

DANIEL J. SARAS

JOHN OF DAMASCUS
ON ISLAM

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BY

DANIEL J. SAHAS

University of Waterloo



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JOHN OF DAMASCUS
ON ISLAM
THE GIBBERY OF THE ISLAMITES

DANIEL J. SARAS
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

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TO MYRTA
TO MY FAMILY
TO MY STUDENTS

“Φιλοσοφία πάλιν ἐστι φίλια σοφίας.
Σοφία δὲ ἀληθῆς, ὁ Θεός ἐστιν,
ἢ οὖν ἀγάπη πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν
αὕτη ἐστιν ἀληθῆς φιλοσοφία”.

“Philosophy, again, is love of wisdom.
But true wisdom is God.
Therefore, the love of God, this is the
true philosophy”.

John of Damascus
Fount of Knowledge, (MPG, XCIV, 533)

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PREFACE

As a result of an unprecedented phenomenon in human history, the two World Wars in this century—the most unfortunate and degrading experience of mankind—as well as the revolutionary explosion of technology and its application to transportation and communication, we live at, and witness to, a turning point in man's relations with his fellow global citizens. The interest of modern man in the religious ideas and experiences of other men is, undoubtedly, one of the characteristic features of this era. The field of the History of Religions (or, more properly, *Religionswissenschaft*) has developed in immense proportions, it has found its way to almost every University and institution of learning in the world today, and, what is more heartening, it has attracted the attention of a variety of scholars from different disciplines who are joining forces in their effort to study and understand the phenomenon Religion in its essence and manifestations. At a time of a growing sense of human solidarity and world community, the study of the various religious traditions of the world does not simply offer an intellectual satisfaction to the curiosity of the academic world, but it contributes, hopefully, to the understanding by the community at large of the concrete men who live by and adhere to different religions. Of course, the quest for a knowledge of other men's religions is not a new phenomenon. What is new is the prospect that, perhaps, the modern study of the specifics of the religions will provide a more solid foundation for inquiry and dialogue, in an atmosphere of self-understanding and mutual respect for what is cherished as essential in the religion of the other, rather than a confrontation in the realm of emotion and self-righteousness. The inter-religious dialogue of the past is, also, part of the interest of the History of Religions. Many times outside challenge results in a more lucid and articulate communication of one's faith as it reflects shades of emotions and experiences often concealed in the security of the religious community.

The history of the Muslim-Christian dialogue in particular, loaded and spirited though it might have been, is a very significant source for understanding some of these shades of emotions and experiences projected by each religion through its exponents. Several studies have attempted very successfully to outline the

history and the content of the encounter between these two religions. The works of E. Fritsch (*Islam und Christentum im Mittelalter*, 1930), J. T. Addison (*The Christian Approach to the Moslem*, 1942), G. H. Dorman (*Toward Understanding Islam*, 1948), W. J. Sweetman (*Islam and Christian Theology*, 1945-), and N. Daniel (*Islam and the West*, 1966) could be mentioned here as representative examples. These studies, without having lost their value, have been supplemented by more specific ones which have enlarged our knowledge and understanding of more limited periods of this history, the Byzantine one being of particular importance, due to the proximity in distance and in time to the origins and the earliest development of Islam. The works of C. Güterbock (*Der Islam im Lichte der byzantinischen Polemik*, 1912), A. A. Vasiliev (*Byzance et les Arabes*, 1935-1959), and most recently A.-Th. Khoury (*Les théologiens byzantins et l'Islam*, 1969-) have made a significant contribution by providing information and criteria pertinent to the circumstances and context of the Byzantine-Muslim dialogue. But they have also, indirectly, demonstrated that there is a need for studying individually each or some of the representative figures who have been engaged in this dialogue. The surveys of the Muslim-Christian encounter have ably shown that, in a final analysis,—and this is perhaps true for any inter-religious encounter—one deals, actually, with the case of individual Muslims and individual Christians conversing with, arguing against, provoking, scolding, attacking, cursing, condemning, or proselytising each other! We are now at the moment when we begin to realize that the history of the Muslim-Christian encounter cannot be fully comprehended apart from the concrete circumstances and the concrete persons who have influenced, in one way or another, the formulation of a policy or, most important, the shaping of an attitude of the one religious tradition toward the other.

At this point the study of John of Damascus (*ca.* 655-750) is, if we may suggest, very timely and needed. He has been extensively studied by scholars of various disciplines and is widely known as one of the most celebrated figures of the Christian community, an outstanding contributor to the History of Christian thought, one of the most talented theologians and hymnographers of his time and, for many, the last of the great fathers of the classical period in the Christian East. However, John of Damascus is little known as a contributor to the History of Religions by the students of this field.

This study is only an attempt to make justice to this last, but not least, aspect of his scholarship and personality. The re-attribution to him of the authorship of the book *Barlaam and Ioasaph*, a Christian novel widely read in the Middle Ages throughout which its writer has intelligently alluded to the life of the Buddha, reinforces the conviction that in pointing to John of Damascus' awareness of and interest in men of other faiths and to his knowledge and appreciation of their tradition, even though not necessarily for their own sake, one is not making a case out of nothing.

The work at hand has stemmed from a desire to re-examine the sources available for his life—very inadequate though they might be—and through these to reconstruct some details which, even in a fragmentary form, allow us a glimpse of his contact with and experience of the Muslim community. This, coupled with an analysis of those writings attributed to him and pertinent to Islam, will, hopefully, provide some information on John of Damascus' understanding of Islam, the degree of accuracy of the information that he conveyed to his Christian readers, his attitude toward the Muslims under the circumstances, and his evaluation of the "heresy of the Ishmaelites". Studying John of Damascus as a real person, living and reasoning with his own people and with the Muslim settlers in his home city, which in his time was no less than the capital of the Muslim Empire, discloses one of the most serious originators of the Muslim-Christian dialogue; a pioneer mind of distinguishing qualities, such as personal objective knowledge and sensitivity, which one finds generally missing from later Christian representatives.

It would have been important to have placed the otherwise well-known person of John of Damascus in the general context of Byzantine and Islamic culture, if we had not considered this as redundant. This study takes on from the point where histories of civilization, histories of the Byzantine Empire, or histories of the Christian Thought in the East make a reference to John of Damascus. The study of John of Damascus is not concluded with this work; it is rather broadened to include another aspect of his personality. As we will become more knowledgeable about individuals who, either unofficially shared their views, or officially became advocates of Christianity in the Muslim-Christian encounter, we will perhaps be able to trace the origins of some of the grossest misunderstandings which have shaped the attitude of one religion toward the other. It

is only then, that we will be able to assess the extent to which justice or bias, sensitivity or fanaticism, concern or self-righteousness still permeate the attitude of Christians toward more than half a billion Muslims in the world to-day.

Although the responsibility for the content of this book remains entirely with the author, he would like to acknowledge the contribution to it, directly or indirectly, of many people, whose names "were every one of them to be written" would, undoubtedly, create a publication problem. I am sure, however, that all of them will find in the completion of this work a satisfaction, in return for the inspiration, friendship and love which they have granted to me. A special acknowledgement is due to Dean Willem A. Bijlefeld for his personal interest and involvement as Ordinarius Professor and Chairman of the Committee, under the guidance of which the main part of this work was prepared and presented initially as a Ph. D. dissertation at the Hartford Seminary Foundation. To Professor Ford Lewis Battles is, also, due a special expression of gratitude for his most stimulating and penetrating remarks, the responses to which, although at times difficult, were in the end deeply rewarding. Professor Morris S. Seale's kind help and encouragement will, also, be remembered always with deep appreciation. Personal thanks are here expressed to the Exchange and Scholarship Program of the World Council of Churches and the Hartford Seminary Foundation, for the means they provided for the studies which led to this publication; to the Librarian of the Case Memorial Library and his staff, especially to Miss Diana Yount, for their unreserved patience and help; as well as to Mrs. France Chouinard for her secretarial assistance in preparing the manuscript for publication. It is appropriate, also, to be acknowledged here that the publication of this book has been made possible with the help of a grant from the Humanities Research Council of Canada, using funds provided by the Canada Council.

A very special word of recognition, however, is due to my wife for the most persistent and kind help that she offered me throughout the phases of development of this book. She accepted wholeheartedly and shared with me the pains and the excitements of this work as a way of life for more than three years now. It is, therefore, duly dedicated to her as a token of gratitude.

Waterloo, Ontario,
May, 1971

DANIEL J. SAHAS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AB</i>	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i> . Bruxelles; Paris.
<i>AS</i>	<i>Acta Sanctorum</i> . Parisiis et Romae, 1867.
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i> . Manchester.
<i>BLE</i>	<i>Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique</i> . Toulouse.
<i>BSa</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sanctorum</i> . Roma: Instituto Giovanni XXIII della Pontificia Università Lateranense, 1961-1969.
<i>Byz</i>	<i>Byzantion</i> . Bruxelles.
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i> . München; Leipzig.
<i>CH</i>	<i>Church History</i> . Oreland, Pa.
<i>DAL</i>	<i>Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie</i> . ed. by Fernand Cabrol and Henri Leclercq, Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1907-1953.
<i>DI</i> s	<i>Der Islam</i> . Berlin; Leipzig.
<i>DK</i>	<i>Der Katholik</i> . Mainz.
<i>DOP</i>	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i> . Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies.
<i>DTC</i>	<i>Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique</i> . Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané.
<i>EI</i> s	<i>Encyclopedia of Islam</i> . ed. by M. Th. Houtsma, <i>et al.</i> Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1913.
<i>EI</i> s (New Ed.)	<i>Encyclopedia of Islam</i> . New Edition. ed. by Hamilton A. R. Gibb, <i>et al.</i> , Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960.
<i>EO</i>	<i>Echos d'Orient</i> . Paris.
<i>EPh</i>	<i>Ekklesiastikos Pharos</i> . Alexandria.
<i>ERKn</i>	<i>New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge</i> . ed. by Samuel Macauley Jackson. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1908-1912.
<i>HThR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i> . Cambridge, Mass.
<i>Ir</i>	<i>Irénikon</i> . Chevetogne.
<i>JA</i>	<i>Journal Asiatique</i> . Paris.
<i>JMEOS</i>	<i>Journal of the Manchester Egyptian and Oriental Society</i> . Manchester.
<i>JRAS</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland</i> . London.
<i>MPG</i>	<i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus</i> . Series Graeca Prior, ed. by Jacques Paul Migne, Paris: J. P. Migne, 1857-1866.
<i>MFO</i>	<i>Mélanges de la Faculté Orientale</i> . Beyrouth.
<i>MW</i>	<i>The Muslim World</i> . Hartford, Conn.
<i>OC</i>	<i>Orientalia Christiana</i> . Roma.

<i>OCA</i>	<i>Orientalia Christiana Analecta</i> . Roma.
<i>OCP</i>	<i>Orientalia Christiana Periodica</i> . Roma.
<i>POC</i>	<i>Proche Orient Chrétien</i> . Jerusalem.
<i>RAO</i>	<i>Recueil d'Archéologie Orientale</i> . Paris.
<i>RHR</i>	<i>Revue de l'Histoire des Religions</i> . Paris.
<i>RSR</i>	<i>Revue des Sciences Religieuses</i> . Strasbourg.
<i>SEIs</i>	<i>Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam</i> . ed. by Hamilton A. R. Gibb and J. H. Kramers. Ithaca: Cornell University Press (Leiden: E. J. Brill), 1965.
<i>SIs</i>	<i>Studia Islamica</i> . Paris.
<i>ZAs</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie</i> . Leipzig.
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i> . Giessen.
<i>ZDMG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i> . Leipzig.

PART ONE
INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

CHAPTER ONE

THE ICONOCLASTIC SYNOD (754) AND JOHN OF DAMASCUS

The Iconoclastic Synod convened at the palace of Hiereia (Ἱερέια) in Chalcedon in 754. It was called by the Emperor Constantine V "Copronymus" (741-775), and presided over by Theodosius, bishop of Ephesus, in the place of the Patriarch of Constantinople, who had died in the same year.¹ The Synod convened in order to condemn officially the veneration of the icons, a widespread practice in the devotional life of the Christians. At the end of its acts, the Synod issued a decree in which various theological positions on the matter were condemned.²

¹ Giovanni Domenico Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et amplissima Collectio* (Florentiae: Expensis Antonii Zatta Veneti, 1766-1767), XII, XIII; Philip Labbei et Gabrielli Cossartii, *Sacrosancta Concilia ad regiam editionem exacta* (Lutetiae Parisiorum, 1671), VII; Charles Joseph Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*; french tr. by Henri Leclerq (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1910), III, pt. 2, pp. 693ff; Theophanes the Confessor (d. 817), *Chronographia*, ex recensione Ioannis Classeni, in *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* (Bonn: 1839), XXXIX, ann. 745, pp. 659f; the same text in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, CVIII, 56-1009 (critical edition by de Boor, Leipzig, 1883-1885, 2 vols.). For the difference in the chronological system that Theophanes follows, see the discussion and bibliography in George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (tr. by Joan Hussey, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1956), p. 80 and n. 1; Alexander A. Vasiliev, "The iconoclastic edict of Caliph Yazid II, A.D. 721", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies), IX-X (1955-1956) 46, n. 73; M. Hubert, "Observations sur la chronologie de Théophane et de quelques lettres des papes (726-774)", *BZ*, VI (1897) 491-505.

² Mansi, *Collectio*, XIII, 205-364. For an English translation of the *Definition* of the Iconoclastic Synod as it was presented by the VIIth Ecumenical Council (787), see Henry R. Percival, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils* (Vol. XIV of *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*), II Series, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., [1952], pp. 543-546. This text has been based on Charles Hefele's *A History of the Councils of the Church*, tr. by William R. Clark (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1896), V, 309-315, and is not without considerable misinterpretations and omissions. Cf., also, Hefele-Leclerq, *op. cit.* III, 2, pp. 697-704. The iconoclastic documents and the records of the Iconoclastic Synod were destroyed by the iconolaters. An account of the Synod can be reconstructed through the acts of the VIIIth Ecumenical Council and other sources. Ostrogorsky, *History*, 130ff. Cf. Mansi, *Collectio*, XII, 20ff; cf. also Herman Hennepf, ed. *Textus Byzantinos ad Iconomachiam Pertinentes, in usum academicum*, Byzantina Neerlandica, Series A (Textus), Fasciculus I (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), pp. 61-78.

The Iconoclastic Synod exemplified further this condemnation by anathematizing three major defenders of the icons, "saintly men and respectable doctors"¹: Germanus, the dethroned Patriarch of Constantinople, George, Patriarch of Constantia, the capital of Cyprus, and John of Damascus, a presbyter and monk in the monastery of Saint Sabas, a few miles outside of Jerusalem. This particular portion of the decree of the Iconoclastic Synod reads as follows:

Ἡ ἁγία σύνοδος ἐξεβόησε·πάντες οὕτω πιστεύομεν, πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ 352
φρονοῦμεν·πάντες συναινέσαντες καὶ ἀσμενίσαντες υπεγράψαμεν·πάντες
ὀρθοδόξως πιστεύομεν·πάντες νοερῶς τῇ νοερᾷ θεότητι λατρεύοντες 353
προσκυνοῦμεν. αὕτη ἡ πίστις τῶν ἀποστόλων, αὕτη ἡ πίστις τῶν πατέρων,
αὕτη ἡ πίστις τῶν ὀρθοδόξων·οὕτω πάντες λατρεύοντες τῷ Θεῷ προσ-
εκύνουν·πολλὰ τὰ ἔτη τῶν βασιλέων ... τὰ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ οἰκουμενικῶν
ἐξ συνόδων δόγματα ὑμεῖς ἀπεκυρώσατε·πᾶσαν εἰδωλολατρείαν ὑμεῖς
ἐξηφανίσατε·τούς διδασκάλους τῆς τοιαύτης πλάνης ἡμεῖς ἐθριαμβεύσατε·
τούς τὰ ἐναντία φρονοῦντας ὑμεῖς ἐστηλιτεύσατε.

Γερμανοῦ, Γεωργίου καὶ Μανσοῦρ τῶν κακοδόξων φρόνημα ὑμεῖς 356
διελύσατε.

Γερμανῶ τῷ διγνώμῳ καὶ ξυλολάτρῃ, ἀνάθεμα.

Γεωργίῳ τῷ ὁμόφρονι αὐτοῦ, καὶ φαλσευτῇ τῶν πατρικῶν διδασκαλιῶν,
ἀνάθεμα.

Μανσοῦρ τῷ κακωνύμῳ καὶ σαβῶρακηνόφρονι, ἀνάθεμα.

Τῷ εἰκονολάτρῃ καὶ φαλσογράφῳ Μανσοῦρ, ἀνάθεμα.

Τῷ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὕβριστῇ καὶ ἐπιβούλῳ τῆς βασιλείας Μανσοῦρ,
ἀνάθεμα.

Τῷ τῆς ἀσεβείας διδασκάλῳ καὶ παρερμηνευτῇ τῆς θείας γραφῆς
Μανσοῦρ, ἀνάθεμα.

Ἡ τριάς τοὺς τρεῖς καθεῖλεν.²

¹ Theophanes, *Chronographia*, *ann.* 745, p. 66.

² "The holy synod cried out: Thus we all believe; we all are in one accord. That is what we all believe and we all agree to; we all consented and signed heartedly; we all believe in the orthodox way; we all when we worship, venerate the spiritual godhead in a spiritual manner. This is the faith of the Apostles; this is the faith of the fathers; this is the faith of the Orthodox; this is the way they venerated God when they worshipped. Long live the kings . . . You have confirmed the doctrines of the six synods; you have swept away every idolatry; you have triumphed over the teachers of this error; you have assailed those who are counter-minded. You have defeated the faith of Germanus, George and Mansūr, the misbelievers. Anathema to Germanus, the double-minded and worshipper of wood. Anathema to George, his associate and falsifier of the teachings of the fathers. Anathema to Mansūr, who has a bad name and Saracen opinions. To the iconolater and falsifier Mansūr, anathema. To the insulter of Christ and conspirator against the empire, Mansūr, anathema. To the teacher of impiety and perverter of the sacred Scripture, Mansūr, anathema. The Trinity has deposed these three." Mansi, *Collectio*, XIII, 352E-356D. John of Damascus' relations with the

It seems very likely that John of Damascus became publicly known during the iconoclastic controversy, because of his active involvement in it, and his position with regard to the icons.¹ Church historians and chronographers mention his name, for the first time, in the context of the Synod of 754.² The above given text seems to be the earliest document dealing with the person of John of Damascus. This fact urges us to make use of this text as a starting point in our study.

It is obvious that this document constitutes a violent assault, primarily against John of Damascus. Out of six anathemas that the Synod reserved for three persons, one of whom was the Patriarch of Constantinople and the other the Patriarch of Cyprus, John of Damascus, a simple presbyter and monk, received four! According to these anathemas, John of Damascus (Mansūr) has a "bad" (or ill-sounding, dissonant, dirty?) name and "Saracene opinions"; he is an "iconolater", or "worshipper of icons", a "falsifier", an "insulter of Christ", a "conspirator against the Empire", a "teacher of impiety" and a "perverter of the Scriptures". Of greater interest for this study are the references, implicit or explicit, to John of

Empire were strained since he wrote the *Orationes pro sacris Imaginibus* (MPG, XCIV, 1232-1420), three consecutive speeches against Emperor Leo III (717-741). Theophanes relates that, even before the Synod, Constantine Copronymus (741-775), successor of Leo III, "ἐτησίῳ καθυπέβαλεν ἀναθέματι διὰ τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν ἐν αὐτῷ ὀρθοδοξίαν, καὶ ἀντὶ τοῦ παππικοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ, Μανσοῦρ, ὃ ἐρμηνεύεται λελυτρωμένος, Μανζήρῳ Ἰουδαϊκῷ φρονήματι μετονομάσας τὸν νέον τῆς ἐκκλησίας διδάσκαλον" *Chronographia, ann.* 734, p. 643. ("He degraded him [John of Damascus] with an anathema which was to be repeated yearly, and instead of his family name, Mansūr, which means 'saved', he changed the name of the new doctor of the Church to *Manzer*, with a Hebrew connotation".) It is obvious that such a decision reflects enmity and hatred of the Emperor for John of Damascus. See Frederick H. Chase, *Saint John of Damascus. Writings*, Vol. XXXVII of *The Fathers of the Church* (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1958), p. xiii.

¹ John of Damascus' activities fall into the first phase of the iconoclastic movement. This period extends from 726 to the VIIth Ecumenical Council in 787. The second phase, which lasted from 813 to 843, ended with the so-called "triumph of Orthodoxy". Cf. Alexander A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire* (324-1453) (Milwaukee: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), I, 251.

² Theophanes, *Chronographia*; cf. above, p. 4, n. 1; Agapius (Mahboub) de Menbidj (an Arab Christian historian of the 10th c.), *Kitāb al-ʿUnwan (Histoire Universelle)*, edited and tr. into French by Alexander A. Vasiliev, in *Patrologia Orientalis* (Paris: Firmin Didot et Cie., 1909), VII, fasc. 3, 533; George Cedrenus, *Compendium Historiarum*, MPG, CXXI, 889; Ioannes Zonaras, *Annales*, MPG, CXXXIV, 332; cf. also, the extracts from selected testimonies, given in MPG, XCIV, 504-514.

Damascus' relationship with, and his attitude toward, Islam and the Muslims.

One is under the impression that this document reflects: a) the uneasiness that the theology of John of Damascus created in the Church and the State of Byzantium in the context of the iconoclastic controversy;¹ b) the tension that this controversy created in the relations of John of Damascus with the established Byzantine authorities;² and c) the earliest feelings of the Byzantine State toward the politico-religious situation in its former provinces. This last point, as well as the historical background and implications for the above-mentioned accusations, will be of a major interest in the pages which will follow.

The first question that must come under our consideration is what the Synod meant with the accusation: "Mansūr, who has a bad (or dissonant) name".

It is interesting to note that the Iconoclastic Synod of Chalcedon did not use John of Damascus' Christian name, as one would expect, since John, being already a monk and a presbyter, had abandoned his family name Mansūr as is the custom in the Ortho-

¹ The author of a *Vita* of John of Damascus (cf., below, pp. 35f.) makes an allusion to the preoccupation of John of Damascus with iconoclasm and he, somewhat, distinguishes it from the other heresies when he calls it "the refuted heresy" among the rest which constitute "a darkness of false beliefs". Because of his impressive victory over the heresies this biographer calls John of Damascus "the greatest and brightest star in the constellation of the Church"; cf., *MPG*, XCIV, 432.

² At the beginning, John of Damascus was opposed to Leo's iconoclastic policy not merely on theological grounds. He, also, saw in Leo's edict the danger that the State would interfere in questions of belief, which is the responsibility of the Church alone. Cf., below, p. 12, n. 3. In all three *Orationes* he protests against the interference of the Emperor in the Church's affairs, and he condemns this transgression. In the third *Oratio* he bursts into a literal condemnation and, although he uses instead the words of Galatians 1:8, this is exactly what he himself wanted to say: "Κάν ἄγγελος, κán βασιλεὺς εὐαγγελίζεται ὑμᾶς παρ' ὅ παρελάβετε, κλείσατε τὰς ἀκοὰς· ὄνῳ γάρ τέως εἰπεῖν ὡς ἔφη ὁ θεὸς Ἀπόστολος, Ἀνάθεμα ἔστω, ἐκδεχόμενος τὴν διόρθωσιν" ("Even if an angel, or even a king, should teach you contrary to that which you have been handed down,—close your ears, for I can hardly restrain from repeating that which the divine Apostle said—'Let him be anathema', until he will correct his mind"); *MPG*, XCIV, 1321-2A. Constantine Copronymus, son of Leo and successor to his throne, retaliated with an anathema against John. Cf., above, p. 4, n. 2. Zonaras also states that John of Damascus "πολλάκις τὸν θεομάχον ἤλεγξε τοῦτον καὶ τὸν αὐτοῦ πατέρα δι' ἐπιστολῶν ἀσεβεῖν" (Many times in letters he reproved him [Constantine Copronymus], the opponent of God, and his father, for impiety) *MPG*, CXXXIV, 1332.

dox tradition. His writings bear mostly the name "John of Damascus" and sometimes simply "John presbyter and monachus".¹ Unlike the Iconoclastic Synod, the Seventh Ecumenical Council speaks of him as John and sometimes as Mansūr with the remark that this last name was used by the bishops of the Iconoclastic Synod "insultingly".² This implies that each Synod used the name Mansūr for different purposes.

Mansūr was the family name of John of Damascus. Theophanes says that John inherited it from his grandfather,³ Mansūr b. Sargūn. The name is foreign to the Greek onomatology, although it is common among the Syrian Christians of Arab descent.⁴ There is no document to inform us about the "tribal" background of the Mansūr family. The name might suggest that they were from Kalb or Taglib.⁵ Eutychius, a tenth century Melkite Patriarch and chronographer, speaks of the governor of Damascus who surrendered the city to the Muslims, most likely Mansūr b. Sargūn himself, as being an Arab in nationality.⁶ Another argument for this thesis is the fact—to which Nasrallah draws attention—that John of Damascus is, very often, presented in Byzantine iconography with his head covered by a turban. To the objection that this was the customary appearance of the Syrians during the Umayyad period, Nasrallah replies that Cosmas, who is traditionally considered as his adopted brother, and who was born in Jerusalem,⁷ is never presented wearing a turban.⁸ However, the name Mansūr does not, necessarily, indicate an Arab background since it could be given to a non-Arab family as well.⁹

¹ Cf. e.g. *MPG*, XCIV, 1421: "Ioannis Monachi et Presbyteri Damasceni, Libellus de Recta Sententia".

² Mansi, *Collectio*, XIII, 357 "'Ιωάννης . . . δε παρ' αὐτῶν ὑβριστικῶς Μανσοῦρ προσαγορεύεται". Cf., below, p. 9, n. 3.

³ Theophanes, *Chronographia ann. 734*, p. 643: "καὶ ἀντὶ τοῦ παππικοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ Μανσοῦρ . . .", Cf., *Vita Marciana*, fol. 293^r, col. a: "ὀνομάζετο δὲ ἡ γενεὰ αὐτοῦ τοῦ μανσοῦρ", Mauritius Gordillo, "Damascenica, I. Vita Marciana, II. Libellus Orthodoxiae" *OC*, VIII (1926) 63.

⁴ Joseph Nasrallah, *Saint Jean de Damas, son époque, sa vie, son œuvre* (Paris: Office des Éditions Universitaires, 1950), p. 14, n. 5.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁶ Bernard Carra de Vaux, *Les penseurs de l'Islam*, III (Paris: Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1923), p. 204. Carra de Vaux is one of the editors of Eutychius' *Annales*. Cf., below, p. 17, n. 1.

⁷ *MPG*, XCIV, 445A.; cf., also below, pp. 39; 41, n. 2; 54f.

⁸ Nasrallah, *Saint Jean*, p. 16, n. 2.

⁹ Ferdinand Kattenbusch, "John of Damascus", *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co.,

Mansūr, which means "Victorious", was a well known name among the Muslims. The 'Abbasid Abū Jafar assumed the name al-Manṣūr when he became Caliph.¹ There was also a city in Beluchistan called al-Manṣūra.² Another interpretation of the name, suggesting the meaning "saved", was given by Theophanes.³

The name Mansūr was passed from Mansūr b. Sargūn, the grandfather of John of Damascus, to Sargūn b. Mansūr, his father, and then to John himself. As we have seen already John had two names, one Christian and one Arabic. The anonymous Greek *Vita* gives indications to this fact and makes a distinction between the name that John received "from the holy baptistry" and the national or gentile (?) one, which the author rather passes by in silence.⁴ Barhebraeus calls John Qurin b. Manṣūr⁵ and the Coptic writers Yanah b. Manṣūr⁶ and Abu'l Farağ al-Aṣḫānī, Ibn Sargūn,⁷ while Agapius states John's full name as ايانس بن منصور الدمشقى (*Iyānis b. Mansūr al-Dimashqī*).⁸

1910), VI, 208. The fact that Von Kremer attributes a Byzantine origin to the family of John of Damascus, shows the range of speculation on this matter. Cf., Alfred Freiherr Von Kremer, *Kulturgeschichte des Orient unter den Chalifen* (Wien: Willhelm Braumüller, 1875), II, 402; Nasrallah, *Saint Jean*, p. 14.

¹ William Muir, *The Caliphate, Its Rise, Decline and Fall* (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1915), p. 446

² *Ibid.*, pp. 354, n. 1; 394.

³ "... Μανσοῦρ, ὃ ἐρμηνεύεται λελυτρωμένος", *Chronographia ann.* 834, p. 643; Cf. M. Jugie, "Jean Damascène", *DTC*, VIII, (1924), 963; Cearenus suggests that the name means Λέντραβος, *Compendium*, MPG, CXXI, 877A.

⁴ About this anonymous *Vita*, cf. below, p. 37 "παρήσω τὸ ἔθνικόν αὐτοῦ ὄνομα τὸ δὲ ἐκ τῆς ἁγίας κολυμβύθρας, τὸν τίμιον Ἰωάννην τὸν ποιητὴν", in A. Papadopoulo-Kerameus, *Analecta Hierosolymitikes Stachyologias* (St. Petersburg, 1888-1897; reprinted by Culture et Civilisation, Bruxelles, 1963), IV, 273. It seems that it was not uncommon for one to bear an Arabic and a Greek name. This is, according to Nasrallah, the practice even today. Nasrallah, *Saint Jean*, p. 59.

⁵ Barhebraeus, *Book of Ethics*. Diss. I, pt. V, ch. 4. Quoted by Nasrallah, *Saint Jean*, p. 59.

⁶ George Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur* (Citta del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1944), I, 377f.

⁷ *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, VIII, 290. Quoted in Nasrallah, *Saint Jean*, p. 59.

⁸ Agapius, *al-Unwan*, VIII, fasc. 3, p. 533. The full name of John of Damascus was Yūḥannā (in an older form, Yanah) b. Manṣūr b. Sargūn. Graf, *Geschichte*, I, 377. Another name under which John of Damascus is known is the epithet *Chrysoorroas*, "golden-flowing", which, as Theophanes explains, was given to John "διὰ τὴν ἐπανθοῦσαν αὐτῷ τοῦ πνεύματος ἐν τε τῷ λόγῳ καὶ βίῳ . . . χάρις" (for the flowing grace of the spirit upon him in both, his speech and his life); Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ann. 734, p. 643. In

Returning to the use of the name Mansūr by the Iconoclastic Synod of 754, we have already mentioned the information from Theophanes that the Emperor Constantine V Copronymus (741-775), in revenge for the attacks of John of Damascus against his fathers's iconoclastic edict, condemned John with an anathema which was to be renewed every year.¹ Theophanes adds a second measure that Constantine took against John of Damascus in order to degrade him:² he perverted his name Mansūr to *Manzer*, with the Hebrew connotation of that word—"bastard".³ It is obvious, therefore, that the Iconoclastic Synod with the expression "Μανσοῦρ τῷ κακωνόμῳ" reflects the feelings that Constantine Copronymus himself wanted to convey through the transliteration of John's family name, and that the treatment that John of Damascus received by this Synod was not free of imperial political influence and bias. This becomes even more explicit by the next expression of the Synod.

The Iconoclastic Synod also called John of Damascus "Saracen-minded",⁴ an epithet frequently ascribed to different persons during the iconoclastic controversy. It is necessary, therefore, to discuss the reasons and the implications of this name when attached to John of Damascus.

The Seventh Ecumenical Council called "Saracen-minded" Beser, a Christian apostate to Islam who, allegedly, with Constantine bishop of Nacoleia, influenced Leo III to take measures against the icons and their defenders.⁵ Theophanes called Leo, also, "Sara-

one case the same Theophanes cites all four names of John of Damascus: "... καὶ Ἰωάννην τὸν Χρυσορρόα Δαμασκηγὸν τὸν Μανσοῦρ", *Ibid.*, *ann.* 745, p. 660. See also Cedrenus, *Compendium*, *MPG*, CXXI, 877A, n. 68. Chrysorroas was the name of the river which irrigated the gardens of Damascus. Cf. Chase, *Saint John*, pp. xiv-xv.

¹ Cf. above, p. 4, n. 2.

² "... καὶ ἀντὶ τοῦ παππικοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ Μανσοῦρ, ὃ ἐρμηνεύεται λελυτρωμένος, Μανζηρὸν Ἰουδαϊκῶ φρονήματι μετονομάσας τὸν νέον τῆς ἐκκλησίας διδάσκαλον" *Chronographia*, *ann.* 734, p. 643.

³ The Seventh Ecumenical Council, was aware of the difference between the real name *Mansūr* and the perverted one, *Manzer*, which was used "insultingly" by the bishops of the Iconoclastic Synod. However, the synod of 787 did not hesitate to use the name Mansūr, as well as John. Mansi, *Collectio*, XIII, 337. Cf. above, p. 7, n. 2. For more on the name *Mansūr*, cf. *MPG*, XCIV, 12.

⁴ Mansi, *Collectio*, XIII, 356.

⁵ *Ibid.*, XII, p. 269; Theophanes, *Chronographia*, *ann.* 715, p. 618; 718, p. 622.

cen-minded" for his ideas and his edict against the icons (726).¹ In Theophanes' narrative of the apostate Beser² follows another account about a Jew who persuaded Yazīd II (720-724) to eradicate the icons from all the Christian Churches.³ This seems to suggest a certain connection between the iconoclastic movements of the Christians and of the Muslims. Vasiliev in his study of Yazīd II makes this introductory remark:

Inasmuch as there is a certain parallelism between the development of the iconoclastic ideas in Byzantium, which was relatively slow before the promulgation of the edict of Leo III in 726, and the development of the same ideas in the Islamic world . . . and, inasmuch as, according to some scholars, the edict of Leo III may have been inspired by the edict of Yazīd of 721, it is important to review the sources relative to Yazīd's iconoclasm, and to study certain questions which bring out the political similarity between the Emperor and the Caliph.⁴

Five different chronological computations used by Theophanes lead to the year 721 as the exact date of Yazīd's edict.⁵ All the Greek sources⁶ relate to this edict a story involving certain Jews

¹ Theophanes, *Ibid.*, ann. 718, p. 623; Vasiliev, *History*, I, 255. Ostrogorsky has shown that Leo III's edict was not issued in 726 but in 730. *History*, p. 144, n. 3. Vasiliev seems to sympathize with this idea because, the first violent action of Leo against the iconolaters was the disposal of Patriarch Germanus in 730. Cf. *DOP*, IX-X (1955-1956), 27. According to other authors Leo issued two edicts, in 726 and in 730. Ioannes Karmires, *Τά Δογματικά καί Συμβολικά Μνημεῖα τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας* (Athens, 1960) I, 237. Vasiliev says that the one in 730 "is only a restoration of the decree of 725-6", *History*, I, 258.

² About Beser, see Vasiliev, *DOP*, IX-X (1955-1956), 31. He was a Christian who became a Muslim. Vasiliev identifies him with *Σαραντάπηχος*, mentioned in John Presbyter's report to the Seventh Ecumenical Council. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 28, n. 12, 31. Mansi *Collectio*. XIII, 197.

³ Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ann. 715, pp. 617f. Cedrenus, *Compendium*, MPG, CXXI, 864. Muslim opposition to human representation in art appeared much earlier than 721. Cf. Ostrogorsky, *History*, p. 143, n. 1.

⁴ Vasiliev, *DOP*, IX-X (1955-1956), 26f.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 45f; Theophanes, *Chronographia* ann. 712-715, pp. 616-618.

⁶ Vasiliev reviews the Greek, Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Armenian sources dealing with this edict in *DOP*, IX-X (1955-1956) 26-45. The Greek are the earliest ones.

We state them here without further discussion.

- a) The letter of Patriarch Germanus of Constantinople (715-730) to Thomas of Claudiopolis. Mansi, *Collectio*, XIII, 109B-E.
- b) The report of Presbyter John of Jerusalem to the fifth session of the VIIth Ecumenical Council, 787. *Ibid.*, 196E-200.
- c) The statement of the bishop of Messana (Μεσσήνη) in the VIIth Ecumenical Council. *Ibid.*, 200.
- d) Theophanes, *Chronographia* ann. 715.

and Muslims who convince the Caliph to destroy all the representations and icons, including those of the Christians. Whether Yazīd's edict influenced the decision of Leo III to issue a similar edict, and to what extent, is a question which deserves careful study and consideration, and on which no agreement has been reached.¹

Iconoclastic incidents in the Christian community have been recorded earlier than the eighth century,² generally being linked with leaders native to the same geographical areas, Asia Minor and Syria.³ Moreover, it is important to note that the veneration of the icons seems to have been subject to much "external" criticism,

- e) Nicephorus of Constantinople, in his *Antirrheticus*, against Constantine Copronymus, *MPG*, C, 528-532.
 f) Nicephorus' IV *Antirrheticus*, *MPG*, C, 201-202.
 g) Georgius Monachus (Hamartolus), *Chronicle*, ed. Muralt, 629; de Boor, II, 735-736, *MPG*, XCV, 356-357.
 h) *Life of the Constantinopolitan Martyrs*, for editions, cf. Vasiliev, *DOP*, IX-X (1955-1956), 34, n. 29.
 i) *Life of St. Stephen*, *MPG*, C, 1116B-C.
 j) *The Letter of the Emperor Theophilus Concerning the Holy and Venerable Images*. Cf. *MPG*, XCV, 356-357. (Published among the works of John of Damascus.)
 k) Cedrenus, *Compendium*, *MPG*, CXXI, 864.
 l) Zonaras, *Annales*, XV, 3, 1-5, *MPG*, CXXXIV, 1321A-1324A.

¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 45, where the names involved in this discussion are mentioned.

² Cf. Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire*, III, 2, pp. 601-675. The 36th canon of the Synod of Elvira (A.D. 300) denounced categorically the use of the icons in the churches. ("Placuit picturas in ecclesia esse non debere, ne quod colitur et adoratur in parietibus depingatur".) *Ibid.*, I, 1, p. 240. Also, in the sixth century the bishops of Asia Minor demonstrated that they had "no delight in the icons". Norman H. Baynes, "The icons before Iconoclasm", *HThR*, XLIV (1951), 95. [This article has been reprinted in Baynes, *Byzantine Studies and other Essays* (London: University of London, the Athlon Press, 1955), pp. 226-239.] A very well known case is that of Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis in Cyprus (315-403), who was vehemently opposed to the representation of the person of Christ in an icon. For bibliography on this subject, cf. Vasiliev, *History*, I, p. 254, n. 72; Johannes Quasten, *Patrology* (Utrecht: Spectrum Publ., 1960), III, pp. 391-393. John of Damascus, in spite of Epiphanius' different attitude toward the icons, made an extensive use of his writing—especially of his *Panarion*—in the *De Haeresibus*, cf. below, pp. 56f.

³ The bishops of Asia Minor were those who started again the iconoclasm in the eighth century. Leo III, himself, was from Asia Minor. Theophanes calls him Syrian: "Τούτῳ τῷ ἔτει εἰκοστῷ τετάρτῳ τῆς βασιλείας Λέοντος τοῦ τυράννου καὶ παρανομωτάτου Σύρου . . .", *Chronographia ann.* 732, p. 634. For the dispute over the home country of Leo III, cf. Vasiliev, *History*, I, 234; Ostrogorsky, *History*, p. 143. "The place of origin of the iconoclastic rulers cannot be viewed as accidental", says Vasiliev in *History*, I, 254.

first from the Jewish and later from the Muslim side.¹ Ostrogorsky's observation at this point is significant:

The iconoclastic controversy in the eastern districts of the Empire arose from the interaction of a Christian faith striving for pure spirituality, with the doctrines of iconoclast sectarians, the tenets of old Christological heresies, and the influences of non-Christian religions, such as Judaism and especially Islam.²

The relation between Byzantine and Muslim iconoclasm is still under debate. More recently Professor Anastos denied any such connection. He believes that at its roots the Byzantine iconoclasm is a Christological question "as the later history of the controversy indicates",³ and he adds that,

On the other hand, it is hardly to be supposed that a Byzantine Emperor engaged in a deadly struggle for existence with the Arabs would deliberately adopt from the enemy a characteristically Muslim attitude towards an article of Christian theology.⁴

This was not, however, the impression of the bishops of the Seventh Ecumenical Council who had the opportunity to hear

¹ Cf. e.g. Leontius of Neapolis, of Cyprus, (d. 650) *MPG*, XCIII, 1597-1609; a discussion on him is found in Baynes, *Studies*, p. 230f.

² Ostrogorsky, *History*, p. 143; Theophanes, *Chronographia ann.* 635, p. 524; Vasiliev, *History*, I, 255. Cf. also, Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire*, III, pt. 2, 614f.

³ Milton V. Anastos, "Iconoclasm and the Imperial Rule 717-842", in *Cambridge Medieval History*, edited by Joan M. Hussey (Cambridge: University Press, 1966), IV, pt. 1, 68. We think that the iconoclastic controversy was the outcome of a disturbed and tense situation in the politico-religious life of the Byzantine Empire. Various motives and considerations played a role in this complex controversy. It is worth noting, for example, that John of Damascus' first reaction was as much traditional-canonical, as theological-Christological. He resented the fact that the Emperor was interfering in matters which were the sole responsibility of the Church, namely issues of doctrine and faith. Cf. e.g., "οὐ βασιλέων ἐστὶ νομοθετεῖν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ" *MPG*, XCIV, 1296: "βασιλέων ἐστὶν ἡ πολιτικὴ εὐπραξία· ἡ δὲ ἐκκλησιαστικὴ κατάστασις, ποιμένων καὶ διδασκάλων. Ληστρικὴ ἔφοδος ἐστὶν αὕτη, ἀδελφοί". *Ibid.*; "οὐ δέχομαι βασιλέα τυραννικῶς τὴν ἱερωσύνην ἀρπάζοντα. Οὐ βασιλεῖς ἔλαβον ἐξουσίαν δεσμεῖν καὶ λύειν", *Ibid.*, XCIV, 1301D-1304A. Cf. also, above, p. 6, n. 4. John of Damascus showed, also, that the issue of the icons is to be understood as a theological question. However, if iconoclasm is to be seen not simply as an event in the history of the Christian Church alone, but as a phenomenon of religious experience—as we think it should be seen—then it must not be considered independently from similar movements outside the Christian community, especially when such experiences have appeared in areas with a strong multi-religious background and of such active theological speculation, as Asia Minor and Syria were always for the Byzantine Church.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 67; Cf. Constantine Amantos, 'Ιστορία τοῦ Βυζαντινοῦ Κράτους (Athens, 1953), I, 334f.

three¹ contemporary witnesses referring to Yazid's edict as the source of influence of the Christian iconoclasm. The accusation by Leo's opponents that he was influenced by the Jews and the Muslims is not made invalid by the fact that Leo persecuted the Jews and fought against the Muslims.²

The Seventh Ecumenical Council saw in the iconoclastic edict of Leo III (726) an imitation of Muslim policy. This seems to have been the reason why this synod called Emperor Leo and those who influenced him, "Saracen-minded".³ On the other hand, as we have seen, this epithet had been used a few years earlier by the Iconoclastic Synod of 754 against John of Damascus, a theologian and defender of the icons! It is obvious, therefore, that the expression "Saracen-minded" is not used by the iconoclastic Synod of 754 and by the Council of 787 in the same way and with the same connotation. The latter, which exonerated John of Damascus, used it to label the opponents of the icons, in order to indicate their imitation of Muslim beliefs and practices. The former used it against John of Damascus, who, on the contrary, was a defender of the icons, not obviously as indicative of any influence by the Muslims on the issue of the icons but rather, we think, in order to emphasize John of Damascus' affinity with the Muslim world, in terms of his environment, his family and his personal contact with the Muslims. We have, therefore, a Christian document, almost contemporary to John of Damascus, which makes clear allusion to his encounter—to put it only in this vague terminology—with the Muslims and their religion.⁴

It is very interesting that Vasiliev has translated the word *σαρακηνόφρων* as "inclined to Muhammedanism".⁵ The background and the type of this encounter we will examine in the following chapter.

¹ Cf. above, p. 10, n. 6, documents a, b, c.

² Ostrogorsky, *History*, p. 142.

³ Ostrogorsky believes that the name *σαρακηνόφρων* (Saracen-minded) was a nick-name given to Leo by his contemporaries, and that this name is indicative of Leo's friendly attitude toward the Muslims, *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁴ C. Dyovouniotes, *Ἰωάννης ὁ Δαμασκηνός* (Athens, 1903), p. 6, n. 2; Anastos, *Cambridge Medieval History*, I, pt. 1, 67; Nasrallah, *Saint Jean*, p. 18.

⁵ Vasiliev, *History*, I, 261. A Latin sermon with the title *De Philocosmis* relates that John of Damascus was from Constantinople and later went to Damascus. *MPG*, XCIV, 433. Dyovouniotes sees in this information an effort of the author to protect John of Damascus from the accusation of being a friend of the Muslims. Dyovouniotes, *Δαμασκηνός*, p. 5, n. 1.

PART TWO
HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

CHAPTER TWO

FAMILY BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SYRIA AT THE TIME OF THE MUSLIM CONQUEST

A. THE CAPITULATION OF DAMASCUS AND THE MANSŪRS

Mansūr b. Sargūn, John of Damascus' grandfather, seems to have played an important role in the capitulation of Damascus to the troops of Khālīd b. al-Walīd. Eutychius and Ibn al-'Amīd present him as the person who negotiated with the Muslim commander the surrender of the city and who opened the Eastern Gate (*al-Bāb al-Sharqī*) of Damascus to the Muslim troops.¹ Al-Baladhūri (d. 892) mentions a "bishop of Damascus" and, in another place, the bishop and "a friend of the bishop", as those who negotiated with Khālīd.² Because "certain occupants of the convent" are mentioned in the account, there might have been an abbot instead of a bishop involved in the negotiations.³ Ibn Ishāq (d. 767) names this "bishop" Bāhān and Sayf b. 'Umar, Nestās (Anastasius).⁴

Possibly the most detailed account of the siege of Damascus is found in al-Baladhūri's record. According to him the Muslims had besieged the city twice.⁵ The first time the bishop offered gifts and

¹ Eutychius (surnamed Saīd b. Baṭrīq, Melkite Patriarch of Alexandria, d. 940), *Annales*, II, *Corpus Scriptorum Orientalium*, LI (Louvain: Imprimerie Orientaliste, 1954), p. 15. Cf. also, Nasrallah, *Saint Jean*, p. 23.

² al-Baladhūri, *Kitāb Futūh al-Buldān* (*The Origins of the Islamic State*), tr. by Philip Khūri Hitti (New York: Columbia University, 1916), pp. 172, 187. Al-Baladhūri is one of the greatest Muslim historians of the Arab conquests. His proximity to the events he narrates, and his personal knowledge of the area which we discuss (his studies led him to visit Damascus, Emessa and Antioch), make his information very significant. Cf. Carl H. Becker, "Al-Baladhūri", *EIs*, New Edition (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960). For an extensive account of the capitulation of Damascus, from various sources, cf. Leone Caetani, *Annali dell' Islam* (Milano: Ulrico Hoepli, 1910), III, 326-422.

³ Cf. Richard Bell, *The Origin of Islam in its Christian Environment* (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1968), p. 168.

⁴ Caetani, *Annali*, III, 340; Muir, *Caliphate*, p. 93. Theophanes narrates the capitulation of Damascus extremely briefly: "τότε οἱ Σαρακηνοὶ λαμπρῶς νικήσαντες ἐπὶ τὴν Δαμασκὸν ἔρχονται καὶ ταύτην παραλαμβάνουσι, καὶ τὰς χώρας τῆς Φοινίκης . . .", *Chronographia*, ann. 626, p. 518.

⁵ Al-Baladhūri states that "the Muslims returned to Damascus . . . fourteen days before the end of Muharram, year 14", *Futūh*, p. 186; Caetani, *Annali*, III, 339.

homage to Khālid, saying to him: "Keep this covenant for me".¹ It seems that this covenant dealt with some mutual promises regarding the final surrender of the city. At the second siege al-Baladhūri pictures the bishop standing on the wall and greeting Khālid with these words: "Abū-Sulaimān, thy case is prospering and thou hast a promise to fulfill me, let us make terms for this city."² The terms for the city were described in an agreement which reads as follows:

In the name of Allah, the compassionate, the merciful. This is what Khālid would grant to the inhabitants of Damascus, if he enters therein: he promises to give them security for their lives, property and churches. Their city wall shall not be demolished; neither shall any Moslem be quartered in their houses. Thereunto we give them the pact of Allah and the protection of His Prophet, the caliphs and the "Believers". So long as they pay the poll tax, nothing but good shall befall them.³

Eutychius relates that in these negotiations Mansūr demanded from Khālid that he spare his life, the life of his family, the lives of those who were with him, and of the inhabitants of Damascus, "except the *Rūm*" (سوى الروم) so that he would open the gates.⁴

Al-Baladhūri gives this description of the Muslim entrance into the city:

One night a friend of the bishop came to Khālid and informed him of the fact that it was the night of a feast for the inhabitants of the city, that they were all busy, and that they had blocked the Sharkī gate with stones and left it unguarded. He then suggested that Khālid should procure a ladder. Certain occupants of the convent by which Khālid's army camped, brought him two ladders on which some Moslems climbed to the highest part of the wall, and descended to the gate which was guarded by one or two men. The Moslems cooperated and opened the door. This took place at sunrise. In the

¹ Al-Baladhūri, *Futūh*, p. 172.

² *Ibid.*, p. 187. It seems more likely that the promise that Khālid is now called upon to fulfill is what was secured with the first "covenant". Cf. also, *Ibid.*, p. 172, n. 2.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 187. One of the principles of 'Umar's policy, with regard to conquered lands, was the distinction between conquest by capitulation and conquest by force. Depending on these circumstances, the conditions of the relations between the conquerors and the conquered, as well as the kind of taxes imposed, varied. Later this variation was further materialized by the use of different terms for the taxes: *jizyah* and *kharāj*. Philip Khūri Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (London: Macmillan Co., 1937), p. 171.

⁴ Eutychius, *Annales* II, 15. *Rūm* (روم) is the name used for the Eastern Romans, i.e., the Byzantines, in contrast to رومان, which is for the Western Romans. For the implications of this agreement, cf. below, p. 24.

meantime abū-'Ubaidah had managed to open the Jābiyah gate and sent certain Moslems over its wall. This made the Greek fighters pour to his side, and lead a violent fight against the Moslems. At last, however, the Greeks took to flight.¹

It is difficult to assess exactly what Mansūr's role was in those events. It may be that Mansūr was the "friend of the bishop" who, according to al-Baladhūri's story, came and informed Khālid of the best time for occupying Damascus. Al-Baladhūri's story, which seems to be more accurate than Eutychius', justifies Bell's view that it was not the bishop who would have the authority to officially surrender the city; his role was rather to convey information to the Muslim commander "as to a suitable opportunity for assault".² The impression given by al-Ṭabarī is that Damascus did not surrender immediately and without resistance. Damascus, for al-Ṭabarī, was "la ville principale de la Syrie et ... bien fortifiée".³

Damascus was besieged on the 13th of March 635 and it surrendered in six months. Heraclius was stationed in Antioch and his army was expected to relieve the city, but in vain. It was not until the following year that Damascus returned, for a short period only, to Byzantine hands. The battle of Yarmūk, on the 20th of August 636, marked the end of the Byzantine presence in Syria. Heraclius' farewell exclamation is expressive of his disappointment: "Peace

¹ Al-Baladhūri, *Futūh*, p. 187.

² Bell, *Origin*, p. 168; Amantos, 'Ιστορία, I, 338; Philip Khūri Hitti, *History of Syria* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1951), pp. 414f. Hitti rejects the idea that the partition of the Cathedral of Saint John, in Damascus, into a Christian and a Muslim part, is a historical justification for the traditional report according to which part of Damascus was conquered by force and the other by capitulation. Cf. Caetani, *Annali*, III, 359-392; Muir, *Caliphate*, pp. 95f.

³ Abu-Djāfar Muhammad b. Djarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Chronique*, tr. by M. Herman Zotenberg (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1871), III, 361. For the story of the siege of Damascus, cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 361-364. Lequien also suggests that an honorable surrender of the city was the only solution after a hopeless defense; Michelis Lequien, Τοῦ ἐν ἀγίοις πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰωάννου τοῦ Δαμασκηνοῦ, μοναχοῦ καὶ πρεσβυτέρου Ἱεροσολύμων, τὰ εὐρισκόμενα πάντα (*Sancti Patris Nostri Joannis Damasceni, monachi et presbyteri Hierosolymitani, opera omnia quae extant*) (Parisii: Apud Johannem Baptistam Delessine, 1712), I, iii, n. 1; in *MPG*, XCVI, 435-436, n. (3); M. Jugie, "La vie de saint Jean Damascène", *EO*, XXIII (1924), 139. Hitti, on the contrary, speaks of "treachery on the part of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, who included the grandfather of the celebrated St. John..." *Arabs*, p. 150; cf. also, Henri Leclercq, "Jean Damascène (Saint)", *DAL* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1927), VII, 2189.

unto thee, O Syria, and what an excellent country this is for the enemy".¹

The loss of Syria, and immediately afterwards that of Palestine and Egypt, brought to an end the dream that the Middle East would be an integral and unified territory of Byzantium. Vasiliev sees these events as a turning point dividing the Byzantine history into two distinct periods:

Since the history of Constantinople itself is now, relatively speaking, well known, I think that our attention must be concentrated on *provincial Byzantium*. This is absolutely indispensable if we wish to understand the general character of Byzantine civilization. Its study may be divided into two periods: before the seventh century and after, when the Empire lost Syria, Palestine and Egypt to the Arabs, along with the two brilliant cultural "provincial" centers of Antioch in Syria and Alexandria in Egypt.²

The farewell words of Heraclius to Syria quoted above reflect a general Byzantine feeling not only toward the lost territories, but also toward the Muslim invaders. They also foretell the character of the relations which would develop between Byzantium and the Arabs in the years to come. Indeed, a new era of constant and exhaustive conflict between the Muslims and the Byzantines begins. With the words of Zonaras, "... since then [after the fall of Syria] the race of the Ishmaelites did not cease from invading and plundering the entire territory of the Romans".³

¹ Baladhūri, *Futūh*, p. 210; Michael the Syrian records only the phrase "Σώζου Συρία" ("Demeure en paix, Syrie" *sic.*), a much more conservative farewell. Michel le Syrien (Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch, 1166-1199), *Chronique universelle*, ed. and tr. by J. B. Chabot (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1899-1905), II, 424; Hitti, *Arabs*, p. 152. Ostrogorsky describes the impact that the loss of Syria had on Heraclius with the following words: "His life's work collapsed before his eyes. The heroic struggle against Persia seemed to be utterly wasted, for his victories here had only prepared the way for the Arab conquest . . . This cruel turn of fortune broke the aged Emperor both in spirit and in body", *History*, p. 99; Graf, *Geschichte*, II, 265f.

² Sirarpie der Nersessian, "Alexander Alexandrovitch Vasiliev", *DOP*, IX-X (1955-1956), 8. Vasiliev's early work was in the field of Islamic studies. His interest was concentrated on the history of that area which he called "provincial Byzantium". From this area he came to grips with Byzantium itself, to become, finally, one of its most profound students.

³ "... και έκτοτε οὐκ ἐπαύσατο τὸ τῶν Ἰσμηλιτῶν γένος τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἄπασαν γῆν κατατρέχον καὶ ληϊζόμενον" *Annales*, *MPG*, CXXXIV, 1288. On the hostile relations between the Arabs and the Byzantines, see a short account in Hitti, *Arabs*, pp. 199-205. There was also a similar tension in fields other than the political one between the Muslim and the Byzantine Empire. Cf. Oleg Grabar, "Islamic Art and Byzantium", *DOP*, XVIII (1964), 69-88.

Constantinople became very early the goal of the Arab expansion. It was dreamed of as capital of the Muslim world-empire. Ostrogorsky sees in the building of naval forces, and in Mu'āwiya's conquest of the islands Cyprus, Rhodes, Cos, Chios the route toward the capital.¹ An early tradition urged the Muslims to win Constantinople for the Faith, and promised a special distinction in paradise for those who would conquer it.² The grave strikes, occasionally inflicted upon the Arabs by the Byzantines, did not obscure the vision of their ultimate goal, as the history of the later expeditions against the Capital indicates.³ Byzantium and the

¹ Ostrogorsky, *History*, p. 104; Leone Caetani, *Chronographia Islamica* (3 vols., Paris: Librairie Paul Geuthner, [1912]), pp. 301f, 339; Steven Runciman, "The Place of Byzantium in the Medieval World", in *Cambridge Medieval History*, IV, pt. 2, 354-375. A quick look at the chronological table of the Arab conquests which have an interest for the Byzantine Empire, demonstrates the determination of the Muslims toward their goal: 634: Possession of Bosra, a Byzantine fortress; 635: Fall of Damascus; 636: Battle of Yarmūk; fall of the whole of Syria; 637-8: Fall of Jerusalem and of Palestine; 641-2: Fall of Alexandria, and later, of the whole of Egypt, Cyprus, Crete, Sicily; 655: Defeat of the Byzantine fleet off the Syrian coast; 670: Appearance of the Muslim fleet outside Constantinople. From then on the Arabs kept attacking Constantinople almost every year. Cf. Hitti, *Arabs*, pp. 201ff; Ostrogorsky, *History*, pp. 110f; Vasiliev counts the Arab attacks against Constantinople as one of the reasons for which serious consideration was given, during the middle of the eleventh century, to the moving of the capital of the Empire from Constantinople to the old Rome or elsewhere, *History*, I, 200-20.

² "Constantinople will be conquered. Blessed are those who will conquer it". Cf. Francesco Gabrieli, *Muhammad and the Conquests of Islam* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), p. 105; Runciman, *Cambridge Medieval History*, IV, pt. 2, 358. For this tradition, cf. the article "Constantinople" by J. H. Mordtmann in *EI*s (Leiden: Brill, 1913), I, 867. The Qur'ān (S. 30 The "Romans", vs. 1-4) makes a reference to the Persian-Byzantine struggles in which it reaffirms the defeat of the Byzantines but it anticipates, ultimately, their triumph. Cf. e.g., Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran* (New York: Mentor, [1963]), p. 290. A variant reading of these verses can result in an entirely different interpretation, according to which the Byzantines were victorious, but will be, finally, defeated; which looks "as if it was intended to transform the passage into a prophecy of defeat of the Byzantines by the Muslims". W. Montgomery Watt, *Companion to the Qur'ān* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1967), p. 184. This Sūrah, which has been placed with serious hesitations in the late Meccan period, might have been used in its ambiguity to reflect later attitudes of the Muslims toward the Byzantines. Cf. Régis Blachère, *Le Coran (al-Qur'ān)* (Paris: G. P. Maisonneuve & Larose, 1966), pp. 429f.

³ Ostrogorsky, *History*, pp. 138f. Although the two major victories, on the one hand of the Byzantines in defending Constantinople (678 and 717) and on the other of Charles Martel at Poitiers (732), stopped the advance of the Arabs in Europe yet they did not guarantee a complete security for the

Arabs remained for more than eight centuries in a situation of political and military antagonism, a fact which had great impact upon the religious and theological encounter between Byzantine Christians and Muslim Arabs.

B. THE ATTITUDE OF THE SYRIANS TOWARD THE BYZANTINES AND TOWARD THE MUSLIMS

In Syria the Muslims found themselves in a familiar environment. Since pre-Islamic times Arabs, especially those of Northern Arabia, used to travel to the northern countries up to Syria in search of pastures for their flocks and food for themselves. Syria was, to a great extent, Arab in character. Many Arabs had made their settlements both in the rural areas and in the cities. Many also had served in the Byzantine (the Gassanides) and the Persian armies (the Lahmtes).¹ As far as the Church was concerned, one can find many Arabic names of bishops in the lists of the representatives in the councils, a fact which testifies to this Arab presence in Syria.²

The Syrians were known for their independent thinking, a trait which, as far as theology is concerned, is reflected in the appearance of various schools and heresies.³ In spite of a long history under foreign dominion they preserved their religion, their culture, and their language, and they kept themselves, essentially, intact from the influence of the Greco-Roman rulers.⁴ Furthermore politico-

Christians. Alexander A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, I; *La Dynastie d'Amorium* (820-867), *Corpus Bruxellense Historiae Byzantinae*—I (Bruxelles: Éditions de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales, 1959), p. 1; Ostrogorsky, *History*, pp. 111f., 138.

¹ Theophanes, *Chronographia ann.* 614, p. 473; Amantos, Ἰστορία, I, 294.

² Names in the Arabic form, such as Sergis, Ya'qoub and Yohannan are recorded among the Syrian, Palestinian and Arab representatives by Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, I, 249, 250, 314; II, 66; cf. Bell, *Origin*, p. 19. Cf. below, p. 47, n. 1.

³ Cf. in Adolph Harnack, *History of Dogma.*, tr. by Neil Buchanan, 7 vols. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1961); J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960); Berthold Altaner, *Patrology*, tr. by Hilda Graef (New York: Herder and Herder, 1961), pp. 361f, 370f, 393f, 399-409; Arthur McGiffert, *A History of Christian Thought*, I (New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1960). The outstanding contribution of the Syrians to Orthodoxy should also be emphasized.

⁴ Hitti states that, "at its thickest, Hellenistic culture was only skin deep, affecting a crust of the intelligentsia, in urban settlements. The bulk of the population must, throughout the millenium, have considered the rulers aliens". Hitti, *Syria*, p. 417, and *Arabs*, p. 153. Greek was a foreign language for the Syrians, although widely spoken and spread among the above-

religious events at times sharpened the differences between the Syrians and the Byzantines. The efforts of Heraclius, for example, to bring the Monophysites and the Chalcedonians closer together, and thus to draw the provinces politically closer to the capital, led to the outbreak of Monothelitism, which disappointed both the Monophysites and the Chalcedonians and increased the tension in the relations between Syria and Constantinople.¹ Also the high taxes, the overruling power of the landowners over the peasants and the participation in long, exhaustive and mostly fruitless wars with the Persians were some of the reasons why the Syrians welcomed the change.² These wars, which aimed at neutralizing the Persian

mentioned "intelligentsia", the philosophy and the theology students. Syriac remained, throughout the centuries, alive, and contributed to the Arabic system of orthography and writing. Cf. Hitti, *Syria*, pp. 520, 526; I. M. Moosa, "Studies in Syriac literature", *MW*, LVIII (1968), 105-119, 194-217, 317-333.

¹ Zonaras, the twelfth century chronicler, writes about Heraclius that "he groveled in the heresy of the Monothelites": *Annales*, MPG, CXXXIV, 1288: "Ἡράκλειος δὲ ὡς εἴρηται, εἰς τὴν τῶν Μονοθελητῶν ἐγκυλισθεὶς αἵρεσιν . . ."; Nasrallah, *Saint Jean*, p. 51; Vasiliev, *History*, I, 209. Vasiliev, in another work, remarks that "the decisions of the Sixth Council, proved to Syria, Palestine and Egypt that Constantinople had abandoned the desire to find a path for religious reconciliation with the provinces which no longer formed a part of the Byzantine Empire", *History*, I, 225.

² The people of Hims, north of Damascus, expressed such feelings to the Muslims, when these were withdrawing their protection in order to concentrate on their preparations for the battle of Yarmūk: "We like your rule and your justice far better than the state of oppression and tyranny in which we were", al-Baladhūri, *Futūh*, p. 211. It appears highly probable that Syria, Palestine and Egypt did not hesitate to submit themselves to the Muslim Arabs in exchange for the Byzantine Christians. Cf. Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 425f; Ostrogorsky, *History*, p. 103; Reynold A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1914), p. 193; Vasiliev, *History*, I, 208f.

The Monophysites saw the defeat of Heraclius as a punishment from God for the persecution of the "Orthodox", as they were calling themselves. The Arabs were "la grand verge de colère de Dieu". Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 421. At another point the same author writes: "C'est pourquoi le Dieu des vengances . . . amena de la religion du Sud les fils d'Ismaël, pour nous délivrer par eux des mains des Romains". *Ibid.*, 412-413. The Arab invasions were also interpreted by Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians as a sign of the wrath of God for the laxity, iniquities and lack of faith of the Christians themselves. Cf. *Ibid.*, 422, 430; and Kaegi, Walter Emil Jr. "Initial Byzantine Reactions to the Arab Conquest", *CH*, XXXVIII (1969), 143. For the Muslims, the conquests meant, of course, expansion into new territories and material riches. But from the point of view of religion, they were the manifestation of God's justice against those peoples who sinned and disobeyed Him. Michael the Syrian quotes Mu'awiya as he addresses his troops facing "les pays des juifs": "Nous montons dans un pays que est

threats against the provinces and the capital and at strengthening the Byzantine influence there had, ultimately, the opposite effect by preparing the way for the Arabs. While the military and politico-economic reforms of Heraclius¹ strengthened the Byzantine position in other provinces (Armeniacon, Anatolicon, Opsicon, Carabisiani), the more remote eastern provinces did not profit from these reforms since they were in Persian hands and, only a short time afterwards, under Arab dominion.²

When the Muslims arrived in Damascus a great part of the population was eager to see the Byzantines leaving. As we have noted already, Eutychius relates how Mansūr negotiated the opening of the city, by insisting upon security for himself, his family, and the inhabitants of Damascus, "except the *Rūm*".³ Although this agreement can also be interpreted as a political move of Mansūr in order to secure a peaceful co-existence with the Muslims, the most significant point is that it reflects the feelings of the Syrians toward the Byzantines.

At the beginning the Muslims were tolerant toward the Syrians,

plein d'or et de richesses de toutes sortes; le Seigneur le livrera entre vos mains, à cause des péchés de ses habitants", *Ibid.*, 431, (the italicising is ours). Of course, the same motives, one would imagine, would be valid also for the "countries of the Christians". Cf. also, Gabrielli, *Muhammad*, pp. 103f, Vasiliev, *History*, I, 206, where the views of Goldziher, Grimme, and Caetani on the motives of the Arab conquests are summarized.

¹ Cf. Ostrogorsky, *History*, pp. 83f. Cf. below, p. 27.

² Ostrogorsky cites as major reasons for the resentment of the Syrians toward the Byzantines the "irreconcilable religious differences", "abuses in the military organization . . ., disruption in the administrative circles" and the lack of benefiting from Heraclius' reforms. *History*, pp. 98f.

³ Eutychius, *Annales*, II, 15; cf. above, p. 18, n. 4. The reliability of this information could easily be challenged if it were conveyed by a Muslim or by a Monophysite author; this, however, is not the case. Mansūr himself and his family were adherents to the Chalcedonian doctrine, which Heraclius also followed. Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 477, 492; cf. Nasrallah, *Saint Jean*, pp. 50ff. This fact eliminates the possibility of religious hatred between Mansūr and the Byzantines as a motive. Eutychius, who relates this information, is also a Chalcedonian ["Melkite", i.e. "royal", as the Orthodox of Syria and Egypt who did not belong to the indigenous population and followed the confession of the Emperor were called. Vasiliou Stefanides, 'Εκκλησιαστικὴ Ἱστορία (Athens: Aster, 1959), pp. 242, 699]. Therefore, Eutychius would have had no reason to report, let alone to fabricate an information, which reflects the resentment of the Syrians and questions the prestige of the Byzantines, if he had not accepted this information as reliable. One of the codices (MS 291 of the *Bibliotheca Parisiensis*) omits the sentence "except the *Rums*, so that he would open the gates of Damascus". Cf. Eutychius, *Annales*, II, 277.

a fact which the latter did not fail to notice. The Muslims were, primarily, concerned with establishing themselves successfully as rulers in these new territories with a Christian majority. They were, therefore, little interested in the theological divergence among the Chalcedonians, Monophysites and Monothelites.¹ The Syrians were not forced to convert to Islam after the conquest;² and although, according to the decree of 'Umar, they were not permitted to build new churches, this measure seemed much less painful to them than the bitter persecution which they suffered after the triumph of Heraclius.³ The tolerance of the early Umayyad caliphs was also expressed in their decision to retain the existing system in the administration as well as its official language, Greek⁴.

The Christians found entrance to the court of the Caliph in a variety of ways: as administrative advisors (e.g., the family of the Mansūrs),⁵ as "admirals"(?) in the newly built Muslim fleet,⁶ as poets,⁷ instructors of the princes,⁸ and artists.⁹ They did not need

¹ Michael the Syrian, although a Monophysite, admits that the Muslims "attribuèrent à chaque confession les temples qu'ils trouvèrent en sa possession, et qu'à cette époque la Grande église d'Édesse et celle de Haran nous avaient été enlevées . . ." *Chronique*, II, 413.

² The *Vita Marciana*, fol. 293^r, col. a, states that the family of John of Damascus "Χριστιανοὶ ὄντες διέμειναν ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ, μὴ ἀναγκασθέντες ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰσραηλιτῶν, ὡς ἀρχῆθεν ἔχοντες τὴν θρησκείαν" (being Christians, remained such, without being forced by the Ishmaelites, as they were in their religion) Gordillo, *OC*, VIII (1926), 63.

³ Bell, *Origin*, p. 166. During the Persian victories (611-629) the Jacobites were in a favorable position while the Chalcedonians were under persecution. Cf. Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 379^f. The situation was reversed after the victory of Heraclius over the Persians. These memories were fresh at the time of the Arab conquest of Syria. Cf. *Ibid.*, II, 412^f; Nasrallah, *Saint Jean*, p. 51.

⁴ Gabrielli comments about the Umayyads that "they considered themselves at the same time the enemies, the competitors, and the potential heirs of the Byzantine Empire". Francesco Gabrielli, "Greeks and Arabs in the Central Mediterranean Area", *DOP XVIII* (1964) 64; Jawad Boulos, *Les peuples et les civilisations du Proche Orient* (La Haye: Mouton and Co., 1964), Vol. IV, pp. 228^f. Cf. above, p. 21, n. 2.

⁵ Cf., below, pp. 26^{ff}.

⁶ Muir states that "the superintendents of Alexandria, Rosetta and Damietta were, at the end of the first century, Christians", *Caliphate*, p. 362. Vasiliev, "Byzantium and Islam", in Norman H. Baynes and H. S. Moss, *Byzantium, An Introduction to East Roman Civilization* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), p. 309.

⁷ Henri Lammens, "Le chantre des Omiades. Notes biographiques et littéraires sur le poète Arabe Chrétien Aḥṭal", *JA*, 9me s., IV (1894), 94-176, 193-241, 381-459; and *Études sur le siècle des Omayyades* (Beyrouth: Imprimerie Catholique, 1930), pp. 211-268.

⁸ Cf. below, about Cosmas the Sicilian, pp. 39^f.

⁹ Runciman, in *Cambridge Medieval History*, IV, pt. 2, 361.

to conceal their background, and freely showed their Christian insignia.¹ Many Christians were not even cognizant of the religious identity of the Muslims. The general feeling about Islam was that this was another Judeo-Christian heresy with strong Arian or Monophysite elements in it.² All these were good reasons to make them positively disposed toward the new rulers.

C. IBN MANSŪR IN THE Umayyad ADMINISTRATION

One of those employed by the Muslims in the new administration was Mansūr, the grandfather of John of Damascus. In the records dealing with the capitulation of Damascus, he appeared to have already a position of public authority.³ Euty chius, e.g., speaks of him as عامل دمشق, or governor of Damascus.⁴ In the year 661, after the death of Yazīd b. Abu Sufyān, Mansūr assumed the highest position in the caliphate, under Mu'āwīya I (661-680). In this position he was later succeeded by his son ibn Mansūr, the father of John of Damascus.⁵ It is very probable that Mansūr's position was related more specifically to financial matters, because both his son Ibn Mansūr and his grandson John of Damascus, held such an office, which seems to have been transferred from one generation to the next in this family.⁶

¹ Lammens, *JA*, IV (1894), 107f. Nicholson, *History*, p. 241; Muir, *Caliphate*, p. 363.

² Carl H. Becker, *Von Werden und Wesen der islamischen Welt: Islamstudien*, I (Leipzig: Verlag Quelle & Meyer, 1924), p. 433; the same article in *ZAs*, XXVI (1911), 177; cf. also Hitti, *Syria*, pp. 523f; Muhammad Maher Hammadeh, "Muhammad the Prophet: A Selected Bibliography", Ph. D. Dissertation (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1965), p. 29; Kaegi, *CH*, XXXVIII (1969), 140f, and below, pp. 72ff.

³ Cf. above, pp. 17ff.

⁴ Euty chius, *Annales*, II, 15.

⁵ "Sargūn b. Mansūr al-Nasrāni è a capo del Diwān al-Šām soto il califato di Mu'āwīyah" Caetani, *Chronographia*, p. 465. Caetani calls John of Damascus' grandfather Sargūn b. Mansūr and his father Mansūr b. Sargūn. Cf. also, Henri Lammens, "Études sur le règne du Caliphe Omayyade Mo'awia Ier", *Mélanges de la Faculté Orientale* (Beyrouth: Imprimerie Catholique, 1906), I, 13. Lammens says that Mansūr was Mu'āwīya's "premier ministre".

⁶ Cf. below, pp. 28f. Hitti, *Syria*, p. 414; Nasrallah defines Mansūr's position as "contrôleur générale des finances, non pas de la Syrie entière, mais de la riche province de la Phénice Libanaise dont Damas était la principale ville". *Saint Jean*, p. 9. According to Boulous "Si l'on se rappelle que l'armée et les finances constituaient 'tout le gouvernement arabe' de l'époque on se rendra compte que la charge d'Ibn Sarjūn faisait de lui une sorte de 'Chancelier du Califat', à la fois ministre de la guerre et des finances", *Peuples*, p. 248.

The financial, as well as the military affairs, were no less crucial matters for the Umayyads than they were for the Byzantines.¹ The administrative and financial system established by Heraclius survived for a long time after him, even in areas conquered later by the Arabs.² Although Syria was one of those provinces which did not benefit from the administrative reforms of Heraclius³ we must assume that, when Theophanes calls Ibn Mansūr “general logothetes”,⁴ he is referring to a position similar to that of the Byzantine administration. The *Vita* by John of Jerusalem calls John of Damascus’ father “commander of the public affairs throughout the country”.⁵ Another *Vita*, by an anonymous writer, relates that Ibn Mansūr was a “ruler of Damascus at that time”, and that the citizens called him “emir”.⁶

¹ Boulos, *Ibid.*, p. 230. Finances and military organization were two areas of great importance for the Byzantine administration, especially in a period of war with the Persians. Heraclius saw this need early, and took radical measures to meet it. The most significant among them were: a) the division of the territories into military zones (θέματα) under the government of the commander (στρατηγός, general) of the military regiment, and b) in the field of finances, the replacement of the prefecture and the office of the *Sacellarius* (the keeper of the privy purse) by three independent departments: one of the army (στρατιωτικόν), of the general bank (γενική τράπεζα) and of the special or local bank, which was the central administrative body of the finances of the whole *thema*. The new heads of the three departments were given the name *logothetes*, and they were called, respectively, “logothetes of the military” (τοῦ στρατιωτικοῦ) “logothetes of the general finances” (τοῦ γενικοῦ), and “logothetes of the particular finances” (τοῦ εἰδικοῦ). On the administrative reforms of Heraclius, cf. Ostrogorsky, *History*, pp. 83f; Vasiliev, *History*, I, 226f; Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus (913-959), *DeThematibus*, MPG, CXIII, 64-140.

² Ostrogorsky, *History*, p. 95.

³ Cf. above, p. 24.

⁴ “. . . καὶ παρεκάλεσεν αὐτὸν Σέργιός τις ἀνὴρ χριστιανικώτατος ὁ τοῦ Μανσοῦρ γενικὸς λογοθέτης καὶ λίαν ὀκειωμένος τῷ αὐτῷ Ἀβιμέλεχ. . .” Theophanes, *Chronographia ann.* 682, p. 559. Eutychius employs a similar term “عامل على الخراج” *Annales*, II, 5. This title can imply a collector of land taxes, which all the citizens used to pay, except the Arab Muslims, who were not allowed to hold or cultivate land outside the peninsula. Cf. Hitti, *Arabs*, p. 170. Such a position, however, does not indicate collecting taxes from the Christian community alone, nor that “such a post would not necessarily imply deep acquaintance with the Arab civilization”. Cf. in John Meyendorff, “Byzantine Views of Islam”, *DOP* XVIII (1964), 116.

⁵ “διοικητῆς τῶν δημοσίων πραγμάτων τῶν ἀνὰ τὴν χώραν πᾶσαν καταστάς”. MPG, XCIV, 437. Ibn Mansūr succeeded his father in a position at the head of “*Diwān al-Sām*”. Caetani, *Chronographia*, p. 465; cf. above, p. 26, n. 6.

⁶ “τῷ γὰρ Μανσοῦρ ἄρχοντι ὄντι τῆς Δαμασκοῦ τῷ τηνικαῦτα καιρῷ, ὃν ἀμνηρῶν ἐκάλουν οἱ ἐγχώριοι, δεδώκασιν ὡς ἀπαρχήν. . .” in Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Analecta*, IV, 272. About this *Vita*, cf. below, p. 37.

The responsibilities of those in charge of the military and financial affairs became more and more significant as the Arab conquests brought new territories under Muslim administration. These new areas under the caliphate were subject to the financial control of the capital, the direction of which was in the hands of Ibn Mansūr.¹ Michael the Syrian calls Ibn Mansūr "écrivain" of 'Abd al-Malik (684-705).² Although Michael does not describe this post, one can obtain a rather clear idea of what this meant and involved from a narrative dealing with an incident between Ibn Mansūr and a certain Athanasius from Edessa.³ Athanasius, or Bar Goumayē, was a learned Monophysite Christian with great prestige. 'Abd al-Malik entrusted to him his brother al-'Azīz who, at a very early age, became emir of Egypt. Athanasius in this position became extremely rich not only from the many presents which he received from the Caliph, but also from some sort of allowance that his children received out of every payment of each soldier.⁴ When Athanasius left Egypt, after the death of the emir, Ibn Mansūr accused him to the Caliph that he had taken away with him all the treasury of Egypt. Athanasius was brought before the Caliph to defend himself and, although he was not punished, he was forced to return part of these riches; and even so a great amount was still left with him.

From this story one can draw some conclusions with regard to the nature of Ibn Mansūr's post.⁵ The responsibilities of Ibn Mansūr

¹ Nasrallah explains: "L'Afrique du Nord, une partie de l'Asia Mineure, l'Iraq, le Horāssān, passeront sous le contrôle financier de Sarḡūn; les troupes de terre et de mer qui posteront leurs armes jusqu'au Magreb et sous les murs de Constantinople seront régies par ce chrétien que tenait les leviers de commands les plus importants de l'Empire arabe". *Saint Jean*, pp. 33f. The financial and military responsibilities were intimately related to each other and they comprised the whole Arab administration. Cf. Boulos, *Peuples*, p. 248. Cf. also above, p. 26, n. 6.

² Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 477.

³ About this Athanasius, cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 475ff.

⁴ The story aims, primarily, at describing at length the riches which Athanasius amassed. Although he financed the building of several churches and monuments, he himself possessed "four thousand slaves, villages, gardens, gold and money like stones . . . and three shops in Edessa"; *Chronique*, II, 475f.

⁵ This story, although it cannot be used by itself as a conclusive argument in this discussion, can be presented in order to illustrate the previous indications. Michael does not give any source to substantiate the reliability of the incident. There are, however, several points which should be taken into consideration: The story of Athanasius follows the history of these events in the year 75 A.H. (about A.D. 695): a lunar eclipse, the slaughter of the swine in Syria, and the great famine which lasted for seven years. *Chronique*,

were, first of all, financial in nature. This post, however, does not seem to have been that of tax collector only. Ibn Mansūr's accusation implies some kind of abuse of Egypt's treasury, something which could eventually affect its economy. The point at stake is not the misuse of personal, but rather of public funds. Therefore, Ibn Mansūr could report this case directly to 'Abd al-Malik. A second important point to notice is that Ibn Mansūr was concerned with the abuse, although it took place in Egypt, a fact which reveals that his responsibilities were not limited to the area of Damascus, neither to Syria alone, but that they extended at least as far as Egypt.¹ Finally, the mention of the name of 'Abd al-Malik shows that Ibn Mansūr was in that post during the reign of this Caliph.

Ibn Mansūr must have been one of those officials for whom the Caliph had deep respect, and in whose abilities and loyalty he had the greatest confidence.² The Mansūr family was respected by both the Muslims and the Christians. Theophanes called Ibn-Mansūr an "extremely devout Christian".³ The *Vita* exalts the Mansūrs for

II, 474f. Theophanes, under the year 686/695 mentions also the lunar eclipse, the slaughter of the swine, and, about seven years later, (692/701) the great famine. *Chronographia*, pp. 561-569. The story of Athanasius comes as a great contrast to the famine in Syria, and perhaps for this reason he placed it immediately after the events of 695. Another point is that in the story, the names of 'Abd al-Malik and Ibn Mansūr are mentioned, a fact which points out to the historical basis of the incident. A final point is the remark of Michael that Ibn Mansūr—who was a Chalcedonian—reported Athanasius' case to the Caliph because of jealousy. *Chronique*, II, 477. Regardless of the motives which may have led Mansūr to make this accusation, it was found valid, as the story shows. It is important to note that Michael, who records this incident, is himself a Monophysite and he seems to take a critical position towards Athanasius, also a Monophysite.

¹ Cf. in the *Vita Marciana*, fol. 293^r, col. b: " . . . ὡς τε καὶ δημόσια πράγματα ἐμπιστευθῆναι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ καὶ διοικοῦντες ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ πατρίδι, κτῆσιν τε πολλὴν εἶχεν ἐν τῇ ἀραβίᾳ καὶ δαμασκῶ καὶ πάσῃ τῇ παλαιστίνῃ καὶ ἐν λοιποῖς διαφόροις τόποις" Gordillo, *OC*, VIII (1926), 63-4. The spacing is ours.

² In a conversation between the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik and the admired Christian poet Akhṭal, 'Abd al-Malik, when he heard that the poet was acquainted with Ibn Mansūr's home, exclaimed: "You know the right places". Lammens, *JA*, IV (1894), 124f. According to Theophanes, Ibn Mansūr was "a very close friend of 'Abd al-Malik". When the Caliph wanted to use the columns of the Church in Gethsemane to rebuild the mosque in Mecca, Ibn Mansūr pleaded with him not to do so, promising that he would ask the Emperor Justinian to send other columns in their place. 'Abd al-Malik agreed and, thus, the church was spared. *Chronographia ann.* 682, p. 559. Cf. also, above, p. 27, n. 4.

³ "ἀνὴρ χριστιανικώτατος", *Ibid.*, ann. 682, p. 559.

their piety and attachment to the Orthodox faith, which they preserved, even "in the midst of thorns . . . without giving up anything of the right faith after the descendants of Hagar occupied the city".¹ The same *Vita* also exalts the compassion of Mansūr for the poor and the captives.² Two Patriarchs of Jerusalem came out of the Mansūr family: Sergius I (842-858) and Elias III (878-907). The Patriarch Dositheus II of Jerusalem (1669-1707)³, the author of the historical survey "About those who have been Patriarchs of Jerusalem"⁴ does not fail to identify each one of these with the addition, "son of Mansūr, who surrendered Damascus to the Saracens and for this reason has been anathematized by the entire world".⁵ This reminder shows that the event of 635 had been kept

¹ "Πρόγονοι δ' εὐσεβεῖς καὶ μόνοι τετηρηκότες τὴν τῆς εὐσεβείας ἀνθὴν καὶ τὴν ὀσμὴν τῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ γνώσεως ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἀκανθῶν . . . μηδὲν λυμηνάμενοι τὸ ὀρθόδοξον, ἀφ' οὐπερ οἱ τῆς Ἀγαρ τῆς πόλεως κατεκράτησαν", *MPG*, XCIV, 436B-437A. Although the expression "in the midst of the thorns" might imply also the diverse Christian groups which existed in Syria, it is an explicit reference to the religion of the "descendants of Hagar", i.e., the Muslims. Cf. also, Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 492. Michael presents Ibn Mansūr here as a fanatic Chalcedonian who entangled many of the Monophysites "in his heresy".

² *MPG*, XCIV, 437D. In one of these occasions he met Cosmas, the Sicilian monk whom he set free and received him as a teacher for his son John, and for John's adopted brother, Cosmas. Cf. below, pp. 39f. Cf. also, *Vita Marciana*, fol. 293^r, col. b, in *OC*, VIII (1926), 64.

³ Dositheus Notaras is an outstanding figure in the History of the Church. Stefanides speaks of him as "comparable to the Early Fathers of the Church", *Ἱστορία*, p. 769. He is also a voluminous writer. Among his writings are included the *Τόμος Καταλλαγῆς* (*Volume of Reconciliation*), *Τόμος Ἀγάπης* (*Volume of Love*), *Τόμος Χαρᾶς* (*Volume of Joy*), the historical treatise *Παραλειπόμενα ἐκ τῆς ἱστορίας περὶ τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις Πατριάρχουσάντων* (*Paraleipomena from the history of those who have been Patriarchs of Jerusalem*) and the well-known *Ὁμολογία Πίστεως* (*Confession of Faith*). For an English translation of the Confession see B. A. Gerrish, *The Faith of Christendom. A Sourcebook of Creeds and Confessions* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Co., 1963), pp. 293-341; Greek text and Latin translation in Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, II (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1919), 400-444; cf. also, *Ibid.*, I, 61-67. About Dositheus, cf. Chrysostomos Papadopoulos, *Δοσίθεος, Πατριάρχης Ἱεροσολύμων* (Jerusalem, 1917); Ioannes Karmires, "Ἡ Ὁμολογία Ἱεροσολύμων Θεοῦ" *Theologia* (Athens, 1948-49); Giorgi Curt, *Die Confessio Dosithei, Geschichte, Inhalt und Bedeutung* (München, 1940).

⁴ Published in Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Analecta*, I, 231-307.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 241f, 233. Cf. also, an account of the Patriarchs of Jerusalem by Maximus of Symaion, Principal of the School of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, until the second decade of the nineteenth century. He wrote a historical work entitled: "Οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἐκτῆς Οἰκουμενικῆς συνόδου Πατριάρχαι τῆς Ἱερουσαλήμ ἄχρις ἔτους 1810-ου" ("The Patriarchs of Jerusalem from the

alive in the minds of some Church people and that the prominence of the Mansūr family bore also the scar of that date.

Thus, even before the fall of Damascus in A.D. 635, John of Damascus' ancestors were holding a high administrative office in the Byzantine province of Syria. This office became instrumental to the capitulation of Damascus and to the normal continuation of the Umayyad administration of Syria and of the newly conquered lands in the Middle East, a thorn in the flesh for the court of Constantinople. This influential office was handed over from one generation of the Mansūrs to the next, and, although the prestige of the family was generally acknowledged by the Muslims and the Christians, its adherence to the Chalcedonian doctrine and its role in the capitulation of Damascus often became sources of indignation against its members. John of Damascus became, as we have seen in the first chapter, the target of an open attack from the official ranks of the Byzantine Church and State, a fact which can not be fully justified and understood apart from his sharing of this family background.

Sixth Ecumenical Council till the year 1810"), which has been edited by Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Analecta*, III, 1-86. For more about Maximus, see *Hierosolymitike Bibliotheke*, Vols. I, II, III, and the preface in Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Analecta*, III.

CHAPTER THREE

JOHN OF DAMASCUS' LIFE IN A MUSLIM ENVIRONMENT

A. VITAE OF JOHN OF DAMASCUS

1. *The Arabic Vita*

We lack a comprehensive account of John of Damascus' life. The one commonly used is that edited in Lequien's and Migne's editions under the title: *Vita Sancti Patris Nostri Joannis Damasceni, a Joanne Patriarchi Hierosolymitano Conscripta*.¹ This John of Jerusalem, whose name appears in the title, is not the original author of this biography. He himself admits that he had found this *Vita* in an unrefined form, "sketched" in the Arabic language and writing,² and that the author of the Arabic version was the one who had undertaken the collection of the original information about John of Damascus.³ John of Jerusalem, therefore, is actually the translator and editor of this text.⁴ Before dealing with the Greek

¹ Βίος τοῦ ὁσίου Πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰωάννου τοῦ Δαμασκηνοῦ, συγγραφεὶς παρὰ Ἰωάννου Πατριάρχου Ἱεροσολύμων. *MPG*, XCIV, 429-489.

² *MPG*, XCIV, 432A, 433B, 489A. According to a Georgian MS in St. Katherine's Monastery in Mount Sinai, Ephrem Mtsire (d. 1110) knew a translator of the life of St. John of Damascus from an Arabic original into Greek. Cf. Paul Peeters, "S. Romain le Néomartyr († 1 Mai 780) d'après un document géorgien", *AB*, XXX (1911), 406. The enlarged arabic original text was translated into Greek by Samuel, bishop of Adana. Ephrem Mtsire translated the *Vita* into Georgian from the Greek. Bertrand Hemmerdinger, "La *Vita* de Saint Jean Damascène et BHG 884", *OCP*, XXVIII (1962), 422.

³ *MPG*, XCIV, 489A.

⁴ The Arabic original has been edited by Constantine Bacha, from three manuscripts: a) an old manuscript of Homs, b) a manuscript of Kafr-bu, written in 1646 by a certain Gabriel, and c) the Arabic manuscript 79 of the Vatican Library. This last one is a work by a monk of St. Sabas named Poemen, written in 1223. Constantine Bacha *سيرة القديس يوحنا الدمشقي* (Harissa, Lebanon: Imprimerie Grecque Melchite, 1912), I, 29ff. German translation by George Graf, "Das Arabische Original der *Vita* des hl. Johannes von Damascus", *DK*, XII (1913), 164-190, 320-331. For a review of both these works, cf. Paul Peeters, *AB*, XXXIII (1914), 78-81. A Georgian version has been published by M. C. Kekelidze in *Khristianskij Vostok*, III (1914), 119-174, cf. M. Jugie, "Une nouvelle vie, et un nouvel écrit de saint Jean

translator of the *Vita* one should speak about the author of its Arabic original, and consider why the earliest biography of John of Damascus is an Arabic one.

The Arabic *Vita* has a prologue which is neither in the Vatican manuscript nor in the manuscript from Homs. It is, also, missing from the Greek translation. It appears only in the Codex Kafr-bu (1646).¹ From this Arabic prologue we learn about Michael, a monk and priest, who in December 1084 was in Antioch when the city was under attack by the Muslims. Michael, who was barely saved, attributed his survival to Saint Barbara and Saint John of Damascus, whose memorial feast day was on the 4th of December. The following year, commemorating his escape, Michael decided to write a biography of Saint John of Damascus because none was available either in Greek or in Arabic.²

Until recently it was believed that Michael was indeed the author of the Arabic *Vita*.³ In a recent study, Hemmerdinger has shown convincingly that only the Arabic prologue, which mentions the name of Michael and the date 1084, has been written by this monk Michael of the monastery of Saint Symeon, while the text of the *Vita* belongs to an unknown earlier author!⁴ The fact that an early palimpsest codex of the Greek version has been found, indicates that the Arabic original must have been written before the tenth century. Also, the Arabic text mentions the *Vita* of St. Stephen the Young, which was written by Stephen the Deacon in 808, a fact which indicates the *terminus post quem*.

On the basis of this evidence Hemmerdinger holds that, as far as the translator is concerned, the only possible John Patriarch of Jerusalem in the period from 808 to the tenth century who would

Damascène", *EO*, XXVIII (1929), 36, n. 3. Russian translation by A. A. Vasiliev, *Arabskaja versija zitia sv. Joanna Damaskina* (St. Petersburg, 1913), cf. Graf, *Geschichte*, II, 70. Jugie refers also to an English translation under the title *Biography of St. John Damascene, Original Arabic text published for the first time* (Londres, 1912), cf. Jugie, *EO*, XXVIII, (1929), 35, n. 3. We were able to locate this title only in the *English Catalogue* (1911-1915), p. 146. According to this Catalogue, the text was published in London: Luzac, 1912. It seems to refer to the London distributor of the Arabic text and not to an English translation of the text.

¹ Hemmerdinger, *OCP*, XXVIII (1962), 422.

² Peeters, *AB*, XXXIII (1914), 79.

³ Nasrallah, *Saint Jean*, p. 2. Graf believes that this Michael was a historical person, and that he had, indeed, written this *Vita* after the fourth of December, 1085. Cf. *Geschichte*, III, 69; Peeters, *AB*, XXXIII (1914), 80.

⁴ Hemmerdinger, *OCP*, XXVIII (1962), 422f.

have translated the *Vita* into Greek, would have been Patriarch John who died in 969; which gives us a more specific *terminus ante quem* for the original.¹ Therefore, according to Hemmerdinger's argument, the Arabic *Vita* was written sometime between 808-969.

The second issue to be considered here is whether the fact that the first known *Vita* of St. John of Damascus was written in Arabic is a mere accident or not. The question is legitimate because John of Damascus was from a family which was deeply attached to the Greek-Byzantine culture, had a thorough Greek education² and wrote entirely in Greek. It is, therefore, a paradox that his biography was not written originally in Greek, at least as far as our present knowledge goes.

It is interesting that similar cases of Arabic *Vitae* have been recorded during the same period of time in which we have placed John of Damascus' *Vita*. The *Vita* of St. Roman (730-780) and Saint Symeon, for example, was also written originally in Arabic at St. Sabas' by a monk named Stephen. Paul Peeters, who discusses carefully this case,³ remarks that this preference for Arabic in hagiographical literature seems to have been rather widespread in Palestine toward the end of the eighth century.⁴ Peeters' interpretation is that this development was not unrelated to the situation of unrest in the whole Church because of the iconoclastic controversy. The Orthodox monks, he remarks, considered it preferable to use Arabic in expressing their indignation against Constantine Copronymus and his iconoclastic policy.⁵ During that period it seemed too dangerous to mention and commemorate in Greek some names, especially that of John of Damascus; and this is likely to be the reason why his biographer wrote his *Vita* in Arabic.⁶

¹ *Ibid.*, 423. If the list of the Patriarchs of Jerusalem reprinted in Stefanides, 'Ἰστορία, p. 801, is accurate, between John V (707-735) and John VII (964-966; notice that the last date disagrees with that given by Hemmerdinger) there is a Patriarch John VI (838-842) whose dates also fall within the chronological limits 808-969 set above and who, also, should be considered as a probable translator. Cf. below, p. 35.

² Cf. below, pp. 39f.

³ Peeters, *AB*, XXX (1911), 393-427. According to Peeters, these two saints have not passed over to the Byzantine hagiography, although they were of Greek descent and culture.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 406.

⁵ "... Des moins orthodoxes aient jugé préférable de se soulager en Arabe de leur indignation contre Constantin Copronyme et la politique iconoclaste". *Ibid.*, p. 406.

⁶ "D'autrepart, différents exemples tendent à prouver que durant cette

In the case of John of Damascus' *Vita* there was a good reason, since John had clashed personally with Emperor Leo III and with Leo's son, Constantine Copronymus, on the issue of the icons and had been severely attacked by both of them.¹

2. *The Greek translation*

The identification of John of Jerusalem, mentioned in the title of the Greek *Vita*, is still an open issue. There are at least four Patriarchs with the name John who have been considered as probable translators of the Arabic original.² On the basis of Hemmerdinger's arguments about the date of the Arabic original, the possibilities for the translator are limited to John VI (838-842) and John VII (964-966 or 969) of Jerusalem.³

This *Vita* must be used with caution. It is obvious that it was not meant to be a historical document, but rather an hagiological treatise. Expressions of exaggeration in various descriptions and legendary incidents⁴ abound in it. Although this is not the best source of John of Damascus' life it includes, nevertheless, a number of valuable indications which cannot be ignored.

période, la Palestine vit éclore une littérature hagiographique originale en langue arabe. S. Jean Damascène — *autre héros dangeveux a célébrer en grec* — eut un Arabe pour premier biographe . . ." *Ibid.*, p. 406. The italicising is ours.

¹ Cf. above, pp. 6f.

² Nasrallah has rejected the possibility of John V (706-735) whom Chrysostomos Papadopoulos and Lequien have suggested, assuming that John of Damascus died after 735 and that his biography could not have been written by somebody who had died before he did. *Saint Jean*, p. 3. Cf. also Gordillo, *OC*, VIII (1926), 50. In favor of John VII (964-966?) are Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Analecta*, III, 13, Kattenbusch, *ERK*, VI (1910), 211, and Jugie, *DTC*, VIII (1924), 693. Jugie later changed his opinion and favored John VIII (1106-1156) *EO*, XXIII (1924), 137, and *EO*, XXVIII (1929), 35. Nasrallah does not exclude John VIII, although he also suggests John of Oxite, Patriarch of Antioch (1088-1099), for the reason that the *Codex Marcianus gr.* VII, 25, in the title of the *Vita* gives the name of John of Antioch. *Saint Jean*, p. 3. Hemmerdinger excludes this possibility because the name of John of Antioch is a later addition. *OCP*, XXVIII (1962), 423. The same codex, in fol. 3^r mentions the name of John of Jerusalem. Gordillo, *OC*, VIII (1926), 49, n. 10.

³ Cf. above, p. 34, n. 1.

⁴ Cf. below, p. 45, n. 3. The translator employs sometimes a poetic language familiar among the Byzantine orators. Edmond Bouvy has traced such examples in the *Vita*, as, e.g., *MPG*, XCIV, 429-432, 432, 449, 257. "Anacréontiques toniques dans la vie de Saint Jean Damascène", *BZ*, II (1893), 110f.

3. *Other Vitae*

a) *Vita Marciana*: A short *Vita*, written by an anonymous author, has been published by Gordillo,¹ from the *Codex Marcianus Graecus* 363. Gordillo claims that this is the earliest Greek *Vita*, even earlier than that of John of Jerusalem, and he places it at the end of the 10th or at the beginning of the 11th century.² The author of this *Vita*, according to Gordillo, seems to be a Greek from Constantinople because this *Vita* relates that John of Damascus visited Constantinople where he met and admired the Patriarch Germanus, during the early reign of Leo III when Orthodoxy was still accepted.³

This *Vita* is very short, but as the previous one it refers to the same points of the life of John of Damascus: his family background, his education, his entering the monastery, his visit to Constantinople, his writing in defense of the icons, and his condemnation by Constantine Copronymus.

b) The *Sermo* of Constantine Acropolite: A biographical treatise on John of Damascus was also written by Constantine Acropolite “*magnus logothetes, metaphrastes junior, vir summus . . . imperante Michaelae Paleologo, circa ann. 1270*”, under the title *Sermo in S. Joannem Damascenum*.⁴ It is almost identical in its content and structure to the *Vita* of John of Jerusalem, although in referring to the Muslims it calls them “Persians” and the Caliph, “leader of the Persians” (*Persarches*). As the title clearly indicates, it is an oration rather than a historical document and it must, also, be used with caution.

c) The *Vita* by John Merkouropoulos: Papadopoulos-Kerameus has published a *Vita* from a thirteenth century (1267) codex of Athens. Its author is John IX Merkouropoulos, Archbishop and Patriarch of Jerusalem (1156-1166), and it has the title:

Βίος και πολιτεία τῶν ὁσίων καὶ θεοφόρων πατέρων ἡμῶν καὶ ἀδελφῶν καὶ μελισσῶν τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκκλησίας, ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΔΑΜΑΣΚΗΝΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΚΟΣΜΑ, ἐκτεθειλς παρὰ τοῦ ἁγιωτάτου ἀρχιεπισκόπου Ἱεροσολύμων Ἰωάννου τοῦ Μερκουροπούλου.⁵

¹ M. Gordillo, *OC*, VIII (1926), 63-65.

² Gordillo considers Michael as the author of the Arabic *Vita* in 1085. *Ibid.*, 45; cf. above, pp. 33f.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 62f, 64 (fol. 294^r, col. a)

⁴ *MPG*, CXL, 812-885.

⁵ Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Analecta*, IV, 305-350. From Cod. Athen. 983, ann. 1267, f. 315b-357b. (“Life and acts of our blessed and God-inspired

It is written in the style of a *synaxarium*, with all the characteristics of this type of biography: stress on the ethical character of the person under discussion, flowery language, lack of historical evidences and dates, etc.

d) An anonymous *Vita*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus has also published a *Vita* by an anonymous writer, from a codex of the monastery of Theotokos at Halki, under the following title:

Βίος καὶ πολιτεία καὶ μερικὴ θαυμάτων διήγησις τῶν ὁσίων καὶ θεοφόρων πατέρων ἡμῶν Κοσμά καὶ Ἰωάννου τοῦ Δαμασκηνοῦ τῶν ποιητῶν.¹

Its style and form, also, show that it is an hagiological text. Although its general content does not differ considerably from that of the *Vitae* of John Merkouropoulos and John of Jerusalem, yet it contains some data which are not found in the others. The form and the structure is also, somewhat, different from the *Vita* by John of Jerusalem. This *Vita* speaks also of "Persia" and "Persians" instead of Muslims.

Looking at the place of origin of these *Vitae* of John of Damascus, one cannot fail to observe that three of them come from the area of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.² These are: the *Vita* by John of Jerusalem; the *Vita* by John Merkouropoulos, of the thirteenth century; and, most important, the Arabic original.³ This fact makes it evident that John was particularly honored by the Church of

fathers and brethren and workers in the Church of God, John of Damascus and Cosmas, composed by the most blessed archbishop and Patriarch of Jerusalem, John Merkouropoulos"). Kekelidze states that this is the Patriarch of Jerusalem who translated the Arabic *Vita* into Greek. *Khirstianskij Vostok*, III (1914), 125f; quoted by Gordillo, *OC*, VIII (1926), 55. Cf. above, P. 35.

¹ Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Analecta*. IV, 271-302. ("Life and acts and narration of a part of the miracles of our blessed and God-inspired fathers Cosmas and John of Damascus, the poets").

² Of the other three, the *Sermo* of Constantine Acropolite and the anonymous *Vita* are greatly dependent upon the *Vita* of John of Jerusalem. This would leave only the *Vita Marciana* as an exception. Cf. Gordillo, *OC*, VIII (1926), 51.

³ Modern biographies of John of Damascus have been written, among others, by Dom Remy Céillier, *Histoire général des auteurs sacrés et ecclésiastiques* (Paris: Chez Louis Vivés, 1862), XII, 67-99; Dyovouniotes, *Ἰωάννης ὁ Δαμασκηνός* (1903); Chrysostomos A. Papadopoulos, "Ὁ Ἅγιος Ἰωάννης ὁ Δαμασκηνός", in *EPh*, V (1910), 193-212; Ioannes Phokylides' *Ἰωάννης ὁ Δαμασκηνός καὶ Κοσμάς ὁ κατὰ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ ἀδελφός*", in *EPh*, XXI (1922), 357-440; Jugie, *DTC*, (1924); Nasrallah, *Saint Jean* (1950); Joseph-Maria Sauget, "Giovanni Damasceno, santo", *BSa*, VI (Roma: Istituto Giovanni XXIII della Pontificia Università Lateranese, 1965), 732-739.

Jerusalem, with which he had close relations. John of Damascus was ordained to the priesthood by the Patriarch of Jerusalem¹ and, most important, he placed himself under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem by devoting his life to the monastic community of St. Sabas, located only a few miles outside of Jerusalem.

B. EARLY LIFE AND EXPERIENCE

One of the great problems in the study of the life of John of Damascus is the uncertainty as to the dates of his birth and death. Most of the scholars place his date of birth, without discussing it, in 675.² Nasrallah has challenged this date, as well as any date between 670 and 680.³ He starts with the presupposition that John of Damascus, as well as the Christian poet Akḥṭal,⁴ were close friends and commensals of the prince Yazīd I.⁵ Yazīd was born in 22 A.H. (A.D. 644) and in 60 A.H.⁶ (A.D. 680) he became Caliph at the age of thirty-six. If, therefore, John of Damascus had been born in 675 he would have been too young to be a commensal of the Caliph. Nasrallah suggests that the date of birth of John of Damascus should be placed between 655-660.⁷ It seems that although Yazīd was about the same age as Akḥṭal,⁸ John of Damascus was younger

¹ *MPG*, XCIV, 48of, 439, n. (4); Was John of Damascus ever asked to become a bishop and he refused? This question, although not documented by the *Vitae*, is worth consideration. Cf. Ioannes Karmires, 'Ἡ Δογματικὴ Διδασκαλία τοῦ Ἱωάννου τοῦ Δαμασκηνοῦ. (Athens, 1940), p. 5.

² Cf. Jugie, *DTC*, VIII (1924) 695; Altaner, *Patrology*, p. 635; Amantos, 'Ἰστορία, I, 338; Hitti, *Syria*, p. 449, Adel-Théodore Khoury, *Les théologiens Byzantins et l'Islam, Textes et auteurs* (VIIIe-XIIIe S.) (Éditions Nauwelaerts, Louvain, Béatrice-Nauwelaerts, Paris, 1969), p. 47; Panagiotes K. Christou, "Ioannes o Damaskenos", in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. VI, Athens 1965, p. 1218.

³ Nasrallah, *Saint Jean*, p. 58.

⁴ Cf. above, p. 25, n. 7.

⁵ Nasrallah quotes from Abu'l Faraj al-Asfahani's *Kitāb al-Aghāni*, XVI, 70, about Yazīd I, that "ses commensaux habituelles étaient le chrétien Sargūn, son *mawla*, ainsi que Akḥṭal". *Saint Jean*, p. 66. On the friendship between John of Damascus and Yazīd, cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 66f; Hitti, *Arabs*, p. 246.

⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *Chronique*, III, 501; IV, 20.

⁷ Nasrallah, *Saint Jean*, p. 58.

⁸ Akḥṭal was born in 640 ("eight years after the death of Muhammad, four years after the capitulation of Jerusalem") in Hira. Cf. Lammens, *JA*, IV (1894), 99. Lammens' biography of Akḥṭal is, rather, a translation of the Arabic notice which appears at the end of the fourth fascicle of the *Divan* of Akḥṭal, published by the Imprimerie Catholique in Beirut [1893]. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 94.

than either of them. According to the biography of the Christian poet, Akhṭal used to visit Ibn Mansūr's house in Damascus. There he happened to meet John who was at that time a young man.¹ If John was born in 655-660 he would be 15-20 years younger than Akhṭal² and 10-15 years younger than Yazīd.

According to the anonymous *Vita*³ John was twelve years of age when Cosmas the Sicilian came to Ibn Mansūr's house as a teacher for his son.⁴ Theophanes records a Muslim expedition against Sicily in the year 664, in which many people were captured and taken to Damascus.⁵ If Cosmas arrived in Damascus in the same year⁶ and if John of Damascus was, indeed, twelve years old at that time this would point to 652 as his probable birthdate.

All the *Vitae* to which we have referred speak highly of the education which John of Damascus received. In this connection they mention as his teacher an Italian monk named Cosmas, who was captured and brought to the market of Damascus, along with other captives.⁷ Ibn Mansūr acquired the Sicilian monk as a teacher for his son John and for his adopted son also named Cosmas, who was from Jerusalem.⁸ Ibn Mansūr pleaded with the Caliph to obtain permission to free this Christian captive.⁹

When Cosmas was brought to Ibn Mansūr's house John, according to the anonymous *Vita*, begged his father to let this Greek monk become his teacher, so that he could learn from him "not only

¹ Lammens, *Ibid.*, p. 124. "Dans cette famille, si connue par son attachement à la foi orthodoxe, grandissait alors une *jeune fils* de Sergius, appelé Jean . . ." (The italicising is ours). We do not know, however, when Akhṭal met John as a young boy, to be able to determine the difference of age between Akhṭal and John.

² Akhṭal died in 710, at the age of seventy. Cf. Lammens, *Ibid.*, p. 434.

³ Cf. above, p. 37.

⁴ Cf. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Analecta*, IV, 272f.

⁵ Theophanes, *Chronographia ann.* 655, p. 532.

⁶ *MPG*, XCIV, 441, n. (6); Nasrallah, *Saint Jean*, p. 61.

⁷ *MPG*, XCIV, 440-441. According to the author of the anonymous *Vita*, Cosmas was originally from Crete and belonged to a prominent family, distinguished for its piety and benevolence. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Analecta*, IV, 271.

⁸ *MPG*, XCIV, 445. Cf. also above, p. 7.

⁹ *MPG*, XCIV, 444; cf. above, p. 30. The fact that the Caliph granted permission confirms the impression which one has of the Caliph Mu'āwiya: a person of religious tolerance, free-thinking, and political flexibility. About Mu'āwiya, cf. Lammens, *MFO*, I (1906), 1-108; II (1907), 1-172; III (1908), 19-312. Cf. also above, p. 25.

the books (?) of the Saracens, but those of the Greeks as well".¹ This quotation reflects not so much the wish of John, who was according to the same *Vita* twelve years old at that time,² but rather Ibn Mansūr's desire to give his son a Greek as well as an Arabic education.

More important for this study is the probability, as it is suggested by this *Vita*, that John of Damascus was restricted, at least until his twelfth year, to an education prescribed for the children of the Saracens.³ It seems justified to assume that the expression τὰς τῶν Σαρακηνῶν βίβλους (the books, or the literature, or the scriptures of the Saracens) is a reference, perhaps, to John's memorizing and reciting the Qur'ān and the Ḥadith literature as well as Arabian poetry.⁴ Constantine Acropolite in his *Sermo* on John of Damascus praises him for having learned the Greek language very rapidly through which he achieved a knowledge of history, mythology and other areas of Greek education.⁵ This seems to confirm the suggestion that John of Damascus was introduced to a systematic study of Greek and of the "classical" disciplines only at the time when Cosmas became his teacher.

In the conversation that John of Damascus had with Cosmas, before the latter was set free, Cosmas expressed regret that he would never have the opportunity to convey his wide knowledge—actually "all human wisdom"⁶—to someone else and thus, would

¹ "ἵνα μὴ μόνον, φησί, τὰς τῶν Σαρακηνῶν βίβλους ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς τῶν Ἑλλήνων παρὰ τοῦ διδασκάλου μάθοιμι" Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Analecta*, IV, 273. Cf. below, p. 46.

² Cf. above, p. 39.

³ Whether, indeed, John of Damascus attended school with Prince Yazīd I, is not anywhere stated clearly; and yet it cannot be considered as totally impossible. If one interprets the statement mentioned above, that John of Damascus did not have a Greek education before he met Cosmas, and if one takes into account the frequency of Ibn Mansūr's visits, the easy access to the court of Mu'āwiya, the consideration and the leniency of this Caliph toward Greek learning, the prestige of Christian teachers among the Muslims, and their employment as teachers of Muslim children, it does not sound unlikely that the son of the minister of finances and the son of the Caliph had some of their education in common. Cf. Nasrallah, *Saint Jean*, pp. 62ff.

⁴ For the kind of teaching material that was used during the early Umayyad period, as well as the importance of poetry in it, cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 62f.

⁵ "ἐν ἀκαιρεῖ γὰρ καὶ μετρίῳ πάντῳ χρόνῳ πρὸς Ἑλληνισμὸν τε τὴν γλῶτταν ἐρρύθμισε, καὶ συχρὴν ἱστορίαν . . ." MPG, CXL, 829. Hitti states that John, as a Syrian, spoke Aramaic at home and in addition he knew Greek and Arabic! *Arabs*, p. 246.

⁶ MPG, XCIV, 441.

be unable, through philosophy, to bring forth a child similar and equal to himself.¹ From the different areas of learning which Cosmas enumerated to Mansūr we receive some idea of the type of knowledge that John of Damascus received from his teacher: rhetoric, physics, arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy, and theology.² Indeed, John of Damascus is praised by his biographers for his profound knowledge and for his proficiency in secular and theological disciplines—"in the human and the divine knowledge", as Cedrenus put it.³

C. FROM THE CALIPHATE TO THE MONASTERY

1. *John of Damascus' public position*

Ibn Mansūr served as a government official during the reign of 'Abd al-Malik (684-705), a fact which is testified by both Muslim

¹ "τούτων οὖν μεστὸς γεγονώς, οὐπω καὶ ἄλλω μεταδοῦναι τῆς ἐξ αὐτῶν ὀφελείας πέφθακα, οὐδὲ παῖδα τεκεῖν διὰ φιλοσοφίας πατῆροιον", *MPG*, XCIV, 444.

² Cf. *MPG*, XCIV, 941-944. It is not difficult at all to detect the competence of John of Damascus in these fields of knowledge through his writings and, especially, in his *Fount of Knowledge*. Cosmas, John's adopted brother, who later became bishop of Maiuma, is known especially in the Orthodox Church as Cosmas the Melode for his outstanding contribution to Church music and hymnology. John of Damascus was also a prominent hymnographer of the Orthodox Church. Since music was among the disciplines which Cosmas the Italian taught his students, one can see that it is not a mere coincidence that both became famous hymn writers.

³ Cf. *Vita*: "οὐ τῆς θύραθεν σοφίας τόχαριεν μόνον ἔχουσι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ τοῦ παρακλήτου φῶς δαψιλῶς ἀποπέμπουσιν" *MPG*, XCIV, 432; Cedrenus: "πάσης γνώσεως θείας τε καὶ ἀνθρωπίνης ἐμπεπλησμένος" *MPG*, CXXI, 877A; Constantine Acropolite: "τὸν πολὺ τὰ θεῖα καὶ τὰ ἀνθρώπινα Ἰωάννην". *MPG*, CXL, 817. The fact that John of Damascus did not use Latin authors in his works—except the letter of Pope Leo to Flavian of Constantinople—is most likely due to the scarcity of such writings in the libraries available to John of Damascus and, especially, in the monastery of St. Sabas. It can also be attributed, however, to his teacher Cosmas who, being from South Italy, was living actually under the influence and the culture of the Eastern Roman Empire, i.e., Byzantium. Cf. Chase, *Saint John*, pp. xxxiii f. Nasrallah, *Saint Jean*, p. 61. The cultural links between South Italy and Sicily with the Aegean world were always close. With the political developments during the reign of Justinian and the expansion of the Byzantine influence in North Africa, Spain and, especially, South Italy, these links became stronger. Moreover, Emperor Constans II (641-668) made Syracuse his new capital. Cf. Joan M. Hussey, *The Byzantine World*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), p. 20; Ostrogorsky, *History*, pp. 64f, 109f, 146: [V. Grumel, "L'annexion de l'Illyricum oriental, de la Sicile et de la Calabre au patriarcat de Constantinople". *RSR*, XXXIX-XL (1951-52), 191ff]. We were unable to locate this article, mentioned by Ostrogorsky, *op. cit.*, p. 146 (1).

and Christian sources.¹ We do not know the exact date of Ibn Mansūr's death, but it is likely that this happened between 691-695 and not later than 705, because the last incident that Theophanes narrates with regard to 'Abd al-Malik and Ibn Mansūr took place in the year 691, and it presupposes that Emperor Justinian II was still alive (685-695).²

After the death of Ibn Mansūr, John of Damascus became secretary to the "prince of that city", advancing to a higher position than that which his father had occupied, as the Arabic and the Greek *Vitae* indicate.³ However, it is not clear from these sources what exactly John of Damascus' public responsibilities were. The Acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council (A.D. 787) imply that John was in charge of a financial office in the administration, because they compare him with Matthew, the former publican.⁴ It is obvious that this comparison meant to indicate not only a similar decision to abandon his position and follow Christ,⁵ but also the similar nature of the profession which both Matthew and John had. However, we think that this reference from the Seventh Ecumenical Council does not describe definitely John of Damascus' position as being in charge of collecting taxes from the Christian community alone.⁶

The Greek *Vita* defines John of Damascus' position as πρωτοσύμβουλος,⁷ that is, head advisor, or *primus a consiliis*.⁸ Constantine Acropolite remarks that John of Damascus, who as he calls him was one among the λογάδες (ministers or advisors) of

¹ Nasrallah, in *Saint Jean*, p. 35, notes 2-8, gives references from al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, al-Masūdi, Ibn Asākir, Michael the Syrian, and Theophanes. Cf. above, pp. 29ff.

² Cf. above, p. 29, n. 2.

³ "وبعد ذلك توفي منصور وصار ابنه يوحنا كاتباً لأمير البلد متقدماً عنده صاحب سره وجهه" *Arabic Vita*, quoted by Nasrallah, *Saint Jean*, p. 71, n. 1; "καὶ καθίσταται οὗτος ἐν μείζονι ἀρχῇ παρὰ τὸν γεννήσαντα" *MPG*, XCIV, 449; also *Ibid.*, CXL, 836; Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Analecta*, IV, pp. 281, 318.

⁴ "Ἰωάννης δὲ . . . ἀφῆκε πάντα, Ματθαῖον τὸν εὐαγγελιστὴν ζηλώσας, Χριστῷ ἠκολούθησε, μείζονα πλοῦτον ἡγησάμενος τῶν ἐν Ἀραβίᾳ θησαυρῶν τὸν ἐνειδισμὸν τοῦ Χριστοῦ" Mansi, *Collectio*, XIII, 357; cf. also, Constantine Acropolite, *MPG*, CXL, 853.

⁵ In the case of John of Damascus, to follow the monastic ideals, or "the shame of Christ", Mansi, *Collectio*, XIII, 357.

⁶ Meyendorff, *DOP*, XVIII (1964), 116. Cf. also, above, p. 27, n. 4.

⁷ ὁ δὲ τῶν Σαρακηνῶν ἀρχηγὸς τὸν Ἰωάννην εἰσκαλεσάμενος προχειρίζετο πρωτοσύμβουλον" *MPG*, XCIV, 449.

⁸ *Ibid.*, XCIV, 450, n. (17).

the public affairs, was receiving "first honour", was the one "next to the Caliph" and was considered as a co-ruler.¹ These expressions may be an exaggeration, but they are indicative of the importance of the rank that John held.²

We do not know exactly when John of Damascus abandoned his public post for the contemplative life at St. Sabas monastery. The Greek *Vita* suggests that this took place after the eruption of the iconoclastic controversy and it presupposes John of Damascus' reactions to Emperor Leo's policy³ and, perhaps, the issuing of his edict. It also relates John's resignation from the court to his confrontation with, and his punishment by, the Caliph, an incident which has been recorded in a legendary form.⁴ The same *Vita* also

¹ "Ἐγκρίνεται δὲ οὗτος εὐθὺς καὶ τὴν πατρικὴν ἀξίαν ἀναλαμβάνει, καὶ τοῖς λογάσι συγκαταλέγεται . . . Πλὴν ἀλλὰ τὴν τῶν πολιτικῶν ἐπιωμίσατο φροντίδα . . . Καὶ πρὸς μὲν ἀπάντων ἄλλων περιελαλεῖτο καὶ ἐθαυμάζετο, πρὸς δὲ τοῦ κρατοῦντος αὐτοῦ τὰ πρῶτὰ τε ἐτιμᾶτο, καὶ μετ' αὐτὸν ἦν εὐθὺς, καὶ σύναρχος ἐνενόμιστο" *MPG*, CXL, 836. It is interesting to note that for some Byzantines the title σύμβουλος stands for the title Caliph. Cf. e.g., John of Jerusalem, the Presbyter and representative of the bishops of the East in the Seventh Ecumenical Council: "τοῦ τῶν ἀθέων Ἀράβων τεθηγκότος τυράννου, ἤτοι συμβούλου (Σελεμᾶν ἦν οὗτος τοῦνομα) διεδέξατο τοῦτον Οὐμάρως". Mansi, *Collectio*, XIII, 197A; *Ibid.*, 197C, 200A. The same presbyter calls, a little later, Yazid II σύμβουλον. About John of Jerusalem, and his report, cf. Vasiliev, *DOP*, IX-X (1955-1956), 28, n. 11. This report was written much earlier than 787, perhaps in 769, and, therefore, it represents terminology of the time of John of Damascus. Also, the bishop of Messana, in the same Council; "κάγῳ παιδίον ἤμην ἐν Συρίᾳ ὀπηγνίκα ὁ τῶν Σαρρακηνῶν σύμβουλος τὰς εἰκόνας κατέστρεφεν". Mansi, *Collectio*, XIII, 200B. According to Nasrallah, in the *Book of Ceremonies* the Caliph of Baghdad is given the title πρωτοσύμβουλος and in the Arab-Greek papyrus of Egypt the Arab governor of Egypt is called σύμβουλος. *Saint Jean*, p. 71.

² In the letter that Emperor Leo III forged and sent to the Caliph, John of Damascus was presented claiming to the Emperor that he had under him "the whole country and the city". *MPG*, XCIV, 456A. Cf. below, n. 4. Cf. also, the anonymous *Vita*, in Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Analecta*, IV, 281; also, the *Vita* by John Merkouropoulos, *Ibid.*, p. 318.

³ *MPG*, XCIV, 452-453; cf. above, p. 6, n. 2.

⁴ The story relates that Leo III, in retaliation for John's severe criticism of the Emperor's interference in the affairs of the Church and of his iconoclastic policy, and, being unable otherwise to punish John—since Damascus was in the hands of the Muslims—thought to punish John through the Caliph. Leo sent to the Caliph a forged letter which, supposedly, had been written earlier to him by John of Damascus. In this letter John was urging Leo to assault and regain Damascus, informing him that a weak guard was guarding the city, and also that he himself would provide help, since "the city and the whole country was under him". Leo accompanied this false letter with a personal one to the Caliph, reassuring him of his friendship and his interest to preserve the peace between them; he also called the attention of the Caliph to

states explicitly that John fought against Leo, at the beginning from Damascus and later from Palestine,¹ i.e., before and after his retirement. The open question is, therefore, when is the date of his move to Palestine. There seems to be a consensus that the three homilies of John of Damascus in defense of the icons were written between 726-730,² but we do not know whether any of them was written in Damascus. If so, that would mean that John retired, at the earliest, after 726 because there is no indication that Leo had taken any position against the icons prior to this date: on the contrary, there are ample indications that his attitude towards them was favorable or, at least, tolerant at the beginning of his reign.³

Nasrallah considers any date after 726 as highly improbable, because of the fact that the last years of 'Abd al-Malik's reign (684-705) and the reign of his successors was a particularly intolerant and hostile period for the Christians. Under those circumstances John of Damascus could not have stayed in office so long without having changed his faith.⁴ Nasrallah, therefore, suggests that John of Damascus must have retired much earlier than the

that Christian whom he had in his court. The Caliph was deceived, believed that the letter was authentic, and ordered that John of Damascus' hand be cut off. The story narrates how John at the end of that day pleaded with the Caliph to have his hand back, so that he might bury it, and how after he prayed and asked for the help of Theotokos he found the next day his hand back in its place healed. After the miracle became known the Caliph did not give John permission to resign, but offered him a higher position instead. John had to insist firmly before he was permitted to leave. *MPG*, XCIV, 453-461.

¹ "... οὔτε μὴν ἐξ ἀνακτόρων εἰς ἐρήμους διέβαιναν διὰ τοῦ λέοντος βρυχυθμόν, ἀλλ' ἐν Δαμασκῶ τὸ πρότερον, ἐν Παλαιστίνῃ δὲ ὕστερον ποιούμενος τὰς διατριβάς, καὶ ἐν ἐρήμῳ τόπῳ ἀσκούμενος ἀντεπολεμᾶτο πρὸς τὸν Λέοντα γενναϊότατα" *MPG*, XCIV, 484-485.

² Karl Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Literatur*, (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1897), p. 68; Dyovouniotes, *Ἰωάννης Δαμασκηνός*, p. 8, n. 1. Kattenbusch, *ERK*, VI (1910), 209; Hitti, *Syria*, p. 499; Jugie, *DTC*, VIII (1924), 695; Nasrallah, *Saint Jean*, p. 112; Altaner, *Patrology*, p. 637. The date of Leo III's edict against the icons is disputed. However, the arguments favoring the date 730 are not without substance. Cf. Ostrogorsky, *History*, p. 144, n. 3, and Vasiliev, *DOP*, IX-X (1955-1956), 27. Cf. above, p. 10, n. 1. The possibility that John of Damascus retired as late as 730, or shortly before this time, cannot be excluded.

³ Coins minted after the year 720 bear the image of the Virgin carrying the infant Jesus; also, Leo's reply to Caliph 'Umar II (717-720) shows a positive attitude toward the veneration of the icons. Cf. Vasiliev, *DOP*, IX-X (1955-1956), 25, n. 5.

⁴ Nasrallah, *Saint Jean*, p. 81, and pp. 72-73.

Vita indicates, that is, between 718-720.¹ This argument is hardly convincing, because the unfavorable situation for the Christians started long before this date suggested for John's retirement.² We think that the motives of John of Damascus for retiring to the monastery are primarily personal, out of his own choice to follow a life of complete devotion,³ although the political situation in Damascus, as well as that in Byzantium may have played a role in his decision. His withdrawal from public life must be placed, we think, not before the beginning of Caliph Hishām's reign in 724 and, at any rate, after a considerably long period of his life in the Muslim administration.

2. Did John of Damascus know Arabic?

We know that Greek remained, for a period at least, the official language of the Umayyad administration in Syria although Syriac and Arabic were widely spoken.⁴ It was the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 81. Cf. also, Altaner, *Patrology*, p. 635; Jugie, *DTC*, VIII (1924), 695; Chase, *Saint John*, p. xii. Chase goes as far as suggesting the year 715 as the year of retirement.

² Cf. e.g., Theophanes, *Chronographia ann.* 686, 699, 710.

³ Mansi, *Collectio*, XIII, 357; cf. above, p. 42, n. 4. *MPG*, XCIV, 461. The *Vita* narrates, as we stated before, that John of Damascus had to plead strongly with the Caliph before the Caliph accepted his resignation; cf. above, p. 43, n. 4. Cf. also, Constantine Acropolite, *MPG*, CXL, 852-853; Jugie, *EO*, XXVIII (1929), 41. Gordillo sees in the penultimate paragraph of the *Libellus Orthodoxiae* (a text which is considered the ordination speech of John of Damascus), where John renounces his worldly life, an allusion to his friendship with Yazīd I (cf. above, p. 38, n. 5), known for the laxity of his character. *OC*, VIII (1926), 76. About Yazīd, cf. al-Ṭabarī, *Chronique*, IV, 20. The authenticity of the *Libellus Orthodoxiae* is not established. The text is edited in Gordillo's, *OC*, VIII (1926), 86-92.

⁴ Cf. above, p. 25. In the Church circles the Arabic element was already present. Cf. above, p. 22, n. 2. Michael the Syrian writes about the correspondence between the Jacobite Patriarch John I and the Arab general Amr b. al-ʿAs, in about 639 (?). The general ordered the Patriarch to prepare a translation of the Gospels in Arabic, in which John was ordered not to include anything "ni de la divinité du Christ, ni de la baptême, ni de la croix." John rejected the last demand, and he responded that, in spite of threats, the only way that he would undertake the translation would be by not changing even one *iota* from the Gospel. Michael describes the process of this translation thus: "Le Patriarch réunit les évêques et fit venir de Tanoukayé, des Aqoulayé, des Touayé, qui connaissaient les langues arabe et syriaque, et il leur commanda de traduire l'Évangile en langue arabe. Il avait ordonné que chaque sentence qu'ils traduisaient passât, sous les yeux de tous les interprètes. . . C'est ainsi que l'Évangile fut traduit et présenté au roi". *Chronique*, II, 432. The Syriac text in this discussion has been edited by F. Nau in *JA*, XI (1915) 225-279. A. Mingana has discussed

(684-705) who first introduced reforms in the administration, imposed the use of Arabic as the official language of the government and minted new coins, which, unlike the ones that had been used until then, bore no images but only inscriptions from the Qur'ān.¹ It seems that the decision to change the language completely did not become effective until the end of the Umayyad dynasty, when the majority of the government employees were Arabs.² Walid I (705-715) pursued the policy of his father with greater determination. Theophanes records the measures which this Caliph took in order to replace Greek with Arabic in the public records (c. 708).³ If our assumption, that John of Damascus resigned several years after those reforms of 'Abd al-Malik and Walid, is right, one wonders how he could have functioned as a high official without knowing at least enough Arabic to meet the circumstances. The same question can also be asked about his father, Ibn Mansūr, because of his long service in the administration.⁴ We have also referred to an indication of the anonymous *Vita*, according to which John of Damascus was since his early youth exposed to an education from the "books of the Saracens".⁵ Although this part—as well as any part—of the *Vita* must be used with caution, it is significant to

this text in *JMEOS* (1916), 35ff. Cf. Arthur Jeffery, "Gregory of Tathew's 'Contra Mohammedanos'", *MW*, XXXII (1942), 219-235; cf. also, Harry Gaylord Dorman, *Toward Understanding Islam*. (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1948), pp. 12f, and n. 5. Moosa states that the first known translation from Syriac to Arabic was the four gospels, made in 643, when John of Sedras was Patriarch of Antioch. *MW*, LVIII (1968), 327.

¹ Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 473, reports that in the year 78 A.H., the Muslims "commencèrent à frapper des dinars, des zouzê et des oboles, sur lesquels il n'avait point d'image, mais seulement des inscriptions"; Caetani, *Chronographia*, p. 927; Nicholson, *History*, p. 201; Hitti, *Arabs*, p. 271. Muir mentions the name of the Persian Mawlā of Sijistan, Salih b. 'Abd al-Rahman, who suggested to 'Abd al-Malik the change in the language; *Caliphate*, pp. 339f. Greek, however, did not cease to be the language of the Syrian aristocracy. Nasrallah, *Saint Jean*, p. 62.

² Boulos, *Peuples*, pp. 252f.

³ *Chronographia*, ann. 699, p. 575. Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 481. At this point Theophanes speaks explicitly about the replacement only of the Greek language, not of the Greek personnel, in the administration. On another occasion, about fifty years later, he indicates that many Christian employees were replaced by Muslims. *Ibid.*, ann. 751, p. 664.

⁴ Cf. above, p. 27, n. 4. This reference implies a dialogue between Ibn Mansūr and 'Abd al-Malik. The *Vita* also presents John of Damascus conversing with the caliph on several occasions. Cf. *MPG*, XCIV, 456, 460.

⁵ Cf. above, p. 40.

notice that some biographers simply assumed that John of Damascus, because of the environment and the circumstances under which he spent a great part of his life, knew at least some Arabic. It is also difficult to believe that John of Damascus lived, even after his retirement, in a totally Greek speaking environment. Arabic was in rather common use at St. Sabas during the eighth century, due to the constant relations of the monastery with the bedouins surrounding it, as well as because of the origin of some of its monks.¹

3. *About the date of his death.*

John of Damascus died at an old age. He himself, in his second treatise on the Dormition of Theotokos, reveals that this is a writing of his later years.² The edict of the Iconoclastic Synod (754) after the anathemas ends with the sentence "The Trinity has degraded these three".³ In the past many scholars have interpreted this as an indication that the three condemned theologians, including John of Damascus, had died before 754.⁴ The past tense in this sentence cannot be accepted as a conclusive argument for this thesis. For determining the exact date of John of Damascus' death

¹ Cf. e.g., in Leontius Sabaita, "Vita S. Stephani Sabaitae Thaumaturgi Monachi" in *AS*, Julii, III (Parisiis et Romae, 1867), p. 540: "Ἐγγισάντων οὖν ἡμῶν, τοῦ ἰδίου σπηλαίου ἀσυνήθως ἐξέδραμεν εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν ἀπάντησιν, καὶ τὴν τοῦ συνοδεύοντός μοι κεφαλὴν καταφιλήσας, ἑλληνιστὶ προσεφθέγγετο οὕτως" ("When we were approaching his cave he hurried out to meet us, — something unusual for him to do — and after he kissed my companion on his head, he said to him *in Greek* the following . . ."). The italicising is ours. This observation of the biographer, as Vailhé remarks, would be a "réflexion incompréhensible, si le grec était la langue habituelle". Simeon Vailhé, "Le monastère de Saint Sabas", *EO*, III (1900), 22. Nasrallah, *Saint Jean*, p. 90.

² "οὕτω καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν χειμῶνι τῶν ἐπῶν τὰ ἀνθρῶ τῆ βασιλίδι προσάγοντες καὶ γεγηρακότα λόγον . . ." *MPG*, XCVI, 724A. A synaxare states that he died at the age of one hundred four years: *MPG*, XCIV, 501, while the *Vita Marciana* states that he died in the place of his birth, Damascus, after he persisted in "the study of the divine law for seventy years". (" . . . τῆ μελέτῃ τοῦ θείου νόμου διηνεκῶς χρόνους ἑβδομήκοντα καὶ εἰς βαθὺ ἐλάσας ἀνεπαύσατο ἐν κυρίῳ ἐν τῇ γῆ τῆς γεννήσεως αὐτοῦ, ἐν πόλει καλουμένῃ δαμασκῶ"). Gordillo *OC*, VIII (1926), 55. This statement of the *Vita Marciana* seems to be more concerned with the years which John spent in the "study of the divine law", and therefore, gives no clear indication as to his exact age. However, it seems to be in line with the other records that John lived to a very advanced age.

³ "Ἡ τριάς τοὺς τρεῖς καθεῖλεν", Mansi, *Collectio*, XIII, 356. Cf. above, p. 1.

⁴ Dyounouniotes, Ἱωάννης Δαμασκηνός, pp. 9f, n. 3.

another fact has been brought forth for consideration:¹ John of Damascus had a nephew, Stephen, son of his brother Theodore who, according to Theophanes, was exiled in the year 735.² At the age of ten Stephen was brought to the monastery of Saint Sabas "to the brother of his father", i.e. to John of Damascus, "with whom" as Leontius the biographer of Stephen states "he stayed for fifteen years".³

Although this does not necessarily mean that John of Damascus passed away at that time—which would have been the year 749 or 750—this may, indeed, have been the case, especially since Leontius has no reference to John of Damascus following this fifteen-year period.⁴

Although John of Damascus' life is largely unknown, the existing documents—even with a variety of degree—seem to agree on some points of special interest to this study, such as, the prominence of his family's religious and public resources; the high quality of his personal education; the wide character of the experiences with regard to his own religious and cultural background, and that of the new authorities in Syria; the extent of his active involvement in the public life of Damascus and his awareness of the two religious traditions co-existing in the Muslim capital. It seems, however, that these qualities are even better reflected in his own writings which, for this purpose, are the best sources of information about his personality. For our study of his views on Islam, those writings pertinent to this religious tradition will be primarily considered.

¹ Simeon Vailhé, "Date de la mort de Jean Damascène" *EO*, IX (1906), 28-30; Jugie, *EO* XXIII (1924), 158f; Chase, *Saint John*, p. xvii.

² "τούτῳ τῷ ἔτει ἐξωρίσθη Θεόδωρος ὁ τοῦ Μανσοῦρ εἰς τὰ κλίματα τῆς ἐρήμου . . ." *Chronographia ann.* 726, p. 632.

³ "δεκαετῆς δὲ παρεγένετο εἰς τὴν μεγίστην ἡμῶν λαύραν σὺν τῷ τῷ αὐτοῦ πατραδέλφῳ μεθ' οὗ δεκαπέντε ἐνιαυτοὺς ἐν πάσῃ ὑπακοῇ διῆζε", Leontius Sabaita, *AS*, Jul. III, 580. The biographer of Saint Stephen states that this saint died in 794, at the age of sixty nine, which means that he was born in 725. It appears, therefore, that he was brought to the monastery when he was ten years old (735), because of the exile of his father, which Theophanes records in that same year.

⁴ The *Vita* of Saint Stephen could be a very important document for at least these fifteen years of the life of John of Damascus if it were in a complete and reliable form. Gordillo, *OC*, VIII (1926), 74. Sauget doubts whether even the person in the *Vita Stephani Sabaitae* is the same as Stephen, John of Damascus' relative. Cf. *BS*, IV (1965), 735.

PART THREE
WRITINGS: "ON THE HERESY OF THE
ISHMAELITES"

CHAPTER FOUR

THE TRADITION OF THE TEXT

A. THE "FOUNT OF KNOWLEDGE" AND THE "DE HAÆRESIBUS"

With the possible exception of the first *Oratio pro sanctis imaginibus*,¹ all the works of John of Damascus were written during the years of his life in the environment of Saint Sabas' monastic community.² His writings are devoted to dogmatic, moral and ascetic theology, exegesis, history, homiletics and hymnography.³ John of Damascus is, primarily, a theologian and the various forms of writing that he chooses become the means of expressing his theological insights.⁴ This is something that one should keep in mind when dealing with any of his writings. He remained, however, open to knowledge from various other disciplines and to the definitions of the "outside" philosophers, as far as they could lead to anything "worthy" and "profitable to the soul", and he referred to these disciplines as "servants" in the service of the "queen" which is Truth.⁵ For John of Damascus the ultimate goal of the philosophical

¹ *MPG*, XCIV, 1232-1284; Lequien, *Opera*, I, 307-330.

² There is a disagreement as to whether John of Damascus wrote the first *Oratio* before or after he retired to Saint Sabas, while there seems to be unanimity as far as the date of its writing is concerned (724); cf. above, p. 44, n. 2.

³ Altaner, *Patrology*, p. 636; Dyovouniotes, *Δαμασκηνός* pp. viif. The Greek *Vita* has an implicit account of John of Damascus' competence in the various fields of theological writing. *MPG*, XCIV, 472C-473A; cf. a similar survey in Constantine Acropolite's *Sermo* ". . . κοσμήναι λόγοις τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ἄφες ἀναλῦσαι τὰ τῶν σοφιστῶν τῆς κακίας περίεργα καὶ γριφώδη προβλήματα. Ἄφες διελέγξαι τὰς ἀπάτας τούτων καὶ τὰ σοφίσματα. Ἄφες στηρίζαι ταύτην τοῖς ὀρθοῖς δόγμασι". *MPG*, CXL, 873. The spacing is ours.

⁴ For John of Damascus philosophy and theology are intimately related. Theology as a discipline belongs to the theoretical branch of philosophy. He gives to the term *philosophy* such a wide definition as "knowledge of things that exist, in so far as they are" (*MPG*, XCIV, 533) as well as other more specific definitions, but he concludes with this statement: "Philosophy is love of wisdom, and true wisdom is God; therefore the love of God, this is the true philosophy". ("Φιλοσοφία δὲ ἀληθής, ὁ Θεός ἐστιν, ἡ οὖν ἀγάπη πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν αὐτὴ ἐστὶν ἀληθὴς φιλοσοφία") *Ibid.*, XCIV, 533C.

⁵ ". . . ἐρευνησωμεν καὶ τῶν ἕξω σοφῶν τοὺς λόγους. Ἴσως τι καὶ παρ' αὐτοῖς τῶν ἀγωγίμων εὐρήσωμεν, καὶ τι ψυχοφελὲς καρπωσόμεθα . . . Πρέπει δὲ καὶ τῇ βασιλίδι ἄβραις τισὶν ὑπηρετεῖσθαι. Λάβωμεν τοίνυν τοὺς δούλους τῆς ἀληθείας λόγους . . ." *Ibid.*, XCIV, 532A-B. The *Fount of Knowledge* is the best de-

and theological endeavor is to elevate man "through the sense perceptions to Him who is the Author and Maker and Creator of all, and who is beyond all sense perception and comprehension."¹

John of Damascus, the last of the great Fathers of the Church in the East, is primarily recognized as the first classical systematic theologian.² He dealt with the issues of doctrine which had caused controversy and theological speculation in the Church and he formulated the Biblical teaching and its interpretation by the Councils and the thought of the Church Fathers in a logical and systematic way. He himself states in the *Fount of Knowledge* that his purpose is not to say anything of his own, but rather to accumulate and display what "the saintly and wise men" have taught at different times.³ This statement has led some modern scholars to conclude that John of Damascus was more a compiler, than an original thinker,⁴ a conclusion which seems

monstration of how John of Damascus combined various disciplines in a major theological writing. Whenever he employed philosophical terms or definitions, he did so in order to clarify and establish those presuppositions which are basic for a theological understanding. Although philosophy, and especially the Aristotelian philosophy, played an important role in his work, the classical patristic definitions constitute the predominant element in his thought and in his style. Cf. Joan M. Hussey and T. A. Hart, "Byzantine Theological Speculation and Spirituality" *Cambridge Medieval History*, IV, pt. 2, 187ff.

¹ "Ἔσται δὲ σκοπὸς τοῖς ἐντυγχάνουσι πρὸς τὸ μακάριον τέλος καθορισθῆναι τὸν νοῦν. Τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶ τὸ διὰ τῶν αἰσθήσεων ἀναχθῆναι πρὸς τὴν ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν αἴσθησιν καὶ κατάληψιν, ὅς ἐστι ὁ τῶν πάντων αἰτιος καὶ ποιητής, καὶ δημιουργός". *MPG*, XCIV, 532C. Cf. Chase, *Saint John*, pp. 9-10. It is interesting for our study to note that John of Damascus exemplified this thesis in his major theological work by analyzing philosophical ideas and terms and by reviewing the heresies, among which he included Islam!

² Karmires, *Διδασκαλία*, p. 3. Cf. also, Deno John Geanakoplos, *Byzantine East and Latin West: Two Worlds of Christendom in Middle Ages and Renaissance*. (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966) pp. 22f., for a parallelism between John of Damascus and Thomas Aquinas. After the Council of Chalcedon and the establishment of the classical terminology of the Christian dogma, begins a period of decline which by the time of John of Damascus was almost completed. The importance of John of Damascus lies in the fact that at that moment he undertook the task of summarizing all the previous theological teaching and of offering a complete system of the Christian dogma. Cf. Franz Dölger, "Byzantine Literature", *Cambridge Medieval History*, IV, pt. 2, 211, 214.

³ "Ἐρῶ τοιγαροῦν ἐμὸν οὐδέν. τὰ δὲ σποράδην θελοῖς τε καὶ σοφοῖς ἀνδράσι λελεγμένα, συλλήβδην ἐκθήσομαι" *MPG*, XCIV, 533A.

⁴ Cf. e.g., McGiffert, *History*, I, 308: "John himself, as a matter of fact, did not contribute to the development in any significant way. He was a systematizer rather than a creative thinker and he added nothing important

unfounded.¹ The statement should be read, we think, in the spirit of an author whose ideal is not to demonstrate originality in his personal thought, but rather to exhibit continuity with past orthodoxy. In this spirit John of Damascus wrote and, later, revised his work.

The Greek *Vita* indicates clearly that John spent the last years of his life revising and completing his works,² simplifying flowery and excessively pompous passages and expressions, so that his writings would not give the impression of personal arrogance.³ It seems very likely that expressions such as "I will say nothing of my own" might be part of this effort to de-emphasize his own contribution.⁴

of his own". Cf. also, in Altaner, *Patrology*, pp. 635f., a similar—although less negative statement, with a praise of John's "astonishingly versatile and constructive mind, capable of building up a coherent system from the most diverse material".

¹ Cf. Dyovouniotes, *Δαμασκηνός*, pp. 1ff. At the end of a period of creative religious literature, the *Fount of Knowledge* stands as a demonstration of an immense accumulation of material from philosophy, history and especially from the Christian thought of the previous centuries. John of Damascus handled this material with astonishing competence and accuracy; and it was of his own initiative that he chose the authors, the teaching and the form of the exposition, to produce, with the *De Fide Orthodoxa*, the first *Summa Theologica* of the Christian Church. This fact in itself constitutes an original contribution to the Christian literature and thought. Cf. Chase, *Saint John*, p. xxvi. Hanz-Georg Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich*, (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1959), pp. 476, 480; Kelly characterizes the work of John of Damascus as a "classic reformulation of Greek theology in the eighth century". *Doctrines*, p. 396. In the *De Fide Orthodoxa* the theology of Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil the Great, Cyril of Alexandria, Athanasius, John Chrysostom, Maximus the Confessor, Nemesius and others—some of them widely unknown—was popularized and incorporated into a system of theology. Cf. G. Matthew, "The Christian Background", *Cambridge Medieval History*, IV, pt. 1, 52. Cf. also, Dölger, in *Ibid.*, 242ff. The writings themselves, with which this study will deal, can serve as an eloquent evidence of his original contribution.

² *MPG*, XCIV, 484B. Chase has indicated that in the *Fount of Knowledge* there are several revisions, which are also obvious in the editions of Lequien and Migne. Cf. Chase, *Saint John*, pp. vii-x. Precision in the expression, distinction in the terms and definitions and analysis of the most complicated doctrines are characteristics of John of Damascus' careful writing. Cf. Jugie, *EO*, XXIII (1924), 152f.

³ "Καὶ ὅπου τὸ κάλλος ἀνθρώπων ἔγαν, καὶ οἷον ἄμετρον, ἐπισεμνήνων διὰ τὸ σῶφρονος, ἵνα γένοιτο αὐτῷ οἱ λόγοι, μηδὲν ἐπιδεικτικὸν καὶ φαῦλον ἐπισυρόμενοι:" *MPG*, XCIV, 484.

⁴ Perhaps the sentence "I shall say nothing of my own" is the least among several examples which reflect the modest character of John of Damascus. The whole prologue of the *Fount of Knowledge* speaks of the importance of the work he is to undertake, and of his personal limitations. Cf. *MPG*, XCIV, 521-526. Cf. also, Jugie, *EO*, (1924), 151f.

John of Damascus wrote his major theological work, the *Fount of Knowledge*, in the late years of his life, and in response to a request of his adopted brother Cosmas, the "most saintly and honoured of God, . . . most holy bishop of Maiuma".¹ Cosmas succeeded in the throne of Maiuma near Gaza its bishop Peter, who became a martyr at the hands of the Muslims in 743 because he repeatedly condemned "Muhammad, his mythography and all who believe in it".² Therefore, the *Fount of Knowledge* must have been written during, or immediately after, 743.³ It seems most likely that what Cosmas requested was a manual of Christian doctrines in which the teaching of the Church would be stated clearly, supported by Biblical references and the traditional Patristic interpretation.⁴

The *Fount of Knowledge* consists of three parts: the *Capita Philosophica* or *Dialectica*, the *De Haeresibus* (*Compendium unde ortae sint et quomodo prodierunt*) and the *Expositio accurata fidei Orthodoxae* or *De Fide Orthodoxa*.⁵ The Philosophical Chapters are a summary of the basic philosophical categories, and as such they play the role of a general introduction to, and explanation of, the terminology and the ideas which the author will use in his exposition

¹ MPG, XCIV, 521A. About Cosmas, cf. above, pp. 39, 41, n. 2. Cosmas, after much reluctance on his part, was ordained bishop by the Patriarch of Jerusalem. *Ibid.*, 477-480, and n. (29).

² Theophanes, *Chronographia ann.* 734, pp. 642f; cf. also, MPG, XCIV, 476, n. (27), 477-480. Theophanes mentions that this incident happened in the first year of Walīd (obviously, the IInd., 743-744); therefore, the year A.D. 743 is precise.

³ This is a generally accepted date. Cf. Jugie, *DTC*, VIII (1924), 697, Dyovouniotes, *Δαμασκηνός*, p. 43; Altaner, *Patrology*, p. 635, and others.

⁴ The primary purpose of the *Fount of Knowledge* is theological. In the Prologue, the author speaks about "divine and unsurpassable things which surpass the comprehension of every rational creature" MPG, XCIV, 524A. In another place, where he speaks about truth and knowledge, he concludes that "Christ is the subsistent wisdom and truth, and in him are all the hidden treasures of knowledge". *Ibid.*, 592B. The author of the *Vita* calls the *Fount* a "divine book and a God-inscribed tablet . . . and door leading into the mysteries of theology". MPG, XCIV, 476A.

⁵ I. Κεφάλαια Φιλοσοφικά MPG, XCIV, 529-676; II. Περὶ αἱρέσεων ἐν συντομίᾳ ἔθεν ἡρξάντο καὶ πόθεν γεγόνασιν. *Ibid.*, 677-780; III. Ἐκδοσις ἀκριβῆς τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Πίστεως *Ibid.*, 789-1228. The *De Fide Orthodoxa* is twice the length of the previous Books of the *Fount*, together. It is very interesting that an equivalent work and the first of the kind in Muslim literature, al-Ash'arī's *Makālāt al-islamīyīn*, consists also of the same three parts: a) a survey of the Muslim sects, b) the creed of the orthodox community and c) a survey of the different opinions on the concepts of *kalām*. Cf. Arent J. Wensinck, "al-Ash'arī" in *SEIs*, pp. 46-47.

of the Orthodox Faith.¹ The second part is a survey of heresies, which is also given as an introductory section aiming at advising the reader as to what is false and absurd, in order that with more zeal he might advance to the study of truth.²

The *De Haeresibus* presents some difficulties as far as its authorship and form are concerned. John of Damascus himself mentions this book explicitly as a part of the *Fount of Knowledge* in the *Prologue*.³ He, also, implies its existence in the first chapter of the *Dialectica*, where he promises to use the words of truth to refute false knowledge and to overthrow those who fight dishonestly.⁴ In this Prologue, which is written in the form of a dedicatory letter to Cosmas, John of Damascus outlines the content of the *Fount* in this order: *Dialectica*, *De Haeresibus*, and *De Fide Orthodoxa*.⁵ Many manuscripts, however, contain the *De Haeresibus* after the *De Fide Orthodoxa*. This change of order suggests, perhaps, that the *De Haeresibus* was not, at the beginning, included in the *Fount of Knowledge* and that this was incorporated afterwards. This is an hypothesis which seems to find support in the fact that early manuscripts do not contain the *De Haeresibus* at all.⁶

An explanation for the omission of the *De Haeresibus*, or for the interchange in the order of the Books in the *Fount of Knowledge*, should be, possibly, sought in the fact that the *Dialectica* and the *De Fide Orthodoxa* seem to form an independent unit and a complete systematic theology which, because of its nature and its direct relevance to the knowledge of truth, seemed to have a greater

¹ *MPG*, XCIV, 524C. On the elaboration and the understanding of "philosophy" by John of Damascus, and its relation to theology, cf. above, p. 51, n. 4.

² *Ibid.*, XCIV, 524C.

³ "Εἶτα τούτων ἐχόμενα τῶν θεοστυγῶν αἱρέσεων συντάξω τὰ φληναφήματα, ὡς ἂν τὸ ψεῦδος ἐπιγιγνώσκοντες, πλέον τῆς ἀληθείας ἐξώμεθα" *Ibid.*, XCIV, 524C.

⁴ "ἀλλὰ εἰ καὶ μὴ δεῖται ποιικίλων σοφισμάτων ἢ ἀλήθεια πρὸς γε τὴν τῶν κακομάχων, καὶ τῆς ψευδονύμου γνώσεως ἀνατροπὴν τούτοις ἀποχρησώμεθα" *Ibid.*, XCIV, 532B.

⁵ "Καὶ πρῶτον τῶν παρ' Ἑλλήσι σοφῶν τὰ κάλλιστα παραθήσομαι . . . Εἶτα τούτων ἐχόμενα τῶν θεοστυγῶν αἱρέσεων συντάξω τὰ φληναφήματα . . . Εἶτα τὴν τῆς πλάνης ὀλέτειραν, καὶ τοῦ ψεύδους ἐλάτειραν . . . κεκαλλωπισμένην καὶ περιεκοσμημένην ἀλήθειαν, σὺν Θεῷ καὶ τῇ αὐτοῦ ἐκθήσομαι χάριτι" *Ibid.*, XCIV, 524C-525A.

⁶ P. Bonifaz Kotter, *Die Überlieferung des Pege Gnoseos des hl. Johannes von Damaskos*. vol. 5 in the series *Studia Patristica et Byzantina* (Ettal: Buch-Kunstverlag, 1959), p. 197.

appeal as reading than a book of heresies.¹ The *De Haeresibus* reminds us immediately of another text, similar in form and content, namely Epiphanius of Salamis' ² *Panarion*, a treatise of eighty heresies.³ Indeed the first eighty chapters of the *De Haeresibus* is simply material taken verbatim from the *Anakephaleoseis* of *Panarion*. Chapters 1-20 deal with religious and philosophical movements and traditions belonging to the time before Christ, which is, perhaps, an illustration of the fact that the words "sect" and "heresy" had a different meaning for Epiphanius than they have now. These twenty heresies form four major groups, Barbarism, Scythism, Hellenism and Judaism, which are "mothers and prototypes of all the heresies".⁴

¹ Such an explanation can be amply illustrated by the characteristic introduction of a scribe, found in Codex 2926 of Regium, who explains why he omitted the *De Haeresibus* when copying the *Fount*: "Εἰ καὶ ἐν ἐπιστολῇ ὁ παρὼν οὐτοσὶ Ἅγιος εἶρηκεν, ὅτι μετὰ τὸ παραθεῖναι τὰ παρὰ τοῖς σοφοῖς τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἐχόμενα, τούτοις ἐκθήσομαι τὰ τῶν αἱρέσεων, εἶτα τῆς ἀληθείας, ἀλλ' οὖν γε ἡμεῖς ἐναλλαχμῆνως πεποιήκαμεν, μετὰ τὰ τῶν φιλοσόφων, τὰ τῆς ἀληθείας προτιθέντες, εἶτα τὰ τῶν αἱρέσεων· οὐκ ἐναντιούμενοι τῷ Ἁγίῳ ἄπαγε, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον αἰρούμενοι τὰ τῆς ἀληθείας ἀληθῶς καὶ ἀκριβῶς εἰδέναι, ἥπερ τὰ τῶν αἱρέσεων" ("Although this Saint [i.e., John of Damascus] in the letter [i.e., in the Prologue to Cosmas] has stated that 'after the words from the sages among the Greeks will be presented, I will make an exposition of the heresies, and afterwards, of the truth', nevertheless we preferred to do otherwise: after the sayings of the philosophers we placed first the words of truth, and afterwards the heresies; not because we wanted to oppose the Saint—not at all—but because we preferred to know truly and precisely the words of truth rather than the heresies'.) Lequien, *Opera*, p. 74 (in *MPG*, XCIV, 675-676); cf. also, Kotter, *Überlieferung*, p. 197.

² Epiphanius (315-403) was born in Eleutheropolis, near Gaza. Being attracted early by the monastic ideals he established a monastic community near his native town, where he lived for thirty years. In 367 he was called by the bishops of Cyprus to become metropolitan of Constantia (ancient Salamis). He is known for his ardent adherence to the patristic tradition and theology and for his vehement opposition to Origen and his followers. On Epiphanius, cf. Quasten, *Patrology*, III, 384-396; Altaner, *Patrology*, pp. 365-368. Cf. also above, p. 11, n. 2.

³ The major work of Epiphanius bears the title: Κατὰ Αἱρέσεων ὀγδοήκοντα τὸ ἐπικληθὲν Πανάριον εἰπ' οὖν Κιβώτιος (*Adversus Octoginta Haereses opus quod inscribitur Panarium sive Arcula*). The word Πανάριον has been interpreted as the chest which contains antidotes for those who have been bitten by the serpents of heresy. Cf. *MPG*, XLI, 177C. The work is an extensive treatise (*MPG*, XLI, 173-XLII, 773) in which material from the works of Justin, Irenaeus, and Hippolytus has been utilized. An *Expositio Fidei Catholicae et Apostolicae Ecclesiae* is attached, and a section called *Anakephaleosis*; (*Ibid.*, 42: 833-885). Short *Anakephaleoseis* appear also at the end of each book, which seem to be later interpolations. Cf. Quasten, *Patrology*, III, 388.

⁴ *MPG*, XCIV, 677. There is a variety of terms used to define the divisions

The next sixty chapters deal with an equal number of heresies, from the Simonians (the followers of Simon Magus) to the Massalians.¹ This portion of the *De Haeresibus* is as long as the remaining one which includes twenty-three other heresies. It has been suggested that the first twenty heresies in this section (numbers 81 to 100) are dependent upon writings of previous authors, such as Theodoret, Timothy of Constantinople, Sophronius of Jerusalem and Leontius of Byzantium.² What has been considered as an original contribution in the *De Haeresibus* are only the last three chapters dealing with Islam, Iconoclasm and the sect of the Apocrites.³ The study of the manuscripts, however, has shown that the *De Haeresibus* included originally only one hundred chapters and that the one hundredth was the one which appears in Lequien's and Migne's editions as Chapter 101 on Islam.⁴ This conclusion comes in accordance with the credal statement at the end of the *De Haeresibus* which mentions explicitly that all the heresies which have been included in this book are one hundred.⁵

in these "heresies": those of the Greeks are called "differences" (διαφοραί: Pythagoreans, Platonists, Stoics, Epicureans); of the Samaritans, "nations" (ἔθνη: Gosthenes, Sebuaeans, Essenes, Dosthenes); and of the Jews, "heresies" (αἱρέσεις: Scribes, Pharisees, Saducees, Hemerobaptists, Ossenes, Nassareans). The Latin translation employs the following terms, respectively: *sectae variae*, *factiones*, and *haereses* or *sectae*. The terms "other religion" and "heresy" seem to be equated in the mind of Epiphanius.

¹ The *De Haeresibus* adds to the heresy of the Massalians a section called "Chapters from the impious doctrine of the Massalians, taken from their book". *MPG*, XCIV, 729A-736A. Chase suggests that this book is, perhaps, the *Asceticus. Saint John*, p. 131, n. 52. It also adds an extract from Theodoret's *History*, *MPG*, LXXXII, 1141-1145.

² Lequien, *Opera*, pp. 74f.; (in *MPG*, XCIV, 677-678). Altaner mentions, besides Epiphanius, "Theodoret and other sources known to us". *Patrology*, p. 636; cf. also, Jugie, *DTC*, VIII (1924), 697. Chase sees no interdependence between these twenty heresies and similar works of previous writers. On the contrary, he holds that the one hundred heresies of the *De Haeresibus* are compiled by another writer who took the first eighty from Epiphanius and added to them the next twenty chapters. Chase, therefore, implies that John of Damascus used this collection of one hundred heresies and that he only added the last three chapters. This suggestion is supported by the mentioning of the number "one hundred" in the concluding statement of the *De Haeresibus*.

³ Jugie, *DTC*, VIII (1924), 697; Chase, *Saint John*, p. xxxi; Altaner agrees that these three heresies are an original contribution, but probably added by another author. *Patrology*, p. 636.

⁴ Kotter, *Überlieferung*, p. 213.

⁵ "Καὶ αὗται μὲν αἱρέσεις αἱ προγραφεῖσαι ἐγράφησαν κατ' ἐπιτομὴν διὰ τὸ εἶναι ταύταις τῶν λοιπῶν γεννητικᾶς, ἐπεὶ πᾶσαι εἰσι τὸν ἀριθμὸν ρ' . . ." *MPG*, XCIV, 777B. ("And all these above mentioned heresies, which are one hun-

What has been said so far leads to the following conclusions:

a) The *De Haeresibus* is an integral part of the *Fount of Knowledge*—as is the book of the Philosophical Chapters—which is, undoubtedly, a work of John of Damascus.

b) Neither the *Dialectica* nor the *De Haeresibus* constitute the end of John of Damascus' writing, but they are both preparing the way for the *De Fide Orthodoxa*. The *Fount of Knowledge* constitutes, therefore, primarily a theological work.

c) One can easily identify in the *De Haeresibus* the *Anakephaloseis* of Epiphanius' *Panarion* as the source of the first eighty chapters. As far as the next twenty chapters are concerned, some of them may have parallels in previous works although these cannot be identified conclusively.¹

d) The heresy of the Ishmaelites, under the number 100, belonged originally to the main body of the *De Haeresibus*, which included only one hundred chapters instead of one hundred and three as the modern editions indicate.

B. THE PLACE OF CHAPTER 100/101 IN THE "DE HAERESIBUS"

Among the one hundred heresies Chapter 101, the "heresy of the Ishmaelites", stands as a unique entity. While the rest of the heresies do not extend to more than a few lines each, Chapter 101 occupies four and a half columns in the edition of Migne.² It is introduced in

dred in number, have been stated briefly because they are the ones which have given birth to the rest of them"). The *Doctrina Patrum* also includes one hundred heresies, Islam being the last one. Cf. below, p. 59, n. 5. The *De Haeresibus* ends with a short paragraph which is written in the form of a short creed of the orthodox doctrine. In Lequien's and Migne's editions it appears after the one-hundred third heresy, the Aposchites.

¹ The *De Haeresibus* contains two important texts which supplement two heresies: an addition of two documents in the heresy of the Massalians (*MPG*, XCIV, 729-737) and two supplementary fragments from the *Arbiter*—the principal dogmatic work of John Philoponus (d. after 565)—for the heresy of the Monophysites (*MPG*, XCIV, 744-753). These fragments are the only survivals of the Greek original of the *Arbiter* which exists, otherwise, in a Syriac translation only. Cf. Chase, *Saint John*, pp. xxxi, 140, n. 7; Altaner, *Patrology*, pp. 612f.

² *MPG*, XCIV, 764-773; in Lequien, *Opera*, I, 110-115. For an English translation see John W. Voorhis, "John of Damascus on the Moslem heresy", *MW*, XXIV (1934), 391-398; and Chase, *Saint John*, pp. 153-160. The heresies of the Massalians and of the Monophysites have each taken, *in toto*, almost equal length, but this is because other documents have been incorporated. Otherwise the description of the heresies themselves occupies for the first, four and for the second, thirty-two lines only! Cf. above, p. 57, n. 1; also below, p. 67, n. 1.

another way than all the other heresies: "There is, also, prevailing until now the deceptive 'superstition' ¹ of the Ishmaelites . . .".² The style, also, of the whole Chapter 101 is, undoubtedly, different from that of the other chapters. There are statements about the origin of the heresy of the Ishmaelites, their Prophet and their Scriptures, their doctrines and their practices; but, more than once, the discussion takes the form of a dialogue between Christians and Muslims.³ The chapter is a synthesis of historical apologetic and controversial writing.

This chapter on Islam has an early tradition of being a part of the *De Haeresibus*. Its evidences date from, as early as, the tenth century ⁴ and, even earlier, the eighth and ninth centuries, for example in the edition of the *Doctrina Patrum, De Incarnatione Verbi*.⁵ Another significant early reference to the present arrangement of the last section of the *De Haeresibus* is the third *Oratio* against Constantine Copronymus by Nicephorus, who later became patriarch of Constantinople (806-815).⁶ Nicephorus in this

¹ Cf. below, p. 68.

² "Ἔσται δὲ καὶ ἡ μέχρι τοῦ νῦν κρατοῦσα λαοπλάνος σκεία τῶν Ἰσμαηλιτῶν . . .", 767A. (For the references to this chapter we will only give the number of the column in Migne's edition, since it will be implied: *MPG*, XCIV, . . .). The rest of the heresies follow the pattern of *Anakephaleosis*: they state first the name of the heresy (e.g., Noetians, Sabellians, Donatists, etc.), sometimes they state the name of the founder, and they summarize the basic points of doctrine and practice.

³ "ἡμῶν δὲ λεγόντων . . . ἀποκρίνονται" 765C-D; "Τοῦτο καὶ ἡμεῖς, φαμέν, οἶδαμεν· ἀλλ' ἔπως ἡ γραφὴ κατῆλθεν εἰς τὸν προφήτην ὑμῶν, ἐρωτῶμεν. Καὶ ἀποκρίνονται . . ." 765D-768A; "Πάλιν ἡμῶν ἐρωτώντων . . . σιωπῶσιν" 768B; "Πρὸς οὗς φαμέν . . . Καὶ τινες μὲν αὐτῶν φασιν . . ." 768B etc.

⁴ Cf. Kotter, *Überlieferung*, pp. 197-214.

⁵ Franz Diekamp, *Doctrina Patrum, De Incarnatione Verbi. Ein Griechisches Florilegium aus der Wende des siebenten und achten Jahrhunderts*. (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1907) p. 270. The codices used for this edition date from the sixteenth to as early as the eighth and ninth centuries, e.g., Codex Vaticanus 2200. This summary of the *De Haeresibus* includes only one hundred heresies, Islam in this case being listed as the last one. The heresy of the *Autoproscopae*, which is listed as number one hundred in Lequien's and Migne's editions, does not appear here. Cf. Kotter, *Überlieferung*, p. 213; cf. also, above, p. 57, n. 4, 5. Dyovouniotes, *Δαμασκηνός*, p. 44, considers the three heresies after Islam as later interpolations in the *De Haeresibus*.

⁶ *MPG*, C, 528. On Nicephorus, cf. his *Vita*, *MPG*, C, 45-160. He became Patriarch of Constantinople after the iconolatric Patriarch Tarasios, who had proposed Nicephorus fervently as his successor. *Ibid.*, C, 61. He took part in the Seventh Ecumenical Council as imperial secretary (770-780). He wrote treatises in defense of the icons, a history from Emperor Mauricius (582-602) to his own time and a short chronography (*Chronographia Brevis*). Leo

Oratio promises to show to the Emperor that Iconoclasm, which as he claims is of Jewish inspiration and origin, is the latest heresy which has been added as the "one hundred and second heresy to those which have already been enumerated".¹ After this introduction follows the description of this heresy under the title "Heresy 102, *Christianocategoroi*, that is Iconoclasts". The author, beginning this description, has reproduced almost verbatim the text on the Iconoclasts from John of Damascus' *De Haeresibus* under the same number, one hundred and two. These striking similarities in the numbering of the heresies, in the title, as well as in the text of Iconoclasm, prove that Nicephorus, a few years only after the death of John of Damascus, knew the text of the *De Haeresibus*. If he counts Iconoclasm as the one-hundred-second heresy, as the *De Haeresibus* also does, it is most likely that Islam is the one implied to be the one-hundred-first, according to the numbering of the *De Haeresibus*.² Therefore, the earliest possible sources witness to the presence of the Chapter 101 as part of the *De Haeresibus*.

C. ABOUT THE AUTHENTICITY OF CHAPTER 100/101

The conclusion which has just been stated does not answer the question whether, indeed, this chapter on Islam is an authentic writing of John of Damascus. The *Doctrina Patrum* includes only a very small portion of the text of Chapter 101 which has been edited by Lequien and Migne.³ Diekamp has expressed the opinion that this portion is earlier than the text of the *De Haeresibus* and that it was borrowed by John of Damascus for his list of heresies,⁴ but this thesis has been challenged by the study of Kotter.⁵ The opposite

V the Armenian (813-820), who was crowned Emperor by Nicephorus, dethroned and exiled him in 815 for his iconolatric ideas. He died in 829. Cf. also, Leo's *Grammaticos*, *MPG*, CVIII, 1037, 1040; Symeon Magister, *MPG*, CIX, 665; 669; Joel, *Chronographia*, *MPG*, CXXXIX, 273. Cf. also, above, p. 10, n. 5 (e). Krumbacher, *Geschichte*, pp. 71-73, 349-352.

¹ "Ἐκείναις γοῦν συντεταγμένη παρέπεται, ἑκατοστή δευτέρα ταῖς προκατελεγμέναις ἐπαριθμουμένη. Ἐχει δὲ ὧδε . . .", *MPG*, C, 528; and *Ibid.*, XCIV, 773-774.

² On the basis of what was said above, p. 57, n. 4, 5, even if Islam is not implied as the one hundred-first heresy, it is, however, presupposed to be in the list of heresies; otherwise, how else would Nicephorus have reached the same numbering?

³ "Ἔστι δὲ . . . διὰ τὸ φιλεῖν αὐτὸν", *MPG*, XCIV, 764A-765B; Diekamp, *Doctrina*, p. 270.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. lxi f; Khoury, *Théologiens*, I, pp. 53f.

⁵ Kotter, *Überlieferung*, pp. 211f.

opinion has been expressed by Altaner without further elaboration; namely that Chapter 101 was added by another author.¹ The great majority of modern scholars consider the chapter on Islam as an authentic writing of John of Damascus.²

The most comprehensive discussion against the authenticity of Chapter 101 of the *De Haeresibus* has come from Professor Armand Abel.³ His arguments are based on the evidence of the content of the text itself and its comparison with later texts. It is an attempt to show that the picture of Islam and of the Muslim-Christian dialogue which the chapter presents is incompatible with the time of John of Damascus. The discussion on the authenticity of Chapter 101 involves more important implications than simply a question

¹ Altaner, *Patrology*, p. 636.

² Cf. e.g., Dyovouniotes, *Δαμασκηνός* p. 44; Jugie, *DTC*, VIII (1924), 701; J. R. Merrill, "Of the tractate of John of Damascus on Islam", *MW*, XLI (1951), 88. Merrill expresses the opinion that John of Damascus had not a thorough and accurate knowledge of Islam. Cf. below, p. 93; Amantos, *Ἱστορία*, I, 458; Khoury, *Théologiens*, I, 55; Hussey-Hart, *Cambridge Medieval History*, IV, pt. 2, p. 190; Meyendorff, *DOP*, XVIII (1964), 115f. Against the authenticity of Chapter 101, on the assumption that it is a late eighth century text, is Argyriou, "Une 'Controverse entre un chrétien et un musulman' inédite", *RSR*, XLI, (1967), 237, n. 3. This Controversy is found in a 17th century manuscript at Mount Athos (S. Dionysius' Monastery) with another text which, according to Argyriou, is nothing but Chapter 101, without the name of the author.

³ "Le chapitre CI du *Livre des Hérésies* de Jean Damascène: son inauthenticité". *SIs*, XIX (1963), 5-25. This is the second time that Abel has suggested that Chapter 101 is inauthentic. The first time seems to have been in his thesis "Le Chapitre CI du *De Haeresibus* de Jean Damascène", thèse annexée, (Bruxelles, 1949). Cf. Abel, "La polémique Damascénienne et son influence sur les origines de la théologie Musulmane", *L'Élaboration de l'Islam. Colloque de Strasbourg 12-13-14 juin 1959* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1961), p. 65, n. (1). Abel, "La lettre polémique d'Aréthas à l'émir de Damas", *Byz.*, XXIV, (1954), 353 (2). Abel's argument is based upon the similarities between Chapter 101, which he considers to be an interpolation, and the tenth-century writing *Contra Muhammed* which was, also, utilized by the *Thesaurus Orthodoxae Fidei* of Nicetas Acominatus and, before him, by Euthymius Zygabenus (*Panoplia Dogmatica*) and the anonymous writing *Contra Muhammed* (*MPG*, CIV, 1448B). The above-mentioned text, *Contra Muhammed*, has been edited by Migne (CIV, 1448B-1457D) immediately after Bartholomeus' *Elenchus et Confutatio Agareni* (CIV, 1384A-1448A). Except for the Introduction of Chapter 101 of the *De Haeresibus*, which has been copied almost verbatim (*MPG*, XCIV, 764AB = CIV, 1448B), no other serious similarity that could prove interdependence can possibly be shown between these two texts, while their difference in content and spirit is considerable. On *Contra Muhammed*, cf. Khoury, *Théologiens*, I, 194ff.

of deciding who is the writer of this text,¹ as the following statement by Abel himself illustrates:

S'il est authentique, le chapitre CI de Περὶ αἱρέσεων de Jean Damascène (PG, XCIV, 764-769) est le plus ancien témoignage qui nous soit parvenu, en langue grecque, sur la connaissance de l'Islâm, sinon parmi les Byzantins, du moins par les Chrétiens soumis à la conquête et, par eux, transmise aux Byzantins. Par lui, en effet, et pourvu que, dans l'ensemble composite dont il fait partie, il ait le caractère de l'authenticité, il nous serait possible de nous rendre compte du degré de connaissance que les Chrétiens de langue grecque, vivant en terre d'Islâm, pouvaient avoir, au début du VIII^e s., de la région des conquérants, des leurs idées, de leur doctrine. Dans une certaine mesure, ce chapitre pourrait même nous aider à mesurer le niveau doctrinal de l'Islâm de ce temps. Enfin, et surtout, nous pourrions le tenir pour le point de départ de la polémique grecque contre l'Islâm. Et ce caractère lui conférerait une importance particulière dans une culture dont on connaît bien l'esprit de traditionalisme scolastique.²

The arguments of Abel need careful study and consideration.³ The most important argument for his thesis is that the whole chapter 101 is found, verbatim, as a part of Book XX of the *Thesaurus Orthodoxae Fidei*, which Abel accepts as an authentic writing of Nicetas Acominatus, a 12th-13th century Byzantine writer.⁴ This chapter of Book XX bears the title "On the religion of

¹ For the case of Chapter 101 the name of John of Damascus as its author is of great importance for the history of the Muslim-Christian dialogue. Cf. below, pp. 127ff.

² Abel, *SIs*, XIX (1963), 5.

³ For a short answer to Abel's theses, cf. Khoury, *Théologiens*, I, 50-55.

⁴ Cf. Abel *SIs*, XIX (1963), 13. Nicetas and his brother Michael were from Chonae, Asia Minor, and thus they are also known as *Choniatae*. Michael became bishop of Athens (1182), while Nicetas was promoted to various political posts up to the rank of general *logothetes* during the reign of Emperor Alexius Murtzuphlos. After Constantinople fell into the hands of the Franks (1204) he followed Emperor Theodore (1204-1222) with his exiled government to Nicea, where he died a short while later (1214?). The name Acominatus was given to him later by the first editor of his historical work Wolf (1557). He is the author of *Historia*, a text which covers the period 1180-1206 [Ed. I. Bekker, *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* (Bonn: Weber, 1835) and *MPG*, CXXXIX, 320-1057], of exegetical treatises and of the well-known dogmatic work *Thesaurus Orthodoxae Fidei* (*MPG*, CXXXIX, 1101-CXL, 281) which he wrote in the pattern of Euthymius Zygabenus' *Panoplia Dogmatica* (*MPG*, CXXX, 33-1360). The *Thesaurus* is actually a supplement to the *Panoplia*. Krumbacher, *Geschichte*, p. 474; Khoury *Théologiens*, I, 249ff. Ferdinand Cavallera, "Le trésor de la foi Orthodoxe de Nicétas Acominatos Choniatae", *BLE*, V (1913), 124-137.

the Hagarenes", has eighteen paragraphs and is twice as long as Chapter 101 of the *De Haeresibus*.¹ Abel, on the merit of its length and style, holds that in this text one has the feeling of continuity and of unity, while Chapter 101 gives the impression of being only a fragment.² He concludes that the text of Acominatus is the original one, while Chapter 101 is an interpolation of this part of the *Thesaurus* into the *De Haeresibus*.³ In support of this conclusion Abel states some contextual evidences to demonstrate that the text of the *Thesaurus* reflects developments of the Muslim-Christian dialogue which date from a later period than the time of John of Damascus. Examples of these evidences are, according to Abel:

1. That the author of the *Thesaurus* frequently used later traditions, rather than the Qur'ān itself as, for example, in Paragraph 8 the discussion on Paradise.⁴

2. That there are cases—as, for example, paragraph 11—which reflect a later Byzantine polemic tactic, to underline and to use as an argument against the Muslims that which appeared to the Christians to be sexual laxity and obscenity in Islam.⁵

3. That the Muslims make use of Biblical texts—as, for example, in paragraph 14—a source of polemics which was introduced, according to Abel, only during the ninth century.⁶

4. That the Christians accuse the Muslims in paragraph 10 of considering *jihād* (holy war) as the divine mission of Islam, a reference which presupposes the military successes of the ninth century.⁷

¹ *MPG*, CXL, 105-121. The *Thesaurus* contains, also, a chapter "On the doctrine of Muhammad on God", still unedited. Cf. *MPG*, CXXXIX, 1101.

² Abel, *SIs*, XIX (1963), 14. Chapter 101 is identical with the first seven paragraphs, it omits the eighth, and it contains half of the ninth paragraph of the *Thesaurus*. The *Thesaurus* continues up to paragraph 18.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁴ *MPG*, CXL, 113A-C. According to this paragraph, Muhammad will be the gatekeeper of Paradise. Moses with the Israelites will be present and they will be condemned to the eternal fire as transgressors of the Law. The Christians also will be punished for having confessed Christ as God. Muhammad will enter Paradise with 70,000 believers who will not be submitted to judgment as the rest of the people. The Samaritans will enter Paradise, but only in order to clean Paradise from filth, "so that Paradise will not smell". The Jews and the Christians will become firewood and will be thrown into the fire. Cf. Abel, *SIs*, XIX (1963), 16-17. But, interestingly enough, this paragraph is the missing one, between paragraphs 7 and 9, from Chapter 101. Cf. above, n. 2.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17; *MPG*, CXL, 116D.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 18; *MPG*, CXL, 121B-C.

The facts to which these examples point are, perhaps, undisputed. But, precisely, because of this reason they can not be used as evidences against the authenticity of Chapter 101, because none of these cases is included in this chapter! We find it utterly difficult to accept, on the basis of these arguments, that Chapter 101 is an extract from Acominatus' *Thesaurus* and an interpolation in John of Damascus' *De Haeresibus*. Such a case would demand the extremely skillful and careful work of someone who would have an accurate knowledge of the history of the Muslim-Christian dialogue, so that he might avoid including those parts which were not compatible with the time of John of Damascus. Rather the opposite seems more likely, that the text of the *De Haeresibus* has been used as a basis and a starting point for composing a more complete account which, inevitably, reflected the later developments of the Muslim-Christian encounter and the attitudes of the Byzantines toward the Muslims.

The most serious argument against Abel's thesis is, we think, the fact that, at least the part on Islam which the *De Haeresibus* and the *Thesaurus* have in common and which constitutes the whole of Chapter 101, could not be of Acominatus originally, since the evidences of its existence go back even to, as early as, the eighth century!¹

Moreover, Abel's thesis on the continuity of the text of the *Thesaurus* can be challenged. At the end of paragraph 9 of this text Migne indicates explicitly in a footnote: "*Ita codex Choniatae*".² This shows that the part of Book XX on Islam is a combination, unsuccessfully made, of two codices. Indeed, by looking at the chapter "On the religion of the Hagarenes" as a whole, one can detect several inconsistencies in the text, especially in paragraph 9: From paragraph 6 a discussion on the various Surahs starts and this same discussion continues until the end of the text (par. 18). Unexpectedly, however, in the middle of paragraph 9, reference is made to the Muslim practices, circumcision, abolition of the Sabbath and of baptism, discrimination in foods and prohibition of drinking.³ In this same paragraph, also, the text states in a few

¹ Cf. above, pp. 59, n. 4, 5, 6, with reference to the *Doctrina Patrum*, Nicephorus, and the study of Kotter.

² *MPG*, CXL, 116, n. (7). He also corrects the author's statement that the religion of the Hagarenes appeared in 6145 from the beginning of the world, pointing that the *hijra* took place in 6129 (A.D. 622).

³ *Ibid.*, 113D.

sentences what for the Christians was the major point of Muslim theology, that "God is the cause of every good and evil" ¹ and it proceeds with the conclusion: "This heresy of the Ishmaelites arose in the times of King Heraclius, which is, up to him, 6145 years from the creation of the world".² If we were to consider the chapter of the *Thesaurus* as a unit, this second part of its paragraph number 9 would be, we think, an obviously irrelevant and untimely interpolation in the midst of a discussion of specific Surahs, a discrepancy incompatible with the skill of any writer, let alone of Acominatus. In addition to this, a more careful study of the structure of this last part of paragraph 9 shows that: a) the reference to Muslim practices is simply the concluding sentence of Chapter 101 of the *De Haeresibus*; ³ b) the reference to God as the cause of every good and evil is the headline of the main subject of the *Dialogue* between a Christian and a Saracene by John of Damascus; ⁴ and c) that the last sentence of this paragraph ⁵ is a repetition of the introductory statement of the *De Haeresibus*, unnecessary at the middle of the text, unless it marked the end of the discussion. Indeed, the next paragraph (10) of the chapter of the *Thesaurus* is actually the beginning of a new unit in which the author, as he announces, will demonstrate from the book of Muhammad that the Prophet "did not say anything true".⁶ If one considered those paragraphs before paragraph 9 and the ones which start with paragraph 10 as a unified text this announcement would be, obviously, inaccurate because it disregards the discussion on some Surahs made already in the previous paragraphs.⁷ Acominatus seems to have written refutations to several Surahs as the title of a codex mentioned by Migne clearly indicates,⁸ corresponding to this particular section (paragraphs 10-18) of the chapter of the *Thesaurus*.

¹ *Ibid.*, 113D.

² *Ibid.*, 116A.

³ *Ibid.*, XCIV, 773A.

⁴ Cf. below, pp. 102.

⁵ "Ἀνεφύη δὲ ἡ τοιαύτη τῶν Ἰσμηλιτῶν ἀίρεσις ἐπὶ τῶν χρόνων Ἡρακλείου τοῦ βασιλέως, ὡς εἶναι μέχρις αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου ἕτη σρμε'" *MPG*, CXL, 116A = *Ibid.*, XCIV, 764B.

⁶ "Ἴνα δὲ προσθῶμεν τοῖς εἰρημένοις τὸ κατὰ μηδὲν τὸν Μωάμεδ ἀληθὲς λέγειν, εἰρήσεται καὶ ταῦτα ἐκ τῆς αὐτοῦ βίβλου παρεκβληθέντα" *Ibid.*, CXL, 116A.

⁷ Cf. below, pp. 89, for the Surahs which Chapter 101 discusses.

⁸ "Τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ Μωάμεθ νομοθετηθέντα ἐκ τῆς βίβλου αὐτοῦ καλουμένης Κοράν, καὶ Χωνειάτου ἀντιρρήσεις". Codex Colbertino 4753; cf. *MPG*, CXXXIX, 1099.

All these indications demonstrate that the text which appears in Book XX of the *Thesaurus* is not a unit, but a combination of two originally independent texts: Chapter 101 of the *De Haeresibus* and a Refutation of some Surahs of the Qur'ān, probably of Nicetas Acominatus;¹ to this latter part material from later traditions and instances has been added.

We think that Abel's objections² do not offer sufficient reason for denying the authenticity of Chapter 101, but rather provide us with positive arguments in its favour. However, since a critical edition of the writings of John of Damascus is under preparation,³ a final conclusion on the authenticity of this chapter of the *De Haeresibus* may have to be postponed. What can be said at this point with certainty is that this text was already known a few decades after the writing of the *Fount of Knowledge*, which is an attested work of John of Damascus, and that it has been attributed to him since then. This seems sufficient justification for us to discuss Chapter 101 as John of Damascus' work.

¹ As a matter of fact, Book XX is not only a combination of two texts but a compilation of various writings, mainly of John of Damascus, Zygabenus, Nicetas of Byzantium, and George Hamartolus. Cf. Khoury, *Théologiens*, I, 250ff. The text of the *De Haeresibus*, although it has been quoted verbatim, has undergone some alteration. For example: in two instances where the *De Haeresibus* (H) uses a present tense—thus indicating narration of a contemporary situation—the *Thesaurus* (T) has changed them to the past: H = "ἐξ οὐρανοῦ γραφὴν κατενεχθῆναι ἐπ' αὐτὸν διαθρυλλεῖ, MPG, XCIV, 765; T = "ἐξ οὐρανῶν γραφὴν ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ κατενεχθῆναι παρ' αὐτὸν διεθρύλλησε" *Ibid.*, CXL, 105B; H = "Τινὰ οὖν συντάγματα ἐν τῷ παρ' αὐτοῦ βιβλίῳ χαράξας γέλωτος ἄξια, τὸ σέβας αὐτοῖς παραδίδωσι" *Ibid.*, XCIV, 765A; T = "τινὰ δὲ συγγράμματα ἐν τῷ τοιούτῳ βιβλίῳ χαράξας γέλωτος ἄξια, τὸ σέβας αὐτοῖς παρέδωκε" *Ibid.*, CXL, 105B; cf. also below, pp. 74.

² Other objections of Abel, not yet referred to above, will be discussed below, pp. 73, n. 5; 84, n. 3.

³ This edition is being prepared by the Byzantine Institute at Scheyern, Ettal, Germany. Cf. Franz Dölger, "Die Johannes-Damaskenos Ausgabe des byzantinischen Instituts Scheyern". *Byz.*, XX (1950), 303-314; also, D.Bf.M., "L'Institut Byzantin de Scheyern et l'oeuvre de S. Jean Damascène", *Ir.* XXXI (1958), 510-512. Cf. the studies from this institute by Johannes M. Hoeck, "Stand und Aufgaben der Damaskenos-Forschung", *OCP*, XVI (1951), 5-60; Kotter, *Überlieferung* (Ettal, 1959). The first volume of the critical edition of John of Damascus' works was recently published: P. Bonifatius Kotter, O.S.B., *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos. I. Institutio Elementaris. Capita Philosophica (Dialektika)*. ser. *Patristische Texte und Studien*. Herausgegeben von Kurt Aland und Wilhelm Schneemelcher (Band 7, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1969).

CHAPTER FIVE

THE TEXT AND ITS CONTENT

It is important to study closely what John of Damascus had to report and remark on Islam. It is only then that one can draw a picture of his knowledge and his evaluation of Islam.¹

¹ For an English translation see John W. Voorhis, "John of Damascus on the Moslem heresy", *MW*, XXIV (1934), 391-398; and Chase, *Saint John*, pp. 153-160. A few inaccuracies have passed on into both these translations, most likely due to the fact that they relied heavily upon the latin translation, instead of on the original Greek version. Cf. Appendix I, pp. 132-143 for the Greek text and a translation into English.

An excellent contribution to this discussion is Paul Khoury's work "Jean Damascène et l'Islam", *POC* VII (1957), 44-63; VIII (1958), 313-339; although there is, at the end of this installment the indication "(à suivre)", the article has not been completed, to the best of our knowledge. In the first installment the author summarizes in sixteen groups the points with which Chapter 101 deals:

"1. Origines; 2. Ancienne religion; 3. Mahomet; 4. Le Coran, livre révélé; 5. Description du Coran; 6. Dieu; 7. Le mal et le libre arbitre; 8. Le Christ; 9. Prophètes et personnages bibliques; 10. Paradis; 11. Mariage; 12. Témoins; 13. Autres prescriptions; 14. Culte; 15. Ce que les musulmans pensent des juifs et des chrétiens; 16. Comportement des musulmans dans une discussion".

Afterwards he gives for each of these units corresponding references from the Qur'ān, sometimes with very short comments. In a third section he states his conclusions from this study. We think that the above-mentioned grouping is inadequate. Section 7, e.g., is not an issue in Chapter 101. At this point "God does whatever He wants" is not used with the connotation of God being the source of good and evil neither of man's free will, but it is used in the framework of a discussion regarding the testimonies of the prophethood of Muhammad. Neither is group 9 a unit in itself, but an argument in the same discussion of the authenticity of Muhammad's prophethood. Khoury's arrangement does not show the emphasis upon the discussion of the person and of the prophetic mission of Muhammad, which, along with the discussion on Christ, is the major theme of Chapter 101.

In our discussion we will attempt to make a short analysis of each unit of the text as well as a critical discussion of the information that the text offers, in order to be able to assess the accuracy of John of Damascus' knowledge of Islam, his sources, emphases and his attitude toward this religion. In a way this remains a preliminary work, since the critical edition is not yet available. This new edition will provide the possibility to investigate the dependence upon the previous sources, the possible interpolations, variations of editions, their implications, etc. For a short discussion of Chapter 101, cf. J. Windrow Sweetman, *Islam and Christian Theology, A Study of the Interpretation of Theological Ideas in the two Religions*. Part I, vol. 1 (London: Lutterworth Press, 1945), pp. 65f.

1. "There is also the deceptive superstition of the Ishmaelites, prevailing until now . . ." (764A)

This opening sentence indicates clearly that other heresies have preceeded ("there is also . . ."), and it suggests, perhaps, that this chapter concludes a list of heresies¹ which, by this section, has been brought up to date ("which prevails until now . . .").

2. Islam is introduced as a "deceptive superstition of the Ishmaelites" and "forerunner of the Antichrist" (Cf., 764A)

a. The Greek text in Lequien's and Migne's editions reads *σκειλα*, which the Latin has translated as *superstitio*.² This word, however, cannot be identified in Greek. Voorhis has suggested that the word was taken as *σκιλα*³ which means, figuratively, "spiritual darkness" or "error" as in Matt. 4:16; Lk. 1:79; Jn. 1:5, and 8:12; I Jn. 1:5, and 2:8-11.⁴ The adjective *λαοπλάνος* (= leading men astray; deceptive) seems to favor this suggestion. This interpretation seems to find support from the text itself when, a few lines below, John of Damascus states explicitly that Muhammad "having conversed, *supposedly*, with an Arian monk, devised *his own heresy*".⁵

It is difficult to conclude from these statements that John of Damascus did not consider Islam as *another* religion, but as a "deceptive superstition" and a "heresy". There is much to be learned, first, about the meaning and the use of the terms, *religion*, *heresy* and *superstition*. The terminology, however, used by John of Damascus to describe Islam and especially the fact that he included it in his *De Haeresibus*, allows a wide range of consideration.

b. "Forerunner of the Antichrist": In the same year that the *Fount of Knowledge* was written (743) Peter, bishop of Maiuma, was sentenced to death because he condemned Islam publicly and he called Muhammad a "false prophet" and the "forerunner of the

¹ Cf. above, p. 59, n. 5.

² The version of Chapter 101 in Book XX of Acominatus' *Thesaurus* has completed the word from *σκελα* to *θηρησκελα* (= religion). The Latin translation of the text has translated *θηρησκελα* in one place as *superstitio* (cf. *De superstitio Agavenorum*, MPG, CXL, 105) and in another as *religio* (cf. *religio Agavenorum*, *Ibid.*, 106). The *Doctrina Patrum* has, also, *θηρησκελα* Cf. Diekamp, *Doctrina*, p. 270.

³ The Greek word is *σκιλα*.

⁴ Voorhis, *MW*, XXIV (1934), 392, n. 1.

⁵ "ὁμοίως δὴθεν Ἀρειανῶ προσομιλήσας μοναχῶ ἰδίαν συνεστήσατο αἵρεσιν" 765A; cf. also below, p. 73, n. 3.

Antichrist".¹ This expression, however, was not employed for the first time against only Islam and Muhammad. It had been used for Emperor Leo III,² his son Constantine V,³ the Patriarch of Constantinople John VII Grammaticos (836-842)⁴ and possibly for some other prominent political and religious leaders. This grave accusation was directed against those who were believed to lead men astray from the Orthodox faith, by "deceiving" the believers. Thus, in a special chapter "On the Antichrist" in the *De Fide Orthodoxa* John of Damascus considers as Antichrist not only Satan, but also any man "who does not confess that the Son of God came in flesh, is perfect God and He became perfect man while at the same time He was God".⁵ In accord with his definition John of Damascus applied this name to Nestorius, whom he called "Antichrist" as well as "son of Satan", for ascribing to Mary the name "Christotokos" instead of "Theotokos".⁶ It is obvious, therefore, that the epithet "forerunner of the Antichrist" was a condemnation of those who perverted the basic doctrines of the Church especially with regard to the divinity of Christ, and as such it was used against Islam.⁷

¹ Theophanes, *Chronographia ann.* 734, p. 642. Cf. below, p. 75.

² *Ibid.*, ann. 721, p. 627.

³ *Ibid.*, ann. 711, pp. 414f; Cedrenus, *Compendium*, MPG, CXXX, 868.

⁴ Symeon Magister, *Annales*, MPG, CIV, 668. All three cases stated above are related to Iconoclasm, and these three persons were leading Iconoclasts. It could be that the epithet "forerunner of the Antichrist" was extensively used by the iconolaters against their religious antagonists during the Iconoclastic Controversy. It must be noted here that Peter of Maiuma and John of Damascus were both iconolaters, and lived during this century.

⁵ MPG, XCIV, 1216A.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1032A. Cf. also Athanasius (295-373) calling Emperor Constantius "forerunner of the Antichrist" for supporting the Arians; MPG, XXV, 773, 777ff; also in the *Vita St. Antonii*, the great anchorite is reported calling the Arians "forerunners of the Antichrist"; MPG, XXVI, 941. It is very interesting that the term "Antichrist" (*al-Dajjal*) is found also in the early Muslim literature, apparently taken from Christian writers! The Antichrist is depicted with horrifying features, as being an unbeliever and not among the "submitted ones to God", i.e., a Muslim. Cf. Hishām Ibn al-Kalbi (d. A.D. 821), *Kitāb al-Asnām (The Book of Idols)*, tr. by Nabih Amin Faris, (Princeton University Press, 1952), pp. 50-51.

⁷ John of Damascus, unlike Peter of Maiuma, did not call Muhammad personally the "forerunner of the Antichrist", but applied it to the "religion" of the Ishmaelites, (764A). Nicetas of Byzantium called the Qurʾān "antitheos" and "Antichrist", MPG, CV, 717A. Cf. also, below, p. 77. The epithet "forerunner of the Antichrist" played a role in the formation of the Christian attitude toward Islam. John Meyendorff remarks that the relations between the Arab Muslims and the Greek Emperors "were shaped by

3. Chapter 101 gives three names to the Muslims: Ishmaelites, Hagarenes, and Saracenes. (Cf., 764A).

All three names are inter-related within themselves and with the Muslim heritage. The religion of Islam is, from the Muslim point of view, "the religion of Abraham and Ishmael"¹ the forefathers of the Muslims.² According to Ibn al-Kalbi, who conveys also the belief of his predecessors, Ishmael settled in Mecca where he became the father of many children who supplanted the Amalekites of Mecca; to him is ascribed the origin of the Arabs.³ The Qur'ān states that Abraham and Ishmael "raised the foundations of the House"⁴ and established a "proper worship".⁵ The rites of the pilgrimage, the circumambulation, the visitation of the lesser pilgrimage, the vigil of 'Arafāt, the sacrifice of the she-camels and the acclamation of the name of the deity "came down from the time of Abraham and Ishmael",⁶ according to Ibn al-Kalbi, and they constitute a part of the religion. Therefore, when John of Damascus calls Islam "the 'religion' of the Ishmaelites", he uses a name fully acceptable to the Muslims.

Chapter 101 calls also the Muslims *Hagarenes*, a name derived from Hagar, the mother of Ishmael. The expression "the sons of Hagar" referring to the Muslims is widely used by the later Byzantine authors.⁷

their respective religious ideologies, and each side interpreted the attitudes and actions of the other as motivated by religion. If the Qur'ān appealed to a holy war against 'those who ascribe partners to God'—i.e., Christians who believe in the Trinity—the Byzantine retaliated after the example of St. John of Damascus, by considering Islam as a 'forerunner of Antichrist' *DOP*, XVIII (1964), 115. Although this could be said as a generalization for the Byzantine Christians, one could not say that it was John of Damascus who gave this tone to the Christian attitude toward Islam. John of Damascus, on the contrary, preserved his dialogue with Islam within a theological framework, so that, to the Muslim accusation that the Christians are polytheists because they "ascribe partners to God", he retaliated with a theological, not emotional, counter-accusation that the Muslims are "mutilators" because "they disassociate God from His Word". Cf. below, pp. 82f.

¹ Ibn al-Kalbi, *Idols*, pp. 4ff. Cf. also, S. II, 135: "Nay, but (we follow) the religion of Abraham, the upright, and he was not of the idolaters".

² S. II, 133; al-Ṭabarī, *Chronique*, II, 356. Michael the Syrian calls Islam "la religion du sud" and the Muslims "les fils d'Ismael". *Chronique*, II, 413.

³ Ibn al-Kalbi, *Idols*, p. 4. al-Ṭabarī, *Chronique*, I, 161f.

⁴ S. II, 127.

⁵ S. XIV, 40; al-Ṭabarī, *Chronique*, I, 188f.

⁶ Ibn al-Kalbi, *Idols*, pp. 4f.

⁷ Cf. e.g., the author of the *Vita* of John of Damascus *MPG*, XCIV, 436; Zonaras, *Annales*, *MPG*, CXXXIV, 1332; Constantine Acropolite, *Sermo*,

For the etymology of the name "Saracen" Chapter 101 refers to the incident of Genesis 16:8, and in particular to the dialogue of Hagar with the angel: "I am fleeing from my mistress Sar'ai", which in a restatement reads "Sara has sent me away, empty".¹ John of Damascus, being perhaps aware of the arbitrariness of this explanation, states that this name is not his own invention, but that the Muslims "are called so".

4. They (the Ishmaelites) became idol worshippers—they worshipped the morning star, and Aphrodite, whom they called *Habar* (or *Haber*) in their language, which means great—and they remained as such until the time of Heraclius, when Muhammad appeared. (Cf., 764B)

John of Damascus speaks of a change in the religion of the Ishmaelites, from the religion of Ishmael to idolatry, which is in accord with the testimony of the Qur'an and Muslim writers. The pure religion of Abraham and Ishmael deteriorated with the introduction of images and alien practices in the worship.² Those who "departed from the religion of Ishmael" made idols, which they worshipped on different occasions.³ Ibn al-Kalbi states emphati-

MPG, CXL, 817. One cannot refrain from making the comment that, although these names are, possibly, cherished by the Muslims as indicative of their origin and of their adherence to the earliest monotheism, they were adopted by the Christian polemicists—not without a concealed sarcasm—in order to demonstrate that the Muslims are only Abraham's illegitimate children and false monotheists. The use of all these three names together is indicative of such a purpose in mind. The names *Ishmaelites* and *Saracens* are already mentioned by Epiphanius (d. 403) as referring to one and the same religious group, which practiced circumcision. Cf. *Panarion*, *MPG*, XLI, 469A.

¹ "... διὰ τὸ εἰρηθῆσαι ὑπὸ τῆς Ἄγαρ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ· Σάρρα κενὴν με ἀπέλυσεν", *MPG*, XCIV, 764A. Louis Cheikho, "L'origine du mot 'Sarasin'", *al-Machriq*, VII, 340, stated in *Table Décennales des articles parus dans la revue al-Machriq* 1898-1907. ([Beirut]: Imprimerie Catholique, 1910), p. 25. We were unable to locate this article. The name *Muslim* does not appear at all in Chapter 101; perhaps the other names were preferred not only because they were commonly known among the Christians, but also because they emphasize the links of this "heresy" with the Judeo-Christian tradition.

² Ibn al-Kalbi, *Idols*, p. 6.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 6. Here is an account that shows the process of this religious deterioration: "The reason which led them to the worship of images and stones was the following: no one left Mecca without carrying away with him a stone from the stones of the Sacred House (*al-Harram*) as a token of reverence to it, and as a sign of affection to Mecca. Wherever he settled he would circumambulate it in the same manner he used to circumambulate Ka'abah [before he departed from Mecca] . . . In time this led to the worship of whatever took their fancy, and caused them to forget their former worship". *Ibid.*, p. 4.

cally that "the Arabs were passionately fond of worshipping idols".¹ The veneration of the star and of Aphrodite to which John of Damascus refers is an aspect of this period of idolatry. In the statement "they worshipped the morning star *and* Aphrodite" we should, perhaps, see an allusion to the veneration of 'Athar, the principal stellar divinity of South Arabia in the pre-Islamic times, in its morning and evening position.²

John of Damascus' awareness of the idolatrous character of the pre-Islamic religion in Arabia leads him to a positive recognition of Muhammad as the person who brought his people back to monotheism. The author is, certainly, aware of the painful task that Muhammad had undertaken, as well as of the opposition to his mission, before he gained the favor of his people.³

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 28. For the religion in pre-Islamic Arabia, cf. A. Jamme, "La religion Arabe pré-islamique" in Maurice Brillant et René Aigrain, *Histoire des Religions*, IV (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1953), pp. 239-307; Hamilton A. R. Gibb, "Pre-Islamic Monotheism in Arabia", *HThR*, LV (1962), 269-280; W. E. N. Kensdale, *The Religious Beliefs and Practices of the Ancient South Arabians*. (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1955).

² This star was called with three epithets corresponding to its three stellar aspects: "morning" star (*shvqn*), "evening" star (*ghrbn*)—these two mark the two opposite aspects of Venus, which John of Damascus calls with its Greek name Aphrodite—and "dominating" or "elevated" star, which characterizes the star in its zenith. Jamme, in Brillant's *Histoire*, IV, 265; Khoury sees in the Qur'ān (S. LXXXVI, 1-3 and LIII, 1) an allusion to this morning and evening star. *POC*, VII (1957), 53.

³ He implies this situation, when he states—even though in a negative way: "Καὶ προφάσει τὸ δοκεῖν θεοσεβείας τὸ ἔθνος εἰσποισησάμενος . . . διαθρυλλεῖ" ("And when he had infused the favor of the people, he declared . . ."), 764A. This is how an early *hadīth* describes the attitude of the Muslims toward Muhammad's mission, in an address of Ja'far b. Abū Ṭālib to the Christian king of Abyssinia: "O King, we were an uncivilized people, worshipping idols, eating corpses, committing abominations, breaking natural ties, treating guests badly, and our strong devoured our weak. Thus we were until God sent us an apostle whose lineage, truth, trustworthiness, and clemency we know. He summoned us to acknowledge God's unity and to worship him and to renounce the stones and images which we and our fathers formerly worshipped. He commanded us to speak the truth, . . ." Alfred Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*. A translation of Ishāq's *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, Karachi, Pakistan: Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 151. Muhammad b. Ishāq lived between A.H. 85-151.

In the words of Ibn al-Kalbi: "When God sent His Prophet, who came preaching the Unity of God, and calling for His worship alone, without any associate, (the Arabs) said: 'Maketh he the god to be but one god? A strange thing forsooth is this'. They had in mind the idols". *Idols*, pp. 28f. Cf. also, S. XXXVIII, 6ff; LXIX, 33ff; and Régis Blachère, *Le Problème de Mahomet*. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1952), pp. 52ff; W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad, Prophet and Statesman*. (London: Oxford University

5. Muhammad, the founder of Islam, is a false prophet who, by chance, came across the Old and New Testament and who, also, pretended that he encountered an Arian monk and thus he devised his own heresy. (Cf., 765A)

Another codex gives a more explicit account of the sources of influence upon Muhammad: Jews, Christians, Arians and Nestorians.¹ From each one of these Muhammad acquired a particular teaching and thus he formed his own heresy: from the Jews absolute monotheism ("monarchy"), from the Arians, the affirmation that the Word and the Spirit are creatures and from the Nestorians anthropolatry,² obviously because of their teaching that Christ was simply a human being.

With the reference to the "Arian monk", John of Damascus alludes to a *hadith* about a Syrian monk, Baḥīrā, who had predicted the prophetic career of Muhammad.³ This tradition was, later, utilized by the Muslims as an answer to the challenge of the Christians that Muhammad was an "un-announced" and, thus, a false prophet.⁴ John of Damascus does not seem to know about this use of the tradition; he simply refers to this monk in order to identify the source and explain Muhammad's theology.⁵ The fact

Press, 1961), pp. 56ff; and Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca*. (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1960), pp. 100ff.

¹ Codex R. 2508, "ὅς περιτυχῶν Ἑβραίοις καὶ Χριστιανοῖς δῆθεν, καὶ Ἀρειανοῖς, καὶ Νεστοριανοῖς, πανταχόθεν ἐν ἀρυσάμενος, ἐξ Ἰουδαίων μὲν μοναρχίαν· ἐξ Ἀρειανῶν δὲ Λόγον καὶ Πνεῦμα κτιστά· ἀπὸ δὲ Νεστοριανῶν ἀνθρωπολατρείαν, καὶ ἐαυτῷ θεησκείαν περιποιεῖται . . .", *MPG*, XCIV, 765, (y); cf. also, *Contra Muhammad*, *Ibid.*, CIV, 1449A; and Acominatus, *Ibid.*, CXL, 105B; Cedrenus, *Compendium*, *Ibid.*, CXXI, 809C.

² This expression is used to indicate the Nestorian teaching. Nestorius is called by some writers "anthropolater". Cf. e.g., Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 406.

³ Tor Andrae, *Mohammed, the man and his faith*, tr. by Theophil Menzel (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), pp. 37f; Armand Abel, "Baḥīrā", *EIs* (New Ed. I, 1960), pp. 922f. Cf. above, p. 68, n. 5.

⁴ Cf. below, p. 79. This tradition secures the testimony of an advocate, "chosen at the heart of the most important scriptural religion", which Baḥīrā (Aram. = *the elect*) supposedly, represented. Abel, *EIs* (New Ed.) I, 1960, p. 922. Abel's reference to Djahiz's *Risālat f'īl-Radd 'ala'l-Nasara* (A.D. 851) is very important at this point, to show that "the Christians, of whom the passage in the Kur'an (V, 82) speaks with benevolence, are not members of the Byzantine Church, either Jacobite or Melchite, but, merely, those of the type of Baḥīrā . . .", *Ibid.*, p. 922.

⁵ The Muslim argument of Baḥīrā, being a product of the eighth century (*Ibid.*, p. 922), presupposes a Christian challenge. The earliest account of the tradition seems to be the one given by Muhammad b. Ishāq in the *Sirat*, pp. 79-81. Since John of Damascus seems unaware of the fact that the Mus-

that John of Damascus preferred to identify the monk as an Arian¹ reflects the initial impression that Islam made upon him, and it explains the content and the character of his refutation.

If the version which speaks more extensively of the sources that influenced Muhammad is the authentic one—an issue which cannot be decided until we have a critical edition of the text—it reveals that John of Damascus had a thorough knowledge of the Theology and the Christology of the Qur'ān. The belief that the Word and the Spirit of God are created, that Jesus was only a human being and, in all of this, an emphasis on an absolute "monarchy" are, indeed, the issues at stake in Islam which constitute what a Muslim and a Christian would consider as the most essential theological differences between the two.

6. Muhammad claims that a book was sent down to him from heaven. (Cf., 765A)

John of Damascus employs constantly the word $\gamma\rho\alpha\phi\acute{\eta}$ (scripture, book) in referring to the Qur'ān.² The Qur'ān itself uses the word *Kitāb* (Book) as a self-designation,³ as well as a name for all the revealed Scriptures.⁴ "Sending down" of the scripture to Muhammad is also an expression found in the Qur'ān.⁵ In contrast to John of Damascus, in the later Byzantine polemics we find the claim that Muhammad was an epileptic and that under this condition he

lims use this tradition as an answer to a Christian question, but he refers to it for a different purpose, it appears that we have here another internal indication of the earliest phase of Christian-Muslim dialogue, which chapter 100/101 represents. Abel's thesis, that the Chapter 101 is a text later than the time of John of Damascus, is once more questioned. Cf. above, pp. 61.

¹ 'Abd al-Māsīh b. Ishāq al-Kindī uses the name Sergius, and identifies him as a Nestorian. The Anonymous text in *MPG*, CIV, 1446, as Jacobite; Euthymius Zygabenus (*MPG*, CXXX, 1333) as Arian; Theophanes, *Chronographia ann.* 621, p. 513) and Cedrenus (*MPG*, CXXI, 809) do not identify him. Cf. Abel. *EIs* (New Ed.), 1960, 923. Cf. above, p. 26, n. 2.

² 765A; 768A. Once he speaks of $\sigma\upsilon\gamma\rho\alpha\phi\acute{\eta}$ (scripture) 765C. The word $\gamma\rho\alpha\phi\acute{\eta}$ is used also by him when referring to a Surah.

³ Cf. e.g., S. XIX, 16, 41, 51, 54; II, 2, etc. Other meanings of the word *Kitāb* are letter, document, or testimonial (XXVII, 28); book of decrees (XXXV, 11); the decree or decision of God (XXX, 56); the Record (XXXV, 11); the Heavenly Book, or Archetype (XIII, 39).

⁴ Richard Bell, *Introduction to the Qur'ān*. (Edinburgh: at the University Press, 1963), pp. 151f.

⁵ The phrase "to send down" is used frequently in the Qur'ān in connection with a revelation, e.g., more than 18 times in S. II, 4 (twice), 23, 41, 90 (twice), 97, 99, 159, 170, 174, 176, 185, 213, 231, 285. Cf. also, S. III, 23; IV, 105; V, 48; XVI, 64; XXVII, 6; LXXXVI, 23; and Khoury, *POC*, VII (1957), 55.

thought that he received revelations from God; or that it was Khadija who, in her effort to conceal and counter-act the misfortune of her marriage with Muhammad, as well as the illiteracy and the poor health of her husband, declared that he was a prophet of God.¹

7. He says that there is one God, creator of all, who is neither begotten, nor has begotten. (765A)

This statement is the precise content of S. CXII, *al-Tawhīd*, the proclamation of the unity of God, which is "the essence of the Qur'ān".² The fact that John of Damascus starts his discussion of the Qur'ānic doctrine with this point seems to indicate that he had, indeed, detected the core of the Qur'ānic message. The notion of the unity of God is emphasized in the Qur'ān positively as the basis of Muslim faith and, at the same time, as a challenge to the polytheists and to those who "ascribe partners" to God, that is, the Christians.³

In John of Damascus' own theology the doctrine of the oneness and uniqueness of God plays an important role and it is stressed throughout the *De Fide Orthodoxa*.⁴ He speaks there about God in similar terms as the Qur'ān, and with the same emphasis:

We believe in one God, one principle, without beginning, uncreated, *unbegotten*, indestructible and immortal, eternal, unlimited, un-circumscribed, unbounded, infinite in power, simple, uncompound, incorporeal, unchanging, unaffected, inalterate, invisible, source of goodness and justice, light intellectual and inaccessible . . . maker of all things visible and invisible . . .⁵

¹ Theophanes, *Chronographia ann.* 621, pp. 512ff; Abū Qurra, *MPG*, XCVII, 1548A; Bartholomeus *Confutatio Agareni*, *MPG*, CIV, 1388B-C; *Contra Muhammed*, *MPG*, CIV, 1449A-D; Cedrenus, *Compendium*, *MPG*, CXXI, 809A-B; Zygabenus, *Panoplia Dogmatica* *MPG*, CXXX, 1333B-C; Euthymius Monachus, *Disputatio de Fide*, *MPG*, CXXXI, 33D-36A; Zonaras, *Annales*, *MPG*, CXXXIV, 1285C. It is interesting that while the later Byzantine authors adopted the idea that Muhammad was epileptic, Acominatus—if we accept the first part of Book XX of the *Thesaurus* as authentic—is the only one who does not mention such a point. This makes it difficult for one to accept that Acominatus' text is authentic and that he remained uninfluenced in this matter by previous authors to whom, otherwise, he is very much indebted. Cf. above, pp. 28ff.

² Pickthall, *Koran*, p. 454; Cf. also, Blachère, *Le Coran*, pp. 670 f.

³ Cf. S. II, 133, 163; III, 18; XXXVII, 4; XXXVIII, 66; IX, 31; Cf. also, below, p. 81f.

⁴ Cf. lib. I, cap. V; "A demonstration that God is one and not many" *MPG*, XCIV, 800C-801C; references to the unity of the Godhead are scattered throughout the *De Fide Orthodoxa*, and especially in the first Book.

⁵ *MPG*, XCIV, 808B-C; Cf. Chase, *Saint John*, p. 176.

It is very interesting to notice that John of Damascus offers this list of attributes of God in a chapter under the title . . . "On the Holy Trinity"! ¹ That the unity of God is stressed in the context of a discussion on the Trinity must have been seen as a paradox by the Muslims. It is as if John of Damascus were convinced that Christian Theology has not placed the crucial question of "the Word of God" in the right perspective. For John of Damascus the issue at stake is not whether God is one or many; he simply assumes the former as *sine qua non*; the issue at stake is how God can be known. The question of Trinity, therefore, is for John of Damascus an answer to the question of the knowledge of God, who is:

The very source of being for all things that are. Knowing all things before they begin to be; one substance, one Godhead, one virtue, one will, one operation, one principality, one power, one domination, one kingdom; *known* in three perfect persons . . . united without confusion, and distinct without separation, which is beyond understanding.²

And, although John of Damascus speaks in terms of *Father*, *Son* and *Spirit*, he explains that:

We know one God, and Him in the properties of fatherhood, and sonship, and procession only. We perceive the difference in terms of cause and effect and perfection of subsistence, that is, in the manner of existence.³

The expression "nor has begotten" of the Qur'ān is, therefore, equally acceptable to John of Damascus, who speaks of fatherhood as a manner of existence of the same one substance, rather than in a physical sense.⁴

As for the notion of God as "creator of all", John of Damascus conveys rightly the Qur'ānic teaching.⁵ The emphasis at this point is upon the idea of God as the omnipotent creator of the world and of man, without an explicit or implicit reference to the question of predestination. It seems that John of Damascus is aware of these two notions ("creator of all" and "agent of all things") and of their

¹ *MPG*, XCIV, 808B-833A.

² *Ibid.*, 809A. The italicising is ours.

³ *Ibid.*, 829D. Cf. also, *Libellus Orthodoxiae*, in Gordillo, *OC*, VIII (1926), 86f.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 812B.

⁵ For Qur'ānic data on God as creator—particularly as creator of man—cf. Dirk Bakker, *Man in the Qur'ān* (Amsterdam, Drukkerij Holland N.V., 1965), pp. 1-28. Cf. also, e.g., S. LIX, 24; V, 17; II, 117; VI, 101, 102; III, 6; VII, 11; XIII, 16; LXIV, 3; Cf. Khoury, *POC*, VII (1957), 56f.

implications, but at this point he does not refer to the latter issue.

A last point, to which attention should be drawn, is the way in which John of Damascus on the one hand, and the later Byzantine polemicists on the other, convey the idea of Surah CXII, 2. The latter read the crucial word *Samad* as ὀλόσφαιρος (= all spherical) or ὀλόσφυρος (= round hammered compact).¹ Modern translations read "Allah le Seul",² or "God the Eternal",³ or "Allah the eternally besought of all",⁴ or "Allah is He on whom all depend".⁵ John of Damascus translates,⁶ "God, the Creator of all". The misunderstanding of Nicetas is not simply an oversight of one word, but actually the result of a biased attitude and a wrong interpretation of the Qur'ānic proclamation of Allah. Later Byzantines continued the tradition of Nicetas, from whom they borrowed the distorted translation of *samad*.⁷

¹ The idea, perhaps, came from Abū Qurra (c. 750-825) who knew Arabic and translated the word *سَمَدٌ* figuratively as 'σφύροπῆκτος' = "firmly hammered in", or "solid". *MPG*, XCVII, 1545C. About Abū Qurra, cf. below, p. 99, n. 4. Nicetas of Byzantium (842-912), either because of lack of original knowledge of the Arabic Qur'ān, or for polemic purposes, translated the same word *samad* as "all spherical" (*MPG*, CV, 705D-708A) and in another place as "hammered all around" (*Ibid.*, 784C-788B). Nicetas elaborated, also, that the Muslims understand God as a solid body, otherwise they would not give Him a spherical shape. God being, therefore, a material sphere, is unable to hear, or to see, or to comprehend, not even to act without the help of someone else. Cf. *Ibid.*, 708A. Nicetas of Byzantium, the Philosopher, wrote a *Refutation of the Book forged by Muhammad the Arab*, acting on the orders of the Byzantine Emperor Michael III, "The Drunk" (842-867). He called the Qur'ān "a rustic booklet" and "forged mythography" and Islam "a barbaric religion" *MPG*, CV, 709C. The *Refutation* is primarily a tool for the Emperor and for the Byzantine Christians to take political action against the Muslims. Cf. *Ibid.*, 672A. About Nicetas, cf. Khoury, *Théologiens*, I, pp. 110-162.

² Blachère, *Coran*, p. 671.

³ Edward Henry Palmer, *The Qur'ān*. vols. VI and IX of *The Sacred Books of the East*, ed. by Max Müller (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1900), II, p. 344.

⁴ Pickthall, *Koran*, p. 454.

⁵ Maulānā Muhammad 'Alī, *The Holy Qur'ān*. Arabic text, translation and commentary (Lahore: Aḥmadiyyah Anjuman Ishā'at Islām, 1951), p. 1219.

⁶ We believe that John of Damascus in 765A translates, indeed, and not simply interprets, or distorts the verse.

⁷ Cf. Zygabenus, *MPG*, CXXX, 1348B; Kantakuzenos, *Ibid.*, CLIV, 692; the *Ritual of Abjuration* in Edouard Montet, "Un rituel d'abjuration des Musulmans dans l'Église Grecque", *RHR*, LIII (1906), 155; (about the "Formula", cf. below, pp. 124); Wolfgang Eichner, "Die Nachrichten über den Islam bei den Byzantinern", *DIs*, XXIII (1936), 158f; Sweetman, *Islam*, pt. I, 2, 171.

8. The account of the Muslim understanding of Christ,¹ as it has been recorded by John of Damascus, is very interesting and, as such it shall be reproduced here:

He says that Christ is the Word of [from] God² and His Spirit,³ created,⁴ and a servant,⁵ born from Mary,⁶ the sister of Moses and Aaron⁷ without seed⁸ [i.e., without human father], because the Word of God entered Mary⁹ and she gave birth to Jesus, a prophet¹⁰ and a servant of God, and that the Jews, violating the law wanted to crucify him¹¹ and they seized him, but they crucified his shadow,¹² and Christ himself was not crucified, they say, nor did he die;¹³ God took him up to heaven unto Himself¹⁴ because He loved him. And he says that when he ascended into heaven God asked him, "Jesus, did you say that 'I am Son of God, and God'?" And Jesus answered "Be merciful to me, O Lord; you know that I did not say so, neither shall I boast that I am your servant, but men who have gone astray wrote that I said this thing, and they spoke lies against me, and they are in error".¹⁵ And God answered to him: "I know that you would not say this thing". (765A-C)

¹ For Qur'anic data on Christ, cf. Henri Michaud, *Jésus selon le Coran* (Neuchâtel: Éditions Delachaux et Niestlé, [1960]; Geoffrey Parrinder, *Jesus in the Qur'an*. (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1965); James Robson, *Christ in Islam*. (London: J. Murray, 1929); Samuel M. Zwemer. *The Moslem Christ. An Essay of the life, character, and teaching of Jesus Christ according to the Koran*. (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferris, 1912).

² S. (III, 39); III, 45; IV, 171; (II, 87) Cf. also, Thomas O'Shaughnessy, *The Koranic Concept of the Word of God* (Roma: Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1948). Acominatus, in the section referred to, has "Son of God", instead of "Word of God" (*MPG*, CXL, 105). This is a serious misunderstanding and an indication—if this reading is correct—that Acominatus did not have any real knowledge of the Qur'an. The Qur'an could never claim that Christ is the "Son of God". Acominatus' version repeats a Christian and not a Qur'anic doctrine as John of Damascus wants to present.

³ S. IV, 171. Cf. Thomas O'Shaughnessy, *The Development of the Meaning of Spirit in the Koran* (Roma: Pontificio Instituto Orientalium Studiorum, 1953).

⁴ S. III, 59.

⁵ S. IV, 172; XIX, 30, (93); XLIII, 59.

⁶ S. II, 87, 253; III, 45; IV, 157, 171; V, 46, 75, 110, 112, 114, 116; XIX, 34; XXXIII, 7; LVII, 27; LXI, 6, 14.

⁷ S. XIX, 28.

⁸ S. III, 47; XIX, 19-22; XXI, 91.

⁹ S. IV, 171, XIX, 17; XXI, 91; LXVI, 12.

¹⁰ S. III, 39, 79; IV, 171; V, 75; XIX, 30; XXXIII, 7.

¹¹ S. III, 54.

¹² S. IV, 157 and II, 73. A literal translation of the Greek would be: "and after they seized his shadow, they crucified this".

¹³ S. IV, 157.

¹⁴ S. III, 55; IV, 158.

¹⁵ S. V, 116; III, 55f; V, 17, 72; IV, 171; IX, 30, 31; XIX, 35, 90-93; XXXIX, 4; CXII, 3.

This passage is one of the most convincing evidences of the accuracy of John of Damascus' knowledge of the teaching and the wording of the Qur'ān! The references to the Qur'ān which we have given show that each of these points which John mentions has a Qur'ānic origin and that he transmits to the Christians a most accurate account of the Muslim point of view with regard, especially, to the most delicate topic in a Muslim-Christian dialogue.

9. At the beginning of the Chapter John of Damascus had called Muhammad a "false prophet" (764B). After the discussion on Christ the next major issue under consideration is the authenticity of the prophethood of Muhammad. This discussion reveals that the author is reproducing here some of the most important points which emerged in actual conversations between himself, or other Christians, and Muslims. The subject of the prophethood of Muhammad is introduced by two questions. From the answers to these questions the author expects, obviously, to justify the thesis that Muhammad is a false prophet:

Who is the one who gives witness that God gave him a book? Who of the prophets foretold that such a prophet would arise? (765C)

In connection with the first question the author mentions the example of Moses, who received the Law while his people were looking at the smoking mountain.¹ The answers that he receives are, first, that "God does whatever He wills"² and then a more specific one, that "while he [Muhammad] was asleep the scripture came down on him".³ Perhaps this last answer, as it is recorded by John of Damascus, refers implicitly to Surah XCVII (*lā'ilat al-qadr* = the night of power). This Surah—one of the earliest in the Qur'ān—speaks of that night of Ramadan during which "The angels and the Spirit (Gabriel) descend therein, by the permission of their Lord, with all decrees".⁴ This Surah, however, does not convey any information that Muhammad received the Qur'ān while he was asleep. The answer that the Muslim gives is, rather, a reference to a tradition which Ibn Ishāq recorded later in the *Sīrat*: "... Gabriel brought him the command of God. 'He came to me' said the Apostle of God, 'while I was asleep, with a coverlet of brocade, whereon was

¹ Ex. 19, 9, 16-19; cf. also, above, pp. 73f..

² 765D. This statement became a major issue in the discussion on pre-destination to which we shall refer below, pp. 102ff.

³ 768A.

⁴ S. XCVII, 4; Pickthall, *Koran*, p. 446; Bell, *Introduction*, p. 37.

some writing, and said: "Read"! . . ."¹ The Christian challenges further the Muslim for having accepted a scripture without witnesses who could testify as to where this came from and how; while, according to the Christian of the conversation, his opponent's scripture does not permit one either to get married, or to buy, or take anything without witnesses. Indeed, the Qur'ān prescribes witnesses for different cases, as for debt, marriage, proof of the infidelity of one's wife, death of someone who leaves heirs, and for receiving back one's wife.²

In connection with the second question John of Damascus refers to Moses and the prophets after him, who foretold the advent of Christ. This argument caused an immediate reaction on the part of the Muslims, who during the following generations tried to meet this challenge by presenting long lists of Old and New Testament passages as prophecies of the coming of Muhammad.³

It seems that John of Damascus does not know yet of such a reaction on the part of the Muslims. When he asks the Muslim directly "And who of the prophets foretold that such a prophet would arise?" he has to offer him some examples of what he means

¹ Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrat*, p. 106.

² S. II, 282f; IV, 6, 15, 41; V, 106f; XXIV, 4ff, 13; LXV, 2.

³ Cf. al-Ṭabarī, *The Book of Religion and Empire*, tr. by Alphonse Mingana (Manchester: at the University Press, 1922). Al-Ṭabarī (839-923) takes a favorable position toward the Christian Scriptures. He accepts them as authentic and reliable, and finds evidences in them of the coming of Muhammad. Ibn Ḥazm (994-1064) rejected totally the Christian Scriptures as having been entirely corrupted and falsified by the Christians. Therefore, for him such an effort is vain and meaningless. He mentions only three passages which he understands as prophecies to the advent of Muhammad (Deut. 18:18; 33:2; and Daniel 2:29). Cf. Myrta Rivera, "Ibn Ḥazm on Christianity: the polemics of an eleventh century European Muslim". M. A. Thesis, Hartford Seminary Foundation, 1968, pp. 77ff, and Appendices I, IV, V, VI. (About Ibn Ḥazm, cf. Erdman Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum im Mittelalter, Beiträge zur Geschichte der muslimischen Polemik gegen das Christentum in arabischer Sprache*. Breslau: Verlag Müller & Seiffert, 1930, pp. 15ff.). Ibn Taimiyya (d. 1328)—as in a third stage—took a more moderate position, and, although he considered the Bible as corrupted, not deliberately however, he found valid prophecies of Muhammad in it. (About Ibn Taimiyya, cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 25-33). On the same subject, cf. also the following studies: Karl Brockelmann, "Muhammedanische Weissagungen im Alten Testament" *ZAW*, XV (1895), 135-142; M. Schreiner, "Zur Geschichte der Polemik zwischen Juden und Muhammedanern", *ZDMG*, XLII (1888), 600-601, 626-628; Ignaz Goldziher, "Über Muhammedanische Polemik gegen Ahl al-Kitāb", *ZDMG* XXXII (1878), 372-379; cf. also, G. D. Pearson, *Index Islamicus*, 1905-1955. (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Son, Ltd., 1958) nos. 1673, 1678, 1683, 1698.

by this (i.e., by previous witnesses from the prophets), because "they were wondering what he was talking about".¹ This is another indication that Chapter 101 belongs to an earlier period than the ninth century, the time when Muslims started to use biblical texts in defense of the prophethood of Muhammad. It is shortly after John of Damascus' direct provocation, expressed in the second question mentioned above, that such an effort begins and that such lists were compiled with an emphasis on texts from the Prophets of the Old Testament.²

10. The Muslims accuse the Christians of being "Associators", for ascribing a partner to God, by calling Christ "Son of God" and "God". The Christians, in turn, accuse the Muslims of being "Mutilators", by having disassociated God from His Word and Spirit. (Cf., 768B-D)

The accusation of the Muslims is based upon the affirmation of the Qur'ān that God has no son.³ The expression "to ascribe partners unto Allah" (Pickthall, Blachère), or "to associate [others]

¹ 765C. "Καὶ τίς τῶν προφητῶν προεῖπεν ὅτι τοιοῦτος ἀνίσταται προφήτης; καὶ διαπορούντων αὐτῶν, ὡς ὁ Μωϋσῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ . . .". Voorhis and Chase have both translated this phrase more emphatically, although not accurately, as: "they are quite at a loss" [Voorhis, *MW*, XXIV (1934), 393] or "they are at a loss" (Chase, *Saint John*, p. 154).

² Already in the dialogue between the Nestorian Patriarch Timothy (780-823) and Caliph al-Mahdī (775-785), the Caliph claims that both the Old and the New Testament bear witness to Muhammad. For the Syriac text of this dialogue, with an English translation, cf. Alphonse Mingana, "The Apology of Timothy, the Patriarch, before the Caliph Mahdī" *BJRL*, XII (1928), 137-298; cf. also, L. E. Browne, "The Patriarch Timothy and the Caliph al-Mahdī". *MW*, XXI (1931), 38-45. In Appendix VI of Rivera's thesis appears a list of texts from the Old and the New Testament, used by al-Ṭabarī as prophecies of the coming of Muhammad. This list has been compiled by Professor Willem A. Bijlefeld. It presents the following interesting statistics: of the sixty one references listed, 54 are from the Old Testament, and only 7 from the New Testament. Of those 54 from the Old Testament, 40 are from the Prophets (Isaiah 26, Hosea 1, Micah 1, Hab. 1, Zeph. 1, Zach. 1, Jer. 4, Ezek. 1, Daniel 4) and only 14 from: Genesis (5), Deut. (3), and Psalms (6). Cf. S. III, 81, and LXI, 6 which are used by Muslims as Qur'ānic testimonies of the coming of Muhammad. The latter reference is to Jesus himself "bringing good tidings of a messenger who cometh after him (me), whose name is the Praised One" (*Aḥmad*). The verse might remind the Christians of John, 14:16 but the name Aḥmad is an undisputed identification of the name of Muhammad, for the Muslims! Cf. Blachère, *Le Coran*, pp. 593f.

³ S. XIX, 88-93; XVIII, 103; cf. also, II, 116; XIX, 35; XXXIX, 3-4; CXII, 3; and above, p. 78, n. 15.

with Allah" ('Ali) occurs frequently in the Qur'ān¹ and it refers not only to the "pagan" polytheists and the Jews,² but also to the Christians who call Christ "Son of God". John of Damascus has a correct knowledge of this Qur'ānic notion and he is well aware of the meaning that the Muslims ascribe to this issue.³

John of Damascus replies by calling the attention of the Muslims to the testimony of the prophets whom, as he knows, the Muslims also accept. Indeed the Qur'ān calls to belief in all prophets.⁴ John of Damascus' representation of the Muslim position, at this point, is accurate. He shows also that he is aware of the Muslim criticism that the Christians have altered the books of the prophets, while the Jews have misled the Christians by concealing such prophecies (768C). These are, precisely, criticisms from the Qur'ān against the Christians.⁵

John of Damascus turns the accusation "associators" into a counter attack and he rebukes the Muslims for being "Mutilators" (Κόπτασι), for having alienated God from His Word and His Spirit.⁶ This, he claims, is untenable for:

¹ S. IV, 48, 116; V, 72; XXVIII, 68; XXX, 35. The verb employed in the Arabic text is شَرِكَ (= to be a partner, to associate with) from which the words شُرْكٌ (polytheism) and مُشْرِكٌ (polytheist) derive.

² S. IX, 30.

³ Abel's argument that the name *Mushrikuna* was not employed to indicate the Christians, before the ninth century, cannot be considered as valid because this is not a term invented by the Muslims at a later time, but is found in the Qur'ān itself (e.g., S. V, 72); Abel, *SEIs*, XIX (1963), 11f.

⁴ S. IV, 150-1; cf. also, IV, 164; VI, 90; XII, 110; XIII, 7; XVI, 36, 43, 44; XXII, 75; XXXV, 24; XL, 51, 78; LXXII, 27, 28. Throughout the Meccan period there is an affirmation of the validity of the teaching of the earlier scriptures, as well as of the idea that the scriptures of the Jews and Christians have derived from the same archetype—the Heavenly Book. Therefore, the Qur'ān confirms what was revealed previously; S. III, 81; VI, 92; XXXV, 31; XLVI, 30. A period of criticism of these scriptures, however, starts with the Medinan Surahs. Cf. F. Buhl, "al-Kur'ān", *SEIs*, pp. 275f.

⁵ S. XIX, 58-9; also II, 146; III, 71. These criticisms refer to the notion of *tahrif* (corruption) of the scriptures of the Christians and it is found especially in the Medinan Surahs. In the Qur'ān it is expressed in different terms to indicate the kind of corruption implied, as, e.g., malicious corruption (II, 75; III, 78; IV, 46; V, 13, 41), falsification (II, 79), exchange of words (II, 59; VII, 17), alteration (III, 78); concealing or suppressing the content (II, 146, 159, 174; III, 71; VI, 92), etc. F. Buhl, "Tahrif", *SEIs*, pp. 560f. Cf. also above, p. 80, n. 3.

⁶ Cf. above, p. 78, n. 2, 3, 4.

The Word and the Spirit are inseparable from that in which [or, in whom] they have been by nature. Therefore, if His Word is in God, it is obvious that He is God. But if He is outside of God then, according to you [Muslims], God is without reason and without Spirit . . . and you treat Him like wood, or a stone, or some irrational thing. (768C-D)

One may see in this dialectic accusation and counter accusation reflections of a fervent dialogue which was taking place in the eighth century between the Muslims and the Christians on the nature of God and His attributes.¹ From John of Damascus' criticism it is obvious that he is responding to the orthodox Muslim theology, which later would be criticized by other Muslims as setting God's names and qualities apart from His essence, as components of Deity. John of Damascus' theology seems to anticipate the Mu'tazilite position, according to which the attributes of God are not entities in themselves but are of the nature of God and constitute His essence.² John of Damascus, without stripping God of names and qualities, stresses that these are of His essence, although they do not describe His essence.³ With his apophatic

¹ Cf. Duncan Black Macdonald, *Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence, and Constitutional Theory*. (Lahore: The Premier Book House, repr. 1964), p. 132.

² The Mu'tazilite theology, with its emphasis upon the absolute unity of God (*tawhīd*) could not tolerate other entities being eternal, apart from the divine essence itself. Therefore, it "deprived" God of His attributes in the sense that it understood them to be His essence itself. Cf. Henri Corbin, *Histoire de la philosophie islamique*. (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1964), pp. 166f. According to the Mu'tazilites, God is knowing, rather than He has knowledge; or: God knows not by His knowledge, but by His essence. In a more definite Mu'tazilite form of the Basra school, the attributes are not *in* God's essence but they *are* His essence. (Abū-'l Hudhayl Muhammad al-Allaf, d. ca. 841). Cf. Macdonald, *Theology*, p. 136. Cf. also, Arthur Stanley Tritton, *Muslim Theology*. (Bristol: Luzac and Co., 1947), pp. 56f, 79. Al-Ash'arī took, actually, a middle position and, while he accepted that God has attributes which as such are a positive reality, he stressed that they have neither existence nor reality apart from God's essence. Corbin, *Philosophie*, p. 166. Cf. also Michel Allard, *Le problème des attributs divins dans la doctrine d'al-As'arī et de ses premiers grands disciples*. (Beyrouth: Éditions de l'Imprimerie Catholique, [1965]); A. H. Wolfson, "The Muslim attributes and the Christian Trinity", *HTHR*, XLIX (1956), 1-18.

³ Cf. e.g., "The uncreated, the unoriginated, the immortal, the boundless, the eternal, the immaterial, the good, the creative, the just . . . all these and the like are possessed by His nature . . . it is His nature that communicates all good to His own creatures. *MPG*, XCIV, 860A-B. "The Godhead is simple and uncompounded . . . therefore one should not think that any of these qualities ascribed to God is indicative of what He is in essence, but they show either what He is not, or some relation to something that is contrasted with

theology he avoided anthropomorphism (*tashbih*) into which Orthodox Islam was eventually led,¹ while he preserved the attributes of God along with His unity, avoiding agnosticism (*ta'til*), into which the Mu'tazilites fell.²

Chapter 101 shows clearly that John of Damascus is well aware of the theological schools arising among the Muslims and that he, perhaps, became involved in those early discussions and stimulated them with his theology.³

11. The Muslims accuse the Christians also of idolatry, because they venerate the cross; and the Christians return the accusation to the Muslims, because they venerate the Ka'ba. (Cf., 768D-769B)

There is no reference in the Qur'an in which the Christians are accused of being idolaters because of their respect for, and veneration of, the cross.⁴ This Christian symbol is, however, indirectly rejected by the Qur'an and despised by the Muslims. The Qur'an denies that Jesus was crucified on the cross,⁵ an idea related to the notion that, in spite of persecution, the Apostles of God ultimately

Him, or something that is consequential to His nature or action." *Ibid.*, 833-836A. Cf. also, above, p. 75.

¹ Corbin, *Philosophie*, p. 166.

² *Ibid.*, p. 166. For John of Damascus "One who would like to define the essence of something must say what it is, and not what it is not. However, with regard to God, it is impossible to say what He is in His essence, but it is more proper to make reference (to Him) by abstraction from all things whatsoever, because He is not any of those that exist; not that He does not exist, but because He transcends all beings, and He is even beyond being itself". *MPG*, XCIV, 800B-C.

³ Abel uses this passage under discussion (10) as an indication of an author who was influenced by the Mu'tazilite theology, which developed after John of Damascus. Therefore, he insists, Chapter 101 is of a later author. *SIs*, XIX (1963), 12. It has just been shown, however, that John of Damascus had "his own" theology, which he has expressed explicitly in the *De Fide Orthodoxa*. Perhaps the opposite could be said, that the challenge of John of Damascus raised a stronger interest among the Mu'tazilites, offered them additional arguments and had an influence upon their theology, rather than the opposite.

⁴ The Christians are accused as people "who ascribe partners to God" (*mushrikūn*), i.e., as polytheists (Cf. above, p. 181, n. 3, p. 182, n. 1) and, possibly, once or twice as "unbelievers" (*kāfirūn*). Cf. Josef Horowitz, *Koranische Untersuchungen* (Berlin und Leipzig; Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1926), pp. 59ff. Mostly the Christians are distinguished from the unbelievers—along with the Jews—as the "people of the Book" (*ahl al-kitāb*). S. II, 105, 111f, 121, 145; III, 23, 64ff, 98f, 110f, 186f, 199; IV, 44f, 123, 153ff, 171; V, 5, 15, 19ff, 59, 65, 68, 77; XXIX, 46; XXXII, 26f; LVII, 29; XCVIII, 1ff.

⁵ Cf. above, p. 78, n. 11, 12, 13, 14.

triumph.¹ The Jews crucified only the "resemblance" or "similitude" of Jesus; they thought that they nailed him to the cross, but they did not. In the Ḥadīth literature it is even stated that Jesus himself will appear as *ḥakam* or *imām* and will destroy the cross.² Thus, that which the Christians venerate as the symbol "through which the power of the demons and the deceit of the devil has been demolished" (769B) is, actually, considered by the Muslims as a gross insult against God and disbelief in God's messengers.³ When, therefore, John of Damascus says that the Muslims "despise the cross" he conveys exactly their feelings and ideas. Not only the veneration of the cross, but also that of any representation or image was despised by the Muslims.⁴ As we have already discussed earlier, the policy of Yazīd II (720-724) may have had an impact upon the development of the Christian iconoclasm, which erupted only a few years later (726 or 730).⁵ Yazīd's predecessor, 'Umar II

¹ S. XIV, 13-20; XL, 51. Cf. Willem Abraham Bijlefeld, "A Prophet and more than a Prophet? Some observations on the Qur'anic use of the words 'prophet' and 'apostle'", *MW*, LIX (1969), 22f, especially, n. 97.

² For references to al-Bukhārī, Muslim and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, on this tradition, cf. Arent Jan Wensinck, *A Handbook of Early Muhammadan tradition, alphabetically arranged*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1927), p. 113.

³ S. IV, 154.

⁴ Cf. Vasiliev, *DOP*, IX-X (1955-1956), 25, for reference to the Muslim attitude towards the icons. Ibn al-Kalbi attributes to the introduction of the images the deterioration of the early pure religion of the Arabs, "the religion of Abraham and Ishmael". (*Idols*, p. 6; cf. above, p. 71, n. 3); this must have been a general feeling among the Muslims. Reuben Levy, *The Social Structure of Islam* (Cambridge: at the University Press, 1965), pp. 252f.

⁵ Cf. above, pp. 9. Before Yazīd II, Theophanes records, under the year 635, an incident with 'Umar I: When 'Umar was building the temple in Jerusalem the building could not stand, but kept falling. When 'Umar inquired as to the reason the Jews told him that unless he would take away the cross from the hill of the olive trees, this building would not stay erected. Theophanes adds that, indeed, the cross was taken away, and after that "those who hate Christ" pulled down many crosses. Theophanes, *Chronographia ann.* 635, p. 524. It is not clear from this text whether the words "those who hate Christ" refer to the Jews or to the Muslims. What is clear is that 'Umar ordered the taking away of, at least, the cross to which the Jews drew his attention. The temple that this story refers to is, obviously, the Dome of the Rock, often erroneously called the "Mosque of 'Umar", which was erected by 'Abd al-Malik in 691. Nevertheless, 'Umar had already started in 638 building a temple during his visit to Jerusalem. (Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, p. 425). Cf. Hitti, *Arabs*, pp. 220, 264. Michael the Syrian mentions that 'Abd al-Malik also, in the year 695, ordered that the crosses be pulled down and the swine be slaughtered. *Chronique*, II, 475. Theophanes refers only to the slaughtering of the swine. *Chronographia ann.* 686, p. 561.

(717-720) had questioned Leo III regarding the validity of the Christian veneration of the cross and of the icons,¹ which shows that the Muslims had early objections to it. It was, rather, the tolerance of some caliphs (e.g., 'Abd al-Malik, for his friend Akhṭal) that permitted a few Arab Christians to appear in public with a silver cross hanging around their necks, than the tolerance of the public itself.²

Because the Muslims accuse the Christians of idolatry for venerating the cross John of Damascus challenges, in turn, their veneration of the Ka'ba. In this context John of Damascus wants to inform his reader about the religious practices of the Muslims connected with the Ka'ba. Chapter 101 contains the following information on this point:³

- a. There is a stone which the Muslims embrace and kiss in their Χαβαθάν⁴ (*Habathan* or *Chabathan*).
- b. This—which they call "stone"—is a head of Aphrodite, whom they used to venerate, and whom they used to call [address] Χαβέρ (*Haber*, or *Chaber*).⁵
- c. Upon this stone, even to this day, traces of an engraved image are visible, for those who know about it.

We have to refer here once more to the remark of Chapter 101 which we have discussed already:

¹ Arthur Jeffery, "Ghevond's Text of the Correspondence between 'Omar II and Leo III", *HThR*, XXXVII (1944), 322.

² Cf. Lammens, *Ommayyades*, p. 212, and above, p. 25.

³ We have to relate these data in more detail because some modern scholars have based their critical conclusions as to John of Damascus' knowledge of Islam on this description.

⁴ ". . . ὑμεῖς λίθῳ προστρίβεσθε κατὰ τὴν Χαβαθάν ὑμῶν καὶ φιλεῖτε τὸν λίθον ἀσπαζόμενοι" 769A. Chase's translation of προστρίβεσθε as "you rub yourselves against . . ." is too literal. The meaning of this statement is that "in your *Chabathan*, you embrace the stone, and you kiss it fervently". It is interesting that the version in Acominatus' text omits the word ἀσπαζόμενοι and, instead, it has ἄσμενοι (= with joy, or with passion, or pleasure). Lequien and Migne indicate that there are also two other forms for Χαβαθάν in other codices, Βαχθάν and Χαβοθάν (Lequien, *Opera*, I, 113; *MPG*, XCIV, 769) which, along with that in the version of Acominatus (Γαβαθάν), are evidently closely related.

⁵ "Οὗτος δέ, ὃν φασὶ λίθον, κεφαλὴ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ἐστὶν ἣν προσεκύνουν, ἣν Χαβέρ προσηγόρευον". Voorhis' translation changes the past tense of the verbs into the present, and this change of tenses causes misunderstanding. John of Damascus refers here to the pre-Islamic religion of the Ishmaelites, and not to the Muslim practice. Cf. above, pp. 70ff.

- d. They venerated the morning star and Aphrodite, whom (Aphrodite) they called in their language Χαβάρ (Habar, or Chabar), which means "great". (764B)

From this discussion it becomes obvious that John of Damascus is referring to two different, but related, subjects: the description of the sanctuary, and the description of the ritual.

From an earlier description, which speaks explicitly of an address and a supplication to the stone¹ and from the statement of John of Damascus that *Habar* "means *great* in their language" we must assume that under the expression *Habar* may be a reference to the exclamation *Allahu akbar* (= *The God is the most great*).² Germanus' description might leave some doubt as to whether this author confused *Hobar* with the stone itself, although the two phrases "address to the lifeless stone" and "invocation of the so-called Hobar" do not allow a justification of this interpretation.³ In John of Damascus' account, however, there is no ambiguity whatsoever. In the first passage quoted above John of Damascus makes a clear distinction between *Habathan* and a "stone", referring with the former to the sanctuary of the Ka'ba. In the second point (b) he states the name λίθος (= "Stone"—most likely the

¹ Germanus of Constantinople (715-730) in his letter (724) to Thomas of Claudiopolis, an iconoclast bishop in Asia Minor (cf. above, p. 10, n. 6a.), points out that the iconoclasts imitate the Jews and the Muslims in their campaign against the icons, and he condemns the religious practices and symbols which they both use. Speaking about the Muslims he relates that even to this day they address themselves to a "lifeless stone" and they practice the so called invocation of *Hobar* ("τὴν μέγρι τοῦ νῦν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ τελουμένην παρ' αὐτῶν λίθῳ ἀψύχῳ προσφωνήσιν τὴν τε τοῦ λεγομένου Χαβάρ ἐπίκλησιν"). The letter has been preserved in the Acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council; Mansi, *Collectio*, XIII, 109E.

² Ibn al-Kalbi informs us that circumambulation of the "House" and also "raising the voice in the acclamation of the name of the deity (*tahlīl*)" existed as practices in the pre-Islamic worship. *Idols*, p. 4f. We do not know whether the pre-Islamic acclamation was, indeed, "*Allahu akbar*". John of Damascus seems to connect here the pre-Islamic practice with the, certainly, Islamic acclamation.

³ In the sentence "τὴν τε τοῦ λεγομένου Χαβάρ ἐπίκλησιν" the masculine passive participle τοῦ λεγομένου—unless it is mis-copied—can imply either the word stone, or, perhaps, the word Allah. If it implies the stone, the sentence says that the stone was called Hobar. It is possible for one—especially for an outsider—to identify the content of an invocation with the object to which it is addressed, i.e., to think that what the invocation contains is the name of the object of the cult. It is possible, also, that under the participle τοῦ λεγομένου (masculine) the name of God may be implied, and in this case, the sentence of Germanus says that Allah was called *Hobar* (great).

Black Stone) that was given to the stone, the head of Aphrodite, on which traces of an engraved image can be seen.

This information of John of Damascus confirms the theory that the pre-Islamic cult of Ka'ba was syncretistic, and that it had embraced elements of heathen worship and of astral symbolism.¹ Even more specifically, traces of the Semitic Venus (Gr. Aphrodite) could be identified during the time of Muhammad's life.²

The very faint traces of an image on the stone which John of Damascus mentions point out, perhaps, to the consecutive destructions and demolitions which the Ka'ba as a whole and the Black Stone itself had suffered in the past, as well as the wearing smooth of the stone by rubbing and kissing³ which, as John of Damascus describes it, was extremely passionate.⁴

On the basis of what has been said so far we think that, the conclusion that "John of Damascus identifies $\chi\alpha\beta\acute{\alpha}\rho$ or $\chi\alpha\beta\acute{\epsilon}\rho$ with both Aphrodite herself and with the Ka'ba which according to him represents the head of the pagan goddess",⁵ is inaccurate. Furthermore, it seems to us unjustifiable to state that,

The example of the passage on Aphrodite proves that John of Damascus did not add anything substantial to the information on Islam already available to the Byzantines of his time, and that he merely made use of an accepted argument which conveniently confirmed the Byzantine belief that the Arabs were devoted to lechery.⁶

This passage on the Ka'ba proves, rather, the opposite: that John of Damascus is more accurate and explicit than his predecessors and that he has a remarkable knowledge of its cult; and, most important, that this passage stresses that the Arabs before Muhammad were idolaters, rather than it accuses the Muslims of being devoted to lechery. What is called here "lechery" is, actually, a reference to Abraham with two clearly discernible subjects: the

¹ Arent Jan Wensinck, "Ka'ba" *SEIs*, p. 198.

² Wensinck states that "The dove of aloes wood which Muhammad found in the Ka'ba may have been devoted to the Semitic Venus". *Ibid.* p. 198. Cf. also, this tradition in Ibn Mādja, Wensinck, *Handbook*, p. 120.

³ Wensinck, *SEIs*, p. 192.

⁴ "Πῶς οὖν ὑμεῖς λίθῳ προστριβεσθε . . . καὶ φιλεῖτε τὸν λίθον ἀσπαζόμενοι", 769A.

⁵ Meyendorff, *DOP*, XVIII (1964), 119. Vasiliev also states that "John of Damascus . . . refers to the Kaaba as $\chi\alpha\beta\alpha\theta\acute{\omega}$ or Khaber". *DOP*, IX-X (1955-1956), 27.

⁶ Meyendorff, *DOP*, XVII (1964), 119.

history of the pre-Islamic Ka'ba cult and the Muslim attitude toward the sanctuary. When John of Damascus questions the Muslims as to why they venerate the Ka'ba, he says that some of them reply that it is "because Abraham had sexual intercourse with Hagar on it" and others "because Abraham tied there his camel when he was about to sacrifice Isaac". (769A) ¹

There is no Qur'ānic reference which can support these interpretations. By referring to Abraham both explanations tend rather to stress that the origin of Islam goes back to Abraham and to relate the foundation of the Ka'ba to him, affirmations which are clearly Qur'ānic.² John of Damascus uses the two Muslim interpretations not in order to underline any scandal or lechery, but to criticize the Muslims for their inconsistency when they accuse the Christians of idolatry:

Let us assume that it (the stone) is of Abraham, as you foolishly maintain. Then, just because he had intercourse with a woman on it, or he tied a camel to it, you are not ashamed to kiss it, *yet you blame us* because we venerate the cross . . . ? (769A-B)

12. John of Damascus refers to the Qur'ān in two places. In the first one, at the beginning of the Chapter, he spoke of "some doctrines" (lit. constitutions) which Muhammad inscribed in his book, and which "he entrusted to his followers to adhere to".³ At this point he is dealing more extensively with some of the Surahs of the Qur'ān, which he describes as "preposterous" or "ridiculous" and "foolish".⁴

Regarding the Surahs—or as he calls them, "scriptures"—he gives the information that each bears a *προσηγορία* (title). No agreement has been reached on the question when the 114 Surahs in the Qur'ān received the names under which they are known.⁵ John of Damascus' text shows that in the first half of the eighth century some Surahs were, already, referred to by specific names.⁶

¹ John of Damascus challenges this last explanation on the ground of the Biblical information, (Genesis, 22:1-14) that there were trees on the hill of sacrifice and, on the other hand, that the ass remained with the two young men accompanying Abraham. (Cf. 769A).

² S. II, 127; XIV, 40; cf. above, pp. 69f.

³ 765A; cf. above, pp. 74f.

⁴ "Ὁὗτος ὁ Μάμεδ πολλάς . . . ληρωδίας συντάξας . . ." 769B.

⁵ The word *Surah* is used in the Qur'ān with a variety of meanings, such as "row", "chapter", "piece", "section", "writing", "discourses", "text of scripture", "scripture", "revelation"; Buhl, "Sūra", *SEIs*, pp. 553, and 281. Cf. also Bell, *Introduction*, p. 52.

⁶ Buhl, "al-Ḳur'ān", *SEIs*, p. 282; Bell, *Introduction*, pp. 52ff.

He gives the names of the four Surahs which he selected for discussion and with which we will deal briefly in the following pages.

(1) Surah IV: *The Women (al-Nisā)*

Surah IV, which contains 177 verses (*ayat*), is discussed by John of Damascus in 25 lines, and the discussion is concentrated on one subject only, the legislation concerning marriage and divorce. The points that John of Damascus mentions here are the following:

(a) Marriage:

He, (Muhammad) permits by law that one may, openly, take four wives and concubines, if he can, one thousand, that is as many as his hand can maintain, besides the four wives. (Cf., 769C)

This, obviously, is S. IV, 3, which reads:

And if ye fear that ye will not deal fairly by the orphans ('Alī = that you cannot do justice to orphans), marry of the women, who seem good to you, two or three or four; and if ye fear that ye cannot do justice, then [marry] one of [the captives] that your right hand possesses. Thus it is more likely that ye will not do injustice.¹

It is apparent that although these two texts show a striking similarity in their content, they differ considerably in their emphasis and intentions. John of Damascus' text seems to ignore the original emphasis and purpose of this legislation—namely to secure protection and justice for the orphans of the battle of Uḥūd (23rd. of March, 625)²—and to underline one-sidedly polygamy, which the author is interested in condemning as a general, now, practice among the Muslims.

(b) Divorce:

One may divorce whom he desires and may take another. One should not reunite with his wife after he has divorced her, unless she shall have been married by another. And if a brother divorced his wife, another brother can marry her. (cf. 769B-D)

The Qur'ānic legislation on divorce is contained primarily in two Surahs: S. II, 226-241 and S. IV, 35, 128. Other statements about specific conditions, financial arrangements and rights of divorce, occur in a number of Surahs.³ John of Damascus does not

¹ Pickthall, *Koran*, p. 79.

² W. Montgomery Watt. *Muhammad at Medina*. (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1956), pp. 21-29.

³ S. IV, 20, 23, 25, 130; XXXIII, 4, 49; LVIII, 2-4; LXV, 1f, 4, 6, 7.

enter into all these complicated cases, but he gives only the basic Islamic laws on divorce in line with the Qur'ān.

(c) Muhammad's marriage to the wife of Zaid (769C):

This incident, which is recorded in the Qur'ān,¹ became a favorite subject for polemics. John of Damascus connects the incident with the discussion on divorce and he states it as the reason for the institution of the practice of *muhallil* or repudiation.² This incident, which John of Damascus viewed as a premeditated act by Muhammad, later Christian polemicists made a central theme in recriminating Muhammad as a Prophet.³

The closing sentence of this section characterizes one of the well known Qur'ānic passages on marriage as "obscene" or "shameful":

Your women are a tilth for you [to cultivate], so go to your tilth as ye will, and send [good deeds] before you for your souls; and fear Allah, and know that ye will meet Him. Give glad tidings to believers.⁴

(2) *The "she-camel of God"*.

There is no Surah in the Qur'ān under this title. The expression "she-camel of God" is known, however, from the frequently mentioned story of Ṣāliḥ, the prophet and warner to the people of Thamūd.⁵ The she-camel became the sign of the truth of Ṣāliḥ's message and a trial for the people of Thamūd. The leaders of the tribe killed or mutilated the camel (XCI, 14; VII, 77) to test Ṣāliḥ's warning as to its validity. God then caused them to die, buried under the ruins of their houses, obviously after an earth-

¹ S. XXXIII, 37.

² S. II, 229.

³ Khoury, *Théologiens*, II, 91ff.

⁴ S. II, 223. John of Damascus has translated this passage almost verbatim: "Ἐργασαι τὴν γῆν, ἣν ὁ Θεὸς ἔδωκε σοι, καὶ φιλοκάλησον αὐτήν· [καὶ τόδε ποίησον, καὶ τοιῶσδε]" 769D.

⁵ S. VII, 73-79; XI, 61-68; XIV, 9; XV, 80-84; XXV, 38; XXVI, 141-159; XXVII, 45-53; XXIX, 38; XLI, 13, 14, 17, 18; LI, 43-45; LIV, 23-31; LXIX, 4, 5; LXXXV, 18; LXXXIX, 9; XCI, 11-14. Cf. the same story in al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr. Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*. ed. by Mahmud Muhammad Shakir (Cairo: Dar-Mu'arif, 1957), vol. XII, pp. 526. Ṣāliḥ proclaimed the unity of God to the tribe of Thamūd, and he called his people to worship Allah alone. The people of Thamūd rejected the message of Ṣāliḥ, who urged them to abandon the worship of their fathers. (XI, 61-62). Ṣāliḥ "is usually depicted as a sign and a warning in the style of Muhammad". F. Buhl, "Ṣāliḥ" *SEIs*, p. 499.

quake.¹ It may be for this reason that the Qur'ān refers to them as dwellers of the rock.²

The version of John of Damascus contains many of the same points, to which some traditional variations have been added. It comes closest to the story as recorded in S. XXVI, 141-159, where the camel and the people are presented as drinking water from the river in turns. Ṣāliḥ's name is not mentioned, although there are clear indications about his involvement in this story.³

A discussion on Paradise is connected with this story and it is loosely related to it. The author is aware of the Qur'ānic teaching of Paradise as a garden underneath which flow rivers and where delight and pleasures prevail.⁴ The description of Paradise, however, does not seem to have been the purpose of this paragraph. It is rather used as indicative of the inconsistencies that the story of the "she-camel of God" contains, and it turns as a criticism against the prophet⁵ and a condemnation of those who believe in him (772C-D).

(3) Surah V: "*The Table Spread*" (*al-Mā'idah*)

This is the proper title of the Surah taken from verse 114. John of Damascus gives the following account of this Surah:

Another writing which Muhammad calls *The Table*. He says that Christ asked from God a table, and this was given to him. And God said to him: "I have given to you and to your people a table which is incorruptible". (772D)

The corresponding verses in the Qur'ān are as follows:

114. Jesus, son of Mary, said: O Allah, Lord of us! Send down for us a table spread with food from heaven, that this may be a feast for us, . . . and a sign from Thee. Give us sustenance, for Thou art the Best of Sustainers.

¹ The story seems to have some historical foundation, inasmuch as Thamud has been identified as an ancient Arab tribe. *Ibid.*, p. 500.

² S. XV, 80.

³ "Ο οὖν προφήτης ὑμῶν, ὃ καθὼς λέγετε, ἐλάλησεν ὁ Θεός, διὰ τι περὶ τῆς καμήλου, οὐκ ἔμαθε, ποῦ βρῖσκειται . . ." ("Your prophet, therefore, to whom as you say, God spoke, why did he not learn about the she-camel, where she grazed . . .") 772B; cf. also, 772C. From the version of Chapter 101 it is not clear whether the author implies Muhammad or any other prophet.

⁴ S. II, 25; VII, 40ff; XIII, 23; XV, 45ff; XVIII, 32, 108; XXII, 23; XXXVI, 54ff; XXXVII, 42ff, XXXVIII, 51ff; XLIII, 70ff; XLVII, 15; LII, 17ff. Chapter 101 refers to three rivers, of water, wine, and milk, while it by-passes that of honey, which S. XLVII, 15 mentions.

⁵ Cf. above, n. 3.

115. Allah said: Lo! I send it down for you. And whoso disbelieveth of you afterward, him surely will I punish with a punishment wherewith I have not punished any of [my] creatures.¹

Many scholars have seen in the verses 114-115 an allusion to the Last Supper.² Perhaps this is the reason why John of Damascus has mentioned this Surah, in order to show the "heretical" aspect of Islam in contrast to the Christian understanding of the sacrament.

(4) In addition to S. IV the "she-camel" and S. V, there is one more reference to the Qur'ān with S. II, the "*Heifer*" (*al-Baqarah*). John of Damascus gives only the name of this Surah which is taken from the verses 67-71 (Cf., 772D).

We believe that John of Damascus had read, or had heard of, more than the four Surahs which he mentions by their titles. This conclusion is based not only upon the references which have, already, been discussed in this chapter but, also, upon his own affirmation. At the beginning of his discussion on the Muslim scriptures he wrote: "This Muhammad, after he *wrote many* preposterous things (writings, i.e., Surahs) he set on each of them a title, such as . . ." (769B).³ And at the end of the discussion on these four Surahs he concluded in the following manner: "Again the writing of *Heifer*, and *other* preposterous things, worthy of ridicule, which because of their great number I think *I ought to pass over.*" (772D-773A).

These two sentences show that John of Damascus was only selecting a few Surahs which would suffice to demonstrate that the Muslim scriptures are preposterous and unworthy of serious consideration. We find, therefore, the suggestion that John of Damascus "was not acquainted with even the four suras of the Qur'ān in detail" unfounded.⁴

13. In the last part of Chapter 101 some aspects of Muslim practices are mentioned:

He [Muhammad] made a law that men and women be circumcised and he gave orders not to observe the Sabbath, neither to be baptized; and to eat some foods which are forbidden by the Law, and

¹ Pickthall, *Koran*, p. 107.

² *Ibid.*, p. 95. According to Tor Andrae, Muhammad understood the Lord's Supper celebrated in the Church as an actual meal. *Mohammed*, pp. 38ff.

³ The italicising is ours.

⁴ Merrill, *MW*, XLI (1951), 97. Cf. also below, p. 127, n. 4.

to abstain from others; and he forbade entirely the drinking of wine. (773A)

Circumcision is not mentioned in the Qur'ān, but is found in Islam as a part of the whole idea of ablution and cleanliness¹ and as a practice from the "religion of Abraham" of which Islam, according to the Muslims, is a continuation.²

The renunciation of the Sabbath, as well as of baptism, are obviously reactions of the Muslim community and an expression of a sense of its independence from Judaism and Christianity.³

The prohibition of some foods and the approval of others is often discussed in the Qur'ān,⁴ as is the prohibition of strong drinks as well.⁵

As a conclusion to this chapter we wish to defend the thesis that Chapter 101 of the *De Haeresibus* is an early systematic introduction to Islam written by a Christian writer. Its purpose was to inform the Christians of the newly-appeared "heresy" and to provide some preliminary answers to its "heretical" elements. The following tentative outline can clearly show the unity and coherence of the Chapter:

- I. *Historical introduction.*
 - A. Name of the heresy and its derivation
 - B. Its historical background
 - C. Its founder
- II. *Systematic Theology.*
 - A. Theology
 - B. Christology
 - C. Revelation

¹ Maulana Muhammad 'Alī, *The Religion of Islam*. (Lahore: The Aḥmadiyyah Anjuman Iṣhā'at Islām. 1950), p. 397, n. 1.

² Cf. Levy, *Structure*, p. 252. During the Jahiliyya, circumcision was practiced, even on women, and it was adopted by Muhammad. The different schools differed as far as the indispensability of the practice was concerned, with those who objected to it doing so on the ground that the Qur'ān is silent on the subject. The statement made by the Caliph 'Umar II (717-729) "Allah sent Muhammad to summon men [to Islam] and not to circumcise" is significant. Quoted by Levy, *Structure*, p. 251, from al-Ṭabarī, *Annales*, arabic text, ed. by M. J. de Goeje, II, 1354.

³ Watt, *Muhammad*, pp. 93ff. The Qur'ān refers to those "who violate the Sabbath" (S. II, 65; IV, 47; VII, 163) as a criticism against the religious inconsistencies of the Jews; it is not an implication on the Muslims who abolish the observance of the Sabbath.

⁴ S. II, 172f; V, 1, 3ff, 96; VI, 119f, 146f; XVI, 114ff; XXII, 34, 36.

⁵ S. II, 219; IV, 43; V, 90f. Wine, however, is promised to be one of the pleasant drinks in Paradise, along with water, milk, and honey. Cf. S. XLVII, 15.

- III. *Apologetics.*
 - A. Theology of the attributes of God
 - B. Devotional life and symbolism
- IV. *Introduction to the Islamic Scriptures.*
 - Surah IV
 - Surah VII
 - Surah V
 - Reference to Surah II
- V. *Legislation and Practices*

It has to be said, however, that this essay was written by a Christian writer for Christian readers who, although geared to contrast what is "heretical" to what is "Orthodox", are with the author ultimately interested in an instruction on the Christian orthodox theology. Chapter 100/101 can not be seen otherwise, than as a part of the *De Haeresibus*, and not as an independent polemic piece of literature. The author is not defending Christian Orthodoxy through this essay on Islam, neither does he consider this discussion as the final goal of his writing. This is not the final word that he reserves for each heresy and for Islam, and, perhaps, that is why he is not absorbed in making it, also, a "fatal" one. He presents the facts about Islam in an orderly and systematic way, although not at all complimentary; he demonstrates an accurate knowledge of the religion, perhaps higher than the one that an average Muslim could possess; he is aware of the cardinal doctrines and concepts in Islam, especially those which are of an immediate interest to a Christian; he knows well his sources and he is at home with the Muslim mentality. Chapter 100/101 is not inflammatory of hatred, neither grandiloquent and full of self-triumph; it is an essay on Islam, in a book of Christian heresies. In this simple fact lies its significance and its weakness!

PART FOUR
WRITINGS: THE *DISPUTATIO SARACENI*
ET CHRISTIANI

CHAPTER SIX

THE TRADITION OF THE TEXT

Under the name of John of Damascus has been transmitted a text in the form of a dialogue which appears under the title: *Joannis Damasceni, Disceptatio Christiani et Saraceni*.¹ Lequien has edited a Latin translation with, only, fragments of the Greek original printed juxtaposed to the Latin. The Greek original has been edited by Galland under the title, *S. Joannis Damasceni, Disputatio Saraceni et Christiani*.² The Greek fragments in Lequien's edition are identical with the corresponding passages in Galland's edition.

The Dialogue deals with two main subjects: a discussion about Christ, which develops into a dispute over the distinction between the Word and the words of God, and a discussion about the source of good and evil which leads to a debate about predestination. A third subject, which is raised at the end of both texts and is dealt with briefly, may be the author's answer to an attempt made by the Muslim to show Muhammad as the seal in the line of God's prophetic revelation. The major difference between the two editions of the dialogue lies, rather, in the order in which the subjects are discussed.³

In Lequien's edition there is, as a continuation to the *Disceptatio*, a short dialogue, almost two columns long, between a Christian and a Muslim under the title: *Ex ejusdem (Theodorre Abucaræ cognominati episcopi Carorum) concertationibus cum Saracenis, ex ore Joannis Damasceni*.⁴

¹ "Ἰωάννου τοῦ Δαμασκηνοῦ, Διάλεξις Σαρακηνοῦ καὶ Χριστιανοῦ". Lequien. *Opera*, I, 467-469; this text has been reprinted in *MPG*, XCIV, 1585-1596, English translation by John W. Voorhis, "The discussion of a Christian and a Saracen", *MW*, XXV (1935), 266-273.

² "Ἰωάννου τοῦ Δαμασκηνοῦ, Διάλεξις Σαρακηνοῦ καὶ Χριστιανοῦ" *Ex. Bibl. Gallandiana*, t. XIII, 272; *MPG*, XCVI, 1336B-1348B. Cf. Appendix II, pp. 144-157 for the Greek text and a translation into English.

³ Lequien's version starts with a discussion on Christ and the attributes of God, develops into the discussion on the source of good and evil, and ends with the discussion of the relation between John the Baptist and Jesus. Galland's version starts with the discussion on good and evil, continues with Christ and the attributes, and ends with the same issue about John the Baptist and Jesus.

⁴ "Ἐκ τῶν πρὸς τοὺς Σαρακηνοὺς ἀντιρρήσεων αὐτοῦ (Θεοδώρου τοῦ τὸ ἐπίκλην Ἀβουκαρᾶ ἐπισκόπου Καρῶν) διὰ φωνῆς Ἰωάννου Δαμασκηνοῦ" (=

In Lequien's *Opera* this portion is better distinguished from the *Disceptatio*¹ than in Migne's edition. The title . . . *ex ore* suggests that, although the content of this dialogue can be attributed to John of Damascus, its written form is a work of Abū Qurra (c. 720-825) bishop of Harran, who had heard (?) this argument from John of Damascus. Because of the particulars of its transmission, as well as because of its content, we will deal with this portion separately.

The problem of the authenticity of the *Disputatio*² involves questions regarding the author, as well as the form of this text.³ The *Disputatio* coincides with five *Opuscula* of Abū Qurra:

	<i>Abū Qurra</i>	<i>Disputatio</i>
Opus. XXXV	97:1588A-1592C	= 96:1336B-1341D
Opus. IX	97:1529A-D	= 96:1340D-1341D
Opus. XXXVI	97:1592C-1593B	= 96:1344A-C
Opus. XXXVII	97:1593B-C	= 96:1345B-C
Opus. XXXVIII	97:1593D-1596A	= 96:1345C-1348A

The question, therefore, arises whether the *Disputatio* is an integral unit composed by John of Damascus,⁴ or a synthesis of short dialogues written by Abū Qurra and erroneously attributed to John of Damascus.⁵ In trying to answer this question, the following facts must be taken into consideration:

"From his objections [Theodore, the so called Abū Qurra, bishop of Carrā] to the Saracene, *through the voice* [lit] of John of Damascus), *MPG*, XCIV, 1596B-1597C. In the works of Abū Qurra edited in Migne's collection, this dialogue appears as *opusculum* XVIII (*MPG*, XCIV, 1544). About Abū Qurra, cf. Krumbacher, *Geschichte*, pp. 68-71; Graf, *Geschichte*, II, 7ff; Khoury, *Théologiens*, I, 82-105; Ignace Dick, "Un continuateur arabe de saint Jean Damascène: Abuqurra, évêque melkite de Haran, la person et son milieu", *POC*, XII (1962), 209-223, 319-332; XIII (1963), 114-129; Dick, "Theodore Abuqurra": Extrait de *Proche Orient Chrétien*. Jerusalem, 1963; Works, in *MPG*, XCVII, 1461-1609; Constantine Bacha, *Un traité des œuvres arabes de Theodore Abu-Kurra évêque de Harran*. Rome: Chez le R. Père Procureur des Basiliens de Saint Saver, [1905]. Georg Graf, *Die arabischen Schriften des Theodor Abū Qurra*. Paderborn: Druck und Verlag von Ferdinand Schoningh, 1910; Alfred Guillaume, "A debate between Christian and Moslem Doctors", *Centenary Supplement, JRAS* (1923), 233-244.

¹ Lequien, *Opera*, I, 470-1. Galland's version of the *Disputatio* does not include this portion of the dialogue. Cf. below, pp. 120.

² *Disputatio* will be used for Galland's text; *Disceptatio* for Lequien's.

³ For a more analytical discussion of these issues, cf. Khoury, *Théologiens*, I, 71-76, of which we will present here the major points.

⁴ Hans Georg Beck, "Forschung und Vorherbestimmung in der theologischen Literatur der Byzantiner", *OCA*, CXIV (1937), 42.

⁵ Carl Gütterbock, *Der Islam im Lichte der byzantinischen Polemik*, (Berlin: J. Guttertag Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1912), p. 15; W. Eichner, *DIs*, XXIII (1936), 137; Dyovouniotes includes the *Disputatio* among the spurious

a. The text, in Galland's edition, consists of three units: the discussion of the source of good and evil, the Word and the words of God and their nature, and the relation between Jesus and John the Baptist.

b. Each one of these three subjects constitutes the major content of one *opusculum* of Abū Qurra, namely the numbers 35, 36 and 38, respectively.¹

c. The expression *ex ore* ² *Joannis Damasceni* appears only in the above-mentioned *opusculum* 18, which is independent from the text of Galland's edition and is not found in the *opuscula* to which we have just referred, nos. 35-38, or in any other one.

These indications seem to suggest that the text published by Galland is an edition of short treatises written by John of Damascus and utilized by Abū Qurra who incorporated them as *opuscula* 9, 35, 36, 37 and 38 in his collection of short essays on Islam.

As far as the content matter is concerned, the subjects discussed in the *Disputatio* are all found in Chapter 100/101 of the *De Haeresibus*, which we have taken as being of John of Damascus.³ When, for example, the Christian in Chapter 101 challenges the Muslim to mention any witnesses to the fact that God sent down a book to Muhammad, John of Damascus describes the Muslim as answering with the sentence: "God does whatever He wills".⁴ Also, in the same Chapter, the response of the Christians to the accusation of being "associators"⁵ is an allusion to the question of the attributes of God and His nature. The difference in the treatment of these topics there becomes understandable when we have specified

writings attributed to John of Damascus, and he considers it as a text which betrays a less competent author than John of Damascus. Cf. Δαμασκηνός, pp. vii, and 52. The authenticity of the *Disputatio* is also denied by Jugie, *DTC*, VIII (1924), 701; Gordillo, *OC*, VIII (1926), 82; Meyendorff, *DOP*, XVIII (1964), 117.

¹ Khoury states that, specifically, these three *opuscula*: 35, 36, 38, contrary to the other dialogues of his related to Islam, are not directly attributed to Abū Qurra and, unlike his other ones, they do not mention his name as the interlocutor of the Saracene. *Théologiens*, I, p. 71. This argument makes the theory, that the *Disputatio* might be a combination of various *opuscula* of Abū Qurra, less tenable.

² M. Richard, "'Απὸ φωνῆς'", *Byz.* XX (1950), 191-222.

³ We do not think that John of Damascus "n'a pas la moindre allusion à ces graves problèmes de l'Islam qu'étaient alors ceux du libre arbitre et de l'éternité du Coran, dans son *De Haeresibus*". Khoury, *Théologiens*, I, p. 70.

⁴ *MPG*, XCIV, 765D; cf. above, p. 79, n. 2.

⁵ *MPG*, XCIV, 768C; Cf. above, pp. 81ff.

the character of Chapter 101 as being a general introduction to Islam with emphasis upon the historical features of the "religion of the Ishmaelites", in contrast to these three treatises each one of which is devoted to the discussion of one particular theological topic. The *Disputatio* is a supplement to, and an elaboration of, the preliminary discussions of Chapter 101. This kind of presentation seems to be a usual pattern in John of Damascus' writing.¹

The fact, also, that the *Disputatio* is found among the *Opuscula* of Abū Qurra, a student and an admirer of John of Damascus, leaves little doubt that John of Damascus is not unrelated to this treatise. Even if the text in its present form does not come from his own hand, its content is a product of his thought; and as such we will deal with it in the following pages.²

¹ Cf. e.g., Heresy 66: Manichaeans (*MPG*, XCIV, 717A) and *Dialogus Contra Manichaeos* (XCIV, 1505A-1584D); Heresy 83: Monophysites (*MPG*, XCIV, 741A-744B) and *Contra Jacobitas* (*MPG*, XCIV, 1436A-1501D).

² The *Disputatio* has been, generally, accepted as an authentic writing of John of Damascus in the history of the Muslim-Christian dialogue, e.g., Bell, *Origin*, p. 186; Macdonald, *Development*, p. 132; Güterbock, *Islam*, pp. 12ff; Sweetman, *Islam*, I, 1, p. 66; Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image*. (Edinburgh: at the University Press, 1966), p. 4, James Thayer Addison, *The Christian Approach to the Moslem: A Historical Study*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), p. 27. Cf. also below. p. 115, n. 1.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CONTENT OF THE *DISPUTATIO*

I. The first issue under discussion in the *Disputatio* is the paradox of God's omnipotence and man's power. A survey of some of the questions and answers indicates the lines along which this discussion developed:

a. The omnipotence of God and the cause of good and evil.

M. Whom do you say is the cause of good and evil?

C. Of all things that are good we do say that no one else is the cause, except God, but not of evil.

M. Whom do you say (then) is the cause of evil?

C. It is the Devil and we, men.

M. How is this so?

C. Because of free will. (1336B)¹

The Christian answers reflect clearly the position which John of Damascus himself held, as we know from his other writings and especially from his *De Fide Orthodoxa*.²

The first Muslim question affirms, indirectly, that God is the cause of all good as well as of evil as a consequence of the belief that God is the creator of everything that exists. But does the *Disputatio* reflect authentic Muslim questions, or are these put by John of Damascus in the mouth of an hypothetical Muslim for the sake of dialogue and for showing that there is a different theology between Islam and Christianity? It seems that not only questions such as these, but even answers such as those of the Christian, were ex-

¹ The numbers will refer to *MPG*, XCVI . . .

² Cf. e.g., Chapter 92 of the *De Fide Orthodoxa*: "That God is not the cause of evil" (*MPG*, XCIV, 1192B-1193C); also Chapter 95: "On the law of God and the law of sin" (*Ibid.*, 1197C-1201A). Cf. also, "God in his goodness brings into being from nothing the things that are made" (*Ibid.*, 1197A); "The Godhead is good, and more than good, and so also is His will . . ." (*Ibid.*, 1197C); "Therefore, we believe in one God . . . source of goodness and justice . . . light itself and goodness . . . and the cause of all good things for all" (*Ibid.*, 808B-809A); "Where, then, does sin come from? It is an invention of the free will of the Devil" (*Ibid.*, 1196CD); "One should know that virtue has been given by God to our nature, and that He, Himself, is the source and the cause of all good . . . But it depends upon us either to persevere in virtue . . . or to abandon virtue, which is to become attached to vice and to be guided by the Devil" (*Ibid.*, 972-973).

changed among the Muslims themselves. Al-Malati's (d. A.D. 987/8) description of a Qadariya sect is only an example:¹

One group holds that noble actions (*hasanat*) and goodness (*khair*) are from God, but wickedness and base actions from themselves, so that they may not attribute any base action or sin to God.²

It is still an open question whether Christian theology, through such a spokesman as John of Damascus, influenced the Qadariya movement. It is only safe to say that the source of evil is a topic long debated in religion, and Qadariya is another "genuine revolt of the human soul against an immoral conception of the universe", as Guillaume has characterized it.³

b. Man's power.

M. How is it therefore? Have you, yourself a power and can you do whatever you wish?

C. (Yes); but I have not been created by God with power but with regard to two things.

M. Which are these?

C. If I do what is good,⁴ I am not afraid of the law but I receive, rather, honour and mercy from God. The same thing (is true) for the devil. (i.e., he has been created with power, or free will).⁵ The first man was created with power by God, but he sinned and God expelled him from his proper state. (I336B-C)

The notion that man has the power to determine his own actions has been erroneously expressed as "free will".⁶ The Greek termino-

¹ About the Qadariya, cf. below, p. 105, n. 1.

² *Al-Tanbih w'arrad ala ahl-al-ahwaà w'al-biddaà*, p. 116; quoted by W. Montgomery Watt, *Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam* (London: Luzac and Co., 1948), p. 52.

³ Alfred Guillaume, "Some Remarks on Free Will and Predestination in Islam, together with a translation of the Kitabu-l Qadar from the Sahih of al-Bukhàri", *JRAS* (1945), p. 45.

⁴ The Greek text has, erroneously, "bad" instead of "good". Abū Qurra's *opusculum* 35 has "good", which is the correct word in this context.

⁵ Cf. *De Fide Orthodoxa*, Chapter 18, *MPG*, XCIV, 873-877.

⁶ Cf. Voorhis' translation of the *Disputatio*, *MW*, XXV (1935), 270. The word that the Greek text uses is ἀυτεξούσιον and the adjective ἀυτεξούσιος. The second part of the word (ἐξουσία) means, precisely, "authority", "sovereignty", "power". From this notion the ideas of "freedom of choice" or "freedom of will" have been ascribed, inaccurately, to the term. Another term used by John of Damascus as equivalent to ἀυτεξούσιον is the expression τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῖν, i.e., "those things which depend upon us (upon our power)". Cf. *De Fide Orthodoxa*, Chapter 39: "Concerning what depends upon us, that is on our power" (ἀυτεξούσιον). *MPG*, XCIV, 956B-957C; cf. also, *Ibid.*, 961B-C, "Concerning those things which do not depend upon us". For the Orthodox Muslim theology and its Qadarite opponent, the issue is not whether man has a free will to do this or the other act, but whether he

logy comes much closer to the Muslim concept than the translation "free will". It is well known that the first protest against the orthodox doctrine of predestination came from the Qadarites, who declared that man himself has the power to determine his own actions and that, therefore, he is to be held responsible for his evil actions.¹ The time of appearance of the movement can be traced back to the very early years of the eighth century.² Therefore, the *Disputatio* is contemporary with, or somewhat later than, the earliest controversy between orthodox Muslims and the Qadarites.

Whether the Qadarites borrowed the term ἀυτεξούσιον from John of Damascus is difficult to determine. Moreover, the context of use of identical or very similar terms by both, John of Damascus and the Qadariya, does not seem to be the same. For John of Damascus man's power to act "on his own" is the immediate consequence of the nature of man, a sensible and deliberating being;³ while the Qadarite emphasis upon man's power is, primarily, a reaction against the Orthodox absolutism that, since God is all powerful

has the *power* of his own to do so. It is interesting that this is the terminology used by Christian theology and by John of Damascus in discussing this question of "free will", which makes the dialogue between a Christian and a Muslim more realistic, as it makes the question of interdependence and mutual influence more difficult to determine.

¹ There are at least two explanations to their name. One is that they are called Qadarites because they started the discussion of (God's) *Qadar*. Another that their opponents gave them this name because of their teaching that man possesses power (*qadar*) over his actions. The Qadarites themselves resented this name, which they returned to those who ascribe all power to God. With the words of al-Ash'arī: "The Qadariyyah think that we merit the name '*qadar*' because we believe that God decrees evil and infidelity . . . therefore it may be said to them: The *Qadari* is he who asserts that he himself and not his Lord has the *qadar* . . ." Abū'l Ḥasan 'Alī b. Ismā'il al-Ash'arī, *Al-Ibānah 'an usūl ad-Diyānah*, tr. by Walter C. Klein. (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1940), p. 113. Cf. also Duncan Black Macdonald, "Qadariya", *SEIs*, p. 200; Watt, *Free Will*, pp. 48ff. Guillaume holds that the name of the movement derived from the proper term *qudra* (power), and not from *qadar*, which "properly applies to a decree of God". Cf. *JRAS* (1945), 45, n. 1. F. M. Pareja, *Islamologie*. (Beyrouth: Imprimerie Catholique, 1957-63), pp. 694f. Henri Laoust, *Les schismes dans l'islam, Introduction à une étude de la religion musulmane* (Paris: Payot, 1965), pp. 48f.

² Among the first Qadarites mentioned is Ma'bad al-Juhānī, who was put to death by 'Abd al-Malik for his opinions, ca. A.D. 699. Other pioneers of the Qadarite ideas were Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 728), Ghaylān of Damascus, who was also executed in 743, and Shabīb al-Najranī. Cf. Watt, *Free Will*, pp. 53f. Macdonald, *Development*, p. 128.

³ "If a man is not a principle of action, then it is useless for him to deliberate; because, what is the use of his deliberation if he is not a master of any action?" *De Fide Orthodoxa*, MPG, XCIV, 957C.

He is, also, the author of evil. The emphasis on man's *qadar* aimed mainly at "protecting" God from being considered unjust, and at making man responsible for his own actions. One of the Qadarite sects is reported to have worded its theology in the following terms:

They are entrusted (*muvakkal*) to themselves in such a way that they have power (*yaqdirūna*) for everything good through this delegation (*tafwīd*) they speak about, without God's help and guidance.¹

This sect was called *Mufawwida*, a name which derives from the term *fawwada*. In the above stated description of *Mufawwida* one can hardly see in the term *fawwada* the exact equivalent of John of Damascus' ἀυτεξούσιον which, as we stated above, is rather related to the understanding of man as being sensible and deliberating.²

c. The justice of God.

C. "... but are you saying both good and evil are from God? (then) God would be proven, according to you, to be unjust, which is not (the case). Because, since God has ordered—as you claim—the adulterer to commit fornication, and the thief to steal, and the murderer to kill, these are worthy of respect, because they did the will of God . . ." (I336G-I337A)

This portion of the *Disputatio* reveals the different stand-points from which each party views the problem of man's power, or "freedom of will". While the orthodox Muslim is interested in underlining the omnipotence of God, the Christian wants to preserve the justice of God. The latter side represents the development of the Muslim theology linked with the "school" of the Mu'tazilites who opposed, as did the Qadarites, God's *qadar* over men but who also stressed an emphasis upon the notion of the justice of God,³ by

¹ Al-Malati, *Tanbih*, p. 133, quoted by Watt, *Free Will*, p. 52.

² Although *fawwada* can be used freely in the sense of "free will"—ἀυτεξούσιον—, we think that the two words derive from different presuppositions and contain different emphases. We do not think, therefore, that *fawwada* is an exact translation of ἀυτεξούσιον, and find it impossible to see in it an adequate proof that a "Christian influence lies at the origin of Qadari ideas". Morris S. Seale, *Muslim Theology. A Study of Origins with Reference to the Church Fathers*. (London: Luzac and Co., 1964), pp. 27, 29ff. The question of Christian influence upon the Qadarites cannot be discussed conclusively on the basis of the use of isolated terms.

³ The Mu'tazilites, because of the two emphases in their theology, are known as "the people of unity and justice" (*Ahl al-Tawhīd wa'l-'adl*). About the Mu'tazilites, cf. H. S. Nyberg, "al-Mu'tazila", *SEIs*, pp. 421-427; Watt, *Free Will*, pp. 61ff; Macdonald, *Development*, pp. 135ff; Klein, *al-*

denying that He can create evil.¹ Man cannot be punished for actions which have been predetermined by God, because this contradicts His justice. As an early statement of al-Khayyāt, head of the school of Baghdad (late third century A.H.) reads:

He is just in His judgments, merciful to His creatures, regardful of His servants, and . . . He loves not wrong-doing and "approves not unbelief for His servants" (S. XXXIX, 7/9) and wills not injustice for the worlds.²

John of Damascus in his writings speaks with the same emphasis about the justice of God, as he does about His goodness.³ His teaching is contemporary to the pioneers of the Mu'tazilite movement, Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā (d. 749), and 'Amr b. 'Ubayd (762). Although Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā's theology became the basis of the religious and political orientation of the Mu'tazilite movement,⁴ its great development started fifty years after the death of Wāṣil. The true founder of its dogmatic system was Abū'l-Hudhayl, who died in 840, almost one hundred years after Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā⁵ and John of Damascus.

d. "Creation" and/or "generation", and man's sin.

M. Who forms the foetus in the wombs of the women? (The Saracens use this strong argument against us because they want to prove that God is the cause of evil. Because if by answering I say that "God forms the foetus in the wombs of the women", the Saracen will say: "Here, God is co-operating with the fornicator and the adulterer".)

C. I do not find anywhere in the Bible a saying that after the first week of creation God created or made anything. All the visible creatures were made the first week. Because God created man the first week, and He ordered him to give birth and be begotten, . . . and since man had life in himself, and had seed with life within himself, a sowing was developed in his own wife. There-

Ibānah, Introduction, Ch. II, pp. 15-24. W. Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology* (Edinburgh: at the University Press, 1964), pp. 58-71.

¹ Al-Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-Milāl wa'n-nihal*, ed. Cureton, (1842-6), I, 29ff, quoted by Klein, *Ibānah*, p. 17.

² Al-Khayyāt, *Kitāb al-Intiṣār*, p. 5, quoted by Klein, *Ibānah*, p. 16.

³ Cf. *De Fide Orthodoxa*, "God is good and just (XCIV: 792C); "source of goodness and justice" (808C); "It is not proper to ascribe to God immoral and unjust actions" (957B); "God does not want to be the only one that is just, but that all be like Him, in so far as they are able". (1193C), etc.

⁴ With the words of Nyberg, "The theology of Wāṣil and of the early Mu'tazila represents the official theology of the 'Abbāsīd movement". *SEIs*, p. 423.

⁵ About Abū'l-Hudhayl, cf. Watt, *Free Will*, pp. 69ff, and the teaching of Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā in Tritton, *Theology*, pp. 61f.

fore, man gives birth to man . . . We thenceforth know that only Adam was created by God, while those after him are born and give birth until today . . . And, behold, as I said at the beginning, since I have myself power with regards to what I mentioned above, wherever I sow, either in my own wife, or in another woman—making use of my own sovereignty—she brings forth, and it is accomplished, in response to the first command of God. Not that, even now, every day, God fashions and creates. (I337A-I340A)

The Muslim question is the core of a frequently discussed subject in the Qur'ān, namely man's creation. The creation-of-man passages are intimately related to the sovereignty and omnipotence of God. These passages teach that man's creation takes place in a process of consecutive stages¹ as, for example in S. XXIII, 12-14, from an extraction of clay, to a drop, to a clot, to a lump of flesh, to bones, to a garment of flesh and to the other creation; in S. XXXII, 7-9 from clay to the progeny of an extraction of mean water, to the composition—especially the breathing—of the vital spirit by Allah into man, and the bestowal of hearing, sight and heart; or in S. XXII, 5, from dust, to a drop, to a clot, to a lump of flesh, to an infant.

Among the various Qur'ānic passages which describe man's creation Bakker has selected four as the most detailed, of which we just mentioned three. The passage which, we think, refers most eloquently to the issues raised in this portion of the *Disputatio* is the fourth, S. LXXV, 37-39. According to this passage, the first stage of man's creation is a spilled "drop of fluid" (*manī*). The Qur'ān stresses that it is Allah, not man, who creates this fluid.² The second stage is the drop, or the clot, which Bakker interprets plainly as the embryo.³ The third is Allah's shaping and fashioning of the embryo.⁴ The last stage is God's creation of man in pairs, male and female. In all these four stages it is Allah who creates the fluid, makes it a

¹ For a detailed discussion on this particular issue, cf. Bakker, *Man*, pp. 9-19, from which we summarize here the most important points. It is important to notice here that the introductory question of "the Muslim" stems from a verbatim pronouncement of S. III, 6 ("He it is who fashioneth you in the wombs as pleaseth Him. There is no God save Him, the Almighty, the Wise"). John of Damascus proves to know not only what a Muslim is expected to ask but, also, that he, necessarily, bases his arguments on the authority of the Qur'ān.

² S. LXXX, 19; LVI, 59; Bakker, *Man*, p. 9.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁴ In the Qur'ān Allah is the "Shaper" and the "Composer". S. LIX, 24.

clot, gives it shape and fashion, and creates the male and female! We think that of the conclusions which Bakker has drawn from the study of these passages, two constitute the predominant Muslim ideas in the *Disputatio*: 1) That it is Allah who created men; thus, men's relation to Allah "is a thing which even before they were aware of it, permanently determined their lives from the first",¹ and 2) which is more specifically dealt with in the discussion of the *Disputatio*, "Allah's power manifested in the creation of man is not restricted to a divine initiative, but is active in each stage of development. There is no phase in the process of man's origin in which Allah is not concerned creatively".²

The intention of the Muslim in the above phase of the *Disputatio* is not, primarily, to prove that God is the creator of evil as such—as the Christian interlocutor seems to interpret—but to show that God is the absolute sovereign over man's life and the source of his existence, since the earliest stages of his being. The Christian, over against the Qur'ānic idea of a continuous creation,³ differentiates "creation" from "generation".

The Ḥadīth has, generally, emphasized those Qur'ānic references which could be interpreted as teaching predestination.⁴ Such is a ḥadīth from the *Kitāb al-Qadar* (*Book of Predestination*) which, on the idea of man's creation in his mother's womb, goes as far as to teach that:

... A man may do the works of the people of paradise, so that between him and it there lieth but a fathom or a cubit, and that which has been written shall overcome him, and he will do the works of the people of hell, and shall enter therein ... In the mother's womb the answer is written.⁵

Among the Muslims a group of Qadarītes denied "that God creates the child of adultery or determines (*qaddara*) him, or wills him, or knows him (antecedently?) ...".⁶ Although this statement comes very close to that which John of Damascus is pursuing, it is more in accordance with the Qadarīte and Mu'tazilite doctrine of the justice of God and man's responsibility for his evil actions.

¹ Bakker, *Man*, p. 18.

² *Ibid.*, p. 18.

³ S. XXXIX, 6 ("He created you in the wombs of your mothers, creation after creation, in a three fold gloom . . .")

⁴ Cf. Watt, *Free Will*, pp. 19ff.

⁵ Alfred Guillaume, *The Traditions of Islam. An introduction to the study of the Ḥadīth literature* (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1924), p. 172.

⁶ al-Malati, *Tanbih*, p. 134, quoted by Watt, *Free Will*, p. 52.

A later Mu'tazilite, however, Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir (d. 825) seems to approach more the Damascene thought. Bishr is a well known theologian, founder of the school of Baghdad,¹ who pursued further in his theology the question of evil and human activity. His doctrine is known as *tawallud*, or *al-fi'l al-mutawallad* ("generated or secondary effects"), or *tawlid* and *tawallud* (= begetting and deriving)² and aimed at showing that "what is generated from a man's act is also his act"³ and that the agent of an action affects the first object only, while the effect on the rest follows.⁴

e. God's foreknowledge of man's destiny.

M. God said to Jeremiah "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you".⁵

C. God created the power of giving life and begetting in every man from Adam and onwards . . . on the other hand, in the expression "I consecrated you from the womb" you ought to understand the womb of baptism that gives a real birth to the children of God, according to the testimony of the Gospel⁶ . . . And the Holy Spirit testifies by saying: "The wicked were alienated from the womb"⁷ i.e., that of baptism. Because we confess that those who were saved, and those who are saved, were saved, and are saved through baptism by the grace of God. (1340A-C)

The Muslim uses an argument from the Christian Scriptures to establish the case that God not only has created man in the womb, but that He also knows him from the womb and has determined his destiny.

This conviction finds support in the Qur'ān in passages such as:

. . . and no female carrieth or bringeth forth but with His knowledge.⁸

Allah knoweth that which every female beareth and that which the wombs absorb and that which they grow. And everything with Him is measured. He is the knower of the invisible and the visible, the Great, the High exalted.⁹

¹ It is not certain if indeed he was from Kufa and migrated to Baghdad. Cf. Tritton, *Theology*, p. 95.

² Macdonald, *Development*, p. 142.

³ Watt, *Free Will*, p. 74.

⁴ Macdonald, *Development*, p. 142. The same idea is expressed by the Christian in the *Disputatio*, below, 1345B-C.

⁵ Jeremiah 1:5.

⁶ John 1:12-13. John of Damascus refers, further, to I Cor. 10:1-2 and John 3:5 to show that there was "Baptism" before Christ!

⁷ Psalms 58:3.

⁸ S. XLI, 47.

⁹ S. XIII, 8-9; The knowledge and the omniscience of God is a common subject in the Qur'ān. II, 255; VI, 3; X, 62; XIII, 8-10; XX, 7; XXXIV,

The Ḥadith literature speaks of an angel who is sent to fulfill upon each embryo the four commandments of God with regard to the sustenance, duration of life, happiness or wretchedness of the man who will be born.¹

John of Damascus dealt with the question of God's foreknowledge and predestination² in similar terms. While he stressed the fact that God foreknows all things, he denied that He predestines all things. Predestination has to do only with those things which are not dependent upon man's power, and not with those which depend upon him. In his words:

He foreknows what is upon us, but he does not predestine them. Because neither does He will evil to be done, nor does He force virtue. And so, predestination is the act of the divine foreknowing command. He predestines, then, those things which do not depend upon us, according to His foreknowledge. Because God by His foreknowledge has already decided everything according to His goodness and justice.³

The Qadariya, in reacting against the predestinarian *sunni* theology, excluded from God a knowledge "antecedent to what men are becoming".⁴ John of Damascus, however, although he reaffirmed God's foreknowledge insisted upon man's freedom of action.

f. The will of God and man's obedience.

At the end of the discussion on predestination the Muslim argues that man is bound to do the will of God which might be evil.⁵ The Christian, on the contrary, draws a sharp distinction between "will" on the one hand and "tolerance" and "longanimity", on the other. (I34IA). In order to show the truth of such a distinction he appears for a moment to agree with the Muslim that every single action of man is performed according to God's will and sovereign power, even, for example, man's sitting or standing (I34IA). They both agree also that it is because God did not will so, that He com-

2-3; L, 16; LVII, 3-4, LVIII, 7. Such passages are favorite references in the context of a discussion on predestination.

¹ Guillaume, *Traditions*, pp. 171f.

² *De Fide Orthodoxa*, Chapter 44, "On foreknowledge and predestination", MPG, XCIV, 969-980.

³ *Ibid.*, 972A. "Foreknowledge" and "predestination" (predetermination) are almost identical in *sunni* theology. Cf. Fikḥ Akbar II, art. 5, in Arent Jan Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed. Its Genesis and Historical Development* (London: Frank Cass, 1965), pp. 190, 211f.

⁴ Cf. al-Malati, *Tanbīh*, p. 133, quoted by Watt, *Free Will*, p. 52.

⁵ If Jesus suffered willingly, then the Jews are praiseworthy, because they did the will of God (I340)!

manded man not to steal, or commit adultery, or kill (134IA). At this point the Christian returns to his original thesis to show that man, in spite of God's will, steals and commits adultery: "what then do you call that", he asks the Muslim, "God's will, or patience, tolerance and longanimity?" (134IB).

Not all Muslims adhered to such a belief in the binding will of God. A certain Qadarite group was of the opinion:

... that God has made (*ja'ala*) the power for action (*istitā'a*) in them perfect and complete of believing, of eating, and drinking, of sleeping and awaking, indeed of doing what they will.¹

An entirely opposite opinion, with an extreme predestinarian conviction, was held by the Jabrites who taught that man acts under the compulsion (*jabr*) of God.²

For John of Damascus, God wills only the good deeds while He tolerates the evil ones because of man's freedom of will and his own power.³

2. In the previous part of the *Disputatio* the central question was God's *qadar* and man's will. In this part although at first sight the subject seems to be Christ,⁴ properly speaking, it is the "Word of God" concept which is at stake which, as the question of *qadar*, evolves in a sequence of issues.

¹ Al-Malati, *Tanbih*, p. 133, quoted by Watt, *Free Will*, p. 52.

² An early representative of this thought, Jahm b. Safwān, was a contemporary of John of Damascus and died in Persia, in 746. According to al-Ash'ari's account of the Jahmite views, "God has created for man a power (*qūwa*) by which the act takes place, and the will for it, and the choice of it, whereby he wills it, just in the same way as God has created for man height by which he is tall, and colour by which he is coloured". *al-Maqālat*, p. 279, quoted by Watt, *Free Will*, p. 99. The Jahmite teaching, however, expanded in the late second, the third, and even the fourth century of Islam. Cf. Watt, *Ibid.*, p. 101. More on the Jabriya and the Jahmites, cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 96ff; Tritton, *Theology*, pp. 62f; and the article "Djabriya", *SEIs*, p. 80.

³ "One should know that God wills antecedently that all be saved and attain to His knowledge . . . But being just, He wills also that the sinners be punished. The former is called *antecedent will* and *approval*, and it is from Him; the latter, *consequent will* and *permission*, and it has ourselves as its cause . . . With regard to those things which depend upon us, those things which are good He wills and approves; those which are bad and indeed evil, He wills neither antecedently nor consequentially, but He lets them to one's own power (free will). Because what is done under compulsion is neither rational nor virtuous". *De Fide Orthodoxa*, MPG, XCIV, 969.

⁴ As in Chapter 101, the question about Christ becomes a major issue of discussion for the Christian debater. Cf. above, pp. 77ff.

a. The "Word of God".

When the Christian is asked by the Muslim to define what he considers Christ to be the Christian answers, "the Word of God". When the same question is asked by the Christian to the Muslim the latter answers, "By my Scripture Christ is called the Spirit and Word of God".¹ While the expression "Word of God" was widely used by the Christians in referring to Christ, the Muslim community used the expression in referring to the Qur'ān. Out of reverence and awe always felt for the Sacred Book a doctrine of the Qur'ān was developed by Muslim theology according to which the Qur'ān not only contains and preserves in a perfect way God's message received and proclaimed by Muhammad, but itself is a "manifestation" in time and history of the eternal speech of God, His uncreated "inner speech", or the "speech of His mind".² It is generally held that the doctrine of the Logos—a long debated issue in the Christian Church—played a formative rôle in the development of the Muslim doctrine of the Qur'ān.

Opposition to the idea of the Qur'ān as the "uncreated speech of God" arose very early, as the case of Jahm b. Ṣafwān (d. 746) indicates.³ The *Disputatio* bears also witness to this controversy and

¹ For the term "Scripture" and for the Muslim account on Christ, as they are recorded by John of Damascus, cf. above, pp. 74, 78. The same data are also given here. The initial question of the Muslim "What do you say is Christ" leaves no doubt that the emphasis of this discussion is centered not on the person, but on the nature of Christ as the "Word of God". The Greek text indicates clearly this distinction by using the interrogative pronoun in neutral gender "What do you say" instead of masculine "whom do you say".

² Macdonald, *Theology*, p. 146. Louis Gardet et M. M. Anawati, *Introduction à la théologie musulmane; essai de théologie comparée* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vris, 1948), p. 38. Becker, *Islamstudien*, I, 442; Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzāni, *A Commentary on the Creed of Islam of Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī*, tr. by Earl Edgar Elder (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), pp. 58ff; Abū Hāmid al-Ghazzālī, *The Foundations of the Articles of Faith*, tr. by Nabih Amin Faris (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1963), pp. 72ff. Sweetman, *Islam*, I, 2, pp. 116ff. The Christological question possesses a major place in the *De Fide Orthodoxa*. The whole Book IV deals with different questions on the Logos and Incarnation. Cf. especially, the Chapters 45-47, 51-55, etc.

³ The opposition of Jahm b. Ṣafwān, as well as of the Mu'tazilites who mainly carried on this debate, arose out of their interest to preserve and to safeguard the absolute unity (*tawhīd*) of God. Among the statements of Jahm b. Ṣafwān, as Aḥmad b. Hanbal records them, are these characteristic ones: "Nothing is like God . . . He cannot be described, is not known by any attribute or act . . .". Quoted by Tritton, *Theology*, p. 63. Cf. also, Macdonald, *Theology*, pp. 146ff. Seale, *Theology*, pp. 66ff. For the discussion

to the early arguments employed by each opposing group in the Muslim community.

While in the discussion on man's power and free will the Christian position seemed to be close to that of the Qadarites and the Mu'tazilites, in this discussion on the "Word of God" it is more in line with the orthodox Muslim teaching.¹ The *Disputatio* makes a clear allusion to an existing heretical group among the Muslims, who do not want to admit that the Word and the Spirit of God are eternal:

Then ask him [the Saracene]: "Are the Spirit and the Word of God called in your Scripture uncreated or created?" And if he tells you "created",² say to him: "And who created the Spirit and the Word of God?" And if, compelled by necessity, he tells you that God created them, say "... Before God created the Word and the Spirit, did He not have either Spirit or Word?" And he will flee from you, having nothing to answer. Because these, according to the Saracens are heretics, and therefore very much despised and rejected; and if you want to report him to the other Saracens, he will be very much afraid of you. (1341D-1344A)

The last reference to "heretics" is apparently an allusion to the Jahmites and to the early Mu'tazilites.³ These, indeed, had little following and suffered at times heavy persecutions, especially during the Ummayyad period.⁴

between Orthodox Islam on the one hand, and Jahmites and Mu'tazilites on the other, cf. al-Ash'arī, *Ibānah*, pp. 66-82; Macdonald, *Theology* pp. 146-152.

¹ The opponents of the "uncreated Qur'ān" saw that this doctrine was leading the Muslims to speak about the attributes of God as realities existing eternally "alongside" Him in a similar way as Christians were speaking about Christ as being the uncreated Word of God, eternally co-existent with Him, and proclaiming that he is "of the same substance with the Father". Cf. e.g., John of Damascus, "By the good will of God the Father, the only begotten Son and Logos (Word) of God, and God, who is in the bosom of God the Father, of the same substance with the Father and the Holy Spirit, existing before the ages, without beginning, who was with God the Father and He is God, He, being in the form of God, bowed down from the Heavens and descended . . ." *De Fide Orthodoxa*, MPG, XCIV, 984A. Cf. also, Macdonald, *Theology*, p. 151; and above, pp. 82ff.

² The text, erroneously, has "uncreated", which is obviously a misprint, as the context of the discussion indicates. The corresponding text in Abū Qurra's *opusculum* XXXV has "created". MPG, XCVII, 1592C.

³ Al-Ash'arī, *Ibānah*, p. 69.

⁴ Ja'ad b. Birham (743) and Jahm b. Šafwān (746) were executed for their teaching of the createdness of the Qur'ān. The persecution against the Mu'tazilites and the Qadarites had an additional reason, related to their adherence to the doctrine of *qadar*. (Al-Juhānī was executed in 699 and a few years later Ghaylān, in 743). The Ummayyad caliphs had reason to support the doctrine of God's omnipotent power and decree, rather than that of man's

This reference is a perfect example of the accuracy and the extent of the knowledge that John of Damascus had of Islam and the Muslim community of his days. It shows, also, that this text is very unlikely to be originally of Abū Qurra, who lived during the Abbasid period when the Muʿtazilites enjoyed more freedom and a greater popularity.¹

b. The Word and the words of God.

Are the words of God created or uncreated? They address this very difficult question because they want to prove that the Word of God is created, which is not [the case]. If you say "Uncreated" ² he tells you: "If all these are words of God and they are uncreated, nevertheless they are not gods. Therefore you confessed that Christ, although he is the Word of God, is not God. For this reason the Christian, without answering that they are either created or uncreated, says to him: "Myself I confess only one Word of God, hypostatic, uncreated, as you also have confessed, but my Scripture, I do not call Word, but *words*". (1344A) ³

This portion of the *Disputatio* reflects clearly the controversy of the Orthodox Muslims with the Jahmites and the early Muʿtazilites over those passages in the Qurʾān in which God Himself appears to be speaking directly. Particular Qurʾānic sentences or statements were singled out and were frequently quoted in such dialogues, in which the orthodox Muslims aimed at proving that God is speaking ⁴ and, moreover, that this word is uncreated and eternal.⁵ For the

freedom of will and power, because this way their policy and their administration could be interpreted "comme l'expression intangible de la volonté divine". Gardet, *Introduction*, p. 38; cf. also Klein, in al-Asḥʿari's *Ibānah*, p. 15. Sweetman, *Islam*, II, 2, pp. 165f. Guillaume remarks that this passage of John of Damascus is the "earliest non-Muslim reference to the Muʿtazilites"! *JRAS* (1924), 49.

¹ It is interesting that this allusion to the Muʿtazilites is missing entirely from Abū Qurra's text. *MPG*, XC VII, 1592C. Cf. above, p. 102.

² The text has, erroneously, "created", which is obviously a misunderstanding of the editor. If it were "created" the Muslim would answer immediately, "you have confessed that the Word of God is created". Abū Qurra's text includes also this sentence: "If you say they are created he will tell you: The created things are not called Gods". *MPG*, XC VII: 1592C.

³ The contrast in this passage is between the words $\lambda\delta\gamma\iota\alpha$ (words) and $\rho\acute{\eta}\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$, which could also be translated as "words" or, more properly, "utterances", "articulations", "pronouncements".

⁴ Cf. e.g., "He said: 'O Moses! I have preferred thee above mankind by My messages and by My speaking [unto thee]'" (VII, 144); "... he was called by name 'O Moses! Lo! I, even I am thy Lord'". (XX, 11f).

⁵ "And our word unto a thing, when We intend it, is only that We say unto it: *Be!* And it is". (XVI, 40); "His is verily all creation *and* commandment" (VII, 54). Orthodox Islam used the word which we italicised to show

Jahmītes the words of the Qur'ān are, definitely, the words of God but they are created in order to convey God's will and His command.¹ To this later Orthodox Muslim theologians responded that there is no indication that God's words are means to convey His will, and that "God's will is not created in any created thing".²

The Christian answer is only partially the same as the answer of orthodox Islam. It makes a distinction between the "Word" (Logos) and "utterances" (Scriptures) and while it states categorically that the Word is uncreated it implies that the "utterances" are created, although this latter conclusion is not explicitly stated. Especially in its first part the *Disputatio* reflects the early stage of Muslim orthodoxy when in the discussion on "uncreatedness" there was not yet a distinction made between the Qur'ān as book and the Qur'ān as the speech of God. Obviously under the challenge of the Jahmītes and the Mu'tazilites, *sunni* theology came closer to a similar terminology as that used by John of Damascus.

The distinction between "Word" and "words" did not play a role in either the Jahmīte or the orthodox thought, at first. For the Jahmītes this distinction between *Word* (speech) and *words* (utterances)³ was meaningless, because both were believed to be created. The early orthodox Muslims did not feel the necessity to make such a distinction until they were forced to do so, in order to defend the uncreatedness of the utterance (*lafz*) of the Qur'ān and, from that, the eternity of the whole Qur'ān as a book.⁴

that the commandment is differentiated from creation and, therefore, uncreated. Cf. al-Ash'arī, *Ibānah*, p. 67. Macdonald, *Theology*, pp. 148ff.

¹ A detailed account of the arguments of the Jahmītes and of the answers of Orthodox Islam, is given by al-Ash'arī, *Ibānah*, pp. 66-75.

² *Ibid.*, p. 68. Their point is that God did not create the world with a created word "be", because this would presuppose another created word "be" and then another, which would lead to an infinite series of created words, a logical impossibility. Cf. al-Ash'arī, *Ibānah*, pp. 67f.

³ In the *Disputatio* there are clear indications that the Muslim (a Jahmīte) does not accept the distinction. He argues that such a distinction between λόγια and ῥήματα does not exist even in the Christian Bible: "And how then David says 'The words (λόγια) of the Lord are pure words', and not 'The utterances ῥήματα ...'". (1334B; Ps. 12:6. The Revised Standard Version translates: "The promises of the Lord are promises that are pure". The text of the Septuagint has λόγια). The Christian answers that the word λόγια in this case is used figuratively, not literally, and he explains these two terms. The Muslim argues: "Is it possible for a prophet to say something uncertain?" (i.e. "figuratively"?) 1334B.

⁴ Cf. Waṣīya of Abū Ḥanīfa (it is not of Abū Ḥanīfa but expresses, rather, the thought of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, who died in 850-855), art. 9: "We

It is difficult, however, to say that John of Damascus' distinction between "Word" and "words" (or utterances) finds an exact parallel in Muslim theology. The distinction between "the Word of God" (i.e., Christ) and "the words of God" (i.e., the Scriptures) found an application in The Orthodox Muslim Theology as a means to reaffirm the eternity and uncreatedness of the Qur'ān without any differentiation from its utterance. At a later stage, however, such a distinction was felt necessary and then the Qur'ān was proclaimed to be uncreated, but its pronouncement by men, created.¹

c. The Communication of the Word to men.

And if he [the Saracen] says to you "How did God descend into a woman's womb?" tell him: "Let us make use of your Scripture and mine; your scripture says that God purified the Virgin Mary above every other woman's flesh, and the Spirit of God and the Word descended upon her,² and my Gospel says: The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.³ Behold, one voice and one mind in both these scriptures, . . . and if the Saracen asks you: "If Christ is God, how did he eat, drink, sleep

confess that the Kuran is the speech of Allah, uncreated . . . Whoso sayeth that the speech of Allah is created, he is an infidel regarding Allah, the Exalted, whom men serve, who is eternally the same, His speech being recited or written and retained in the heart, yet never dissociated from Him". Wensinck, *Creed*, p. 127; or Arthur Jeffery, *The Reader of Islam* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1962), p. 343. Cf. also the tradition of al-Bukhārī (d. ca. 870) who after being forced to spell out his position about the uncreatedness of the Qur'ān, gave the following answer: "The Qur'ān is the Word of God and is uncreated. The speech of man is created, and inquisition (*imtihān*) is an innovation (*bid'a*)". Macdonald, *Theology*, pp. 147f. Here is an early attempt to distinguish the Word of God from man's utterance.

¹ Such a distinction seems to be articulated only in the *Fiḫ Akbar II*, art. 3: "The Kuran is the speech of Allah, written in the copies, preserved in the memories, recited by the tongues, revealed to the Prophet. Our pronouncing, writing, and reciting the Kuran is created, whereas the Kuran itself is uncreated". Wensinck, *Creed*, p. 189. This formulation, however, was not universally accepted by Muslim Orthodoxy, *Ibid.*, p. 207. The Ash'arītes, although making a distinction between the Word of God and the Qur'ān as a book, formulated their theses around the following three principles, as they have been summarized by Wensinck: "(1) The speech of Allah was different from Himself; (2) Allah had one Kalām only; (3) What was revealed to Muhammad was a reflex (*ibāra*) of the Kalām of Allah". *Ibid.*, p. 151.

² "And when the angel said: "O Mary! Lo! Allah hath chosen thee and made thee pure above [all] the women of creation . . . O Mary! Lo! Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a word from Him whose name is Messiah, Jesus, Son of Mary . . . She said: My Lord! How can I have a child when no mortal hath touched me?" S. XIX, 17, 29; III, 42, 45, 47.

³ Luke 1:35.

and so on?"¹ tell him² . . . Know that Christ is said to be double in the natures, but one in the hypostasis. Because the pre-eternal Word of God is one—even after the incarnation—in the hypostasis [person], but not in the nature; for a fourth person was not added to the Trinity after the unspeakable union with the flesh.³ (I344C-I345B)

Al-Ash'arī accuses the Jahmites that they:

. . . have the same ideas as the Christians, because the Christians think that the womb of Mary enclosed the word of God—and the Jahmiyyah have improved upon them, with the result that they think that a created word of God descended upon a bush and the bush enclosed it.⁴

In *sunni* theology the syllogism that leads into the doctrine of the uncreatedness of the Word of God develops in the following stages. In the case of the bush, the bush was not a "substrate" (*mahall*)⁵ of the Word of God, because a word created in a created subject becomes its word. The Jahmites used this syllogism with the case of the talking "poisoned lamb" in order to prove that it is a blasphemy to say that the word of the lamb was God. Al-Ash'arī explained that, although God created that word, it was not God who was saying: "I am poisoned".⁶ Speaking is an accident (*'arad*)⁷

¹ Cf. "The Messiah, Son of Mary, was no other than a messenger . . . and his mother was a saintly woman. And they both used to eat [earthly] food" S. V, 75. "Jesus, Son of Mary said: O Allah, Lord of us! send down for us a table spread with food from heaven . . ." *Ibid.*, V, 114; "Lo! the likeness of Jesus with Allah is as the likeness of Adam. He created him of dust, then He said to him: Be! and he is". S. III, 59.

² The Christian explains that it was not the Word of God who ate, drank, and slept, and was crucified, but the eternal Word of God who became a perfect man from the flesh of the Virgin Mary.

³ Cf. *De Fide Orthodoxa*: "His two natures belong to the one Person and one hypostasis of the Word of God . . . I do not, therefore, add a fourth person to the Trinity—God forbid—but I confess one Person of the Word of God and of His flesh. For the Trinity remained Trinity, even after the incarnation of the word". MPG, XCIV, 1013C-1016A.

⁴ Al-Ash'arī, *Ibānah*, p. 68; S. XX, 14. The reference here is to Ex. 3:1-6.

⁵ Al-Ash'arī, *al-Lumā*, pp. 24, 30, 79; *Ibānah*, pp. 68f.

⁶ Al-Ash'arī, *Ibānah*, pp. 71f. The "poisoned lamb" refers to the attempt of the Jewess Zaynab d. al-Hārith, after the occupation of Khaybar (A.H. 6) one of the last remaining Jewish strongholds, to kill Muhammad by preparing a roast lamb meal for him and his companions which she had poisoned. According to the same tradition the Prophet said "This bone tells me that it is poisoned" and spat it out before he had eaten of it, while one of the companions, Bishr b. al-Barā' b. Ma'rūr, died because he had already eaten of it. Ibn Ishāq, *Sirāt*, p. 516.

⁷ Al-Ash'arī, *al-Luma*, p. 57.

and, therefore, it is not self-existent but it needs a substrate in which to exist. That "substrate" is God; and since nothing created is God, the conclusion must be that the speech of God is uncreated, existing in God's essence.¹

The Jahmites, being at the beginning more than any other movement influenced by the Christian doctrine of the Logos, spoke of Jesus as being an instrument through which the Spirit of God revealed His will. Thus, when Jahm b. Şafwān was asked if he could see his God, he answered:

The spirit, which is in Jesus, is the spirit of God from His essence. When God wants to produce something, the spirit enters into one of His creatures, and speaks by its tongue, ordering or forbidding what he wills.²

Although the Jahmites in this statement did not identify Jesus with the Word of God, al-Ash'arī objected to them that the created being on which God descends must be either a human or have the qualifications of a human being. But if it is a human, man eats, drinks, gets married, and dies, things which are impossible for the Word of God.³ This is, also, what John of Damascus taught, but only in so far as the human nature of the Word is concerned.

3. Islam, the religion of the last prophetic revelation.

The *Disputatio* ends with a short dialogue which is introduced with this question posed by the Muslim: "Who is, in your opinion, greater: the one who sanctifies or the one who is sanctified [by someone else]?" (I345C). The Christian understands the purpose of the question, and he characterizes it as a "vicious" one through which the Muslim intended to silence his opponent with his own answer. He therefore answers:

If I tell you that the one who sanctifies is greater than the one who is sanctified, you will answer me: Go then and venerate John the Baptist, because he baptized and consecrated your Christ. (I348A)

The Muslim admits that that was the purpose of his question. The Christian gives an answer with a parable:

When you go to your bath with your slave, and you are washed by him and cleansed, whom do you consider greater: the poor slave

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-32.

² Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Radd 'ala' l-Zanādika wal-Jahmīya*. f. 2b, quoted by Tritton, *Theology*, p. 63. For the characteristic Jahmite doctrine on the absolute unity of God, cf. also, *Ibid.*, p. 63.

³ Al-Ash'arī, *Ibānah*, pp. 74f.

whom you have bought with money, or yourself, who have been washed by him? In the same way He [Christ] also being the Master, was cleansed by the slave. (1348A)

This short dialogue is preserved in two fragments in Lequien's edition,¹ and in a shorter form in Abū Qurra's 38th *opusculum*.²

In Lequien's edition following the *Disputatio* is Abū Qurra's *opusculum* 18, "*ex ore Joannis Damasceni*". It is a dialogue between the bishop Theodor Abū Qurra and a Muslim. The latter shows that at the beginning the world was full of idols. Later Moses came and proclaimed Judaism. Not all the people practiced Judaism, but only those who did showed their piety in that manner. After Moses Christ came proclaiming Christianity. Again, those people only responded in the right manner who received it. Abū Qurra agrees with these statements. After Christ Muhammad came proclaiming the religion of the Hagarenes.³ "Which group", the Muslim asks, "seems to you to have shown piety, those who accepted the religion of the Hagarenes, or the part which remained in Christianity and did not follow Muhammad?"⁴ The answer of the bishop is that part which remained in Christianity; ⁵ Moses and Jesus are reliable persons. Moses had received from God assurances of his mission, testified by signs and miracles. Christ also is reliable, because he was announced by Moses and established himself with signs, wonders and mighty works, such as his supernatural birth, the manifestation of his divinity on the mountain, the expulsion of demons, the feeding of thousands of people, the rising of the dead. . . ! Muhammad, on the contrary, had none of these signs to show except his preaching and teaching. The line of the prophets is completed with John the Baptist; "where, then, is your prophet?"

¹ Lequien, *Opera*, I, 469. Cf. -above, pp. 99ff.

² *MPG*, XCVII, 1593D-1596A.

³ Cf. above, p. 00. We translate as "religion of the Hagarenes" the word Ἀγαρισμὸν. The Greek text, however—we do not know whether this is the original writing or a later perversion of the text—has adulterated the word by adding simply an *M* at the beginning, so that it makes the word a derivative of the verb μαγαρίζω, which means "to make dirty", "to cover with filth", "to befoul", etc.; therefore, Μαγαρισμός implies the religion which causes filth, dirt, and defilement. It is very unlikely that this malicious adulteration can be ascribed either to John of Damascus or to Abū Qurra. Cf. Voorhis, *MW*, XXV (1935), 272, n. 47. Cf. Appendix III, pp. 158-161 for the Greek text and a translation into English.

⁴ *MPG*, XCIV, 1596C; Lequien, *Opera*, I, 470.

⁵ The Muslim expected, of course, the opposite answer, "in conformity with the preceding ones". *MPG*, XCIV, 1596C.

this is not obscure" [i.e., he is nowhere in the line of the prophets].¹

The meaning of the short dialogue in the last part of the *Disputatio* becomes clear only when viewed under the light of this dialogue of Abū Qurra. The subject of the dialogue is neither the divinity nor the baptism of Christ²—although both texts refer to these issues—, but as Abū Qurra's *opusculum* clarifies, the Muslim attempt to demonstrate that Islam is the last stage of God's progressive revelation and that Muhammad the Prophet was sent to fulfill the mission inaugurated by Moses and developed by Christ. Once again we are witnessing here something above a superficial knowledge of Islam by John of Damascus; rather a keen awareness of, and a dealing with what the Muslims considered as crucial and significant in their own religion.

According to the Qur'ān, Muhammad does not lack any of the qualifications of an authentic prophet: Already Abraham and Ishmael had prayed to God to "raise up a messenger . . . who shall recite unto them" His revelations (S. II, 120). Other prophets testified, also, Muhammad's coming (III, 81).³ He was sent as Moses was (LXXIII, 15) and he was inspired as the previous prophets (IV, 163); he came as a teacher of the Scripture and of wisdom (II, 151) to deliver a message (V, 67); he is exalted among the prophets (II, 253); God protected him from his enemies as He protected the other prophets (III, 144) and he was granted special gifts by God (LXIX, 40; LXVIII, 4).

While Chapter 100/101 of the *De Haeresibus* serves as a general introduction to the "heresy" of the Muslims, the *Disputatio* is a kind of manual for a dialectic confrontation of a Christian with a Muslim. This short treatise is a valuable source of information about the earliest stage of Muslim-Christian dialogue, of the development of Muslim theology and the theological inquiries and divisions inside the Muslim community. Although it, still, leaves some very anxious Christians without an answer to their question, as to whether and to what extent the Christian theology influenced the Muslim intellectuals to form a theology of their own, it unmistakably reflects an earnest desire of both sides to reason together and to debate their theological convictions, as it also reflects a sincere concern on the part of various groups of faithful Muslims to make their faith more understandable and relevant.

¹ *Ibid.*, 1597C; Cf. above, pp. 78f.

² Khoury, *Théologiens*, I, p. 80.

³ Cf. above, p. 81, n. 2.

From the point of view of the particular interest of this study, the *Disputatio* allows one to assume that John of Damascus was personally cognizant of this quest and of inquiries among the Muslim believers and had participated in formal or informal debates on such issues, on which there was a Christian answer. The Christian position is in line with his teaching, as he formulated it in his writings and especially in his primary systematic one, the *De Fide Orthodoxa*. The *Disputatio* is a summary of the most essential questions of early Muslim theology, as well as of the most common off-hand answers that a Christian should have in mind whenever he happened to be confronted by a Muslim.

When one views Chapter 100/101 of the *De Haeresibus* and the *Disputatio* together one can not miss noticing the interdependence of the one upon the other, the presupposition of the former for the latter, and the wholesome knowledge, experience and understanding of John of Damascus of the religion of the Muslims.

CHAPTER EIGHT

OTHER WRITINGS

Besides Chapter 100/101 of the *De Haeresibus* and the *Disputatio Saraceni et Christiani* the following titles, as being related to Islam, have been attributed to John of Damascus: ¹

1. *De Draconibus* ²
2. *De Stygibus* ³
3. *The Passion of St. Peter of Capitolia* ⁴
4. *Refutation of the Muslims* ⁵
5. *The Formula of abjuration*

1. *De Draconibus*

It is a short treatise (two columns long in the *Patrologia Graeca*) which aims at refuting popular beliefs and superstitions about spirits and dragons. There is no reference whatsoever to the Muslims, or to any other religious tradition.⁶ The text seems to address the plain people in the Christian community, as the following quotation indicates:

Indeed, ignorance is a fallacious thing, because we harm ourselves excessively by not reading the holy Scriptures and by not investigating them, as the Lord said. Instead, the soldier, on the one hand, says "I am a soldier, and I do not need to read", on the other hand, the farmer uses as an excuse his farming, and the rest of the people act likewise; and [this is the reason why] we all are deficient.⁷

This writing is considered spurious.⁸

2. *De Stygibus*

This short paragraph, as the previous one, deals with popular beliefs about witches. It is also considered spurious.⁹

¹ Khoury, *Théologiens*, I, pp. 66-67.

² *MPG*, XCIV, 1600-1601.

³ *Ibid.*, 1604A-B.

⁴ Peeters, *AB*, LVII (1939), 299-333.

⁵ In Arabic, unedited, cf. below, p. 124.

⁶ Khoury attributes these popular beliefs, which as he states might have found ground among the Christians in Syria, to the Muslims and the Jews. *Théologiens*, I, p. 48.

⁷ *MPG*, XCIV, 1601B.

⁸ Dyovouniotes, *Δαμασκηνός*, p. 187; cf. Hoeck, *OCP*, XVII (1951), 18ff.

⁹ Dyovouniotes, *Δαμασκηνός*, p. 187; cf. Hoeck, *OCP*, XVII (1951), 18ff.

3. *The Passion of St. Peter of Capitolia*

Theophanes has recorded the martyrdom of Peter, bishop of Maiuma, who was put to death in A.D. 743 because he had blasphemed against Muhammad, and because of his disdain for the religion of the Muslims.¹ In this account Theophanes conveys, also, the information that John of Damascus praised him with a eulogy. No such text has been preserved; however, among the works of John of Damascus.²

4. *Refutation of the Muslims*

This title belongs to an Arabic text,³ still unpublished.⁴ Khoury gives the information that this text exists at the Vatican Museum, which seems not to be reaffirmed.⁵

5. *The Formula of abjuration*

Immediately following the *Thesaurus Orthodoxae Fidei* of Nicetas Acominatus⁶ in the *Patrologia Graeca* we find the text of a ritual of abjuration for those who return to Christianity from Islam.⁷ This text is a reprint of an edition by Sylburg in 1595.⁸ Sylburg places this text in the year 1152.⁹ This late date, however, has been challenged by Cumont¹⁰ who places it much earlier, in the second part

¹ *Chronographia ann.* 734, p. 643; cf. above, p. 54.

² Khoury refers to the same incident, but he seems to have confused Walid II (743-744) during whose reign this episode took place, with Walid I (705-715). This does not coincide with the explicit date given by Theophanes, neither does it seem as likely to have happened then.

³ Paul Sbath, *Al-Fihris (Catalogue des manuscrits arabes)*, (Première Partie. *Ouvrages des auteurs antérieurs au XVIIe siècle*. Le Caire: Imprimerie Al-Chark, 1938), p. 72, no. 586. This writing bears the title: رد على المسلمين.

⁴ Khoury, *Théologiens*, I, p. 48.

⁵ *Vat. Arab.* 175, according to Mai, *Scriptorum veterum nova collectio*, t. IV, 2, p. 323. Upon our inquiry from the Vatican Library we received a negative answer concerning its existence there. (February 3, 1969).

⁶ Cf. above, pp. 62.

⁷ MPG, CXL, 124-136. Cf. Khoury, *Théologiens*, I, pp. 187-194. Clermont-Ganneau, "Ancient rituel grec pour l'abjuration des Musulmans dans l'Église Grecque". *RAO*, VII (1906), 254-257.

⁸ Friderici Sylburgii, *Saracenicæ sive Moamethicæ opera* (Heidelberg: Ex typographeio H. Commelini, 1595), pp. 74-91. The part related particularly to Islam has been edited and translated into French by Montet, *RHR*, LIII (1906), 145-163. Cf. also Jean Ebersolt "Un nouveau manuscrit sur le rituel d'abjuration des Musulmans dans l'Église Grecque", *RHR*, LIV (1906), 231-232.

⁹ Montet, *RHR*, LIII (1906), 146.

¹⁰ Franz Cumont, "L'origine de la formule Grecque d'abjuration imposée aux Musulmans". *RHR*, LXIV (1911), 143-150.

of the seventh century. His main arguments are that in the passage, in which Muhammad and the succeeding caliphs are repudiated, the last name mentioned is that of Yazid, obviously of Yazid I (680-683), since this is preceded by Mu'awiya's name; and, furthermore, that the content of the formula shows "striking" similarities with Chapter 100/101 of the *De Haeresibus* and a closeness to the *Disputatio*. Cumont holds that both, the formula and Chapter 101, have as a common source a text of a refutation of Islam going back to the second part of the seventh century.

However, the formula of abjuration shows only some similarities with John of Damascus' texts while its similarity to later Byzantine polemics is indeed striking in its content, as well as in its spirit. The formula contains the same material of Chapter 101 which has been repeated by later Byzantines and, in addition to this, all those traditions and arguments which the later Christian anti-Islamic literature after John of Damascus incorporated. The formula, compared with the text of Acominatus,¹ contains all the points of his text, which are not, however, included in Chapter 101, such as the reference to Muhammad as being the key holder of Paradise and the seventy thousand Muslims who will enter therein.² The most striking difference between the text of John of Damascus and the text of the formula is the misinterpretation of the Muslim doctrine of God, the attitude of the abjuration formula being clearly reflected in the reference to "the God of Muhammad" as *ὁλόσφυρος*, an expression which, as we have seen, is found in the later Byzantine polemical works, but not in John of Damascus.³

It is, also, important to note that the paragraph with the list of Muhammad's successors which the formula anathematizes is identical with a paragraph in the *Contra Muhammed*,⁴ a text of, probably, the tenth or eleventh century.⁵

Although the formula of abjuration shows similarities with Chapter 101 as the later Byzantine anti-Islamic texts do, it seems to us that it is a product of a later stage of Muslim-Christian

¹ Cf. above, pp. 111ff.

² Comp. *MPG*, CXL, 105-121 (Acominatus) with *Ibid.*, 124-137 (formula).

³ Cf. above, pp. 77f. The last anathema of the formula states: "And above all I anathematize the God of Muhammad, about whom he says "He is God, one God *ὁλόσφυρος*, he did not beget, neither was begotten, and no one similar to Him exists". Montet, *RHR*, LIII (1906), 155.

⁴ Cf. Montet, *Ibid.*, p. 148; and *MPG*, CIV, 1452BC.

⁵ Cf. Khoury, *Théologiens*, I, pp. 194-199.

relations which reflects a mentality and an attitude toward Islam markedly different from the one that the writings of John of Damascus demonstrate.¹

At this point one can hardly resist from making the comment, that, the fact that various early treatises with an explicit or implicit reference to Islam have been, even falsely, attributed to John of Damascus, is a kind of recognition of, and reference to, an "authority" on the subject!

¹ Khoury suggests that the formula belongs to the end of the ninth, or the beginning of the tenth century, and that it shows evident marks of Nicetas of Byzantium's *Refutation of the Qur'ān*. *Théologiens*, I, pp. 187f. Cf. above, pp. 77, n. 1.

CHAPTER NINE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The period in which John of Damascus lived and the geographical location of his birthplace inevitably connect his life with Islam in its very early history. The fact seems well established that John of Damascus and his family were among the highest officials in the Muslim government, in which they served for about one hundred years.¹ It is, therefore, strange to suggest that John of Damascus' life was spent "in a Christian ghetto which preserved intact the Byzantine political and historical outlook".² His theology was, definitely, traditionally Byzantine but a great part of his life was lived in a direct personal encounter with people outside this tradition, namely with Muslims. One of the clearest indications of this contact is the document of the Iconoclastic Synod (754), which characterizes him as "Saracen-minded" or "inclined to Muhammedanism". The Iconoclastic Synod condemned John of Damascus, also, as being "insulter of Christ and conspirator against the Empire". This, obviously, was not only because of John's opposition to the Emperor on the matter of the icons and of his interference in the affairs of the Church, but also because of John's contact with the Muslim Arabs, with whom Byzantium was in a bitter conflict.³

While one cannot question seriously that John of Damascus was involved in some type of encounter with Muslims, one finds it more difficult—because of limited written evidences—to specify his knowledge of the details of Islam, let alone to determine conclusively his attitude toward the Muslims.⁴ The documents on which an answer

¹ From the capitulation of Damascus (635) to the time of John of Damascus' retirement to the monastery, which we have placed around 724. The time that John himself remained in office (ca. 705-726) is longer than Meyendorff has described as "for a while". *DOP*, XVIII (1964), 116. Actually the whole length of John of Damascus' public life must be considered as a period of direct contact with the Muslim community including, also, such officials as the later Caliph Yazid I (680-683). Cf. above, pp. 38ff.

² Meyendorff, *DOP*, XVIII (1964), 117.

³ Cf. above, pp. 4, 7 and 17.

⁴ The issue of John of Damascus' knowledge of Islam has been discussed frequently. Merrill has expressed the opinion that John of Damascus "was not acquainted with even the four suras of the Qur'ān in detail", *MW*, XLI (1951), 97. Meyendorff is of the same opinion. *DOP*, XVIII (1964), 118.

can be based are the two short treatises, Chapter 101 of the *De Haeresibus* and the *Disputatio Christiani et Saraceni*,¹ which we consider authentic.²

One of the main conclusions that we have reached is that John's knowledge of the Muslim sources, and specifically of the Qur'ān, was not limited simply to the four Surahs which he names in Chapter 101. In all the issues he raises he demonstrates an accurate knowledge of the content of the Qur'ān, of major points of the Muslim tradition and of the early theological formulations,³ not only of the *sunni* Islam, but of the early Muslim theological movements as well.⁴ With regard to his attitude toward Islam one can hardly trace in these documents any intentional distortion of the Muslim position. His writings do justice to Islam, in the sense that they convey a reliable picture of it to the Christians to whom primarily John of Damascus addressed himself. His aim was to inform the Christian community of the faith and practice of the Muslims with whom they shared their communal life, rather than to inflame hatred.

The foregoing is not a denial of the fact that the statements in these writings are, at the same time, a theological condemnation of Islam and, as such, a warning for the Christians. This is one of the reasons why Islam found its place in a book of Christian heresies which aimed at preparing the Christians for a better defense of, and a greater appreciation for, their orthodox faith.

But the primary reason for his treating Islam as a "Christian heresy" is that Islam rejects that which is indispensable in Christianity, that is the belief in God's redemptive revelation through Jesus Christ, His Logos.⁵ The focal concern of John of Damascus

A good representative of the other side of the discussion is Addison: "Throughout all his controversial work John of Damascus displays a thorough knowledge of Islam. Fully at home in the Arabic tongue, he often cites the Koran word for word and shows his familiarity with the Hadith, or traditions". *Approach*, p. 27.

¹ Cf. above, pp. 66 and 102ff.

² Cf. above, pp. 60 and 99.

³ Cf. pp. 102ff.

⁴ Cf. pp. 114ff.

⁵ Cf. pp. 77ff. John of Damascus, because of his deep and personal convictions as an Orthodox Christian and clergyman, could not, naturally, tolerate teachings which jeopardized the most essential aspect of his faith. On the other hand it is exaggerated to say that he described Islam "with horror". Meyendorff, *DOP*, XVIII (1964) 129; cf. also Khoury, *POC*, VIII (1958), 338. The outline of his descriptions reflect a passionate disposition but testify to the opposite: a naive heresy, unworthy of consideration, or worthy of ridicule.

was what the sources of Islam said and what the belief of the Muslims was about Jesus. What distinguishes John of Damascus as a Christian interlocutor in the Muslim-Christian dialogue is that he was motivated to refute Islam as, primarily, a theological heresy and as a "false" religious tradition, whereas the later Byzantine writers were involved in anti-Muslim polemics which, more often than not, had political dimensions and support. In the history of the Muslim-Christian encounter in the East John of Damascus stands alone as a theologian, keen observer and sometimes participant, who was able to understand Islam as it was experienced and professed by his contemporary Muslims.

John of Damascus has, certainly, made a great impact upon the development of the later Christian-Muslim dialogue.¹ He is a pioneer figure in this field who undertook a serious and knowledgeable confrontation with, and eventually refutation of, Islam. He lived in the midst of an Orthodox Christian community without, however, remaining isolated from the lives and experiences of the people who surrounded him; and this without compulsion.² He set forth his personal and first-hand information as a presupposition for a serious dealing with Islam and he popularized the theological issues which would bring common men of both faiths into an encounter. It was this information that later Byzantine polemicists used for indiscriminately spreading false rumors about Islam and inflaming hatred against the Muslims.

The point, perhaps, at which one might feel compelled to disassociate himself from John of Damascus is his methodology and the very consideration which led him to include Islam among the

¹ We do not think that John of Damascus' "contribution to the history of the Byzantine polemics against Islam is slight". Meyendorff, *DOP*, XVIII (1964), 117. In the light of the analysis of his two writings which we undertook above, this conclusion seems to us unjustifiable. A comparison of the issues raised by John of Damascus and by later Byzantine polemicists shows a far-going dependence of the latter upon the former. Cf. Khoury, *Théologiens*, vol. II as a whole.

² Cf. e.g., the Carolingian and especially the ninth century Spaniard polemicists in the West, as they are described by R. W. Southern: "They were ignorant of Islam, not because they were far removed from it like the Carolingian scholars, but for the contrary reason that they were in the middle of it. If they saw and understood little of what went on round them, and if they knew nothing of Islam as a religion, it was because they wished to know nothing . . . They were fleeing from the embrace of Islam: it is not likely that they would turn to Islam to understand what it was they were fleeing from". *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages*. (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 25-26.

Christian heresies.¹ He saw the Muslims and Islam primarily under the light of what is the most essential in the Christian religion; that is he saw Islam exclusively, in so far as its relation to Christianity is concerned. The moment has come, however, to focus our attention on what the Muslims believe; and this viewed not from the standpoint of the Christian faith, but on what *they* see and confess as being crucial and essential in their own faith. As long as Christians continue to see Islam as a distortion of Christianity, or as long as Muslims see Christianity as a preliminary stage in the history of God's revelation, a religion fulfilled and "annulled" by the advent of Islam, there is little hope for a fruitful and meaningful dialogue between men of both faiths. The "conversion", to which one is called, is to take his partner in the dialogue seriously on his own terms. This means that Christians are challenged to look upon Muslims not simply as potential Christians, and Muslims not to look upon Christianity as an incomplete Islam.

¹ Cf. above p. 95. Cf. also Daniel, *Islam*, p. 5; Hugh Frank Foster, "Is Islam a Christian Heresy?", *MW*, XXII (1932), 126-133; David S. Margoliouth, "Is Islam a Christian Heresy?", *MW*, XXIII (1933), 6-15.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

THE CHAPTER 100/101 OF THE *DE HAERESIBUS*

M.P.G., XCIV:764

ρα'. Ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἡ μέχρι τοῦ νῦν κρατοῦσα λαοπλάνος σκεία τῶν Ἰσμαηλιτῶν, πρόδρομος οὐσα τοῦ Ἀντιχρίστου. Κατάγεται δὲ ἀπὸ Ἰσμαήλ, τοῦ ἐκ τῆς Ἀγάρ τεχθέντος τῷ Ἀβραάμ· διόπερ Ἀγαρηνοὶ καὶ Ἰσμαηλίται προσαγορεύονται. Σαρακηνοὺς δὲ αὐτοὺς καλοῦσιν, ὡς ἐκ τῆς Σάρρας κενούς, διὰ τὸ εἰρῆσθαι ὑπὸ τῆς Ἀγάρ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ· Σάρρα κενήν με ἀπέλυσεν. Οὗτοι μὲν οὖν εἰδωλοατρήσαντες καὶ B προσκυνήσαντες τῷ ἑωσφόρῳ ἄστρῳ, καὶ τῇ Ἀφροδίτῃ, ἦν δὴ καὶ Χαβάρ τῇ ἑαυτῶν ἐπωνόμασαν γλώσση, ὅπερ σημαίνει μεγάλη· ἕως μὲν οὖν τῶν Ἡρακλείου χρόνων προφανῶς εἰδωλολάτρουν. Ἀφ' οὗ χρόνου καὶ δεῦρο ψευδοπροφήτης αὐτοῖς ἀνεφύη,

M.P.G., XCIV:765

A Μαμῆδ ἐπονομαζόμενος, ὃς τῇ τε Παλαιᾷ καὶ Νέᾳ Διαθήκῃ περιτυχῶν, ὁμοίως δῆθεν Ἀρειανῶ προσομιλήσας μοναχῶ, ἰδίαν συνεστήσατο αἵρεσιν. Καὶ προφάσει τὸ δοκεῖν θεοσεβείας τὸ ἔθνος εἰσποιησάμενος, ἐξ οὐρανοῦ γραφὴν κατενεχθῆναι ἐπ' αὐτὸν διαθρυλλεῖ. Τινὰ οὖν συντάγματα ἐν τῷ παρ' αὐτοῦ βιβλίῳ χαράξας γέλωτος ἄξια, τὸ σέβας αὐτοῖς παραδίδωσι. Λέγει ἓνα Θεὸν εἶναι ποιητὴν τῶν ὅλων, μήτε γεννηθέντα, μήτε γεγεννηκότα. Λέγει τὸν Χριστὸν Λόγον εἶναι τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ, κτιστὸν δὲ καὶ δοῦλον, καὶ ὅτι ἐκ Μαρίας τῆς ἀδελφῆς Μωϋσέως καὶ Ἀαρὼν ἄνευ σπορᾶς ἐτέχθη. Ὁ γὰρ Λόγος, φησὶ, τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα B εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὴν Μαρίαν, καὶ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἰησοῦν προφήτην ὄντα, καὶ δοῦλον τοῦ Θεοῦ. Καὶ ὅτι οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι παρανομήσαντες ἐθέλησαν αὐτὸν σταυρῶσαι, καὶ κρατήσαντες ἐσταύρωσαν τὴν σκιὰν αὐτοῦ· αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐσταυρώθη, φησὶν, οὔτε ἀπέθανεν· ὁ γὰρ Θεὸς ἔλαβεν αὐτὸν πρὸς ἑαυτὸν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν διὰ τὸ φιλεῖν αὐτόν. Καὶ τοῦτο λέγει, ὅτι, τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀνελθόντος εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς, ἐπηρώτησεν αὐτὸν ὁ Θεὸς λέγων· Ὡ Ἰησοῦ, σὺ εἶπας, ὅτι <Υἱός εἰμι τοῦ Θεοῦ,

APPENDIX I

THE CHAPTER 100/101 OF THE *DE HAERESIBUS*

There is also the still-prevailing deceptive superstition of the Ishmaelites, the fore-runner of the Antichrist. It takes its origin from Ishmael, who was born to Abraham from Hagar, and that is why they also call them Hagarenes and Ishmaelites. They also call them Saracenes, allegedly for having been sent away by Sarah empty; for Hagar said to the angel, "*Sarah has sent me away empty*".¹ These, then, were idolaters and they venerated the morning star and Aphrodite, whom notably they called *Habar* in their own language, which means "great"; therefore until the times of Heraclius they were, undoubtedly, idolaters. From that time on a false prophet appeared among them,

surnamed Mameth, who, having casually been exposed to the Old and the New Testament and supposedly encountered an Arian monk, formed a heresy of his own. And after, by pretence, he managed to make the people think of him as a God-fearing fellow, he spread rumors that a scripture was brought down to him from heaven. Thus, having drafted some pronouncements in his book, worthy (only) of laughter, he handed it down to them in order that they may comply with it.

He says that there exists one God maker of all, who was neither begotten nor has he begotten. He says that Christ is the Word of God, and his spirit, created and a servant, and that he was born without a seed from Mary, the sister of Moses and Aaron. For, he says, the Word of God and the Spirit entered Mary and she gave birth to Jesus who was a prophet and a servant of God. And that the Jews, having themselves violated the Law, wanted to crucify him and after they arrested him they crucified his shadow, but Christ himself, they say, was not crucified nor did he die; for God took him up to himself into heaven because he loved him. And this is what he says, that when Christ went up to the heavens God questioned him saying: "O Jesus, did you say that 'I am

¹ The words combined here to form the name *Saracenes* are Σάρρα + κενοί(-ούς) = (cast away) empty by Sarah. Actually there is not such a dialogue recorded as having taken place between Hagar and the angel. The "founding" sentence of the name Saracenes refers rather to *Gen. 21:10, 14* "So she (Sarah) said to Abraham, 'Cast out this slave woman with her son; . . .' So Abraham rose early in the morning . . . and sent her (Hagar) away". Contrary to what the name Saracene is interpreted to mean, *Gen. 21:14* suggests that Abraham provided Hagar with bread and water for her and the child, before sending them away.

- καὶ Θεός;> Καὶ ἀπεκρίθη, φησὶν, ὁ Ἰησοῦς· <Ἰλεώς μοι, Κύριε· σὺ οἶδας ὅτι οὐκ εἶπον, οὐδὲ ὑπερηφανῶ εἶναι δοῦλός σου· ἀλλ' ἄνθρωποι οἱ παραβάται ἔγραψαν, ὅτι εἶπον τὸν λόγον τοῦτον, καὶ ἐψεύσαντο κατ' ἐμοῦ, καὶ εἰσὶ πεπλανημένοι.> Καὶ ἀπεκρίθη, καὶ φησιν αὐτῷ ὁ Θεός· <Οἶδα ὅτι σὺ οὐκ ἔλεγες τὸν λόγον τοῦτον.> Καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ τερατολογῶν
- C ἐν τῇ τοιαύτῃ συγγραφῇ γέλωτος ἄξια, ταύτην πρὸς Θεοῦ ἐπ' αὐτὸν κατενεχθῆναι φησὶν. Ἡμῶν δὲ λεγόντων· Καὶ τίς ἐστὶν ὁ μαρτυρῶν, ὅτι γραφὴν αὐτῷ δέδωκεν ὁ Θεός; καὶ τίς τῶν προφητῶν προεῖπεν ὅτι τοιοῦτος ἀνίσταται προφήτης; καὶ διαπορούντων αὐτῶν, ὡς ὁ Μωϋσῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ κατὰ τὸ Σινὰ ὄρος ἐπ' ὄψεως παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ, [ἐν νεφέλῃ, καὶ πυρὶ, καὶ γνόφῳ, καὶ θυέλλῃ φανέντος ἐδέξατο τὸν νόμον. Καὶ ὅτι πάντες οἱ προφήται, ἀπὸ Μωϋσέως καθεξῆς ἀρξάμενοι, περὶ τῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ παρουσίας προηγόρευσαν, καὶ ὅτι Θεός ὁ Χριστός, καὶ Θεοῦ Υἱὸς σαρκούμενος ἤξει, καὶ σταυρωθήσόμενος, καὶ θνήσκων, καὶ ἀναστήσόμενος· καὶ ὅτι κριτὴς οὗτος ζώντων καὶ νεκρῶν· καὶ
- D λεγόντων ἡμῶν, Πῶς οὐχ οὕτως ἦλθεν ὁ προφήτης ὑμῶν, ἄλλων μαρτυρούντων περὶ αὐτοῦ, οὐδὲ παρόντων ὑμῶν, ὁ Θεός, ὡς τῷ Μωϋσεῖ βλέποντος τοῦ λαοῦ, καπνίζομένου ὄρους δέδωκε τὸν νόμον, ἀκακείνω τὴν γραφὴν, ἣν φατε, παρέσχεν, ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς τὸ βέβαιον ἔχητε; ἀποκρίνονται, ὅτι ὁ Θεός ὅσα θέλει ποιεῖ. Τοῦτο καὶ

M.P.G., XCIV:768

- A ἡμεῖς, φαμέν, οἶδαμεν· ἀλλ' ὅπως ἡ γραφὴ κατῆλθεν εἰς τὸν προφήτην ὑμῶν, ἐρωτῶμεν. Καὶ ἀποκρίνονται, ὅτι ἐν ὄσῳ κοιμᾶται, κατέβη ἡ γραφὴ ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ. Καὶ τὸ γελοιῶδες πρὸς αὐτοὺς λέγομεν ἡμεῖς· ὅτι λοιπὸν ἐπειδὴ κοιμώμενος ἐδέξατο τὴν γραφὴν, καὶ οὐκ ἤσθητο τῆς ἐνεργείας, εἰς αὐτὸν ἐπληρώθη τὸ τῆς δημώδους παροιμίας]
- Πάλιν ἡμῶν ἐρωτῶντων· Πῶς αὐτοῦ ἐντειλαμένου ἡμῖν ἐν τῇ γραφῇ ὑμῶν, μηδὲν ποιεῖν, ἢ δέχεσθαι ἄνευ μαρτύρων, οὐκ ἠρωτήσατε αὐτὸν, ὅτι Πρῶτον αὐτὸς ἀπόδειξον διὰ μαρτύρων, ὅτι προφήτης εἶ, καὶ ὅτι ἀπὸ Θεοῦ ἐξῆλθες, καὶ ποία γραφὴ μαρτυρεῖ περὶ σοῦ; σιωπῶσιν αἰδού-
- B μενοι. Ἐπειδὴ γυναῖκα γῆμαι οὐκ ἔξεστιν ὑμῖν ἄνευ μαρτύρων, οὐδὲ ἀγοράζειν, οὐδὲ κτᾶσθαι, οὔτε ὑμεῖς αὐτοὶ καταδέχεσθε ὄνον, ἢ κτήνος ἀμάρτυρον ἔχειν· ἔχετε μὲν καὶ γυναῖκας, καὶ κτήματα, καὶ ὄνους, καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ διὰ μαρτύρων, μόνην δὲ πίστιν, καὶ γραφὴν ἀμάρτυρον ἔχετε· ὁ γὰρ ταύτην ὑμῖν παραδοὺς οὐδαμῶθεν ἔχει τὸ βέβαιον, οὐδὲ τις προμάρτυρ ἐκείνου γνωρίζεται, ἀλλὰ καὶ κοιμώμενος ἐδέξατο ταύτην. Καλοῦσι δὲ ἡμᾶς Ἑταιριαστὰς, ὅτι, φησὶ, ἑταῖρον τῷ Θεῷ παρεισάγο-

Son of God, and God'?" And Jesus, they say, answered: "Be merciful to me, Lord; you know that I did not say so, nor will I boast that I am your servant; but men who have gone astray wrote that I made this statement and they said lies against me and they have been in error". And God, they say, answered to him: "I knew that you would not say this thing". And although he includes in this writing many more absurdities worthy of laughter, he insists that this was brought down to him from God. And we ask: "And which is the one who gives witness, that God has given to him the scriptures? And which of the prophets foretold that such a prophet would arise?" And because they are surprised and at a loss (we tell them) that Moses received the Law by the Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people when God appeared in cloud and fire and darkness and storm; and that all the prophets, starting from Moses and onward, foretold of the advent of Christ and that Christ is God and that the Son of God will come by taking up flesh and that he will be crucified and that he will die and that he will be the judge of the living and of the dead alike; and when, then, we ask, "How is it that your prophet did not come this way, by having others bearing witness to him, nor did—as in the case of Moses, that God gave the Law to him while the people were looking and the mountain was in smoke—God give him as well, as you claim, the scripture in your presence so that you, too, have an assurance?", they reply that God does whatever he pleases. "This"

we say "is what we also know; but how did the scripture come down to your prophet, this is what we are asking". And they answer that, while he was asleep the scripture came down upon him. Then we say to them in jest that, (well) since while asleep he received the scripture and he did not have a sense of this event taking place, it is on him that the folk proverb was fulfilled . . .¹

When again we ask them, "How is it that, although in your scripture he commanded not to do anything or receive anything without witnesses, you did not ask him 'You first prove with witnesses that you are a prophet and that you came from God, and which scripture testifies about you'", they remain silent because of shame. Since you are not permitted to marry a woman without witnesses, neither to purchase something, nor to acquire property—you do not even condescend to have an ass or an animal without witnesses—you have women, and properties, and asses and everything else through witnesses; and yet, only your faith and your scripture you have without a witness. And this is because the one who handed it down to you does not have any certification from anywhere, nor is there any one known who testified about him in advance, but he, furthermore, received this while asleep. Moreover they call us *Associators*, because, they say, we introduce beside God an associate to

¹ The proverb does not appear in the text. Lequien suggests that this is the one from Plato: "You are spinning me dreams". Cf. Chase, *Saint John*, p. 155, n. 106.

μεν, λέγοντες εἶναι τὸν Χριστὸν Υἱὸν Θεοῦ καὶ Θεὸν. Πρὸς οὓς φαμεν, ὅτι τοῦτο οἱ προφήται καὶ ἡ Γραφή παραδέδωκεν· ὑμεῖς δὲ ὡς ἰσχυρίζεσθε τοὺς προφήτας δέχεσθε. Εἰ οὖν κακῶς λέγομεν τὸν Χριστὸν Θεοῦ Υἱὸν, κακῆνοι ἐδίδαξαν καὶ παρέδωκαν ἡμῖν. Καὶ τινες μὲν αὐτῶν C φασιν, ὅτι ἡμεῖς τοὺς προφήτας ἀλληγορήσαντες τοιαῦτα προστεθείκαμεν. Ἄλλοι φασὶν ὅτι οἱ Ἑβραῖοι μισοῦντες ἡμᾶς ἐπλάνησαν, ὡς ἀπὸ τῶν προφητῶν γράψαντες, ἵνα ἡμεῖς ἀπολώμεθα.

Πάλιν δὲ φαμεν πρὸς αὐτούς· Ὑμῶν λεγόντων, ὅτι Χριστὸς Λόγος ἐστὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Πνεῦμα, πῶς λοιδορεῖτε ἡμᾶς ὡς Ἑταιριστάς; Ὁ γὰρ λόγος καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα ἀχώριστόν ἐστι τοῦ ἐν ᾧ πέφυκεν· εἰ οὖν ἐν Θεῷ ἐστὶν ὁ Λόγος αὐτοῦ, δῆλον ὅτι καὶ Θεὸς ἐστὶν. Εἰ δὲ ἐκτός ἐστι τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἄλογός ἐστι καθ' ὑμᾶς ὁ Θεός, καὶ ἄπνους. Οὐκοῦν φεύγοντες ἐταιριάζειν τὸν Θεὸν ἐκόψατε αὐτόν. Κρεῖσσον γὰρ ἦν λέγειν ὑμᾶς, ὅτι ἐταῖρον ἔχει, ἢ κόπτειν αὐτόν, καὶ ὡς λίθον, ἢ ξύλον, ἢ τι τῶν D ἀναισθήτων παρεισάγειν. Ὡστε ὑμεῖς ἡμᾶς ψευδηγοροῦντες, Ἑταιριστάς καλεῖτε· ἡμεῖς δὲ Κόπτας ὑμᾶς προσαγορεύομεν τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Διαβάλλουσι δὲ ἡμᾶς ὡς εἰδωολάτραις προσκυνοῦντας τὸν σταυρὸν, ὃν καὶ βδελύσσονται· καὶ φαμεν

M.P.G., XCIV:769

A πρὸς αὐτούς· Πῶς οὖν ὑμεῖς λίθῳ προστρίβεσθε κατὰ τὴν Χαβαθὰν ὑμῶν, καὶ φιλεῖτε τὸν λίθον ἀσπαζόμενοι; Καὶ τινες αὐτῶν φασιν ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ τὸν Ἀβραάμ συνουσιάσαι τῇ Ἄγαρ· ἄλλοι δὲ ὅτι ἐπ' αὐτόν προσέδησε τὴν κάμηλον, μέλλων θύειν τὸν Ἰσαάκ· Καὶ πρὸς αὐτούς ἀποκρινόμεθα· Τῆς Γραφῆς λεγούσης, ὅτι ὄρος ἦν ἀλσῶδες, καὶ ξύλα, ἀφ' ὧν καὶ εἰς τὴν ὀλοκάρπωσιν σχίσας ὁ Ἀβραάμ ἐπέθηκε τῷ Ἰσαάκ· καὶ ὅτι μετὰ τῶν παιδῶν τὰς ὄνους κατέλιπεν· πόθεν οὖν ὑμῖν τὸ ληρεῖν; οὐ γὰρ ἐκεῖσε ξύλα δρυμῶδη κεῖται, οὔτε ὄνοι διοδεύουσιν. Αἰδοῦνται μὲν. Ὅμως φασὶν εἶναι τὸν λίθον τοῦ Ἀβραάμ. Εἰτά φαμεν· Ἔστω τοῦ Ἀβραάμ, ὡς ὑμεῖς ληρεῖτε· τοῦτον οὖν ἀσπαζόμενοι, ὅτι μόνον ὁ Ἀβραάμ ἐπ' B αὐτόν συνουσίασε γυναικί, ἢ ὅτι κάμηλον προσέδησεν, οὐκ αἰδεῖσθε, ἀλλ' ἡμᾶς εὐθύνετε ὅτι πρὸς σταυρὸν τοῦ Χριστοῦ προσκυνοῦμεν, δι' οὗ δαιμόνων ἰσχύς, καὶ διαβόλου καταλέλυται πλάνη; Οὗτος δὲ, ὃν φασὶν λίθον, κεφαλὴ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ἐστὶν ἣν προσεκύνουν, ἣν Χαβερ προσηγόρευον, ἐφ' ἧν καὶ μέχρι νῦν ἐγγλυφίδος ἀποσκίασμα τοῖς ἀκριβῶς κατανοοῦσι φαίνεται.

Οὗτος ὁ Μάμεδ πολλάς, ὡς εἴρηται, ληρωδίας συντάξας, ἐκάστη τούτων προσηγορίαν ἐπέθηκεν· οἷον ἡ γραφὴ τῆς γυναικὸς, καὶ ἐν

Him by saying that Christ is the Son of God and God. To whom we answer, that this is what the prophets and the Scripture have handed down to us; and you, as you claim, accept the prophets. If, therefore, we wrongly say that Christ is Son of God they also were wrong, who taught and handed it down to us so. And some of them maintain that *we* have added such things, by having allegorized the prophets. Others hold that the Jews, out of hatred, deceived us with writings which supposedly originated from the prophets so that we might get lost.

Again we respond to them: "Since you say that Christ is Word and Spirit of God, how do you scold us as *Associators*? For the Word and the Spirit is inseparable each from the one in whom this has the origin; if, therefore, the Word is in God it is obvious that he is God as well. If, on the other hand, this is outside of God, then God, according to you, is without word and without spirit. Thus, trying to avoid making associates to God you have mutilated Him. For it would be better if you were saying that he has an associate than to mutilate him and introduce him as if he were a stone, or wood, or any of the inanimate objects. Therefore, by accusing us falsely, you call us *Associators*; we, however, call you *Mutilators* (Coptas) of God".

They also defame us as being idolaters because we venerate the cross, which they despise; and we respond

to them: "How is it that you rub yourselves against a stone by your *Habathan*, and you express your adoration to the stone by kissing it?" And some of them answer that (because) Abraham had intercourse with Hagar on it; others, because he tied the camel around it when he was about to sacrifice Isaac. And we respond to them: "Since the Scripture says that there was a grove-like mountain and wood, from which Abraham even cut for the holocaust on which he laid Isaac, and also that he left the asses behind with the servants, from where is, then, your idle tale? For, in that place, there is neither wood from a forest, nor do asses travel through". And they are embarrassed. However they claim that the stone is of Abraham. Then we respond: "Suppose that it is of Abraham, as you foolishly maintain; are you not ashamed to kiss it for the only reason that Abraham had intercourse with a woman, or because he tied his camel to it, and yet you blame us for venerating the cross of Christ, through which the power of the demons and the deceit of the devil have been destroyed?" This, then, which they call "stone" is the head of Aphrodite, whom they used to venerate (and) whom they called *Haber*, on which those who can understand it exactly can see, even until now, traces of an engraving.

This Muhammad, as it has been mentioned, composed many idle tales, on each one of which he prefixed a title, like for example the discourse of

αὐτῇ τέσσαρας γυναῖκας προφανῶς λαμβάνει νομοθετεῖ, καὶ παλλακὰς, ἔαν δύνηται, χιλίας, ὅσας ἡ χεὶρ αὐτοῦ κατάσχη ὑποκειμένας ἐκ τῶν
 C τεσσάρων γυναικῶν· ἣν δ' ἂν βουληθῆ ἀπολύειν, ἢ θελήσειε, καὶ κομίζεσθαι
 ἄλλην, ἐκ τοιαύτης αἰτίας νομοθετήσας· Σύμπονον ἔσχεν ὁ Μάμεδ
 Ζεῖδ προσαγορευόμενον. Οὗτος γυναῖκα ἔσχεν ὠραίαν, ἥς ἠράσθη ὁ
 Μάμεδ. Καθημένον αὐτῶν, φησὶν ὁ Μάμεδ· <Ὁ δεῖνα, ὁ Θεὸς ἐνετείλατό
 μοι τὴν γυναῖκά σου λαβεῖν.> Ὁ δὲ ἀπεκρίθη· <Ἀπόστολος εἶ· ποιήσον
 ὡς σοὶ ὁ Θεὸς εἶπε· λάβε τὴν γυναῖκά μου.> Μᾶλλον δὲ, ἵνα ἄνωθεν
 εἴπωμεν, ἔφη πρὸς αὐτόν· <Ὁ Θεὸς ἐνετείλατό μοι, ἵνα ἀπολύσῃς
 τὴν γυναῖκά σου.> Ὁ δὲ ἀπέλυσε. Καὶ μεθ' ἡμέρας πολλὰς· <Ἀλλὰ,
 φησὶν, ἵνα κἀγὼ αὐτὴν λάβω ἐνετείλατο ὁ Θεός.> Εἶτα λαβάν, καὶ
 μοιχεύσας αὐτὴν τοιοῦτον ἔθηκε νόμον· <Ὁ βουλόμενος ἀπολύετω
 τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ. Ἐὰν δὲ μετὰ τὸ ἀπολύσαι ἐπ' αὐτὴν ἀναστρέφῃ,
 D γαμείτω αὐτὴν ἄλλος. Οὐ γὰρ ἔξεστι λαβεῖν, εἰ μὴ γαμηθῆ ὑφ' ἑτέρου.
 Ἐὰν δὲ καὶ ἀδελφὸς ἀπολύσῃ, γαμείτω αὐτὴν ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ βουλόμενος.>
 Ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ γραφῇ τοιαῦτα παραγγέλλει· <Εἴργασαι τὴν γῆν, ἣν ὁ
 Θεὸς ἔδωκέ σοι, καὶ φιλοκάλησον αὐτὴν· καὶ τότε ποιήσον, καὶ τοιῶσδε·>
 ἵνα μὴ πάντα λέγω, ὡς ἐκεῖνος, αἰσχροῦ.

Πάλιν γραφὴ τῆς καμῆλου τοῦ Θεοῦ, περὶ ἧς λέγει, ὅτι ἦν κάμηλος
 ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἔπινεν ὄλον τὸν ποταμὸν, καὶ οὐ διήρχετο μεταξὺ δύο
 ὀρέων διὰ τὸ

M.P.G., XCIV:772

A μὴ χωρεῖσθαι. Λαὸς οὖν, φησὶν, ἦν ἐν τῷ τόπῳ, καὶ τὴν μὲν μίαν ἡμέραν
 αὐτὸς ἔπινε τὸ ὕδωρ, ἡ δὲ κάμηλος τῇ ἐξῆς. Πίνουσα δὲ τὸ ὕδωρ ἔτρεφεν
 αὐτοὺς τὸ γάλα παρεχομένη ἀντὶ τοῦ ὕδατος. Ἀνέστησαν οὖν οἱ ἄνδρες
 ἐκεῖνοι πονηροὶ ὄντες, φησὶ, καὶ ἀπέκτειναν τὴν κάμηλον· τῆς δὲ γέννημα
 ὑπῆρχεν μικρὰ κάμηλος, ἣτις, φησὶ, τῆς μητρὸς ἀναιρεθείσης ἀνεβόησε
 πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ ἔλαβεν αὐτὴν πρὸς ἑαυτόν. Πρὸς οὓς φαμεν· Πόθεν
 ἡ κάμηλος ἐκείνη; Καὶ λέγουσιν, ὅτι ἐκ Θεοῦ. Καὶ φαμεν· Συνεβιβάσθη
 ταύτη κάμηλος ἄλλη; Καὶ λέγουσιν· Οὐχί. — Πόθεν οὖν, φαμέν, ἐγέννη-
 σεν; Ὁρῶμεν γὰρ τὴν κάμηλον ὑμῶν ἀπάτορα καὶ ἀμήτορα καὶ ἀγενεαλό-
 γητον· γεννήσασα δὲ, κακὸν ἔπαθεν. Ἄλλ' οὐδὲ ὁ βιβιάσας φαίνεται,
 B καὶ ἡ μικρὰ κάμηλος ἀνελήφθη. Ὁ οὖν προφήτης ὑμῶν, ὃ καθὼς λέγετε,
 ἐλάλησεν ὁ Θεός, διὰ τί περὶ τῆς καμῆλου οὐκ ἔμαθε, ποῦ βόσκειται,
 καὶ τίνες γαλεύονται, ταύτην ἀμέλγοντες; Ἡ καὶ αὐτὴ μὴ ποτε κακοῖς,
 ὡς ἡ μήτηρ, περιτυχοῦσα ἀνηρέθη, ἢ ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ πρόδρομος
 ὑμῶν εἰσῆλθεν, ἀφ' ἧς ὁ ποταμὸς ὑμῖν ἔσται, ὃν ληρεῖτε, τοῦ γάλακτος;
 Τρεῖς γὰρ φατε ποταμοὺς ὑμῖν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ ῥεῖν, ὕδατος, οἴνου,
 καὶ γάλακτος. Ἐὰν ἐκτός ἐστιν ἡ πρόδρομος ὑμῶν κάμηλος τοῦ παρα-
 δείσου, δῆλον ὅτι ἀπεξήρανθη πείνη καὶ δίψη, ἢ ἄλλοι τοῦ γάλακτος

The Woman, in which he clearly legislates that one may have four wives and one thousand concubines if he can, as many as he can maintain beside the four wives; and that one can divorce whomsoever he pleases, if he so wishes, and have another one. He made this law because of the following case: Muhammad had a comrade named Zaid. This man had a beautiful wife with whom Muhammad fell in love. While they were once sitting together Muhammad said to him: "Oh you, God commanded me to take your wife". And he replied, "You are an apostle; do as God has told you; take my wife". Or rather, in order to tell the story from the beginning, he said to him: "God commanded me (to tell you) that you should divorce your wife"; and he divorced her. Several days later he said, "But now God commanded me that I should take her". Then after he took her and committed adultery with her he made such a law: "Who-soever wills may dismiss his wife. But if, after the divorce, he wants to return back to her let someone else marry her (first). For it is not permitted for him to take her (back) unless she is married by somebody else. And even if a brother divorces (his wife), let his brother marry her if he so wishes". This is the type of precepts that he gives in this discourse: "Till the land that God gave you and beautify it; and do this and in this manner"—not to say everything obscene, as he did.

Again, there is the discourse of The Camel of God, about which he says that there was a camel from God and that she used to drink the whole river so that she could not pass between two mountains because

there was not enough room for her to go through. There were people in that place, he says, and on the one day they were drinking the water and the camel on the next. When she was drinking the water she fed them by offering her milk to them instead of the water. Those people, then, being evil, rose up and killed the camel. There was, however, a small camel which was her offspring which, he says, when her mother was killed cried out to God and He took her up to Himself. And we say to them: "Where was that camel from?" And they answer that (she was) from God. And we say: "Was there any other camel that coupled with her?" And they say, "No". "How, then" we say "she gave an offspring? For we see that camel was without father, mother and genealogy; and when she gave birth she was met, instead, with evil. In your story there appears neither the one who coupled with the she-camel, nor (where) the young camel was taken up. Your prophet, then, to whom as you say God has spoken, why did he not find out about the camel, where she is grazing and who is milking her and drinking her milk? Or did she also happen, like her mother, to fall into the hands of evil men and was killed, or has she, before you already, entered paradise and from her is going to flow the river of milk that you are talking about? For you say that you will have three rivers in paradise flowing water, wine and milk. If your fore-runner camel is outside paradise, it is obvious that she has died out of hunger and thirst, or that other people are going to enjoy her milk;

- αὐτῆς ἀπολεύσουσι· καὶ μάτην ὁ προφήτης ὑμῶν φρυάττεται, ὡς ὁμιλήσας Θεῷ· οὐ γὰρ τὸ μυστήριον αὐτῷ ἀπεκαλύφθη τῆς καμῆλου.
- Εἰ δὲ ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ ἐστὶ, πάλιν πίνει τὸ ὕδωρ, καὶ ἀνυδρία ξηραίνεσθε
- C ἐν μέσῳ τῆς τρυφῆς τοῦ παραδείσου. Κὰν οἶνον ἐκ τοῦ παροδεύοντος ἐπιθυμήσητε ποταμοῦ, μὴ παρόντος ὕδατος (ἀπέπια γὰρ ὄλον ἢ κάμηλος) ἄκρατον πίνοντες ἐγκαίεσθε, καὶ μέθη παραπταίετε, καὶ καθεύδετε· καρηβαροῦντες δὲ καὶ μεθ' ὕπνον, καὶ κεκραίπαληχότες ἐξ οἴνου, τῶν ἡδέων ἐπιλανθάνεσθε τοῦ παραδείσου. Πῶς οὖν ὁ προφήτης ὑμῶν οὐκ ἐνενοήθη ταῦτα, μήποτε συμβῆ ὑμῖν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ τῆς τρυφῆς; Οὐδέποτε περὶ τῆς καμῆλου πεφρόντικεν, ὅπου νῦν διάγει. Ἄλλ' οὐδὲ ὑμεῖς ἐρωτήσατε αὐτόν, ὡς ὑμῖν περὶ τῶν τριῶν διηγόρευεν ὄνειροπολούμενος ποταμῶν. Ἄλλ' ὑμεῖς σαφῶς τὴν θαυμαστὴν ὑμῶν κάμηλον εἰς ψυχὰς ὄνων, ὅπου καὶ ὑμεῖς μέλλετε διάγειν, ὡς κτηνώδεις, προδραμοῦσαν ὑμῖν
- D ἐπαγγελόμεθα. Ἐκεῖσε δὲ σιότης ἐστὶ τὸ ἐξώτερον, καὶ κόλασις ἀτελεύτητος· πῦρ ἡχοῦν, σκώληξ ἀκοίμητος, καὶ ταρτάριοι δαίμονες.

Πάλιν φησὶν ὁ Μάμεδ· ἡ γραφή τῆς τραπέζης· λέγει δὲ ὅτι ὁ Χριστὸς ἤτήσατο παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τράπεζαν, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ. Ὁ γὰρ Θεὸς, φησὶν, εἶπεν αὐτῷ, ὅτι <Δέδωκά σοι καὶ τοῖς σοῖς τράπεζαν ἄφθαρτον.

Πάλιν γραφὴν Βοϊδίου, καὶ ἄλλα τινὰ ληρήματα λέγει γέλως ἄξια, ἃ διὰ τὸ πλῆθος παραδρα-

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- A μεῖν οἶμαι δεῖν. Τούτους περιτέμεσθαι σὺν γυναιξὶ νομοθετήσας, καὶ μήτε σαββατίζειν, μήτε βαπτίζεσθαι προστάξας, τὰ μὲν τῶν ἐν τῷ νόμῳ ἀπηγορευμένων ἐσθίειν, τῶν δὲ ἀπέχεσθαι παραδούς· οἰνοποισίαν δὲ παντελῶς ἀπηγόρευεν.

and your prophet is boasting in vain that he talked with God, since there was not revealed to him the mystery about the camel. If, on the other hand, she is in paradise, she again drinks the water and you are going, for lack of water, to dry up in the midst of the delights of paradise. And if you will desire (to drink) wine from the nearby flowing river, since there will be no water (because the camel has drunk it all), drinking of it without an end you will burn inside you, and you will wobble because of drunkenness, and will be asleep. With heavy head, therefore, and after sleep, and with intoxication because of the wine you will miss the pleasures of paradise. How, then, did your prophet not think of all these, that they might happen to you in the paradise of delight? He never cared (to find out) where the camel is living now; neither did you, however, ask him about, when, out of his dreams, he was preaching to you about the three rivers. But we assure you, definitely, that your wonderful camel has already entered before you into the souls of asses, where you also are going to abide, like animals. And there is the outer darkness and everlasting hell; a roaring fire, an ever wakeful worm, and demons of the hell”.

Muhammad, also, talks about the discourse of The Table. He says that Christ requested from God a table, and it was given to him. Because, he says, he told him “I have given to you and to your (companions) an incorruptible table”.

Also the discourse of The Heifer, and several other idle tales worthy of laughter, which, because of their number, I think that I should skip.

He made a law that they and the women be circumcised, and he commanded (them) neither to observe the Sabbath, nor to be baptized and, on the one hand, to eat what is forbidden in the Law and, on the other, to abstain from the other ones (which the law permits); he also forbade drinking of wine altogether.

APPENDIX II

DISPUTATIO SARACENI ET CHRISTIANI

M.P.G., XCIV:1336

- B Ἐρωτισθεὶς ὁ Χριστιανὸς παρὰ ΣΑΡΗΝΟΥ (sic) τίνα λέγεις αἴτιον καλοῦ καὶ κακοῦ; Ἀπορία.
 Ὁ ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΟΣ εἶπεν· Πάντων τῶν ἀγαθῶν οὐδένα φαμὲν αἴτιον εἶναι εἰ μὴ τὸν Θεόν, κακοῦ δὲ οὐ.
 Καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ ΣΑΡΑΚ. εἶπεν· Τίνα λέγεις αἴτιον εἶναι τῶν κακῶν;
 Ὁ ΧΡΙΣΤ. Τὸν ἀπὸ γνώμης ὄντα διάβολον δηλονότι, καὶ ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους.
 Ὁ ΣΑΡΑΚ. Χάριν τίνος;
 Ὁ ΧΡΙΣΤ. Διὰ τὸ αὐτεξούσιον.
 Ὁ ΣΑΡΑΚ. Τί οὖν; αὐτεξούσιος εἶ, καὶ ὅσα θέλεις δύνασαι ποιεῖν;
 Ὁ ΧΡΙΣΤ. Ἐκ δύο μόνων, ἐν ἄλλῳ οὐ πέπλασμαι ὑπὸ Θεοῦ αὐτεξούσιος.
 C Ὁ ΣΑΡΑΚ. Ποῖα ταῦτα;
 Ὁ ΧΡΙΣΤ. Τὰ κακὰ μὲν πράττων οὐ φοβοῦμαι τὸν νόμον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τιμῶμαι, καὶ ἐλεοῦμαι ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ὁμοίως καὶ ὁ διάβολος. Πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος αὐτεξούσιος πέπλασται ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἡμάρτησεν, καὶ ὁ Θεὸς τῆς ἰδίας τάξεως ἐξέωσεν αὐτόν. Ἄλλ' ἴσως καὶ λέγεις μοι ἀντιλέγων· Ποῖά εἰσιν ἃ λέγεις μοι καλὰ καὶ κακὰ; Ἴδου ἥλιος, σελήνη καὶ ἀστέρες καλοὶ εἰσιν· ποιήσον ἐν ἑκ τούτων· οὐ τούτου χάριν προλέγω σοι κατὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐργάζομαι καλὰ καὶ κακὰ. Καλὸν μὲν, οἶόν ἐστι, δοξολογία Θεοῦ καὶ προσευχή. Κακὰ δὲ, πορνεία, κλεψία· ἐπεὶ ὡς λέγεις σὺ καλὰ καὶ κακὰ ἐκ Θεοῦ

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- A εἶναι; Εὐρεθήσεται ὁ Θεὸς κατὰ σὲ ἄδικος, ὅπερ οὐκ ἔστιν. Ἐπεὶ γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς προσέταξεν, ὡς σὺ λέγεις, τὸν πόρνον πορνεύειν, καὶ τὸν κλέπτην κλέπτειν, καὶ τὸν ἀνδροφόνον ἀνδροφονεῖν, ἄξιόι εἰσιν τιμῆς· τὸ γὰρ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐποίησαν. Εὐρεθήσονται καὶ οἱ νομοθέται σου ψευδεῖς, καὶ τὰ βιβλία σου ψευδεπίγραφας, ἐπειδὴ προστάττουσι τὸν πόρνον καὶ τὸν κλέπτην δέρεσθαι ποιήσαντας τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ τὸν ἀνδροφόνον ἀποκτανθῆναι, ὃν ἔδει τιμηθῆναι, ἐπειδὴ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐποίησεν.

APPENDIX II

DISPUTATIO SARACENI ET CHRISTIANI

When the Christian was asked by the SARACENE, "Whom do you say is the cause of good as well as of evil?"; he (the Christian) was surprised.

The CHRISTIAN said: Of everything good we profess that no one is the cause except God, but not of evil.

The SARACENE then said: "Whom do you say is the cause of evil?".

The CHRIST. Obviously the one who has been perverter (of the truth = *diabolos*, or the devil) out of his own judgment, and we humans.

The SARAC. Because of what?

The CHRIST. Because of our own sovereignty (i.e., free will).¹

The SARAC. Therefore, you have your own power and you can do whatever you wish?

The CHRIST. With regard to *two* things I have been created with my own power by God, not in anything else.

The SARAC. Which are these?

The CHRIST. In so far as I am doing what is good ² I am not afraid of the law but, rather, I am honoured, and receive mercy from God; so does, even, the devil! The first man was created with his own power by God and he sinned, and God expelled him from the state in which he was. But because you might challenge me saying, "Which are these things that you are calling good and evil? Here are the sun, the moon and the stars that they are good; make one of them", I am telling you in advance that I am not referring to these but to doing good and evil in so far as it is pertinent to men. For example, good on the one hand is praising God and prayer; evil, on the other hand, is fornication and theft. Are, therefore, as you say, both good and evil from God?

God, then, will prove unjust, according to you, which is not so. Because if it was God who commanded, as you say, the adulterer to commit fornication and the thief to steal and the murderer to kill, these are worthy of praise because they fulfilled the will of God. In that case your law-givers will prove false and your books falsified, because they command that the adulterer and the thief be flogged, although they did the will of God, and the murderer to be killed, who should rather be honoured, because he (also) did the will of God.

¹ Cf. above, p. 104.

² The Greek text has, erroneously, *evil*, instead of *good*. Cf. above, p. 104.

‘Ο δὲ ΣΑΡΑΚ. Τίς φησι, πλάττει τὰ βρέφη ἐν κοιλίαις τῶν γυναικῶν; τοῦτο γὰρ προβάλλονται οἱ Σαρρακηνοὶ πρὸς ἡμᾶς πρόβλημα δεινότατον, θέλοντες ἀποδείξαι τὸν Θεὸν αἴτιον τοῦ κακοῦ. Εἰ γὰρ ἀποκριθεὶς B λέγω, ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς πλάττει τὰ βρέφη ἐν κοιλίαις γυναικῶν, ἔρεϊ ὁ Σαρακηνός· Ἰδοὺ ὁ Θεὸς σύνεργός ἐστι τῷ πόρῳ, καὶ τῷ μοιχῷ.

‘Ο ΧΡΙΣΤ. Πρὸς ταῦτα ἀποκρίνεται· Οὐδαμῶς εὕρισκω μετὰ τὴν πρώτην ἐβδομάδα τῆς κοσμοποιίας τὴν Γραφὴν λέγουσαν πλάττειν τὸν θεὸν ἢ κτίζειν τι. Εἰ δὲ ἀμφιβάλῃ περὶ τούτου, δείξῃ [σοι] κτίσμα ἢ πλάσμα οἰονδηποτοῦν μετὰ τὴν πρώτην ἐβδομάδα γιγνόμενον ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ· οὐδαμῶς τούτου ὑποδείξαι. Πάντα γὰρ τὰ ὁρατὰ κτίσματα τὴν πρώτην ἐβδομάδα γεγόνασιν. Ἐπλασεν γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον τὴν πρώτην ἐβδομάδα, καὶ προσέταξεν αὐτὸν γεννᾶν καὶ γεννᾶσθαι, εἰπών· <Αὐξάνεσθε, καὶ πληθύνεσθε, καὶ πληρώσατε τὴν γῆν.> Καὶ ἐπειδὴ ἔμψυχος ἦν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἔμψυχον σπέρμα ἔχων, ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ γυναικὶ C σπορὰ ἀνεφύει. Ὡστε ἄνθρωπος ἄνθρωπον γεννᾷ, καθάπερ ἡ Γραφὴ λέγει· <Ἄδὰμ γὰρ ἐγέννησε τὸν Σέθ, καὶ ὁ Σέθ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἐνῶς, καὶ Ἐνῶς ἐγέννησε τὸν Καϊνᾶν, καὶ Καϊνᾶν ἐγέννησε τὸν Μαλαεὴλ, καὶ Μαλαεὴλ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἐνώχ.> Καὶ οὐκ εἶπεν, Ὁ Θεὸς ἔπλασε τὸν Σῆθ, ἢ τὸν Ἐνῶς, ἢ ἄλλον τινά· καὶ ἐντεῦθεν γινώσκωμεν, ὅτι μονώτατος πέπλασται ὁ Ἄδὰμ ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ, οἱ τε μετ’ ἐκεῖνον γεννῶνται καὶ γεννῶσιν ἕως τοῦ παρόντος. Καὶ οὕτως χάριτι τοῦ Θεοῦ ὁ κόσμος συνίσταται. Ἐπειδὴ καὶ πᾶσα βοτάνη καὶ φυτὸν προστάξει τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀπὸ τότε γεννᾷ καὶ γεννᾶται. Ἐφη γὰρ ὁ Θεός· <Βλαστησάτω ἡ γῆ βοτάνην χόρτου.> Κατὰ τὸ πρόσταγμα αὐτοῦ ἐβλάστησεν ἕκαστον δένδρον, εἶδος βοτάνης καὶ φυτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἔχει σπερματικὴν δύναμιν. Ἡ σπορὰ δὲ παντὸς φυτοῦ καὶ βοτάνης ἔμψυχός ἐστιν, ἥτις ἐν τῇ γῆ πάλιν ἐφ’ αὐτῆς πίπτουσα, ἢ καὶ ὑπὸ ἄλλου σπειρομένη, βλαστάνει· μὴ πλαττομένη ὑπὸ τινος, ἀλλὰ τῷ πρώτῳ προστάγματι τοῦ Θεοῦ ὑπακούσαντος. Ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ, καθὰ πρώην ἔφην, αὐτεξούσιος ὢν ἐν οἷς μόνοις προεῖπα, ὅπου ἐὰν σπείρω, κἂν εἰς ἰδίαν

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A γυναιῖκα, κἂν εἰς ἀλλοτρίαν τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ μου χρώμενος, ἀναβλαστάνει καὶ γίνεται τῷ πρώτῳ προστάγματι τοῦ Θεοῦ ὑπακούουσα. Οὐχ ὅτι καὶ νῦν καθ’ ἐκάστην ἡμέραν πλάττει ὁ Θεὸς καὶ ἐργάζεται· ἐπειδὴ ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ ἐβδομάδι <ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὸν σύμπαντα κόσμον ἐξ ἡμέραις, καὶ τῇ ἐβδόμῃ κατέπαυσεν ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ, ὧν ἤρξατο ποιεῖν,> καθὼς καὶ ἡ Γραφὴ μαρτυρεῖ μοι.

‘Ο δὲ ΣΑΡΑΚΗΝΟΣ. Φησὶν ὁ Θεὸς πρὸς Ἱερεμίαν· <Πρὸ τοῦ μὲν πλάσαι σε ἐκ κοιλίας ἐπίσταμαί σε, καὶ ἐκ μήτρας ἠγάγακά σε.>

‘Ο ΧΡΙΣΤ. Παντὸς ἀνδρὸς ἐκ κοιλίας ἔπλασεν ὁ Θεὸς τὴν ἔμψυχον

The SARAC. "Who", he says, "forms the infants in the wombs of the women?". The Saracenes pose to us this very difficult problem, because they want to prove that God is the cause of evil. For if I respond saying that, "God is the one who forms the infants in the wombs of the women", the Saracene will say, "Here, God is co-operating with the fornicator and the adulterer".

The CHRIST. gives the following answer to these: "I find nowhere that the Scripture says that God formed or made anything after the first week of creation". If he doubts about this let him show you a thing or a creature made by God after the first week; he will not find anything to show. For all the visible creation was made during the first week. Thus, God created man during the first week and commanded him to beget and be begotten, saying "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth".¹ And because man had life and had a living seed within himself, a sowing sprang up in his own wife. It is man, therefore, who begets man, as the Scripture says: "Adam became the father of Seth and Seth of Enosh, and Enosh of Kenan, and Kenan of Mahallel, and Mahallel of Enoch";² and it (the Scripture) does not say: "God created Seth, or Enosh or anyone else". And from this we know that Adam was the only one who was created by God and those after him are begotten and are begetting to the present time. And this way, by the grace of God, the world is composed, because even every herb and plant since then produces and is produced after the commandment of God: "Let the earth put forth vegetation".³ According to his order there sprang up every tree, all species of herb and of plant, having in itself a seminal power. The seed of every plant and herb is a living thing, which, therefore, when it falls again into the ground grows up by itself, even if it is sown by somebody else; without being created by anyone, but by obeying God's initial order. Here myself, according to what I said above and since I have myself power with regard only to what I mentioned earlier, wherever I sow,

either in my wife, or in another—making use of my sovereignty—it springs up and grows, obeying the initial command of God. It is not that God, now and every day, fashions and creates; for God created the heavens and the earth and the whole universe in six days during the first week, and the seventh day he rested from all his works which he started doing, as the Scripture tells me.⁴

And the SARAC. But God said to Jeremiah: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and while in the womb I consecrated you".⁵

The CHRIST. God created from the womb the living and seminal

¹ Gen. 1:28.

² Cf. Gen. 5:3ff.

³ Gen. 1:11.

⁴ Cf. Gen. 2:3.

⁵ The reference to Jer. 1:5 is slightly misquoted in the Greek text.

- B και σπερματικὴν δύναμιν ἀπὸ Ἀδάμ και καθεξῆς. Ἀδάμ γὰρ ἐν κοιλίᾳ ἔχων, τὸν Σῆθ ἐγέννησεν, ὡς προεῖπον, και Σῆθ τὸν Ἐνὼς, και ἕκαστος ἄνθρωπος προέχων ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ αὐτοῦ υἱόν, και ὁ υἱὸς ἐγέννησε και νᾶ (sic) μέχρι τοῦ παρόντος. Τὸ δὲ, <Ἐκ μήτρας ἡγίακά σε,> νόησον τὴν ὄντως γεννώσαν τὰ τέκνα τοῦ Θεοῦ, κατὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν τοῦ ἁγίου Εὐαγγελίου. <Ὅσοι γὰρ ἔλαβον αὐτὸν, φησὶν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα Θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς αὐτὸν, φησὶν, ἀ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων, οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς, ἀλλ' ἐκ Θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν> διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος.
- C Ὁ δὲ ENANTIOS, και ἦν πρὸ Χριστοῦ βάπτισμα: ὁ γὰρ Ἰερεμίας πρὸ Χριστοῦ γενναῖται.
 Ὁ ΧΡΙΣΤ. Ἦν, κατὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν τοῦ ἁγίου Ἀποστόλου φάσκοντος ὅτι οἱ μὲν διὰ νεφέλης, οἱ δὲ διὰ θαλάσσης ἐβαπτίσθησαν. Και ὁ Κύριος ἐν Εὐαγγελίοις φησὶν· <Ἐὰν μή τις γεννηθῆ δι' ὕδατος και πνεύματος, οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθῃ εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν.> Ὡστε ὁ Ἀβραὰμ και Ἰσαὰκ και Ἰακώβ, και οἱ λοιποὶ πρὸ Χριστοῦ ἅγιοι εἰσερχόμενοι εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν, εἰ μὴ προεβαπτίσθησαν, οὐκ ἂν ἐσώζοντο. Μαρτυρεῖ δὲ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, λέγον· <Ἀπηλλοτριώθησαν οἱ ἀμαρτωλοὶ ἀπὸ μήτρας,> τοῦτ' ἔστι τῆς τοῦ βαπτίσματος. Χάριτι τούτου ὁμολογοῦμεν, ὅτι πάντες οἱ σωθέντες και οἱ σωζόμενοι διὰ βαπτίσματος ἐσώθησαν και σώζονται χάριτι Θεοῦ.
- Ὁ ΣΑΡ. ἠρώτα λέγων· Τὸν Χριστιανὸν τὸν ποιοῦντα τὸ θέλημα D αὐτοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ, καλὸν εἶναι λέγεις ἢ κακόν;
 Γνοὺς δὲ τὴν πανουργίαν αὐτοῦ ὁ ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΟΣ ἔφη· Ὁ θέλεις εἰπεῖν ἐπίσταμαι.
 Ὁ ΣΑΡ. Φανέρωσόν μοι αὐτό.
 Ὁ ΧΡΙΣΤ. Εἰπεῖν θέλεις πρὸς ἐμὲ, ὅτι ὁ Χριστὸς θέλων ἔπαθεν, ἢ μὴ θέλων; Και ἐὰν σοι εἴπω, θέλων ἔπαθεν, ἵνα μοι εἴπῃς, Ἄπελθε, προσκύνησον τοὺς Ἰουδαίους, ἐπειδὴ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐποίησαν.

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- A Ὁ ΣΑΡ. Οὕτως, φησὶ, σοὶ ἤθελον εἰπεῖν· Εἴ ἐστί σοι λόγος, ἀποκρίθητί μοι.
 Ὁ ΧΡΙΣΤ. Σὺ λέγεις θέλημα εἶναι, ἐγὼ λέγω ἀνοχὴν και μακροθυμίαν.
 Ὁ ΣΑΡ. Πόθεν δύνῃ τοῦτο παραστήσαι;

power of every man, since Adam and onwards. For Adam, having in his loins (the power), became the father of Seth, as I said before, and Seth of Enosh, and every man holding in his loins a son becomes a father and the son also becomes a father until the present time. Under the expression "and in the womb I consecrated you" understand the womb that indeed gives birth to the children of God, according to the testimony of the holy Gospel: "But to all those who received him", it says, "who believe in his name, he gave power to become children of God", it says, "who were born not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God"¹ through baptism.

And the OPPONENT. But was there a baptism before Christ? For Jeremiah was born before Christ.

CHRIST. There was, according to the testimony of the holy Apostle who said: "Others were baptized in the cloud, and others in the sea".² And the Lord in the Gospels says: "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he will not enter the kingdom of God".³ Therefore, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the other saints before Christ would not be saved and enter the kingdom of heaven, unless they were baptized before. And the Holy Spirit testifies, saying: "The wicked go astray from the womb",⁴ that is the womb of baptism. For this reason we profess that all those who were and are saved, they were and are saved through baptism, by the grace of God.

The SARAC. asked this question: Do you call the Christian who does the will of God alone, good or evil?

But the CHRIST. who discerned his ruse said: "I know well what you want to say".

The SARAC. Show it to me.

The CHRIST. You want (actually) to ask me: "Did Christ suffer willingly or unwillingly?"; so that if I will answer you "He suffered willingly", to tell me, "Go and bow to the Jews, because they did the will of God".

The SARAC. says, "That is what I wanted to tell you. If you have anything to say, answer me".

The CHRIST. You call this "will"; I call it "forbearance" and "magnanimity".

The SARAC. How can you demonstrate that?

¹ Cf. John, 1:12-13.

² Cf. I Cor. 10:2.

³ Cf. John, 3:5.

⁴ Ps. 57:4/58:3.

Ὁ ΧΡΙΣΤ. Διὰ πραγμάτων ἔφη πρὸς Σαρακηνόν· Καθημένου ἐμοῦ καὶ σοῦ, ἡ ἰσταμένου, δύναται τις ἐξ ἡμῶν ἄνευ τῆς ἐξουσίας καὶ δεσποτείας τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀναστῆναι ἢ κινηθῆναι;

Καὶ ὁ ΣΑΡ. Οὐ.

Ὁ ΧΡΙΣΤ. Τοῦ Θεοῦ εἰπόντος, Μὴ κλέψης, μὴ πορνεύσης, μὴ φονεύσης, οὐ θέλει ἵνα κλέψωμεν καὶ πορνεύσωμεν καὶ φονεύσωμεν.

Ὁ ΣΑΡ. Οὐχί. Εἰ γὰρ ἔθελεν, οὐκ ἂν εἶπεν, Μὴ κλέψης, μὴ πορνεύσης, μὴ φονεύσης.

B Ὁ ΧΡΙΣΤ. Δόξα τῷ Θεῷ, ὅτι σὺ ὠμολόγησας λέγων ἃ θέλω εἰπεῖν. Ἴδου συνέθου μοι, ὅτι οὐδεὶς ἐξ ἡμῶν ἄνευ τοῦ Θεοῦ δύναται ἀναστῆναι ἢ κινηθῆναι. Καὶ ὅτι οὐ θέλει ὁ Θεὸς ἵνα κλέψωμεν ἢ πορνεύσωμεν. Ἐὰν ἄρτι ἀναστάς ἀπέλθω, καὶ κλέψω ἢ πορνεύσω· τί αὐτὸ λέγεις; Θέλημα Θεοῦ, ἢ συγχώρησιν καὶ ἀνοχὴν καὶ μακροθυμίαν;

Ὁ ΣΑΡ. Νόησας καὶ θαυμάσας ἔφη· Ἀληθῶς οὕτως ἔχει.

Ὁ ΧΡΙΣΤ. Νόησον καὶ τοῦτο, ὅτι δυναμένου Θεοῦ πατάξαι, ἀνεχώρησον πρὸς τὸν σταυρόν· τοῦτ' ἔστιν, ἐμακροθύμησον ἐπὶ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν.

C Ἄλλ' ὅταν θέλῃ [ἵνα] μετανοήσω, ἀποδίδωσί μοι καθάπερ καὶ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ἐποίησεν. Μετὰ γὰρ [ἔτη] ὀλίγα ἀνέστησεν κατ' αὐτῶν τὸν Τίτον, καὶ Οὐεσπασιανόν, καὶ τοὺς Ἕλληνας, καὶ καθεῖλεν τὰ φρυάγματα αὐτῶν.

Ἐὰν ἐρωτηθῆς παρὰ Σαρακηνοῦ λέγοντος· Τί λέγεις εἶναι τὸν Χριστόν; εἰπέ αὐτῷ· Λόγον Θεοῦ. Μηδὲν ἐν τούτῳ νομίζω ἁμαρτάνειν, ἐπειδὴ καὶ Λόγος λέγεται παρὰ τῆ Γραφῆ, καὶ σοφία, καὶ βραχίων, καὶ δύναμις Θεοῦ, καὶ ἄλλα πολλά τοιαῦτα, πολυώνυμος γὰρ ἔστιν. Καὶ σὺ ἀντερώτησον αὐτὸν λέγων· Τί λέγεται παρὰ τῆ Γραφῆ ὁ Χριστός; ἴσως κἂν θελήσῃ ἐρωτῆσαί σε ὁ Σαρακηνός ἄλλο τι, μὴ ἀποκρινοῦ αὐτῷ, ἕως ἂν λύσει τὸ ἐρώτημά σου. Ἀνάγκη ποῖα ἀποκριθῆσεται σοι λέγων· Παρὰ τῆ Γραφῆ μου Πνεῦμα καὶ Λόγος Θεοῦ λέγεται ὁ Χριστός.

D Καὶ τότε εἰπέ αὐτῷ σὺ πάλιν· Τὸ Πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ὁ Λόγος, παρὰ τῆ Γραφῆ σου, ἄκτιστα λέγονται ἢ κτιστά; Καὶ ἐπὶ εἶπε ὅτι ἄκτιστά εἰσιν, εἰπέ αὐτῷ· Καὶ τίς ἔκτισε τὸ Πνεῦμα καὶ τὸν Λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ; Καὶ ἐὰν ἐξ ἀπορίας εἶπη σοι, ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς αὐτὰ ἔκτισεν, εἰπέ· Ἴδου εἰ ἔλεγον ἐγὼ πρὸς σὲ τοῦτο, ἔλεγες ἂν πρὸς μὲ, ὅτι Ἠφάνισας τὴν μαρτυρίαν σου· καὶ τοῦ λοιποῦ οὐ πιστεύετε ὅσα ἂν εἴπῃς. Ὅμως οὖν καὶ τοῦτο ἐρωτῶ σε, πρὸ τοῦ κτίσαι ὁ Θεὸς τὸν Λόγον καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα, οὐκ εἶχεν Πνεῦμα οὐδὲ Λόγον; Καὶ φεύζεται ἀπὸ σοῦ μὴ ἔχων τι ἀποκριθῆναι. Αἵρετικοὶ γὰρ εἰσιν αἱ τοιοῦτοι κατὰ

The CHRIST. "From the facts", he said to the Saracene. When I or you are sitting, or standing, is anyone of us able, without the power and sovereignty of God, to stand or to move?

And the SARAC. (answered) No.

The CHRIST. Since God said, "Do not steal, do not commit adultery, do not kill", he does not want us to steal, or to commit adultery or to kill.

The SARAC. No, (indeed). Because if he wanted us (to do so) he would not have said, "Do not steal, do not commit adultery, do not kill".

The CHRIST. Glory be to God, for you confessed what I wanted to say. Here, you agreed with me that none of us can, without God, stand or move; and that God does not want us to steal or to commit adultery. If, right now, I get up and leave and steal or commit adultery, what do you call this, "will" of God, or "tolerance" and "forbearance" and "magnanimity"?

The SARAC. having understood and being impressed, said: That is the way it is, indeed".

The CHRIST. Think of this also, that although God could smite (his enemies) he proceeded to the cross, that is he tolerated the sin. But when he wants me to repent, he will return it to me as he did to the Jews. For, a few years later, he raised up against them Titus and Vespasian and the Greeks and he dispersed their arrogance.

If you will be asked by a SARAC. this question: "What do you say that Christ is?" say to him: "Word of God". I do not think that you commit a sin by saying that, because in the Scripture he is called Word and wisdom and arm and power of God and many other similar, for he has many, names. And you also return the question to him: "What is Christ called in the Scripture?". Even if the Saracene wants, perhaps, to ask you something else do not answer to him until he will satisfy your question. With some pressure he will answer you: "In my Scripture Christ is called Spirit and Word of God". And then you again tell him, "In your Scripture are the Spirit of God and the Word said to be uncreated or created?". And if he tells you that they are created,¹ say to him: "And who created the Spirit and the Word of God?". And if, compelled by surprise, he tells you that God created them, say to him: "Here, if I had said this to you, you would have told me that 'You have concealed your testimony and from now on you will not be credible no matter what you say'. However, I will ask you also this, Before God created the Word and the Spirit did he have neither Spirit nor Word?". And he will flee from you not having anything to answer. For these are heretics, according to the Saracenes

¹ The Greek text has erroneously "Uncreated", an obvious misprint. Cf. above, p. 114.

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- A Σαρακηνοῦς, καὶ πάνυ βδελυκτοὶ καὶ ἀπόβλητοι· καὶ ἐὰν αὐτὸν θέλῃς δημοσιεῦσαι τοῖς λοιποῖς Σαρακηνοῖς φοβηθήσεται σε πολὺ. Καὶ ἐὰν ἐρώτησῃ σε ὁ Σαρακηνὸς λέγων· Τὰ Λόγια τοῦ Θεοῦ κτιστά εἰσιν ἢ ἄκτιστα; Τοῦτο γὰρ προβάλλονται πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἐρώτημα δεινότατον θέλοντες ἀποδείξαι κτιστὸν εἶναι τὸν Λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὅπερ οὐκ ἔστιν. Εἰ δὲ εἶπῃς· Κτιστά εἰσιν, λέγει σοι, ὅτι ἰδοὺ ταῦτα πάντα λόγια τοῦ Θεοῦ ὑπάρχοντα, ἄκτιστα μὲν εἰσι, Θεοὶ δὲ οὐκ εἰσιν. Ἴδου σὺ ὠμολόγησας, ὅτι ὁ Χριστὸς Λόγος ὢν τοῦ Θεοῦ, οὐκ ἔστι Θεός. Διὸ μηδὲ κτιστά μηδὲ ἄκτιστα ὁ Χριστιανὸς ἀποκριθεὶς αὐτῷ λέγει· Ἐγὼ ἓνα μόνον Λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν ὑποστάσει ὁμολογῶ ἄκτιστον ὄντα, καθάπερ καὶ σὺ ὠμολόγησας· τὴν δὲ ἅπασαν Γραφὴν μου, οὐ λέγω Λόγια, ἀλλὰ
- B ῥήματα Θεοῦ. Καὶ ἐὰν εἶπῃ ὁ Σαρακηνός· Καὶ πῶς λέγει ὁ Δαβὶδ· <Λόγια Κυρίου, λόγια ἀγνά·> καὶ οὐχί, Τὰ ῥήματα Κυρίου, ῥήματα ἀγνά; εἰπέ αὐτῷ· Ὁ Προφήτης τροπολογικῶς ἐλάλησεν, καὶ οὐ κυριολογικῶς. Καὶ ἐὰν σοι εἶπῃ· Τί ἐστὶν τροπολογία καὶ κυριολογία; εἰπέ αὐτῷ· Κυριολογία μὲν ἐστὶν, βεβαία ἀπόδειξις πράγματος· τροπολογία δὲ ἐστὶν ἀβέβαιος ἀπόδειξις. Καὶ ἐὰν σοι εἶπῃ ὁ Σαρακηνός· Ἐνδέχεται προφήτην εἰπεῖν ἀβέβαιον ἀπόδειξιν; εἰπέ αὐτῷ εὐθέως· Ἐπὶ τοῖς προφήταις τὰ ἄψυχα πρόσωπα ποιεῖν, καὶ ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ στόματα θεάσθαι αὐτοῖς· ὥστε, <Ἡ θάλασσα εἶδεν, καὶ ἔφυγεν.> Ἴδου καὶ θάλασσα ὀφθαλμοὺς οὐκ ἔχει, οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἔμφυχος. Καὶ πάλιν ὁ αὐτὸς Προφήτης ὡς ἔμφυχον αὐτὴν διαλέγεται· <Τί σοὶ ἐστὶ, θάλασσα, ὅτι ἔφυγες;> καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς. <Καὶ ἡ μάχαιρα φάγεται κρέα,> λέγει ἢ
- C Γραφή. Τὸ γὰρ φαγεῖν ἐπὶ στόματος λέγει τρώγοντος καὶ πίνοντος, ἢ δὲ μάχαιρα τέμνεται μὲν, οὐ καταπίνει δέ. Οὕτως καὶ τὰ ῥήματα τροπολογήσας ἐλάλησε λόγους, ἅπερ οὐκ εἰσιν λόγια, ἀλλὰ ῥήματα. Καὶ ἐὰν σοι εἶπῃ, Πῶς κατῆλθεν ὁ Θεὸς εἰς κοιλίαν γυναικίος; εἰπέ αὐτῷ· Χρησώμεθα τῇ γραφῇ σου, καὶ τῇ Γραφῇ μου· ἡ γραφή σου λέγει, ὅτι ἐκάθην ὁ Θεὸς τὴν Παρθένον Μαρίαν ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν σάρκα γυναικίαν, καὶ κατέβη τὸ Πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ὁ Λόγος ἐν αὐτῇ, καὶ τὸ Εὐαγγελιόν μου λέγει· <Πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σέ, καὶ δύναμις Ὑψίστου ἐπισκιασέαι σοι.> Ἴδου μία φωνὴ ἀμφοτέρων τῶν λέξεων, καὶ ἐν νόημα. Γινώσκω δὲ καὶ τοῦτο, ὡς πρὸς τὴν ἡμετέραν ιδιότητα
- D λέγει ἢ Γραφὴ κατὰ βασιν Θεοῦ καὶ ἀνά βασιν, τροπολογικῶς καὶ οὐ

and utterly despised and rejected; and if you want to report him to the other Saracenes he will be very much afraid of you. And the SARAC. might ask you, "The Words of God, are they created or uncreated?" They pose to us this very difficult question in their effort to prove that the Word of God is created, which is not so. And if you answer "They are uncreated"¹ he tells you that, "Here, all these that are words of God, although they are uncreated, yet they are not Gods. Behold you confessed that Christ, although he is the Word of God, he is not God". For this reason let not the Christian say either "created" or "uncreated" (but), "I confess that there is only one hypostatic Word of God, who is uncreated, as you also confessed; on the other hand my Scripture, as a whole, I call not 'Words' but 'utterances of God'". And if the SARAC. says, "And how is that David says, 'The words of the Lord are words that are pure',² and not 'The utterances of the Lord are utterances that are pure'?" reply to him: "The Prophet spoke figuratively and not literally". And if he tells you, "What is figurative and what literal?", say to him: "Literal is a positive proof of something, while figurative is an uncertain proof". And if the SARAC. tells you, "Is it likely that a prophet would use an uncertain proof?" answer to him immediately: "In the prophets the inanimate objects are made persons and you will see eyes and mouths in them; thus, 'The sea looked and fled';"³ here, the sea does not have eyes, because it is inanimate. Again the same prophet converses with it as if it were an animate being; "What ails you, O sea, that you flee?"⁴ and so forth; "And the sword will devour flesh"⁵ says the Scripture. However the verb "to devour" refers to a mouth that eats and drinks, while the sword cuts but it does not devour. Thus he called also, figuratively, the "utterances" words, which are not words but utterances. And if he tells you, "How did God descend into the womb of a woman", say to him: "Let us make use of your scripture and of my Scripture; your scripture says that God cleansed the Virgin Mary above all other women and the Spirit of God and the Word descended into her; and my Gospel says, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you'.⁶ Here is one voice in both statements and one meaning. I also know this, that the Scripture speaks of God's descending and ascending with our own (human) quality in mind, that is, figuratively

¹ Cf. above, p. 115.

² Ps. 111:7 (O⁷). Cf. Ps. 12:6 ("The promises of the Lord are promises that are pure").

³ Ps. 113:3/114:3.

⁴ Ps. 113:5/114:5.

⁵ Cf. Jer. 12:12.

⁶ Lk. 1:35.

κυριολογικῶς. Κυρίως γὰρ κατὰβασις καὶ ἀνάβασις ἐπὶ σωμάτων λέγεται κατὰ φιλοσόφους, ὁ δὲ Θεὸς τὰ πάντα περιέχει, καὶ οὐ περιέχεται ὑπὸ τινος τόπου. Ἔφη γὰρ τις τῶν προφητῶν· <Τίς ἐμέτρησε τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ τὴν θάλασσαν, καὶ τοὺς οὐρανούς σπι-

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- A θαμῆ, πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν δρακί;> Καὶ ὅλως, πάντα τὰ ὕδατα ὑπὸ χειρῶν εἰσιν τοῦ Θεοῦ [καὶ ὁ οὐρανὸς δρακί]. Πῶς ἐνδέχεται αὐτὸς ἰδίᾳ χειρὶ τῇ κατεχούσῃ τὰ πάντα καταβῆναι καὶ ἀναβῆναι; Ἐὰν καὶ ἐρωτήσῃ σε ὁ Σαρακηνὸς λέγων· Καὶ εἰ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ Χριστὸς, καὶ ἔφαγεν καὶ ἔπιεν, καὶ ὕπνωσεν, καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς; εἶπε αὐτῷ, ὅτι Ὁ προαιώνιος Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁ κτίσας τὰ σύμπαντα, καθὼς λέγει ἡ Γραφή μου, καὶ ἡ γραφή σου, αὐτὸς ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς τῆς ἁγίας Παρθένου Μαρίας ἄνθρωπος γενόμενος τέλειος, ἔνους καὶ ἔμψυχος· ἐκεῖνος ἔφαγεν, καὶ ἔπιεν, καὶ ὕπνωσεν, ὁ δὲ Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ οὐκ ἔφαγεν οὐδὲ ἔπιεν οὐδὲ ὕπνωσε οὐδὲ ἐσταυρώθη, καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς. Γίνωσκε δὲ, ὅτι ὁ Χριστὸς διπλοῦς μὲν λέγεται ταῖς φύσεσιν, εἷς δὲ τῇ ὑποστάσει. Εἷς γὰρ ὁ προαιώνιος Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ μετὰ τὴν πρόληψιν τῆς σαρκὸς ὑποστατικῶς καὶ οὐ φυσικῶς· οὐ γὰρ προσετέθη
- B τῇ Τριάδι τέταρτον πρόσωπον μετὰ τὴν ἄρρητον ἔνωσιν τῆς σαρκὸς.

Ὁ ΣΑΡ. Ὅτι ἦν ἐγετελ (incomplete) θεῖκὸν ἀπέθανεν ἡ ζῆ;

Εἶπε αὐτῷ· οὐκ ἀπέθανεν, θαρρῶν τῇ Γραφικῇ ἀποδείξει. Λέγει γὰρ ἡ Γραφή περὶ τούτου· <Ἦλθεν> ἐπ' αὐτὴν ὁ φυσικὸς τῶν ἀνθρώπων θάνατος μνήμην καθάρξας ἢ χειρωσάμενος πρὸς ἐν ἡμῖν ἄπαγε. Ἄλλως φέρε εἰπεῖν. Ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος ὕπνωσεν, καὶ τὴν πλευρὰν ἀφῆρέθη.

- Ὁ ΣΑΡ. Ἴδου πέπληγμαι ἐν τινι τόπῳ τῆς σαρκὸς μου, καὶ πληγεῖσα ἡ σὰρξ μώλωπα ἀπετέλεσεν, καὶ ἐν τῷ μώλωπι ἐγένετο σκώληξ. Τίς αὐτὸν ἐπλασεν;
- C

Ὁ ΧΡΙΣΤ. Λέγει τὸ καὶ προείπομεν· μετὰ τὴν πρώτην ἑβδομάδα τῆς κοσμοποιίας, οὐχ εὐρίσκομεν οἰονδηποτοῦν πράγμα πλάσαντα τὸν Θεόν, ἢ πλάττοντα· ἀλλὰ τῷ προστάγματι τοῦ Θεοῦ προσετάγη ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ ἑβδομάδι, καὶ ἐγένοντο τὰ γινόμενα. Μετὰ τοῖς προστάγμασι κατεκρίθη καὶ ἀκάνθας καὶ τριβόλους. Τότε δὲ καὶ ἡ σὰρξ ἡμῶν κριθεῖσα, μέρῃ τῆς σήμερον φθειρᾶς καὶ σκώληκας ἀνατελεῖ.

Ὁ ΣΑΡ. Ἐρωτᾷ τὸν Χριστιανόν· Λοιπὸν τίς ἐστί παρὰ σοὶ μεῖζων, ὁ ἀγιαζών ἢ ὁ ἀγιαζόμενος;

- D Γινὸς δὲ ὁ ΧΡΙΣΤ. τὴν ἔνοπλον αὐτοῦ ἐρώτησιν, εἶπεν· Ὁ θέλεις εἰπεῖν γινώσκω,

and not literally. Because, according to the philosophers, descending and ascending is used with reference to bodies, but God embraces everything and he is not confined to any place. For one of the prophets said, 'Who has measured the sea by his hand and the heavens by his span and the

whole earth by his handful?' And indeed, all the waters are under the hands of God and the heaven in his handful. How (then) is it probable for the one who holds everything in his hand to descend and ascend?''! If, again, the Saracene asks you: "If Christ was God how did he eat, drink, sleep and so forth?" tell him that "The pre-eternal Word of God, the one who created the universe, as my Scripture as well as yours says, the one who became a perfect man from the flesh of the holy Virgin Mary, sensible and living, this is the one who ate and drank and slept, but the Word of God did not eat, nor did he drink, nor did he sleep, nor was he crucified and so on. You should know also that Christ is believed to be double with regard to natures, but one with regard to hypostasis. For the pre-eternal Word of God is one, hypostatically as well as physically, even after he assumed flesh; because there was not added a fourth person to the Trinity after the unspeakable union with the flesh.

The SARAC. What, therefore, (is called) divine (nature) did it die or does it live?

Reply to him: "He did not die", having confidence in the Scriptural evidence. For the Scripture says on this: The natural death of men came upon it, but not that it washed away the memory or that it subdued it as it happens to us; far from being so. Or let me put it otherwise. The first man was put to sleep and his rib was extracted from him.

The SARAC. Suppose that, I have been wounded in one place of my flesh, and the flesh, being wounded, formed a contusion and in the contusion a worm has developed. Who has created the worm?

The CHRIST. says what he said already before: After the first week of the creation of the world we find that God did not create nor did he form any thing; but rather it was ordered by the command of God, during the first week, and there was established what is (still) taking place. However after the commandments transgression followed and it resulted in thorns and thistles.¹ At that time, therefore, our flesh also being condemned, produces until the present day lice and worms.

The SARAC. asks the Christian: Well, who is greater according to you, the one who consecrates or the one who is consecrated?

The CHRIST. however, realising his loaded question, replied: I know what you want to say.

¹ The translator takes here the liberty to slightly improvise the English translation of an, otherwise, incomplete Greek sentence.

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A Ὁ ΣΑΡ. Καὶ ἐὰν οἶδας δεῖξόν μοι.

Ὁ ΧΡΙΣΤ. εἶπεν· Ἐάν σοι εἶπω ὅτι ὁ ἀγιάζων μείζων τοῦ ἀγιαζομένου, ἔρεῖς μοι, Ἄπελθε, φησί, προσκύνησον τὸν Βαπτιστὴν Ἰωάννην, ὡς βαπτίσαντα καὶ ἀγιάσαντα τὸν Χριστόν σου.

Ὁ δὲ ΣΑΡ. Οὕτως, φησί, σοὶ ἔθελον εἰπεῖν.

Αἰνιγματωδῶς ἔφη ὁ ΧΡΙΣΤ. πρὸς τὸν Σαρακηνόν· Ἀπερχομένου σου ἐν τῷ βαλανείῳ μετὰ τοῦ δούλου σου λούσασθαι, καὶ λουόμενος ὑπ' αὐτοῦ καὶ καθαιρόμενος, τίνα ἔχεις εἰπεῖν μείζονα; Ἐκεῖνον τὸν οἰκτρὸν δοῦλον καὶ ἀργυρώνητον, ἢ σὺ ὁ καθαρθεὶς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ; Οὕτως οὖν καὶ αὐτὸς Δεσπότης ᾧν, ὑπὸ τοῦ δούλου ἐκαθαίρετο.

Ἐμαυτὸν λέγεις μείζονα τὸν κτισάμενον, ἢ ἐκεῖνον τὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ κτισθέντα, εἶπεν ὁ Σαρακηνὸς πρὸς τὸν Χριστιανόν;

Ὁ δὲ ἀπεκρίθη, εὐχαριστήσας πρότερον τὸν Θεὸν, καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς τὸν Σαρακηνόν· Οὕτως μοι νόει καὶ τὸν Ἰωάννην, δοῦλον καὶ οἰκέτην, ὑπουργήσαντα τῷ Χριστῷ ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ, ἐν ᾧ βαπτισθεὶς ὁ Σωτήρ μου, τῶν ἐκεῖσε ἐμφωλευόντων πονηρῶν δαιμόνων τὰς κεφαλὰς συνέτριψεν.

Ὁ δὲ Σαρακηνὸς σφόδρα θαυμάσας, καὶ ἀπορήσας, καὶ τί ἀποκριθῆναι μὴ ἔχων τῷ Χριστιανῷ, ἀνεχώρησεν μηκέτι προσβάλλων αὐτῷ.

The SARAC. If you know show me.

The CHRIST. said: If I tell you that the one who consecrates is greater of the one who is consecrated, you will tell me, "Go, therefore, and prostrate yourself before John the Baptist, as the one who baptised and consecrated your Christ.

And the SARAC. says: That is what I wanted to tell you.

The CHRIST. replied to the Saracene parabolically: When you go to the bath with your servant to take a bath, and when you are given by him a bath and made clean, whom do you say is greater, that miserable servant whom you have bought with money or you who were cleansed by him? In the same way also, he (Christ) being the Sovereign was cleansed by the servant.

And the SARAC. said to the Christian: You are calling me, (therefore,) greater, the one who "created", rather than the one who "was created" for my own sake, (is it not so)?¹

And the other (the Christian) replied, after giving thanks to God, saying to the Saracene: In the same manner understand John, as servant and attendant, serving Christ in the Jordan in which my Saviour, by being baptised, crushed the heads of the evil demons who were hidden in ambush there.

And the Saracene who was very much amazed and surprised, and having nothing to reply to the Christian, departed without challenging him anymore.

¹ This statement is utterly confusing, especially with the employment in the original version of the verbs "to create" and "to be created". Perhaps a more free translation could use in their place the expressions "the one who is the author of something" and "the one which is made for one's own sake", respectively.

APPENDIX III

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Ἐκ τῶν πρὸς τοὺς Σαββρακηνοὺς ἀντιβρῆσεων τῶν αὐτοῦ (Θεοδώρου τοῦ τὸ ἐπίκλην Ἀβουκαρᾶ ἐπισκόπου Καρῶν) διὰ φωνῆς Ἰωάννου Δαμασκηνοῦ.

ΣΑΡΑΚΗΝΟΣ. Εἶπέ μοι, ὦ ἐπίσκοπε· οὐ κατείδωλος ἦν ὁ κόσμος πρὸ τοῦ Μωϋσέως τὸν Ἰουδαϊσμὸν κηρύττειν (incomplete).

ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ. Δηλαδῆ.

ΣΑΡΑΚ. Ἦνίκα Μωϋσῆς Ἰουδαίζειν ἐδίδασκε, πότερον μέρος τοῦ κόσμου εὐσεβεῖν σοι φαίνεται, τὸ δεξάμενον τὸν Ἰουδαϊσμὸν, ἢ τὸ μεῖναν εἰδωλολατροῦν, τῷ Μωϋσεῖ μὴ πειθόμενον;

C ΘΕΟΔ. Τὸ δεξάμενον.

ΣΑΡΑΚ. Εἶτα, ὡς καὶ μετὰ καιροὺς ἦλθεν ὁ Χριστὸς τὸν Χριστιανισμὸν κηρύττων, πότερον μέρος σοι φαίνεται εὐσεβεῖν, τὸ δεξάμενον τὸν Χριστιανισμὸν, ἢ τὸ μεῖναν ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ ἀμετάθετον;

ΘΕΟΔ. Τὸ δεξάμενον τὸν Χριστιανισμὸν.

ΣΑΡΑΚ. Εἶτα, ὡς μετὰ καιροὺς ἦλθεν ὁ Μουχαμῆθ κηρύττων τὸν Μαχαρισμὸν, πότερον μέρος φαίνεται σοι εὐσεβεῖν, τὸ δεξάμενον τὸν Μαχαρισμὸν, ἢ τὸ μεῖναν ἐν τῷ Χριστιανισμῷ, τῷ Μουχαμῆθ μὴ πειθόμενον;

ΘΕΟΔ. Τὸ μεῖναν ἐν τῷ Χριστιανισμῷ.

ΣΑΡΑΚ. Ἀνάρμοστον ταῖς προτάσεσι τὸ ἔσχατον ἐπήνεγκας συμπέρασμα.

D ΘΕΟΔ. Οὐκοῦν ἀναγκαῖόν μοι ψευδέσι προτάσεσι συμπεράναι; Οὐ γὰρ, ὡς ὑπέλιπας, ἀξιόδεκτοι γεγονάσιν, ὅ τε Μωϋσῆς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς, διότι ἐκήρυττον καὶ ἐδίδασκον, ἵνα καὶ ὁ Μουχαμῆθ ἐκ τοῦ κηρύττειν καὶ διδάσκειν πιστευθῇ· ἀλλ' ἄκουσον ἐκατέρου τὸ ἀξιόπιστον· ἦνίκα μέντοι παρὰ Θεοῦ ἀπεστέλλετο ὁ Μωϋσῆς, ἀπεκρίθη τῷ Θεῷ· <Ἴδού ὑπάγω, καὶ λέγουσί μοι. Οὐκ εἶδες Θεόν, οὐδὲ Θεὸς ἀπέσταλκέ σε, τί ποιήσω;> Καὶ φησι πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ Θεός· <Τί τοῦτο τὸ ἐν τῇ χειρί σου;> Καὶ εἶπε· <Ράβδος.> Καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· <Ρίψον αὐτήν.> Καὶ ῥιφεῖσα γέγονεν ὄφις. Καὶ πάλιν κρατηθεῖσα γέγονε ῥάβδος· εἶτα λέγει ὁ Θεὸς αὐτῷ· <Ἐμβαλε

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τὴν χειρὰ σου εἰς τὸν κόλπον σου.> Καὶ ἐμβληθεῖσα ἐξεβλήθη λελε-
A πρωμένη· καὶ αὐθις ἐμβληθεῖσα ἐξεβλήθη ἀλώβητος. Καὶ φησιν ὁ Θεὸς πρὸς αὐτὸν· <Ἐὰν μὴ πιστεύωσι τῷ πρώτῳ σημεῖῳ, μηδὲ τῷ

APPENDIX III

From the refutations against the Saracenes by the same (Theodore, the so-called Abū Qurra, bishop of Carae) with the words of John of Damascus.

SARACENE. Tell me, bishop; was the world full of idols before Moses proclaimed Judaism?

THEODORE. That is so.

SARAC. After Moses taught men how to practice Judaism, which part of the world does it seem to you to be right (in its religion) the one that accepted Judaism, or the other that retained its idolatrous practices and did not obey Moses?

THEOD. The one that accepted it.

SARAC. Then, and after a period of time, Christ came proclaiming Christianity; which part does it seem to you to be right (in its religion) the one that accepted Christianity, or the other that remained unchanged in Judaism?

THEOD. The one that accepted Christianity.

SARAC. Then, and after a period of time, Muhammad came proclaiming Hagarism; ¹ which part does it seem to you to be right (in its religion) the one that accepted Hagarism, or the other that remained in Christianity and did not obey Muhammad?

THEOD. The one that remained in Christianity.

SARAC. You drew a conclusion at the end which is inconsistent with the (previous) questions.

THEOD. Well, is it necessary for me to draw a conclusion to false statements? For, Muhammad was not as Moses and Christ, who proved worthy of being accepted because they preached and taught, so that Muhammad also be believed for his preaching and teaching; but listen to what makes each one of them worthy of being accepted. When Moses was being sent by God he replied to Him: "Here, I will go and they will tell me 'You did not see God and God has not sent you', what shall I do?" ² And God said to him: "What is this that you have in your hand?". And he said, "A rod". And he said to him: "Throw this away". And when he had thrown it, it became a snake; and when again he held it it became a rod. Then God said to him: "Put your hand in your chest".

And after he put it in and he took it out it was afflicted with leprosy; and when, immediately, he put it in and took it out again it was well. And God said to him: "If they will not believe the first sign, nor the second, turn

¹ Cf. above, p. 120, n. 3.

² Cf. Ex. 4:1.

δευτέρω, ποιήσον τὸ ὕδωρ αἷμα.> Καὶ οὕτως ἀποσταλαίς ὁ Μωϋσῆς, ἐποίησε, καὶ ἐπιστώθησαν οἱ λόγοι αὐτοῦ διὰ τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ. Ναὶ ἢ οὐχί;

ΣΑΡΑΚ. Πάντως.

ΘΕΟΔ. Ἦλθεν ὁ Χριστὸς τὴν πρὸς Θεοῦ ἀποστολὴν ἑαυτῷ ἐπικυρῶν· οὐ τῆ Μωϋσέως καὶ μόνον προφητεία μαρτυρούμενος, ἀλλὰ σημείοις, τέρασι, καὶ ποικίλαις δυνάμεσι μετ' ἐκείνην ἑαυτὸν πιστούμενος.

ΣΑΡΑΚ. Τίσι δὴ τούτοις;

B ΘΕΟΔ. Ἀσποροσυλλήψει, καὶ ἀνάνδρω μητρὶ, καὶ ἐκ παρθένου γεννήσει, ὕδατος εἰς οἶνον μεταβολῇ· ἔτι μετὰ ταῦτα οὐκ ἀπεμφανῆς, ἀλλὰ καὶ λίαν ἀρίδηλος ἢ τῶν τυφλῶν ὁμμάτωσις, ἢ τῶν λεπρῶν κάθαρσις, τῶν παρέτων ἢ σφίξις, τῶν ποικίλων νοσημάτων ἢ θεραπεία, ἢ ἐπὶ τοῦ ὄρου τῆς θεότητος αὐτοῦ φανέρωσις, τῶν δαιμόνων ἢ διώξις, καὶ τῶν πολλῶν χιλιάδων ἐξ ὀλίγων ἄρτων καὶ ἰχθύων ἢ ἔμπλησις, καὶ τῶν νεκρῶν ὡς ἐξ ὕπνου ἢ ἔγερσις, καὶ ἀπαξαπλῶς τῆς φύσεως τῶν σφαλμάτων ἢ ἀνάπλασις. Τί πρὸς ταῦτα φῆς, Σαρρακηνέ; μὴ ἐλάττωσι τῶν Μωϋσαϊκῶν σημείων ἑαυτὸν ὁ Χριστὸς ἐπιστώσατο ἐπιδείξεις;

ΣΑΡΑΚ. Οὐδαμῶς.

C ΘΕΟΔ. Οὗτος ὁ ὑπὸ τοῦ Μωϋσέως προδηλωθεὶς, καὶ τοσοῦτοις καὶ τοιοῦτοις ἑαυτὸν πιστωσάμενος σημείοις πρὸς Θεοῦ ἐληλυθέναι, παρεγγυᾶται τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ μαθηταῖς λέγων· <Ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται μέχρι Ἰωάννου τοῦ Βαπτιστοῦ. Ὁ ἔχων τὰ ὦτα ἀκούειν, ἀκουέτω.> Ποῦ τοίνυν ὁ προφήτης ὑμῶν; οὐκ ἄδηλον.

the water into blood".¹ And, thus, Moses was sent and he performed these, and his words were proven to be reliable through his works. Yes or no?

SARAC. Certainly.

THEOD. Christ came confirming his mission from God in himself by being witnessed to not only by Moses' prophesy but, also, by proving himself reliable through signs and miracles and various mighty works.

SARAC. By which ones?

THEOD. By his conception without a seed, a mother without husband and his virgin birth; by the conversion of the water into wine; also after all these it was not obscured but rather quite manifest in the giving back of sight to blind men, the cleansing of lepers, the strengthening of paralytics, the healing of various diseases, the manifestation of his divinity on the mountain, the expulsion of demons, the feeding of many thousands with a few loaves and fish, the rising of the dead as if it were from sleep, and once and for all the restoration of physical handicaps. What do you say about these, Saracene? Did Christ prove himself reliable by less signs than those of Moses?

SARAC. Not at all.

THEOD. This, who was proclaimed in advance by Moses and who has proved himself reliable by so many and such signs, (in his claim that) he has come from God gives this warrantee to his disciples saying: "The law and the prophets were until John the Baptist. He who has ears to hear, let him hear".² Where, therefore, does your prophet fall? This is not dubious . . .

¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 2-9.

² K. 16:16; Matt. 11:15.

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