

## ARABIC, SYRIAC AND GREEK HISTORIOGRAPHY IN THE FIRST ABBASID CENTURY: AN INQUIRY INTO INTER-CULTURAL TRAFFIC<sup>1</sup>

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The discipline of history writing has had a somewhat vicissitudinous and ambiguous career in the civilisations of the West and the Middle East. Frequently disdained by "serious" scholars and excluded from the scheme of established sciences,<sup>2</sup> it was nevertheless deemed useful for instruction in moral, political and military matters,<sup>3</sup> and proved to be of crucial importance in guiding society through periods of extreme turmoil or rapid change.<sup>4</sup> The unsettling, though very different, impact of Persian and Egyptian culture upon the Ionian and Athenian world of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. provoked a rash of history writing, most notably by Hecataeus, Herodotus and Thucydides.<sup>5</sup> In the second to fourth centuries A.D., the upheaval caused by the emergence of a Christian society within the pagan Roman empire called forth frantic historical activity: Clemens Alexandrinus, Julius Africanus and Hippolytus of Rome inaugurated a Christian chronology, and Eusebius invented ecclesiastical history; while Eutropius and Festus fought back by producing a pagan version of the

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<sup>2</sup>Finley, M., *Introduction to the Greek Historians*, (New York, 1959) notes the Greek philosophers' "indifference to history"; al-Fārābī, *Falsafat Aristūṭalīs*, Mahdi, M., (ed), (Beirut, 1961), 61, ranks history with fables and stories, "to which one listens solely for the delight they give".

<sup>3</sup>The statements of Cicero, *De Oratore*, (Loeb, 1917), 224 that History is "*magistra vitae, nuntia vetustatis*" and of Livy *Ab Urbe Condita*, (Oxford, 1914), *praefatio* that in it "you may look upon the lessons of every kind of experience" are perhaps the most famous, but many histories extol their contents as of didactic merit. Cf. Rosenthal, F., *A History of Muslim Historiography*, (Leiden, 1968), 30-53.

<sup>4</sup>Radical alterations to the status quo require a re-writing of the "where we came from" story (though a Canute-like conservatism may continue to be the response of many); new institutions and values demand legitimisation and validation - both needs find satisfaction in historical elaboration. See Hobsbawm, E., & Ranger, T., *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge, 1983).

<sup>5</sup>Butterfield, H., *The Origins of History*, (London, 1981), 118-137.

Roman past.<sup>6</sup> In the West too, the road from classical Rome to Medieval Europe was paved by historians.<sup>7</sup> The Magdeburg Centuries and John Foxe's Acts and Monuments followed hard on the heels of the Lutheran transformations, and in our own times we have the example of Marxist history, which has been instrumental in aiding traditional societies to make the quantum leap to modern nationhood.<sup>8</sup>

The subject of this paper is another such period of cultural transformation, namely the first century of the Abbasid dynasty of Islam (750-850 A.D.),<sup>9</sup> a period which also bore witness to a marked upturn in historical output, most noticeably in the Muslim realm, but in some measure too in the neighbouring Byzantine empire. It was in this century that the various politico-religious and ethno-cultural Arabic-speaking groups in the Middle East were engaged in fervent debate with one another and striving to seek legitimisation for their positions. Since ultimate sanction and authority came to be vested, during this period, in the Prophet Muḥammad and his Companions, a party's practices and institutions, beliefs and values had to be shown to derive from the sayings and doings of these figures. One result of this was the expending of great efforts in the search for genuine knowledge of the era of the Prophet and the first rulers of Islam, but an inevitable concomitant was the generation of immense amounts of pseudo-history.<sup>10</sup>

In the Greek and Syriac speaking worlds, the renewed interest in history had rather to do with providing a sense of continuity and stressing the re-establishment of orthodoxy after the tremendous disruptions visited upon the Christian community by the Arab takeover of the former Byzantine provinces, and the twin "heresies" of monotheletism and iconoclasm.<sup>11</sup> The

<sup>6</sup>Momigliano, A., "Pagan and Christian Historiography" in idem, (ed), *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography*, (Oxford, 1977).

<sup>7</sup>Goffart, W., *The Narrators of Barbarian History. A.D. 550-800*, (Princeton, 1988).

<sup>8</sup>Hall, J., *Powers and Liberties*, (Oxford, 1985), 9f. & 251; and compare the present efforts in the former U.S.S.R. to rewrite Stalinist history and in Europe to demonstrate that "Europeans" have had a long unbroken past together.

<sup>9</sup>For simplicity I use the term "First Abbasid century", but throughout the paper I tacitly accept that the phenomenon will very likely have had its beginnings in the late Umayyad period (c. 720-50).

<sup>10</sup>Goldziher, I., *Muhammedanische Studien I*, (Halle, 1889), chs. 2-3; Petersen, E., *Alī and Mu'āwiya in Early Arabic Tradition*, (Copenhagen, 1964), summary on 177-87; Wansborough, J., *The Sectarian Milieu*, (Oxford, 1978); Crone, P., *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*, (Princeton, 1987), ch. 9. Economic interests might also give rise to "historical" information - cf. Juynboll, G., "Dyeing the Hair and Beard in Early Islam. A Ḥadīth-Analytical Study", *Arabica*, 33 (1986), 49-75.

<sup>11</sup>This statement does not, of course, apply in equal measure to the Jacobites of Syria and the

Greek chronicles of the patriarch Nicephorus (extending 602-769) and the monk Theophanes (284-813),<sup>12</sup> and the Syriac chronicles of a monk of Zuqnān monastery in northern Mesopotamia (Creation-775) and the Jacobite patriarch Dionysius of Tellmahārē (582-842)<sup>13</sup> emphasize their links with and their intentions to continue on from earlier authorities.

With the gradual emergence of Arabic as the universal scholarly medium of the Muslim empire in Abbasid times,<sup>14</sup> the possibility of exchange between Greek, Syriac and Arabic cultures was greatly enhanced, and indeed has been shown to be the case with regard to theology and philosophy.<sup>15</sup> The following is an investigation into the likelihood of contact between Greek, Syriac and Arabic traditions in the field of historiography.

### SYRIAC TO ARABIC

From earliest Islamic times, there circulated among the Arabs narrative material (*akhbār*)<sup>16</sup> about their past. This material was initially transmitted in the same manner as pre-Islamic tradition (*ayyām*), namely orally by a

Chalcedonians of the Byzantine heartlands. For the background, see Treadgold, W., *The Byzantine Revival 780-842*, (Stanford, 1988), ch. 1 & 373ff.; Wilson, N.G., *Scholars of Byzantium*, (London, 1983), chs. 3-4.

<sup>12</sup>Nikephoros, *Short History*, Mango, C., (ed & tr), (Washington, 1990); Theophanes, *Chronographia*, de Boor, C., (ed), (Leipzig, 1883) - hereafter referred to as Theoph.

<sup>13</sup>The first was initially mistaken for the second, then later re-edited as *Incerti Auctoris Chronicon Anonymum pseudo-Dionysianum I-II*, Chabot, J., (ed), (CSCO 91 & 104, Louvain, 1927 & 1933). The text of Dionysius is lost, but was the chief source of Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, Chabot, J., (ed & tr), (Paris, 1899-1924) for the period 582-842 and the sole source of the *Anonymi Auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens, I-II*, idem (ed), (CSCO 81 & 2, Paris, 1920 & 1916); for this reason, it is the latter that is used in this essay to represent the views of Dionysius. These works will hereafter be referred to as Ps. Dion. (always Volume II), Michael and Chron. 1234 (always Volume I) respectively.

<sup>14</sup>Blake, R., "La Littérature grecque en Palestine au VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle", *Le Muséon*, 78 (1965), 367-80, points out that Greek disappears from the monasteries of Palestine in the ninth century; Griffiths, S., "Greek into Arabic in the Monasteries of Palestine in the Ninth Century", *Byzantion*, 56 (1986), 117-38, shows that this is because production is by then in Arabic.

<sup>15</sup>E.g. Griffiths, S., "Ḥabīb ibn Ḥidma Abū Ra'īṭa, a Christian *mutakallim* of the First Abbasid Century", *Oriens Christianus*, 64 (1980), 117-38; idem, "Ammār al-Basrī's *Kitāb al-Burhān*: Christian *Kalām* in the First Abbasid Century", *Le Muséon*, 96 (1983), 145-81. Walzer, R., *Greek into Arabic. Essays on Islamic Philosophy*, (Oxford, 1962).

<sup>16</sup>*Akhbār* tends to refer to the tribal tradition at large, becoming a general word for history in detribalised Islam. *Ḥadīth*, on the other hand, came to denote specifically narratives pertaining to the Prophet, his Companions and other religiously significant figures, and it is therefore far more affected by doctrinal and legal concerns than is the former. The distinction probably only arose, however, in the aftermath of the late Umayyad argument over methods of transmission, the traditionists (*muḥaddithūn*) insisting on the use of chains of authorities to back up reports (Juynboll, G., "The Date of the Great Fitna", *Arabica*, 20 (1973), 142-59; Landau-Tesserer, E., "Sayf b. 'Umar in Medieval and Modern Scholarship", *Der Islam*, 67 (1990), 6-9), and with the ascendancy of Prophetic authority, which made the study of the deeds and dicta of Muhammad the most "Islamic" form of scholarship.

reciter or storyteller (*rāwī* / *qāṣṣ*) amid tribal gatherings. For this reason, its content is much concerned with displays of military prowess, eloquence and kinship loyalty; and its form is that of self-contained units, depicting an incident or imparting an oral communication, usually on the authority of an eye- or ear-witness. The individual unit frequently lacks any specific temporal or spatial location and hence, in its most nuclear form, may appear in a variety of contexts, serving many different ends. The reciter would assemble such units into groups, producing for example a cycle of narratives clustered around a particular character, event or theme. By the late Umayyad period, there had evolved a body of material which, though still malleable and still growing, exhibited a basic agreement on the events of early Islam and a certain resistance to radically new interpretation.<sup>17</sup>

In the first Abbasid century, this material was subjected to intense scholarly treatment, particularly at the hands of descendants of prisoners of war who wished to define the culture into which they had been born.<sup>18</sup> Professional historians were rare,<sup>19</sup> and it was generally philologists, lawyers, traditionists, theologians, genealogists, geographers, astronomers and particularly political figures who came to this corpus to ransack it for their own needs, but frequently to indulge in some history writing as well. They would sift through, selecting and rejecting, detaching and combining, adding material from their own disciplines,<sup>20</sup> and organising the narratives into monographs on particular subjects. Typical titles would be "The Campaigns of the Prophet", "The Battle of Ṣiffīn", "The Murder of Ḥujr b.

<sup>17</sup>Jones, J.M.B., "Ibn Ishāq and al-Wāqidi", *BSOAS*, 22 (1959), discerns a "common reservoir of *qāṣṣ* material" (47), and asserts that "the greater part of the *sīra* was already formalised by the 2nd century A.H." (51).

<sup>18</sup>The historian Ibn Ishāq (d. 767) was the grandson of a captive from 'Ayn al-Tamr in Iraq; the poet Bashshār b. Burd (d. 785) was the grandson of a captive from Tukharistan; the lawyer Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 767) was the grandson of a prisoner-of-war from Kabul; the anthologist Ḥammād al-Rāwīya (d. 772) was the son of a captive from Daylam, and the philologist Abū 'Ubayda (d. 824) was the son of a Jew from Bājarwān in Mesopotamia. All were, however, thoroughly assimilated into Arab-Muslim culture. See Crone, P., *Slaves on Horses*, (Cambridge, 1980), 50; and *E.I.* on the individual authors.

<sup>19</sup>I.e., those whose principal activity was history writing. A notable exception is al-Mas'ūdi, though he was something of a polymath; al-Ṭabarī was first and foremost an exegete and lawyer, Abū Ḥanīfa al-Dīnawārī a philologist who also dabbled in astronomy, and al-Balādhurī was in the employ of the caliph, al-Mutawakkil. No lives of historians are found in the vast biographical literature of Islam, except in the guise of traditionists.

<sup>20</sup>In particular, genealogies, poetry and legal sayings would make their way into histories: see Watt, W.M., "The Materials used by Ibn Ishāq" in Lewis, B. & Holt, P., (eds), *Historians of the Middle East*, (London, 1962); Brunschwig, R., "Ibn 'Abd alḥakīm et la conquête de l'Afrique du Nord par les Arabes", *Annales de l'Institut des Études Orientales de l'Université d'Alger* (1942-47), illustrates how much of Conquest narratives are made up of legal and doctrinal material.

'Adī", "The Life of Mu'āwiya".<sup>21</sup> In fashioning these accounts, a good *akhbārī* author would use considerable artistry, in the process transforming the material still further.<sup>22</sup> As the monographs became ever more comprehensive, incorporating more and more diverse material and treating ever greater extents of time and space, it became clear that some other system of organization was needed besides the thematic one. Many were tried and some persisted, such as arrangement according to genealogies (*ansāb*), successive generations (*ṭabaqāt*), or the reigns of rulers (*duwal*). But the one that was to prove most successful was arrangement by year: annalistic history.

There had been an increasing emphasis, during the first Abbasid decades, on giving some chronological order to narratives of early Islam.<sup>23</sup> Conversely and coincidentally, there was a move to flesh out lists compiled from government records that had been kept since mid-Umayyad times, regarding the names of holders of high office and notable events for each year.<sup>24</sup> From such, Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhri (d. 742) had drawn up a list of "the Years of the Caliphs";<sup>25</sup> soon after, such works included pilgrimage leaders, governors and judges.<sup>26</sup> Names of those who had fallen in battle may also have been inscribed, since they had a bearing upon the distribution of stipends.<sup>27</sup> Then, in the early 9th century, al-Haytham b. 'Adī (d. 822) and

<sup>21</sup>These and other examples are given in N. Faruqi, *Early Muslim Historiography*, (Delhi 1979), 214-302. It should be emphasised that these works were still not continuous narratives; the individual narrative units remained obtrusive (cf. Nasr b. Muzāḥim al-Minqarī (d. 828), *Waq'at Šiffīn*, 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, (ed), (Cairo, 1945)).

<sup>22</sup>Leder, S., "Authorship and transmission in unauthored literature: the akhbār attributed to al-Haytham ibn 'Adī", *Oriens*, 31 (1988), 67-81; idem, "Features of the novel in early historiography. The Downfall of Xālid al-Qaṣrī", *Oriens*, 32 (1990), 72-96.

<sup>23</sup>Jones, J.M.B., "The Chronology of the *Maghāzī* - A Textual Survey", *BSOAS*, 19 (1957), 245-80.

<sup>24</sup>Papyri, inscriptions and coins suggest that an effective Umayyad administration was in place at a very early date; see Donner, F., "The Formation of the Islamic State", *JAOS*, 106 (1986), 283-96.

<sup>25</sup>A Syriac king list of 724 (in *Chronica Minora II*, Brooks, E., (ed), (CSCO 3, Louvain, 1960), 155) already derives from an Arabic version (note the use of lunar years and transliteration of the Arabic terms *fitna* and *rasūl Allāh*). Another list of caliphs in Syriac ends in 705 (Land, J.P.N., *Anecdota Syriaca II*, (Leiden, 1868), 11 of Addenda).

<sup>26</sup>Rotter, G., "Abū Zur'a al-Dimashqī und das Problem der frühen arabischen Geschichtsschreibung in Syrien", *Die Welt des Islams*, 6 (1971), 91-2 & 99f.; Schacht, J., *Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, (Oxford, 1950), 100 (on the early provenance of Kindī's lists).

<sup>27</sup>Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh al-Rusul wa'l-Mulūk*, I, de Goeje, M., (ed), (Leiden, 1879-1901), 2496 (on *irāfāt*). Sellheim, R., "Prophet, Chalif und Geschichte. Die Muhammad-Biographie des Ibn Ishāq", *Oriens*, 18 (1967), 73-77 and Schacht, J., "On Mūsā b. 'Uqba's *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*", *Acta Orientalia*, 21 (1953), 288-300, have discerned name lists as a discrete element in Sīra literature. Lecker, M., (*The Banū Sulaym*, (Jerusalem, 1989) - though see the review by

Abū Ḥassan al-Ziyādī (d. 857) composed a "History according to the Years" (*Ta'rikh 'alā sinīn*),<sup>28</sup> presumably a compendium of year by year notices. Finally, with the History of Khalifa b. Khayyāt (d. 854)<sup>29</sup> and especially the "History of the Prophets and Kings" of Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 923), we see a full marriage between literary narrative (*akhbār*) and official annals and records (*ta'rikh*).

It is not impossible that Muslim historians hit upon using an annalistic style of presentation independently,<sup>30</sup> but since the technique has a considerable pedigree in the Middle East, it is worth examining the possibility of borrowing from the other cultures existing in the region. There is no firm evidence of annalistic writings having been produced by Iranian authors,<sup>31</sup> nor by Nestorians until Elias bar Shinaya, metropolitan of Nisibis (d. 1050).<sup>32</sup> Of some consequence for Muslim chronography, however, may have been the emergence, under Greco-Indian influence, of Pahlavi astronomical texts. Circa 450 A.D., a Royal Almanac (*Zik-i Shāh*) was composed, though we know no more of it than that it gave the longitude of the sun's apogee.<sup>33</sup> A century later, Khusrau Anūshirvān ordered his astrologers to compare an Indian work with Ptolemy's *Syntaxis*. The former was favoured and a new redaction of the *Zik-i Shāh* was based upon it,<sup>34</sup> which in turn was apparently used by the astrologer who computed a series of horoscopes of significant eclipses and events in early Islam, ending in 679,

Hawting, G., *BSOAS*, 54 (1991), 359-62 - and Hinds, M., "The Murder of the Caliph 'Uthmān", *IJMES*, 3 (1972) have shown that there is some meaning behind them.

<sup>28</sup>Duri, A., *The Rise of Historical Writing among the Arabs*, (Princeton, 1983), 53-4 (Haytham); Sezgin, F., *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, (Leiden, 1967), 316 (Abū Ḥassan).

<sup>29</sup>Khalifa b. Khayyāt, *Ta'rikh*, al-'Umari, A.D., (ed), (Najaf, 1967); see also the comments of J. Schacht in *Arabica*, 16 (1969), 79-80.

<sup>30</sup>The germs of it may be seen to lie in pre-Islamic practice; cf. Ṭabarī, *I*, (1254): "When they dated an event, they did so from such as a drought which occurred in some part of their country, a barren year which befell them, the term of a governor who ruled over them, or an event the news of which became widespread among them" (e.g. "Quraysh rebuilt the ka'ba 15 years after the *Fijār* wars", 1139). The cataclysmic nature of the *hijra* served to halt the constant revision of *termini a quo*, furnishing the ultimate *point de repère*.

<sup>31</sup>Spuler, B., "The Evolution of Persian Historiography" in Lewis & Holt, (eds), *Historians of the Middle East*, 126-32; Christensen, A., *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, (Copenhagen, 1944), 59ff. But see Morony, M., *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, (Princeton, 1984), 564f.

<sup>32</sup>Nestorians seem to have favoured a biographical arrangement of material; cf. the anonymous Chronicle in *Chronica Minora I*, Guidi, I., (ed), (CSCO 1, Louvain, 1960), and the Chronicle of Seert ("Histoire Nestorienne", Scher, A., (ed & tr), *PO* 4, 5, 7, 13).

<sup>33</sup>Pingree, D., "The Persian 'Observation' of the Solar Apogee in ca. A.D. 450", *JNES*, 24 (1965), 334-6.

<sup>34</sup>Kennedy, E.S., "The Sasanian Astronomical Handbook *Zij al-Shāh* and the Astrological Doctrine of Transit (*mamārr*)", *JAOS*, 78 (1958), 246-62.

and by the author of another series in the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd (786-809).<sup>35</sup>

Thus, at a very early date and under Indo-Iranian influence,<sup>36</sup> there were efforts made to put Islam on the chart of astrological history and to inaugurate a Muslim astronomy.<sup>37</sup> Its earliest exponents, such as Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Fāzārī and Ya'qūb b. Ṭāriq, both active in the reign of al-Manṣūr (754-75), gave much thought to such problems as integrating the Arab lunar calendar with other chronologies,<sup>38</sup> as well as to the more standard questions on astrolabes, armillary spheres and planetary motion. Their slightly younger, non-Muslim contemporaries, Theophilus bar Toma (d. 785), a Chalcedonian from Edessa who was chief astrologer to al-Mahdī (775-85), and Māshā'Allāh (d. c.815), a Mesopotamian Jew, likewise engaged in some chronological activity,<sup>39</sup> and the close contemporaries Yaḥyā b. Abī Manṣūr (d. 832) and Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Khwārizmī (d. 835) are both credited with some history writing.<sup>40</sup> It is indeed the duty of an astrologer to have a good knowledge of dates (*ma'rifat al-tawārīkh*), declares a late tenth century encyclopaedia.<sup>41</sup> It may well have been, then, the rise of astronomy within Islam that prompted Muslim historians to set their discipline on firmer chronological ground. Astrologers enjoyed a certain prominence, particularly at the Abbasid court, and would be called

<sup>35</sup>Pingree, D., *The Thousands of Abū Ma'shar*, (London, 1968), 93-121.

<sup>36</sup>Pingree, D., "Historical Horoscopes", *JAOS*, 82 (1962), 487-8, 495. The use of Arabic by Persian writers as early as the late Umayyad period (*E.I.*, s.v. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd & Ibn al-Muqaffa') must in part explain the initial entry of astronomy into Islam via Iran, for the Greek tradition was not lacking in champions: e.g. Severus Sebokht (d. 667) and George bishop of the Arabs (d. 724). See Pingree, D., "Greek Influence on Early Islamic Mathematical Astronomy", *JAOS*, 93 (1973), 32-43.

<sup>37</sup>The astrologer who devised the series of horoscopes in Hārūn al-Rashīd's time and whose techniques were used by Abū Ma'shar (d. 886) in his *Kitāb al-Ulūf* would seem to have been a Muslim, judging from his injunctions to build mosques, and references to *sharā'i*, *fiqh* and *ṣunan* (Pingree, *The Thousands*, 58).

<sup>38</sup>Fāzārī drew up "astronomical tables according to the years of the Arabs" (*Kitāb al-Zīj 'alā sīnī al-'arab*) - Pingree, D., "The Fragments of the Works of al-Fāzārī", *JNES*, 29 (1970), 103-23. Idem, "The Fragments of the Works of Ya'qūb b. Ṭāriq", *JNES*, 27 (1968), 97-125; Sezgin, *GAS*, VI, 122-127.

<sup>39</sup>Breydy, D., *Geschichte der syro-arabischen Literatur der Maroniten vom 7. bis 16. Jahrhundert*, (Opladen, 1985), 132-38 (Theophilus); Kennedy, E.S., & Pingree, D., *The Astrological History of Māshā'Allāh*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1971).

<sup>40</sup>Yaḥyā was commissioned by al-Ma'mūn to test the dates and observations of Ptolemy; the outcome was Yaḥyā's "Tried and Tested Almanac" (*al-Zīj al-mumtaḥan*), which dealt with the chronologies of different regions (Sezgin, *GAS*, VI, 136-7). A *ta'rikh* attributed to Khwārizmī (*ibid.*, 140-43) is cited by Bīrūnī for the Prophet's birth date (Garbers, K., "Eine Ergänzung zu Sachaus Ausgabe von al-Bīrūnī's 'Chronologie orientalischer Völker'" in Fück, J., (ed), *Documenta Islamica Inedita*, (Berlin, 1952), 55).

<sup>41</sup>*Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafa*, IV (Cairo, 1928), 364.

upon to decide propitious moments for actions of consequence: no less than five of them being consulted by al-Mansūr regarding the most auspicious time for the founding of Baghdad.<sup>42</sup> Yet the methods and materials of astrological history are very different from those of its literary counterpart,<sup>43</sup> and chronological detail need not imply annalistic organization. For the inspiration behind the idea of narrative history arranged year by year we should, therefore, perhaps continue to look elsewhere.

Annalistic techniques were, of course, deployed by writers in the Greco-Roman tradition as far back as Thucydides, who was himself probably confirming the practice of individual cities before him. Any direct influence on the Arabic tradition seems, however, unlikely given the conspicuous absence of Arabic translations of Byzantine historical works.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, the Eusebian tradition of chronography in Greek appears to have faltered after the efforts of Panodorus and Anianus in the fifth century, and Greek historical writing as a whole went into the doldrums with the onset of Arab rule.<sup>45</sup> On its re-emergence in the late eighth and early ninth century, it does evince an interest in precise chronological narrative, as is exemplified by the chronicle of Theophanes, but an indebtedness to some Syriac or Arabic model is readily apparent.<sup>46</sup>

West Syrian historiography, on the other hand, suffered far less disruption.<sup>47</sup> The royal annals of Edessa inspired a subsequent episcopal tradition of annalistic record-keeping, of which we find extracts in the mid-sixth century anonymous Edessan compilation and the early seventh century

<sup>42</sup>Pingree, D., "Greek Influence on Islamic Astronomy", *JAOS*, 93 (1973), 37-8.

<sup>43</sup>Astrological history sought to reconstruct the past and predict the future by means of casting horoscopes, i.e., tables of the longitudes of planets calculated for a particular time, then determining the planetary conjunctions and relating their significance to the event that did, or would, occur at that time. It was from the events coinciding with past conjunctions that one tried to assess the nature of events to occur on future conjunctions. Astronomy provided the laws for making these computations.

<sup>44</sup>Steinschneider, M., *Die arabischen Übersetzungen aus dem Griechischen*, (Graz, 1980), fails to signal any.

<sup>45</sup>For a survey of what history was being written in the late sixth and early seventh century and a consideration of why it was curtailed, see Whitby, M. & M., "Greek Historical Writing after Procopius" in Cameron, Averil & Conrad, L. (eds), *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East I. Problems in the Literary Source Material*, (Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam, Princeton, 1991), 25-80.

<sup>46</sup>Mango, C., "The Tradition of Byzantine Chronography", *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 12-13 (1988-9), 363-9.

<sup>47</sup>The Chronicle of 819 (prefixed to *Chron. 1234*, 12) has a gap for the years A.G. 976-90 (664-79), which leaves the Zuqnīn chronicler also at a loss. But a number of notices on natural disasters shared by Theoph., 353f., and Michael, 436/456f. (bk. 11.13) show that there was still some activity. See Palmer, A., *The Seventh Century in Syriac Chronicles*, (Liverpool Translated Texts, forthcoming).



work of Thomas the Presbyter.<sup>48</sup> At monasteries such as Qenneshre and Qartmin in north Mesopotamia, the tradition was continued until the time of Dionysius of Tellmahṛê, who gave it a new vigour.<sup>49</sup> After the fashion of Eusebius, "other men charted the succession of years, namely Jacob of Edesssa and John, the stylite of Litarba", both active in the first years of the eighth century.<sup>50</sup>

Language constituted no barrier to exchange between Syriac and Arab cultures. Many Arabs, Muslim as well as Christian, knew Syriac: the scholar 'Abdallāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ (d. 684) was famous for it and for his knowledge of the books of Daniel.<sup>51</sup> And West Syrians made use of Arabic very early on as a language of scholarship.<sup>52</sup> So if one were to posit extraneous rather than indigenous origins for the annalistic form in Muslim historiography, then it is to the West Syrian historical tradition that one should look.

### ARABIC TO SYRIAC

Throughout the seventh and eighth centuries Syriac writers of history did not cease to note happenings at the Byzantine court, but since they lived under Arab rulers who made their intention to stay increasingly obvious, it was naturally Arab power-politics that tended more and more to draw their attention. It was natural, too, that they should turn to Arab sources for information on these matters, whether indirectly via Syriac Christians working in the Arab government, or directly via Arab informants and Arabic written records and histories.

It is in the secular history of Dionysius of Tellmahṛê that we find the

<sup>48</sup>"Chronicum Edessenum" in *Chronica Minora*, I, 1-14. The chronicle of Thomas ends in 640, but a king-list of 724 appended to it has imposed upon it the inapt title: "Chronicum Miscellaneum ad A.D. 724 pertinens" (*Chronica Minora*, II, 77-154).

<sup>49</sup>The work of earlier authors is clear in the Chronicle of 846 and its immediate source, a Qartminite chronicle of 819; see Brooks, E.W., "The Sources of Theophanes and the Syriac Chroniclers", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 15 (1906), 578-87; Palmer, A., *Monk and Mason on the Tigris Frontier*, (Cambridge, 1990), 9-143. The comment by a Maronite chronicler that, since the raid of 664, "the Arabs have not attacked that lake again up to the present day", suggests he was active not long after 664 (*Chronica Minora*, II, 73). And the Zuqnīn monk's source for Leo III's dealings with Maslama in 717 was clearly a contemporary of that emperor: e.g., "As for this Leo, he is a courageous, strong and warlike man; and he is by origin a Syrian from these borderlands" (Ps. Dion., 157).

<sup>50</sup>Michael, 378/358 (10.20).

<sup>51</sup>Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, (Beirut, 1960-68), IV, 266, VII, 495; Tabarī, II, 299. Cf. Kister, M.J., "Haddithū 'an banī isrā'īla wa-lā ḥaraja", *Israel Oriental Studies*, 2 (1972), 215-39. Cook, M., "An Early Islamic Apocalyptic Chronicle", forthcoming in *JNES*, demonstrates that Christian terminology and ideas were present in early Muslim apocalyptic literature.

<sup>52</sup>Griffiths, S., "Stephen of Ramla and the Christian Kerygma in Arabic in Ninth Century Palestine", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 36 (1985), 23-45.

clearest indication of such use of Arabic material. In the first place, there often occur anecdotes popular in the Muslim tradition, a good example being Abū Bakr's despatch of four generals to Syria. Dionysius actually gives us two accounts of the inception of the Arab Conquests, one from a Syriac source to the effect that Muhammad initiated raids upon Palestine which escalated into a full-scale invasion of Roman and Persian territory,<sup>53</sup> and the other portraying Abū Bakr as the instigator, who "sent an army of 30,000 Arabs to subdue the land of Syria and placed over them four generals", whom he addressed as follows:

"Do not kill any old man, nor small child nor woman. Do not force down a stylite from his place nor harm the solitary for they have dedicated themselves (*prashw napshhūn*) to the service of God. Do not cut down any tree or damage any plant, and do not tear open any domestic animal (*b'īro*), cow or sheep".<sup>54</sup>

This incident crops up in numerous Arabic works, yet the words of Abū Bakr are remarkably constant:

"Do not kill any small child nor old man nor woman. Do not decapitate or burn a palm tree nor cut down any tree bearing fruit, and do not slit open any sheep, cow or camel (*ba'īr*) except to eat it. You will pass by men who have dedicated themselves (*farraghū anfusahum*) inside cells, so leave them alone and what they have dedicated themselves to".<sup>55</sup>

Some connection seems evident, but care is required over the Arabic version. The list of generals given by Dionysius: Abū 'Ubayda b. al-Jarrāh,<sup>56</sup>

<sup>53</sup>*Chron. 1234*, 227-8. That this is drawn from a Syriac source is suggested by its agreement with Jacob of Edessa that Muhammad would go to Syria for trade (*Chronica Minora*, III, Brooks *et alii*, (eds), (CSCO 5, Louvain, 1905, 326), and by its erroneous statement that Muslims pray to the south (230), a mistake made frequently by Syrian Christians regarding Jews (Crone, P. & Cook, M., *Hagarism*, (Cambridge, 1977), 173 n. 30; Bardy, G. (ed & tr), "LesTrophées de Damas", *PO* 15, 252).

<sup>54</sup>*Chron. 1234*, 239-40. Abū Bakr then proceeds to speak of how to deal with the citizens of the lands they are about to enter. Al-Wāqidī (*Kitāb al-Maghāzī*, Jones, M., (ed), (Oxford, 1966), 757) does so too and there are certain similarities (particularly the statement: "As for those who do not receive you, make war on them"), but Wāqidī is more concerned to get across the standard three options of conversion, tribute or battle.

<sup>55</sup>Ṭabarī, *I*, 1850. Literally, the last part reads: "They have made themselves unoccupied (so that they can spend all their time) in cells (*ṣawāmi*), so leave them...".

<sup>56</sup>Note that Dionysius gives his full name: Abū 'Ubayda 'Āmir b. 'Abdallāh b. al-Jarrāh (cf. Ibn Hazm al-Andalusī, *Djamharat ansāb al-'arab*, Levi-Provençal, E., (ed), (Cairo, 1948), 166-7).

'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ,<sup>57</sup> Shurahbīl b. Ḥasana and Yazīd b. Abī Sufyān, certainly represents the most popular Arabic formulation, but by no means the only one.<sup>58</sup>

Furthermore, though the text of the speech exhibits little change,<sup>59</sup> its setting varies considerably: Muḥammad voices it to the army departing for Mu'ta in September 629;<sup>60</sup> Abū Bakr delivers it to Usāma b. Zayd as the latter leaves for the Balqā' in June 632,<sup>61</sup> and to Yazīd b. Abī Sufyān before his march upon Syria in early 634.<sup>62</sup> It features in legal discourse on the conduct of war, where it was generally broken up to be used in support of such rulings as the inadmissibility of killing women and children and of damaging property during war;<sup>63</sup> and it belongs to the literary genre of pre-

<sup>57</sup>Dionysius actually has 'Amr b. Sa'īd b. al-ʿĀṣ, which is the name of a famous Umayyad (Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 100f.) who fought at Ajnādayn (al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, de Goeje, M., (ed), (Leiden, 1866), 113) and/or Marj al-Suffar (Khalīfa, I, 88) and/or Yarmūk (Khalīfa, I, 100; Ṭabarī, I, 2101). His brother, Khālīd b. Sa'īd b. al-ʿĀṣ (Ibn Sa'd, IV, 94-100), is often named as one of the first generals (Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīkh Madīnat al-Dimashq* I, al-Dīn al-Munajjid, S., (ed), (Damascus, 1951), 443-46; Ṭabarī, I, 2079-82), and it may be that

Dionysius or his source has confused Khālīd and 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ.

<sup>58</sup>Donner, F., *The Early Islamic Conquests*, (Princeton, 1981), 114-116. The "four generals" theme may well be of Christian origin (Balādhurī, 107 has three). Dionysius' reference to it on 239-40, where it is linked with Abū Bakr's address, is distinct from that on 241 which accords with that given by Agapius ("Kitāb al-Unwān", Vasiliev, A., (ed & tr), PO 8, 468 - hereafter Agapius), who himself has a second distinct notice of it, possibly drawn from a brief Byzantine chronicle ending in 668 (453-4; the chronicle is most noticeable at 451-55). The late 7th century apocalypse of pseudo-Methodios talks of "four chiefs of chastisement" (Martinez, F., *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic in the Early Muslim Period*, (Catholic University of America Ph.D., 1985), 78), mirroring the "four tyrants, sons of Mūnī the Arab woman" (65) who feature in the fifth millennium Ishmaelite-Midianite eruption.

<sup>59</sup>Differences occur in the order, in the use of synonyms ("young child" is rendered by *walīd*, *ṭifl*, *ṣabī* and *murda*), in interpolations (cf. n. 65) and omissions, and in copyist's mistakes: e.g. 'aqara ("cut off the head of a palm tree": Lane, *Lexicon*) also appears as *gharaqa* (Waqīdī, 758), 'arrafa (al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh Futūḥ al-Shām*, al-Mun'im 'Abdallāh 'Amīr, 'A., (ed), (Cairo, 1970), 12), 'azaqa (Ibn 'Asākir, 427 & 454-7), and is applied to sheep instead of palm trees (Mālik, *al-Muwatṭa'*, Cairo 1930, I, 298; perhaps related to the legal maxim *lā 'agra fī l-islām*). But substantially the text remains the same.

<sup>60</sup>Waqīdī, 758; al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, Houtsma, M., (ed), (Leiden, 1883), II, 83.

<sup>61</sup>Ṭabarī, I, 1850; Ibn 'Asākir, 427. Both cite the authority of Sayf b. 'Umar.

<sup>62</sup>Azdī, 12 ('an Muḥammad b. Yusuf); Ibn 'Asākir, 454-57 (six variants). Where the speech is quoted in full, the usual context is that Abū Bakr is walking next to the person he is addressing; the latter (Usāma or Yazīd) is mounted and says to Abū Bakr, "Either you mount or I alight"; he refuses on the grounds that his steps are "in God's cause".

<sup>63</sup>Ṭabarī, *Kitāb Ikhtilāf al-Fuqahā'*, Schacht, J., (ed), (Leiden, 1933), 8-12; Muslim, *al-Sahīḥ*, al-Bāqī, 'A., (ed), (Cairo, 1955), III, nos. 1745-46. The Medinan Mālik b. Anas (d. 795; *Muwatṭa'*, I, 297-8) and the Meccan Ibn Jurayj (d. 767; in 'Abd al-Razzaq al-San'ānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, al-Rahmān al-A'zamī, H., (ed), (Beirut, 1972), V, no. 9375) both cite the authority of the well-regarded Medinan judge, Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd al-Anṣārī (d. 761; Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, (Hyderabad, 1325-7), XI, 221-4) and give almost identical versions, suggesting a *terminus ante quem* for this tradition of the late Umayyad period.

battle hortatory speeches.<sup>64</sup> Finally, the Arabic text concludes with a passage that has no counterpart in the Syriac:

"And you will find others in whose heads the devil has nesting places (*mafāḥiṣ*), so uproot them (the nesting places) with your swords".<sup>65</sup>

Arabic commentaries always explain this as a reference to ministers of the church (*shamāmisa*), who wore a tonsure and, in contrast to monks (*raḥbān*), condoned fighting, thereby becoming legitimate targets of attack.<sup>66</sup> The distinction is, however, unlikely, since the practice of tonsure was not restricted to clergymen,<sup>67</sup> and monks certainly did fight on occasion;<sup>68</sup> and the statement may not even have concerned Christians.<sup>69</sup>

The names given by Dionysius to certain actors in the Arab Conquest has occasioned much puzzlement, but by referring to the Arabic accounts the

<sup>64</sup> Compare the examples given in Ibn Qutayba, *Uyūn al-akhbār* (Dar al-Kutub, Cairo, 1925), I, 107-11. Or, more generally, Moses in *Deuteronomy*, 20.11; Shakespeare, W., *Henry V*, Act III.1 (before Harfleur) & IV.3 (before Agincourt).

<sup>65</sup> Wāqidi, 758. Tabarī, I, 1850, and Ibn 'Asākir, 427, have: "You will come across a people who bring you containers of assorted food; if you eat something of it, then mention the word of God over it. And you will meet men who have hollowed out (*fahāṣū*) the centre of their heads and left like a band (of hair) around it, so strike them (the men) with your sword". The word *fahāṣa* caused some problems, and Azdī (12) glosses it with "so that it is as if the centre of their heads were the nesting places of sand grouse (*afāḥiṣ al-qatā*)".

<sup>66</sup> Zamakhsharī, *al-Fā'iḳ*, al-Bajāwī, A.M. & Abū 'l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, (eds), (Cairo, 1945-8), II, 250 (*al-shamāmisa ya'nī alladhīna ḥalaḳū ru'ūsahum*) Ibn 'Asākir, 457-8; al-Shaibānī, *K. al-Siyar al-Kabīr*, in the commentary of al-Ṣarrakhsī, (Hyderabad, 1335), I, 33-4 (who says they have the same position as the 'Alids in Islam and they are the "sons of Aaron!"); Sa'īd b. Maṣṣūr, *Sunan*, al-Raḥmān al-A'zamī, H., (ed), (Beirut, 1985), II, nos. 2634-5. Al-Bīrūnī equates the Arabic and Syriac terms: *mshamshānā wa-hūwa al-shammās* (*Chronologie Orientalischer Völker*, Sachau, E., (ed), (Leipzig, 1878), 289).

<sup>67</sup> A central tonsure, which the Arabic appears to be describing, was worn by the Nestorian monks in the seventh century (Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, II.2, 905: the hair is cut off from the top of the head, leaving a space "like a wheel and a crown"). See Trichet, L., *La tonsure: vie et mort d'une pratique ecclésiastique*, (Paris, 1990), esp. ch. 3: "La Couronne" (first reference to which is made by Gregory of Tours, c. 590).

<sup>68</sup> Monks (*dayroḳē*) held the fortress of Mardīn against the Persians in 604: Michael, 390/378 (10.25); they were given dispensation to fight in times of need: Vööbus, A., *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, (Stockholm, 1960), 96. For early Muslim attitudes towards monks, see Sviri, S., "Wa-rahbāniyatan ibtada'ūhā: an analysis of traditions concerning the origin and evaluation of Christian monasticism", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 13 (1990), 195-208.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. *Herodotus*, Cary, H.F., (tr), (London, 1912), 173 (bk. 3.8): "They (the Arabians) acknowledge no other gods than Bacchus and Urania, and they say that their hair is cut in the same way that Bacchus' is cut; but they cut it in a circular form, shearing it round the temples"; Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, Wüstenfeld, F., (ed), (Göttingen, 1858-60), 759: "some men shaved their heads on the day of Hudaybiyya while others cut their hair". And in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* of pseudo-Wāqidi, it is said that recourse should be made to the sword so that these men who shave the centre of their heads should return to Islam (*The Conquest of Syria: commonly ascribed to Aboo 'Abd Allah Mohammad b. 'Omar al-Waqidi*, Nassau Lees, W., (ed), (Calcutta: Military Orphan Press, 1854), 8).

problem is soon resolved. The *Abū 'l-Kwlb* whom he cites as chief of the Yemenites must be the renowned Yemenī leader, Dhū 'l-Kalā'.<sup>70</sup> The general *Qyqlaws* who attacks the Arabs at Ajnādayn is clearly the Qīqilās named by Ibn Ishāq as Byzantine commander at that battle, and which ultimately derives from the title Cubicularius.<sup>71</sup> The mysterious *Qntris* and *Ardigūn* named by Dionysius as Byzantine officers at the battle of Yarmūk very likely correspond to the Ibn Qanāṭir and Arṭībūn whom we find in the Arabic sources, the latter possibly being a corruption of the title Tribunos.<sup>72</sup>

The third indication of Dionysius' dependence upon the Muslim tradition lies in the very reconstruction of the events of the Arab incursions. Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh al-Azdī's "The Conquests of Syria" is particularly useful here for its narrow focus and relatively continuous narrative.<sup>73</sup> A comparison between the two works reveals that the order of events from Ajnādayn to the death of Abū 'Ubayda at Emmaus and replacement by Mu'adh b. Jabal is identical, and that almost every detail given by Dionysius can be found in Azdī.<sup>74</sup> Some would appear to be unique to Azdī, such as the Muslims making camp by the Rastan gate at Ḥimṣ, the iniquities committed by Baanes' troops upon the local Syrian population, and Heraclius' hearing of the defeat at Yarmūk via a Christian Arab. But many are to be found throughout the Muslim tradition in numerous versions, such as Heraclius' farewell to Syria and the simultaneous entry into Damascus of two generals, one by force, one by treaty.<sup>75</sup> For the most part,

<sup>70</sup>*Chron.* 1234, 240; Azdī, 9-10, like Dionysius, mentions him alongside Abū Bakr's appointment of four generals, and on 16 states that he came to Abū Bakr with "a large number of the people of Yemen".

<sup>71</sup>*Chron.* 1234, 245; Ṭabarī, I, 2125. The Arabic is slightly corrupted: all read Q-Y(b/n - there are no diacritical points)-Q-L-A- then there is a curve which could be n/s/r; see de Goeje, M., *Mémoire sur la Conquête de la Syrie*, (Leiden, 1900), 62. It is difficult to imagine Dionysius independently arriving at the same error.

<sup>72</sup>*Chron.* 1234, 249. Ibn Qanāṭir is mentioned only by Azdī (210, 217, 226). Arṭībūn is most commonly connected with Ajnādayn (De Goeje, *Mémoire*, 61-62).

<sup>73</sup>See Conrad, L.I., "al-Azdī's History of the Arab Conquests in Bilād al-Shām: some Historiographical Observations", *Fourth International Bilād al-Shām Conference*, Bakhit, M.A., (ed), (Amman 1987), where the argument for an origin in late second-century Syria but deriving from an earlier Syrian narrative is advanced. The earlier edition of Nassau Lees, W., *The Fotooh al-Sham*, (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1854), should be consulted, if possible, when using this source.

<sup>74</sup>See the table of the correspondences in Appendix I.

<sup>75</sup>The details of the surrender of Damascus are obscured by the intrusion of disputes about wider issues: the identity of the commander-in-chief and the nature of the city's capture (by force or by capitulation; see Noth, A., "Zum Verhältnis von kalifaler Zentralgewalt und Provinzen in umayyadischer Zeit. Die *ṣulḥ/ʿanwa* Traditionen für Ägypten und den Iraq", *Die Welt des Islams*, 14 (1973), 150-62). See De Goeje, *Mémoire*, 94-101 (Damascus) & 123 (farewell).

Dionysius presents us with what would pass as an adept summary of Azdī, but occasionally we even get word for word correspondences, as in the address of the Ḥimṣīs to the besieging Muslims,<sup>76</sup> in their subsequent peace treaty with them,<sup>77</sup> and in the discussion of the Arab chiefs at Ḥimṣ on how to act in the light of reports of an approaching Byzantine army.<sup>78</sup>

Agreement on a small number of points might indicate independent confirmation of events, but the coincidence of almost every detail in exactly the same order, as we have here, can only be explained by direct or indirect borrowing. Both authors do include material of their own: Azdī pads out the basic schema with numerous letters, speeches and dreams; and Dionysius delves into the Byzantine and Syriac tradition for notices such as the tragic death of the patrician Sergius of Caesarea, the Arab assault on the monks of Mardīn, and the conversation of Theodore, brother of Heraclius, with a Chalcedonian stylite.<sup>79</sup> Yet the conclusion that the two works are in some way linked is inescapable. That the Arabic is primary is clear from the prosopographical evidence given above, from the irrelevance of many of the incidents to a Syriac Christian, Dionysius' use of Hijrī dates alone for the capture of Damascus and the plague of 'Amwas,<sup>80</sup> and from the fact that a large proportion of the details are not confined to Azdī but are strewn about the Muslim tradition. The occasional discrepancies, however, make it unlikely that Dionysius utilised Azdī directly. A good example is the capture of Damascus: Dionysius falls in with the general consensus of the Muslim sources that Khālīd b. al-Walīd made terms just as Abū 'Ubayda was entering by force, whereas Azdī reports the converse.

What then are we to make of the existence of Arabic material in Dionysius? The subject of the Conquests was chosen due to the ease of comparing the narratives of Azdī and Dionysius. The latter does, however, draw on Arabic sources elsewhere, though always in discrete portions which, because of their anecdotal nature and/or concentration upon intra-Arab affairs, stand out as islands in an otherwise Greco-Syriac sea. By style and content, Dionysius' accounts of the Conquests of Syria (*Futūḥ al-Shām*),<sup>81</sup>

<sup>76</sup>Azdī, 146: *idhhabū nahw al-malik fa-inn ẓafartum bih fa-nahnu kullunā lakum 'abūd*; Chron. 1234, 249: *zelw l-ūrā' malko d-rumoyē w-mo dazakaitūnoih howeinan l-kūn msha'bdē*.

<sup>77</sup>Azdī, 146: *katabū lahum kitāban bi 'l-amān 'alā anfusiḥim wa-amwāliḥim wa-kanā'isiḥim*; Chron. 1234, 249: *nsabw ktobo 'al napshathūn w-naksaiḥūn w-'al 'idthūn*.

<sup>78</sup>Azdī, 172: *In anta kharajta minhā (al-ard?) innī la-khā'if allā tarja' ilaiḥā abadan*; Chron. 1234, 250: *En nopqānan mneh tūb lo hopkīnan leh l-'olam*.

<sup>79</sup>Sergius: Chron. 1234, 241-2; Mardīn monks: 245 (cf. *Chronica Minora II*, 148); Theodore: 243.

<sup>80</sup>Chron. 1234, 248 (Damascus), 255 ('Amwās).

<sup>81</sup>Theophanes has just one very brief notice on the Arabs' capture of Persia (341); Dionysius

the Murder of 'Umar and biographical notes on 'Uthman (*Maqatal 'Umar & Sirat 'Uthmān*), and of the first civil war (*Kitāb al-Fitna*) do distinguish themselves from the surrounding material, and could easily have been drawn from Arabic monographs with such titles. Inbetween and thereafter, the doings of Muslims are of course mentioned, but either very briefly, in the form of notes on Arab incursions and changes in Arab leadership, or from a Christian perspective, as may be seen in the narrative on the conflict between Andrew, eunuch and imperial chamberlain, and Sergius, envoy of a rebel Byzantine general.<sup>82</sup> There is a world of difference between the report that "in the first year of Constantine's reign an Arab army invaded Africa and returned with 80,000 captives" (287) or that Mu'āwiya rebuilt the fallen part of the church of Edessa (288), and the report that Abū Sufyān turned up as the Arabs were preparing for the battle of Yarmūk<sup>83</sup> or that 'Amr b. al-Āṣ tested Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī's intelligence by whispering to him in a deserted place (278-9).

An answer to our question is suggested by the coincidence of Dionysius' use of Arabic material with a low point in Byzantine historiography; for though it certainly did not cease, history writing in Syriac, and even more so in Greek, did become rather thin on the ground in the mid- to late seventh century. Nikephoros records no events for the reign of the emperor Constans II (641-68) in his *Breviarium*, and the interval A.G. 971-6 (659-664) is covered in Syriac only by a Maronite chronicle.<sup>84</sup> Dionysius clearly did not know the latter, since they share no notices in common, but rather turned to Arabic sources for help in plugging the gap, and hence the considerable attention given to an anecdotal description of the first Arab civil war.<sup>85</sup> Another scant period is that between 952 and 960 (641-9), which Dionysius fills with information of Arab origin on the lives of 'Umar and

can do little more than add an anecdote about a tribesman of Ma'add (246-7).

<sup>82</sup>*Chron.* 1234, 282-6. Though they both come to seek Mu'āwiya's support, it is the squabble between them that is the focus of the tale. Whereas Mu'āwiya is simply king, Andrew is apparently something of a celebrity among the Arabs, of great valour and rhetorical ability, and proud of his status and of his master.

<sup>83</sup>*Chron.* 1234, 250. Though surely of little interest to a Syriac-speaking Christian, the matter occasioned much speculation in Arab scholarship: Azdī, 219, portrays Abū Sufyān begging 'Umar to let him join the Muslims in having a go at the polytheists; Balādhūri, 135, says he had wished to see his sons; Tabarī, I, 2348-9, has him cheering on the Byzantines; Ibn 'Asākir describes him as watching the battle with the other elders (550) and urging on the Muslims (536-7).

<sup>84</sup>"*Chronicum Maroniticum*" in *Chronica Minora II*, 69-74. The Chronicle of 819 has notices for 967, 971, 976, 990 (*Chron.* 1234, 12); the Zuqnīn chronicler has consecutive notices for 960-8, then for 973 (killing of 'Alī - placed too late), 976, 988, (Ps. Dion., 152f.).

<sup>85</sup>*Chron.* 1234, 276-81.

‘Uthmān, and with extracts from ecclesiastical writings.<sup>86</sup> It was, therefore, most likely the paucity of their own sources which prompted Syriac historians to delve into the Arabic tradition, but one might perhaps speculate that such activity was made possible by the greater intellectual openness and more universal vision which the Abbasids strove to promote.

### GREEK-SYRIAC-ARABIC

The period in which Theophanes (d. 817) and Dionysius (d. 845) lived was characterised by a high degree of intellectual to-ing and fro-ing. Whether out of scholarly interest or for apologetic purposes, learned men of diverse geographical, ethnic and cultural backgrounds from within the Muslim realm were avidly reading and translating, commenting upon and responding to each others' writings, both past and present. As early as the mid-eighth century, ‘Abdallāh b. al-Muqaffa’ (d. 756), secretary to the caliph, had made much Persian lore available to Arabic readers; only a short while later, in the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd (786-809), the same was being done for Greek and Sanskrit astronomical texts,<sup>87</sup> and for religious scriptures in Hebrew, Greek and Sabian.<sup>88</sup> Theophilus of Edessa (d. 785) translated part of Homer into Syriac, and it was in the early ninth century that the mystical works of Isaac of Niniveh (d. 668) made their way into Greek from Syriac.<sup>89</sup> The transmission of Greek learning into Arabic, often via Syriac, was an immense task, of which al-Ma’mūn (813-33) was perhaps the most energetic patron and Hunayn b. Ishāq (d. 873) the most famous exponent.<sup>90</sup> Greek and Syriac speakers were, at the same time, making forays into Arabic writings, largely to find ammunition against Islam. "They hunt out what is contradictory among our traditions," complains the Arab literateur al-Jāhīz (d. 868), "reports with a suspect chain of transmission, and the ambiguous verses of our scriptures".<sup>91</sup> And indeed, among the

<sup>86</sup>The gap is found at *Chron.* 1234, 260-7. Dionysius states that his words on ‘Uthmān are "according to the Arabs" (261). The ecclesiastical notices are drawn from a letter concerning the Jacobite patriarch John III (Nau, F., "Un colloque du patriarche Jean avec l'émir des Agaréens", *JA*, ser. xi 5 (1915), 225-79); a Life of Maximus (Brock, S., "An Early Syriac Life of Maximus the Confessor", *AB*, 91 (1972), 299-346); and a local monastic chronicle (cf. Nau, F., "Notice historique sur le monastère de Qartmin", *Actes du XIV<sup>e</sup> congrès international des orientalistes, Alger 1905*, (Paris, 1907), part ii, 76-99).

<sup>87</sup>Pingree, "Greek Influence on Islamic Astronomy", *JAOS*, 93 (1973), 38-9.

<sup>88</sup>By one Aḥmad b. ‘Abdallāh b. Salām (fl. 790s) - Dodge, B., *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm* (New York, 1970), I, 42.

<sup>89</sup>Brock, S., "Greek into Syriac and Syriac into Greek" in idem, (ed), *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity*, (London, 1984), 6 & 15.

<sup>90</sup>Walzer, R., *L'Eveil de la Philosophie Islamique*, (Paris, 1971).

<sup>91</sup>Al-Radd ‘alā ‘l-Naṣārā in *Rasā’il Jāhīz*, ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Ḥasan, (Cairo, 1979), III, 320.



Greek treatises of Theodore Abū Qurra (d. c.825), a renowned Christian apologist and Melkite bishop of Ḥarrān, we find evidence of his acquaintance with the Qur'ān and a summary of the tale, very well-known in the Muslim tradition, of the slandering of the Prophet's wife, 'Ā'isha (*Ḥadīth al-Ifk*).<sup>92</sup> Finally, we find Muslims engaging Christians in debate<sup>93</sup> and perusing non-Arab material: the polymath Ibn Qutayba (d. 883) is forever telling us that he read such and such in a book of the Persians or of the Byzantines.<sup>94</sup>

Historiography was no exception to this phenomenon, and it has long been known that the Greek chronicler Theophanes made use of a Syriac source in Greek translation for his notices on Arab affairs,<sup>95</sup> a number of which were in turn derived from the Arabic tradition.<sup>96</sup> A very likely candidate for the mediator of at least a portion of such information is the Theophilos of Edessa mentioned above, who wrote some sort of history and who is cited as a source by both Dionysius and the Melkite historian, Agapius of Menbij (d. c.950).<sup>97</sup> That Theophanes, Agapius and Dionysius share a common source for certain events occurring within the Muslim realm is clear from even a brief glance at their Chronicles, but it is equally clear that each makes substantial alterations to this source, adapting it according to their own purposes and needs. Agapius says so explicitly, and in Theophanes and Dionysius it is self-evident. None of the Arabic material adduced by the latter on the Arab Conquests is found in Theophanes or Agapius,<sup>98</sup> nor is there any similarity in their respective accounts of the

<sup>92</sup>PG 87, col. 1545C (Qur'ān) & 1545D ("The Pardon of Eaiissa").

<sup>93</sup>PG 97, col. 1560A: "One of the Muslims, respected among them and skilled in conversing, addressed the bishop, while sitting amid a public gathering, asking him: 'What do you say about Christ, Theodore?'" (i.e. Abū Qurra). See also Thomas, D., "Two Muslim-Christian Debates from the early Shi'ite Tradition", *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 33 (1988), 53-80.

<sup>94</sup>Ibn Qutayba, *Uyūn al-Akhbār*, e.g. 117 & 159.

<sup>95</sup>For a summary of the scholarship on this subject see Proudfoot, A., "The Sources of Theophanes for the Heraclian Dynasty", *Byzantion*, 44 (1974), 367-439.

<sup>96</sup>Conrad, L.I., "Theophanes and the Arabic Historical Tradition: Some indications of intercultural transmission", *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 15 (1990), 1-44.

<sup>97</sup>In Michael's account of Dionysius' prologue, 378/358, (10.20) Theophilos is classed with those who wrote "narratives resembling ecclesiastical history...but summarily and in parts" (*msaiko'īth wamfasqo'īth*); Agapius, 525, says he wrote "many books" (*kutub kathīra*); Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, Bedjan, P., (ed), (Paris, 1890), 127, and *Ta'rīkh Mukhtaṣar al-Duwal*, Salihani, A., (ed), (Beirut,) 1958, 127, says he wrote "admirable books", "a fine book of history" (*ktobē d'maktab zabnē imihē*), (*kitāb ta'rīkh ḥasan*).

<sup>98</sup>The shared entries on the despatch by Abū Bakr of four generals and by 'Umar of an army to al-Balqā' (Theoph., 336-7; Agapius, 468-9; *Chron.* 1234, 239ff., 245) very likely stem from the Byzantine tradition (see n. 58 above). This is certainly true of other mutual notices such as the death of Sergius of Caesarea and the actions of Cyrus and Manuel in Egypt.

death of 'Uthmān and the first Arab civil war.<sup>99</sup> For the second civil war (683-92), however, the three writers would appear to be dependent upon a single account,<sup>100</sup> Dionysius' alternative sources presumably failing him for these events.

When we come to the third civil war, comparison becomes more difficult since all three writers have a wealth of material.<sup>101</sup> Dionysius and Agapius have substantially the same account from the killing of Walid II in 744 at least until the establishment of the Abbasids in 750,<sup>102</sup> though each has additions,<sup>103</sup> omissions, variants,<sup>104</sup> and changes of order. Mid-way through his narrative, Agapius volunteers the following information:

"Theophilos the Astrologer, from whom I took these accounts, said: 'I was myself a constant witness of these conflicts and I would write things down so that none of it escaped me'. He has many books on this subject from which we have made this abridgement, adding what we knew to be indispensable but avoiding prolixity." (525)

Of the two writers, Dionysius has the fullest account. Concerning the report of Yazīd III's killing of Walid, for example, both relate how Yazīd goes to Damascus to seize the treasury, 'Abd al-'Azīz b. al-Hajjāj kills

<sup>99</sup>*Chron.* 1234, 275-81 (including the defeat of Ḥusayn at Karbalā); Agapius, 485-6, would appear to have his own source here, for he dwells heavily on the situation in Egypt about which Dionysius and Theoph. are silent; and he notes the Battle of the Camel but not Šiffin, whereas the converse is the case in Dionysius and Theoph. (347, though confusing it with Karbalā).

<sup>100</sup>Theoph., 360-5 (though his account is too compressed for one to be sure of its origin); *Chron.* 1234, 290-3 & Agapius, 494-7 both relate how 'Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr, Marwān b. al-Ḥakam and 'Amr b. Sa'īd drew lots for the caliphate.

<sup>101</sup>Theoph., 418-27; *Chron.* 1234, 315-35; Agapius, 511-31. For the events of this conflict see Shaban, M., *The Abbasid Revolution*, (Cambridge, 1970); Sharon, M., *Black Banners from the East*, (Jerusalem, 1983).

<sup>102</sup>The last incident which they both relate at length and almost word for word is 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī's siege of Damascus in May 750: *Chron.* 1234, 317 & Agapius, 527 (Ṭabarī, *III*, 48). Both continue to narrate the same events, though differing much in order and detail, up to the massacre of the Arab chiefs of Mošūl in 133 (750-1) by its governor, Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad (338 & 532; cf. Yazīd b. Muḥammad al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh al-Mawṣil*, Habiba, 'A., (ed), (Cairo, 1967), 145f.). Both then have a gap of three years (Ṭabarī too has little to report for the years 133-5; *III*, 76-84) until the pilgrimage of Abū Ja'far al-Mansūr and Abū Muslim, the death of Abū 'l-'Abbās and the revolt of 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī in June 754, which Dionysius deals with briefly (339) and Agapius at length (532-5). Dionysius has very little on Mansūr (754-75; 340), whereas Agapius gives much detail, particularly for the first half of his reign.

<sup>103</sup>In particular, Dionysius adds lengthy passages on the divisions arising among the Arabs after the murder of Walid (316), the plague of 747 (319) and the earthquake of 749 (326-8).

<sup>104</sup>E.g. Dionysius (317) has Masrūr b. al-Walid besieging Hims, which had refused to acknowledge Ibrāhīm as caliph, whereas Agapius (513; thus also Ṭabarī, *II*, 1877) states that it was 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Hajjāj, and that Masrūr was sent to Aleppo.

Walīd, the latter's head is placed on a lance and paraded round the city.<sup>105</sup> But Dionysius is able to augment this with much detail, which in addition coincides with Muslim versions: Walīd's dissoluteness, his seeking refuge at the fortress of al-Bakhrā' and the attempts of al-Abrash Sa'īd b. al-Walīd to help him; he also introduces a different perspective, presenting Yazīd's brother, al-'Abbās b. al-Walīd as the mastermind of the operation.<sup>106</sup> If we accept Agapius' statement quoted above, then the obvious conclusion is that Dionysius gives us a largely faithful rendering of Theophilos, whereas Agapius or his intermediary<sup>107</sup> indulges in a considerable amount of editing and abbreviation.

Theophanes presents more of a problem and it is difficult to decide whether he uses Theophilos at all. He definitely does not do so after 746, after which date he continues to report Muslim affairs but shows no dependence upon the common source of Agapius and Dionysius.<sup>108</sup> In his description of the killing of Walīd, the rule of Yazīd, and Marwān II's defeat of Sulaimān b. Hishām and the Khārijites, Theophanes is so brief that one cannot be sure of any borrowing.<sup>109</sup> Finally, even in his highly compressed account, Theophanes adduces a surprising amount of new material: Marwān first engages Sulaimān by the river Lita and kills 20,000 men;<sup>110</sup> Sulaimān escapes to Damascus and there kills the sons of Walīd;<sup>111</sup> Marwān hangs 120 Kalbītes and has 'Abbās killed in prison by an Ethiopian, who smothers him with bags of quicklime.<sup>112</sup> Indeed Theophanes continues to

<sup>105</sup>*Chron.* 1234, 315; Agapius, 511-12.

<sup>106</sup>Cf. Tabarī, *II*, 1775 (dissoluteness), 1796 (al-Abrash & Bakhrā'), 1784f. (role of al-'Abbās). Agapius' source perhaps knows of the ideological background to Yazīd's revolt (reading *qadariyya* for *badariyya*).

<sup>107</sup>The possibility of an intermediary is suggested by the corruption of a number of names: e.g. 'Ain al-Jārr, where Marwan engages Sulaimān b. Hishām, is transliterated correctly by Dionysius (317), but becomes Tel Gharā in Agapius (514), perhaps linked with Theophanes' "a camp called Garis" (418); 'Amir b. Ḍubāra al-Murri (Tabarī, *II*, 1945f.) becomes 'Amr b. Ṣanāra (Agapius, 521). This could, however, reflect a damaged manuscript.

<sup>108</sup>The only instance is the notice of a son being born to the Emperor Constantine (426), which is found similarly worded in Dionysius (325) but not at all in Agapius.

<sup>109</sup>Two positive indications are the common phrases: Marwān pretended to be fighting on behalf of the sons of Walīd (Theoph., 418; *Chron.* 1234, 317; Agapius, 513), and: Sulaimān was defeated, lost 7000 men and fled to Palmyra (Theoph., 422; *Chron.* 1234, 320-1; Agapius 517).

<sup>110</sup>Theoph., 418; Tabarī, *II*, 1877 says "between the two armies there flowed a slow-moving river". Dionysius (317) and Agapius (514) have 12,000 men perish.

<sup>111</sup>Agapius (514) and Dionysius (318) agree that this was done by 'Abd al-'Azīz b. al-Hajjāj.

<sup>112</sup>Theoph., 421. The hanging and exiling of Kalbīs is mentioned by Agapius (516) and Dionysius (320), but no numbers are given. The death of 'Abbās is not noted by either; Tabarī, *III*, 43, says he died in prison from a disease.

give us intimate details of events occurring within the Muslim realm, often found in no other source, up until around 780 A.D. One might, then, conclude that Theophanes made use of the work of a West Syrian Chronicler, writing at around 780, who had Theophilos at his disposal, but who reworked it thoroughly and blended it with new material drawn from Arabic, Syriac and Greek traditions.<sup>113</sup>

It is often asserted that historical material, especially regarding events of the first century of Islam, was hard to come by in the Syriac and Greek worlds of the late eighth and early ninth century; it certainly would appear to have been transformed as to style, interests and scope,<sup>114</sup> but history writing in some form there still was.<sup>115</sup> In the preface of his *Ab Urbe Condita*, Livy tells us that there had been a "constant succession" of writers before him who had treated the same subject, yet the greater appeal of Livy's work has meant that they are now lost to us as independent compositions. Similarly, behind the accomplished achievement of Dionysius and Theophanes, one can glimpse a whole host of subsequently eclipsed figures. In the latter their identity remains opaque, but in Dionysius many are clearly discernable, such as: Sergius Rusafāyā,<sup>116</sup> the authors of the maritime raids of Mu'āwiya and of the Arab siege of Constantinople in 717,<sup>117</sup> a north Syrian chronicler of c. 728,<sup>118</sup> "Coptic historians",<sup>119</sup> the

<sup>113</sup>Examples of Arabic material are the genealogy of Muḥammad (333) and the battle of Mu'ta (335); of unique Syriac/Greek material are: Heraclius' conversion of a Jew named Benjamin at Tiberias (328), the challenge of a cubicularius named Kakorizos to Mu'āwiya's naval exploits (344), the death of Thomas bishop of Apamea and burning alive of the bishop of Emesa (348), and the burning of the caliph's camels in the church of St. Helias in 726 (404). Theophanes' friend, George Synkellos, may also have had some hand in the editing; see Mango, C., "Who Wrote the Chronicle of Theophanes?", *Zbornik Radova Vizantoloskog Instituta*, 18 (1978), 9-17.

<sup>114</sup>See Cameron, Averil, "New themes and styles in Greek literature, seventh-eighth centuries", in idem & Conrad (eds), *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, I, 81-106.

<sup>115</sup>It is worth bearing in mind that there are many shadowy historians for whom we have only brief allusions; e.g. who is the Isaac the Monk who seems to be a common source of Agapius and the late 9th century Iraqi Chronicler, Abū 'Isā al-Munajjim? (Stern, S., "Abū 'Isā al-Munajjim's Chronography", in Stern, Hourani & Brown (eds), *Islamic Philosophy and the Classical Tradition*, (Oxford, 1972)).

<sup>116</sup>*Chron.* 1234, 233f., 231; Michael, 408f./411 (11.3).

<sup>117</sup>*Chron.* 1234, 268-75, 300-7. Both accounts are very full and narrated from a Christian perspective. Conrad, L.I., "The Conquest of Arwad: a source-critical study in the historiography of the early medieval Near East", in Cameron & idem, (eds), *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East* I, 317-402, shows that the Arwad account for one is certainly not from the Muslim tradition.

<sup>118</sup>Identified by Brooks, "The Sources of Theophanes and the Syriac Chroniclers", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, (1906), as a common source of Dionysius, Theophanes and a Syriac Chronicle of 846. A north Syrian origin is suggested by the content of the shared notices.

<sup>119</sup>*Chron.* 1234, 251f., cf. Theoph., 338.

West Syrian John bar Samuel,<sup>120</sup> the transmitter of Dionysius' Arabic material, Daniel of ʿAbdin,<sup>121</sup> Theophilos bar Thomas,<sup>122</sup> and Dionysius' brother, Theodore metropolitan of Edessa, who was a scholar of Greek and very likely translated writings in that language for his brother.<sup>123</sup>

Dionysius' efforts had been directed towards producing a continuous and comprehensive narrative arranged in coherent chronological order, instead of the "fragmented narratives" and "motley writings" that existed in his day and which failed to preserve either "chronological accuracy or the order of succession of events".<sup>124</sup> By making use of Syriac, Arabic and Greek material, he achieved a fair measure of success in his venture, and his work, along with the chronicle of Theophanes, provides a clear indication that a certain degree of intercourse did take place between these three traditions in the field of historiography.

### CONCLUSION

Returning to the point made at the beginning of this essay - that history plays a crucial role in seeing a society through its traumas and transformations -, it was during the first Abbasid century, more than at any other time, that Islamic Civilization was being forged. The Medinan scholar, Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhri, is supposed to have said to the caliph ʿAbd al-Malik (685-705), after demonstrating to him that non-Arab Muslims held all the important positions in the land: "It's all a matter of religion, O Commander of the Faithful. Whoever assimilates it dominates, whoever neglects it drops out".<sup>125</sup> This applied in particular to Abbasid times when it was one's "Islamicness" rather than one's "Arabness" that counted most. The result was a surge of converts who entered the Islamic fold, bringing their cultural baggage with them and using it in their fight to dilute the Arab

<sup>120</sup>He was favoured by Brooks as "the Eastern source" ("The Sources of Theophanes", 568). It is tempting to link him either with the maritime / Constantinople battle-narratives, or with the Arabic material in Dionysius which appears to have Ḥimṣī origins (Conrad, "al-Azdī's History", 59), but we simply know nothing about him.

<sup>121</sup>On him see Palmer, *Monk and Mason on the Tigris Frontier*, 169ff..

<sup>122</sup>He will have been responsible for transmitting certain of the aforementioned works to Dionysius.

<sup>123</sup>Dionysius declares: "We shall collect from their books (of the Chalcedonians) such things as are well attested and with care and great diligence these will be translated..." - Michael, 454/487 (11.18).

<sup>124</sup>Both the Zuqnīn monk (Ps. Dion., 147) and Dionysius (Michael, 378) make this complaint.

<sup>125</sup>Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, *Baṣā'ir wa Dhakhā'ir*, Amīn, A. & Ṣāqr, A., (eds), (Cairo, 1953), II, 414f.

character with which this fold had been stamped during the Umayyad era. For those left behind, the issue was rather to show the continuing vigour and relevance of their own traditions in the new milieu, and to warn against the dangers of apostasy. In each struggle, history was of great importance: educating initiates to Islam in a new past, highlighting a glorious non-Arab past, cloaking new institutions and practices with an age-old past, and emphasizing to deviants the horrible fate suffered by those in the not-so-distant past.

APPENDIX: A TABLE OF THE CORRESPONDENCES BETWEEN  
THE CONQUEST NARRATIVES OF DIONYSIUS AND OF AL-  
AZDĪ

<i>Dionysius (in Chron. 1234)</i>	<i>Azdī</i>
Battle of Ajnādayn (244-5).	87-93
Khālīd marches from Ajnādayn to Damascus; he camps at the East gate, while Abū Ubayda and Yazīd lodge at the Gabitha and Thomas Gates.	94
Byzantine troops arrive and engage the Muslims; some Byzantines enter Damascus.	95-6
News of the death of Abū Bakr arrives (245-8: digression on war against Persians et alia).	98f.
The Dimashqīs surrender when they realize that neither will the Arabs desist nor help arrive. A treaty is concluded by Khālīd while another commander enters by force. The negotiator for the Dimashqīs is John bar Sarjūn ("the master/ <i>ṣāhib</i> of Damascus": Azdī; "the bishop": Balādhurī, 122; Manṣūr ibn Sarjūn "the governor": Eutychius, <i>Annales II</i> , Cheiko, L., (ed), (CSCO scr. ar. ser. iii v.6, Beirut, 1909, 5 & 13f.)).	104
Khālīd b. al-Walīd and Abū Ubayda march to Ḥimṣ and camp at the Rastan gate. The Arabs conduct a heavy siege. The Ḥimṣīs, perceiving no help to be forthcoming, sue for peace (249).	145-6
Heraclius assembles 300,000 troops from Beth Romye, Armenia and Jazīra, and places over them three commanders.	152
The Muslims discuss how to respond (249-50).	153-72
Ḥabīb b. Maslama and Saʿīd b. Kulthūm are ordered to refund the tribute taken from the Dimashqīs and Ḥimṣīs. (Cf.	155-6, 160

the accounts of the early Syrian authorities, Sa'īd b. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Tanūkhī in Balādhurī, 137 and Makḥūl al-Shāmī in Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-Kharāj*, (Cairo 1933), 131).

The Muslims withdraw and camp by the river Yarmūk. 169, 180

The Romans advance towards them, on the way molesting towns and villages that had surrendered to the Arabs. 172-3, 175-7

Peace talks are held but fail. 195-207

Abū Sufyān arrives to reinforce the Arabs. 219-20

The Romans are soon defeated, many falling to their death from a cliff (*shqīfo rāmo* / *makān mushrif 'alā ahwiya*), disorientated by torch lights (of shepherds: Dionysius, or of Mansur and the Dimashqīs: Eutychius, 14; both concur on an accompaniment of drums and trumpets), by fog/*dabāb* -Azdī, by dust (Theoph., 338; Ziyād b. Ḥanzala in De Goeje, *Mémoire*, 170 though supposedly referring to Ajnādayn), or by sand (Sebeos, *Histoire d'Heraclius*, F. Macler, (tr.), Paris 1904, 97) (250-1). 230

The Arabs return to Damascus, whose inhabitants receive them with joy. 231

A Christian Arab informs Heraclius of the defeat. 235

The Emperor bids farewell to Syria, and gives the order not to engage the Arabs (thus Ṭabarī I, 2102; Sebeos, 97; Nikephoros, 20). 236

(252-3: Capture of Egypt.) Khālīd takes Aleppo (254). 237

'Umar goes to Jerusalem on a camel with a woollen saddle and dirty shirt. He is accompanied by 'Abbās b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib and met by Abū Ju'ayd (see Büsse, H., "Omar b. al-Khaṭṭāb in Jerusalem", *JSAI*, 5 (1984), 73-119). 252-4 (Ibn Ju'ayd)

Abū 'Ubayda contracts the plague and dies at Emmaus. 267  
Mu'ādh b. Jabal takes his place (255-6).

