *Thesaurus monumentorum* 1 (Anvers 1725) 527–630. The *Adv. Nestorianos et eutychianos* exists in full in two medieval manuscripts, *Cod. Vatic.* gr. 2195 (tenth century) and *Cod. Bodl. Laudianus* 92 B (10th–11th c.). Furthermore, the first book can be found alone in *Cod. Genuensis Miss. Urb.* gr. 27 (11th c.) and the third in two closely related manuscripts of the 14th c., *Cod. Paris.* gr. 1335 and *Cod. Venet. Marc.* gr. 575. The more recent manuscripts can be ignored.

⁶⁰ J. P. Junglas, *Leontius v. Byzanz* (Paderborn 1908) 25–37.

⁶¹ R. Devreesse, ‘Le florilège de Léonce de Byzance’, *RevScRel* 10 (1930) 545–76. We will follow the numbering adopted by Mgr Devreesse, while adding that of Junglas in parentheses.

⁶² Maximus Conf., *Ep.* 15, PG 91, 544–76.

⁶³ *Doctrina Patrum de incarnatione Verbi*, ed. F. Diekamp (Münster 1907) pp. LV ff. We owe a great deal to this remarkable publication.

quotations from Ephraem of Amida and Justinian, leads us to conclude that at that time a second Cyrillian florilegium existed, used by our three authors and distinct from the great Alexandrian florilegium previously in question.

The florilegium of the second book, that is nos. 90–116 (83–109), is directed against Chalcedonians guilty of condoning the teachings of Julian of Halicarnassus on the ἀφθαρσία of the body of Christ. This presented a new problem. It is consequently not surprising that the possible connections between this florilegium and previous Diophysite collections are extremely rare and possibly fortuitous. On the other hand, Leontius appears to have drawn certain elements of his documentation from some anti-Julianist work by Severus of Antioch's party.⁶⁴

The patristic florilegium of the third book only contains six citations, nos 117–122 (157–162). It seems that our ascetic placed it there only for reasons of symmetry, to imitate the form of Theodoret's *Eranistes*, which he appears to have taken as an example. The first citation is taken from the *Florilegium Ephesinum*. Leontius does appear to be responsible for the remainder. This same third book also includes a collection of extracts from Theodore of Mopsuestia, Diodorus of Tarsus, Nestorius and the Acts of the council of Antioch of 268 (Paul of Samosata and Malchion)⁶⁵ (Junglas, nos 110–156). This collection, entirely secondhand, presents many problems.⁶⁶

J.P. Junglas dedicated a chapter of his study to the sources of Leontius of Byzantium,⁶⁷ and Mgr R. Devreesse drew up a table indicating the probable origin of 40 fragments.⁶⁸ Here is not the place to discuss these works, but in any case we must set aside the list of the Pamphilus⁶⁹ and Ephraem of Amida sources. As for the borrowings from the fifth-century florilegia, as we previously mentioned these only apply to 16 texts.

The *Contra monophysitas* by Leontius of Jerusalem⁷⁰ is more or less contemporary with the *Adversus nestorianos et eutychianos* by Leontius of Byzantium. If the former's florilegium wins over that of his homonym because of the number of quotations it contains, it barely stands up to comparison when it comes to the quality of work. It divides naturally into four parts:

⁶⁴ See my note, *RevEtByz* 5 (1947) 40 (Leontius of Byzantium).

⁶⁵ A. Mai, *Sc.vet.nova coll.* 6, 299–312 (Theodore of Mopsuestia) and *PG* 86, 1385–93 (Diodorus of Tarsus etc.).

⁶⁶ See my articles in *Mus.* 56 (1943) 55–75 (Theodore of Mopsuestia) and *Ml. F. Grat* 1, 99–116 (Diodorus of Tarsus).

⁶⁷ Junglas, *Leontius v. Byz.* 40–65.

⁶⁸ Devreesse, 'Floril. de Léonce de Byz'. 575 ff.

⁶⁹ See my article 'Léonce et Pamphile', *RevScPhTh* 27 (1938) 27–52.

⁷⁰ *PG* 86, 1769–1901. For more on this author and his work see our article 'Léonce de Jérusalem et Léonce de Byzance'. *MélScRel* 1 (1944) 35–88.

The first is entitled: τί ἐστὶ Χριστὸς ὁ προσκυνητὸς ἡμῖν.⁷¹ This is a collection of definitions of Christ according to Gregory of Nazianzus, Athanasius and Cyril of Alexandria. The second, under the title of Ποίαν φασὶ τῆς ἐπὶ Χριστοῦ ἔνωσιν οἱ πατέρες,⁷² constitutes the Diophysite florilegium as such, with 112 texts, including a few doublets. The third⁷³ is a complement to the preceding, but this time it is Monophysite authors who are meant to pay homage to Chalcedonian doctrine. We conclude in final place⁷⁴ with the discussion of a Monophysite florilegium, in which Leontius makes a few borrowings from the Diophysite patristic dossier (p. 741).

The small collection of definitions of Christ which opens this collection would have startled Severus, had he lived long enough to read the *Contra monophysitas*, and already gives rise to a low impression of our author's working methods. Not only does he fail to indicate from which works he has borrowed his texts; he has also rewritten nearly all in his own way. When we move onto the second part, this bad impression is but reinforced. The great majority of the quotations are so brief as to practically remove any proof value. The author excuses himself: ἀναγκαζόμεθα δὲ περιτέμνειν τὰς χρήσεις διὰ τό μὴ εἰς πλήθος καὶ ὄγκον ἄγειν τὸ σύγγραμμα⁷⁵, a bad reason, against which Severus so rightly protested. These texts all originate from previous florilegia, the copying is often mediocre and they are displayed in the greatest disarray. Indeed, this disarray suggests that Leontius used several sources without taking pains to classify his loot. There is one section that we should nevertheless distinguish from the rest,⁷⁶ in which the authors are classified chronologically from Hippolytus to Cyril of Alexandria. Merit for this should not, however, be ascribed to our Leontius. Of the 24 quoted texts, 18 are also found in the work of Leontius of Byzantium. Neither of our two homonyms could have borrowed these common passages from his colleague. It is therefore evident that they both depend upon a common source, in which authors were classified according to their degree of antiquity.

The blunders made by our compiler would be impossible to enumerate; we have had occasion to mention a couple,⁷⁷ and could easily lengthen the list. It should, nevertheless, be noted that even among all these tares there are a few good seeds to glean. The third and fourth parts are a little outside the scope of our subject, but we will admit that Leontius of Jerusalem reveals himself here in a slightly better light.

⁷¹ PG 86, 1817C–1820B.

⁷² Ibid., 1820B–1841A.

⁷³ Ibid., 1841A–1849C.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 1852B–1876C.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 1828 A.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 1836C, line 9, – 1840B, line 12.

⁷⁷ *Mél. E. Podechard* 204.

The three theological treatises of the Emperor Justinian⁷⁸ all contain *testimonia Patrum* and also heretical texts, whether Monophysite or Nestorian. The first, *Contra monophysitas*, often described as a treatise, is a letter addressed in 542 or 543 to Alexandrian monks who had just rallied to the Chalcedonian community of the patriarch Zoilus. Addressing himself to the Egyptians, Justinian sought above all else to prove the compatibility of Chalcedonian doctrine with the thinking of the great Alexandrian scholars, Athanasius and Cyril. Other Fathers are only rarely quoted, with the exception of Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa, who together total eleven citations. Ambrose comes next with five fragments.

The documentation of the *Contra monophysitas* is manifestly of good quality. The emperor and his collaborators took great care to quote solely from works accepted by the Monophysites. Thus apocryphal works are very rare in this treatise. We may only cite with certainty two treatises, *Contra Apollinarem* and *De incarnatione et contra arianos*, attributed to Athanasius, and the fourth book *Contra Eunomium* (by Didymus) attributed to Basil. Yet Severus, usually so fastidious, accepted these four works.

Cyril is cited 40 times. A small part of these texts may come from the original documents. For example, Justinian most probably had before him the complete text of the two letters to Succensus. For almost everything else, however, it would appear that he was beholden to the works of his predecessors. It is not impossible that he would have known the Alexandrian Cyrillian florilegium, but it is far more probable that he used the second collection which we have traced in the works of Ephraem of Amida and Leontius of Byzantium. On the other hand, the 23 Athanasian quotations of the *Contra monophysitas* originate either directly from the works of the bishop of Alexandria, or from a collection which has left no other trace. The remaining Fathers share 21 citations, of which a scant third appears here for the very first time.

The few extracts of Paul of Samosata and Nestorius are secondhand. More interesting are the two Monophysite florilegia. The first, made up of extracts from Apollinaris and his disciple Polemon, has been carefully studied by H. Lietzmann.⁷⁹ The second provides us with two extracts from Severus of Antioch's *Ad Nephaliium* and texts by Mani (?), Dioscorus and Timothy Ailurus. We have here the first appearance of a florilegium designed to compromise the Monophysites by association with the heretics of the past, and which was destined to enjoy a certain vogue as from the third quarter of the sixth century (Eustathius, Pamphilus, Eulogius, the *Doctrina Patrum*).

The second treatise, the *Epistula adversus Theodorum*, was confronted with a new problem. This time it was no longer a matter of arguing against the Monophysites,

⁷⁸ E. Schwartz, *Drei dogmat. Schriften Justinians*, *AbhMünchAk* (1939) H. 18. See my comments on this edition, *MéScRel* 1 (1944) 190 ff.

⁷⁹ H. Lietzmann, *Apollinaris v. Laodicea u. s. Schule* (Tübingen 1904) 108–16.

but rather of bringing the Chalcedonians to make quite large concessions to their hereditary enemy. Thus out of 21 orthodox quotations contained in this work, only one, from Basil's *De Spiritu sancto*, is likely to come from the *Florilegium Ephesinum*. The remainder were most probably taken from original documents. We will note the relatively large amount of space reserved for the Latins with Augustine, an African council, Pope Sixtus III and Pope Leo. On the 'heretical' side, we find a fragment of Theodoret's Letter 147, shamefully exploited against his memory, and eight fragments from Theodore of Mopsuestia, naturally secondhand.

With the third treatise, the *Confessio rectae fidei*, we encounter again a type usual among Diophysite florilegia of the sixth century. Of its eleven citations, only two extracts from Cyril's *Contra Theodorum* give its patristic documentation a small touch of originality.

The Acts of the council of Constantinople of 553 contain an important collection of extracts from Theodore of Mopsuestia and quote numerous documents from the christological controversy of the fifth century, yet no patristic florilegia as such are to be found in them. We will therefore not dwell upon them here, nor upon the other testimonies from the affair of the Three Chapters, such as the treatise *Pro defensione trium capitulorum* by Facundus of Hermiane,⁸⁰ or that *In defensione trium capitulorum* by the deacon Pelagius,⁸¹ for their argumentation is more historical than theological.

After the council we also find the *Letter to Timothy* by the monk Eustathius, the *Liber de sectis* by the Byzantine scholastic Leontius, the *Quaestiones* by Pamphilus and the works of Eulogius of Alexandria.

The monk Eustathius' *Letter to Timothy*⁸² is quite difficult to date. At first glance one might think that it was written during the lifetime of Severus († 538). But several clues force one to adopt a later date, in our opinion the second half of the sixth century.⁸³ The 65 quotations that we find in this work may be divided into four categories:

1. A small number of patristic authorities, of which some come from the collection common to nearly every Diophysite theologian of the sixth century; others are borrowed from the writings of Severus.
2. Texts discussed by the Monophysites (the Tome of Leo, the dogmatic formula of Chalcedon).
3. A Monophysite florilegium (Mani, Dioscorus, Timothy Ailurus, Severus, *Ad Nephaliium*) related to that of Justinian.
4. Extracts from Severus, no doubt drawn directly from the works of the Monophysite patriarch, which Eustathius would seem to have had before him while he penned his letter.

⁸⁰ Facundus Hermian., *Pro def. trium cap.*, PL 67, 527–878.

⁸¹ Pelagius, *In def. trium cap.* ed. R. Devreese, ST 57 (Città del Vaticano 1932).

⁸² Eustathius, *Ep. ad Timoth.* Schol., PG 86,901–41.

⁸³ See Schwartz, *Dogm. Schr. Justinians* 113 ff.

The *Liber de sectis* presents itself as the *reportatio* of the teaching of the philosopher abbot Theodore (no doubt the ageing Theodore of Raithu) by the Byzantine scholasticus Leontius.⁸⁴ Of all the Chalcedonian works of the sixth century, this is the one for which we have the most manuscripts. It is also, and by far, the worst edited. Indeed, the edition by Leunclavius⁸⁵ provides us with a corrected and interpolated text. The ninth lecture contains a Diophysite florilegium of thirteen texts, all borrowed from Leontius of Byzantium.⁸⁶ We find in the remaining lectures some twenty-odd quotations, including two short extracts from Aristotle.

With 71 quotations, Pamphilus' *Quaestiones*⁸⁷ are richer. The florilegium of the sixth *quaestio* comes partly from Leontius of Byzantium.⁸⁸ In the eighth we find the Monophysite florilegium already exploited by Justinian and the monk Eustathius. But aside from these borrowings, it appears that Pamphilus made a quite substantial use of notes taken during his readings, in particular with reference to Dionysius the Areopagite, the Cappadocians and perhaps Aristotle.

The works of Eulogius, bishop of Alexandria from 580 to 607, have reached us in the same state as that of Ephraem of Amida, that is to say that apart from a few fragments we only know them from the summaries in Photius' *Bibliotheca*, codices 225, 226, 227, and 230, the last being by far the most important for our research.⁸⁹ Between these summaries and the fragments of the *Συνηγορία* or *Συνηγορίακά* by Eulogius that were preserved in the *Doctrina Patrum*, we have noted 83 quotations, which of course only represent a small part of the patristic documentation of the bishop of Alexandria. The latter seems to have made better use of his personal reading than most of the authors we have studied until now, particularly the works of Cyril of Alexandria and the great Cappadocians. Yet he did not hesitate either to borrow from earlier Diophysite florilegia, and even from Monophysite authors. Thus a fragment of *De prophetarum obscuritate* by John Chrysostom, for example,

⁸⁴ See my article 'De sectis et Léonce de Byzance', *RHE* 35 (1939) 695–723.

⁸⁵ *De sectis*, ed. Leunclavius (Basel, 1578), from only one MS, Cod. Vindob. theol. gr. 190. This mediocre edition has been reproduced several times without any amelioration, most recently by Migne, *PG* 86, 1193–1268. F. Loofs, *Leontius v. Byzanz* (*TU* 3, H 1–2), p. 136 f., knew five manuscripts. A. Ehrhard noted three new ones (K. Krumbacher, *Gesch. d. Byzant. Lit.* [München 1897²], p. 56). We may also add Cod. Vatic. gr. 668, Athos Vatopedi 236, BM, Arundel 529, Rheno-Traject. gr. 3, Matrit. Bibl. Nat. O.79, Hierosol. Patr. 303.

⁸⁶ See *RHE* 35 (1939) 711 f.

⁸⁷ Ed. A. Mai, *Nov.Patr.Bibl.* 2 (1844) 597–653, from *Cod. Vatic.* gr. 668. This work also appears in *Cod. Athos Vatopedi* 236 fol 221–247 b. For more on this author see my previously cited article 'Léonce et Pamphile', *RevScPhTh* 27 (1938) 27–52. Let us add that the work is complete in the Vatopedi ms.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, *RevScPhTh* 27 (1938) 43.

⁸⁹ Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 225–227, 230, *PG* 103, 940–56, 1024–88.

quoted in the *Συνηγορία*,⁹⁰ is clearly borrowed from Severus of Antioch, *Contra Grammaticum* 3,23.⁹¹

We have reviewed all the witnesses for the Diophysite patristic florilegium of the sixth century, or at least all the contemporary witnesses. For in order to write a complete history of this florilegium we would need to pursue our research into the subsequent centuries, into the works of Anastasius the Sinaite, Maximus the Confessor, John of Damascus, etc., and into the two natures and the unique hypostasis of Christ. The patristic documentation gathered at the time of the *Henotikon* and under the reign of Justinian, of which our authors only supply us in part, was further exploited in the seventh century, the eighth century and beyond.

Such an enterprise presupposes as a preliminary condition perfect editing and classification of the contributions of the fifth and sixth-century theologians. Thanks to the publications of Diekamp, Lebon and Schwartz, we are in a better position than Theodor Schermann when he attempted to write the history of dogmatic florilegia.⁹² Nevertheless, much remains to do be done.

We have repeatedly alluded to the pseudepigraphic texts across which we come across in the fifth and sixth centuries. These have a variety of origins, and may be divided into three categories: 1. Accidental misattributions, explained by simple carelessness. 2. Utilitarian forgeries; for want of a better, we use this term to designate all these false attributions, particularly numerous in homiletics, which can be explained by the desire to ensure in better conditions the preservation or the diffusion of certain works, without any particular intention of ideological propaganda. For example, Pope Leo was victim to such a fraud when he quoted Origen under the name of Basil.⁹³ It was not with Origenist propaganda in mind that a copyist detached a chapter (II, 6) of the *De principiis* to insert it in a collection of Basil's *Homilies*,⁹⁴ but because he thought that this chapter would make a good sermon on the Incarnation. 3. Dogmatic forgeries, which imply a literary fraud undertaken with the conscious aim of ideological propaganda. Pseudepigraphy is incidentally only one of the possible forms of dogmatic forgery. Under this heading we must include doctrinal corrections made in texts by the Fathers and alterations to 'heretical'⁹⁵ texts. This is how a citation from Apollinaris,⁹⁶ quoted under the name

⁹⁰ *Doctrina Patrum* ed. F. Diekamp, 196.

⁹¹ Severus Antioch, *Contra Grammaticum* (trans. Lebon) 3, p. 15.

⁹² Th. Schermann, *Die Geschichte der dogmatischen Florilegien vom V. bis zum VIII. Jahrhundert*, TU Bd 28 H. 1 (= NF 13,1) (Leipzig 1904).

⁹³ See my note 'Testimonia sancti Basilii', in *RHE* 33 (1937) 794–96.

⁹⁴ See the note by Dom David Amand, *Rev Bénéd* 57 (1947) 21.

⁹⁵ From the perspective of literary history we must understand by 'heretical texts' those that are considered as such by the authors who are quoting them.

⁹⁶ *De unione corporis et divinitatis in Christo* § 17.

of Pope Julius by John of Caesarea, the two Leontii and Ephraem of Amida, is both an Apollinarist dogmatic forgery by reason of pseudepigraphy and a Chalcedonian dogmatic forgery by reason of the correction it underwent to bring it to confess the two natures, Monophysite though it really was.

We previously said that dogmatic forgery was usually the weapon of persecuted minorities. This seems natural, and furthermore it appears historically that it had always been the case in the fifth and sixth centuries. The Apollinarist forgeries, of which Cyril of Alexandria was a victim, are well known. The Eustathian forgeries that appear in Theodoret are no less obvious,⁹⁷ although this has not attracted much attention until now. Let us also mention the Luciferian forgeries and the Pelagian forgeries.

The dogmatic forgeries that we meet in quite large numbers in the sixth-century florilegia seem to stem from two principal sources: 1. A collection used by John of Caesarea, the two Leontii and Ephraem of Amida, and characterised by the epistle to Seleucus by Ps. Amphilocheus of Iconium, the sermon *In margaritam* by the Syriac Ps. Ephraem, and the previously quoted fragment of Ps. Julius. 2. A collection used by Leontius of Jerusalem, and, much later, by Ps. Maro,⁹⁸ and characterised by the letter of Ps. Gregory of Nyssa to Philip, the letter by Ps. Chrysostom to Caesarius and the *Ad Judaeos* of Ps. Sylvester of Rome. The use of the first collection by John of Caesarea is sufficient to prove that it existed prior to the end of the period following the *Henotikon* – it would be difficult for it to have preceded it. The second can hardly have been composed in another period.

The great majority of the florilegia that we have quoted list the testimonies of several authors, and even generally of a great many. The sole exceptions that we encountered were the great Alexandrian Cyrillian florilegium, another collection of lost Cyrillian extracts, of which we found the traces in Ephraem of Amida, Leontius of Byzantium and Justinian, and finally the Athanasian florilegium of Macedonius, closely related, as we said, to the first part of that which was preserved in Codex Laurentianus IV 23. To find anything similar one must leave the bounds of our study and consider the collections of extracts from Apollinaris that his disciples gathered after their master's death.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ The two ps. Athanasian treatises *Sermo maior de fide* and *De incarnatione et contra arianos*. If G. Bardy is right in rejecting the authenticity of the *Expositio fidei* attributed by the *Eranistes* to Ambrose (*Misc. G. Mercati* 1 [Vatic. 1946] 199–218), this document must be added to the Eustathian dossier. However, the line of argument of our eminent colleague did not convince us entirely.

⁹⁸ Trans. F. Nau, *RevOrChr* 4 (1899) 193–214.

⁹⁹ Two of these collections, that of Valentinius and that of Timothy of Berytus, have been preserved by Leontius of Byzantium, *Adv. fraudes apollinaristarum* (PG 86, 1948–76); a third, that of Polemon, was exploited by the Emperor Justinian and by the *Doctrina Patrum* (see H. Lietzmann, *Apollinaris* 108–16).

These collections do not answer the same need as the florilegia with multiple authors. Their authors did not so much aim to prove this or that theological thesis through its authority as to prove that they were the true heirs of a master's thought. This presupposes as a preliminary condition the rivalry of two or several Schools claiming for themselves one and the same master. This condition was clearly realised in the case of the disciples of Apollinaris, just as in that of the Monophysite and Chalcedonian communities of Alexandria. To find a similar state of affairs in the case of Athanasius one must go back to the years that immediately followed his death.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, we know that Eustathians and Apollinarists alike fought over his memory. As we have already said, the content of the Athanasian florilegium in no way precludes being assigned a date before the council of Ephesus, in fact quite the opposite.

Before finishing this exposition, we should no doubt say to what extent this wide use of patristic argumentation in the fifth and sixth centuries contributed to the progress of the theology of the Incarnation. But this is a very complex question. Theodoret's florilegia, for example, give us quite a precise idea of his reading and certainly help us to understand the marked evolution of his theology between his first works and the *Eranistes*. Similarly, it is very evident that Cyril's florilegia explain the sudden appearance in his writings of a series of Apollinarist expressions. But when it comes to the theologians of the sixth century, prudence is of the essence. Their collections of texts reflect their own reading only in small measure and inform us poorly as to their theological training. We would be wrong to believe that they lacked in erudition on the grounds that they pillaged previous florilegia. It is by reading their works, and not their florilegia, that we may determine the real sources of their thought. Leontius of Byzantium's work, for example, assumes a vast knowledge of the works of the Cappadocians, notably Basil. Cyril of Alexandria's influence is much harder to detect. Yet in his florilegia, Basil is only quoted 8 times and Cyril 29 times.

We will willingly conclude that the influence of dogmatic florilegia on the future of theology was primarily indirect. By affirming the authority of the Fathers, they contributed to keeping the theologians' attention fixed upon the works of the great Fathers of the past, and thus helped to ensure the preservation of these works. This, we believe, is reason enough for us to be grateful to their authors.

¹⁰⁰ However, it should not be thought that the composition of an Athanasian florilegium in the sixth century is completely inconceivable. In fact, we are strongly tempted to assign the third part of the collection of *Cod. Laurentianus* IV, 23 (nos. 79–103 of the ed. by Schwartz, *Sermo maior de fide* 32–37) to this time, for it seems to be directed against the doctrine of Julian of Halicarnassus.



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The Saint, the Scholar and the Astrologer:
A Study of Hagiographical Themes in some
'Question and Answer' Collections of the Fifth–Seventh
Centuries CE

Gilbert Dagron

In order to situate hagiography within the body of Byzantine culture, we need to step outside the rules of the genre and relinquish the too-easily acquired belief that it is through the model of the saint and the logic of miracles that we reach the true level of a Christianity that is lived, popular, constant in form and undisputed in its principles. We need to stand either above or beyond this.

'Above' requires us to explore everything that competes with and circumscribes hagiography in a particular period: figures such as the doctor or the astrologer, and explanations of naturalistic or demonological types. 'Beyond' requires us to assess the influence of hagiography beyond the *Lives* of saints, taking note of mentions of saints in chronicles, their appearance in the liturgical calendar, and in religious iconography, the first examples in the councils of theological arguments borrowed from hagiographic descriptions,¹ and even the filleting and reprocessing of *Lives* and *Miracles* in the moral florilegia of which the *Evergetinon* (eleventh century) is the prime example.²

In defining hagiographic phenomena in this way iconoclasm and the ninth century undoubtedly constitute a break, while saints, like images (and *qua* images), only acquired their definitive status with Orthodoxy. As it will not be possible to attempt a more general analysis of this here, I will be content with studying the place of saints and miracles in the *Erotapokriseis* literature (*Questions and Answers*) – which is to say, in a genre that reached its peak in the post-Justinianic era,³ and which had the distinctive feature, rare in Byzantine literature, of combining theology and 'moral' discourse, and of giving voice, if only for the length of a short

¹ They appear in a significant way with relation to the iconoclastic controversy in the Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea (see below), and recur in great numbers in the anti-Latin polemic about the afterlife, notably at the Council of Ferrara-Florence; in other words in connection with subjects in which religious tradition and custom override theology as such.

² A work of Paul, founder of the monastery of the Evergetis in Constantinople from the mid-eleventh century, ed. Athens, 1957; for more on this type of florilegia, cf. M. RICHARD, *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, s.v. *Florilèges spirituels grecs*, 475–510.

³ Bibliography in H. DÖRRRIES, *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, 6, 342–370, s.v. *Erotapokriseis*.

question, to those who doubt or question. No matter how fictitious the question or how conventionally repeated the answer, they stand at the heart of a real problem, at least as long as the genre remained alive.

It was certainly alive between the fifth and seventh centuries, and with significant variations that allow us to note certain connections of period, context and use between the *Questions* and the *Lives* of saints. I will refer only to the authors who evoke problems of sainthood and miracles at some length: 1) the Ps. Justin of the *Quaestiones ad orthodoxos*, who is perhaps Theodoret of Cyrillus himself or at least one of his contemporaries;⁴ like the fifth-century *Lives*, he positions us at the meeting of two worlds, between a paganism that is no longer a rival but which has still not yet become a fully assimilated cultural component, and a new faith that is exploring a different corpus of texts, and which has discovered the parallel way of Old Testament history; 2) the Ps. Athanasius of the *Quaestiones ad Antiochum*, which, because of their supposed author, quickly and definitively acquired the status of an authoritative source;⁵ truth to tell, the author was not very dogmatic, and was in fact at times almost heretical,⁶ making a clumsy attempt to find a Christian anthropology which the great heresies had circumscribed, but defined only by bringing up a number of contradictions; 3) next, with Maximus Confessor, and especially with Anastasius of Sinai, or the authors of the second half of the seventh century hidden behind his name,⁷ we enter the period in which eastern Christianity could no longer identify itself with a triumphant history of *romanitas*; in which the notion of divine economy was put to the test by the success of Islam, and in which the saint found himself confronted by all kinds of rivals. It was then that hagiography experienced one of its most original flowerings, but also, and consequently, its sharpest criticism and its lowest point in the sources which are the subject of our study. Subsequently, as from the tenth century, *Questions and Answers* crystallise into florilegia; Photius's *Amphilochia* (ninth century) is a work

⁴ P.G. 6, 1249–1400; we know of the work through two quite different recensions, one of which gives the name of Theodoret. The attribution to this author is admitted by M. Richard and taken as probable by H. DÖRRIES, *op. cit.*

⁵ P.G. 28, 556–709; cf. H. DÖRRIES, *op. cit.*; Athanasius' authority is constantly invoked in the *Aporiai* of Glykas and in the Acts of Ferrara-Florence.

⁶ Thus *Questions* 33 (on the sleep of the soul after death) and 26 (on the angels who appear in the shape of saints).

⁷ P.G. 79, 311–824; on the complex problem of the tradition of the ps. Athanasian collections, cf. M. RICHARD, *Les véritables Questions et Réponses d'Anastase le Sinaïte* in *Bulletin de l'Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes*, 15, 1967–1968, p. 39–51. A publication based on this study is currently being prepared by the Fr. Munitiz. [see now M. Richard and J. J. Munitiz, eds., *Anastasioi Sinaitae Quaestiones et responsiones*, Corpus christ. ser. gr 59 (Turnhout, 2006)]

of erudition without real questioning,⁸ and Glykas's *Aporiai* (twelfth century) preserved and amplified the ancient tradition only in order to spill it over into the history of ideas.⁹ It therefore seems to me justifiable to consider the early collections of *Questions* as a coherent ensemble, concluding in a codification at the very time when hagiography itself became established in liturgy, theology and literature. I would also like to demonstrate that by tackling certain subjects head on (medicine and healing, prediction and prophecy, natural causation and divine intervention), the authors of these *Questions* sought very deliberately to delimit the role of saints, the definition of miracles, and the validity of the hagiographic genre.

Medicine and the cause of illnesses and cures are the subjects of such precise developments in Anastasius of Sinai's *Questions* that H. G. Beck supposed the interpolation into this author's work of a group of questions of 'medizinisch-naturwissenschaftlich' relevance, written by a contemporary Cypriot doctor.¹⁰ However this matters little, since there is no doubt about the date (end of the seventh century) or about the early incorporation (in any case before the ninth century) of these texts into the Anastasian dossier.¹¹

Question 94 tackles the problem of miraculous healing head on:¹² the enquirer asks why the infirm, sufferers from gout, lepers, epileptics and others, are found in greater number 'among we Christians' than among unbelievers. *Answer*: some say that it is because God loves us that He sends us these trials. But not everyone accepts this justification; in fact it is due to differences originating from race, climate and diet; the example of the Jews illustrates this complex relation of cause and effect well: more than any others they abandon themselves to the pleasures of eating and so ought to be ill more often, but because they live in a dry climate and have its racial characteristics, they escape the illnesses from which they ought to suffer. In any case idolatry and heresy have nothing to do with health, even in the case of epileptics or those possessed by demons, the proof being that Christ prescribed both fasting and prayer at the same time to exorcise demons (Matt. 17:21). The author concludes by recalling the sanctuary of St Epiphanius in Cyprus, not long before the Arab invasion of 647, when on seeing the crowd of sick awaiting a miracle a 'philosopher

⁸ P.G. 79, 311–824; 16–264; every field is broached here, from theology all the way to grammar.

⁹ Ed. Eustratiadès, I–II, 1906–1912. One of the problems that Glykas broaches most frequently, and which is very much of his time, is that of the incompatibility between Christianity and astrology.

¹⁰ H.-G. BECK, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich*, p. 442–445. The distinction between the monk Anastasius, author of the *Hodegos* and a 'Cypriot doctor', or several other lay authors, remains uncertain, cf. P. CANART, *Nouveaux récits du moine Anastase*, in *Actes du XII^e Congrès International des Études Byzantines*, II, 1964, p. 263–271.

¹¹ Cf. M. RICHARD, *Les véritables Questions et Réponses d'Anastase le Sinaitte*, *op. cit.*

¹² P.G. 89, 732–733.

and iatrosophist' declared: 'With the help of God healing is possible by means of diet, purgings and bleedings.' Thus, drawing on the authority of the archbishop of Salamis, he undertook to treat and was able to heal most of the pilgrims.¹³

There is nothing anti-religious in this; rather, it represents a readjustment of ideas rendered necessary by the simple observation that unbelievers were in good health, with the consequent limitation of the miraculous in the name of a theory developed in detail in the following questions.

*Question 95*¹⁴: There has been much debate over why it should be that from birth and infancy some people are 'naturally' gentle and others choleric, some hedonistic and debauched and others continent, some intelligent and others stupid. The key words of the answer are references to climate and race, included in the concept of 'causes' and 'natural qualities' (heat, cold, humidity, dryness); these correspond to the different elements of the human body, predisposing it towards this or that virtue or vice, without it being the case that God directly wills the damnation or salvation of anyone, or that these predispositions infringe on personal responsibility. However, in this moral 'choreography' and this system of universal empathy, the author wanders too close to astrology not to feel the need to distinguish himself from 'imbecile astrologers' who make everything depend upon the stars. This insult stands as a semi-confession: were it pursued to the end, the argument would unerringly lead to an appeal to astrology. We have here a theory that refuses to lock itself into a system, and whose strategic implementation is illustrated in *Question 96*¹⁵: the problem of the wicked who live to an old age and saints and innocents who die young. Once again, the explanation given is purely medical: the physical world is made up of four elements and governed by laws instituted by the Creator; birth and death are natural phenomena, aside from certain exceptions, represented by God's wrath (I Cor. 11: 29-30), certain resurrections (Lazarus), and years added to the normal lifespan (Hezekiah). For the most part climate and mode of life are determining influences, yet without predetermination; doctors can work within the natural laws, and divine interventions which breach the normal course of events are exceptional. Given these conditions there cannot be, strictly speaking, a category of the miraculous, or even of God's direct action in the world, for otherwise we could not understand the premature death of the just, the painful agony of the holy man, and the peaceful deaths of the wicked and the idolatrous.

¹³ The episode should be seen in parallel with, and in opposition to the previous or contemporary collections of *Miracles* (St Thecla, Sts Cosmas and Damian, Sts Cyril and John, St Artemios...).

¹⁴ P.G. 89, 733-736.

¹⁵ P.G. 89, 736-749. This is a very short treatise, presented independently in cod. 375 of the municipal library of Rheims, under the name of the 'patriarch Anastasius of Antioch'.

These commonsense analyses define the scope of an entire field, in which neither of the two rival systems, described as equally unacceptable, has full validity: astrology, or absolute causality vested in predetermination,¹⁶ and hagiography, or the usual kind of miracle, established not merely as part of the 'divine economy' but as God's 'direct management' of the world. Medicine clearly plays its role in the hagiography of the fifth to seventh centuries, and despite the *topos* of the doctor powerless before illness, miracle cures remain more often than not medical miracles, in which the saint, compared with ignorant people, is a good doctor who knows how to identify causes and how to use appropriate medication.¹⁷ Yet Anastasius goes further by refusing what constituted the fabric of many *Lives*, tales 'useful to the soul' and iconography: the deaths of the just contrasted with those of sinners;¹⁸ and by this introduction of natural causes, he causes entire sections of the building in construction to crumble down. By thus mediating the divine *pronoia*, we risk losing the thread of all hagiographic logic.

A similar type of division occurs with respect to knowledge of the future and the distinction between prophecy and prediction; on this essential point we should note that the literature of *Questions and Answers* took root and remained standard until the end of the tenth century.

The first problem to be considered is that of the validity of pagan oracles. Ps. Justin (*Questions* 2 and 146) was hardly saying anything new when he recognised that some were inspired by God for a given purpose, which is to say by divine economy.¹⁹ In any case, he states elsewhere (*Questions* 52 and 81)²⁰ that not every prediction is prophecy, and that knowledge of the future can correspond to different degrees

¹⁶ The condemnation of *εἰμαρμένη*, taken up by all the Fathers of the Church (cf. D. AMAND, *Fatalisme et liberté dans l'antiquité grecque*, Louvain, 1945; O. Riedinger, *Die Heilige Schrift im Kampf der griechischen Kirche gegen die Astrologie*, Innsbruck, 1956) is clearly not challenged. The *Aporiai* of Glykas constantly refer to it. [See now P. Magdalino, *L'Orthodoxie des astrologues; la science entre le dogme et la divination à Byzance, VIIe-XIVe siècle*, Paris, 2006.]

¹⁷ Thus Cosmas and Damian are real doctors; see A. J. FESTUGIÈRE, *Collections grecques de Miracles*, p. 89–91; G. DAGRON, *La Vie et les Miracles de sainte Thècle*, p. 106–108.

¹⁸ The saint predicts his death and prepares for it (*Lives of St Macrina, Sts David, Symeon et George, St Peter of Atroa...*); to the just death appears as beautiful and radiant, to sinners it is horrible and frightening (*Testament of Abraham*); a painful agony is a sign of a soul's perdition (*Life of Andrew the Fool*; cf. J. GROSDIDIER DE MATONS, *Les thèmes d'édification dans la vie d'André Salos*, in *Travaux et Mémoires*, 4, 1970, p. 325–328); the painful death of the sinner and the serenity of the saint or the just are a recurring theme in the 'tales useful to the soul' (for example F. NAU, *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*, 8, 1903, p. 98), which culminates in iconography (DIONYSIUS OF FOURNA, *Manuel d'iconographie chrétienne*, ed. Papadopoulos-Kérameus, p. 212–213: deaths of the hypocritical monk, of the just and the sinner).

¹⁹ *PG*, 6, 1252–1253, 1397–1399.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1321–1324.

of certainty, proceeding either from genuine divine inspiration, from an analysis of signs, or from demonic possession: ἔγγαστρίμωθοι announced the ascendancy of David; Apollonius of Tyana predicted the future through his understanding of natural forces (*Question 24*).²¹ The break here is both epistemological and historical: with the appearance of Christ, soothsaying ceases to be a possible technique for the divine economy, while the saints seem to inherit the privilege of inspired prediction and of θαυματουργία.

Anastasius also feels bound to answer the question: from which power do those who think the opposite to us (unbelievers or heterodox) draw their gift of prophecy and their power to perform miracles?²² This difficulty is only ironed out with a series of distinctions that we might say shattered the somewhat overly Manichean dichotomies within hagiography, which the simple observation of the enquirer had already called into question. Signs, miracles and prophecies may be delivered by God through the intermediary of unworthy people, heretics or non-Christians. A distinction must be made between sainthood and morality, and especially between the different types of knowledge of the future: that which arises directly from a study of signs (a doctor can predict the evolution of a sickness, the Saracens were able to recognize those who would die in battle by signs on their faces), and that which is the product of demonic inspiration, whether conscious or not. Even the demons themselves act like doctors, physiognomists and astrologers: they conjecture from signs, which is to say from the present, and their lightness, speed and intelligence merely grant them better results. Indeed, from the *Life of Antony*, Evagrius, and Ps.Athanasius (*Question 100*),²³ we constantly find the examples of demons that predicted the Nile flood by running upstream to check the volume of the rains, that could supply information concerning stolen objects because they had seen the thief, or even that prophesied by listening at the doors of the churches to the reading of the prophets, which they interpreted better than the majority of the faithful. A staging is often added to this deciphering of signs: a demon can cause a man to seem to stand up ἐν φαντασία, to talk, to reveal a secret: we are deceived. Note that behind each of the cases cited we may suppose a hagiographic topos: the denunciation of a thief,²⁴ the announcement of an atmospheric phenomenon²⁵ or the

²¹ *Ibid.*, 1269–1272.

²² *Question 20*, P.G. 89, 517–532.

²³ *V.Ant.*, P.G. 26, 889–893; P.G. 28, 660; Glykas, *Aporiai*, 41; cf. J. GROSDIDIER DE MATONS, *Psellos et le monde de l'irrationnel*, in *Travaux et Mémoires*, 6, p. 345.

²⁴ See below.

²⁵ Earthquakes: John Moschus, *Spiritual Meadow*, 50, P.G. 87, 2095; *Life of St Symeon the Stylite the Younger*, 78, 104, ed. Van den Ven, p. 66–68, 81–84; *Life of St Symeon the Fool*, ed. Ryden, p.150. Storm: *Life of St Luke of Isola Capo Rizzuto*, 6, ed. Schiro, p. 100–104.

interrogation of a dead man for the restitution of a loan.²⁶ Thus doubt is introduced concerning the real nature of every miracle, which, basically, can only be either knowledge or marvel. This doubt culminates with the repeated assertion that there are heretical ‘miracles’; Anastasius (*Question 20*) takes up this point and updates it with a contemporary example, a text by Ps. Justin (*Question 5*):²⁷ he once knew a heretical bishop of Cyzicus (a *pneumatomachos*), who had apparently transported an olive tree from one place to another through prayer because this tree cast too much shade upon the window of the chapel: this same bishop had also caused a briefly resurrected corpse to name the actual sum owed by his widow, who was being prosecuted for debts; his tomb became a place of *φαντασῖαι* and of *σημειοφόρα*. The truth of the matter has nothing to do with this; we recognise these as apparently similar to the true miracles of hagiography; however, in the case of heretics, we seek another origin for them and try to describe them with another vocabulary.

To say that there are true and false miracles of prophecy is already to introduce the need for criticism into hagiography; yet the conclusion goes further. We find it in the shape of definitions in a ps.Chrysostomian text reproduced by George the Monk and the *Souda*.²⁸ It is effectively a Question and Answer, and situates itself within the tradition of that genre. We are given as two opposite extremes: ‘diabolic’ prophecies, which correspond to the techniques of pagan soothsaying (with an exception made for the interpretation of dreams), and which are speculative, and ‘pneumatic’ prophecies, which are the prerogative of saints. However, in the following analysis, this over-simplistic opposition crumbles; as well as in the case of saints, the Holy Spirit can manifest itself by divine economy to unworthy individuals (Pharaoh, Balaam, Caiaphas), and between the ‘diabolic’ and the ‘pneumatic’, which have different natures, there is the vast domain of natural, technical or ‘popular’ foreknowledge: that of animals that sense changes in weather, the man of common sense who predicts the seasons, the doctor, the navigator and the politician, who all reason through conjecture. What is astonishing is that the demons are set beside scholars, as well as intelligent and adventurous persons, and that together these constitute the domain of a vast predictive science, more or less licit (the devil is far clearly condemned than demons...), and in any case effective. Divine prophecy is recognised for its specificity, but as a firmly entrenched exception, in practice difficult to identify. Once established, the boundaries of hagiography are systematically blurred.

²⁶ *Apophthegmata*, Macarius, 7; Milesius, I; P.G. 65, 265 and 297; Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* I, 12; *Life of St Spyridon* by Theodore of Paphos, 7, ed. Van den Ven, p. 34–37.

²⁷ Ps. Justin, P.G. 6, 1256; Anastasius, P.G. 89, 521.

²⁸ Ps. Chrysostom, P.G. 64, 740–744; George the Monk, ed. de Boor, p. 237–239; *Suidae Lexicon*, ed. Adler, s.v. *προφητεία*. This is a theme extensively treated in the *Apoteiai* of Glykas.

Thus the field of demonology opens up and a rival of the saint appears, the 'philosopher' of the seventh to ninth centuries. Much could be said on these two subjects, but let us merely note that the category of the 'demonic' is a strange amalgam of which the *Lives* of saints only show one aspect: the demons of luxury, sloth and the 'celestial customs'; a reversal of Christianity. However, a scholarly demonology continued to exist, in which demons, morally more neutral, correspond to the forces of nature and the hidden names of things;²⁹ every scholar was assumed to touch upon it at least a little. Finally, there was a popular demonology, a composite folklore in which all superstitions had their share, and which the formulas of the 'Treatise of Solomon' illustrated very early on (demons are more at home in the Old Testament than the New).³⁰ A good half of demonology escaped Christianisation, something of which the *Lives* of saints give no inkling.

One figure remains, or rather comes back to life, from the sixth to at least the ninth century: that of the man of knowledge, initiated without being religious, having power over 'nature' (talismans), operating transmutations (alchemy) and having a 'scholarly' knowledge of the future (astrology), without thereby taking a stance outside Christianity.³¹ It is quite clear from the periodic appearances of this figure in the *Chronicle* of Malalas, and much more from his presence on every page of the *Patria* of Constantinople (eighth to tenth centuries),³² that he is not a scholarly construct. His model is the legendary Apollonius of Tyana, a holy wonder-worker, who in the very period of our study passed into the Arab world under the name of Balinus and enjoyed a long survival.³³ Our *Questions* do not doubt the real

²⁹ Thus in the treatise given under the name of Apollonius of Tyana, edited by F. Nau in *Patr. Syr.* II, 1907, p. 1363–1392 and by F. Boll, *Corpus Codicum Astrologicorum Graecorum*, VII, p. 174–181.

³⁰ Cf. P.P. JOANNOU, *Démonologie populaire-démonologie critique au XI^e s.*, Wiesbaden, 1971; *De operatione daemonum* by Psellus, edited by J. Bidez, *Catalogue des manuscrits alchimiques grecs*, VI, p. 119–134 and J.F. Boissonade (1838; reprod. anast., Amsterdam, 1964); A. DELATTE and JOSSERAND, *Contribution à l'étude de la démonologie byzantine*, in *Mélanges Bidez*, I, p. 207–232; for information on the magic treatise attributed to Solomon by an undoubtedly old and widely disseminated tradition, cf. A. DELATTE, *Anecdota Atheniensia* I, p. 211–227. [In general see now P. Magdalino and M. Mavroudi, eds., *The Occult Sciences in Byzantium*, Geneva, 2006].

³¹ Historical characters who were appropriated by legend from a very early date: Stephen of Alexandria, the presumed author of nine 'Lessons' in Christian alchemy (ed. Ideler, *Physici et medici graeci minores*, II, p. 199–253; see below), John the Grammarian, Leo the Philosopher, and Photius himself (on the latter, cf. P. LEMERLE, *Le premier humanisme byzantin*, Paris, 1971, which also contains a bibliography and references).

³² *Scriptores originum constantinopolitanarum*, ed. Preger, Leipzig, 1901–1907, a collection of texts on the origins and the monuments of Constantinople.

³³ For information on the opinions of Byzantine authors concerning Apollonius of Tyana, see W. SPEYER's excellent article, *Zum Bild des Apollonius von Tyana bei Heiden und*

efficacy of his talismans, any more than Malalas or the *Patria*, and in the large area that we have defined they sometimes rank him among the ‘magi’ who produced demonic *φαντασίαι* (Anastasio, *Question 20*),³⁴ and sometimes among the scholarly benefactors of humanity. Ps. Justin goes as far as possible in answering a question that is too suggestive not to reflect an authentic preoccupation:³⁵

Question 24: If God is the demiurge and master of creation, how can it be that the talismans of Apollonius of Tyana should have an effect upon the elements of the created world? Indeed, it has been noted that they prevent tidal waves, hurricanes, plagues of rats and attacks of wild animals. The miracles accomplished by the Lord are only reported in stories, whereas the majority of Apollonius’ talismans are proven by their permanent effect. How, then, would they not deceive those who witnessed them? If this is done with the consent of God, does it not constitute an invitation to paganism? And if God lent his cooperation to Apollonius, because of the good that resulted from his spells, why did he not use the apostles instead as intermediaries? And if the powers of Apollonius are demonic, why does God allow them to remain effective for as long as the earth shall last?

Answer: Apollonius, knowing the natural forces and what they contain of ‘sympathies’ and ‘antipathies’, made his talismans according to this knowledge and thus not by God’s will. Conversely, Christ carried out his miracles without drawing upon matter. Because Apollonius’ talismans belong to the natural domain and to the physical world, the Lord has not destroyed them...

We can appreciate the importance of this explanation by recalling that in Constantinople itself there was belief in a *στοιχείωσις* of statues by Apollonius, summoned for this purpose by Constantine, who thereby confirmed the destiny of the city.³⁶

Indeed, at a time when the repertoire of miracles and ‘lay’ wonders, and of the beneficent talisman and gallery of ‘philosophers’ was growing, we can count more than one work which in contrast sought to rehabilitate the activity of the saints (notably their posthumous activity) against an opinion of the *φιλοσοφούντες*/philosophers, who appear strongly sceptical. At the end of the sixth century, Eustratius of Constantinople dedicated an entire treatise to this subject;³⁷ the Ps. Athanasius (*Question 26*) is of the

Christentum, in *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, 17, 1974, p. 47–63; for information on the Arabic tradition concerning Apollonius, cf. *Encyclopédie de l’Islam*, s.v. *Balinus* (M. Plessner).

³⁴ P.G. 89, 525.

³⁵ P.G. 6, 1269–1272.

³⁶ Ps. Kodinos, *Patria*, II, 103, ed. Preger, op.cit., p. 206.

³⁷ Ed. Allatius, *De utriusque Ecclesiae occidentalis et orientalis perpetua in dogmate de Purgatorio consensione*, Rome, 1655, p. 380–580.

opinion that it is angels who take on the appearance of saints during their apparitions;³⁸ the discussion leaves its traces until the heart of the eleventh century.³⁹

The demonstration would not be convincing if, to conclude, we did not turn to hagiography itself, or to the tales of hagiographic type. These do not succeed in concealing the fact that the saint is not truly master of the field, and that he is surrounded by all manner of rivals, in the midst of whom we often find it difficult to recognise him, and of whom the same questions are asked, and who receive the same price for their services. The exemplary schema that presents the apostle Peter converting Simon Magus in front of a Roman crowd is constantly reproduced,⁴⁰ but thereafter in a Christian world, and consequently with all kinds of contaminations and ambiguities, of which I would like to provide a few examples.

That most of the Christian emperors of the fifth to seventh centuries surrounded themselves with astrologers is in no way surprising. Their successors did the same. But it is remarkable that the prediction made to Maurice concerning his tragic death, before becoming a 'story useful to the soul', should be attributed by Theophylact Simocatta (taken up by Photius) at one and the same time to an inspired monk and to a certain Herodianos, a scholar of the court who ventured to predict the future.⁴¹ History and legend place at the side of Heraclius another man of scholarship, Stephen of Alexandria, a teacher of the quadrivium, an astronomer whose theoretical treatises helped to determine the Easter table, but also a Christian alchemist, an astrologer who predicted to the emperor that he would perish 'by water', who drew a 'horoscope' of Arab power, and who, perhaps for the first time ever, justified recourse to astrological science with two arguments that we find in more than one subsequent work: it was not contrary to the Christian faith, and it was an indispensable weapon against Islam.⁴² Here Apollonius of Tyana found an afterlife, and saints a rival well established in the heart of the Christian world.

Nevertheless, it is better to step out into the streets and to put ourselves in the place of those who had to distinguish between true saints and the rest. The *Life* of St Simeon the Younger tells us that when earthquakes occurred from 551 to 557, the inhabitants of Antioch went to consult both local astrologers and the stylite saint,

³⁸ P.G. 28, 613.

³⁹ See the article (in press) by Jean Gouillard, in *Travaux et Mémoires*, VIII [J. Gouillard, 'Léthargie des âmes et culte des saints: un plaidoyer inédite de Jean Diacre et Maïstor', *Travaux et Mémoires* VIII, 1981, p. 171–86].

⁴⁰ See a long section on this subject in the *Life of St Thecla*, 22, ed. Dagron, p. 254–260.

⁴¹ Theophylact Simocatta, VII, 12, ed. de Boor, p. 266; Photius, *Bibl.*, cod. 65.

⁴² H. USENER, *De Stephano Alexandrino*, Bonn, 1880; *Corpus Codicum Astrologicorum Graecorum*, II, p. 181–186. The Arabic horoscope actually dates from 775; it is taken up by Constantine Porphyrogenitus and by Cedrenus. See also the latest article published on Stephen of Alexandria: A. LUMPE, *Stephanos von Alexandrien und Herakleios*, in *Class. Et Mediaev. Diss.*, 9, 1973, p. 150–159.

and even organised an open debate between the two.⁴³ In similar circumstances we see false demoniacs appear in Constantinople, boasting of knowing the future.⁴⁴ The phenomena seem to be constant, because after a whole spectrum of easy-to-label diviners (lecanomantics, necromantics, etc...), the council in Trullo (692) denounces these same inspired laymen, who are clearly vaguer and more difficult figures to define, itinerants like the *ἀγοραῖος*, the *κωμοδρόμος*, or the gyrovague monk, a familiar attraction among rural or urban populations.⁴⁵ A certain woman, whom Malalas mentions, caused a crowd to gather at the Golden Gate by announcing the end of the world; we are not told where she came from or the source of her inspiration.⁴⁶

The most popular saints are difficult to distinguish from among these cut-price healers or prophets, and it is a typical play in hagiography to suggest ambiguity when distinguishing saints from magicians or spell-casters. The inhabitants of Emesa had reason to take Symeon the Fool for a sorcerer, as when he turned wine into vinegar and made overly happy and pretty girls go cross-eyed, or even when he personally made an amulet to prevent a diviner from practising her art.⁴⁷ Perhaps 'foolishness in God' is sociologically at the meeting point of the two fields we are attempting to distinguish, and which are in fact linked: to the few great holy fools consecrated in hagiography we must contrast the crowd of agitators, the simple-minded and beggars who streamed through the churches (St Nicetas in Constantinople), roaming the streets and pulling people's beards; Balsamon is unable to recognise them as true saints and generally disapproves of this type of holiness; earlier, Gregory the Decapolite fell prey to them in Thessalonica, and Kekaumenos advises caution when meeting them.⁴⁸ Even ascetics inspire some suspicion: a lawyer from Antioch doubts whether Symeon the Younger is God's intermediary in miracles of healing,⁴⁹ and a certain Georgian pilgrim burns his images, believing him to be a sorcerer.⁵⁰ In the *Passion and Miracles* of Modestus, archbishop of Jerusalem, we hesitate between three explanations for the power of the saint over animals: he is either a saint, the

⁴³ *Life of St Symeon the Younger*, 157, ed. Van den Ven, p. 138–139.

⁴⁴ Agathias, *Hist.*, V, 5, 2, ed. Keydell, p. 169–170.

⁴⁵ Canons 60 and 61 of the Council in Trullo (695), Rallès-Potlès, *Syntagma* II, p. 440–443.

⁴⁶ Malalas, *Chron.*, Bonn, p. 481.

⁴⁷ *Life of St Symeon the Fool*, ed. Ryden, p. 157–158, 162–165.

⁴⁸ Balsamon, commentary on Canon 60 of the Council in Trullo, Rallès-Potlès, *Syntagma*, II, p. 441–442; *Life of St Gregory the Decapolite*, 15, ed. Dvornik, p. 59–60; Kekaumenos, *Strategikon*, ed. Wassiliewsky-Jernstedt, p. 63. We are not speaking here of the monks or the clergy condemned by the Council of Laodicea and the Council in Trullo because they practised magic and astrology; they too could pass for saints in the eyes of the public. [See S. A. Ivanov, *Holy Fools in Byzantium and Beyond*, Eng. trans., Oxford, 2006].

⁴⁹ *Life of St Symeon the Stylite the Younger*, 224, ed. Van den Ven, p. 194–195.

⁵⁰ *Life of St Martha*, 54, ed. Van den Ven, p. 298.

disciple of a great doctor, or a magician.⁵¹ Again, here and elsewhere, we observe the wide spectrum of *Questions and Answers*, extending from demonology to sainthood through the natural sciences.

Finally, let us turn the problem round and let us side with the enquirer, and observe the similarity between many of the questions posed to the astrologer and the requests addressed to the saint. The astrological catalogues, which have tirelessly been revisited since the Roman era and which, updated by the Arab contribution, maintain their validity throughout the Byzantine history,⁵² should here be considered in parallel with a typology of miracles. The clearest case is without doubt that of lost or stolen objects. Astrology gives all manner of possible formulas for identifying the thief, the object found or the hiding place in which to find it; and preachers, canonists and jurists all assure us that it remained common practice to consult an astrologer or a diviner on this subject.⁵³ Nevertheless, very early on we also find a rival hagiographic theme: Thecla never fails to denounce thieves;⁵⁴ Symeon of Emesa finds himself being asked: 'Can you do something, Fool, so that I can recover my money?'⁵⁵ In the *Vie ancienne* of St Auxentius, a poor peasant comes to the man of God asking for his stolen lamb to be restored to him (c. 28); rewriting the same miracle in the eleventh century, Psellus perceives the ambiguity so well that he develops the episode, so that St Auxentius understands that the peasant is addressing him as he would an astrologer, smiles, and before satisfying him declares: 'I am neither oracle nor diviner to give you the whereabouts of the animal you seek!'⁵⁶

⁵¹ Chap.7, ed. Loparev, p. 26. We will find other examples in the article by H.J. MAGOULIAS, *The Lives of Byzantine Saints as sources of data for the history of magic in the Sixth and Seventh Century A.D.*, in *Byzantion*, 37, 1967, p. 228–269.

⁵² As shown by the entire *Corpus Codicum Astrologicorum Graecorum* (C.C.A.G.).

⁵³ John Chrysostom, P.G. 62, 413; a condemnation of the astrologer or diviner who, consulted on the matter of a theft, designated an innocent as the thief: *Nomocanon* of Photius, Rallès-Potlès, *Syntagma*, I, p. 197; commentary by Balsamon on Canon 24 of the Council of Ancyra, *ibid.*, III, p. 67; *Basilika* 60, 21, 14, for astrological formulae see for example C.C.A.G., I, 94–99; IV, p. 88–91.

⁵⁴ *Miracles of St Thecla*, 21, 22, 43, ed. Dagron, p. 346–348, 402. See also *Life of St Sabas*, by Cyril of Scythopolis, ed. Schwartz p. 185.

⁵⁵ *Life of St Symeon the Fool*, ed. Ryden, p. 161.

⁵⁶ Psellus, *Life of St Auxentius* 33, ed. Joannou in: *Démonologie populaire*, *op. cit.*, p. 122. We find another example of these naïve consultations in Anastasius's *Question 62* (P.G. 89, 648): if someone angers a holy man who then invokes illness, death or demon on his house, can he then go to another saint to lift the curse?

Finding lost or stolen objects, searching for fugitive slaves,⁵⁷ foreknowledge of the date and type of death, and to a certain extent the knowledge and healing of sickness seem to me to define the scope of a realm of actions common to saints and to any figure who, for the sake of convenience, I place under the name of astrologers, and who in the *Questions and Answers* are more prosaically known as readers of signs and workers of wonders.

Thus when compared with the 'hagiographic production', these *Questions and Answers* cause all manner of problems to appear which the overly uniform discourse of the *Lives*, those answers without questions, obscures. What is a saint? What is a miracle? To talk of scepticism would be nonsense, and I am thinking less of a resistance than of a process of establishing ideas, and the slow definition of a genre. Historically, we are not back in an era in which a still living pagan culture and an uneasy Christianity come into conflict. Quite the reverse. A Christian culture was now flourishing, which was from now on sure enough in its fundamental dogmas to question its anthropology, which was successful enough to try to spill into every field of knowledge, and which identified itself so closely with everything to do with *romanitas* that it found it must answer the provocation of an Islam from which it was not yet separated by any real divide. Hagiography as such played an important role in this, albeit a limited and problematic one. The debate, if it ever really took place, was internal and only lasted a short while. A reversal was to take place of a kind and for reasons that would take us too long to examine here, but whose effects were already perceptible at the Council of Nicaea II in 787: to justify the cult of images, nearly as many arguments were drawn from hagiographic tales as they were from scriptural and patristic texts;⁵⁸ however, what is a hagiographic argument but a kind of normative picture according to which, by a play of mirrors, a society reflects itself back on itself, without questioning itself any further? Thus liturgical iconography and hagiography triumphed by ascribing rules for themselves that protected them against all suspicion.

DISCUSSION

M. van ESBROECK: In a panegyric that has been preserved in Georgian, John Xiphilin plagiarises a Greek model based upon saints Cosmas and Damian. He justifies the miraculous developments by considering that pagans do the same for their heroes. With respect to the origin of the *Erotapokriseis*, of which Krasnoselcev published several anonyms, the most ancient copies are in the names of Basil and Gregory.

⁵⁷ For example, *Miracles of St Theodore*, 4 and 11, *Acta SS.*, Nov. IV, p. 63 and 69, to be considered in parallel with C.C.A.G., I, p. 104–106 or other texts from the dossier.

⁵⁸ C.f. P. VAN DEN VEN, *La patristique et l'hagiographie au concile de 787*, in *Byzantion*, 25–27, 1955–1957, p. 325–362.

G. DAGRON: Without any doubt: Father Munitiz is working on this. I believe that the high point comes after Justinian, but with roots stretching further back to such as the pseudo-Justinian, whom we more or less identify with Theodoret of Cyr, and perhaps even before this. It is an anonymous pseudepigraphic literature that has snowballed. But the high point is situated after Justinian, after the great heresies and the great councils, and culminates with the Arabic invasion, which is in itself not irrelevant.

J.-C. GUY: You have referred to how, as from the VIIth century, the philosopher becomes a rival of the monk Saint. Where do we stand in relation to the identification that was made two centuries previously between the saint and the philosopher, and the monk and the philosopher?

G. DAGRON: Indeed, every type of literature continues to identify the monk and philosopher. But 'philosophers' can also be used to designate people of knowledge, and 'philosophy' encompasses a kind of explosion of the ancient quadrivium with certain disciplines that are privileged, for example: astrology coming out of astronomy, the alchemy of a certain type of studies. At the end of the eighth century, one of the most common themes is the necessity to restore a Christian astrology and alchemy. Many texts show that the Arab invasion caused the Byzantines to believe that, from a certain perspective, they had lost the initiative because of having abandoned all these disciplines considered to be pagan.

J.-C. GUY: In the fourth and fifth century, the true monk is the philosopher, but he is also at the same time in conflict with the philosopher, with philosophy referring in fact to a type of non-religious knowledge.

M. ROUCHE: How can we explain the disappearance of this scientific spirit, which reappeared for a certain time? The hagiographic genre completely takes over as from the eighth century. Is there a clericalisation of science?

G. DAGRON: These layers are no longer juxtaposed. Let me give you an example: until the ninth century, contradictory explanations are given as to the origin of earthquakes: one is Aristotelian and vaguely astrological, the other is the wrath of God. At another period (see Psellos), God is invoked in a homely, Aristotle in a profane treaty and a private letter broaches astrology, with no thought that these three fields might be conflictual.

M. UYTFANGHE: This information sheds an interesting light on the literature of the passions. In the Latin passions at least, in the course of a trial, the magistrate accuses the saint of practicing *artes magicae*.

G. DAGRON: Indeed always. This is perhaps less enlightening that the typology of miracles presented with the questions posed to astrology. We are fortunate to have the twelve tomes of Greek astrologers. This provides us with a type of questions, of which we find many corresponding to hagiographic interventions. The simple act of drawing parallels is revealing.

The First Christian *Summa Theologiae* in Arabic:
 Christian *Kalām* in Ninth-Century Palestine

Sidney H. Griffith

The message of the Qur'an includes, among many other things, a profound critique of the pre-Islamic religious beliefs and practices of the Arabic speaking peoples, be they pagan, Jewish or Christian. So it should perhaps be no surprise for the historian to learn that, with the establishment of the Abbasid caliphate in the mid-eighth century, and the efflorescence of Arabic as both the language and the focus of the culture of the Islamic state, the Qur'an's critique of the doctrines of the earlier scripture people should have come ever more insistently to the attention of the intellectuals of the older religious orders. They were now faced with the task of defending their criticized doctrines, not only against a new ideological challenge, but in a vigorously new *lingua sacra* whose religious lexicon was inevitably to be determined by the burgeoning Islamic sciences, and not by the apologetic or polemical requirements of the older Christian, Jewish or other theological establishments.¹ To meet the new challenge, the *mutakallimūn*, or religious controversialists who were prepared to write apologetic tracts in

¹ See the intriguing, if often inscrutable observations in Wansbrough *Quranic*, esp. pp. 85-118.

Arabic,² first appeared in the Christian communities in the eastern patriarchates in the first Abbasid century. Of their number, Theodore Abū Qurrah, Ḥabīb b. Khidmah Abū Rā'īṭah, Ḥammār al-Baṣrī, and Ḥunayn b. Ishāq are the writers whose names and works are now the most well known.³ But by far the most ambitious single early work of Christian *kalām* is the still unpublished "Summary of the Ways of Faith" (British Library, Or. ms. 4950), a ninth-century Palestinian composition which the present writer calls the *Summa Theologiae Arabica*, in order to call attention to the broad scope of its contents, as well as to put an accent on the fact that the work is quintessentially a product of the Arabophone church in the early Abbasid caliphate. This work is the subject of the present communication.

The purpose here will be first, and very briefly, to describe the *Summa Theologiae Arabica*; secondly, to survey the *Summa*'s reflections of the presence of Islam and the influence of the religious challenges which Muslims posed for Christians in the caliphate; and thirdly to draw out the hints about the continuity of Melkite church life in the ninth-century caliphate which the *Summa* affords us the opportunity to discern.

THE *SUMMA THEOLOGIAE ARABICA*

One may be brief in the description of the *Summa Theologiae Arabica* because after years of relative silence in the usual scholarly publications, a sudden flurry of studies devoted to this work has appeared in the eighties, relieving one of the necessity of repeating all the basic introductory details.⁴ Suffice it to say by way of introduction that the

² Much has been written in the scholarly literature about the origins and the precise significance of the Arabic terms *kalām/mutakallim*. For a review see Niewöhner, pp. 7-34. Some put an accent on Greek antecedents, e.g., Van Ess "Structure," pp. 21-50; Van Ess "Skizze," pp. 23-60. However, it seems clear that the dialectical style of the *kalām* was also at home in Syriac academic practice; see Cook, pp. 32-43. Recently F.W. Zimmerman has sketched the development of "dilemmatic" reasoning in the intellectual traditions which influenced Islamic scholarly culture, which will appear in a forthcoming issue of *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*. But more proximate to present purposes, two scholars have long since shown that in the Arabic speaking world of the Muslims, *kalām* also evokes the contexts of apologetics and polemics. See Gardet, pp. 258-269; Pines "Mutakallim," pp. 224-240. Christian writers in Arabic also used the term *mutakallim* to mean "religious controversialist," as one may see in the following quotation from the work which will be the focus of the present essay. The writer at one point refers to people whom "a *mutakallim*, or a reading of one of God's scriptures, compel to confess that Christ is true God." See *Summa*, fol. 9v-10r. Accordingly, one may meaningfully employ the Arabic terms *kalām* and *mutakallim*, even in connection with Christian writers who wrote apologies for their religious convictions as part of the Arabic scholarly life of the early Abbasid caliphate.

³ See the list of the writers and their works in Griffith "Prophet". To the list one must now add Samir & Nwyja. General guidance to the Christian *mutakallimūn* and their works may also be found in Samir "Tradition"; Haddad *Trinité*.

⁴ See Samir "Theodorus"; Samir "Note"; Samir "Qurrah"; Samir "Date"; Samir "Somme"; Haddad *Trinité*, pp. 59-62 *et passim*; Griffith "Stephen"; Griffith "Greek"; Griffith "Sectarian"; Griffith "Summa".

"Summary of the Ways of Faith," as the *Summa* is called in the manuscripts,⁵ is a long, now anonymous composition of some twenty-five chapters, written in Arabic in the ninth century by one or more Christian *mutakallimūn* from the Melkite community. A fair statement of the tenor of the work is evident in the full title it carries in the one manuscript known to contain the entire work. This manuscript was copied, or perhaps compiled, by Stephen of al-Ramlah at the monastery of Mar Charitōn in Palestine in the year A.D. 877.⁶ The full title reads:

The summary of the ways of faith in the Trinity of the unity of God,
and in the incarnation of God the Word from the pure virgin Mary.⁷

Appropriately enough in a work of *kalām*, the "ways of faith" mentioned in this title refer to the creedal statements (*aqāwīl*), the modes of verbal expression, in which Christians confess their faith. The *Summa* also includes a chapter 14 which states and then refutes what the author calls "the ways which exclude their proponents from Christianity,"⁸ and each one of these "ways" is characterized as an allegation (*zaʿm*) made by an adversary who somehow contradicts an important thesis or doctrinal proposition (*qawl*) espoused in Melkite orthodoxy. For the rest, the chapters of the *Summa* set out reasoned statements of the Christian articles of faith, buttressed by numerous testimonies from the scriptures. Indeed, several chapters are devoted almost exclusively to the quotation of testimonies from scripture (12 and 13), and these are the chapters which one finds copied several times in the manuscript tradition, even apart from the *Summa* as a whole.⁹

Special features of the *Summa*, in addition to the traditional doctrinal discussions of Trinity and Incarnation which it contains, are the chapters devoted to issues which arose in the controversies of the day as a direct result of Islamic hegemony. Among these is chapter 18, which provides tailor-made rebuttals, so to speak, against challenges to Christian doctrines which Muslims customarily posed in the course of day-to-day arguments about religion. Included in this chapter are answers to objections to Christian ideas posed by Manichaean dualists.¹⁰ Chapter 19 is devoted to proving that Christianity is the true religion of Abraham, and indeed of Adam before him. Several chapters (20-22) are devoted to setting forth the position of Jews in the Christian scheme of

⁵ See *Summa*, fol. 2r.

⁶ See Griffith "Stephen"; Samir "Date"; *Summa*, fol. 197v.

⁷ *Summa*, fol. 2r.

⁸ *Summa*, fol. 76r.

⁹ See the convenient chart displaying the relationship between the chapters of the *Summa* and the contents of the MSS where portions of the work are known to appear in Samir "Date," p. 355.

¹⁰ The contents of chapter 18 are listed in Samir "Qurrah"; Haddad *Trinité*, p. 60; Griffith "Sec-tarian".

things; they explain that the gentiles have now become heirs to the promise which God had once made to the Israelites. The latter is a particularly intriguing theme because it suggests that in the increasingly Islamic cultural milieu of the first Abbasid century or so, Jews, Christians and Muslims were all interested in reviewing and revising their conflicting religious claims. It further suggests that being *ahl al-dhimmah* and without political power, they were now impelled to advance their interests in the public domain by arguing their differences with one another in open appeals to exegetical reason, without recourse to imperial power, be it Roman or Persian, as they no longer had it.¹¹

The *Summa* is distinguished from other works of Christian apologetics written in Arabic during the early Abbasid era by the breadth of its scope, and by the comprehensiveness of its coverage of issues of importance to the Melkite community, including even an Arabic translation of the so-called "Apostolic Canons," along with some other canonical provisions which date from the early church synods (chapter 25). In fact, the *Summa*, by itself matches and surpasses the range of topics which one finds addressed in the full bibliographies of the known works of early Christian *mutakallimūn* such as Theodore Abū Qurrah, Ḥabīb ibn Khidmah Abū Rā'īṭah, and Ḥammār al-Baṣrī.

Finally, a striking feature of the *Summa*, and the one which is the major focus of attention in the present essay, is the fact that the *kalām* itself, the Arabic language of the discourse in this work of Christian apologetics, is replete with Islamic religious vocabulary, and with Arabic expressions which put the apologetic arguments in the *Summa* squarely within the framework of a reply to the Qur'an's rhetorical challenges to the Christians. This feature is easily seen in the work's introductory chapter, an analysis of which may best serve the purposes of the present communication.

THE *SUMMA* AND THE LANGUAGE OF ISLAM:
CHAPTER 1; THE *MISE-EN-SCENE*

In the very first chapter of the *Summa* the author clarifies the socio-cultural situation which prompted him to compose the work. It was not simply a matter of supplying the reader with rebuttals to the customary Islamic objections to Christian doctrines and religious practices, although the writer would indeed devote a whole chapter of the *Summa* to this important task, and in chapter 1 he refers the reader interested in rebuttals forward to chapter 18,¹² where there are answers to some thirty-three questions which are typical of those which Muslims and

¹¹ For the earliest Jewish *kalām* see now Stroumsa.

¹² See *Summa*, fol. 5v.

Manichaeans addressed to Christians in the early Islamic period. But in chapter 1 the author has a more pressing concern. He makes it perfectly clear that what most concerns him is an unacceptable confessional situation which had developed in the Christian community of his own day. Specifically, the author complains that Christians of Arabic culture had been dissembling their faith, in Arabic terms calculated to deflect from themselves the reproach which the followers of the Qur'an customarily brought against the upholders of the traditional Christian doctrines. Here is a sample of the author's indictment:

They hide their faith, and they divulge to them [i.e., the Muslims] what suits them They stray off the road which leads its people to the kingdom of heaven, in flight from testifying (*tashahhud*) to the doctrine of the Trinity of the unity of God and His incarnation, because of what strangers say in reproach to them [They are] the hypocrites (*munāfiqīn*) among us, marked with our mark, standing in our congregations, contradicting our faith, forfeiters of themselves (*al-khāsirin*), who are Christians in name only.¹³

In the course of chapter 1 the author of the *Summa* bluntly identifies the erroneous Arabic statements of doctrine which his accused "dissemblers" of their faith publicly accept. They are, as one will see, statements which for the most part echo the language of the Qur'an. The author's own apologetic method is then to defend the traditional doctrines of the Melkite community in an Arabic idiom which takes full account of the nuances of the language of both the Qur'an and the Islamic *ʿilm al-kalām*. In other words, he intends to prove the doctrinal claims of Melkite orthodoxy in the very language of the religious culture whose social success had done most to subvert the clear statement of orthodox doctrines in the first place. Accordingly, one may best describe this accomplishment by examining the issues raised in chapter 1 more closely, and by highlighting the author's apologetic method as one proceeds.

The author of the *Summa* accentuated the problem which Islamic society posed for Christian faith by first summoning up a utopian vision of the "unanimity" of Christians in the profession of the Nicene creed prior to the rise of Islam. Due to God's providential guidance, the apologist argued, the Roman emperors Constantine and Theodosius had in the past arranged for the bishops of the world to gather in council to dispel errors and to teach the truth. They seized the opportunity "to make a summary of the faith in the trinity of the oneness of God, and in His incarnation, from God's scriptures, so that the people of the church, great and small, might altogether recite it."¹⁴ This summary was the creed;

¹³ Ibid., fol. 6r-v.

¹⁴ Ibid., fol. 4v.

God himself had guided its composition; Christian writers and intellectuals of the past had defended it against the opponents of the faith. But now, says the author of the *Summa*, the work of the Christian scholars of the past is of no avail in the present controversies inspired by Muslims. As he explains it:

In those days there was no community (*ummah*) to match the people of this community, in whose midst we are. That is because of the language of the people of the past about God, I mean the materialists (*al-dahriyyah*) and besides them the atheists (*al-zandaqah*) and others; in their descriptions of God their language was a horribly subtle language. The language of this community about God is a clear language (*kalām tāhir*), which ordinary people understand, I mean their saying, "there is no god but God!"¹⁵

One easily recognizes here the first phrase of the Islamic *shahādah* (Q. 37:35). But what one should be careful to notice as well is the author's open allegation that what made the Islamic challenge so formidable to Christians of his time was the clarity of the Arabic language about God. And he immediately points out that by the first phrase of the *shahādah*, Muslims in fact mean something much different from what Christians confess about God.

By "there is no god but God" they mean a god other than the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. According to what they say, "God neither generates nor is generated [Q. 112:3]." Nor according to what they say, is the Holy Spirit anything other than a creature among creatures. So, their saying "there is no god but God" is the same as what we say in words, but it is different in meaning.¹⁶

Striking in this passage is the author's admission that Christians even employ the formula "there is no god but God." He goes on to say,

When we, the assembly of Christians, say "there is no god but God" we mean a living God, comprising a living spirit which both enlivens and brings death; a mind which gives a determination to everything that it wills; and a word by which the being of everything comes about.¹⁷

Here in a nutshell the reader may observe the apologetic method of the author of the *Summa*. He employs language which one recognizes as quintessentially Islamic, such as the first phrase of the *shahādah*. But he uses it to voice in Arabic the essence of the Christian doctrine of God. And complementary to his deployment of this stock phrase from a Muslim's confessional vocabulary for Christian purposes is his constant

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. 5r-v.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 5v.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 5v.

repetition throughout the *Summa* of another Islamic phrase which he has adapted from the Qur'an to express in Arabic the church's most distinctive creedal claim, namely the divinity of Jesus Christ. The phrase is none other than the divine epithet, "Lord of the worlds (*rabb al-^cālamīn*)," which occurs some forty-two times in the Qur'an. The author of the *Summa* constantly employs it in the phrase, "Christ, the Lord of the worlds (*al-Masīḥ rabb al-^cālamīn*)."¹⁸

In spite of his use of Islamic language, however, the author of the *Summa* was nevertheless no religious indifferentist. Rather, his purpose was all the more calculated to counteract the habits of those Arabic speaking Christians of his day who were accustomed to conceal the specifics of their faith behind Islamic phrases, which in the Islamic community could only be interpreted to state the opposite of the traditional Christian doctrines of trinity and incarnation. For this masquerade the author of the *Summa* had only contempt. He considered it to be an unwarranted evasion of the truth, which some Arabic speaking Christians of his day practiced, in contrast to what he presented as the honest habits of Christians of other times and places. He was perfectly blunt about the situation. In his words, the evaders of the truth were

a group (*qawm*) in the midst of the people of this community who rule over them, a group born among them, grown up with them, and educated in their culture (*ta'addabū bi-adabihim*.) They conceal their faith, and disclose to them what suits them This [practice] comes from their forebears, and their children have followed their example in an obliging evasion.¹⁹

Clearly the author is speaking of a group of second generation Arabophone Christians who have already become acculturated to Islamic society. He goes on to mention others of them who "inhibit the open confessor of his faith, saying to him, 'What preoccupies you, to be so distracted from your situation?'"²⁰

For the author of the *Summa*, these people are either hypocrites, heedless of the truth about God, fools incapacitated by the novel, or people consumed with acquisitiveness, "in flight from testifying (*tashahhud*) to the trinity of the oneness of God, and the incarnation, because strangers reproach them for it."²¹

Furthermore, in the author's parlance, such renegade Christians are hypocrites (*munāfiqūn*) among us, marked with our mark, standing in our congregations, contradicting our faith, forfeiters of

¹⁸ E.g., *ibid.*, fol. 4r, and *passim*.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, fol. 6r.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 6r.

²¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 6r-v.

themselves (*al-khāsirin*), who are Christians in name only. They disbelieve in their Lord and their God, Jesus Christ, the son of Mary; due to the calumny of strangers they disdain to describe for them any of their Lord's vicissitudes in the flesh.²²

One may readily recognize expressions common in the Qur'an in this passage in which the author is castigating the diffidence of those Christians who in turn fear the reproach of the Qur'an. Expressions such as "hypocrites," and "forfeiter of themselves" both appear there more than twenty times, while the formula "Jesus, the Messiah, the son of Mary" is the Qur'an's clearest Christological statement (e.g., Q. 3:45).

According to the author of the *Summa* the dissimulating Christians of his day really were devoid of faith in their hearts. They feared reproach because of their overriding concern for their own earthly prosperity. And their dissimulation, as irony would have it, put them outside the very community of Christians whose doctrines even the Qur'an attested.

Although they give voice to something of the confession of Christ our Lord, they voice only that in which those who govern their affairs agree with them, and that to which they have no objection against them. But in that to which they give voice in the presence of those who utter it against them, they are at variance with the Christians characterized in their scripture [i.e., the Qur'an] by disbelief (*kufr*) and enmity to God in their doctrine: "They have disbelieved who say God is the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary" [Q. 5:17]; and, "They have disbelieved who say that God is one of three, and the Messiah is the son of God" [Q. 5:73].²³

In this somewhat densely packed passage the author of the *Summa* argues that in attempting to adopt creedal phrases from the Qur'an the Arabophone Christians choose expressions which in the Qur'an are intended actually to contradict Christian doctrines. Consequently, the logic of the situation puts them in a confessional no man's land: "They are neither Christians, nor *hunafā'* Muslims, but they are betwixt and between, waverers (*mudhabdhabin*)."²⁴ This language in turn is meant to shame the dissimulating Christians, echoing as it does the contempt which, according to Islamic tradition, Muḥammad himself expressed for "waverers" between Islam and Christianity.²⁵

From this point in the first chapter of the *Summa* the author goes on to pinpoint Christology as the determining issue in interfaith relations.

²² *Ibid.*, fol. 6v.

²³ *Ibid.*, fol. 7r-v.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. 7v.

²⁵ See the *hadith* reported in Hanbal *Musnad*, vol. 5, pp. 163-64.

He argues that once Christians have given way on this issue, the distinctiveness of their faith is eclipsed. So he paints the following scene as characteristic of the situation among the "accommodationist" Arabophone Christians, whose practices he opposes.

If you ask them about Christ our Lord, they maintain that he is a messenger (*rasūl*) like one of the messengers [*al-rusul*, cf. Q. 5:75]; they do not favor 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, nor do they do any of the things which Christians do in their churches; in public they avow the opposite of the trinity of the oneness of God and his incarnation, they disparage the messengers (*al-rusul*), 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 with which the Israelites were content, God is one (Deut. 6:4)! We have no need for the 'significations (*al-maʿāni*)', nor for what human beings consider legitimate." Answer, Believer, and say, "Since you have come to this state of affairs, watch out for yourselves! The society (*jamāʿah*) 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."²⁶

In this long passage one may discern the heart of the matter. The author of the *Summa* is taking issue with Christian people who, under the influence of the preaching of the Qur'an, were willing to say that the Messiah is simply a man, one of God's messengers, an "intermediary between God and man,"²⁷ "an owned chattel (*ʿabd marbūb*)"²⁸ of God.

The author of the *Summa* builds his counter arguments on passages from the scriptures and the teachings of the fathers. In the first chapter alone he quotes passages from the works of John Chrysostom, Athanasius, and Gregory the Theologian. Indeed, an important point in his argument is the contention that without the teachings of the fathers and teachers of the church "no one would be guided to the treasuries of

²⁶ *Summa*, fol. 7v-8r. The "significations," or "meanings" (*al-maʿāni*) to which the author refers in this passage are the "referents," the entities or hypostases (*al-aqānīm*), to which the scriptural names "Father," "Son," and "Spirit" must refer according to the arguments of a number of Christian *mutakallimūn*. Cf. the brief discussion in Haddad *Trinité*, pp. 168-169. Correlatively, the term *al-maʿnā* was also an important one in the Islamic *kalām*, to do with the appropriate understanding of the *ṣifāt Allāh*. See Frank.

²⁷ *Summa*, fol. 15v.

²⁸ *Summa*, fol. 16r. The Qur'an insists that Jesus is but an *ʿabd*, a slave or chattel of God. See, e.g., Q.4:172; 19:30; 43:59. The Nestorian patriarch, Timothy I (d. 823), wrote one of the most detailed of the known Christian responses to this Islamic understanding of Christ's title "Servant." See Hurst.

the Gospel, the Acts, or Paul, except the elite of the people."²⁹ Whereas, for the author of the *Summa* the accomplishment of the fathers and teachers in regard to the message of the Bible was to have "built their own discourse (*al-kalām*) on it, and to have dislodged the subtle from God's discourse, to have disclosed the hidden from it, and to have clarified the ambiguous for anyone whose understanding was weak."³⁰ One recognizes that this sentence fairly explains his own purposes in the next twenty-four chapters of the *Summa Theologiae Arabica*, for towards the beginning of chapter 1 he had written:

None of the ways (*wajh min al-wujūh*) by which people may be led to belief in the Trinity of the unity of God, and His incarnation, should be neglected: an argument with any one of those in opposition to the faith; an issue in connection with which a lesson might be taught; a process of reasoning (*qiyās*) by which one who deploys it might be able to tell truth from falsehood; or the elucidation of what is obscure in God's scripture, in behalf of anyone whose understanding is weak.³¹

CONVERSION AND CONTINUITY

Arabic works of Christian theology such as the *Summa* make it clear that during the ninth century there was a concerted effort in the Melkite community to provide for the continuity of Chalcedonian orthodoxy in the Arabic speaking caliphate. The ecclesiastical and scholarly language of this community had been principally Greek up to the middle of the eighth century, as the memory of the name of John of Damascus helps one to recall.³² But beginning with the career of Theodore Abū Qurrah (c. 750-c. 825), and extending well into the eleventh century, as the Sinai archive shows, there was an increasing need in Melkite circles for church books in Arabic.³³ This requirement seems to have been more pressing for Melkites than for those communities whose principal ecclesiastical languages remained current in the caliphate, i.e., Syriac or Coptic. So, for example, among non-Chalcedonians one does indeed find Arabic works of Christian *kalām* dating from the ninth century but few Arabic lectionaries, hagiographies, Bibles, or translations of Christian classics were done into the newly dominant Arabic language by non-Melkites during this early period.³⁴ The inference which readily suggests itself here is that with the disappearance of Greek as a current

²⁹ *Summa*, fol. 18v.

³⁰ *Summa*, fol. 18v.

³¹ *Summa*, fol. 5r.

³² See Blake, pp. 367-80.

³³ See the list of works in Blau, vol. 267, pp. 21-33.

³⁴ See Griffith "Gospel".

language among Christians in the oriental patriarchates, Melkites forthwith adopted Arabic even for ecclesiastical purposes. It is true that in Syria/Palestine Melkites also had a Syriac heritage.³⁵ But their divorce from the Greek-speaking world of Byzantium seems to have cut off the traditional sources of the community's intellectual and liturgical vigor, prompting them not so much to a *resourcement* in their antique Syriac heritage, but impelling them to meet the new challenge head-on. They proposed to meet the Muslim challenge with a full statement of Christianity's religious claims in the Arabic of the Qur'an.

The author of the *Summa* recognized that Arabic itself posed a threat to the faith of Christians. As he said, "the language of this community about God is a clear language, which ordinary people understand."³⁶ Consequently, it is clear from the foregoing analysis of the *Summa*'s first chapter that for Arabophone Christians the need of the day as the Orthodox teachers conceived it was to counter the Islamic *shahādah* with a clear Arabic testimony to "the Trinity of the unity of God, and the incarnation of God the Word from the pure virgin Mary,"³⁷ a formula which in one form or another reappears constantly throughout the *Summa Theologiae Arabica*.

The success of the Arabic language itself, therefore, with the Qur'an as its supreme literary and religious achievement, must have been a potent influence for the conversion to Islam of upwardly mobile Christians in the vigorously new Abbasid caliphate. Traces of this influence may be seen in the earliest Christian *kalām*, in the references which the authors make to the reproach which some Arabophone Christians feared from any too clear a statement of their traditional doctrines and cult practices. Theodore Abū Qurrah, for example, in argument against Christians who neglected the veneration of the holy icons because of the reproach of Muslims, said the following about Christianity's antagonists in the caliphate:

Who among them, hearing the Christians say that God has a son, His equal, of His own essence, would not say these people are mad? And when anyone hears them say that God is not prior to this son born of God, will he not think them to be the most contrary of people? Their saying that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, each one of them, is perfect God, not three gods but one God – for these people would this not be the maddest position? Therefore, anyone of the Christians who abhors the madness of the speech (*kalām*) of these people, or the veneration of the holy icons, should

³⁵ Theodore Abū Qurrah himself says he wrote thirty treatises in Syriac. See Bacha, pp. 60-61. See also Fiey "Rum".

³⁶ *Summa*, fol. 5v. See also n. 15 above.

³⁷ *Summa*, fol. 2r.

also, because of their reproach, give up the other features of Christianity we have mentioned.³⁸

Yet, Abū Qurrah, like the author of the *Summa*, wants the standard Christian doctrines to be clearly stated in Arabic, in spite of the fact that Muslims, such as the famous littérateur al-Jāhiz, would claim that the radical absurdity of the doctrines appeared clearly in their Arabic expression.³⁹ It was precisely the task of the Christian *mutakallim*, Abū Qurrah would argue, to state the faith clearly even in the face of the charge of absurdity from the wise men of this world, as St. Paul had predicted would be the case (1 Cor. 1:18-25).⁴⁰ For Abū Qurrah, echoing yet another theme in the Qur'an (Ibrāhīm 14:4), it was a sign of the true religion that it must be preached to people in their own language:

Had God not given His messengers whom he sent to people the power to discuss with them (*yukallimūhum*) what they should understand, there could be no argument against them on resurrection day if they had called his messengers false and given no credit to their teaching (*qawlahum*), and did not accept what they brought. If God punished the peoples who did not accept His messengers because of a speech (*kalam*) they did not understand, He would depart from His own justice.⁴¹

But the fact remains, according to the testimony of the author of the *Summa Theologiae Arabica*, that some Christians of the ninth century sought to accommodate the Arabic expression of their faith to the diction of the Qur'an in order to avoid the reproach of Muslims and to safeguard their own social status. Their actions may have been a step in the process of the eventual conversion of many Arabophone Christian people to Islam. It is noteworthy in this connection that not only was the first Abbasid century a decisive period for the spread of Arabic in the Semitic speaking conquered territories, and for its full development as the medium of classical Islamic culture in the caliphate;⁴² but the second half of the century, in the judgment of one modern scholar, also saw the beginning of the first great wave of conversions to Islam in Iraq, Syria, and even in Egypt. According to Richard W. Bulliet's scheme, the years 791-888 were the years of the "early majority," when up to thirty-four percent of the population may have converted to Islam, in what Bulliet calls a "bandwagon process."⁴³

³⁸ Abu Qurra, p. 3 (Arabic). See Griffith "Theodore".

³⁹ See Finkel *Jahiz*, pp. 25-29.

⁴⁰ See Abu Qurra, p. 3.

⁴¹ Dick, p. 64.

⁴² See Poliak; Wansbrough *Quranic*; Wansbrough *Sectarian*.

⁴³ Bulliet *Conversion*.

The author of the *Summa*, who was determined to continue the preaching of orthodox, Chalcedonian Christianity in the *lingua sacra* of Islam, despised the Arabophone dissemblers of their faith, who tried to hide it behind phrases from the Qur'an. Echoing the Islamic *ḥadīth*, he contemptuously called these dissemblers "neither Christians, nor *ḥunafā'* Muslims, ... but waverers."⁴⁴ His frustration was shared by another Arabic speaking Christian apologist, a Nestorian. The author of the al-Hāshimī/al-Kindī correspondence reported the reaction of the Caliph al-Ma'mūn, when he was told that the conversion of many of the new Muslims at his court was insincere. The caliph is made to say:

I certainly know that so and so, and so and so, were Christians. They became Muslims reluctantly. They are really neither Muslims nor Christians, but deceivers God's curse be on them all.⁴⁵

Given these testimonies to Christian "waverers," "hypocrites," and "deceivers" in the Christian *kalām* of early Abbasid times, one is led to wonder if such "Christian-Muslims," so to speak, may not account for some of the "Judaeo-Christians" whom Professor Shlomo Pines postulates for this later time.⁴⁶ After all, even the author of the *Summa* says that their faith is "Judaism, ... no more, no less."⁴⁷ But this is yet another issue, for another time. Suffice it now to have introduced the *Summa Theologiae Arabica* as an important document in the search for both continuity and conversion in early Islamic times.

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Communal Identity and the Systematisation of Knowledge in the Syriac ‘Cause of all causes’

G.J. Reinink

One of the major medieval encyclopaedic texts of Syriac tradition occupies a rather exceptional place in Anton Baumstark’s *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*: “An ‘alle Nationen’ d.h. Bekenntnisse sich wendend, handelt es über Gott, die sinnliche und die Geisterwelt und über den Menschen mit dem sichtlichen Bestreben, eine Verständigung nicht nur zwischen den verschiedenen christlichen Religionsparteien, sondern auch zwischen Christentum, Islam und Judentum anzubahnen.” Defining its objectives in this way, Baumstark compares this work with Lessing’s drama *Nathan der Weise*, a typical representative of the “Enlightenment” in eighteenth century Germany.¹

The encyclopaedic text at issue was published in 1889 by Karl Kayser.² It bears the following title in the Berlin manuscript used by Kayser as *manuscrit de base* for his edition: “The book of the Cause of all causes, the Creator of all creatures, the Maker of all visible and invisible things, a universal book (destined) for all peoples under the heavens, which teaches how the knowledge of the Truth can be acquired.”³ The *Cause of all Causes* (henceforth the *CC*) was composed by an anonymous Jacobite bishop of Edessa, according to Baumstark most probably in the tenth century,⁴ though

¹ A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (Bonn 1922) 280–281. Religious tolerance or the pursuit of religious unification is also considered as the work’s main objective by the other handbooks of Syriac literature; cf. N. McLean’s addition in: W. Wright, *A Short History of Syriac Literature* (London 1894) 242–243; R. Duval, *La littérature syriaque* (Paris 1907) 243–244; J.-B. Chabot, *Littérature syriaque* (Paris 1934) 87–88.

² C. Kayser (ed.), *Das Buch von der Erkenntniss der Wahrheit oder der Ursache aller Ursachen* (Leipzig 1889). Kayser used for his edition four manuscripts in European libraries (Berlin, Rome, Paris, Oxford). Kayser’s German translation was posthumously published under the same title by C. Siegfried (Strassburg 1893). In this article the abbreviation *CC* is used for Kayser’s edition (quoted according to its pages and lines) and translation (quoted according to its pages).

³ *CC*, Introduction; 2, ll.2–4/1.

⁴ A. Pohlmann, “Ueber die syrische Schrift: Liber generalis ad omnes gentes in einer Hdschr. der Bibliothek der Propaganda zu Rom,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen*

most scholars assigned the work to the eleventh or twelfth century.⁵ The *CC* is divided into nine Discourses, which are subdivided into chapters, ranging from five to ten chapters in a treatise. It is perhaps due to its size that the last part of the *CC* appears to be lost.⁶ The manuscripts that are known and accessible today present the text up to the end of the second chapter of the seventh Discourse, in which the stones and metals of Creation are described; but thanks to the detailed table of contents in the introduction, we have some information about the topics that were treated in the final part of the *CC*.⁷

Since Kayser's edition, the *CC* has not received the attention

Morgenländischen Gesellschaft 14 (1861) 659, suggested that the famous Jacobite scholar Jacob of Edessa (died 708) may have been the author of the *CC*. B.H. Cowper, "Philosophical Questions in the Ancient Syrian Church," *The Journal of Sacred Literature*, Fourth Series, 1 (1862) 161, accepted Pohlmann's view. Kayser (ed.), *Das Buch* (as in n.2) II, rejected Pohlmann's identification, arguing that the *CC* cannot have been composed before the tenth century and that it may even be of a still later date. Baumstark's argument for the tenth century, on the contrary, is not decisive. It is only based upon the presumption that the *CC* reflects a liberal attitude and that this mentality can be understood better in the tenth century than in later times (*Geschichte* [as in n.1] 280, n.7).

⁵ Th. Nöldeke, in his review of Kayser's edition in: *Literarisches Centralblatt für Deutschland* 30 (1889) 1001–1004, proposed a date in the eleventh or twelfth century because of the influence of certain Arabic words, names and expressions and in particular because of the author's geographical knowledge of European countries. The handbooks of McLean-Wright, Duval and Chabot (see above, n.1) adopt Nöldeke's date. However, we may perhaps exclude the twelfth century. The author reports that he composed the work after having been bishop of Edessa about thirty years (*CC*, Introduction; 8, l.6/10). No bishop of Edessa during the twelfth century seems to have been in office such a long time. A possible candidate of the eleventh century may be Athanasius, who was already bishop in 1042 and died in 1100. He is known as an author by his baptismal name Barsauma bar Ishai and he was highly esteemed for his oratorical powers; cf. I.-B. Chabot (ed.), A. Abouna (tr.), *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens*, CSCO 82, 354 (Louvain 1916, 1974), 295, l.3–296, l.17/221, l.14–222, l.16; J.B. Segal, *Edessa, 'The Blessed City'* (Oxford 1970) 240.

⁶ More probable than the possibility that the work remained unfinished is the assumption that it was once transmitted in two volumes and that the second volume has disappeared, or that some scribe, in an early stage of the transmission of the text, did not complete his copying-work.

⁷ See *CC*, Introduction; 2, l.4–4, l.19/1–5, for the table of contents (on 4, ll.4–19/4–5, the contents of Discourses VII:3–5; VIII:1–5; IX:1–7).

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that it deserves;⁸ for it is a highly interesting and important document not only for the study of encyclopaedic knowledge (in the fullest sense of the word) that circulated in the contemporary scholarly milieu of Jacobite communities in North Mesopotamia, but also for the study of the relations between medieval Syriac, Greek-Byzantine and Arabic scholarship.⁹ My present paper, however, will not enter into that question, but rather will be focussed on the following two interrelated questions. Firstly: For what purpose was the *CC* composed? Is encyclopaedic knowledge here really at the service of “universal religion,” propagated by the enlightened spirit of an Edessene bishop pursuing religious tolerance between the different religious communities in the Near East by appealing to the rational faculties of the human mind? Secondly: Does there exist a connection between the objectives of the *CC* and the way in which encyclopaedic knowledge is organised and systematised in this work, as a consequence of which the composition received its very particular generic characteristics?

1. THE PURPOSE OF THE COMPOSITION

In the introduction the author explicitly defines the main purpose of his work: it intends to teach the perfect knowledge of the Truth;¹⁰

⁸ There is no systematic study of the literary character and the sources of the *CC*. There is a short paragraph on the *CC*'s chemistry in E.O. von Lippmann's *Entstehung und Ausbreitung der Alchemie* (Berlin 1919) 394–395. More important and too much neglected are Gerhard Klinge's remarks on the *CC* in his article “Die Bedeutung der syrischen Theologen als Vermittler der griechischen Philosophie an den Islam,” *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 3.Folge IX, LVIII.Bd. (1939) 382–386. Klinge focussed attention on the Neoplatonic character of the *CC* and its correspondences with the works of Nemesius of Emesa, Abū Qurrah and Moses bar Kepha. In 1948 fragments of the *CC* preserved in the manuscript *Vat.syr.191* were published by G. Furlani, “Estratti del *Libro della Causa delle Cause* in un manoscritto siriano Vaticano,” *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 23 (1948) 37–45.

⁹ See Nöldeke (as in n.4) 1002–1003. Nöldeke also pointed out some correspondences between the *CC* and the works of the Muslim “Brethren of Purity” (cf. I.R. Netton, *Muslim Neoplatonists: An Introduction to the Thought of the Brethren of Purity*, Islamic Surveys 19 [Edinburgh 1991]), but rightly remarks that the explanation for that is to be found in the common cultural background of the time rather than in the assumption that the author of the *CC* was directly influenced by that literature.

¹⁰ *CC*, Introduction; 6, l.9/7.

the perfect knowledge of the Truth basically concerns the knowledge of God being the "Cause of all causes," the Creator of the Universe.¹¹ Furthermore the work is composed not only for his own religious community,¹² but for all peoples, and its contents should be accessible to all bodies and ranks of society.¹³ Finally, the work should inform its reader about all knowledge in every area, including *inter alia* theology, philosophy, anthropology, the sciences, religions and cultures, geography, ethnology, and sociology.¹⁴

If one should look for one simple head-word to characterise the purpose of the work as professed by the author, the best choice would be "universality." How can every single human being, living in the confused, complex and diversified reality of the world, find the one universal principle of truth, which applies to any one at any place, and by which the order of the created world in all its facets and its purpose become lucid and explicable? The author's answer to this question—as may be deduced from his remarks throughout the *CC*—may be summarised as follows. First of all one should retreat from the turmoils of the world and seek the seclusion of a monastery or another quiet place.¹⁵ There, the human soul can be purified from the "strange" passions, which do not belong to the nature of the soul and trouble its natural limpidity.¹⁶ Once the soul has reached the state of rest and cleanness, man can fully use the rational faculty of his soul and take the first step on the way towards the knowledge of the Truth.¹⁷ However, this first step should not be taken by reading the books of the Gentiles, since these books often present different and even conflicting views; moreover, they are not accepted by all.¹⁸ The first step is to read the "Book of Na-

¹¹ Cf. *inter alia* *CC*, Introduction; 6, ll.18–19, 12, l.16/8, 16.

¹² See *CC*, Introduction; 10, ll.10–20/13.

¹³ *CC*, Introduction; 6, ll.9–11/7–8.

¹⁴ Cf. also the author's summary added to the table of contents in *CC*, Introduction; 4, l.20–5, l.17/5–6.

¹⁵ *CC* I:4; 26, ll.9–12/34.

¹⁶ *CC* I:4; 26, ll.12–15/34. See further below, n.47.

¹⁷ I use the word "step" here to mean a process of gradual deepening of knowledge, which belongs to one distinct stage of the tripartite epistemological scheme in the *CC*.

¹⁸ This is discussed in *CC* I:2; cf. also *CC* I:4, 5; 26, l.20–27, l.1, 37, ll.21–23/35, 48.

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ture"; for Nature is prior to books written by human beings, and Nature is the common father and teacher of the human race.¹⁹ The reflection on man (being the microcosm) and Nature (being the macrocosm)²⁰ then leads to the awareness that there is one God, who is the Creator and Ruler of the Universe,²¹ and also to the insight of how God's nature and man's place, role and final destination in the world must be defined.²² The second step consists in the reading and the study of the books. Here one should concentrate primarily on the description of the genesis of Creation by Moses, since the three religions of the Christians, Jews and Muslims with all their different confessions and sects accept the authority of Moses.²³ However, the study of this book still does not lead to the perfect knowledge of the Truth, since it was composed for "children" at a time when the human race was not yet ripe for "consuming" the perfect teaching.²⁴ The third and final step is made by the reception of the perfect teaching of the Holy Gospel (the spiritual Law), which leads to the perfect knowledge of the Truth, being the highest (spiritual) level which mankind can attain, since it surpasses both the level of the natural Law and the level of the written Law.²⁵

Considering the development of the author's arguments throughout the *CC*, we may compare his description of the way towards the perfect knowledge of the Truth with the mounting of a pyramid consisting of three levels: the first level is accessible to every human being who brings his rational soul in the right condi-

¹⁹ *CC* I:2, 4; 19, II.4–13, 26, I.16–27, I.5/24–25, 35, and *passim*.

²⁰ *CC* I:4; 27, II.7–14, 32, I.23–33, I.7/35, 42. See also below, n.44.

²¹ *CC* I:4; 34, II.3–13/44. The topic that there is one Creator is discussed in *CC* I:5.

²² These topics are discussed successively in *CC* I:6–III:9.

²³ *CC* IV:3, 5; 157, II.4–19, 178, II.5–8/204–205, 232.

²⁴ *CC* IV:3, 4; 157, I.22–158, I.12, 162, I.8, 163, I.3, 163, I.22–164, I.3, 165, II.17–21, 166, II.3–7/205–206, 211–213, 215–216.

²⁵ The human race has three teachers: reason (the natural Law = the Book of Nature), Moses (the written Law = Pentateuch) and the Teacher and Lord of all people (Christ) of the perfect Book (the spiritual Law = Gospel); *CC* IV:4; 163, I.20–164, I.5, 166, II.1–3, 19–21/213, 216–217. The now lost Discourses VIII–IX concerned the spiritual Law, including the topics of the incarnation of God the Word and the perfect doctrine of the Lord; *CC* I:6, IV:3, 4; 51, II.19–23, 158, II.12–17, 166, II.17–22/66, 206, 217.

tion; the second level is only accessible for those who, like the monotheistic religions of the Christians, Jews and Muslims, acknowledge the (divine) authority of Moses and other Old Testament prophets;²⁶ the apex of the pyramid can be attained only by those who accept the Christian doctrine. The author's "universality" is, in fact, a demonstration that Christianity is the "universal religion," since only this religion embraces the three levels of knowledge leading to the perfect knowledge of God. The actual purpose of the *CC* appears to consist in a plain apology for the Christian religion rather than in the intention to promote mutual understanding between Christians, Muslims and Jews at the cost of Christian religious identity; and it is—in my view—first of all the tradition of discussions with the Muslim *mutakallimūn*, which exerted a fundamental influence on the *CC*'s argument that Christianity is the only true universal religion. The anthropological argumentation based upon human reason alone, by which the oneness of God over against Qur'ānic criticism is explained in conformity with the Christian doctrine of the Trinity,²⁷ exactly follows the apologetic scheme which Theodore Abū Qurrah (c.750-c.825) had already developed in his tract *On the Existence of the Creator and the True Religion*.²⁸ As Sidney Griffith has recently argued, Abū Qurrah's

²⁶ For the role of the Old Testament prophets, who preceded the coming of the spiritual Law, see *CC* IV:4; 166, ll.7–21. This section contains an implicit polemic against the Muslims, since it demonstrates that the service of the prophets came to an end with the coming of Christ.

²⁷ *CC* I:5; 39, l.6/50, adopts Qur'ānic terminology in saying that God has no companion (*ḥabrā*) or partner (*šawṭāpā*), showing in the following section (I:6) how the Christian Trinitarian doctrine is to be explained (cf. Qur'ān 3:69; 13:17; 16:29,59).

²⁸ There is now a new critical edition of the Arabic text of this tract by I. Dick, *Théodore Abuqurra, traité de l'existence du createur et de la vraie religion*, *Patri-moine Arabe Chrétien* 3 (Jounieh/Rome 1982). German translation by G. Graf, *Des Theodor Abū Qurra Traktat über den Schöpfer und die wahre Religion*, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters. Texte und Untersuchungen*, Bd.XIV, Heft 1 (Münster i.W. 1913). Theodore argues that man's being created in the likeness of God (Gen.1:27) makes that reason can conclude from the analogy Adam-God that God is three divine persons, viz. one who generates (Father), one being generated (Son) and one emanating (Holy Spirit); cf. Dick (ed.) 228; Graf (tr.) 41. According to the *CC* the analogy man-God leads to the "natural" conclusion that God is reason/mind (*ḥawmā*) having the property of generating (*yālūdūtā*) = Father, word (*melā*) having the property of being generated (*īlūdūtā*) = Son, and

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apologetic methodology was deeply influenced by the Christian-Islamic religious discourse of the first Abbasid century.²⁹ There are many more examples of the *CC*'s using the arguments of anti-Islamic polemics, for example in its discussion of human free will,³⁰ but the topic of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, being one of the main issues of Christian-Muslim disputation,³¹ runs

spirit (*rūḥā*) having the property of emanation/procession (*nāpūqūā*) = Holy Spirit; see *CC* I:6, 8, 10, III:6, IV:3, VII:1; 53, II.7–10, 62, II.3–5, 72, II.20–21, 146, II.5–6, 156, II.7–9, 253, I.17/68, 79, 93, 188, 203, 332. See also below, n.38.

²⁹ S.H. Griffith, "Faith and Reason in Christian Kalām: Theodore Abū Qurrah on Discerning the True Religion," in: S.Kh. Samir, J.S. Nielsen (eds.), *Christian Arabic Apologetics during the Abbasid Period (750–1258)*, Studies in the History of Religions 63 (Leiden/New York/Köln 1994) 1–43; for the life, works and influence of the Arabophone Melkite scholar Abū Qurrah, see Griffith's rich bibliography in the notes of this article.

³⁰ Cf. *CC* I:1, 4,9; 14, I.18–15, I.1, 36, II.7–9, 72, II.1–9/19, 46, 92, where the doctrine of the free will shows correspondences with Ephremian theology; see N. El-Khoury, *Die Interpretation der Welt bei Ephraem dem Syrer. Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte*, Tübinger Theologische Studien 6 (Mainz 1976) 111–120. For the topic of the free will in anti-Islamic polemics, see S.H. Griffith, "Free Will in Christian Kalām: The Doctrine of Theodore Abū Qurrah," *Parole de l'Orient* 14 (1987) 97–107; idem, "Free Will in Christian Kalām: Moshe bar Kepha against the Teachings of the Muslims," *Le Muséon* 100 (1987) 143–159. See further below, n.43.

³¹ Cf. *inter alios* S.H. Griffith, "Disputes with Muslims in Syriac Christian Texts: from Patriarch John (d.648) to Bar Hebraeus (d.1286)," in: B. Lewis-F. Niewöhner (eds.), *Religionsgespräche im Mittelalter*, Wolfenbütteler Mittelalterstudien 4 (Wiesbaden 1992) 254; A. van Roey, *Nonnus de Nisibe, traité apologétique. Étude, texte et traduction*, Bibliothèque du Muséon 21 (Louvain 1948) 56–57; B. Holmberg, *A Treatise on the Unity and Trinity of God by Israel of Kashkar (d.872). Introduction, edition and word index*, Lund Studies in African and Asian Religions 3 (Lund 1989) 134–138; Kh. Samir, *Le traité de l'unité de Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī (893–974). Étude et Édition critique*, Patrimoine Arabe Chrétien 2 (Jounieh/Rome 1980) XVII–XXVI; E. Platti, *Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, théologien chrétien et philosophe arabe. Sa théologie de l'Incarnation*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 14 (Leuven 1983) 122–123; idem, "Yaḥyā b. 'Adī and his Refutation of al-Warrāq's Treatise on the Trinity in Relation to his other Works," in: Samir and Nielsen (eds.), *Christian Arabic Apologetics* (as in n.29) 172–191. In particular a further study of the relations between the *CC* and the works of the Jacobite apologist Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī may be prolific; cf. e.g. the three names of God in *CC* I:7; 58, II.4–5/74: "the good, the rich and the wise," and Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī's three attributes of God: good–wise–powerful (Platti, "Yaḥyā b. 'Adī and his Refutation," 179–180) and the very same way in which Yaḥyā defines the "properties" of the three hypostases of the divine Trinity (see above, n.28 and Platti, *ibid.*, 183–184).

through the *CC* like a continuous thread.³²

No Muslim would be convinced by the author's arguments that Christianity is the universal religion, and we may assume—considering the very traditional topics of Christian-Muslim debate in the *CC*—that not even the author himself expected that his Syriac work would produce that effect in the predominantly Islamic and Arabic-speaking milieu of his day. The *CC* was composed for his own religious community, not even for Near Eastern Christianity in general. We may be pretty sure that the author in the chapter on the different confessions of the Christians (now lost) argued that the Christological doctrine of his (Jacobite) community most adequately concurs with the “natural” definition of the Trinitarian concept of God. A foretaste of that can be found in the chapter on the stones and the metals, where the union of the divine and human nature of Christ is compared with the *'ēliqīrōn* (ἤλεκτρον), being an alloy of gold and silver. His definition of Christ being *one hypostasis and one incarnated nature* most clearly distinguished his own Jacobite Christological confession from that of the other communities of Near Eastern Christianity, both the Melkites and the Nestorians.³³ The apologetic tendencies of the *CC*, however, mainly concern Islam, as will appear from the next section of this paper.

2. THE LITERARY STRUCTURE OF THE COMPOSITION

Job of Edessa, an early Syriac encyclopaedist and contemporary of Abū Qurrah, reports in his *Book of Treasures* (c.817) that he once

³² In addition to the references in n.28, cf. also *CC* I:10; 77, II.12–16/99 (comparing the sun with the Trinity); III:1, IV:4, VII:2; 116, II.4–8, 18, 118, II.15–17, 172, II.10–13/148–149, 151–152, 224 (the three congregations of the spiritual beings refer to the Trinity); IV:4; 166, II.7–13/216 (the Old Testament prophets show the Trinity); VII:2; 268, I.18–169, I.1/351 (the twelve stones of the high priest's breastplate [Ex. 28:17–21] symbolize the Trinity).

³³ *CC* VII:2; 268, II.9–13/351. Cf. J. Lebon, *La christologie du monophysisme syrien*, in: A. Grillmeier, H. Bacht (eds.), *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, I (Würzburg 1951) 425–580; A. de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabbog. Sa vie, ses écrits, sa théologie* (Louvain 1963) 378–392; R.C. Chesnut, *Three Monophysite Christologies: Severus of Antioch, Philoxenus of Mabbog, and Jacob of Sarug* (Oxford 1976). For the Cyrilline background of the *CC*'s formula, see J.A. McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy. Its History, Theology, & Texts* (Leiden/New York/Köln 1994) 193–222.

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composed a book, proving that Christ is both God and man according to the following scheme: (a) first of all he presented ten syllogisms based on Nature alone, which prove that Christ is both God and man; then he added to these "natural syllogisms" testimonies (b) from the books of the Prophets and (c) from the Holy Gospel, which demonstrate the same. In so doing, he followed the method of the three Laws: (a) the natural, (b) the written and (c) the spiritual Law, a method that points to the Holy Trinity.³⁴ Job's method in this apologetic tract—undoubtedly inspired by theological debate between Muslim and Christian scholars in Baghdad³⁵—lies at the root of the argumentation in the *CC*, and has decisively influenced its literary structure and the systematisation of encyclopaedic knowledge in this work.

In terms of generic classification the *CC* is related to the genre of the hexaemeron.³⁶ Following the earlier examples of this genre in

³⁴ Job of Edessa, *Book of Treasures*, VI,8, A. Mingana (ed./tr.), *Encyclopedia of Philosophical and Natural Sciences as Taught in Baghdad about A.D.817 or Book of Treasures by Job of Edessa*, Woodbroke Scientific Publications 1 (Cambridge 1935) 458, col.2, ll.13–20/278–279. On this work, see M. Levey, "Chemical Notions of an Early Ninth-Century Christian Encyclopedist," *Chymia* 11 (1966) 29–36; B. Lewin, "Job d'Édesse et son Livre des Trésors," *Orientalia Suecena* 6 (1957) 21–30; U. Weisser, *Das "Buch über das Geheimnis der Schöpfung" von Pseudo-Apollonius von Tyana*, *Ars Medica*, III.Abt., Bd.2 (Berlin/New York 1980) 55–63.

³⁵ It is beyond question that this work of Job (now lost) was directed against the Muslim rejection of Christ's divinity. It may be inferred from Job's remarks that he wrote this work and other works to provide "the believers" (Christians) with rational arguments against Muslim tenets which were opposed to Christian doctrines. The anti-Islamic apologetic character of another work by Job, viz. the book *On Faith*, are also obvious; this work should demonstrate the rightness of the Christian Trinitarian doctrine and the Christian practices of baptism, eucharist and worship to the East; cf. *Book of Treasures*, VI,8, ed. Mingana (as in n.34) 458, col.2, ll.21–29/279. For Job's scholarly activity in Baghdad, see Mingana (as in n.34) XIX–XXIII; R. Degen, "Galen im Syrischen: Eine Übersicht über die syrische Überlieferung der Werke Galens," in: V. Nutton (ed.), *Galen: Problems and Prospects* (London 1981) 131–166; F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, III (Leiden 1970) 230–231; G. Endress, "Die wissenschaftliche Literatur," in: H. Gätje (ed.), *Grundriß der Arabischen Philologie*, II: *Literaturwissenschaft* (Wiesbaden 1987) 410–411.

³⁶ Cf. in general F.E. Robbins, *The Hexaemeral Literature. A Study of the Greek and Latin Commentaries on Genesis* (Chicago 1912).

Jacobite tradition—the hexaemeron of Jacob of Edessa (died 708)³⁷ and the hexaemeron of Moses bar Kepha (died 903)³⁸—the *CC* systematises encyclopaedic knowledge concerning the Creation according to the biblical account of Genesis 1 (Discourses IV-VII), introducing the hexaemeron by an epistemological and theological dissertation on God (Discourse I)³⁹ and the purpose of the Creation (Discourse II:1-2).⁴⁰ But here the general correspondences in literary structure and composition between the *CC* and the older Syriac hexaemera end. Discourse II:3-8 explains that human reason can recognise that there is also an invisible created world and a future world of complete renewal of the visible and invisible Creation. Discourse III deals with the purpose of the creation of man, man's nature, his role in the created world and again with epistemological questions concerning man's knowledge of God. The final part deals with the *theoria*, the deeper spiritual meaning of the Creation, with the question of the gradual ascent of man's knowledge by study and way of life to the highest level of knowledge and with the question whether the knowledge of the Truth is infinite and eternal (Discourse VIII),⁴¹ and, in addition, with questions concerning the world to come (Discourse IX).⁴² The author of the *CC* seems to reorganise the pattern of the older Hexaemera by following the

³⁷ I.-B. Chabot (ed.), A. Vaschalde (Latin tr.), *Iacobi Edesseni Hexaemeron seu in opus creationis libri septem*, CSCO 92, 97 (Louvain 1928, 1932).

³⁸ L. Schlimme, *Der Hexaemeronkommentar des Moses bar Kepha. Einleitung, Übersetzung und Untersuchungen*, Göttinger Orientforschungen, I.Reihe: Syriaca, Bd.14, Teil I, II (Wiesbaden 1977).

³⁹ Jacob of Edessa's hexaemeron was preceded by a treatise (now lost) *On the First, Creating, Eternal and Omnipotent Cause*, Chabot-Vaschalde (ed./transl.) (as in n.37) 2, col.1, ll.6-10, 355, col.2, ll.19-29/1, ll.6-7, 304, ll.11-15. The first Discourse of Moses bar Kepha's hexaemeron (ch.1-10) deals with epistemological questions and questions concerning God; Schlimme (tr.), I (as in n.38) 92-123. In the order and in several titles of chapters the *CC* concurs with Moses' pattern. The author of the *CC* probably knew Moses' work, though the style of both works is fundamentally different (Moses' style is schematic and scholastic, the *CC*'s style is rhetorical and homiletic). For the structural differences between Jakob's and Moses' hexaemeron, see Schlimme, II (as in n.38) 684-688.

⁴⁰ Again several themes in the *CC* occur in Moses' first Discourse. The question of the purpose of the Creation is discussed in chapter 24; Schlimme (tr.), I (as in n.38) 151.

⁴¹ For the contents of this lost Discourse, see *CC*, Introduction; 4, ll.8-14/4-5.

⁴² For the contents of this lost Discourse, see *CC*, Introduction; 4, ll.14-19/5.

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tripartite scheme of the natural, the written and the spiritual Law: treatises I-III concern the natural Law, treatises IV-VII the written Law, and treatises VIII-IX the spiritual Law.⁴³ And thus the literary structure of the composition runs parallel with the epistemological scheme according to which the rational soul in three steps can attain the perfect knowledge of the Truth. Deeply influenced by Neoplatonic thought, the author of the *CC* makes anthropology the foundation of his whole dissertation;⁴⁴ therefore, the topic of the nature of man is treated within the framework of the natural Law.⁴⁵

⁴³ For the *CC*'s remarks on the natural, written and spiritual Law, see above, n.25. That the Discourses VIII-IX concern the spiritual Law is clear both from their contents and the author's remark in *CC* IV:3; 158, ll.12-17/206, that he will discuss "the perfect teaching," "the perfect food," that brings man near to the perfect knowledge of the Truth and instruct him in the love of the Lord and unite him with his Creator (i.e. the Gospel), in a later section of his work. The topic of the Gospel leading to the highest degree of perfection undoubtedly was discussed in Discourse VIII. For the topic of the love of God and the love of human beings, which according to Abū Qurrah shows the truth of the Christian religion, cf. Griffith, "Faith and Reason in Christian Kalām: Theodore Abū Qurrah" (as in n.29) 21-22. The topic of the divine Gospel being the highest level in surpassing by its ethics the Muslim law (in fact the Qur'ān) already occurs in the oldest specimen of Jacobite apologetics against Islam; cf. G.J. Reinink, "The Beginnings of Syriac Apologetic Literature in Response to Islam," *Oriens Christianus* 77 (1993) 180. As to Discourse IX, we may assume that the author of the *CC* like Abū Qurrah exposed the Christian doctrine of the future life according to the Gospel and Christian ascetism (cf. Griffith, *ibidem*, 22-23). It is interesting to note that Job of Edessa concludes his *Book of Treasures* with a Discourse (VI) on the invisible created world (angels) and eschatological items like the end of the created world, the resurrection and the next world; ed. Mingana (as in n.34) 446, col.2, l.17-468, col.1, l.4/257-296. There are many correspondences between Job and the *CC*, but the *CC* discusses one part of the material within the framework of the natural Law (Discourse II:3-7, III:1) and the written Law (Discourse IV:4: angels) and the other part (where Job also argues on the basis of the Christian holy scriptures) in the section of the spiritual Law (Discourse IX).

⁴⁴ Cf. Klinge, "Die Bedeutung der syrischen Theologen" (as in n.8) 383-386. The *CC*'s basic issue is the microcosm-macrocosm analogy (*CC* I:4), at the root of which may lie Nemesius of Emesa's *De natura hominis* I:10, ed. C.F. Matthaei (Halle 1802; repr. Hildesheim 1976) 63-67; tr. W. Telfer, *Cyril of Jerusalem and Nemesius of Emesa*, The Library of Christian Classics 4 (London 1955) 254-255; cf. also A. Kallis, *Der Mensch im Kosmos. Das Weltbild Nemesios' von Emesa* (Münster 1977). For Nemesius in Syriac tradition, see Weisser, *Das "Buch über das Geheimnis der Schöpfung"* (as in n.34) 63-68.

⁴⁵ The *CC* does not treat the topic of the creation of man within the framework of the hexaemeron section (Discourses IV-VII) unlike Jacob of Edessa and Moses

But there is still another aspect by which the *CC* stands out from the hexaemeron-literature; that aspect is most closely connected with the Syriac monastic tradition. Man's gradual ascent to the *perfect* knowledge of the Truth is not to be understood as a purely intellectual process alone; it is also dependent on his moral conduct. In fact, morality is the prerequisite for following the way of knowledge successfully to its highest level, that of the spiritual knowledge, where both the natural and the written Law play no role any more.⁴⁶ Inspired by the doctrine of the soul in Syriac ascetism and mysticism,⁴⁷ the *CC* makes the gradual deepening and increase of man's knowledge of the Truth concurrent with the ascetic battle against the passions which darken the soul's natural limpidity.⁴⁸ At the apex of the pyramid the epistemological, the ascetic and the literary scheme merge in one and the same culminating point: the *theoria* of God, the mystical union with God, and the complete renewal of man in the world to come.⁴⁹

bar Kepha, who discuss the item in connection with the sixth day of Creation.

⁴⁶ *CC* IV:3; 160, ll.4–10/208.

⁴⁷ There are many correspondences here between the *CC* and the works of the Syriac mystic Isaac of Niniveh (second half of the seventh century), e.g. the soul's natural limpidity, perfection and inaffectability; the soul being God's image; the soul's nature to understand the sensible and intelligible created things; solitude being the beginning of the purification of the soul; the constant battle against the passions being necessary to reestablish the soul in its primordial nature; the highest degree of the mystical life being the soul's contemplation of the truth of God; the highest degree of the spiritual state being described as drunkenness with God's love, etc.. These ideas occur again and again throughout the *CC*. Cf. A.J. Wensinck (transl.), *Mystic Treatises by Isaac of Nineveh*, Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam, Afdeling Letterkunde, Nieuwe Reeks, Deel XXIII/1 (Amsterdam 1923); S. Beggiani, *Introduction to Eastern Christian Spirituality: The Syriac Tradition* (London-Toronto 1991) 72–81. The author of the *CC* may also have had knowledge of Moses bar Kepha's treatise *On the Soul*; cf. e.g. the rejection of the opinion of the philosophers that the rational soul's powers are reason, anger and desire in *CC* III:2; 125, ll.7–9/160, and by Moses, *On the Soul* 10, O. Braun (transl.), *Moses bar Kepha und sein Buch von der Seele* (Freiburg im Breisgau 1891) 59.

⁴⁸ Cf. *CC*, Introduction; I:2, 8, III:5, 7; 12, ll.1–7, 20, l.22–21, l.16, 70, ll.5–11, 143, l.8–144, l.7, 146, l.21–148, l.11/15, 27, 89–90, 185–186, 189–191, and many other examples throughout the *CC*.

⁴⁹ Cf. *CC* I:10, II:2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, III:4, 6, IV:3; 73, l.15–75, l.3, 85, l.17–86, l.5, 87, ll.13–17, 89, l.19–90, l.2, 93, ll.11–16, 98, l.15–99, l.2, 103, ll.7–15, 105, l.20–106, l.1, 108, ll.15–22, 112, l.9–114, l.1, 138, ll.13–22, 146, ll.11–16, 156, ll.15–

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It is the fusion of three literary traditions—apologetics, the exegesis of the biblical account of the Creation according to the hexaemeron-tradition, and the mystical-ascetical tradition—which makes the *CC* a unique work in the history of the Syriac literature. However, the way in which these literary traditions are assimilated as regards both content and literary structure is essentially determined by the apologetic method which attempts to demonstrate the unique “universality” of Christianity and confirm the Christian religious identity in a predominantly Islamic world.

3. CONCLUSION

The thesis of this paper is clear: the *CC* is not to be considered a unique work because of its purported universal outlook. When the author in his introduction begs his co-religionists—alluding to Matth.15:26—not to blame him for giving the children’s bread to “foreign children,”⁵⁰ he applies a literary stratagem in support of his main argument. For, when Christianity is the “universal religion,” giving the only all-encompassing explanation of God’s design in creating visible and invisible things, then, of course, its religious and “scientific” knowledge can only be destined “for all peoples under the heavens.”

The most remarkable feature of the *CC* is not its claim of universality, but the way in which it uses current encyclopaedic knowledge within the framework of a composition of which the structure follows the lines of apologetic argumentation with the purpose to define and consolidate the communal identity. Considering the cultural developments within Jacobite scholarly milieus in medieval times, I would prefer to date the *CC* somewhere between the end of the tenth and the end of the eleventh century. The author very likely was acquainted with the works of the prolific writer and bishop of Mosul Moses bar Kepha (died 903), at least with Moses’ hexaemeron.⁵¹ He stands in the tradition of Christian apologists like the

18, 158, ll.12–17, 159, l.20–160, l.10/94–95, 109, 111–112, 114–115, 119, 125–126, 131–132, 135, 138–139, 143–145, 178, 189, 203, 206, 208, and many other instances.

⁵⁰ *CC*, Introduction; 10, ll.20–23/14.

⁵¹ See above, nn.39–40, 47.

Melkite Arabophone writer Theodore Abū Qurrah and, in particular, the author's co-religionist, the Arabophone author Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī (892-974),⁵² who defended Christian tenets by philosophical arguments based upon human reason alone, since the Muslims rejected the authority of Christian holy writings. For historical reasons, I consider the twelfth century a less probable date for the composition of the *CC*.⁵³ One may rather suggest that the author of the *CC* was the predecessor of the great Jacobite scholar and bishop of Amida Dionysius bar Ṣalībī (died 1171). The latter composed for the first time in many centuries a comprehensive apologetic treatise *in Syriac*, defending the veracity of Christian doctrines and practices over against the challenges of Islam.⁵⁴

⁵² See above, n.31.

⁵³ See above, n.5.

⁵⁴ Cf. Griffith, "Disputes" (as in n.31) 268-269; idem, "Dionysius bar Ṣalībī on the Muslims," in: H.J.W. Drijvers, R. Lavenant, C. Molenberg, and G.J. Reinink (eds.), *IV Symposium Syriacum 1984: Literary Genres in Syriac Literature*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 229 (Roma 1987) 353-365.

Abdallah ibn al-Faḍl's Exposition of the Orthodox Faith

Ramy Wannous

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PREAMBLE

This paper intends to introduce the reader briefly to the book شرح الامانة المستقيمة وابانة غلط العاقبة والنسطور على سبيل الايجاز written by one of the most important Christian Arab writers of the Melkite Orthodox Church in the 11th century, namely Abdallah Ibn al-Faḍl. After a short introduction to his Biography, this presentation will shed a light on the content of this text rather than dealing with the editorial methods. This article is a modified section of a Ph. D. dissertation at the University of Marburg (Germany) which will be published later comprehensively including the edited text.

A. ABDALLAH IBN AL-FADL: BIOGRAPHY

Although Abdallah Ibn al-Faḍl was by far one of the most prolific writers of the Melkite Orthodox Church¹, oddly enough, there is not even a single comprehensive work on him or on his works, therefore, pointing a serious gap in the scholarly literature. Until the end of the 19th century, Ibn al-Faḍl was known in the European West and in the Christian East mostly for his Arabic translation of the Psalms. H. Hyvernats² mentioned Ibn al-Faḍl in this context. It was G. Graf who first published a short treatise on Ibn al-Faḍl and his works in 1905³. Like Hyvernats, Graf thought that Ibn al-Faḍl was a bishop. Graf's attempt was only the beginning of his work on Ibn al-Faḍl. In the following decades he published more treatises on Ibn al-Faḍl⁴. His first treatise, however, is important for two reasons: 1. it showed the magnitude of Ibn al-Faḍl's literary heritage; 2. it apparently drew attention to Ibn al-Faḍl in the Christian East. A year later C. Bacha and L. Cheikho⁵ published a detailed treatise on Ibn al-Faḍl and his writings. They shed more light on the date of Ibn al-Faḍl's activity (11th century) as well as his clerical rank, showing that Ibn al-Faḍl was only a deacon⁶. The results of their research in this regard still apply today as a basis research on Ibn al-Faḍl, and since then, interest in Ibn al-Faḍl has increased in the Christian East. However, after the

1) See Georg GRAF, *Geschichte der Christlichen Arabischen Literatur* II, p. 52.

2) Henri HYVERNAT, «Arabes (Versions) des Écritures», in *Dictionnaire de la Bible* I, Paris (1895) 846-856, here p. 850.

3) Georg GRAF, *Die christlich-arabische Literatur bis zur fränkischen Zeit*, Freiburg (1905), pp. 68-71.

4) Georg GRAF, «Christlich-Arabisches», in *Theologische Quartalschrift*, Tübingen (1913), pp. 186-192.

5) Constantin BACHA / Louis CHEIKHO, «'Abdallah Ibn al-Faḍl al-Anṭākī», in *al-Maṣriq* 9 (1906), pp. 886-890 and pp. 944-953.

6) *Ibid.*, p. 888.

publication of the Bacha and Cheikho article, interest in the study of Ibn al-Faḍl's vita subsided. The subsequent contributions – also in the West – focused on Ibn al-Faḍl's bibliography and works. Graf showed that Ibn al-Faḍl is not to be recognised only as a translator of liturgical books, but also as a translator and author of theological and philosophical works. Thus Graf translated sections of Ibn al-Faḍl's work *Kitāb al-manfa'a al-kabīr* and introduced him to the German reader⁷. Graf further examined his literary heritage in his main work *Geschichte der christlich-arabischen Luteratur*⁸ and constructed an important base for further research on Ibn al-Faḍl's bibliography. Unfortunately, western interest in Ibn al-Faḍl and in his writings diminished in the second half of the 20th century. Until 1988 Graf had remained the only one who had dealt with Ibn al-Faḍl⁹. J. Nasrallah conducted further research on the topic¹⁰. He also tried to expand the historical framework of Ibn al-Faḍl's vita. However, he didn't add anything new to the results of Bacha and Cheikho. His two treatises on Ibn al-Faḍl are similar and largely repetitive. Nevertheless, he added new bibliographical data to those of Graf. This area of research must be more examined as Nasrallah's results are unfortunately not always accurate¹¹.

Ibn al-Faḍl's translations of several patristic works, such as those of Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, Maximus the Confessor, John of Damascus, Isaac the Syrian and many others, as well as his own works, show that he had a very good theological background. He translated liturgical, theological, ethical and philosophical books, as well as exegetical commentaries¹².

7) Georg GRAF, *Psychologische Definitionen aus dem «Großen Buch des Nutzens» von 'Ab-dallāh Ibn al-Faḍl (11. Jahrh.)*, Studien zur Geschichte der Philosophie, Festgabe zum 60. Geburtstag Clemens Baeumcker, Münster (1913), pp. 55-78. Later he translated another work of Ibn al-Faḍl. See Georg GRAF, *Widerlegung der Astrologen in philosophischer Betrachtungs-weise*, hrsg. und übers. v. G. Graf, in *Orientalia* NS 6 (1937), pp. 337-346.

8) *GCAL* II, pp. 52-64.

9) Abdallah Ibn al-Faḍl is to be found just merely in some Dictionary entries. Michael TILLY, «Abdallah Ibn al-Faḍl», in *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon* II. (1990), col. 1237-1238. Floris Sepmeijer's contribution was an introduction into one of the works of Ibn al-Faḍl. See Floris SEPMEIJER, «The Book of the Splendor of the Believer by 'Abdallāh Ibn al-Faḍl», in *PdO* XVI (1990-1991), pp. 115-120.

10) Joseph NASRALLAH, «Abdallah ibn al-Faḍl», in *POC* 33 (1983), pp. 143-159; and Joseph NASRALLAH, *Histoire du mouvement littéraire dans l'Église Melchite du V^e au XX^e siècle*, III, I (1983), pp. 191-229.

11) See below.

12) See G. GRAF, *GCAL* II (1947), 52-64; and J. NASRALLAH, *HMLEM*, pp. 193-229.

B. "EXPOSITION OF THE ORTHODOX FAITH AND THE REFUTATION OF THE ERRORS OF THE JACOBITES AND NESTORIANS IN BRIEF"¹³

1. Manuscripts

According to Nasrallah, copies of this text are to be found in Orientale 541, 543 and 549; collection héritiers R. Anṭākī; Léningrad, collection Grégoire IV, 16; 18; Vat. arab. 560, Ma'lūf 1; Moscou and Sin. ar. 452¹⁴. Nasrallah adds two other copies which Graf hadn't mentioned¹⁵. These are Ma'lūf 1 and Sin. ar. 452. The latter is believed to be the earliest, dating back to the 13th century.

Unfortunately, after examining the whole manuscript, which is hard to be read, we found that Nasrallah confused Ibn al-Faḍl's *Exposition of Faith* and another work with a similar title; the second work includes a very brief exposition of the Nicene Creed supposed to be written by John of Damascus on the *Orthodox Faith*¹⁶, which Ibn al-Faḍl had translated as well. Therefore, most of the copies that we have date back to the 17th century. In our research, we are using the three copies of *Orientalis* copies and one Vatican copy.

2. Purpose of Writing this Book

This work consists of an introduction and of seven chapters (ابواب). Parts of the introduction will be mentioned because, in our view, they shed a new light on what has been argued regarding the reason behind this work. Cheikho, Bacha, Graf and Nasrallah all assumed that Ibn al-Faḍl I wrote this *Exposition of Faith* at the request of the bishop of Manbiḡ and Dulūk¹⁷. However, the introduction, which is written in a very good Arabic style, points in a different direction. Ibn al-Faḍl begins by praising the Orthodox Faith and by stressing the importance of having the Orthodox Faith in order to be saved¹⁸. He goes on saying¹⁹:

[...] واما ما يدعو الى ما يجدي حسيم الخيرات واعظم البركات ومصباحاً ينشئ من

13) Mss Orientale 541, 142; 543, 3; 549, 345. شرح الامانة المستقيمة وابانة غلط اليعاقبة والنسطور. على سبيل الايجاز

14) J. NASRALLAH, *HMLEM*, p. 226.

15) G. GRAF, *GICAL* II (1947), pp. 62-63.

16) P.G. 94, 1421-1432.

17) The old city Dloiche in North Syria. See *EI* 2 (1965), p. 624.

18) Orientale 541, 142; 543, 3-4; 549, 345-346: لما ان كانت الامانة مهيباً يقود الى الخلاص الماثور: وينقذ من العذاب المخدور...

19) *Ibid.*

معائر الظلام وطيبًا يرحض درن الذنوب والاثام رايت انا المسكين والعبد المهين... ان
اسطر ما اعتقده قبل الرحيل من العالم المحسوس الى منزل النفوس.

[Because the orthodox faith is] an Imam (preacher), who calls us to do *what is right*, and a lamp, which saves us from the sins of darkness, and an ointment, that washes the sins and faults, that is why I, the poor and indigent servant, resolved to write what I believe before I leave the sensual world to the dwelling of souls...

He continues saying that whosoever relies on God will reach his aim. Finally he writes:

لاسيما وقد انضاف الى ذلك سؤال سيدي الاب الحخير القديس الباذل اجمل نية واحسن
طوية يوحنا مطران منبيج ودلوك.

Especially now that the generous and holy father, my lord Yūḥannā, the bishop of Manbiḡ and Dulūk, asked me to carry it out.

Hence, the request of the bishop was not the reason why Ibn al-Faḍl wrote this work, or at least not the only reason. It is, in our opinion, of minor importance, for had it indeed been so, Abdallah would have mentioned it at the beginning and not in a short sentence at the end of his introduction. Besides, had the demand of bishop Yūḥannā been just to have an Exposition of the Faith, then Ibn al-Faḍl would have given him many patristic works on this topic, which he has already translated such as "Exposition of the Orthodox Faith"²⁰ by John of Damascus, or *Kitāb al-burhān fī taṭbūt al-īmān*, supposedly written by Sophronios of Jerusalem²¹ (we will refer to this work later), or he may have translated another patristic work.

Moreover, the phrase "*I resolved to write what I believe before I leave the world of the senses for the dwelling place of souls*" indicates that Ibn al-Faḍl might have written this work at an old age, since he never uses a similar phrase in his other works, which we have examined. For these reasons, we suggest that Ibn al-Faḍl wanted to leave the believers of his Church a book, which would enable them to stay on the right path and protect them from the teachings of the Jacobites and Nestorians. This means we are dealing with Ibn al-Faḍl's own dogmatic synthesis. Ibn al-Faḍl wanted to write a brief Exposition of the Orthodox Faith from his point of view, though he says in the introduction that he is referring to the works of some Church Fathers.

20) P.G. 94, col. 1421-1432.

21) See GCAL II (1947), p. 57.

The demand of the bishop can thus be understood as an encouragement, or he may have financed the project, as the sentence *ادام الله كفايته أباي في هذا الباب* (*May God prolong his²² support of me in this regard*) indicates.

a. Content

We read also in the introduction that Ibn al-Faḍl had written this work first in Greek, and he then translated it into Arabic. This should not to be understood as if there were a Greek copy, which was lost, but rather that he compiled the texts in Greek and then translated them into Arabic.

As mentioned above, this work consists of seven chapters: 1. On defining what should be known regarding the faith; 2. On the Holy Trinity; 3. On the Incarnation of the Eternal Son; 4. On what the Church Fathers said on this topic; 5. On the Divine Names; 6. Disputation with the Jacobites and the refutation of their weak arguments; and 7. Disputation with the Nestorians and the refutation of their foolish arguments, and on defining other things, from which this work profits. Ibn al-Faḍl clarifies the basic Christian dogmas in the first 5 chapters and uses them as a basis for chapters 6 and 7. In some parts of this work Ibn al-Faḍl follows some Greek Fathers by using the question and answer style.

b. Chapter One

In this chapter Ibn al-Faḍl establishes his metaphysics, and defines basic theological and philosophical notions like, nature (طبيعة), substance (جوهر) and its different forms, hypostasis (قنوم), property (خاصة), the difference between substance and hypostasis, accident (العرض), will (المشيئة), energy (القوة) etc. He further elucidates these notions in the final two chapters. Ibn al-Faḍl refers in this chapter to two major works: John of Damascus' *Dialectica* and Porphyrius' *Esagoge*, though he does not name his sources. One notices directly the wide syntactic difference between the introduction and the other parts of the book. There Ibn al-Faḍl is translating a Greek text, sometimes word for word, which makes his syntax difficult to understand, whereas in the introduction he is using his own words.

c. Chapter Two

In this chapter Ibn al-Faḍl uses several works from Church Fathers, like John of Damascus, Basil the Great, in addition to the aforementioned work

22) sc. Bishop Yūḥannā.

Kitāb al-burhān fī taḥḩīt al-ʿīmān, which is incorrectly attributed to Sophronios of Jerusalem²³. Ibn al-Faḍl will further refer to this work more in chapters Three to Five without mentioning the source. In chapter Two, he follows the patristic orthodox dogma of the Holy Trinity: God is one but also three hypostasis. Ibn al-Faḍl stresses the centrality of the Father as the begetter of the Son and the origin of the procession of the Holy Spirit, but all share one Substance and one divine Nature. There is no mention of the *Filioque*, and so he does not try to explain this dogma. Both the Son and the Holy Spirit are consubstantial with the Father. The three hypostasis have the same Godhead, energy, will and power. No one can perceive the Holy Trinity, for God is above any perception or understanding. Both Basil the Great and Dionysios the Areopagite are used by Ibn al-Faḍl in order to clarify the teaching on the unity of the Holy Trinity. He also explains to his Arabic readers the etymology of the word “Allah” in Arabic, as he had done in his translation of *Kitāb al-burhān fī taḥḩīt al-ʿīmān*²⁴.

d. Chapter Three

The Eternal Logos, the Only Begotten, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary because of His love for us. He became a man but remained God. Ibn al-Faḍl stresses in this context that the Logos did not dwell in a pre-existent body, but rather He was born in the flesh. He shared with us everything except sin. He is perfect God and perfect man. He has two natures but one hypostasis. The Son has two “births”: the first is eternal from His Father while the second is in time from the Virgin Mary. Therefore, He is, simultaneously, sensed and not sensed, created and uncreated, restrained and unrestrained, heavenly and earthly. In this context Ibn al-Faḍl attacks the Manicheans, Valentians, Paul of Samosata and Nestorius.

23) According to Graf and Nasrallah, Abdallah Ibn al-Faḍl is the translator of this work. Actually the Balamand manuscript 126 mentions Ibn al-Faḍl as the translator of this work, and in the body of this mentioned script Ibn al-Faḍl himself writes his name after adding a private note to the text, where he explains the meaning of the word «Allah» in Arabic. In Migne’s PG we do not find this text, thus, we have only an Arabic version. In fact, it is impossible that Sophronios had written this treatise simply because this book summarises the teachings of the six ecumenical councils. Sophronios died on March 13th 638, so it is obvious that he is not the author of this work, since the sixth ecumenical council was held in 680/1. It is worth noting that this text actually consists of two works namely the summary of the six ecumenical councils and an Arabic version of *De Sectis*, which is attributed in this text to Leontios of Byzantium. More about this work, see Alois GRILLMEIER, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche*, Vol. 2/2, Freiburg, 2004, pp. 514-523.

24) Ibid.

Ibn al-Faḍl copied this whole chapter from the aforementioned Pseudo-Sophronios work in addition to some parts of John of Damascus' *Exposition of Faith*.

e. Chapter Four

This chapter is nothing more than quotes from some Church Fathers like Basil the Great, Ephrem the Syrian, John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus and Dionysios the Areopagite. He arranges this chapter largely in a questions-and-answers style.

f. Chapter Five

According to Ibn al-Faḍl, the Divine Names do not tend to describe the Holy Nature, because there is no name for the substance of God. Ibn al-Faḍl refers to John Chrysostom's commentary on the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, which he knows very well as he had translated it into Arabic²⁵. He also cites extensively Gregory of Nazianzus' *Theological Orations*, in which he divides the attributes of the Son into those related to the Son before the Incarnation and those after the Incarnation. He then elucidates why the Son is called God, Son, light, justice, Son of a Man, way, shepherd, sheep, High Priest and so on. Ibn al-Faḍl ends this chapter by referring to Dionysios the Areopagite in order to explain why the Son is called the "cause" or the "principle" of everything.

g. Chapter Six

Without any doubt, one can say that Ibn al-Faḍl's main concern in this book is the refutation of the beliefs of the Jacobites and Nestorians. Therefore, the last two chapters cover more pages than the first five chapters.

The Jacobites, according to Ibn al-Faḍl, believe that Christ has one nature – composed of a divine and a human nature – and one composite hypostasis. They came to this conclusion because they believed that the substance is the same as the hypostasis. Furthermore, he mentions that they believed that Christ has one energy and one will. Thus, Ibn al-Faḍl accuses them of being monotheletic and monoenergetic, though he does not call them as such. Ibn al-Faḍl divides this chapter into two parts: 1. The arguments of the Jacobites and the refutation of their teachings; and 2. Defining *will* and *en-*

25) *GCAL II* (1947), p. 57.

ergy. All these arguments are of a philosophical nature. That is where Ibn al-Faḍl's language becomes more complex.

In part 1, he lists seven arguments, on which the Jacobites base their beliefs. Then he starts refuting them one by one. We will state the first argument:

“As the human being is a composition of body and soul, but neither the soul changed and became body nor the body changed and became soul, rather the two natures remained unchanged and unmixed. Likewise Christ is one nature, composed of His divine and human natures. However, the two natures remained unchanged and unmixed and undivided, but rather they exist in one compound hypostasis and in one compound nature”.

In his refutation of their beliefs, Ibn al-Faḍl relies on John of Damascus *Contra Jacobitas*, whom he mentions at the end of this part, but without mentioning the work. After refuting the seventh argument, he starts exposing the topics of *will* and *energy*. The Jacobites believe that because Christ is one hypostasis, He has, consequently, one will, which they call hypostatic and not natural. Ibn al-Faḍl refers in his explanation to the teachings of the Sixth Ecumenical Council as well as to Maximus Confessor's *Disputation with Pyrrhus*. He explains the dogma of the Will and Energy of Christ extensively²⁶.

h. Chapter Seven

The Nestorians or النسطور, as Ibn al-Faḍl calls them, believed that Christ has two natures and two hypostases (طبيعتان وقنومان) because they held “hypostasis” and “substance” to mean the same thing. The Nestorians denied any single composition in Christ and insisted that Christ has only one will and one energy. God, the Logos, is united with the body وداديا (in a friendly manner) and not hypostatically. They also refused to refer to the Virgin Mary as “Theotokos”, calling her only “Mother of the human” or “Christotokos”. Ibn al-Faḍl lists the arguments of the Nestorians in fifteen points. Like in the previous chapter, the arguments are of a philosophical nature. Before embarking on the refutation of their teachings, he begins by defining several notions like: The One (الواحد), the Unity (الوحدة), the Whole (الكل), the Part (الجزء), Union (الاتحاد), Hypostatic Union (الاتحاد القنومي), Enhypostasis (ذو القنوم), Anhypostasis (غير المنقسم) and so on.

26) The three *Orientalis* Mss are missing the beginning of the second part.

Ibn al-Faḍl relies once again on John of Damascus, this time on his work *Contra Nestorianos*, also without mentioning it by name.

C. CONCLUSION

Ibn al-Faḍl's *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* is mostly a compilation and a translation of some Church Fathers, as he himself mentions in the introduction of this work. Nevertheless, he succeeded in providing a unified text out of various works and introduced it to the Christian Arab reader. Since he did not always mention his sources, it is sometimes hard to tell what is Ibn al-Faḍl's own original writing and what is citation. Even when he did name his sources, he mostly paraphrased them and did not feel restricted by the original text.

This work shows how good Ibn al-Faḍl's knowledge of the Greek Fathers and of Greek philosophy was. Yet, it is not clear whether he knew Greek philosophy from its original sources or via the Church Fathers. This work is, in our opinion, not only a small theological and philosophical lexicon in Arabic, but also a historical witness of its era. It provides us a window into the theological discourse of the Melkite Orthodox Church in the 11th century. Ibn al-Faḍl's harsh and aggressive tone against the Jacobites and Nestorians can be understood as due not only to the fact that Antioch was in the 11th century once again under Byzantine rule, but also to Ibn al-Faḍl's strong belief that only the true faith, which he represents, can guarantee us salvation.

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