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MANICHAEISM

- XV Addai und Mani. Christentum und Manichäismus im dritten Jahrhundert in Syrien 171–185
Orientalia Christiana Analecta 221. Rome, 1983
- XVI Conflict and alliance in Manichaeism 99–124
Struggles of Gods, ed. H.G. Kippenberg. Berlin/ New York/Amsterdam: Mouton de Gruyter, 1984

SYRIAC CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM

- XVII Antony of Tagrit's book on the good providence of God 163–172
Orientalia Christiana Analecta 236. Rome, 1990

- XVIII *The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles: a Syriac apocalypse from the early Islamic period.* 189–213
The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East I. Problems in the Literary Source Material, ed. A. Cameron and L.I. Conrad (Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam 1). Princeton, N.J.: The Darwin Press, Inc., 1992

- XIX Christians, Jews and Muslims in northern Mesopotamia in early Islamic times. *The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* and related texts 67–74
La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam VIIe–VIIIe Siècles, ed. P. Canivet and J.P. Rey-Coquais. Damas: Institut Français d'Etudes Arabes de Damas, 1992

Addenda 1–2

Index 1–3

This volume contains xii + 305 pages

The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles: A Syriac Apocalypse from the Early Islamic Period

AS WITH SO MANY other Syriac texts, the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, published by J. Rendel Harris in 1900, has not received the attention it deserves.¹ Apart from Harris' short introduction to his edition, only Harald Suermann has studied the work, and then only in a rather superficial and unsatisfying manner.² But since this Syriac apocalyptic text, short though it is, reflects the thought of Syrian Christians in northern Mesopotamia in the early Islamic period, it merits more detailed study, the more so since the ideas it contains were not restricted to northern Mesopotamia.

The *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* occupies folios 47r to 58r of Syriac Ms. 85 of the Rendel Harris collection, now in the Harvard College

¹J. Rendel Harris, *The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles Together with the Apocalypses of Each of Them* (Cambridge, 1900). Cf. Friedrich Haase, *Literarkritische Untersuchungen zur orientalische-apokryphen Evangelienliteratur* (Leipzig, 1913), 30–35; Baumstark, 70.

²Harald Suermann, *Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion auf die einfallenden Muslime in der edessenischen Apokalypik des 7. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main, 1985). Cf. the reviews by Sebastian Brock in *BO* 44 (1987), 813–16, and G.J. Reinink in *Le Muséon* 104 (1991), forthcoming.

Library.³ The manuscript, very incompletely preserved, also contains a series of questions on canonical matters put to Jacob of Edessa by the priests Addai and Thomas and John the Stylite, together with Jacob's answers and a series of short chapters containing the replies of the holy fathers to questions sent to them by the Christians in the Orient (the *madnḥayē*).⁴

This material precedes the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, which is followed by an extract from the *Doctrina Addai*, part of the farewell address of the apostle to his flock before his death. The passage, evidently meant as some sort of consolation, deals with the immortality of souls as they depart from human bodies, arguing that the thoughts and knowledge of the soul are the image of the immortal God.⁵ Then follows an extract from the 38th discourse of Severus of Antioch against Grammaticus on the origin of the Nestorian heresy, and a series of apostolic canons and canons of synods—Nicaea, Ancyra, Neocaesarea, Gangra, Antioch *in encaeniis*, Laodicaea, Ephesus, and Chalcedon—followed by a *libellus* for those recanting from heresy.⁶

Though the codex is mutilated, its main contents are clear enough: the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, preceded and followed by canonical material, mainly from Jacob of Edessa and from the synods. The inclusion of a passage from the *Doctrina Addai*, located in the city of Edessa, also points to an Edessan origin for the collection. It stems from Monophysite circles, and may well have been put together to bring

³Moshe H. Goshen-Gottstein, *Syriac Manuscripts in the Harvard College Library: a Catalogue* (Missoula, 1979), 75–76, Syr. 93.

⁴See Harris, *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, 8; Baumstark, 82–83. For literature on Jacob's work in ecclesiastical law, see H.J.W. Drijvers, art. "Jakob von Edessa" in *TRE*, XVI (Berlin, 1987), 468–70.

⁵Ms. fol. 58r. The text can be found in George Howard, *The Teaching of Addai* (Chico, Ca., 1981), 92–95; and more literally in William Cureton, *Ancient Syriac Documents Relative to the Earliest Establishment of Christianity in Edessa* (London and Edinburgh, 1864), 108.

⁶Ms. fols. 58r–9lv; cf. Harris, *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, 10–11. For the discourses of Severus of Antioch against Grammaticus, see the former's *Liber contra impium Grammaticum*, ed. Joseph Lebon (Leuven, 1929–38; *CSCO* 93–94, 101–102, 111–112, *Scr. Syri* 45–46, 50–51, 58–59). A *libellus poenitentiae* (or *recantatae*) was a formula of abjuration or renunciation which was to be recited by those recanting from heresy.

apostates back to the true faith and teach them discipline and church order. In other words, the selection and order of the different elements preserved in this unique manuscript are not coincidental, but rather a matter of deliberate choice. Harris dates the origin of the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* and possibly of the manuscript itself to the middle of the eighth century, but we shall see that an earlier date is much more likely.

The full title of the treatise forming the nucleus of the Ms. is given as “The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles together with the revelations of each one of them”. The *Gospel* itself is written in such a way as to provide the introduction to the following three apocalypses. It begins as follows:

The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of the living God, according to the words of the Holy Spirit: “I send an angel before his face, who shall prepare his way”. It came to pass in the 309th year of Alexander, the son of Philip the Macedonian, in the reign of Tiberius Caesar, in the government of Herod, the ruler of the Jews, that the angel Gabriel, the chief of the angels, by the command of God went down to Nazareth to a virgin called Mariam of the tribe of Judah....

The birth of Jesus in the 309th year of the Seleucid era is an Edessan tradition attested in the acts of the martyr Barsamyā, bishop of Edessa, in the so-called *Doctrine of the Apostles*, itself an Edessan writing, and in the works of Jacob of Edessa, one of whose letters is on the subject of this chronology.⁷

In Gabriel’s annunciation to the Virgin it is said: “They who do not confess the Savior shall perish, for his authority is in the lofty heights and his kingdom does not pass away”. The *Gospel* thus constitutes a serious warning and a call to faith. It summarizes Jesus’ appearance to the world “as it is written by the four truthful Evangelists”, and

⁷François Nau, “Lettre de Jacques d’Edesse à Jean le Stylite sur la chronologie biblique et la date de la naissance du messie”, *ROC* 5 (1900), 581–96; cf. Cureton, *Ancient Syriac Documents*, 24 (the *Doctrine of the Apostles*), 72 (martyrdom of Barsamyā).

emphasizes the choice of the twelve Apostles from the twelve tribes of Israel, "to whom he promised twelve thrones that they may judge Israel".⁸ After the crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples and ordered them to go out into the four quarters of the world and preach the Gospel and baptize, saying: "The Kingdom of Heaven is come nigh unto you".⁹ But here the well-known text is extended with the addition of the apocalyptic claim of the imminence of the kingdom.

In Jesus' presence the Apostles utter a long prayer in which the dominant theme is that of the end of the world:

Yea! our Lord, enrich us according to thy promises, that we may speak with new tongues by the Spirit that is from thee; and let us know what is the end of the world, because we stand in the midst of the offenses and scandals of the world. Reveal and interpret to us, our Lord, what is the manner of thy coming and what is the End, and what offenses exist in the world.

Jesus rebukes them and says:

It is not as with other evangelists who talk of what they have seen and repeat what they have heard, but you shall speak by the Spirit of my Father of those things that are and of those that are to come. And those who believe and do shall see new life in the kingdom of my Father in Heaven.

After Jesus' departure from the world the twelve Apostles speak to the people in different languages, preaching repentance and inviting them to the kingdom of God. Then they gather in the upper room and pray to God for a revelation concerning the End:

...grant us, Lord, and count us worthy, that all of us with one soul and with one mind may see thy revelation, that great and marvellous revelation by which thou art to reveal to us concerning things created, and that we may understand

⁸Luke 22:30.

⁹Mark 16:14.

the times before thy coming again, and how they pass away and are no more, and who are the rulers of those [times], and their lives; and what men are to see the End; and who is he that is to come as thy adversary and to contend with the truth; and whether all men stray from thee and cleave to error....

When the Apostles finish their prayer, a great light appears to them from heaven and a voice speaks from it:

Go forth to the mountain to the place in which Moses and Elias appeared unto you; and there it shall be spoken to you in spirit concerning the world and the End and concerning the Kingdom of God, and all of you shall speak of it in the tongues of the Holy Fathers.

The Apostles subsequently went to the mountain of the Transfiguration, where they fasted and prayed for seven days, were miraculously fed with all good things, and received the Spirit of God and revelations of the End.

Clearly the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* summarizes the Gospel story as told by the four Evangelists and the beginning of Acts, while casting it into an apocalyptic perspective. It functions as an introduction to the subsequent three revelations, and thereby enhances their claims to truth. The offenses and scandals of the world, the things that are to come, the rulers of the world and their lives, who is to come as Jesus' adversary, the errors of men—these are the subjects of the following apocalypses. There is no doubt that the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* and the three apocalypses that follow it form a whole, artfully constructed to function in a particular historical situation. The three apocalypses claim to be true apostolic writings, buttressed by the authority of the Twelve and their Lord.

The Apocalypse of Simeon Kepha

The first is the revelation of Simeon Kepha, and deals with Christianity. It describes the miserable state of the church and of true belief:

I saw the time that is to be after us, full of offenses and evils and sins and lying; and the men in that time will be crafty, perverse, and depraved, men who know not God and understand not the truth; but a few of them shall understand their God because of his works which they behold daily, those which are established in Heaven and those which are brought forth on earth; and they know the Lord, as if they did not discern him; for this name is called upon them that are believers.

The few believers speak the truth, know God and understand his beloved Son and do not deny the Spirit, and perform signs and great works of power; but they will be killed by bribed judges and deniers of the true faith.

And after these things shall have happened, the faith shall fail from the earth and orthodoxy shall come to an end: and those who are named as being baptized in our Lord and as confessing his name shall be more miserable than all men; and they shall trample on the faith and talk perversely and they shall divide our Lord; and in that time there shall be reckoned many teachers, as the Spirit of the Father does not speak in them, and they shall divide our Lord.

The text is clearly of Monophysite origin. The Monophysites, who "do not divide our Lord", had a long history of enmity and conflicts with their Chalcedonian Byzantine rulers in northern Mesopotamia. It is the Chalcedonians, here (as commonly elsewhere) described as Dyophysites, who "divide our Lord", and are therefore the evildoers and the causers of all misery, so that no one can find the Lord. According to the revelation of Simeon Kepha, the Chalcedonians will be delivered to evils, misery, pillage, and tribute, until they ask for death for themselves, when they will not find a savior. The text mirrors all the misery, pillage, and tribute which the Monophysite population of northern Mesopotamia felt that they had suffered from the Byzantines, and in particular from their armies when they went to war against the Sasanians.

But the few who shall be scattered in the countries, who confess the Son in the way that is right for them to do, of these the Lord shall supply their needs.

Apparently the Monophysites form a minority, or they feel like a minority. The Chalcedonians, on the other hand, are compared to the heathen, their Church in a state of complete disorder and moral perversion:

But those who do not believe in him, and who are called baptized people, shall felicitate the heathen, and they shall envy them and say: "Why are these things so, and why has it been given to us on this wise?" And even those who preach among them, on whom the name of the Lord was called, in the headship over their brethren and in the offices of the Church will be disturbers and self-exalting persons and haters of one another: lovers of money and destroyers of order, and who do not keep the commandments: but they will not love their flocks, and in their days men will appear as sheep who are ravening wolves, and they will eat up the labor of the orphans and the sustenance of the widows, and every ruler shall pervert justice and their eyes shall be blinded by bribery, and they shall love vainglory, and because of all these evils that are performed by them, they shall call upon the Lord, and there will be none to answer them, and there will be no Savior for them...men shall see their sons and their daughters and their wives and their revenues made a prey by their enemies.

This misery will last until the Chalcedonians return and:

shall confess our Lord according as we received from him, and according as we believed in the Son, the Life-Giver and Savior of the world; and after this there will be one flock and one Church and one baptism, true and one; and it will come to pass in that day that every one that shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved, and whosoever worships the Paraclete shall be delivered.

Simeon Kepha does not describe the history of Christian belief in the Roman Empire; he rather concentrates on schism in the Church. Only when the Chalcedonians return to the true Monophysite belief will there be a state of peace and grace in which Christians can be saved. Simeon's description of the miserable state of church affairs is, at the same time, partly based on the picture given by the *Apocalypse* of ps.-Methodius of the evils which befall Christians as a result of Islam. It also reminds us of Jōḥannān bar Penkāyē's account (to which I shall return later) of the corrupt state of his own Nestorian church after so long a period of peace.¹⁰

The Apocalypse of James

The second revelation, from James the Apostle, son of Zebedee, deals with Judaism and Jerusalem. The subject is appropriate for James, just as that of the church is appropriate for Simeon Kepha—was not James, the brother of the Lord, known as the first bishop of Jerusalem? However, there seems to be a conflation here of James, the son of Zebedee, and the James who had special relations with Jerusalem.¹¹ James describes the destruction of the Temple:

Alas, our Lord Jesus, for the desolation that I see in this holy city! for lo! after a certain time the Temple will be laid waste, the house of the Lord, the great and renowned; and the city of Jerusalem shall be laid waste; and it shall be disturbed and become a place of pollution; and it shall be delivered up to a people that knoweth not God and doth not understand the truth, because of the wickedness of them that dwell therein; in that they have blasphemed the name of our Lord Jesus and have crucified and killed him.

James next reveals the coming of a man "renowned in name and fearsome in appearance", who will banish and destroy those who dwell in

¹⁰Alphonse Mingana, *Sources syriaques*, I (Leipzig, 1908), 177*–181*; cf. S.P. Brock, "North Mesopotamia in the Late Seventh Century: Book xv of John Bar Penkāyē's *Riṣ Mellē*", *JSAI* 9 (1987), 51–75.

¹¹Acts 12:17, 15:13, 21:18; cf. Eusebius, *HE* II.23. Cf. Friedrich Haase, *Apostel und Evangelisten in der orientalischen Überlieferungen* (Münster, 1922).

Jerusalem. The reference must be to Hadrian, who expelled the Jews from Jerusalem after the suppression of the second Jewish revolt in AD 135.¹² The next reference in James' revelation is probably to Licinius:

and after all these things have happened to the city of the Lord, there shall come forth a man who oppresses them by war against his enemies, and in that war he shall die.

In all probability the revelation hints at the final war between Constantine and Licinius in AD 324, which ended with the murder of Licinius.¹³ The central figure of James' apocalypse is, however, Constantine the Great, who built the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and made Jerusalem a Christian city:

and there shall be in authority over her another man, and he shall set up edicts and shall settle her, and there shall be built in her sanctuaries to the Lord, consecrated and renowned, and they shall come from the ends of the earth and from its bounds.

It is clear that James' revelation refers (however inaccurately) to the so-called "Edict of Milan", and to Constantine's great basilica, to which pilgrims travelled from the whole *oikoumene*.¹⁴ James describes the church at Jerusalem at some length, and then continues:

The Lord shall set up therein a sign that overcomes the evil of the wicked, and no man shall grudge thereat, nor be evilly affected: for there will be therein another house of worship, because peace is decreed to her by the Holy One of

¹²See Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 BC-AD 135)*, rev. and ed. Geza Vermes and Fergus Millar (Edinburgh, 1973-87), I, 553-57.

¹³See Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), 214; A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284-602* (Oxford, 1964), I, 82-83.

¹⁴On the "Edict of Milan", see Andreas Alföldi, *The Conversion of Constantine and Pagan Rome*, trans. Harold Mattingly (Oxford, 1948), 37; the reference may be more general, however. On Constantine's basilica, see Erik Wistrand, *Konstantins Kirche am heiligen Grab in Jerusalem nach den ältesten literarischen Zeugnissen* (Göteborg, 1952).

Israel; and a great and renowned house shall be built in her at great cost, with gold of Ophir and beryls of Havilah, and its name shall go forth and be renowned, more than all the houses in the earth: and they shall say that never before it [was there such], and never after it will it be so. And that king who began to build it shall die on the completion of his building.

The sign which overcomes the evil of the wicked refers of course to the True Cross, highly venerated in Jerusalem and supposedly discovered by Constantine's mother Helena. It was preeminently seen as a sign of victory.¹⁵ The description of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, with its gold and beryls, recalls Eusebius' description of its interior as shining with gold and jewels.¹⁶ It was dedicated in September 335 as part of the celebrations in honor of Constantine's 30th year as emperor, and Constantine himself died soon after, in May 337; the apocalypse is thus not far off the mark when it predicts that the emperor would die on completion of his building.¹⁷

The last sentences of the second apocalypse are, however, enigmatic. Immediately after the mention of the death of Constantine, James continues:

And one from his seed shall rise up in his place and shall burden the chief men with many ills; and he shall have great and vigorous rule, and the earth shall be governed in his days in great peace; because from God it has been so spoken concerning him and concerning his people by the mouth of the prophet Daniel: and it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord he will save.

¹⁵See H.A. Drake, "Eusebius on the True Cross", *JEH* 36 (1985), 1-22; J.W. Drijvers, *Helena Augusta: Waarheid en Legende*, Ph.D. dissertation: Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 1989; Erich Dinkler, "Das Kreuz als Siegeszeichen", in his *Signum Crucis* (Tübingen, 1967), 55-76.

¹⁶Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* III.33-40; ed. F. Winkelmann (Berlin, 1975; *Eusebius Werke* I.1), 99-101.

¹⁷Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 248-53. See Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* IV.43, ed. Winkelmann, 138.

Harris thought that the reference to Constantine's seed could not take us beyond Constantius II or perhaps Julian. But it is striking that the last sentence of James' apocalypse is almost identical with that of Simeon Kepha's revelation. Simeon predicts a future of peace after God's judgment on the hated Chalcedonians, when there will be one Church, as in Constantine's reign. In that time, "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved". The second apocalypse refers to the same situation, but claims that it is a ruler from the house of Constantine who will govern the earth in great peace. The passage does not refer to a historical emperor, but to an "Endkaiser" for whom Constantine serves as model. Daniel's prophecy concerning this last Roman emperor and his people is probably contained in Daniel 7:27: "And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey it".

The Apocalypse of John the Little

The first two apocalypses thus deal, respectively, with Christianity and Judaism. Their main focus is on Church unity as a necessary condition for the restoration of Christian belief and peace, and on the coming of a last emperor from the seed of Constantine who will reign over the earth in great peace. The last apocalypse, however, takes us to the time of Islam. This is the revelation of John the Little, brother of James and son of Zebedee. He is identified with John the Evangelist and author of the Book of Revelation, as is clear from the opening sentence:

And there was suddenly a great earthquake and John, brother of James and the initiate of our Lord, fell on his face on the earth and with a great trembling he worshipped God the Lord of all; and our Lord sent to him a man in white raiment and mounted on a horse of fire, and his appearance was like the flashing of fire.¹⁸

The scene is constructed on the basis of Revelation:

¹⁸Cf. Daniel 7:9; Revelation 4:4, 6:11, 7:13-14.

And I beheld and an angel approached me, one of those that are near to him; and he brought me scrolls written with the finger of truth¹⁹ and inscribed in them times and generations and the iniquities and sins of men, and the miseries that are to come on the earth.

John the Little is invited to reveal the contents of the scrolls:

And I beheld that there was written on the scrolls what men are to suffer in the last times....Woe, woe to the sons of men who are left to the generations [and] to the times that are to come! For there shall rise up the kings of the North and they shall become strong and shall shake the whole world, and there shall be among them a man who subdues all the peoples by the marvellous sign which appeared to him in Heaven, and he shall be prosperous and it shall go well with him. And after him shall rise up kings of the Romans, insolent, evil, idol-worshipping, godless.

Constantine again enters the apocalyptic vision as the ideal Roman emperor, a king of the North who conquers the whole world with the victorious cross which appeared to him in Heaven.²⁰ But after him serious moral and religious decay manifests itself, for which the Lord sends punishment:

The Lord shall send wrath upon them from Heaven, and Persia shall become strong against them, and shall drive away and expel this kingdom from the world, because it hath done exceeding evil, and kings shall rise up among them great and renowned, and lovers of money, and they shall take away government from the earth: and there shall be one of them who because of his love of money shall destroy many men, until commerce and trade shall perish from

¹⁹Cf. Revelation 5-6.

²⁰Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I.40; ed. Winkelmann, 36-37. Cf. Andreas Alföldi, "Hoc signo victor eris", in *Pisciculi. Studien zur Religion und Kultur der Altertums* (Munich, 1939; Dölger Festschrift), 1-5; Dinkler, *Signum Crucis*, 63-65.

off the whole earth, and by the son of his own body he shall die. And all the silver and gold that he has collected shall not save him; and after this Persia shall rule for a little time, and it too shall be delivered over to Media; because of their evil sins the God of heaven shall abolish their rule, and shall destroy their kingdom; and they shall perish and cease to be.

The reference is to the Sasanians under Khusrō II Parvīz (591–628), who used his military strength to extort major concessions from the Byzantine emperors.²¹ Khusrō conquered a large part of the Byzantine Empire in the years from 603 on, Constantinople itself being saved only with great difficulty, until Heraclius' counterattack proved successful and Khusrō was murdered by his own son and ministers.²²

It is noteworthy that the emperor Heraclius is totally absent in this apocalypse, and that Media is mentioned as Persia's successor. It would seem, however, that the concept of the four empires in the book of Daniel is responsible for the introduction here of the Median empire, which has no place at this period. The author of the Daniel apocalypse describes the succession of four world empires: the Babylonian, the Median, the Persian, and the Greek empire of Alexander the Great and his successors. Ps.-Methodius took this historical scheme in an almost unchanged form from the Book of Daniel. He considers the Greco-Roman-Byzantine empire as the last one, and consequently introduces the Byzantine emperor as the Endkaiser. Like ps.-Methodius, but in a different way, our author is interested in the succession of four empires—the Roman, the Sasanian, the Median, and the Arabian—after which there will be a Christian and unified empire without ecclesiastical controversy, under an ideal Roman emperor, Constantine *redivivus*. The ideal state of the Roman Empire under Constantine will return at the end of days, when the Muslim reign will have come to an end through internal conflicts.

²¹Georg Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, trans. Joan M. Hussey, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1968), 85, 94–95, 102–104.

²²John Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: the Transformation of a Culture* (Cambridge, 1990), 42–46.

The successive fall of these empires is caused by their sins, for which they are punished by God's judgments:

But there will be deniers of the truth and men that know not God and do corruptly in their lasciviousness, those who provoke God, and then suddenly shall be fulfilled the prophecy of Daniel, the pure and the desired, which he spake, that God shall send forth a mighty wind, the southern one; and there shall come from it a people of deformed aspect, and their appearance and manners like those of women; and there shall rise up from among them a warrior, and one whom they call a prophet, and they shall be brought into his hands...those like to whom there has not been any in the world, neither do there exist their like; and everyone that hears shall shake his head and shall deride him and say: "Why doth he speak thus? And God seeth it and regardeth it not".

The appearance of Muḥammad, warrior and prophet,²³ is seen as the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy in Chapter 11 on the war between the king of the South and the king of the North. The mighty southern wind refers to Daniel 7:2: "Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea". This text is linked with Daniel 11:5: "And the king of the South shall be strong". The deformed, "female" appearance of the Arabs from the desert is a borrowing from ps.-Methodius, who gives a vivid picture of the perverted morals of the Christians in his time: men dress like harlots and wear jewellery like young girls and behave in a lascivious and shameful way.²⁴ Another passage in ps.-Methodius describes the triumphant Muslims as being dressed like bridegrooms and adorned like

²³See Sidney H. Griffith, "The Prophet Muḥammad, His Scripture and His Message According to the Christian Apologies in Arabic and Syriac from the First 'Abbāsid Century", in Toufic Fahd, ed., *La vie du prophète Mahomet* (Paris, 1983), 131-43.

²⁴Ps.-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, Vatican Ms. Syr. 58, fol. 128v.; Suermann, *Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion*, 62:340-45.

brides.²⁵ Such references to men dressing and behaving like women, a clear sign of moral perversity, may comprise the background for John the Little's portrait of the Muslims.

The Muslims, the people from the South, have subdued Persia and Rome as was ordained by the Holy One of Heaven. John the Little prophesies that:

Twelve renowned kings shall rise up from that people, according as it is written in the law when God talked with Abraham and said to him: "Lo! concerning Ishmael thy son I have heard thee, and twelve princes shall he beget along with many other princesses"; and he, even he, is the people of the land of the South.

The reference is to Genesis 17:20: "And as for Ishmael I have heard thee: behold I have blessed him; and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation".²⁶ Harris supposed that the twelve princes referred to twelve caliphs, bringing the date of the apocalypse and consequently of the entire work to the mid-eighth century.²⁷ But it is more in accord with the tenor of the treatise to consider the meaning as symbolic: as the first apocalypse emphasizes, Christianity had twelve Apostles to judge the twelve tribes of Israel, and Islam consequently had twelve princes. In the Bible, the appearance of groups or things in terms of "twelves" is a sign that the hand of God is involved.²⁸ It is therefore important to keep the number to twelve. When the Levites are excluded from the twelve tribes of Israel, Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manassah become "tribes" in order to keep the twelve complete.²⁹ Similarly, in the New Testament we find that the Apostles choose Matthias to

²⁵Vat. Ms. Syr. 58, fol. 133r; Suermann, *Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion*, 74:497-98.

²⁶Cf. Genesis 25:16.

²⁷Harris, *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, 21. According to a well-known *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, twelve caliphs were to rule after him; see Wilfred Madelung, "Apocalyptic Prophecies in Ḥims in the Umayyad Age", *JSS* 31 (1986), 150.

²⁸See, for example, Genesis 35:22-26, Matthew 14:20, 26:53.

²⁹Cf. Numbers 1:1-54.

replace Judas, again maintaining the twelve.³⁰ In Islam this symbolism is carried over, where the idea of the twelve is that of an élite chosen by God, or a force sent forth according to some divinely ordained plan.³¹

As for the identification of Ishmael with the Muslims, the people of the land of the South, that too occurs in ps.-Methodius.³² The Muslims subdue almost the whole world and oppress its inhabitants with heavy tribute:

He (i.e. Ishmael) shall lead captive a great captivity among all the people of the earth, and they shall spoil a great spoiling, and all the ends of the earth shall do service and there shall be made subject to him many lordships; and his hand shall be over all, and also those that are under his hand he shall oppress with much tribute; and he shall oppress and kill and destroy the rulers of the ends [of the earth]. And he shall impose a tribute on the earth, such as was never heard of; until a man shall come out from his house and shall find four collectors who collect tribute; and men shall sell their sons and daughters because of their need: and they shall hate their lives and shall wail and weep, and there is no voice or discourse except Woe, Woe! and they shall be covetous with a hateful cupidity: and they shall be converted like bridegrooms and like brides...and there shall prosper with them all those who take refuge with them, and they shall enslave to them men renowned in race, and there shall be among them hypocrites, and men who know not God and regard not men except for prodigals, fornicators, and men wicked and vengeful.

³⁰ Acts 1:12-26.

³¹ See Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād, *Kitāb al-fitān*, ed. Lawrence I. Conrad (Wiesbaden, forthcoming), nos. 104, 221-29, 250, 269, 331, 535, and frequently elsewhere (index, s.v. "12"). I would like to thank Dr. Conrad for drawing this dimension of the symbolism of twelve to my attention and providing me with the relevant Biblical and Arabic references.

³² Vat. Syr. 58, fol. 127v; Suermann, *Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion*, 60:315-17. Cf. G.J. Reinink, "Ismael, Der Wildesel in der Wüste. Zur Typologie der Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodios", *BZ* 75 (1982), 336-44.

The heavy tribute, “never heard of before”, is the tax laid upon Christians by the Muslims, specifically by means of the tax reforms and census of ‘Abd al-Malik. Suermann related the number of tax collectors to the four traditional Muslim law schools, but this is impossible, since in the eighth century these law schools (*madhāhib*) did not yet exist. The proposition that Sunnī Islam has specifically four schools of law would not have been true until after about the twelfth century AD. Before that time there were numerous other regional schools, which were not in place until the eighth-ninth centuries AD.³³ Again ps.-Methodius provides the clue: the number four is used to indicate the four chiefs or heads of the chastisements (*rīšā d-mardūtā*) which fall on Christians under Muslim rule, which is in turn sent by God to chastise his people for their sins.³⁴ Heavy tribute is also described by ps.-Methodius—so heavy indeed that, as with John the Little, men are said to sell their sons and daughters.³⁵ Like ps.-Methodius, John foresees a massive apostasy among his co-religionists: they will be converted like bridegrooms and brides (cf. ps.-Methodius’ picture of the triumphant Muslims as bridegrooms and brides). John calls them hypocrites, prodigals, fornicators, etc., and ps.-Methodius again does the same.³⁶

The lamentable state of Christians under Muslim supremacy is a sign of the End that is at hand, and which will come after “one great week and the half of a great week”, i.e. after ten and a half years:

But woe! woe! to the children of men in that time; and they (i.e. the Muslims) shall rule over the world³⁷ for one

³³See Joseph Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (Oxford, 1964), 57–68.

³⁴Suermann, *Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion*, 18–81; Vat. Syr. 58, fol. 128r; Suermann, 62:331–34.

³⁵Vat. Syr. 58, fol. 132v. Suermann, *Der geschichtstheologische Reaktion*, 72:475. ‘Abd al-Malik’s tax reform is described by the chronicle of ps.-Dionysius. See J.-B. Chabot, *Chronique de Denys de Tell-Mahré* (Paris, 1895), 10; cf. G.J. Reinink, “Pseudo-Methodius und die Legende vom römischen Endkaiser”, in W. Verbeke, D. Verhelst, A. Welkenhuysen, eds., *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages* (Leuven, 1988), 104.

³⁶Vat. Syr. 58, fol. 128v; Suermann, *Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion*, 62:340–46; see in particular fol. 131v.; Suermann, 70:440–55.

³⁷The manuscript contains a scribal error here: read ‘amarta “habitable world”, instead of ma’rta = “cave”.

great week and the half of a great week; and every king who shall arise from among them shall strengthen and be made strong, and shall be more vigorous than his fellow; and they shall gather together the gold of the earth....and it shall come to pass after the week and the half of a week that the earth shall be moved concerning them, and God shall require the sins of men from their hands.³⁸ And the South wind shall subside and God shall bring to naught their covenant with them.

John the Little takes the period of one great week and the half of a great week from ps.-Methodius, who wrote at the end of ten "great weeks" of Muslim rule, i.e. in 692.³⁹

Ps.-Methodius prophesies that then the last Byzantine emperor will come and will stay in Jerusalem for one and a half weeks, i.e. for ten and a half years; after this period the son of perdition (the destroyer) and the Antichrist will manifest themselves. Ps.-Methodius thus applies the Danielic scheme of one and a half weeks⁴⁰ to the events of his own day, and the author of the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* takes over the mention of the same period of time, after which the Muslims will split into two rival parties and make war with each other because they hate the name of the Lord and love sin:

But so much the more will they (i.e. the Muslims) afflict all those who confess our Lord Christ; because they shall hate to the very end the name of the Lord and shall bring to naught his Covenant; and truth shall not be found among them, but only villainy shall they love and sin shall they have an affection for. And whatever is hateful in the eyes of the Lord that will they do: and they shall be called a

³⁸The Ms. reads *hetaha d-berīta*, which Harris translates as "the sins of creation"; it seems better, however, to interpret *bryt'* as *brīta*, "creature", and to translate "the sins of men".

³⁹Vat. Syr. 58, fol. 123v; Suermann, 72:474-75; fols. 133r: 2-133v:13; Suermann, 74. Cf. Reinink, "Pseudo-Methodius und die Legende vom römischen Endkaiser", 106.

⁴⁰Cf. Daniel 7:25, 9:27.

corrupt people; and after these things the Lord shall be angered against them, as he was against Rome, and against Media and Persia; and straightaway there will come upon them the End, and suddenly the time [will come]; and at last in the completion of the week and a half God shall stir up against them desolation; and an angel of wrath shall descend and shall kindle evil among them...and they shall be lifted up one against the other, and they shall make and become two parties and each party shall seek to call himself king, and there shall be war between them, and there shall be many murders by them and among them, and much blood shall be shed among them at the fountain of waters which is in the place which was spoken of beforetime in the *Book of the Sibyl*.

At the time of writing, then, the author of the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* expected the end of Muslim rule after one and a half great weeks, through internal conflicts between two rival factions. At that time there were perhaps already signs of this conflict, even actual battles. But while the author seems to have known a Sibylline oracle about a battle near a fountain, no such oracle is attested in extant collections.⁴¹ The battle at the fountain of waters most likely denotes the bloody conflict between the caliph 'Abd al-Malik and his rival Ibn al-Zubayr. In the autumn of 73/692 the latter was finally defeated at Mecca, the place of the fountain Zamzam that played an important rôle in the ceremonies of the *hajj*, the Islamic pilgrimage.⁴²

The final battle between the two Muslim parties will bring the Byzantine emperor back onto the scene of world history. He will besiege the Muslim armies and drive them back from whence they came:

⁴¹See Sebastian Brock, "A Syriac Collection of Prophecies of the Pagan Philosophers", *OLP* 14 (1983), 203-46; *idem*, "Some Syriac Excerpts from Greek Collections of Pagan Prophecies", *VC* 38 (1984), 77-90, concluding that there were other collections of pagan prophecies, among them Sibylline oracles, which no longer survive.

⁴²See Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: the Islamic Near East From the Sixth to the Eleventh Century* (London, 1986), 98; G.R. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam: the Umayyad Caliphate AD 661-750* (London, 1986), 49.

And when the man of the North shall hear this report, he shall not boast and say:⁴³ “By my might and by my arm have I overcome”. Then shall he associate with him all the peoples of the earth, and he will go forth against him, and they shall destroy and devastate his armies and lead captive their sons and daughters and their wives, and there shall fall upon them a bitter wedlock and misery; and the Lord shall cause the wind of the South to return to his place from whence he came forth, and shall bring to naught his name and his fame; and it shall come to pass that when they shall enter again the place from whence they came out, the enemy shall not pursue them thither, and they shall not fear hunger and they shall not tremble, and it shall come to pass in that day that their reliance [shall be] upon silver which they have got by wrong and by plunder which they have hidden in the place named Diglath,⁴⁴ and they shall return and settle in the land from whence they came out; and God shall stir up for them there evil times and times of plagues, and without war they will be laid waste, and unto all generations of the world there shall not be among them any who holds a weapon and stands up in battle....

Here the apocalypse of John the Little ends. The angel Michael leaves him and a voice orders John to go to his companions, Simeon and James, so that they may talk with him.

⁴³Harris' translation is not correct here: he translates “he shall not be affrighted and he shall say”, but *nštbhr* means “to glorify oneself, to boast”. See Jessie Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (Oxford, 1903), 36, s.v. *bhr*.

⁴⁴The Syriac here is the exact equivalent to the Arabic *Dijla*, the Tigris River, and may therefore allude to the founding of the city of Wāsiṭ on the Tigris in 702–705 by al-Ḥajjāj. See Jean Périer, *Vie d'al-Ḥadždjādī ibn Yousof* (Paris, 1904), 205–13. This establishment of a permanent garrison of Syrian troops had enormous economic consequences for the local population. If this reference to “the place called Diglath” does in fact betray knowledge of the existence of Wāsiṭ, it would imply that the *Gospel* cannot have assumed its present form until shortly after 702. I am grateful to Dr. Conrad for drawing my attention to this point.

The Social and Cultural Context

The *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* is a literary unity, consisting of a prologue and three apocalypses, of which the first two function as a preparation for the third and last. It is anti-Chalcedonian and anti-Jewish, sees Constantine as the ideal Christian emperor, and proclaims a Constantine *redivivus* as the last Byzantine emperor who will subdue the Muslims with all other peoples, just as Constantine subdued all peoples by the sign of the Cross. When and in what historical circumstances was this apocalyptic treatise written?

The author used several sources, or at least, his treatise manifests an awareness of the thought of certain writings circulating in his milieu. The prologue displays influence from the so-called *Testamentum domini nostri Jesu Christi*, an apocalyptic writing, supposedly from the fifth century, which forms the introduction to a collection of ecclesiastical laws, apostolic constitutions, and apostolic canons.⁴⁵ Its message is that only believers who strictly keep the commandments of God and the Church will be saved at the end of time, when the son of perdition, the Antichrist, will appear. Jesus instructs his disciples about the signs of the End, when the son of perdition will come, and it is noteworthy that these signs are virtually the same as those given in the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*. Moreover, the *Testamentum* urges its readers to return to the true Church, as the *Gospel* urges its readers back to true belief. Both writings emphasize the aid of the Holy Spirit in understanding the signs of the End and finding the strength to keep the commandments.⁴⁶ According to the colophon of the only surviving Ms. of the *Testamentum*, it was translated from Greek into Syriac by a monk Jacob, in all likelihood the famous translator Jacob of Edessa, in 687.⁴⁷ This is the very year in which Jōḥannān bar Penkāyē wrote

⁴⁵ *Testamentum domini nostri Jesu Christi*, ed. Ignatius Ephraem II Rahmani (Mainz, 1899); see Anton Baumstark, "Überlieferung und Bezeugung des Testamentum Domini Nostri Jesu Christi", *Römische Quartalschrift* 14 (1900), 1–45; Franz Xavier von Funk, *Das Testament unseres Herrn und die verwandten Schriften* (Mainz, 1901).

⁴⁶ See already Harris, *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, 16–17.

⁴⁷ *Testamentum*, 149. On Jacob of Edessa as a translator, see Ignatius Ortiz de Urbina, *Patrologia Syriaca* (Vatican City, 1965), 181–82; Drijvers, "Jakob von Edessa", 468–70.

his *Ktābā d-rīš mellē*, of which Book XV describes the sufferings of northern Mesopotamia, afflicted by famine, plague, and heavy tribute, which made Jōḥannān expect the end of times and of Muslim rule.⁴⁸ We may surmise that the same situation provided a stimulus for Jacob of Edessa to translate the *Testamentum domini nostri* into Syriac. Jacob of Edessa was a strong-minded advocate of the strict maintenance of ecclesiastical canons against the pressure of Islam; and indeed, this brought him into such conflict with his clerics at Edessa that he left his bishopric in 688.⁴⁹ Even if the apocalyptic prologue of the *Testamentum* already existed (so far no Greek text has been discovered), Jacob may have updated it in the process of translation so as to bring it into line with existing conditions,⁵⁰ when the political and social situation evidently aroused apocalyptic expectations among Nestorians and Jacobites alike. The arrangement of the manuscript of which the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* forms a part also manifests the same tendencies that urged Jacob of Edessa to emphasize the strict maintenance of ecclesiastical law as a weapon against apostasy. The *Gospel* functions as an apocalyptic sermon to the readers, urging them to keep the canons, while for possible converts from heresy, i.e. Christians who had apostatized and embraced Islam, an additional *libellus* is added.

A second source for the *Gospel* is the *Apocalypse* of ps.-Methodius, written in 692 as a reaction to the heavy tribute imposed by 'Abd al-Malik, and the subsequent mass conversions to Islam.⁵¹ The *Gospel* gives a similar account of the tribute and conversions and knows the same periodization of history: the Muslims will reign for another one and a half great weeks, and then the man from the North, the Christian emperor, will come and destroy them; as a result also of their internal conflicts, Muslim rule will end. The two Muslim parties, each of which

⁴⁸Cf. Brock, "North Mesopotamia in the Late Seventh Century", 52; Reinink, "Pseudo-Methodius und die Legende von römischen Endkaiser", 84-86.

⁴⁹See Baumstark, 248; Drijvers, "Jakob von Edessa", 468.

⁵⁰See François Nau, "Fragment inédit d'une traduction syriaque jusqu'ici inconnue du Testamentum D.N. Jesu Christi", *JA*, 9ème Série, 17 (1901), 233-56; J.P. Arendzen, "A New Syriac Text of the Apocalyptic Part of the Testament of the Lord", *JThS* 2 (1901), 401-16; Funk, *Das Testament unseres Herrn*, 83-85.

⁵¹Reinink, "Pseudo-Methodius und die Legende vom römischen Endkaiser", is the basic study; also see his study in this volume.

wants to rule, probably denote 'Abd al-Malik and the rival caliph 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr at Mecca. Even after the defeat of Muṣ'ab, Ibn al-Zubayr's brother, at Dayr al-Jathālīq in 691 and Ibn al-Zubayr's final overthrow and death in autumn 692 at Mecca, the conflicts were still not yet over. In northern Mesopotamia in particular, in the Jazīra and in the Palmyrena, there were continuous feuds between the Yamanīs and the Qaysīs, who represented rival factional interests.⁵² The *Gospel* was therefore written in the years following 692, when the memory of the struggle between 'Abd al-Malik and Ibn al-Zubayr was still fresh and the conflicts still continued, while the burden of 'Abd al-Malik's tribute was still heavily felt and conversion to Islam posed a threat to the Monophysite community.⁵³ Its place of origin was probably Edessa, where even after bishop Jacob's departure his influence was still considerable.

There is, however, a major difference between the *Apocalypse* of ps.-Methodius and the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, one which manifests itself most clearly in their view of the four world empires. Ps.-Methodius sees the Byzantine Empire as the last one; he dismisses the Muslims as wild asses from the desert whose power will not long endure—they will soon disappear from the world scene. The author of the *Gospel*, however, considers the Umayyad caliphate as the last world empire and does not see it as a temporary phenomenon. He must have lived when 'Abd al-Malik had firmly consolidated his rule and expectations of the end of Muslim power had considerably diminished. It is in accordance with all the sources and with the socio-political situation to assume that the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* was written at the end of 'Abd al-Malik's reign (he died in 705), when expectations of an imminent end to Muslim rule had disappeared and no one could reasonably expect the Byzantine emperor to repel the Muslims and reconquer his lost territories. This is why, in contrast with ps.-Methodius, the author of the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* did not expect the coming of the last Byzantine emperor, a Monophysite descendant of Alexander the Great. Our writer forecast the coming of the man of the North, who

⁵²See Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, 90–100; Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, 59.

⁵³As noted above (n. 44), it may be that the text reached its present form some time shortly after 702.

would not overcome the Muslims by his own power, his might and arm. He is a shadowy figure, a man from the seed of Constantine, if we combine the information from the second apocalypse with what John the Little prophesies of the man of the North. The schism between Chalcedonians and Monophysites, the source of so much trouble, would then come to an end and all would return to one undivided Church, which once existed under the rule of Constantine the Great in the distant past.

The seventh century, when real historical knowledge of the Roman past was quickly fading, was notable for the emergence of a semi-legendary, saintly Constantine.⁵⁴ It is especially noticeable that our author avoids mentioning the last emperor actually known to the Orient, namely Heraclius, despite his active rôle in defeating the Persians and restoring the Cross to Jerusalem, instead preferring to recall the now almost mythical origins of the Christian empire and its first emperor. Heraclius' victories had given way to defeat by the Muslims, and memories of recent Byzantine rule were too painful and expectations too faint to allow our author to evoke a last Byzantine emperor with the expectation that such a figure could really bring salvation and deliverance from Muslim rule. Nor does the *Gospel* mention the Cross in relation to the last emperor, only referring to it in the context of Constantine's victories and building activity at Jerusalem. For while the Cross had come to the forefront of attention as a result of Heraclius' campaigns, it had more recently become a major bone of contention between Muslims and Christians; that may be why it was thought better to omit it here.⁵⁵ Again, our author differs from ps.-Methodius. The latter wrote in a time of severe crisis, when the danger of apostasy was very threatening to the Church; on the other hand, the second Muslim civil war made the coming of the Byzantine emperor seem a real possibility in an apocalyptic climate. The author of the *Gospel of the*

⁵⁴See F. Winkelmann, "Die älteste erhaltene griechische hagiographische Vita Konstantins und Helenas (BHG Nr. 365z, 366, 366a)", in Jürgen Dümmer, ed., *Texte und Textkritik. Eine Aufsatzsammlung* (Berlin, 1987; *TU* 133), 623-38; cf. A. Khazdan, "'Constantine imaginaire': Byzantine Legends of the Ninth Century about Constantine the Great", *Byzantion* 57 (1987), 196-250.

⁵⁵See G.R.D. King, "Islam, Iconoclasm and the Declaration of Doctrine", *BSOAS* 48 (1985), 267-77.

Twelve Apostles did not live under such conditions. Muslim rule was firmly established, and he was therefore more interested in drawing the boundaries of his Monophysite community against the Chalcedonians and the Jews. His apocalyptic expectations had consequently faded somewhat and were now focussed on the man of the North as pictured in Chapter 11 of the Book of Daniel.

The *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* was thus written after 692, when ps.-Methodius wrote, and before 705, when 'Abd al-Malik's reign ended. A date shortly after the end of the seventh century is the most plausible, as this was a time when, on the one hand, Muslim rule was firmly established, but when, on the other, the continuous fighting between rival Muslim factions could encourage expectations that the hegemony of Islam would end one day in the future. A unified Christian empire would then rule again over the whole world under the scepter of the man of the North, a shadowy and ill-defined Constantine *redivivus*. The *Gospel* gives us a fascinating insight into the thoughts and hopes current in Edessa in the last decade of the seventh century and the beginning of the eighth, when the Muslims threatened the very existence of the Christian Monophysite population, who considered themselves the true heirs of Constantine's orthodoxy. There were signs in recent events which Christians could interpret as indicating that there might at some time be an end to their sufferings. Meanwhile, they had to come to terms with Muslim rule and preserve their identity against both the hated Chalcedonians and the Jews.

XIX

CHRISTIANS, JEWS AND MUSLIMS IN NORTHERN MESOPOTAMIA IN EARLY ISLAMIC TIMES

THE GOSPEL OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES AND RELATED TEXTS

During the last two decades of the seventh century northern Mesopotamia witnessed an intense literary activity, which the tumultuous social and political changes of this period mirror. It was the time of the second civil war between the Umayyads and Ibn al-Zubayr, which ended officially with the death of Ibn al-Zubayr at Mecca in 692, but which actually had a long aftermath especially in northern Mesopotamia and in the Jazira¹. Caliph 'Abd al-Malik (685-705 C.E.) restored the central authority in the Muslim state, defeated his political rivals, carried through tax reforms, imposing a heavy census in 691, issued the first Muslim coins – till then the Byzantine coinage was still in use –, and introduced Arabic as the official language of the administration². He also had the Dome of the Rock built in Jerusalem in 691, indicating that from now on Jerusalem was to be considered a Muslim city, since the Dome was meant as a Muslim counterpart to the main Christian sanctuary of the holy city, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre built by Constantine the Great³. The burden of all these political and religious changes on the Christian population of northern Mesopotamia was increased by a severe plague and famine during 686-687 which brought much suffering to the already much vexed country folk and towns people⁴.

1. See H. Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates. The Islamic Near East from the sixth to the eleventh century*, London, 1986, 90-100; G.R. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam. The Umayyad Caliphate AD 661-750*, London, 1986, 49.

2. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, 61-66.

3. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, 59-61; S.D. Goitein, « The Sanctity of Jerusalem and Palestine * in early Islam », *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions*, Leiden, 1966; O. Grabar, « The Umayyad Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem », *Ars Orientalis* 3, 1959; Heribert Busse, « Tempel, Grabeskirche und Haram aš-Šarif. Drei Heiligtümer und ihre gegenseitige Beziehungen in Legende und Wirklichkeit », in H. Busse-G. Kretschmar, *Jerusalem Heiligtumstraditionen in altkirchlicher und frühislamischer Zeit*, Wiesbaden, 1987, 1-27.

4. See Theophanes Chronographia, (ed. C. de Boor), Vol. I, Lipsiae, 1883, 361, 7; 364, 3; cf. G.J. Reinink, « Pseudo-Methodius und die Legende vom römischen Endkaiser », *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages*, Leuven, 1988, 95, 103-104.

'Abd al-Malik's reign is a real watershed in the history of the Near East. It was possible to see the Arabs from the south Arabian desert who had conquered Syria and Mesopotamia within a very short period as a transient factor in history – they would certainly disappear as hastily as they had come – before the caliphate of 'Abd al-Malik; after 692 in particular Muslim rule was so firmly established that the Christians had to reckon with their Arab overlord as a more permanent feature. Islam and the Muslim state took shape during 'Abd al-Malik's reign; it is of special interest that the earliest securely datable examples of Koranic texts are passages in the inscriptions in the Dome of the Rock with a clear anti-Christian tenor⁵.

Though it is hard to imagine the real impact of all these stormy events, some Christian apocalyptic texts which originated in northern Mesopotamia and were written during 'Abd al-Malik's reign provide us with a unique opportunity to gain some insight into what was going on, and to see how people tried to come to terms with the rapidly changing social and religious situation.

The first text in this series is Book XV of Joḥannan bar Penkaye's *ktaba d-rēš mellē*, written in 687 after the defeat of Mukhtar by the Zubayrid governor of Basra, an episode in the second civil war⁶. During Mukhtar's revolt the *šurtē*, a crack regiment mainly drawn from the *mawali*, took Nisibis and captured the whole of northern Mesopotamia. The *mawali* were non-Arab converts, who supported Mukhtar⁷. This was a sign for Joḥannan that God had decided to end Arab rule through the *šurtē* and that the end of times had come. Joḥannan pictures in vivid colours the calamities that had fallen upon his Nestorian co-religionists – the plague, famine, and heavy taxes – and ascribes all these catastrophes to their sins. He gives a gloomy description of the situation of the Nestorian church, in which the priests neglect their duties and the laity behave like the pagans. Joḥannan's apocalyptic book calls on his Nestorian community to repent and do away with their sins. The Arabs are an instrument in God's hand and only a short episode in His plan for creation⁸.

In the same year in which Joḥannan bar Penkaye wrote his *ktaba d-rēš mellē* the monk Jacob translated the *Testamentum Domini Nostri Jesu Christi* from Greek into Syriac, as the colophon of the unique manuscript tells us⁹. The *Testamentum* is an apocalyptic text supposedly from the fifth century, which forms the introduction to a collection of ecclesiastical laws, apostolic constitutions and apostolic canons. Its message is that only believers who strictly keep God's commandments and the rules of the church will be saved at the end of time, when the son of perdition, the Antichrist, will appear. Jesus' *Testamentum* is

5. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, 61; C. Kessler, « 'Abd al-Malik's Inscription in the Dome of the Rock: a Reconsideration », *JRAS*, 1970.

6. On Mukhtar's revolt and the religious interest of his movement see Hawting, *The first Dynasty of Islam*, 51-53.

7. See for al-Mukhtar's relations with the *mawali* W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, Edinburgh, 1973, 44-47.

8. For text and translation of Book XV of Joḥannan's work see A. Mingana, *Sources syriaques*, Vol. I, Leipzig, 1907, 143*-197*; cf. A. Baumstark, « Eine syrische Weltgeschichte des siebten Jahrhunderts », *Römische Quartalschrift* XV, 1901, 273-280; S.P. Brock, « North Mesopotamia in the Late Seventh Century. Book XV of John bar Penkaye's *Riṣ Mellē* », *JSAI* 9, 1987, 51-75; G.J. Reinink, « Pseudo-Methodius und die Legende vom römischen Endkaiser », 84-94.

9. Ignatius Ephraem II Rahmani, *Testamentum Domini Nostri Jesu Christi*, Moguntiae, 1899, 149; see A. Baumstark, « Ueberlieferung und Bezeugung des Testamentum Domini Nostri Jesu Christi », *Römische Quartalschrift* XIV, 1900, 1-45.

virtually an instruction to his disciples about the signs of the end, when the Antichrist will come. The monk Jacob, who translated the *Testamentum* is in all likelihood the famous translator Jacob bishop of Edessa. The disastrous situation of his time then provided a stimulus to make the apocalyptic *Testamentum* known. Jacob of Edessa was a strongminded advocate of the strict maintenance of ecclesiastical canons against the pressures of Islam in order to keep his monophysite community together and to protect it from conversion to Islam. This attitude brought him into such conflict with his clerics at Edessa that he left his see a year later in 688¹⁰.

The next text of interest is the apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius, written in 691 or the beginning of 692 shortly after the restoration of Umayyad authority in Mesopotamia, when 'Abd al-Malik's tax reforms and census and the recent construction of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem apparently caused a mass conversion to Islam among the monophysite population of northern Mesopotamia. In this threatening situation the author of the apocalypse expected the coming of the Last World Emperor, a Byzantine emperor modelled after an idealized concept of Alexander the Great as well as of Christian emperors like Constantine, Constantius and in particular Jovian, the successor of the pagan Julian the Apostate¹¹. When the author of the Pseudo-Methodius apocalypse wrote his treatise the peace between 'Abd al-Malik and Justinian II (685-695 ; 705-711) was coming to its end and it was expected that war between Byzantium and the Arabs very soon would start again. In this situation, which made it seem unlikely that the Muslim empire would come to its end very soon, when it had manifested itself as a threatening religious and political rival by building the Dome of the Rock at Jerusalem and heavily taxing its non-Muslim subjects, the only hope was the Byzantine emperor. He would be the Last World Emperor (*Endkaiser*), who like a new Alexander would conquer the entire *oikoumene* and as a truly Christian emperor would unite the church and the Christians around the Cross, the victorious sign at Jerusalem.

The apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius was written at Singara, but became known almost immediately at Edessa, where an anonymous writer, a monk from one of the four monasteries situated around the city, used its text together with other sources to adapt its apocalyptic message to local Edessene circumstances¹². This so-called Edessene apocalypse refers to the famous Abgar legend and tells its readers that the Antichrist will reign over the entire world except Edessa, because this city had received a special blessing from Jesus himself in his letter to king Abgar¹³. The Edessene apocalypse also uses the story of queen Helena and the finding of the True Cross, the so-called Judas Cyriacus legend¹⁴. From the nails of Jesus' cross and of the cross of the good robber a bit was made, which hung in a

10. See H. J.W. Drijvers, s.v. «Jakob von Edessa», *TRE* 16, 468-470 ; C.J.A. Lash, «Techniques of a Translator (Jacob of Edessa)», *TU* 125, 1981, 365-383.

11. See G.J. Reinink, «Pseudo-Methodius und die Legende vom römischen Endkaiser»; and Reinink's contribution to this volume.

12. See F. Nau, «Les Révélations de saint Méthode», *JA*, 1917, 415-452 ; G.J. Reinink, «Der edessenische "Pseudo-Methodius"», *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 1991, (forthcoming).

13. See Drijvers, «Abgarsage», in W. Schneemelcher, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen* 5te Aufl. I. Evangelien, Tübingen, 1987, 389-395.

14. Text and German translation in E. Nestle, *De Sancta Cruce. Ein Beitrag zur christlichen Legendengeschichte*, Berlin, 1899, 55-64 ; J. Straubinger, *Die Kreuzauffindungslegende. Untersuchungen über ihre altchristlichen Fassungen mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der syrischen Texte*, Paderborn, 1912 ; J.W. Drijvers, *Helena Augusta : Waarheid en Legende*, diss. Groningen, 1989, 172-186.

church at Constantinople. When an untamed horse would take this bit, the Byzantines would know that the time of Christian world-dominion and the end of Arab rule had come.

Like the apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius, the Edessene apocalypse emphasises the role of Jerusalem, the True Cross and the ideal Christian emperor, a kind of Constantine *redivivus*, builder of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. Both apocalypses were written in the short period 691-692, when it had become clear to the Christians that the Umayyad empire would not come to its end through internal conflicts, but that it on the contrary had manifested itself as a rival religion. In such a situation only the Byzantine emperor could bring salvation. Were not Justinian II's coins decorated with an image of Christ and the emperor himself represented with a cross in his hand? ¹⁵ All these themes demonstrated that Jerusalem was, is, and would remain a Christian city and that through the hand of a Christian emperor the Muslim empire would be vanquished.

This dream of hope and victory turned out to be idle. Although there still were rival parties in the Umayyad empire, there was no actual indication that it would soon come to its end. On the contrary, Justinian II's removal of the Cypriots to the district of Cyzicus, which conflicted with the interests of the caliphate, provoked a new clash of arms in 692, in which the Byzantines were severely defeated at Sebastopolis in Armenia. Byzantine Armenia was therefore again controlled by the Umayyad caliphate ¹⁶. Within a very short period the situation had changed again and called for a different approach in religious terms. This is the background of the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, the last apocalyptic text that will ask for our attention.

The *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* is preserved in the Syriac Ms 85 of the Rendel Harris collection, now in the Harvard University Library. The incomplete manuscript contains a series of questions on canonical matters put to Jacob of Edessa by some priests, together with Jacob's answers, followed by the text of the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*. Then comes an extract from the *Doctrina Addai*, another extract from the thirty-eighth discourse of Severus of Antioch against Grammaticus on the origin of the Nestorian heresy ¹⁷, and a long series of apostolic canons and canons of synods followed by a libellum for those recanting from heresy. The different elements preserved in this manuscript are not accidentally juxtaposed; they are meant as an ensemble to bring apostates back to the true faith and teach them church discipline ¹⁸.

The *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles together with the revelations of each one of them* is the full title of the treatise. The *Gospel* itself, a summary of the Gospel story as told by the four evangelists and the beginning of Acts, put into an apocalyptic perspective, functions as an introduction to the subsequent three revelations. Jesus' Gospel is a warning and a call to faith, for « they who do not confess the Saviour shall perish ». The text of the *Gospel* emphasises the choice of the twelve apostles from the twelve tribes of Israel, « to whom he promised

15. G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, New Brunswick, 1969, 138.

16. G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 131-132.

17. Edited by J. Lebon, *Severi Antiocheni liber contra impium Grammaticum*, CSCO, Syr. 45-46; 50-51; 58-59, Louvain, 1929-1938.

18. See for a description of this manuscript J. Rendel Harris, *The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles together with the Apocalypses of each of them*, Cambridge, 1900, 7-II; Moshe H. Goshen-Gottstein, *Syriac Manuscripts in the Harvard College Library. A Catalogue Harvard Semitic Series 23*, Missoula, 1979, Syr. 93, 75-76.

twelve thrones that they may judge Israel » (cf. Luke 20 :30) ¹⁹. After the resurrection Jesus appears to his disciples, who ask him : « let us know, what is the end of the world, because we stand in the midst of the offences and scandals of the world. » After the ascension the twelve apostles gather in the upper room and pray to God : « ... grant us ... that we may understand the times before thy coming again, ... and who are the rulers of those times, and their lives ; and what men are to see the end ; and who is he that is to come as thy adversary and to contend with the truth ; and whether all men stray from thee and cleave to error ... »

The main emphases in the text of the *Gospel* are obvious : anti-Judaism, true belief or orthodoxy, the character of the rulers of this world before Jesus'(second) coming and who will be Jesus' adversary and contender with the truth. The three following revelations deal precisely with these questions, buttressed in the text by the authority of the Twelve and their Lord.

The first revelation of Simeon Kepha deals with Christianity and describes the miserable state of the church and orthodoxy ²⁰. All evils are due to those who « divide our Lord » and consequently do not know God and do not understand the truth. The *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* is clearly of Monophysite origin, fiercely hostile to the Duophysites, presented as evildoers and causers of all misery, compared to the pagans, for whom there will be no Saviour. The Duophysites are probably the Chalcedonians or Melkites, co-religionists of the Byzantine rulers in northern Mesopotamia, although it is not excluded that the Nestorians are aimed at too. One text in this manuscript, Severus of Antioch's discourse against Grammaticus, deals explicitly with the Nestorian heresy. The *Gospel* claims that the miserable state of the world and the church will end, when the Duophysites return to Monophysite orthodoxy, so that there is one flock, and one church, and one baptism, and salvation for everyone that shall call upon the name of the Lord.

Simeon Kepha's revelation thus focusses on schism in the church and advocates a return to true Monophysite belief. The Duophysites, Chalcedonians and Nestorians alike, are the cause of the deplorable state of the church and of all evil in the world. Simeon Kepha's picture is partly based on Pseudo-Methodius' description of the evils that befall Christians as a result of Islam, and reminds us also of Johānnan bar Penkaye's account of the corrupt state of his own Nestorian church after so long a period of peace ²¹.

The second revelation from James, son of Zebedee, deals with Judaism and Jerusalem ²². He describes the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D., which took place because the Jews « have blasphemed the name of our Lord Jesus and have crucified and killed him. » After mentioning the Emperor Hadrian and the final war between Licinius and Constantine James concentrates on Constantine the Great, who is said to have built sanctuaries to the Lord to which pilgrims travelled from the whole *oikoumene*. The long description of what is certainly the Church of the Holy Sepulchre starts off with the following words : « the Lord shall set therein a sign that overcomes the evil of the wicked », that is, the True Cross

19. The translation of the Syriac text is by J. Rendel Harris, *The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, unless otherwise stated.

20. Rendel Harris, *The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, 31-33.

21. See for details my paper « The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles : A Syriac Apocalypse from the Early Islamic Period », in : Averil Cameron and Lawrence I. Conrad, eds., *Studies in Byzantium and Early Islam I : Problems in the Literary Sources*, Princeton, Darwin Press, 1991.

22. Rendel Harris, *The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, 33-34.

which was highly venerated at Jerusalem²³. The end of the second revelation after the mention of Constantine's death is a prophecy of an emperor who will appear at the end of times : « and one from his (i.e. Constantine's) seed shall rise up in his place and he shall burden the chief men with many ills ... and the earth shall be governed in his days in great peace : because from God it has been spoken concerning him and concerning his people by the mouth of the prophet Daniel : and it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord he will save. » The last sentence of the second revelation is strikingly identical with the last sentence of the first. At the end of times, when there will stand up an emperor from the seed of Constantine there will be church unity and great peace, according to the prophecy of Daniel, 7 : 27 : « and the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey it. »

The last apocalypse takes us to the time of Islam and is put in the name of John the Little, son of Zebedee, identified with John the Evangelist and with the author of the Book of Revelation. After Constantine, « a man who subdues all the peoples by the marvellous sign which appeared to him in heaven », there will be a continuous process of religious and moral decay. After the evil and godless kings of the Romans, the Persians will expel the Roman (i.e. Byzantine) kingdom from the world. The reference is to Chosroes II Aparwez (591-628)²⁴. After the Persians the Medians will come and then suddenly the Arabs will appear from the south and among them a warrior and prophet, who is doubtless Muhammad. The Arabs subdue Rome and Persia and oppress the inhabitants of the whole world with heavy tribute, which causes great misery. The description of this heavy tribute, certainly 'Abd al-Malik's census, reminds of Pseudo-Methodius, and like Pseudo-Methodius John the Little foresees massive apostasy and conversion to Islam : « and they will be converted like bridegrooms and like brides... »

It is of particular interest that the author of the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* fundamentally changed the Danielic scheme of the four world empires : the Babylonian, the Persian, the Median and the Empire of Alexander and his successors, which we still find with Pseudo-Methodius, for whom the Greco-Roman-Byzantine empire is the last one, from which the *Endkaiser* will come to the fore²⁵. By contrast John the Little knows a different succession : the Roman empire, actually beginning with Constantine the Great, then the Sassanian, the Median and the Muslim empire, which will be the last one. The author does not expect the Umayyads to disappear into the Arabian desert, from which the Muslims had come. Their rule is seen as having a much more permanent character.

At the end of days, when the Muslim empire has come to an end through internal conflicts, the ideal united state of the Roman empire and its church under a new Constantine will return. Muslim supremacy will last "one great week and the half of a great week", i.e. ten and a half years, and after this period God shall bring to nought. His covenant with

23. See E. Wistrand, *Konstantins Kirche am heiligen Grab in Jerusalem nach den ältesten literarischen Zeugnissen*, Acta Universitatis Gotoburgensis, 1952 : I ; C. Coüasnon, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem*, London, 1974, 35, considers the *rotunda* of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as a sign of victory.

24. See G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 80 ; A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284-602*, Oxford, 1973, Vol. I, 316.

25. See G.J. Reinink, « Pseudo-Methodius und die Legende vom römischen Endkaiser ».

them ²⁶. « God shall stir up against them desolation ; and an angel of wrath shall kindle evil among them (i.e. among the Muslims)... and they shall be lifted up one against the other, and they shall make and become two parties, and each party shall seek to call himself king, and there shall be war between them, and much blood shall be shed among them at the fountain of waters » The battle at the fountain of waters most likely denotes the bloody conflict between the caliph 'Abd al-Malik and Ibn al-Zubayr. The latter was finally defeated at Mecca, the place of the fountain Zamzam, in October 692. The fountain Zamzam played an important role in the ceremonies of the Hajj and is closely linked with the Ka'aba, the Muslim sanctuary at Mecca. There existed a strong association between Ibn al-Zubayr and the Ka'aba. He rebuilt the Ka'aba and significantly changed its form. When the Umayyads recaptured Mecca they had the Ka'aba restored to the form it had had before ²⁷.

Again there is a striking difference between Pseudo-Methodius and the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*. Pseudo-Methodius prophesies the coming of the Last World Emperor after ten great weeks of Muslim rule, i.e. in 692. The *Endkaiser* will reign for one great week and a half (cf. Dan 7 : 25 ; 9 : 27) and then the end will come. John the Little does not expect the Byzantine emperor to come and gain the victory over the Muslims, but foresees a period of one great week and a half of internal rivalry, after which « the man of the north will come », not as a mighty Byzantine emperor, but rather like a humble person, who shall not boast and say : « By my might and by my arm have I overcome. » « The man of the north will destroy the Muslim armies with the help of all the peoples of the earth and then « the Lord shall cause the wind of the south to return to his place from whence he came forth » (cf. Dan. II : 40ff.). The Muslims will return to their land and there "without war they will be laid waste, and unto all generations of the world there shall not be among them any who holds a weapon and stands up in battle. »

Here the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* ends. It is rather different from the other apocalyptic texts because of the changes in the political circumstances that gave rise to another religious response to a new situation. The major differences are the following :

1 – The *Gospel* does not expect the coming of a Last World Emperor, a Byzantine *Endkaiser*, because Muslim rule of the Umayyad empire is seen as being so firmly established that there is no hope left that a Byzantine emperor will conquer the Muslims. Justinian II's defeat at Sebastopolis must have been a decisive moment.

2 – Instead of by the hand of an *Endkaiser* the Umayyad empire will come to its end through internal conflicts that were still going on after the defeat of Ibn al-Zubayr at Mecca. Then, at the end of times a shadowy emperor, the man from the north, a kind of Constantine *redivivus*, will rule over the world and the nations. As the political situation had become more stable, immediate apocalyptic expectations had focussed on a more remote future period.

3 – Closely bound up with this is the attention paid by the Monophysite author of the *Gospel* to the Jews and to his Nestorian and Chalcedonian rivals. In Pseudo-Methodius no mention is made of the Jews, nor of Chalcedonians or Nestorians ; the political and religious situation was too threatening to pay any attention to them. The Monophysite, who is responsible for the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, emphasises the Christian character of

26. Rendel Harris, *The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, 37, gives an incorrect translation : « God shall bring to nought their covenant with them », whereas as the Syriac text clearly reads *qymh* = His covenant.

27. See Hawting, *The first Dynasty of Islam*, 49.

Jerusalem which the Jews had lost because they had killed Jesus, and where the only Roman emperor who had ruled a unified church, Constantine the Great, had the Church of the Holy Sepulchre built. Earlier apocalypses were so obsessed by the immediate situation that they simply neglected Judaism and the other Christian churches. The Monophysite author of the Pseudo-Methodius apocalypse even tried to make the Chalcedonian Byzantine emperor acceptable to his co-religionists. But now the time had come to re-emphasise the boundaries between Christians and Jews and between Monophysites and their Chalcedonian and Nestorian rivals.

The *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* marks a transition between a period of intense apocalyptic hope and a more stable though more negative situation in which the various Christian churches, the Jews and the Muslims had to deal with each other and find their identities and boundaries. The Monophysite author presents other Christians as pagans and evil-doers and the Jews especially as Christ-killers. I think, therefore, that the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* was written after 692 and certainly before the death of 'Abd al-Malik in 705. Its date certainly lies closer to 692, when during the aftermath of Ibn al-Zubayr's revolt there was still fighting between rival Muslim groups in Northern Mesopotamia, than to the end of 'Abd al-Malik's reign²⁸. The eighth century saw the first disputes between Christians and Muslims, and an intensification of the disputes with the Jews, as well as the first Christian apologies against Islam, which some Syriac sources consider another form of Judaism²⁹. The *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* belongs within this development, where the dividing lines were drawn and polemic with the Jews about the sanctuaries at Jerusalem also implied polemic with Muslim religious claims that took shape in the Dome of the Rock. The *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* deserves therefore more scholarly attention than it has received so far in the process of transition of « Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam ».

28. See Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, 90-100 ; Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, 59.

29. The earliest dispute between a Christian and a Muslim is the Disputation between a monk of the monastery of Beth Hale and a follower of the emir Maslama, of which text G.J. Reinink and the present author will publish an edition and translation with commentary ; see P. Jager, « Intended Edition of a Disputation between a Monk of the Monastery of Bet Hale and one of the Tayoye », in : H. J.W. Drijvers-R. Lavenant-C. Molenberg-G.J. Reinink, *IV Symposium Syriacum, 1984, OCA 229*, Roma, 1987, 401-402 ; the dialogue between the Patriarch John I and the Emir of the Agarenes surely is an eighth century treatise, cf. F. Nau, « Un colloque du patriarche Jean avec l'émir des Agaréens », *JA*, 1915, 225-279, who dates this tract to 639 or 644 ; see further S.H. Griffith, « The Prophet Muhammad, his Scripture and his Message according to the Christian Apologies in Arabic and Syriac from the first Abbasid Century », in : *Vie du prophète Mahomet*, Coll. Strasbourg, 1980, 99-146, esp. 122.

p. 140: Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire. The Development of Christian Discourse* (Berkeley–Oxford 1991) is very illuminating for the shared culture of Christians and pagans.

X: Der getaufte Löwe und die Theologie der Acta Pauli

p. 184, n. 8: See now H.-D. Altendorf, E. Junod, J.-P. Mahé, W. Rordorf and G. Strecker, *Orthodoxie et hérésie dans l'église ancienne. Perspectives nouvelles* (Genève–Lausanne–Neuchâtel 1993) 21–63.

p. 189, n. 20: See now W. Rordorf, 'Was wissen wir über Plan und Absicht der Paulusakten?', in *Oecumenica et Patristica* (Geneva 1989) 71–82.

XI: Marcionism in Syria: principles, problems, polemics

p. 155, n. 9: See D. Bundy, 'The Life of Abercius. Its Significance for Early Syriac Christianity', *The Second Century. A Journal of Early Christian Studies* 7 (1989–90) 163–176.

p. 155, n. 11: See no. XIV in this volume and Han J.W. Drijvers, 'Bardaisan's Doctrine of Free Will, The Pseudo-Clementines, and Marcionism in Syria', in G. Bedouelle and O. Fatio, *Liberté chrétienne et libre arbitre* (Fribourg 1994) 13–30.

XIV: Adam and the True Prophet in the Pseudo-Clementines

p. 314, n. 1: See now F. Stanley Jones, 'Evaluating the Latin and Syriac Translations of the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions*', *Apocrypha* 3 (1992) 237–257.

XVII: Antony of Tagrit's book on the Good Providence of Good

p. 163, n. 1: See also J.W. Watt, 'Syriac Panegyric in Theory and Practice. Antony of Tagrit and Eli of Qartamin', *Le Muséon* 102 (1989) 271–298.

XIX: Christians, Jews and Muslims in northern Mesopotamia in early Islamic times

p. 67, n. 3: See J. Raby, J. Johns' *Bayt al-Maqdis. 'Abd al-Malik's Jerusalem'*, *Oxford Studies in Islamic Art* IX, Oxford 1992.

p. 69, n. 12: See now G. Reinink, 'Der edessenische "Pseudo-Methodius"', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 83 (1990) 31–45.