Evidence of a New Religion in Christian Literature "Under Islamic Rule"?

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1 Methodical Preface

Apart from the Qur'ān, the allegedly "Islamic" empires did not leave behind any literary evidence in the first two centuries of their existence. The extensive religious-biographical and historiographical literature did not come into being before the 9th century (3rd century AH). Neither is there any evidence of a *new religion* current among the rulers of the Arabs in the Byzantine sources of this time; the Arabs were considered *vassals ("confoederati"*, the Arabic equivalent possibly "Q*urayš*") or *opponents*, without a new religion being mentioned. At that time, i.e., before the second half of the 7th century, many Christian regions had already lived under Arabic (and only putatively *"Islamic"*) rule.

The Christians in this area left behind an abundance of literature, which reflects the flourishing intellectual life within their communities; by the end of the 8th century, they were even able to develop far-reaching missionary activities.[1] The status of Christianity under "Islamic rule" is not mentioned in this literature. This might be explained by the genres of the respective scriptures: theological tractates, sermons, letters, chronologies, lives of the saints, reports about the establishment of monasteries or philosophical publications and the like. However, one observation should make us suspicious from the very start: the contemporary state of affairs, which ought to be somehow reflected in such writings, is hardly touched upon, if we understand the "state of affairs" as referring to "Islamic rule". It is very difficult to explain why the monks and bishops of this time, some of whom had travelled extensively, should have wasted all their theological passion discussing "internal" Christian debates about doctrines like Monotheletism, Monenergism and others, when at the same time Christianity as a whole was being threatened by a totally new religion propagated by the new rulers.

Nevertheless, there are a number of texts which – according to the most frequent interpretation – present information on Islamic invasions, the religion of Islam and on Muḥammad. A few years ago, Robert G. Hoyland compiled them in such a way that they seemed to corroborate the

"Traditional Account", i.e., the information transmitted by the Islamic historiography of the 9th/10th century.[2] Moreover, for more than one hundred years, observations of this kind have been confirmed by experts on contemporary Syriac literature. Even today, this position is represented especially by Harald Suermann and also, at least to a certain degree, by researchers like H. J. W. Drijvers and G. N. Reinink. To date, the only historical-critical analysis of the material can be found in Yehuda D. Nevo and Judith Koren's monograph.[3]

Many questions arise when reading the commentaries about the literature examined. The first and most important problem is the interpretation of passages in literature on the basis of the Traditional Account, as Islamic historiography is generally considered to be objective. So whenever ships are mentioned, this is interpreted as referring to a *particular* sea battle, when "unrest" is spoken of, then it therefore must be about the first Arab civil war and so forth. *None of this is written in the original documents.* Even the term "*Muslim*" often found in the translations of Syriac texts is not present in the original, where the term used for the purported Muslims is *mhaggrāyē* ("Hagarenes") or *ṭayyāyē* (to be translated as "Arabs").

The literary genres of the texts were also disregarded: It is not easy to underlay the predicted eschatological battles in the apocalypses with historical facts, particularly not if they must be seen in literary continuity with "pre-Islamic" apocalypses.

The fact that the great chronological distance between the oldest manuscripts and the assumed time of composition of a document is often not critically investigated, is even more important, in many cases the problem is not even mentioned. However, every historian knows that in the process of every new copy, often spanning many centuries, amendments and corrections are made which correspond to the "standard of knowledge" of the respective scribes. The works of Josephus Flavius, for example, can definitely be traced back to him as their author, but it is also obvious that later Christian interpolations were inserted into his texts, e.g. about the figure of Jesus. This is also the case in the text this article is about. In each case we must examine individually if passages that clearly reflect the "level of knowledge" of the 9th century can belong to the original constituents of the text. The approach of many interpreters is often simply naïve and would not be accepted by any historian who, for example, analyzes texts of the Middle Ages. Unfortunately, even modern translators often get carried away and occasionally change the wording of the text, interpreting it in accordance with their seemingly higher "knowledge". If, for example, a text speaks of the Saracens or Ismaelites, the terms are simply translated as "Muslims".

R.G. Hoyland's book alone covers 872 pages, but so much space is not available here. Only the most important texts which come into question could be introduced and analyzed, and even they cannot be treated comprehensively. In a short contribution of less than a hundred pages, the focus will be on a few central issues relevant when investigating the sources in question:

(1) To begin with, and as a matter of course, the text to be investigated has to be taken seriously in its wording and may not be prematurely reinterpreted using the "knowledge" that the traditional literature of the 9th century appears to have, until it matches what exists.
(2) Furthermore, we have to find out what exactly is said about Arabs, Saracens, Ismaelites, Hagarenes/Agarenes, and which geographical evidence exists.
(3) The sparse evidence of the religious convictions of the Arabs should be documented and investigated with the question in mind as to whether they are to be interpreted as evidence for a new religion – Islam.
(4) Finally, it should be asked if and from which moment on there is knowledge of a Prophet of the Arabs.

2 The Designations "*Arabs, Saracens, Ismaelites* and *Hagarenes*" before the 7th Century

The terms stated here have a long "pre-Islamic" tradition which ought to be presented briefly. For this reason their usage in the literature of the 7th and 8th centuries must be justified if they are equated to the term "Muslims" by the translators. It is also important to find geographical assignations which were linked to the Arabs.

2.1 Arabs – Arabia

The etymological origin of the term Arab ("*ʿarab*"; e.g. "those from the West" as seen from the Tigris;[4] Syriac: nomad; *ʿerḇā:* Syriac: sheep; *ʿārāḇā* – "the low desert tract of the Jordan and the Dead Sea") should not be discussed further. The word was already used quite early on in the Middle East (e.g. in the inscriptions of Assyrian kings since the 9th century BCE) and in the Old Testament, firstly in Isaiah 13:20:

> "It will never be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation; nor will the Arab (Hebrew: עָרְבִי – *ʿaraḇī*; Greek: ἄραβες) pitch his tent there, nor will shepherds make their flocks lie down there."

ʿAraḇī here obviously means "inhabitant of the steppe", from the Hebrew *ʿarāḇāh* – "steppe, desert". The text was probably written in the late 8th century BCE. Later, the word appears again in a series of passages up to the First Book of the Maccabees (5:39). At the end of the 1st or 2nd century BCE, the term "Arabs" always designates the non-Jewish tribes neighboring Israel in the

south. Likewise the term "Arabia" can be found in the Old Testament, e.g. in Ez. 27:21:

> "Arabia (עֲרַב – *ʿarab*; ἀραβία) and all the princes of Kedar, they were your customers for lambs, rams and goats; for these they were your customers."

Here it is said of their inhabitants that they are traders (Ez. 27:21) or steppe inhabitants (Is. 13:20b, Jer. 3:2). Occasionally, they also appear as Israel's enemy, alongside the Philistines, especially in the Second Book of Chronicles (e.g. 2 Chr. 17:11; 21:16). An exact localization is difficult because *ʿarābāh* also means "steppe/desert" in general in Hebrew. In one text there is the additional statement that it runs along both banks of the Jordan:

> "These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel across the Jordan in the wilderness, in the Arabah opposite Suph, between Paran and Tophel and Laban and Hazeroth and Dizahab." (Deut. 1:1-2)

Furthermore, the designation "Sea of the Arabah" for the Dead Sea (Deut. 4:49; Joshua 3:16), is an indication that what is meant is probably not the biblical Arabia, which begins only towards the south of the Dead Sea. It is conceivable that the term designates the area from the Negev to Sinai, a territory inhabited by Nabateans. This corresponds to the information given in Paul's Letter to the Galatians: that "Mount Sinai" lies in "Arabia" (Gal. 4:25; Gal. 1:17 is vague, however, an area south-east of Damascus is suggested).

Ancient authors report different regions as Arabia.[5] In the case of Herodotus (died 430 BCE) it is Negev, Sinai and the territory situated to the east of Egypt, just as with Pliny the Elder (died 79 CE). The latter, however, also knows of an "Arabia of the Nomads" which can be found east of the Dead Sea. In Persian lists, especially since the time of Darius (died 486 BCE) an "Arabāya" has been mentioned which lies between Assyria and Egypt, an area probably ruled later from Ḥaṭra. According to Xenophon (died about 355 BCE), the Persian king Cyrus had troops march through Arabia, from Sardis to Babylon, east along the Euphrates.[6] Pliny also knew about this central Mesopotamian Arabia, east of the Euphrates and south of the Taurus Mountains.[7]

In the year 106 CE, the Romans also conquered the regions east of the Province of Judea and south of the Province of Syria, from about Damascus southwards until the northwesterly bank of the Red Sea. This region with both of its cities, Bosra *(Buṣrā)* in the north and Petra in the south (therefore also *Arabia Petraea*) was inhabited by Semitic Nabateans who used Nabatean, an Aramaic language with its own script as a written language, albeit with some kind of Arabic, – but not Classical Arabic –, as their spoken language,

so the question whether they were genetically and linguistically Arabs is not so clear – at least if later definitions of "Arabs" and "Arabic" are used.

At the same time, there was an empire called "Arabiya" which was ruled by the king of Ḥaṭra, a city west of the upper reaches of the Tigris and near Assur (included in the Sassanid Empire in 241 CE), which stretched first of all from the Tigris in the west in the direction of or even up to the Euphrates.[8] The language of this "Arabia" was East Syriac, in the Sassanian period also Middle Persian. According to two homilies written by Isaac of Antioch in 459, "Arabs" conquered Bet Hur, a city situated in North Mesopotamia, around the middle of the 5th century.[9]

All of the Arabian regions mentioned up to now in which Arabs, also called *Ṭayyāyē,* lived,[10] have nothing to do with the *Arabian Peninsula* geographically, and the "Arabs" mentioned so far were ethnically more likely Arameans speaking variants of Aramaic or at least using Aramaic as their written language of choice.

In the Hellenistic period, the regions bordering on this region called "Arabia" in the south seem, occasionally, to be known as "Arabia deserta", a term probably designating the inner peninsula, and "Southern Arabia" or "Arabia felix", traditionally designating the Yemen. The equation "southern" and "felix" (Latin "fortunate; happy; lucky") goes back to the ambiguity in Latin (and also in Syriac and other Semitic languages) of the adjective *dextra*, which means "right = south (facing the sun at sunrise the *south* is to the *right*)", but also "happy; fortunate ("of the right [i.e., fortunate] hand")". The corresponding Semitic term is "yaman/yamīn", the root of which can be found in the names "Ben-jamin = 'son of the right/fortunate hand'" and "Yemen".[11]

Tribes from the Arabian Peninsula spread into the Middle East at a very early period:

> "Arabian dynasties established themselves everywhere on the land of the decaying Seleucid Empire. Arabian kinglets ruled not only in Emesa and Damascus, or the Itureans in parts of Syria, but also in Edessa and in Charax on the mouth of the Euphrates. In Egypt, where Arabs could be found in the desert to the east of the Nile as early as the early Achaemenid period, the district of Arabia, whose history can be followed through the centuries on the basis of papyrus discoveries, came about ... ."[12]

In the following centuries, these "migrations" continued. The ethnic and linguistic Arabs from the peninsula seem to have adopted the name "Arabs" from these new homes only in the course of these migrations to the north – into the Nabatean regions and into Mesopotamia. There, they continued to use their own language, although they also used the vernacular languages Syro-Aramaic or Greek for official correspondence and for their religious rites, depending on the environment.[13]

In the course of their settling down, these originally nomadic tribes – the Palmyrene empire is particularly known from the more recent pre-Islamic period –, then the Ghassanids in West Syria and the Lakhmids with their center Ḥīra at the end of the Euphrates, – but beyond that spread out over the whole of the Middle East, – largely took over the pre-Nicean Syrian Christianity common in the area.[14] The Ghassanids later converted to the Monophysitism of the Jacobites. There were Arab bishops and monks,[15] and Christianity "enriched that (*author's note: Arabic*) identity and raised it to a higher level".[16]

Later, when ʿAbd al-Malik and al-Walīd introduced Arabic as their official language, a process of re-discovery of their roots set in for the ethnic Arabs, so that the term *Arabia* was semantically narrowed to solely designate the Arabian Peninsula. At the beginning of the second half of the 8th century, Medina became the focus of attention, as a sanctuary was now erected there. Around the end of this century, the same happened in Mecca. This new vision was systematically solidified by the ostensibly historiographic literature of the 9th century written in Arabic, which shifted the alleged beginnings of their own – also religious – traditions on the Arabian Peninsula.

2.2 The Saracens

The Saracens are mentioned in many texts from the 2nd century CE on. Trying to clarify the etymology of this name, for which there is a series of hypotheses, Irfan Shahīd comes to the conclusion that this question cannot be clearly resolved. He quotes possible origins: Arabic *šarqī* = "western"; Arabic *sāriq* = "robber, looter"; Arabic *šrkt (šarikat)* = "company, confederation"; an Arabic tribe which Ptolemy called *sarakené* (Greek) and Stephanus of Byzantium mentions as *saraka* (6th century CE, Greek); Aramaic serak = barren land, emptiness, desert.[17]

Sven Dörper adds further derivations,[18] but agrees with Irfan Shahīd that none of the derivations is conclusive. Yet, Saint Jerome's explanation of the word added by S. Dörper is strange: the Saracens attribute their false name to their claim of descent from Sarah the mistress. Originally he understood Ismaelites, Agarenes and Saracens to be Midianites (*Maidanaei*).[19]

Then I. Shahīd examined the historical contexts in which the term originated and was developed.[20] As there were only two reliable early witnesses for the designation Saracens (Ptolemy[21] in the 2nd century and Ammianus Marcellinus[22] in the 4th century), assumptions can also be made here. Shahīd thinks that the most probable solution is the crucial date of the conquest of the Nabatean Empire by the Romans (106 CE) and its naming as "Provincia Arabia". The semi-nomadic and nomadic Arabs who did not belong to the

Roman province and its cities were then named "tent inhabitants", "robbers", "looters", perhaps after a tribe of a similar name or in a generally descriptive sense. This designation spread even more after the *Constitutio Antoniana* in the year 212, which awarded all male inhabitants of the cities of the Roman Empire Roman citizenship, but also spread after further Roman conquests (Osroene in 240 and Palmyra in 272). The Romans designated "eventually all Arabic nomads from the Euphrates to the Sinai Peninsula as *Saraceni*."[23] However, it is questionable as to whether these nomads could all be considered Arabs ethnically and linguistically.

Arabs in the North of the Ḥiǧāz and on the Sinai and, in addition to that, probably all Arabs outside of the cities to the east of the Euphrates are understood by Ptolemy to be Saracens.

From the 4th century on, Saracens appeared as nomadic groups, mostly with a negative connotation, who were perceived as robbers and looters. In his "Onomastikon" of biblical place names, Eusebius of Caesarea (died 339/340) equates the Saracens with the Ismaelites (and uses, somewhat unclearly, the terms *Pharan* and *Arabia*).[24]

Saint Jerome had written three biographies of monks before 393, which did him no credit because of their weird spirituality and obsession with miracles. In the fourth chapter of his *Vita Malchi*[25] he says that this Malchus was held up, plundered and brought into slavery along with a travelling group by the Saracens in the region between Nusaybin and Edessa.[26] In the same chapter, he also calls the Saracens "Ismaelites" without any further explanation – using the two terms synonymously.

In the 25th chapter of the "Vita Hilarionis – Life of the Saint Recluse Hilarion",[27] he speaks of Saracens again, this time in Southern Palestine, and narrates that they worship the morning star. There were also many "Saracens possessed by the devil", and Hilarion begs them imploringly "to worship God rather than stones".[28] This plea concerning astrolatry comes unexpectedly and is not explained further. In his comment to Amos in 406, Saint Jerome addresses the Saracens one more time.[29] In Amos 5:26, the cult of the "Sons of Horus" is criticized by the Israelites. Saint Jerome comments that this (male) God "has been worshipped by Saracens up to the present day".[30]

The worship of the "morning star", Venus, which is compared to the Greek goddess Aphrodite, is widespread in the whole of the Middle East and therefore also with the "Arabs". A. C. Klugkist thinks that this Venus cult was only current "in the North Arabian-Syrian desert (...) linked to al-'Uzza".[31] He explains in a footnote that al-'Uzza means "the strongest, most powerful". "Now we also find a god ''Azīz, the strong, the powerful', the male equivalent of the same type of deity in the pre-Islamic Pantheon". In the northern border areas of the Syrian-Arabian desert both were worshipped. A. C. Klugkist assumes "that it was a matter of one original androgynous divinity" which "is distinguished as a male or female entity", depending on the area of

circulation.[32] These observations could explain the change of the Saracens from the veneration of a female to a male deity, as Saint Jerome narrates.

2.3 The Biblical-genealogical Names of the Arabs: Ismaelites and Hagarenes/Hagarites

As Christianity was gaining more and more ground in the Middle East, the sacred scriptures of the Jews, the Old Testament of the Christians, began to have an ever greater impact on the way people thought in that area, not only in Jewish communities, but e.g. also among the Syro-Arameans, and later also with the Persians and "Arabs". Old Testament notions and patterns determined the "knowledge" of the world and its history. Accordingly, it was almost inevitable that (also) the terms "Arabs" and "Saracens" were paraphrased using the genealogical derivation of the Old Testament.

The tales of Abraham in the Book of Genesis are the point of reference, according to which his wife Sarah could bear him no children. Therefore, his wife asked him to go to her maidservant Hagar. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son, Ishmael (Gen. 16) and an angel announces to her that God will "greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be too many to count." (Gen. 16:10). Later, Sarah also gave birth to a son after all, the lawful heir Isaac (Gen. 21:9-21), through the influence of God. At Sarah's request, Abraham was – reluctantly – forced to cast out Hagar and Ishmael (Gen. 21:9-21). But once again God promised Hagar/Ishmael a large number of descendants (Gen. 21:13-18). Then it says:

> "20. God was with the lad [= Ishmael], and he grew; and he lived in the wilderness and became an archer. 21. He lived in the wilderness of Paran ..." (Gen. 21:20-21).

The most probable explanation is that the desert of P(h)aran is situated south-west of the Dead Sea.

The 25th chapter of Genesis is primarily about the descendants of Abraham, beginning with those of his son, Isaac. It is said of the "line" of Ishmael, "whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's maid, bore to Abraham" (Gen. 25:12) that "the (twelve) sons of Ishmael" could be sub-divided "by their villages, and by their camps; twelve princes according to their tribes" (Gen. 25:16). Then it says "they settled from Havilah to Shur which is east of Egypt as one goes toward Assyria; he settled in defiance of all his relatives" (Gen. 25:18).[33] It is difficult to determine the area of settlement, it can probably be thought of as the territories south and south-east of Israel ("as one goes toward Assyria אַשּׁוּרָה – *ʾAšūrāh*").[34] Harald Suermann believes he knows more accurate details about *ʾAšūr*, – the ending "*-āh*" indicates direction –, however, has no

evidence for this; "it more or less corresponds to the desert of Jathrib", later Medina.[35]

In any case, the tales about Hagar and Ishmael, the descriptions of their descendants as desert inhabitants, as well as the raids associated with them were enough to describe the "Arabs" and Saracens as Ismaelites for the purpose of the biblical derivation of peoples. Saint Jerome even considered *Ismaelites* (from Pharan) in connection with his translation of Eusebius' *Onomastikon* as the original designation for the Arabs who are "now (also) called Saracens."[36]

Apparently, Saint Jerome was also the first[37] to call the Ismaelites *Agareni*.[38] Likewise, in his Church History written between 443 and 450, Sozomen spoke of "Arabs who were called Ismaelites and later Saracens". He also specifically calls Hagar the mother of Ishmael.[39] Isidore of Seville also speaks about Ismaelites, Saracens ("*quasi a Sarra*") and Agarenes.[40] Thus all of these derivations were already common in pre-Islamic times.[41]

Other biblical genealogies are found more rarely. In the Syrian-Christian document "The Cave of Treasures"[42] from the 6th century, an "order of the derivation of the clans of Adam up until the Messiah" is allegedly provided.[43] Hagar and Ishmael are spoken of, but for the Arabs another derivation is suggested. In Genesis 25:1 it also says "Now Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah". She bore him six sons, one of whom was called Shuah (שׁוּחַ) (Gen. 25:2). Abraham sent his concubines' sons "away from his son Isaac eastward, to the land of the east" (Gen. 25:6). This is the passage the "Cave of Treasures" refers to, when it states that Keturah is the "daughter of Baktor, the king of the desert" and "the Arabs" descended from her son Shuah.[44]

How widespread this differing genealogy was, cannot be said. In any case, it did not affect the mainstream biblical classification of "Arabs" and "Saracens" as *Ismaelites* and *Hagarenes/Hagarites*, the only exception being the "History of Heraclius"[45], written by Pseudo-Sebeos, who once mentions "the children of Abraham, born of Hagar and Keturah". At least, both mothers were mentioned in the same place, however, without prompting any deeper reflection.

3 Christian Evidence under the Reign of the Arabs until about the End of the 8th Century

The documents normally used as sources for the historical and religious development of the Arabs are briefly introduced and checked for the *historical* information they actually contain. Beforehand, it should be taken into consideration that there are no critical editions to speak of and that there is often a very big time-gap between the oldest manuscripts and the presumed time of composition.

Likewise, the following interpretations can only be seen as provisional. It can be assumed that further material could still be found in libraries, museums and monasteries. So this short introduction is based on the texts that are already known and are being discussed at the moment. Precise distinctions of the character and theology of the publications conducted in this field cannot be introduced and analyzed here. Only what is said about the *ruling Arabs* in them will be examined.

Firstly, different pieces of evidence ("varia"), which are associated with an earlier and a later phase in literature, are introduced. Then the documents, representing the different genres and/or languages, are examined.

4 Different Texts up to the Middle of the 7th Century

4.1 Sophronius' Christmas Sermon

A Christmas sermon[46] is extant, written by Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem from 634 to 638, of the year 634.[47] The Patriarch complained that the Christians of Jerusalem could not go to Bethlehem as usual at Christmas because of the Barbarians, especially the "godless Saracens" who blocked the way.[48] He interpreted this situation as a punishment for their own sins.

The Latin text extends the statements: He also calls the Saracens *Hagarenes* and *Ismaelites* and speaks of a siege and the occupation of Bethlehem.[49] The Greek text is only about the impossibility of going to Bethlehem, because Saracens are roaming about the whole area. The statements were added to the Latin text according to later Islamic historiography. Y. D. Nevo and J. Koren are to be agreed with, when they state that the bishop is not complaining about the *loss* of Bethlehem but the *impossibility of going on a pilgrimage* there at Christmas.[50] Obviously, no Arab occupation of the country had taken place yet, it was much more about the authorities' being unable to keep Saracen gangs under control. Saint Jerome had also reported about this in the 4th century, despite the Roman Empire, which was still functioning at the time. This was a "normal" or at least not unique situation of this period and was by no means evidence of a successful Islamic conquest. The fact that the Saracens are described as godless is not an indication of another religion, but a common insult for a gang of robbers, also for Christian gangs.

R. G. Hoyland presents another text by Sophronius from the year 636 or 637,[51] which addresses the aggression of Saracen troops who hurry from victory to victory, destroying villages and churches and looting cities and so forth, in the context of baptism. The manuscript is not publicly accessible, so its dating, the handwritten transmission and other questions must remain

unclear (e.g. is it a matter of a later addition to a text about baptism?). This text, if it should exist, cannot come from the time of Sophronius, because it contradicts the archeological findings.[52] Also, a nice statement in the new "Encyclopedia of Ancient Christian Literature" should be registered:[53] "S.[ophronius] handed Jerusalem over to the Arab conquerors."[54] There is no historical source for this statement.

4.2 The Doctrina Jacobi Nuper Baptizati.

The document *Doctrina Jacobi nuper baptizati*[55] was allegedly written in the year 634, according to H. Suermann, however, only in 640.[56] It is a Christian and at the same time anti-Jewish piece of writing in which, however, only Jews are present. It is purportedly located in Carthage. Beforehand, it should be noted that in the opinion of Vincent Déroche, who critically edited the Greek text and compared it with all of the foreign translations, this text was handed down to us "in a hopelessly altered form" ("sous une forme irrémédiablement altérée")".[57] So, pieces of text can only be classified into the assumed historical contexts with the help of further criteria.

The anonymous author assumes that the forced baptism of Jews was ordered by Emperor Heraclius. H. Suermann summarizes the stories:

> "A Jewish merchant called Jacob who came to Africa refuses to be baptized at first, but is baptized, nevertheless, and thrown into prison. In prison he asks God to show him if it was good or bad for him to have been baptized. God reveals to him that it was good and that Christ is the Messiah".[58]

Consequently, he speaks to other Jews and wants to convince them of Jesus the Messiah. Another forcibly converted Jew reports of his brother from Caesarea (Palestine) and, according to the Doctrina Jacobi, he says:

> "Then my brother wrote to me that a false prophet had appeared. When (Sergius) Candidatus was killed by the Saracens, I was in Caesarea, said Abraham [my brother]. And the Jews rejoiced. They said that the prophet had accompanied the Saracens and he proclaimed the arrival of the Anointed One and Christ".[59]

The brother asked an "old man who was well-informed about scriptures" what he thought about the prophet of the Saracens.

> "He said, while sighing deeply: 'He is a fake because prophets do not come with swords and weapons'".

The man asked the brother to make some inquiries about the prophet. He did this and heard from those people who had met him

> "that there is nothing true about the prophet mentioned except where (people's) bloodshed is concerned. He (the prophet) claims namely to have the key to paradise which is unbelievable".

Although only "a prophet" is spoken about and the name Muḥammed is not mentioned, H. Suermann considers the Doctrina Jacobi to be the "oldest text which mentions Muḥammad". [60] It does indeed bother him that the dialogue does not mention the name of the prophet and moreover professes that he is still alive. [61] But he refuses suggestions to identify the prophet as someone else; it is about Muḥammad. No "particular role" was attributed to Muḥammad and the Muslims in the Jewish expectation of the Last Days. As revealed in the Doctrina Jacobi, they were only regarded as "part of the destruction precedent to the end of the world". [62]

What is to be made of this? First and foremost, it is a question of the text, which apparently, unlike the interpretation of H. Suermann, misconstrues almost all religious-historical contexts. The Jews could indeed associate hope with the takeover of the Arab autocracy and therefore the withdrawal of the anti-Jewish Byzantines, but not with the "prophet". Furthermore, the Muḥammad of the traditional account did not announce the coming of Christ or claim to possess the key to the kingdom of heaven and no longer moved around the Middle East with the conquering Saracens. Whether the information about the killing of the Byzantine representative, Sergios Candidatos, is historically true or a later addition must remain unclarified. Apart from that, it is first mentioned in the Chronographia[63] of Theophanes the Confessor in the 9th century and in a chronicle from the 13th century.[64]

It is out of the question that the prophet among the Saracens could have been Muḥammad, as the motto "*muḥammad*" was first brought to Palestine with ʿAbd al-Malik's migration from the east where it originated. What is correct about the story is that the Arabian Peninsula is not spoken of, but the message is about a Saracen prophet who appeared in Palestine, in Caesarea where his brother Abraham lived.

It is possible to assume, as Y. D. Nevo and J. Koren do, that – due to the apocalyptic mood of that time – there could have been a real prophet on the Saracen voyages of conquest whom we know nothing about.[65] It is more probable, however, that the *Doctrina Jacobi* can be located at the time of the messianic expectations of ʿʿAbd al-Malik which are reflected in the construction of the Dome of the Rock at the end of the 7th century. At that time, the older expectations of the Last Days, linked to the tradition of Daniel, came to a head among Syrian and Arab Christians. Back then, Qur'ānic material, which indeed rarely talked about a man called "Muḥammad", but consistently spoke of a "prophet", was known in Jerusalem, Damascus and

also in Caesarea. The prophet of the Saracens could have been understood by this. It is then obvious that the Jews shared the Syrian-Christians' expectations of the Last Days, which the apocalypses show and also the movement of ʿAbd al-Malik suggests.[66] But they also connected hope to the Saracen rule, although they thought it would instigate the catastrophe of the Last Days. The dialogue shows that they could not associate anything positive with the prophet; *this* prophet (of the Qurʾānic material and the Saracens) contradicted the Jewish idea of a prophet.

Likewise, it is conceivable for the time of ʿAbd al-Malik that non-Arab Christians wanted to use these contexts to do missionary work by means of fictitious dialogues by Jews. The backdating of the last years of Heraclius and his command for the forced baptism of Jews seems to have been consciously chosen as the "starter" of the dialogues. Historically speaking this is hardly "what really happened", as Heraclius separated the Middle East from the Byzantine Empire and had therefore revoked its immediate access. In the meantime Arab rulers had governed there.

It cannot be said for sure exactly what the historical truth is, as the problem of text transmission leaves many questions unanswered. On no account does the *Doctrina Jacobi* have anything to do with the prophet Muḥammad, nor does it reflect the circumstances in the later part of the first half of the 7th century. The localization in Carthage also seems to be fictitious and is appropriately relocated to Palestine through a narrative trick: the invention of a brother Abraham of Caesarea.

4.3 A Letter by Maximus the Confessor

Maximus the Confessor (about 580-622) was a fighter against the Christological doctrines of *monotheletism* and *monenergism* and probably lived in North Africa from 626. There, he enforced the dismissal of these Christological theses at synods and supported Pope Martin I in the same matter at a Lateran Council in Rome in 649. Therefore, as the Pope and Maximus the Confessor had gone against a *type* (edict) of the emperor, who had forbidden all discussions on this subject, both were arrested and brought to Byzantium in 653.[67] From there Maximus was first sent to Thrace in 655 but was then banished to the Black Sea by a synod in 622 because of his persistence after "his tongue had been cut off and his right hand had been chopped off".[68] He died in that same year.

This fate acts as a cynical comment on the alleged "culture of gentleness", in which he sees himself threatened by a "barbaric tribe of the desert", as he writes in a letter to Peter Illustrios (between 634 and 640):[69]

> "What is more wretched … to see a barbaric tribe in the desert who crosses a strange land as if it were their own? To see the culture of gentleness ravaged by

> horrible wild beasts? To see the Jewish people having for a long time enjoyed watching the blood of humans flow …?"[70]

What follows is an ugly anti-Jewish polemic. "The people of the desert" are not named more specifically. It could be about the Berbers but also, perhaps more likely, the Arabs. It is only mentioned in passing as the main direction of impact of the polemics is against the Jews. The accusations made against them are malicious stereotypes which cannot be historically verified. *They* are the real enemy for Maximus; the people of the desert at most only heightened the alleged misery.

If Maximus meant the Arabs, then he certainly did not consider them to be members of a new religion. His complete fervor was for the theological and especially the Christological conflicts of that time. He never mentions another religion.

The remarks about the people of the desert do not imply a conquest. Y. D. Nevo and J. Koren can be agreed with here, as they assume "a political vacuum" to be present in North Africa at that time, as "the previous owners (of the country) were effectively absent (and) could not keep control (…)."[71] So, barbaric people could roam the region.

In the year 632, Maximus interpreted the Book of Habakkuk 1:8[72] in which it is said of the Chaldeans that they are "keener than wolves of the steppe (NAS: "wolves in the evening"; Hebrew text: עֶרֶב *ʿäräḇ*, "evening"; with another vocalization *ʿaraḇ* – "desert, Arabia"; Vulgata text: *velociores lupis vespertinis* = evening, west).

Maximus probably had a text version available in which "wolves of Arabia" were spoken of. He adds a commentary to this that the correct meaning is not "Arabia" but "the west". He explains that the wolves meant here are our sins of the flesh.[73] So this note has nothing to do with our matter.

4.4 The Dialogue between the Patriarch John and an Emir

The Syrian manuscript from the year 876 refers to a letter by the Patriarch John about a dialogue with an emir.[74] According to H. Suermann, it is about a dialogue between the Monophysite Patriarch John and the emir Saʿīd ibn Amīr, who is not mentioned by name in the text, which documents an early "debate between Christians and Muslims" in the year 644.[75]

Y. D. Nevo and J. Koren discuss different hypotheses on the people, location and date[76] and come to the conclusion that the dialogue must have taken place in 644, "in the years immediately following Muʿāwiya's acquisition of administrative control". According to them, the patriarch was John I and the emir or the chief administrator of Homs called ʿAmr bn al-ʿĀs, but according to Michael the Syrian, it was Amru bn Saʿd.[77] The reason for this

specification is that a conversation within this claimed context would have fitted to the year 644.[78]

In the letter, four topics are presented by the emir.[79] First, he asks if all Christians have the same gospel and why their faith differs so much. Secondly, it is about the Christological discussion and about the doctrine of the Trinity – was Jesus God or the son of God and which beliefs did Abraham and Moses have? Thirdly, it is explained that the Arabs accept Abraham and Moses as prophets, but not the rest of the Old Testament: hence the question whether the divine nature of Jesus and his birth of the Virgin Mary can be found in the laws (Pentateuch). Fourthly, he asks about the Christian laws (also the law of inheritance/succession) and calls on them to adhere to these laws or to comply with the rules of the Arabs.

Here an Arab, who holds the control, asks about the characteristics of the Christians. He asks the Monophysites, but also the Chalcedonians take part in the conversation. In the questions at no point does he show that he is a Muslim.

> "He is certainly not a Muslim. He shows no knowledge of or adherence to Islam and mentions neither Muḥammad or Islam nor the Qur'an." [80]

The emir simply wants to know what subject he is up against and what he should think of their teachings. He wants to know if they "possess enough adequately detailed laws" to govern their community themselves. "If not, they will have to comply with the Arab law which is now the new law[81] of the country".[82]

Y. D. Nevo and J. Koren think that the position of the emir, who only acknowledges the Pentateuch, was influenced by a non-rabbinical Jewish or Jewish-Christian or Samaritan sect.[83] After an unbiased reading of the conversation they are convinced that the emir did not take the Qur'ān into account because it did not exist; and the faith of the emir was not Islam but a form of "Basic Monotheism" with Jewish-Christian elements.[84]

So, if the document reproduces the conversation fairly reliably, then it will merely show the problems which the new Arab administration had with the many different groups of Christians and that they were looking to learn how to deal with them.

4.5 Letters by the East Syrian ("Nestorian") Patriarch Ishoyahb (Īšōʿyahb) III

Ishoyahb III (died in 659) answered the complaints of the clergy of Nineveh that the new Arab ruler preferred the Monophysites in one his 106 recorded letters. The patriarch answered that this was not true. God had given the control to the "Hagarene Arabs" (*tayyāye mhaggrāye*),[85] as they did not oppose "the Christian religion … but they praise our faith, they honor our priests and the saints of our Lord, they help the church and its monasteries."[86]

He also describes the status of the Christians, including the East Syrian ("Nestorian") ones, very positively: "The faith is at peace and flourishing".[87] Specifically, he states that the Monophysite thesis that "the almighty God suffered and died [on the cross – author], – for East Syrian Christians that Jesus, the Messiah, died",[88] is not supported by the Arabs.[89]

The context of this passage is translated in the following way by H. Suermann:

> "The heretics deceive you: what has happened was ordered by the zealots (Arabs). This is not true at all. In fact, the Arab Muslims do not come to the aid of those who say that the almighty God suffered and died. If it happens (…) that they help them, then you can tell the Muslims what is going on and convince them, as is right and proper".[90]

H. Suermann continues with laudable explanations on the relationship between Christians and Muslims.

Suspecting that the translation might not be appropriate – in any case it would be very difficult to explain why *Muslims* are mentioned this early – the Latin translation, which H. Suermann refers to, was checked by R. Duval. It turned out that in fact "Muslims" are never mentioned, the corresponding nouns to be found in the original being "*Arabes Mohammetani*" or simply "*Mohammetani*".[91] A comparison with the Syrian text, also edited by R. Duval, shows that in the quotation mentioned above "*Tayyāye m-Haggrāye*" (Hagarene Arabs) can be found twice and *"m-Haggrāye"* (Hagarene) once.[92]

This description of the Arabs as *Hagarenes* or *Hagarites*, which had been common since the time of Saint Jerome, has nothing to do with *Islam* and *Muslims*: It is a name for the Arabs according to biblical patterns. In the text, it is only said that at the time of Muʿāwiya, the Arabs gave the (other) Christians free rein and Christian life could flourish undisturbed. It remains a mystery, however, why translators do not simply translate what is clearly said in the text, instead of putting their own opinions, in this case that the Arabs of the time were, of course, Muslims, into the text.

In another text from his article, H. Suermann links his observations about "why Christianity was so weak and so many changed to Islam"[93] to a reference from a letter from Ishoyahb to Mar Simeon from the city of Rew Ardasir[94] which complains about deficits in spirituality and fervor in this region and calls for improvement. However, at no point in the letter can these claims be justified, not even in the Latin translation this time. The author of the letter refers to complaints and admonitions on behalf of the bishops responsible at given occasions, as was common at all times (and still is). Nothing can be read of a "conversion to Islam", but, however, of the danger of "losing faith". Here again, the "knowledge" of the seemingly true contexts,

according to the Muslim historiography of the 9th century, is read into texts which themselves contain nothing of the kind. These texts are indeed valuable sources for their time, unless translators contaminate them with their own "knowledge".

We can conclude that Ishoyahb the Great was a witness for the life of the Christians under Arab rule at the time of Muʿāwiya, but he knows nothing of a new religion of the Arabs.

5 Various Texts Since the Second Half of the 7th century

5.1 Additions to the "Spiritual Meadow" (*Pratum Spirituale*) by John Moschus.

John Moschus (540/550–619/628) was the teacher and friend of Sophronius of Jerusalem (cf. text 1). He was a monk in a monastery near Jerusalem and went on journeys of many years in duration to visit monks in Egypt, on the Sinai Peninsula, and was at times accompanied by Sophronius. After the conquest of Jerusalem by the Persians in 614, he re-settled with Sophronius in the West and died in Rome.

Of course, he cannot contribute anything towards answering our questions himself, but he left his lifework behind, a spiritual book called *'hò leimón', Pratum spirituale* ("Spiritual Meadow")[95] which also provides reports and stories of his travels. This document was, however, edited for the first time much later, "possibly…by Sophronius".[96]

Thus we are concerned with this (at some time) finally-edited version of this text. It provides passages on our subject which can be traced back to John Moschus. He speaks, for example, of a "Saracenus gentilis",[97] of an abbot called John who stopped a destitute female Saracen from fornicating,[98] or about the rescue of a prisoner from the hands of three heathen Saracens.[99] These explanations, however, only give information about his lifetime, therefore "before Islam".

However, there is also an observation made which allegedly cannot be traced back to John Moschus, as he died too early. In the 19th story, it is explained that:

> "The godless Saracens conquered the Holy City of Christ, our Lord: Jerusalem… and they (wanted to) build this damn thing which they called a mosque (*midzgitha*) for their own worshippers."[100]

Only the Dome of the Rock can be meant by this "damn thing". These texts can only have been added as recently as 690, even if it is only the plans and not the finished construction which are being referred to. This was also way beyond the life of Sophronius (died 638). The anonymous person who added

these passages to the Armenian translation could not have done this before 690/693.

Jerusalem was not "conquered", except in traditional reports. It was somewhat unknown Arabs princes, then Muʿāwiyah and later on ʿAbd al-Malik who "took over" the rule from the Byzantines. Accordingly, the 9th century is the most probable candidate for the interpolation.

The fact that the Dome of the Rock is also called "midzgitha" (Arabic: masǧid – lit.: "place of prosternation", Modern Arabic: "mosque"), which is a common term in Syrian Christianity for a church, indicates another religion just as inconclusively as the mention of their "own worshippers" – Protestants could also have spoken of Catholics in these terms and vice versa. The interpolator of these statements could only then have meant a *separate religion* of the Saracens if he belonged to it himself in the 9th century, when a conquest of Jerusalem is commented on.

5.2 The "History of Heraclius" by Pseudo-Sebeos[101]

Sebeos, to whom the anonymous and untitled parts, only extant in the Armenian version of the 'History of Heraclius', were wrongly attributed,[102] was bishop of Bagratunis in around 660. The document narrates the purported history between 590 and 661 CE, which is fit into a pattern of apocalyptic interpretation: The Last Days are initiated by the return of the Jews to the Promised Land and this return is achieved by the Jews' alliance with the Arabs, the "fourth beast" of the Book of Daniel[103] and a victory over Heraclius' troops. The author hopes that the Arabs will soon be defeated.[104]

In the 30th chapter[105] of the *History of Heraclius*[106], the author/editor provides information on the Arabs which he claims to have received from Arab prisoners of war.[107] The pieces of text that are interesting for our subject commence with talk of the descendants of the "slave" (Ishmael). It reads as follows (translated from the German translation by H. Suermann):

> "They (the Jews) took the path into the desert and reached the children of Ishmael in Arabia: they asked them for help and let them know that, according to the Bible, they were related. Although they readily believed in this kinship, the Jews could not convince the whole majority of the people because their cults were so different. [*beginning of interpolation; my gray shading*] At this time, there was a child of Ishmael, a trader named Muḥammad: He introduced himself to them, as God commanded, as a preacher and as the way of truth and taught them about Abraham's God, as he was very well-educated and versed in the stories of Moses. As the commandment came from above, everybody united under the authority of one for the unity of the Law and after they had left the cult of nothingness, they came back to the living God, who

had revealed himself to Father Abraham. Muḥammad commanded them not to eat dead animals, not to drink wine, not to lie and not to go whoring. He added to this 'God promised this land to Abraham and his descendants under oath for evermore. He acted according to his promise, as he loved Israel. You are sons of Abraham and now God is carrying out his promise to Abraham and his descendants. Love Abraham's God, take possession of the region that God gave to your father Abraham and no-one can stand up to you in battle'[*end of the interpolation; my gray shading*].[108] Everyone from Weiwlay (in F. Macler: Ewiwlay; in R. W. Thomas: Ewila) to Sur came together against Egypt. They left the desert of Pharan split between 12 tribes, according to the race of their patriarch. They divided the 12000 children of Israel between the 12 tribes, 1000 per tribe in order to lead them into the region of Israel. They moved from encampment to encampment in accordance with the order of their patriarchs: Nabeuth, Keda (,) Abdiwl, Mosamb, Masmay, Idovmay, Mase, Koldat, Theman, Yetur, Naphes and Kedmay [Gen. 25:13-15, *author's addition*]. These were the tribes of Ishmael. They proceeded to Rabbath Moab in the territory of Ruben, because half of the Greek army was camping in Arabia. They attacked them unexpectedly, threw them to the wolves and routed Theodorus, the brother of Emperor Heraclius and went back to Arabia. Everyone who remained from the people of the children of Ishmael came to unite with them and they formed a big army. Then they sent a message to the Greek emperor which said: 'God promised this land to our father Abraham and his descendants: give it to us peacefully and we will not advance into your territory. If you refuse, we will take away with usury what you took for yourself'. The emperor refused and said, without giving them a satisfactory answer: 'The land belongs to me. Your inheritance is the desert. Go in peace to your land'."[109]

Pseudo-Sebeos refers to many details in his *History*. Regarding our issue, H. Suermann says:

"He (the author) seems to be very informed about the history of the origins of Islam".[110]

Nevertheless, he regretfully notes that:

"….the information on the location of places complies more with the biblical tradition than with the geography of that time. In Sebeos' book, Arabia is the area east of Sinai up to the other side of the Dead Sea. It is not the Arabian Peninsula, but the Arabia of Paul the Apostle. The ancestral homeland of the Arabs is, according to Sebeos, the desert of Pharan. This interpretation, however, leads to a wrong and incorrect geographical understanding of the happenings of that time."[111]

According to H. Suermann, the "right" geographical understanding would be the traditional report. If the standards of the 9th century are ignored, the anonymous author abides by biblical patterns, which are given in Gen. 25:12-18, so in this respect, he does not have any kind of "new" information on the "children of Ishmael" at his disposal. In principle, he also knows just as little about the historical contexts. The fact that the Jews moved to join the Arabs and united their own twelve tribes with the – according to Genesis 25:13-15 – twelve tribes of the Ismaelites, and formed "a big army" with them, contradicts all we know about history. In order to make this description historically plausible, reference is made to the "Constitution of Medina", according to which "Jews and Muslims made up a community",[112] which is historically audacious. Here, a fairytale – the "Constitution of Medina" is a much later idealization – is used to help provide historical reality for another fairytale.

All the same, this historical interpretation has a historical background. As (Christians like) the Jews were characterized by eschatological expectations in the 6th and 7th centuries, the Arab acquisition of autocracy initially triggered off eschatological hopes in the Jews. (A Jewish apocalypse confirms this [as already in text 2 above] with the Jewish hopes linked to Arab rule).[113] With the aid of the Arabs sent by God, the perspective of a triumph over the Greeks was possible, as Heraclius represented an anti-Jewish program.

However, the mention of a joint victory of the Arabs and Jews over Theodorus, Heraclius' brother, mixes up the historical contexts. Using clever propaganda, Theodorus succeeded in getting the Arabs, especially the Ghassanids, who had been disappointed by Byzantium up to this time, to support Heraclius with subsidiary troops in the battle against the Persians. The connection of Theodorus to the Arab troops is accurate, but policy of alliances is turned topsy-turvy.

The author's meager knowledge of historical contexts also becomes clear in the rest of the 30th chapter of the "History of Heraclius". All of the details about the activities of the Ismaelites, partly under King "Amr" (ʿUmar?), are inaccurate or wrong. It can only be said for certain that he (the author) knew that the Arabs had taken over the country of the Byzantines and he had heard several stories or rumors about battles, but not more.[114]

In Chapter 37, Pseudo-Sebeos mentions bloody conflicts amongst the Arabs themselves without locating or defining them more precisely, but these ended with Muʿāwiya:

> "When he had conquered them, he governed over all of the possessions of the children of Ishmael and made peace with everyone".[115]

At least Muʿāwiya's role in the establishment of peace among the Arabs is seen accurately; here the information is more exact on this point than in

Chapter 30, as it did not stem from an author so very dominated by biblical and theological thinking. However, the time before and after this remains unclear and without elaboration. On the other hand, it should be noted that no other religion of the Arabs is spoken of in these lines.

Having said this, Sebeos' entirely biblical-theological reflections in Chapter 30 contradict the remarks about Muḥammad and his preaching.[116] In doing so, information extending beyond the Old Testament, especially the name of the prophet, become important. Therefore, it must be assumed that subsequent interpolations were added to an older prototype. The older prototype uses several lines of Genesis as an aid when describing the speedy eventuation in terms of the apocalyptic expectation of the Last Days, according to the tradition of Daniel: the Jews gather themselves together to fight in order to seize possession of Palestine in the spirit of eschatological expectations. With this in mind, they join forces with the Arabs, the new eschatological threat, who, according to the model of the Book of Genesis, must be completely understood as the children of Ishmael from the Desert of Pharan – a concept which is conceivable in the context of Muʿāwiya.

If we understand the statements about Muḥammad to be later interpolations, then the strange disparity of the text in Chapter 30 can be explained. An older piece of biblical-apocalyptical historical interpretation that brings together Jews and Arabs as eschatological phenomena is then used by a scribe and/or a new editor as a starting point to add further information.

This can be attributed to a time in which the term "Muḥammad" was already historicized – without having been linked with the Arabian Peninsula yet – and Muḥammad was understood to be a preacher or a merchant. Chronologically, the use of the name Muḥammad is a hint that editorial work might have taken place in about the middle of the 8th century, or even two or three decades earlier or later. The assertions about the preaching of Muḥammad mention his demands "not to eat from a dead animal, not to drink wine, not to tell lies and not to go whoring". These individual instructions which can also be found in the Qurʾān – a general ban on wine only in later parts –, but the earlier statements of abrogated passages[117] are supplemented by explanations of the theological concept of Muḥammad, who was "very well-educated"; the proclamation of Abraham's living God[118] and the "unity of the Law", the abolition of a cult of nothingness, the right to Palestine "that God gave to your father Abraham" – a right – and here it is wrong again – that Muḥammad is said to have assured the Jews.

Side note

The notion that this prophet was also a merchant – which the Sīra and not the Qurʾān claims about Muḥammad – could go back to an old tradition about the establishment of Christianity in Southern Arabia, according to which a merchant in Ḥīra became a Christian and did missionary work after

his return to Naǧrān.[119] In the chronicle of Seert, also called Nestorian history, the following passage can be found; which refers to the 6th century:

> "In the era of Yezdegerd, there was a merchant called Hannan in the area of Najran in the Yemen who was well-known in the region. One day, he set off to do some trade in Constantinople and then returned to his country. Afterwards, he wanted to proceed to Persia, but when he got back to Hira he visited Christians frequently and got to know their teachings. He was baptized and stayed there for a while. Then he went back to his home country and invited the people to adopt his belief. He baptized the people of his house and many others of his country and the surrounding area. After that, he won over the inhabitants of Himar and the neighboring regions of Ethiopia with the support of several others who had joined him."[120]

The Nestorian history was written in the early 11th century. R. Tardy presumes, however, that the remarks about Naǧrān were taken from another text, a much older book of the Himyarites, and are historically plausible.[121] In any case, the story of a preaching Arab merchant might be a kind of "wanderlegende", the prototype of a legend which spreads to many countries. This could explain the profession of the Prophet – merchant – both in Pseudo-Sebeos and in the Sīra. Likewise, the stories of the 9th century, that Muḥammad received revelations in the Cave of *Ḥirā'*, could go back to the above-mentioned religious re-orientation of the merchant/prophet of the story in similar sounding *Ḥīra*.

Pseudo-Sebeos' remarks about Muḥammad bear witness to a sympathy for this preacher and his teachings, but at the same time he is used for the confirmation of the Law and the Jewish right to the Promised Land. It is also striking that only motives from his preaching, that were positive in a Jewish sense, (except for the wine ban) were mentioned. Statements of this kind are rather strange in a Christian book of the time, which the *History of Heraclius* is everywhere else. The editor can neither have been a Christian nor a Muslim; the latter would hardly have assigned the Jews the Holy Land as a God-given property. The passages can most likely be explained if a Jewish editor[122] – in the first decades of the 8th century at the earliest – is presumed, who appreciated the Arab rule and the basic principles of their teachings – interpreted from a Jewish perspective –, believed it to be better than the Greek rule anyway and who then formulated Jewish demands using his "knowledge" of Muḥammad.

It is explained in another passage that the Jews lived in peace for a while so they decided to construct the Temple of Solomon again. But the Hagarites/Ismaelites took away the Jews' place of prayer at this point and claimed it for

themselves.[123] This passage implies knowledge of the construction (or the intended construction) of the Dome of the Rock.

A letter from Muʿāwiya to Emperor Constans mentioned by Pseudo-Sebeos calls on the readers to "Reject this Jesus and convert to the Great God whom I serve, the God of our father Abraham". According to the letter, Jesus could not even save himself from the Jews, how could he possibly save the Byzantines from Muʿāwiya?[124]

Since Y. D. Nevo and J. Koren do not only assume a "Basic Monotheism" for a part of the Arab population, but obviously also for Muʿāwiya, they do not deal with these passages critically.[125] The iconographical design of the coinage is, however, sufficient proof that Muʿāwiya was a *Christian* ruler, from whose mouth the demand for a rejection of Jesus is inconceivable. Whoever rejects Jesus and scorns him for his failure, will hardly have coins struck with crosses on them. This letter is a later invention and one of the not too rare interpolations. Due to the exclusive and positive emphasis on the belief of "our father Abraham", we must again assume the work of a Jewish interpolator.

5.2 Anastasius of Sinai

Anastasius Sinaïta (Anastasius of Sinai) (610-701?) was a "monk, priest (and abbot) in the Sinai Monastery".[126] He left behind an extensive work which, above all, was about the theological conflicts in Egypt and Syria, about Monophysitism and Monotheletism on the one hand and about the Syrian, occasionally new-Chalcedonian theology, which he represented, on the other. Moreover, he wrote edifying and exegetical publications.

As his works are attributed to the (later) half of the 7th century, it is amazing, given the traditional historiography, that he did not concern himself with the threat of an alleged *new religion* at all, let alone mention it by its name: *Islam!* Not even the Arabs were a problem for him, although they were the rulers of the country.

The latter are mentioned peripherally in his most important anti-Monophysite work, the "Hodegos" (Latin: "Viae dux"; before 690).[127] This document has an extremely complex transmission in manuscripts and has been edited many times. An originally independent treatise and scholia (glosses) seem to have been integrated into it.[128]

If the text is taken as it is now, short statements about the theology of the Arabs can be found. The reader is admonished to first reject some misconceptions that the opponents might have "about us" before conversing with them.

> "If we want to discuss with Arabs, we should anathematize the one who says '(there are) two Gods', or the one who claims that 'God carnally conceived a

> son' or the one who worships any other creature in heaven or on earth apart from God".[129]

What we are dealing with here are Monophysite convictions, whose theses both the Arabs and Anastasius himself reject.

There is nothing to be said against attributing these passages to Anastasius. Arab convictions at the time of ʿAbd al-Malik are correctly reproduced. As Anastasius is not in any way upset about this matter nor rectifies it, it can be assumed that he deemed the Arab wishes to be justified; they should not get the impression that he thinks like this. His Christology is so constituted that he does not believe in two Gods, nor in a conception of the flesh, nor in the worship of a creature – for him the human Jesus is "merely", a little inaccurately, united with the divine Logos in one hypostasis. Most notably, he does not describe the Arabs in any way as members of *another religion*, but as people *with a specific Christology*.

Another passage can also be understood in a similar way when he polemizes against the Severians. Severus was a more moderate Monophysite who rejected that Jesus Christ existed "in" two natures. He accuses the Severians of thinking about "ugly and unseemly things like the genitalia of men and women" when they hear the word "nature".

> "For this reason, they shun this word (nature) as if they were pupils of the Saracens, because when they hear about the birth and conception of God, they blaspheme immediately because they can only interpret this term as referring to marriage, fertilization and the union of the flesh."[130]

This drastic and untheological perception of nature may have helped the Saracens to defend their Christology – that Jesus was not God, but the Messiah and ambassador – in everyday discussions. Therefore, they could indeed be understood as Christians, like the (heretic) Severians.[131]

In his work *Quaestiones et Responsiones* (Questions and Responses),[132] Anastasius discusses 154 exegetical questions.[133] The short question 126 refers to the statement that the devil (Satan) was brought down because he did not want to kneel down in front of a man. Anastasius regards this as something coming from the myths of the Greeks and Arabs. Regarding the latter, this could, at least from hearsay, indicate knowledge of Qurʾānic material (cf. surah 38:71-78)

5.3 Jacob of Edessa (9)

Jacob (died in 708) was a significant Syrian theologian "one of the most productive authors and scholars of his time".[134] He was born near Antioch in around 633 and became bishop of Edessa in 684.[135] Evidently, he fell out with

his surroundings again and again, and therefore, he resigned from his office of bishop after four years. For limited periods of time he lived in various Syrian monasteries and he was also active as bishop again for several months.

He wrote exegetical, canonical and philological books and chronicles, as well as translating Greek writings, including Aristotle, into Syriac.[136] However, "many of his works are passed on in fragments, mostly integrated into the works of later authors including Michael the Great".[137]

Islam is not mentioned in any of his writings! In one passage of a comment on the First Book of Kings 14:21-26, in which the sin of Judas under King Rehoboam and the following punishment of an attack on the part of the Egyptian king is spoken of, he comments

> "Christ hit us because of (our) many sins and wrongdoings and we are subjected to the hard burden of the Arabs".[138]

Jacob is not talking about battles at this point, but only about the Arab rule which he sees as a punishment for sins, just like John bar Penkaye (cf. text 12). Towards the end of the 7th century, the Arab rule was no longer felt to be positive, as in the time of Muʿāwiya, it was a now seen as a punishment. But conflicts with a *new religion* were probably not seen as problem, as he was not aware of any such thing.

Another chronicle is also attributed to Jacob of Edessa which is only extant in fragments in a manuscript from the 10th or 11th century.[139] Here, a person called Muḥammad is spoken of, who went around the regions of Palestine, Arabia (?), Phoenicia and Tyre as a merchant;[140] he is also called the first king of the Arabs who ruled for seven years and Abu Bakr for two years after him.[141] The information, however, that the Arab kingdom began in the 11th year of Heraclius and the 31st year of Ḵosrow, is more correct[142]

It is very difficult to explain that the same author, who writes of Muḥammad as a *merchant*, writes about him as a *king* a few lines later and also that the term inseparably linked to the name in Islam – "prophet" – with its religious meaning, is not even mentioned once. The fact that a person called Muḥammad is obviously seen as a historical figure would indicate that the text is from the 8th century, but then again he would have to appear as "prophet" and "messenger". Why is only a "merchant" and "king" spoken about here?[143] The text remains opaque, both in its meaning and in its chronological assignations. The isolated naming of Muḥammad, however, rules out an authorship of Jacob of Edessa.

5.4 Arabs as "heathens" in the late 7th century (10)

In 1902 J.-B. Chabot translated, commented on and published three volumes of Syrian synodal records. A synod from the year 676 prohibited a close co-existence with the (Arab) pagans; above all the intermarriage of Christian

women with pagan men was disallowed. The custom of having two wives and being buried in magnificent clothes was likewise rejected.[144]

While the reference to two (instead of four) wives could be seen as Islamic to a certain extent, a burial in splendid clothes is strange in Islam. So it might indeed be "pagans" and their customs, which were obviously attractive for Christians, that this text warns about.

Likewise, in a letter to his priests, the Syriac-Orthodox patriarch Anastasius II advises against the participation in pagan festivals, their sacrifices and, above all, intermarriage of Christian women with pagans. He is, however, a little forgiving in the case that someone should return repentant.[145]

Arab rule and life with Arabs belonged to the religious milieu of these texts. Therefore, Y. D. Nevo and J. Koren come to the clear conclusion:

> "The local Arab population is pagan and they are holding pagan rites."[146]

However, the *Arabs* are not explicitly named. Y. D. Nevo and J. Koren think that the Syrian word "ḥanpē" used in the source is "a normal term for the invading Arabs".[147] Whether this is conclusive or not remains unclear. But as the existence of other pagan populations in traditionally Christian regions cannot be assumed, let alone that it exerted a kind of fascination, it seems very likely that what the text is dealing with, is Arab paganism.

However, it must be considered that the complaints of the bishops about paganism do not implicitly have to mean real pagans, but more likely people who were not baptized or non-Christians. This is how Isaac of Antioch, in two homilies of "about the year 459",[148] depicts the conquest of the city Bet Hur in Northern Mesopotamia by Arabs (about the middle of the 5th century).[149] He sees the capture as God's punishment for the fact that "the Christian inhabitants [of the city; *author's note*] still had memories of pagan cults. The devotion [of Christians; *author's note*] to pagan cults was the reason that the Arabs plague this city like a hostage of God".[150] In the following, Isaac goes into more details about these cults.

This look back into the past could convey that the much later synods could maybe also have referred to Christians who practiced pagan customs, ethics and cults with their accusations against "pagans". But it could also mean that larger groups of them, besides the Christian Arabs, were still "real pagans", as Nevo and Koren believe – perhaps with a "Basic Monotheism".[151] The connection with them and above all marriage with their women was considered a threat to Christianity on the part of the official church, probably because of the dominant position of the ruling Arabs.

5.5 Remarks in chronicles

Ancient chronicles should not be read with modern historical standards in mind. Apart from the continuous re-workings in the course of the hand-written transmission processes, they often offer a mixture of factual knowledge and fictional narratives, led by interests and religious interpretations, which serve to classify and master what was deemed history.

In any case, historical events are often reflected in those documents. Y. D. Nevo and J. Koren refer, for example, to a chronicle by Joshua the Stylite, which describes the years 395 to 506 CE, in which we can learn a lot about "battles, sieges, ambushes and attacks".[152]

The chronicles to be introduced now do not offer us much material, at least if we expect reports on Arab invasions, battles, their religion and so on, but the authors were at least contemporaries of the events. There can only be one reason that none, or hardly any of these things are reported: The things that are desired to be confirmed, did not happen in this way. The contemporaries simply did not know the narratives of the traditional report at that time.

5.6 A Syrian chronicle (11)[153]

In a Syrian chronicle[154] written by an East Syrian monk in South Iraq between 670 and 680,[155] the victory of the Arabs over Byzantium and the Sassanians is reflected upon:

> "Verily, the victory of the sons of Ismael, who conquered and defeated two of these strong kingdoms, was really God's (victory) who, up to this point, had not allowed them to seize Constantinople. Therefore, the victory is God's and should not be attributed to the Arabs. It is the Dome of Abraham which we have not found (nothing could be found out about what it is; *author's note*), but we know that the blessed Abraham, who was rich and wanted to remove himself from the desire of the Canaanites, preferred living in remote places and in the expansive open deserts, and as is common for those who live in tents, he built this place to worship God and to offer his sacrifices to him. Whichever (place) it happens to be that exists today, it got its name from him. The memory of the place survived along with that of the generation. For the Arabs are doing nothing other than maintaining this custom if they worship God at this place, as is proper for those who [offer] worship [to] the forefather of their race (lit.: the father who is the leader of their people; *author's note*). Hazor, who was called the head of the empire by the scriptures, belongs to the Arabs. It was called Medina, after the name Madian, Abraham's fourth son with Keturah, it. It was also called Yathrib."[156]

So the Ismaelites prevailed over two empires. This was seen as an act of God, who had not allowed them to "seize Constantinople" until then. In the year

674, Muʿāwiyah's attempt to conquer this city failed, and as Muʿāwiyah's loss of the East, which followed this event, is not yet spoken of, the chronicles seem to have been written in the year of preparation for the fight (?).

It is said of the Arabs that they worship God in the spirit of Abraham and at the place where Abraham built a cult site for God. Hence, even the Arabs are doing nothing new; it is even proper for them to continue maintaining the old customs and offer worship to their forefather Abraham. The author does not know anything else about the religion of the Arabs. By no means has he heard of a new Arab religion.

After this, thoughts follow on the cult site of Abraham, which the author admits "we" know nothing about. Then, biblical associations follow. According to Gen. 12, Abraham left his home country and built an altar in Canaan (Gen. 12:7), then he moved further away to the "mountain on the east of Bethel, (...) with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord," (Gen. 12:8) which he visited again some time later and called upon the name of the Lord there. (Gen. 13:4)

Then it says in the chronicle that "Hazor belongs to the Arabs". Hazor is situated, according to the Book of Joshua 11:10-15, in the northern half of Canaan and was "the head of all these kingdoms" which Joshua conquered (Josh. 11:10). This Hazor is put on a level with Medina – also an etymological, biblical derivation is found for this from Midian, one of Keturah's sons (Gen. 25:1-2, 1 Chr. 1:32) and then it is added that it refers to Yathrib.

All of this is very confusing, as one city in Palestine is equated with Medina/Yathrib. This can be explained in two ways: The author could have written this after the construction of the temple in Medina in the year 756, but then his remarks about the Arabs would have to be more precise and he could not have conducted his geography using only biblical references.

The second and more probable alternative is that a later scribe added Medina and Yathrib in the second half of the 8th century at the earliest. Unfortunately, this cannot be verified on the basis of the handwriting.

The author did not know where Abraham's cult site could be found and speculates with biblical references. But the scribe names Medina/Yathrib, so he knew more. He must have made the addition before the last third of the 8th century because Mecca was not made use of.

H. Suermann would disagree, he follows Islamic tradition:[157] "The author …recognizes Mecca as the place where the tradition (of Abraham; *author's note*) has survived". Or: "Mecca is not mentioned by name, but the Dome of Abraham is identified as Mecca". H. Suermann thinks that the statements about Medina are comments "following" the remarks about Mecca.[158] As is so often the case, a source is re-interpreted according to the author's own beliefs,

"knowledge" or taste. If sources are taken seriously so little, then why deal with them at all?

5.7 John (Jochanan) bar Penkayê

John bar Penkaye was an (East) Syrian Christian and probably a monk. At about the end of the 7th century (R. G. Hoyland: 687 CE)[159] he wrote a chronicle, a kind of world history of which only fragments remain. In these the Arab rule is depicted as God's punishment for the Christian heresies of Monophysitism and Chalcedonism. Then it said that they won two kingdoms "without a fight or a battle. (...) God gave them the victory".[160]

Obviously John knows nothing of the fights, but does indeed want to clarify that the Arab rule was wanted by God (and was therefore handed over peacefully). The Arabs seized their autocracy peacefully after the withdrawal of the Byzantines and the collapse of the Sassanian dynasty. He does report of conflicts between the Arabs which were ended by Muʿāwiyah: "Since Muʿāwiyah came to power, peace was established in the world henceforth."[161] We can agree with H. Suermann when he writes that John

> "sees the Arab Empire as the rule of an ethnic group and not the rule of a religious group."[162]

Other fragments attributed to the chronicle and documented especially by A. Mingana,[163] go into further detail about events after Muʿāwiyah's death which are evocative of details of the traditional report.[164] As their authenticity is questionable and cannot be judged at the moment, they should not be discussed further here.[165]

5.8 Thomas the Presbyter

A Syrian manuscript from the 8th century was attributed to a presbyter called Thomas.[166] It provides geographical references, ancestral charts and so forth. Statements about the *Arabs*, but not about a *new religion* can be found in it, although it is stated that they also killed many monks. Two remarks must be considered:

> "In the year 947 (635/636)….the Arabs invaded the whole of Syria, moved to Persia and conquered it."[167]
>
> "In the year 945 (634)….a battle took place between the Romans and the Arabs of Muḥammad in Palestine…12 miles east of Gaza….The Arabs devastated the whole region."[168]

The information given here causes difficulties: The rule of the Arabs in Persia did not begin until the end of the Sassanian dynasty, so much later, and cities, churches and monasteries were, according to archeological findings, not destroyed at that time. Whether a presence of Muḥammad at the battle should be pointed out by the term "Arabs of Muḥammad" or only the point

of identification of the Arabs can remain unclear. The remarks can, by no means, go back to Thomas the Presbyter. The name was probably first given around the middle of the 8th century and a religious function of Muḥammad is not spoken of. Therefore, it must deal with statements which originated later, probably from the 9th century, in which the Arab rule is then traced back to an earlier invasion, without mentioning a new religion yet.

5.9 A list of caliphs (14)

A. Palmer records, in an English translation, a list of Muḥammad's caliphs (without ʿAlī) up to Al-Walīd[169] with details of their periods of government. A. Palmer assumes (with a question mark) that the fragments of a manuscript are from the 9th century and that the text was written in the years between 705 and 715.[170]

However, this enumeration requires knowledge of the traditional report. As it is said of Muḥammad "he came to earth (was born) (in the year) 932 (620/621)… and ruled for seven years"[171] and because ʿAlī is missing, there are uncertainties (A. Palmer thinks that the seven years were just – without thought? – taken over from Jacob of Edessa).[172] Apparently the order of the traditional report was not available in its complete form. Maybe the late 8th century can be presumed as the time of origin.

5.10 A further list (15)

A further list, translated from Arabic into Syriac – A. Palmer's[173] assumption – continued the list of caliphs up to Yazīd, a son of ʿAbd al-Malik.[174] Here, Muḥammad is also called the Messenger of God. On the one hand ʿAlī is also missing and, on the other hand, there are arithmetical problems with the times stated for Muḥammad. Also here, the time of origin is believed to be the end of the 8th century (at the earliest).

5.11 A Maronite chronicle (16)

This chronicle extends to the year 684 "and was probably written by someone who was alive then."[175] The fragmentary manuscripts from the 8th or 9th centuries[176] present ecclesiastical events at the time of Muʿāwiyah which cannot be checked. ʿAlī is also mentioned in one sentence:

> "Also ʿAlī again threatened to wage war against Muʿāwiyah, but they struck him down while he was praying in al-Ḥīra and they killed him. Then Muʿāwiyah wanted to go to Al-Ḥīra…."[177]

ʿAlī is neither mentioned in the Qurʾān, nor in inscriptions or coinage of the first two centuries. He first appears in the literature of the 9th century. Likewise, a Maronite church is first spoken about in the course of the late 8th

century, even if it allegedly goes back to the early figure of Maron. This chronicle, and therefore also the fragment in question, can only have been written as recently as the 9th century.

5.12 A Spanish chronicle (17)

A small text from Spain which, however, "comes from the Orient" dates back to a chronicle which extends to the year 741. There it is said of Muḥammad that he belongs by birth to a "famous tribe of his people", he is "very wise" and the Arabs "respect and worship him because they consider him to be an apostle/messenger of God and a prophet".[178]

This text resembles the insertion in the "History of Heraclius" by Pseudo-Sebeos in its statement about Muḥammad (he is "wise"). The Arab estimation of Muḥammad is mentioned, but the author does not polemize against it. The Christian writer had no problem with this judgment. Due to the way the name of Muḥammad is mentioned and the way he is described, the text can be dated back to the last decades of the first half of the 8th century.

5.13 Syrian Apocalypses of the 7th and 8th Centuries

Apocalypses[179] are a very specific genre. They occur in times of severe affliction which are perceived as being hopeless. In such a situation, apocalypses preach hope for a speedy turnaround caused by God. The fact that this salvation is imminent is justified by looking back in history. Typically, an array of great empires are depicted, mostly following the Book of Daniel. After the annihilation of the last great empire and a dreadful plight under the rulership of the Anti-Christ, God will take action and cause a change.

In substance, apocalypses want to convey hope; they are a kind of "comfort and perseverance literature" at times of great distress. In order to support their reasoning, they work with biblical references and associations, into the patterns of which the course of history is adapted.

The Christian apocalypses have a model for their composition, the biblical Book of Daniel, which they are attached to. It is the "prototype of this genre (...) so that the interpretation of the Book of Daniel can be looked upon as a piece of world history."[180]

Aphrahat already commented on the vision in Daniel as a sequence of the four empires of the Babylonians, the Medes, the Greeks and the Romans without associating any hope with this story.[181] Ephrem, the Syrian, modified the empires: Babylon, Media, Persia and Macedonia, after which the reign of Christ comes to an end. Ephrem's second sermon[182] does not seem to be an apocalyptic adaptation of Daniel, but more a sermon with apocalyptic characteristics. An example of a complete apocalypse is the "pre-Islamic" "*Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel*"[183] from the 4th or 5th century.[184]

Apocalyptic moods and their corresponding literary manifestations could not only be found with Christians at that time, but also with Jews, who at first

coupled their hopes with the Arab rulership, which had displaced the often anti-Jewish Byzantine regiment. But apocalyptic tendencies seem to be linked to the program of ʿAbd al-Malik as well; the construction of the Dome of the Rock and the expectation of a second coming of Christ in Jerusalem, some of which is also adopted into the Qur'ān. A kind of messianism linked to the apocalyptic literature can be proved for long periods of the 8th century and beyond:

> "During the first four centuries of Islamic rule, Messianic hopes ran high among the peoples of the Caliphate. Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians subjected (...) their traditions of a Messiah, (...) who (...) would come or return to the world (...) to the rule of a new and alien religion." (this does not apply to the first one and a half centuries; *author's note*)."

In the following, B. Lewis discusses comparable notions of a *mahdi* in Islam.[185]

The horrors which precede the anticipated end always follow the same pattern, as H. Suermann observes in Pseudo-Ephrem:

> "Sacrilege proliferates on the earth, the screams ascend to God who then intervenes…".[186]

The crimes of the wicked are atrocious; the scribes give free rein to their almost sadist imagination. As a rule, these stereotypical narratives bear no relation to historical reality; they are the inverted picture which gives the anticipated end an even more colorful intensity.

Just how little they are descriptions of real crimes on the part of the Arabs can be made clear by a reference to Ephrem, the Syrian, who writes in his second sermon (later re-workings, however, cannot be ruled out because the horrors are referred to after mentioning the people of Hagar):[187]

> "Behold! The adornment of men is destroyed, the jewelry of women is taken away. With lances (...) the old men are impaled, the son is separated from his father, the daughter from her mother, brother from brother, sister from sister. They will kill the bridegroom in bed and drive the bride out of the nuptial chamber (...), take the mother away from her child and imprison her. (...) The child is trampled by the hoofs of horses, camels and draft animals. (...) The ends of the earth will be ravaged, the cities will capitulate, there will be many people killed on the earth, all nations will be subjected… ."[188]

Remarks of this kind are present in all the apocalypses of the 7th and 8th centuries, now (also) with reference to the Arabs. These are not descriptions of historical events, but apocalyptic stereotypes with which the whole world history is proven to be wicked, corrupt, sinful and evil before the end.

5.14 The Sermon of Pseudo-Ephrem (18)

The sermon (Sermon 5)[189] that is incorrectly attributed to Ephrem, the Syrian, is problematic both concerning the time of its composition and the context of the text. As the Arabs are spoken of in Chapters 3 and 4, they are dated by some to be in the first half of the 7th century. G. J. Reinick suggests the last third of the 7th century (before 680 or 683);[190] but this dating applies at most to Chapters 3 and 4. W. Bousset had already realized that these Chapters could have been interpolated:

> "the alternative future prophesies in Chapter 5 do not take account of Chapters 3 and 4 anymore".[191]

Further parts of the apocalypse could also have been inserted later. According to the whole structure, however, – here H. Suermann can be assumed to be correct – "the content of the sermon [fits; *author's note*] into the 4th century"[192] and has been extended and edited many times. However, the displacement of the Romans by the "Assyrians", probably meaning the Persians,[193] and the Roman resistance, probably under Heraclius,[194] hint at the 6th and early 7th century – it is information that cannot be traced back to Ephrem. But even these few lines could have been inserted into an older manuscript. It may also be possible, however, that the conflicts between "Romans" and Persians meant here are events which had already taken place at the time of Ephrem.

It is Chapters 3 and 4 that are important to us, "about the Muslims", – or – as H. Suermann[195] correctly says: "about Hagar's offspring from the desert"[196] (neither Arabs nor Saracens nor Ismaelites appear by name, and definitely no Muslims!), – who were later inserted into the text that already existed. In Chapter 3, the descendants of Hagar, who come from the desert, are mentioned in an attachment, after general comments on the screams of the desperate which go up to heaven and cause God to intervene. These are described as the Sons of Hagar and Heralds of the Anti-Christ, drawing on the Book of Genesis.

> "And a people will emerge from the wilderness, the progeny of Hagar, the handmaid of Sarah, (the offspring) who hold fast to the covenant with Abraham (...) set in motion to come in the name of (...) Heralds of the Son of Destruction."

According to Matthew 24:30, there is talk of signs in heaven and the following wars of the disbelievers:[197]

> "And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory."

In Chapter 4, terrible proceedings are talked about. They could go back to a model or prototype. Only one reference to the "marauders" ("the marauding nation will prevail"[198]) could be understood as an indication of the offspring of Hagar – it cannot be decided if it was originally a part of the text or if it was added later. They loot, murder, take prisoners, raise tributes, enslave and tear families apart. The latter is based on Genesis 20 (Sarah's visit to Abimelech) and Genesis 37:12-41 (Joseph sold into slavery [by his brothers]). The hope is expressed that this captivity will end prosperously. However, this hope is not quite so clear for the present; at the end it is understood to be the work of the marauding nation;

> "And after the people have endured much on earth, and hope that now peace has arrived, they will start raising tribute and everyone will be fearful of them. Lawlessness will intensify on the earth (...)."[199]

Little information can be filtered out because of the biblical-apocalyptic patterns, actually only that the offspring of Hagar now rule and that this fact is evaluated negatively. The fact that they came out of the desert is not information, but biblical topos.

As in Chapter 4, hope for a positive outcome is expressed, following biblical references (Gen 20 and 37) and the editor does not contradict this. H. Suermann believes that he is of the same opinion regarding the current situation. Therefore, he is convinced "that the interpolation of Chapters 3 and 4 originated from the first instance of Arab attacks from the desert",[200] probably because it was hoped that a speedy end to the horrors was still possible.

Having said that, the coming of Hagar's descendants from the desert cannot be understood as a historical message. The interpolated text ends without a comforting perspective: they will raise tribute and injustice and godlessness will increase. Here, an establishment of Arab rule seems to be insinuated, which does not make the assumption compulsory that Chapters 3 and 4 were interpolated before the time of Muʿāwiyah, on the contrary.

Further reigns of terror follow (Chapter 5). The Huns cause terrible massacres (Chapter 6) and so forth. The 8th Chapter begins as follows:

> "Then the Lord will bring in his peace, which attests the glorification among the heavens, and once the empire of the Romans will spring and flourish in its place (...)."[201]

Nevertheless, the godlessness increases again and the "Son of Destruction", the Anti-Christ comes and enters Jerusalem.[202] He rules for a long time but finally God sends Enoch and Elijah, who are murdered (Chapter 11), then Gabriel and Michael and finally Christ (Chapter 12) "And Christ will reign forever and be king (...)."[203]

It is interesting that the anticipated and positively interpreted rule of the Romans is only mentioned in one sentence at the beginning of Chapter 8; this is overrun with new terror in the next sentence, and this is the way it stays until the coming of Christ. Statements of this kind do not seem to have arisen from a situation in which real hope was still possible for the Byzantines around the time of Heraclius; the Roman Empire appears to be an insignificant, although positive episode. It may be more easily assumed that the Romans no longer sparked any hope: that was in the past. The terror is much more established. However, it is not associated with the Arabs after Chapter 4.

Therefore, it is not surprising either that the Roman rule is not mentioned in Chapter 4. H. Suermann thinks:

> "The question arises whether the interpolator deliberately left this (the rebuilding of the Roman Empire; *author's note*) out for ideological-theological reasons or he simply forgot it".

H. Suermann believes that it is probable that it was forgotten.[204]

Now, it is very unlikely that an interpolator forgets something which is important to him. More likely it did not matter to him and this corresponds to the further description of the apocalyptic sermon. The text is strangely indifferent when it comes to historical places, and this also affects the detailed horror stories about the Huns. It is more likely to be assumed that a short-term dominance of the Romans, maybe under Heraclius, was already a matter of the past and had no bearing on the interpolator of Chapters 3 and 4. Nor is there any talk of "quick conquests that the Muslims made".[205]

Therefore, to summarize, we come to the conclusion that the editor must have believed that Chapters 3 and 4 about Hagar's progeny had to be inserted, because there was a negative assessment of the Arab rule. Nothing is said about *their religion* or even *Islam*. In the introduction of Hagar's offspring out of the desert at the beginning of the third Chapter, it merely says that they "hold fast to the covenant with Abraham". This might refer to Abraham's faith, which could not be judged negatively. It is, however, more probable that it was only said that this offspring continued to refer to Abraham and derive from him.

At this point, Ephrem's *Second Sermon*[206] should be considered. It also shows an apocalyptic pattern: there are conflicts among the peoples – the Assyrians (Persians) temporarily oust the Romans from their territories, many crimes take place,[207] Gog, Magog and the Huns wreak havoc and finally the Anti-Christ comes and seduces everyone. Enoch and Elijah are sent and killed by the Anti-Christ and then Gabriel and Michael follow and Christ, too.

At the beginning, after the Assyrians and the Romans are mentioned, the people from the desert are spoken of in a few lines; "and a people will come

out of the desert, the son of Hagar, Sarah's handmaid, who received the covenant of Abraham, the husband of both Sarah and Hagar", a herald of the Anti-Christ.[208]

The terrors that followed are not verbally linked with this people so that it seems that an interpolation in a text existing already must be assumed. This original text itself could also be a later construction, but at least its composition in the time of Ephrem is not totally impossible, as the Syrian Apocalypse of Daniel was also written then (4th or 5th century). Sermons of this character were indeed possible at that time.

5.15 The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius (19)

The apocalypse, which originated in Syria, probably near Edessa[209] and, according to F. J. Martinez, near the Sinjar Mountains in Northern Mesopotamia in the second half of the 7th century,[210] is available as a critical edition, [211] which is an exception for literature of this kind.

This text, which was apparently translated from several Syriac versions into Greek, of which there were also various adaptations before the end of the 7th century, and from the Greek, according to the opinion of G. J. Reinick, was translated into Latin[212] "before about 727". Therefore, it became "one of the most influential and widespread apocalyptic texts in Byzantium and the medieval West". [213]

All of the text versions available are, according to G. J. Reinick, from a Syrian original which cannot be reconstructed for sure, so that he makes do by taking one of the Syrian versions (from the Codex Vat. Syr. 58) as a basis and putting all the variants of the text from other Syrian manuscripts and also the Greek and Latin translations into the critical apparatus.[214]

The apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius[215] is divided into 14 verses or chapters and deals with the stories from Adam to the end of the world. The first Chapters 1-10 provide a rather confusing "history of the world" which uses a series of other sources[216] beyond the Bible and awkwardly joins the respective motifs, names and associations together. In this order, Chapter 5, which is about Ishmael and his sons, that is the Arabs, seems to be interpolated. The fact that this is the case is shown in the following chapters, which return to the time before the Arabs and do not continue the narrative thread.

At the beginning of the 8th Chapter the apocalyptic pattern of the four kingdoms that followed one another is developed: the people of Cush[217] made way for the Macedonians, they, in turn, for the Greeks and the latter for the Romans. In the following, a lot of effort is made by the people of Cush to provide information on the background of Alexander the Great as well as the Kings of Byzantium and finally the Romans.

> "concerning this (kingdom [of the Greeks; *author's note*]), the blessed David spoke: 'Cush (Ethiopia) will quickly stretch out her hands to God.' [Psalm 68:31 – *author's note*]. For there is no people or kingdom on earth that can defeat the kingdom of the Christians". [218]

In Chapter 10, narratives about the Greeks and Romans follow who destroyed Israel under Vespasian and Titus after the death of the "Messiah". The last comment indicates an East Syrian author for whom the messiahship (not the divine sonship of Jesus) is important and the cross additionally a central date of salvation.[219]

The last two sentences of Chapter 10 lead on to Ishmael: "the sons of Ishmael, the sons of Hagar, whom Daniel called 'the Arm (forces) of the South' [Dan 11:15 – *author's note*] (...)."[220] (The sons of Ishmael are presented once again – without reference to the 6th Chapter). Hence, the last millennium begins in Chapter 11. This Chapter is entirely about the Ismaelites. In Chapter 12 general thoughts follow that not all Israelites are real Israelites, not all Christians are real Christians and that many Christians defect and many become weak in the final days.

> "And lots of those who were sons of the church will renounce the true Christian faith and the holy cross and the glorious sacraments. And without force and torture and blows they will deny Christ and will stand beside the disbelievers". [221]

There is always a (holy) "remainder" left.

In the 13th Chapter – the self-chastisement of the Christians, as addressed in the 12th Chapter, was connected with the sons of Ishmael who destroyed everything. Then the Greek king enters, defeats them and drives them back into the Desert of Yathrib where they also came from. A new Greek rulership is formed, the Byzantines, during which everything flourishes. It is "the last peace (before? – *author's note*) of the completion of the world". [222]

Then the gates "of the North"[223] will open and everything will be subjected to terrible atrocities again (Dan. 11). The king of the Greeks will go up to Jerusalem and "then the Son of Destruction will be revealed".[224]

Chapter 14 deals with the Anti-Christ who takes over the government in Capernaum and subdues everything. The Greek king erects the holy cross on mount Golgotha, which is then exalted to heaven. But everyone runs after the seducer who works miracles but otherwise only makes trouble. He enters Jerusalem.

> "And at the arrival of our Lord from heaven, he (the Anti-Christ) will be (...) at the mercy of (...) the Gehenna of fire (...) but our Lord Jesus Christ will find us worthy of his heavenly kingdom."[225]

G. J. Reinick believes that Pseudo-Methodius originated in the later period of ʿAbd al-Malik because of his religious propaganda documented "via the construction of the Dome of the Rock on Temple Square".[226] Reinick does not only see a separation from the Byzantine crown and the right to autocracy in ʿAbd al-Malik's activities, but also the proclamation of a new religion – Islam. According to him, this religion is then polemically antagonized in Pseudo-Methodius.[227] It is confronted with the ideal image of the (Byzantine) "last emperor", who governs "the final Christian empire";[228] he alone has claim to Jerusalem because of the cross. He is seen by Pseudo-Methodius as a second Alexander, a new Constantine or Jovian, who had followed the apostate Julian.[229] However, it must be noted that this "ideal Greek emperor" is only the *ruler before the end*. The term "last emperor" is a little inaccurate, as new terrors follow soon after.

Maybe Reinick's dating can be accepted and also the "Sitz-im-Leben" (position in life) that he designed for the formation of this apocalypse in ʿAbd al-Malik's conflict with Byzantium. But he assumes that the construction of the Dome of the Rock and particularly its inscriptions reveal an anti-Christian manifesto. However, this contradicts the contemporary sources. Therefore, the question has to be asked what can be read about the Ismaelites and their religion in Pseudo-Methodius, even if it is not the dominant opinion among the other interpreters.

If we begin with Chapter 11 (and the last sentences of Chapter 10), as well as further statements which probably belonged to the original text, the sons of Ismael would come, according to the exegesis of Daniel at that time, from the South (Dan. 11).[230] After the end of the Persian Empire, they would gather in the desert of Jathrib. According to Gen. 16:12 they are called "wild donkeys" (there the angel says to Hagar).

> "He [Ishmael] will be a wild donkey of a man,
> His hand will be against everyone,
> And everyone's hand will be against him;"

He is a fright for everyone. God let him and his sons "take possession of the Christian kingdom, not because he loves them to enter the Christian kingdom, but because of the injustice and sin committed by the Christians".[231]

The Ismaelites are dressed like harlots and commit sexual and unnatural digressions. Persia will be destroyed: Sicily (!), the country of the Romans, the islands of the sea, Egypt and Syria – so roughly the empire of ʿAbd al-Malik, with the exception of Sicily, which was first conquered in the 9th century. Tolls and poll tax are enforced upon everyone. They are led by tyrants who do not pity the poor and ridicule the Elders, on the whole a "chastisement"[232] for the Christians. Around the end of the Chapter, the crimes increase to apo-

calyptic standards; the "wild donkey" tortures everyone. "For these barbaric tyrants are not human, they are sons of the desert", they kill small children and priests and sleep with their wives and daughters; they are "a furnace of ordeal for all Christians".[233]

Noticeably, little historical information can be found about the Ismaelites, except regarding the wide area of their rulership and their crimes. What is historically certain is the aversion to them and the Christians' feeling of being menaced by them. The Ismaelites are confronted with and set against the (long-established?) Christians, but Chapter 11 does not provide evidence of *another religion*.

This seems, however, to be present in Chapter 12, which has a theologically-reflexive tone, in which "the ordeal/test" that the Christians were subjected to, is described. They renounce the Messiah freely and join the disbelievers. However, the apocalyptic statements are not linked verbally to the Ismaelites, but describe the lapse in faith expected at the end. If a link should be seen to the Ismaelites mentioned above, then the chronological attribution is difficult, as ʿAbd al-Malik documented a clear affirmation to the Servant of God, Jesus the Messiah; only the (Greek) teachings of the *divine sonship* are rejected. Chapter 11 can definitely be understood to be a complaint by the Christians about the hardship and certainly often inhumane foreign rule they experienced, as is imaginable at the time of ʿAbd al-Malik. In the opinion of almost all analysts, however, the narration in Chapter 12 goes beyond this, which would mean that a *new religion* of the Ismaelites could be referred to. This would first be conceivable at around the end of the 8th century at the earliest. But the text *itself* does not suggest this conclusion at all if the Bed of Procrustes of Islamic historiography of the 9th century is not taken into consideration. Chapter 12 probably simply provides an non-specific apocalyptic scenario according to the announcements from the New Testament; in the end many Messiahs are proclaimed and the big lapse in faith comes "at the end" (cf. the "Apocalypse of Mark" [Mark 13; cf. the parallels Matthew 24 and Luke 20]. If this should be the case, then these expectations have nothing to do with the history of the Arabs.

Initially this reflexive tone is continued in Chapter 13, and the Ismaelites are made responsible for the decline in Christian services and respect for the priests. The crimes described now are harmless in comparison to those mentioned previously in Chapter 12. Once again, the areas ruled by the Ismaelites are named[234] and in all of these regions it is said that "the Christians have no savior".[235]

According to Reinick, the term "savior" also has a "Christological connotation",[236] so it is not only the rescue/salvation from the oppressors. However, this is not clear unless, as Reinick does, a solid Islamic Empire ruling at that time is assumed. It should, however, be taken into consideration that the next sentence says: "the king of the Greeks will move against them (...) and he will

throw the sword into the Desert of Yatreb and into the dwelling place of their fathers"[237] and take their wives and children prisoner. In Yathrib (Yaṯrib/ Medina), the Ismaelites will endure great distress. If this, as it would seem, is meant by "salvation" of the Christians, then a *new religion* should not be spoken of. Instead it is a matter of "salvation" or rather "redemption" or "liberation" from foreign rule. The Christian-Ismaelite contrast can also be understood to reflect the polarity between the *long-established* Christians and the *new rulers*. If the term "salvation" is understood in a Christological sense, then this small sentence must have been interpolated later on, but the context does not suggest this point.

"Chapter 5", which is short, does not have to have come into existence later than the basic text by Pseudo-Methodius. It sounds very archaic but originally it was an individual item, as its motifs are not picked up on in the following Chapters. The train of thought is from the Old Testament, but adapted in a strange way. Thus the Ismaelites indeed rule Rome, Illyria, Egypt, Thessaloniki and Sardinia for 60 years,[238] which is quite a "western" vision. At the same time "the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Hivites and the kings of the Amorites and the kings of the Jebusites and the kings of the Girgasites and the kings of the Canaanites and the kings of the Ammonites and the kings of the Philistines"[239] are all subordinate to them. These peoples were all long time gone at the time of the Arab rule. Then four Arab tyrants are mentioned by name. They are called "sons of the Arab woman Muya", and their names are taken from the Book of Judges 7:25, 8:3 and 8:5-11. It is added that "the sons of Ishmael were called Midianites", which alludes to Judges 7:23-25.[240]

It is said that King Samsasnakar (Shamaiaser; Šapur I, 309-379) makes captives of the sons of Ishmael who subsequently "(flee) the desert of Yatrib and (...) (enter) the civilized world".[241] They are described as barbarians on the basis of their terrible eating habits and their nakedness, who then conquer the whole earth and sail the seas with wooden boats.[242] But they are driven "out of the civilized world into the desert of Yathrib" again by Gideon.[243] The (first) exodus from the desert of Yathrib is announced again for the future, towards the end of the chapter as is the fact that they destroy the earth and take possession of the cultivated lands "from Egypt to Cush and from the Euphrates to India and from the Tigris to the sea", "because their yoke of oppression of all the peoples is twofold".[244] At this point the final editor, to whom Chapter 11 was already available, seems to have tried to explain the co-existence of two Ismaelite rules. We read that after ten weeks of rule "they will also be defeated by the kingdom of the Romans (...), because the (kingdom) will defeat all kingdoms (...) and cannot be vanquished by one of them".[245]

The assertions made in this chapter are not easy to understand. They seem to be retrojected in the past of the Book of Judges and, at the same time, the ancient Roman world, and yet outline the scope of the Arab rule from the end of the 7th century (and in the 9th century). At what time could the thesis of the invincibility of the Romans have been stated? It no longer seems to have been possible at the time of ʿAbd al-Malik or later on, despite the failure to conquer Constantinople. During antiquity, however, the Ismaelites (not even other Arabs) were not a power to be reckoned with. Alternatively, is it about re-projections from the future?

H. Suermann thinks "the author sees the eschatological invasion of the Ismaelites as prefigured in the eschatological descent of the Midianites on Israel".[246] If this is the case and Chapter 5 wants to provide an Old Testament prototype for the contemporary Arab rule in Chapter 11 – which would lead to the question of what sense that would make – then the apocalypse of two Ismaelite rulers, a biblical and a contemporary, would be recounted. But then it is difficult to attribute an Empire to the Midianites based on biblical traditions, which would cover roughly the same areas as that of the Arabs at the end of the 7th century.

Be that as it may, we only get to know allegorical-biblical matters about the Ismaelites in Chapter 5, and apart from the mention of the "desert of Yathrib", there is no talk of *new religion*. If Yathrib (Medina) first became the focus of attention towards the end of the first half of the 8th century, as is shown by the evidence of contemporary documents, then this passage could be dated as belonging to this period. An alternative would be an Arab orientation towards Yathrib, which did not leave traces known to us, which had already started some time before the construction of the temple there and which was the reason this place was chosen. A dating in the last decades of the 8th century can probably be ruled out as then Mecca would have occupied the position of Yathrib (Medina).[247] Due to the many uncertainties of the translation of the text, many questions cannot be resolved conclusively. Pseudo-Methodius wants to overcome the critical situation of the long-established Christians under Arab rule with apocalyptical methods and reveals a hopeful perspective. The real background may be the sectarian program represented by the rule of ʿAbd al-Malik, but at the same time, also the oppression and excesses of the soldatesca. The author(s) and editor(s) are of the opinion that legal control must belong to the Greek emperor.

However, the texts do not allow the conclusion that for Pseudo-Methodius "the crisis was brought about by the continuous presence of Muslim violence in the Christian world".[248] Indeed, Martinez also admits that Pseudo-Methodius ignores the Muslim faith.[249] However, due to the basic assumption that the dominating religion at the time the text was composed must have been Islam, the statements in the text are, as so often is the case, re-interpreted.

In all commentaries, *Islam* and *Muslims* are spoken of again and again. In doing so, Pseudo-Methodius is constantly misinterpreted in the light of the "knowledge" firmly established already. The apocalypse itself does not speak of it; the lapse in faith "at the end" is only spoken of in one single text. This is justified in Pseudo-Methodius using quotes from the New Testament, so it belongs to the eschatological scenario of the New Testament, independent of the Ismaelites, as no direct reference is made to them or their religion. The crimes, especially the corrupt sexual practices of the Ismaelites as well as the oppression and cruelty, are not information about Islam, but they belong to the repertoire of apocalyptic scenarios without immediate historical value. Similar things are also told about others, to some extent also about Christians. An example for this is the "pre-Islamic" Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel mentioned before. These stereotypes turn up again and again, sometimes they are described more colorfully, sometimes in a more reserved manner – this time they are described excessively and apply to the Ismaelites.

5.16 A fragment of Pseudo-Methodius (20)

In a fragment which can be attributed to the intellectual world of Pseudo-Methodius,[250] it is said that the sons of Hagar cause trouble; but that the Christian empire will soon come and the king of the Romans/Greeks will move against them. The sons of Hagar gather in Babylon and flee to Mecca where their empire comes to an end.

The empire of the Greeks will exist for 208 years and afterwards the sin will increase again. Gog and Magog arrive, a confinement (by Alexander) takes place, crimes are committed and so forth until the Son of Destruction seizes power. After some time Enoch and Elijah are sent and annihilate the corrupter. The Greek king, a person from Cush, comes up again and climbs mount Golgotha with a cross. After this, the end of the world will come together with the resurrection with heaven and hell.

This fragment is also very close to Pseudo-Methodius in its reasoning, although the order of events shows some changes. H. Suermann believes that this fragment is very old as "the Ismaelites suffered a resounding defeat by the Greek king in the year 694".[251] He advocates a time of origin before 694.[252] However, he fails to recognize that the victory – the defense of a siege of Constantinople – was not a *devastating* defeat for the Arabs, that the Greek king emerges triumphant many times in the course of the narrative and, likewise, that the final prospects – resurrection, heaven and hell are "more theologically" formulated than in the apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius; Enoch and Elijah are not killed etcetera. Here a later contemplation of the material seems to be documented. The mention of Mecca instead of Yathrib (Medina) indicates the end of the 8th century.

Apart from the mention of Mecca "strong theological statements about Islam (,) or Muslims"[253] could not be found. There is no talk of a *new religion* of the sons of Hagar.

5.17 The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles[254] (21)

The Syrian manuscript which probably originated in Edessa and is dated by its publisher and translator, J. Rendel Harris, at the end of the 8th century, is titled "The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles together with the Apocalypses of each one of them".

The number twelve was important because, according to the text, the twelve apostles are associated with the twelve tribes of Israel from which they come, which causes a problem between brothers, and the matter of who will judge them. The apocalypses of Simon Kephas, James and John, the younger brother of James, who together were the sons of Zebedee, are all short texts.

"The apocalypse of Simon Peter probably deals with the Christological conflicts of the 5th century; the apocalypse of James is concerned with Jerusalem, the destruction of the temple and the re-building of the Church of the Resurrection by Constantine".[255] The apocalypse of John provides a complete apocalyptic pattern of world history and then devotes itself to the empire of Ishmael's offspring.

Whether there are also texts gathered in the "gospel" which are originally autonomous and can be dated differently, will not be taken into account here – H. J. W. Drijvers assumes an original entity,[256] – as our enquiry is only about the revelations of John. Regarding these, H. Suermann presumes that they "were written by a Jacobite in Edessa in around 700".[257]

According to J. R. Harris,[258] H. J. W. Drijvers[259] and H. Suermann,[260] the Apocalypse of John is about *Muslims, Islam* and *Muḥammad*, although H. Suermann has to admit that the name Muḥammad is not used and [261]

> "the religio-historical importance of Muḥammad and Islam are not addressed at all (...). The author does not say a thing about the teachings of Islam".[262]

At first, John was introduced in the apocalypse, who, moved by the Holy Spirit, knows all things, even those in the future. He sees the "kings of the north", and among them one, probably Constantine, who sees a sign. After him come the Roman kings (Byzantines) who are godless and wicked. Subsequently, God sends the Persians as a punishment. They are powerful but exploit people, so God sends the Medes as a punishment. This rule also ends because of their sins and God sends a wind from the south and a people who are ugly.[263] "And a warrior arises among them and they call him prophet and they are passed on to him."[264]

The historical interpretation entirely refers to the biblical book of Daniel (2:31-45; 7; 10:13-11:5). The "four kings" (Daniel 7:17) turn into the four consecutive empires of the apocalyptic tradition (Babylonians, Persians,

Greeks and Romans). Babylon and the Greeks have been omitted from the Apocalypse of John, the Persians and the Romans remain. The number four is reached by adding Medes and "Ishmael". In two cases the order of events is reversed; the Empire of the Medes lies chronologically before the Persians and also the "Romans" (Byzantines) were only pushed back by the Persians for a while, but not ousted. The rest is about the fourth empire.

"The south" subordinates Persia and destroys Rome, whereby the city of Constantinople cannot be meant, but the areas previously governed by the Romans in the Middle East. Everybody is afraid of them and "twelve renowned kings of them stand up, as it is written in the law".[265] Whether these are interpreted as twelve caliphs or are just quotes from the "law", i.e the Torah (Gen. 17:20 and 25:16 call the twelve sons of Ishmael "princes" or "kings"), remains undecided. The latter is more probable ("But it is more in accord with the tenor of the treatise to consider the meaning as symbolic"),[266] because the next sentence in the apocalypse refers to Abraham and Ishmael "He himself (Ishmael) is the people of the south of the earth".

Ishmael loots, takes prisoners "and all the end of the earth serve him and many principalities are conquered by him".[267] In the following, Ishmael's crimes are recounted in an apocalyptic fashion, which reproduces the stereotypes of this genre of literature, not historical events. In any case, Ishmael's rule is firmly established.

Several remarks must be considered because the purported facts cannot be found in the previous literature:

> "They (Ismael and his family) put all the more pressure on those who acknowledge the Messiah, our Lord, because they hate the name of the Lord until the end and they annul his covenant."

Subsequently, God is furious with them, as he was with the Romans, Medes and Persians before them. After this, there are "fights among them and many murders". "The North"[268] hears about this, extends an invitation to all people to prepare for battle and annihilates the evil ones.[269]

> "And the Lord turns the spirit of the south back to the place in which it became strong and destroys its name and its pride. And this happens when they enter the place which they had moved out of (...)."

On that day, the silver "that it is said they hid (...) in a place, the Tigris (J. R. Harris: Diglath)"[270] will be taken. "And they turn around and settle in the land that they came from" where they will fare badly.[271]

What do we learn about the historical background? The apocalypse was obviously written in the time of the Arab rule already long -established. The time of the "Romans", according to the Byzantines, is over in the Near

Eastern area, as are the victories of Heraclius: "Heraclius does not exist in this apocalypse".[272] The Ismaelite rule, which admittedly was God's punishment for the sins of the Persians, is perceived extremely negatively and the negative points are exaggerated in the apocalyptic images. The fact that the Ismaelites took over from the Persians and not the Romans indicates an East Syrian author.

The Arabs or Saracens are not named. They appear in biblical images as *wind*, *spirit* or people "of the south" or as Ishmael, who often appears in the plural, so that the personal pronoun changes from "he" to "they". Salvation is brought by the king of the "north".

It is not about the geographical terms north and south, for example the statement: the Arabs come from the south (from the Arabian Peninsula) and the salvation comes from the Byzantines in the north, it is about the allegories in the Book of Daniel (Dan. 11:5 "king of the south", v. 6 "king of the north", cf. ibid. verses 8, 9, 11, 14, 15 etcetera). If the apocalypse says: "He himself (Ishmael) is the people of the south of the earth", he interprets this people according to the Book of Daniel. The Apocalypse of John though seems to imply that the place which they (Ishmael) moved away from and must go back to is situated on the Tigris. The time of their rule, a big week and half a big week, seems to be taken from Pseudo-Methodius.[273]

Invasion and concrete battles cannot be inferred from the text,[274] only that Persia and "Rome" were conquered. The fact that before the "end", the children of Ishmael are fighting among themselves is not a reference to a particular event, e.g. an Arab civil war, but it is indeed a traditional topos for the imminent collapse of an empire (cf. e.g. Mark 8:24; Matthew 12:25 = Luke 11:17).

As already said, Muḥammad is not named and Islam is not mentioned. But the apocalypse knows of a soldier whom "they" call prophet. This means that it was known that the Arabs in Edessa at this time had a soldier and a prophet. This seems to correspond to a phase which only gradually began to change with the addition of the name Muḥammad in West Syria in the first half of the 8th century.[275] Perhaps it can be assumed that the naming of the prophet did not take place until later in Edessa and was therefore still unknown at the time the Apocalypse of John was written.

H. J. W. Drijvers states an exact time of composition (after Pseudo-Methodius in 692 and before the end of ʿAbd al-Malik's rule in 705).[276] However, the statements that "they" put pressure on those "who acknowledge the Messiah, our Lord", "hate" him and get rid of "his covenant" indicate the second half of the 8th century. On the one hand, these passages do not indicate a Jacobite, but an East Syrian ("Nestorian") author, like the whole of the Apocalypse of John; because he does not criticize the denial of the divine sonship of Jesus – the most important term for a Jacobite – but of *Jesus the Messiah*. On the other hand, "Ishmael's" separation and turning away from

the Christian faith, which did not exist at the time of Muʿāwiyah or ʿAbd al-Malik and his sons, is documented here and neither was it present under the early Abbasids.[277] This being the case, a time of origin from about the middle of the second half of the 8th century might be suggested, at least for this passage. Only if it should be so that the text does not refer to a historical development, but simply reflects Mark 13, especially Mark 13:21-23 (and the parallels in Matthew and Luke), would an earlier composition come into question or even be probable.

5.18 Jewish historical interpretations of the apocalypse (20)

A Jewish apocalyptic scripture with the title "The Secrets of Rabbi Simon ben Yochai"[278] was not, as was thought by its publisher A. Jellinek, to be dated at the time of the first crusade, but according to H. Graetz, already at the end of the Umayyad era, around the year 750 (with the exception of one later addition).[279] Another later version of the "Secrets", which came from the "Midrash Ten Kings" and probably initiated the development of a further text "The Prayer of Rabbi Simon ben Yochai"[280] came into being in the Fatimid era of the 10th century or at the time of the crusades.[281]

"The Secrets" express apocalyptic hopes related to the Arab rule: "He (God) raises a prophet up over them, according to his will (...)."[282] It is explained that this prophet "should subject the Holy Land to them and they, the Arabs, will restore Israel". [283] Expectations of this kind are possible in the first part of the Arab rule as they almost match the remark in the 30th Chapter of Pseudo-Sebeos (cf. Text 7).

However, the remarks, which are confusing in parts, about the order of the empires and their kings, as well as the details of the reports, prompt questions. Thus B. Lewis, for example, basically agrees with the dating and interpretation of H. Graetz, but he thinks that correction and clarification could now be undertaken[284] "with the much greater knowledge of early Islamic history that we now possess" and he also does this. It is just a shame that this "more precise knowledge" is from the *traditional report* and not from *real history* (i.e.,, what really happened). So everything more or less leads to the confirmation of this traditional report, especially the history of the early "caliphs", which is possible by means of an almost allegorical interpretation of these dark texts, but is, unfortunately, not conclusive. An example is that B- Lewis interprets the "king of Hazarmaveth", who was murdered, as "ʿAlī in Iraq" who, according to the *Secrets*, was killed by Muʿāwiya, a fact inferred from the statement that he "profited from ʿAlī's death".[285] Now, the name ʿAlī does not appear in the Qurʾān, nor on the coinage of the first two centuries nor in the *Secrets*.

Anyway, the text provides no information on "Ishmael" to speak of, except on the names of several caliphs, and even less on the religion of these people. Perhaps there was an older version of the apocalyptic text before the end of the Umayyad era that sparked off Jewish hopes – perhaps the most plausible explanation. Nevertheless, it seems to have been revised many times and there is nothing in these passages which could provide information on our question. The same is also true of the "Prayer" of the Rabbi compiled much later.

5.19 Coptic sources

The following documents of Egyptian descent also belong to different genres, e.g. they are chronicles or apocalypses. However, here they will be dealt with together, not only because of their small number, but because they reveal a very specific character, courtesy of their Monophysite train of thought.

A sermon about the holy children of Babylon (21)

The motif of the "three young men in the fiery furnace" (Daniel 3:25-29) was often used in sermons of warning. An anonymously translated sermon[286] is extant in a Vatican manuscript of the 12th century. H. de Vis does not think that it is a translation from another language into Coptic: it was written in this language.[287] It features a Monophysite theology which is, however, not very "profound" and occasionally "very close to ridiculousness".[288] He assumes the first years after the establishment of Arab rule (in the language of Islamic historiography: "après la conquête" [after the conquest]"[289] to be the time of origin and R. G Hoyland dates them at around 640.[290]

The sermon calls on the people to pray and fast, but it should be different to the fasting of the "God-killing Jews" and the Saracens who are "oppressors who indulge in prostitution and carry out massacres… (also they said) We both (?) fast and pray at the same time". Likewise, the people should not fast like those "who deny the redemptive suffering of the son of God who died for us".

In the latter passage, it does not have to be the Saracens who are meant. A fasting in the manner of the apostles and the "ancient prophet Moses" of Elijah and John, the prophet Daniel "and (like) the three saints in the fiery furnace" is called for.[291]

This text is not clear. The accusation that the Jews had killed "God" and not just "Jesus" or the "Messiah", or that the suffering "of the son of God" is denied, reveals a Monophysite background. However, it remains unclear who the people are, who deny "the redemptive suffering of God's son", because the Saracens are no longer clearly named. Is it the Syrian Christians, who had reservations about the common statements made in the Monophysite churches that *God*, that is to say, *God's son* died for us (for them "Jesus the Messiah" died), or is it the Saracens who are meant here? As the latter did not

know about ʿAbd al-Malik's messianic scheme at this early stage, it could be about Syrian-Christian or "pagan" Saracens, perhaps with a "Basic Monotheism"? It must be admitted that the Saracens also claim to fast and, – according to R. G. Hoyland, to be "God-fearing".[292]

It is merely said of the Saracens that they oppress and kill as well as practice prostitution. These are accusations which almost always apply to a dominant band of soldiers (a "soldatesca"), who in this early period were not subject to close scrutiny, as was, however, soon to be the case under Muʿāwiyah's rule.

Benjamin of Alexandria (24)

Benjamin (born around 590) became patriarch of Alexandria beside a Melkite patriarch under Persian rule. In 631 he had to flee to Upper Egypt and first returned to Alexandria, which was "under Arab rule", in 643/644 and died there in 665. Of the "numerous scriptures" which he wrote in Coptic, many have been lost and others are only available in fragments and later translations and therefore a lot of things remain unclear.[293]

There are only a few pieces of information on our questions, e.g. that he was given the right to build churches by a certain ʿAmr. According to the historiography of the 9th century, this was brought into the context of the Arab "conquest" of Egypt, which did not happen this way. Even R. G. Hoyland regards this source as historically uncertain.[294]

5.20 Further documents

H. Suermann examined further sources from the Coptic Church.[295] He states that a series of texts, like the "History of the Patriarchs of Egypt" and the "Chronicle of John (of) Nikiu", which are occasionally gathered together to obtain information on the "Muslim era", are unproductive and "many judgments might come from a later time".[296] This is certainly true for a part of the "History of Patriarchs",[297] a text in which "the rule of Islam" and the "year 96 of the Hijra (Islam)" are spoken of; this cannot have been added until the 9th century. At least the rule of Hišām (724-743?) is "described (as) fair towards everyone and a blessing for the Church."[298]

In a text from the "Chronicle of John of Nikiu", *Islam* and *Muslims* are also spoken about. Many Egyptian Christians abandoned their faith "and turned to the Muslim religion, the enemy of God, and accepted the despicable teachings of the monster Muḥammad". Two lines later there is talk of the "faith of Islam".[299]

The time and origin of the next text is completely unresolved. The chronicle was surely written in Greek and partially in Coptic, but it is now only available as an Ethiopian translation of an Arabic version (from the year

1602). Y. D. Nevo and J. Koren go to a lot of trouble to prove that the mention of Islam and Muslims cannot have been in the original[300] and then they come to the (wrong) conclusion that it could have been added in the era of ʿAbd al-Malik because they assume that there is talk of Muḥammad and Islam (as a religion) in the inscriptions in the Dome of the Rock. But this is not true, as an investigation by Chr. Luxenberg[301] has shown. Also no other text from the 8th century speaks of Islam and Muslims. The quoted insertion (in the Arab translation) must have taken place in the 9th century or later because of the new "knowledge" of the scribe.

The story "Eudocia and the Holy Sepulchre" and the "Cambyses Romance" are considered to be out the question because of their chronological attribution.[302] R. G. Hoyland points out later interpolations in a "Vision" (Pseudo-Shenute)[303] from the 5th century in which it is said of the sons of Ishmael and Esau that they rule and are constructing a temple in Jerusalem (again).[304] If the latter should refer to the Dome of the Rock, – Hoyland also believes that a simple biblical association is possible –, then the interpolator would not only have had to know about the Arab rule but also about the building of the Dome of the Rock. However, nothing more is explained.

H. Suermann thinks that the "Discussion of the Patriarch John III (with a Jew and a Melkite) before the governor ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz"[305] is a text which can be attributed to the late 7th century.[306] Apart from its very dubious handwritten translation (in Arabic and the Bohairic dialect of Coptic), it gives the impression that the discussion is literary fiction. Why should a Monophysite, a Melkite and a Jew of all people discuss questions about the understanding of the Eucharist before an Arab governor? "At the end of the discussion, the governor declares himself defeated (...)."[307] In other words, it is not about the reproduction of the actual conversation, but about a literary production – whenever this may have taken place.

A very legendary "Vita of the Patriarch Isaac" also deals with the relationships to the Arab governor. But even according to H. Suermann, "it is difficult to filter out the historical substance".[308]

A Coptic Apocalypse[309] (26)

A Coptic apocalypse – the fourteenth vision of Daniel – which is recorded in Bohairic and Arabic, provides hints on the reign of the Ismaelites. This is said to have ended before Gog and Magog and the Anti-Christ arrived.[310]

This apocalypse, which was written at the beginning of the second half of the 8th century at the earliest, "was edited again and provided with insertions[311] at the time of the Fatimid rule", so that the individual materials could not be historically located for sure. It is interesting that a text which originated in Egypt set its hopes on a Roman emperor.

At first, the fourth vision, the fourth animal, a lion, is interpreted by an angel:

> "The fourth animal (...) is the king of the sons of Ismael. He will rule over the earth for a long time (...) This kingdom is the progeny of Abraham and his maidservant Hagar (...) All Persian, Roman and Greek cities will be destroyed; nineteen kings of this people will rule over the earth."[312]

In the following, the author reports nineteen kings; "it is possible that he is talking about the Fatimids in Egypt."[313] For H. Suermann, several (the last?) of these could allude to the successors of ʿAbd al-Malik from Sulayman (from 715) up to Marwān. The only conclusion we can draw, unlike in the History of the Patriarchs, is that the Arab rule was perceived as a burden by the Copts and was depicted negatively in the apocalyptic interpretation of history in the first half of the 8th century (or the Fatimid period), although several of the kings are characterized positively. There is no information given on a *new religion* of the Ismaelites.

The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Athanasius (27)

The Coptic scripture that is most important for our questions is the "Apocalypse of Pseudo-Athanasius".[314] The Coptic manuscript, which was discovered at the beginning of the 20th century in a monastery near Faiyum (today in New York), is not dated and features many bigger gaps in the text which have been filled in from the Arabic version, which, however show considerable deviations. The text follows the pattern of a sermon (on the feast of St. Michael?) and has four parts: an introduction, an admonition to bishops and clergy, an "apocalypse", which complains about the moral decline of the Christians and announces the hard rule of the Persians as a punishment of God and gives explanations (particularly) about the Roman and Arab rule[315] and the last part, which continues with the apocalyptic descriptions of the previous part. The Roman kings were "godless" because of their religious policy and because of their propaganda of the doctrine that Jesus Christ existed "in" two natures. Again, a short Persian rule is announced, after which God will send another people, the Saracens.

Their rule is characterized in the usual negative apocalyptic stereotypes. They devastate everything, get rid of coinage with cross symbolism and raise taxes. God sends troubles (drought and famine), but the Christians do not convert and the clergy co-operates with the rulers.

A final perspective – the rule of a Roman emperor, the Anti-Christ and the second coming of Christ – is missing. In this respect, the text does not provide an "apocalypse", but is more a sermon with apocalyptic characte-

ristics. The apocalyptic depictions should prompt the listener to persevere in times of hardship.

As Damascus is named (and Bagdad not yet),[316] H. Suermann advocates a time of compilation between 725 and 750.[317] This may be the case, but the possibility of later amendments and adaptations must always be considered.

The text reveals very little about the Saracens, except that they are Ismaelites and sons of Hagar. The replacement of the sign of the cross on the coinage (since ʿAbd al-Malik) with seemingly non-Christian symbols is criticized as ungodly or anti-Christian. However, nothing is said about the *religious ideas* connected with this act and just as little is said about the "invasions" or conquests of the Saracens, apart from the usual biblical reminiscences. Anyway, it is explained that:

> "Many Christians will join them in their faith (?), although they hope to be released from the oppressions which they (the Saracens) bring to the earth".[318]

If it should be the case that here it is *faith*, and not *loyalty*, trust or such like that is actually being spoken about (?), then this *faith* is obviously considered different to that of the Copts. This could mean that the teachings represented by the Saracens, no Trinity and no divine sonship", could be understood to be another heretical version of Christianity, as "ungodly" as, for example, the teachings of the Chalcedonians. A new non-Christian faith could also be meant. But nothing more is explained in addition to this, and an interpretation in the sense of a new religion is not necessary at all, especially as no important points of controversy appear in the rest of the text. If a *new religion* had really been noticed, should we not expect a *sermon* to be directed against a threat like this? But this is not the case.

5.21 Greek Texts from the First Half of the 8th Century

Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople (28)

A note made by the patriarch Germanus of Constantinople (died between 730 and 733) is also interesting in this context. Because of the involvement of his father in a state scandal – previously a high-ranking official with Heraclius - Germanus was castrated and made a member of the clergy of the Hagia Sophia. In 705, he became Bishop of Cyzicus and Patriarch of Constantinople from 715 on. As he advocated the worship of images in the Iconoclastic Controversy, he was deposed in 729 or 730 and died soon after.[319]

Germanus spent most of his life in the capital city of the Byzantine Empire and certainly did not have any exact knowledge of the Arabs, unlike John of Damascus. Accordingly, the casual mention of the Saracens is inaccurate.

In the context of the discussion on image worship, in his dogmatic letters,[320] he briefly goes into the religious feasts and myths of the Greeks, the

opinion of the Jews and the practices of the Saracens, and then the Christians.[321] He writes the following on the Saracens:

> "Considering that they themselves seem to have sworn to this [the previously mentioned observance of the laws by the Jews; *author's note*], it has brought shame and disgrace on the Saracens until the present day that they practice the cult offered to an inanimate stone in the desert (steppe, wasteland) – the worship of the so-called Chobar, and (likewise) the other ridiculous celebrations of the wicked customs practiced there and handed down by their fathers (like e.g.) at their notorious (renowned) festivals there."[322]

"Chobar" is the same term as the "Chabar" used by John of Damascus and is probably the Greek transcription of the root meaning "big (k-b-r)" in Arabic (cf. Text 29). Nothing is said about the meaning, unlike in John who associates "Chabar" with the old cult of Aphrodite (the "big"). With Germanus, it is merely a *baetylus*. The cult is, however, performed in the desert; he knows nothing about the function of the stone/rock on the Temple Mount that John addresses. He is probably referring to old stories about a Baetylus of the Saracens which, for example, Saint Jerome had witnessed. The reason for the assumption that this cult still exists could be the change from the clear and epiphanic Christian iconography to a stone symbolism which has been understood in this sense in Constantinople since the time of ʿAbd al-Malik; he would not have known anything about the Christological confession of faith documented in the Dome of the Rock.

Germanus complains that the Saracens still practice the cult with strange rites, although they are bound to the laws of the Torah like the Jews previously mentioned. The high estimation of the Torah could be attributed to the Saracens because they were connected with Abraham as Ismaelites/Hagarites; it is improbable that Germanus was aware of the Qurʾānic material in which Moses played a central role. "Empirical" information on the Saracens going beyond this cannot be recognized; it is probably more a matter of generally accepted stereotypes, e.g. about "*the* French" or "*the* English" etcetera, that are still common today.

John of Damascus (29)

John was born in Damascus in about 650. He came from a genteel Melkite family, maybe with Syrian roots, – his grandfather was allegedly the apostolic prefect of Damascus, his father head of the fiscal authority under Muʿāwiya – at first he was said to have been an official of ʿAbd al-Malik. Before 700 he secluded himself in the monastery of Mar Saba near Jerusalem. He later became a priest and was literarily active. He lived to a good old age, but the exact date of his death is not known (after 749, before 754).[323]

He left behind a series of scriptures written in Greek which show him to have been an important Byzantine theologian. As he summarized many areas of the discussion on late-antique Greek theology, he had also often been read since the period of High Scholasticism in the Latin Middle Ages. As late as 1890 he was pronounced a (Roman) Catholic Doctor of the Church.

In his time, there were intense discussions about Monophysitism and its effects on Monoenergetism and Monotheletism. Especially John devoted himself to this question and used a clear terminology for the diphysite Christology. In addition to that, he fought against dualistic trends, advocated image worship and composed ethical/ascetical writings.

Two documents, which are important for our questions, are associated with John: a book "Concerning Heresy" in which the faith of the Ismaelites is presented as the 100th heresy,[324] and a "Disputation" (verbal dispute) between a Saracen and a Christian.[325]

In the first four Chapters, the "Disputation" is structured as a direct verbal sparring match between a Christian and a Saracen. From Chapters 5 to 10, it is more about instruction as to how a Christian should answer Saracenic questions (e.g. Ch. 5, Line 1: If a Saracen asks you [...] answer him [...]).[326] The concluding Chapter 11 has the form of a dialogue again, apart from the resumptive concluding sentence: "The Saracen (...) did not know how to answer the Christian anymore and went away (...)."[327]

This dialogue cannot have come from the same author as the one who wrote Chapter 100 of the "Book concerning Heresy". Even if the word *Islam* or *Muslim* does not appear, (except in the French translation!), here the Saracens quite clearly belong to a new religion. The issues of dispute reveal a detailed knowledge of their religion. Therefore the dialogue must be traced back to a different author to the one of the "Liber de haeresibus", however not to "Theodore Abu Qurrah", – following a didactic talk by J(ohn)"[328] – either, as R. Volk considers possible. This work must be considerably more recent: it could only have been thought of and written in this way as recently as the 9th century or later, probably in about the middle of that century.

The "Liber de haeresibus" is generally considered to be authentic, although the manuscript translations did not exist until the 11th century.[329] It is not clear when this book was written, but probably not very much before 750. It discusses 100 Christian heresies. For the first 80 of them, John refers to the "Panarian Omnium Haeresium" ("medical case against all heresies") of Epiphanius of Salamis (died 403), while he deals with the remaining 20 "apparently independently"[330] and this is also true for the 100th heresy of the Ismaelites. John's fondness of the number 100 also speaks for the affiliation of this chapter.

One thing must be kept in mind from the start. John does not regard the concept of the Ismaelites as a *separate religion*, the term Islam cannot be found in his text, but considers their faith as a *Christian heresy*, like the other

beliefs dealt with previously. This observation is important, because it was made by someone whose family was in the service of the Arab rulers in Damascus as was he himself for a while. But if he did not accept the religious orientation of the Ismaelites as a new religion, then it *was not one* at this time.[331] How could he of all people, an expert on doctrines in Damascus and at the same time a sophisticated theologian, misunderstand the intentions of the governing authorities in Damascus on such a central matter?

At the beginning, he goes into the cult of the Ismaelites of the obviously pre-Muḥammad period as described a few lines later. He says that the Ismaelites, also called Agarenes, are called this because Ismael was born to Abraham of Agar. They were also called Saracens (ἐκ τὴς Σάρρας κενούς) – here he attempts a play on words.[332]

It is said of the Ismaelites that in their language they used to worship idols and, in addition to that, the morning star and Aphrodite,[333] whom they called "Chabár", which means (the) "big one" (goddess).[334] They had been idolaters up to the time of Heraclius; since this time the Pseudo-prophet "Mamed (Machmed)",[335] who got to know the old and new covenant and was taught by an Arian monk,[336] "put together [his] own heresies."[337]

> "And he circulated again and again that a scripture (γραφή) had come down to him from heaven. But the order forced by him on this book (βίβλος) – it is laughable – he thus passed it on to them as an object of worship."[338]

So John knows about a (holy) book (kitāb?) that, however, probably was not known under the name Qur'ān at that time, but he traces this back to *Ma(ch)med*.

He then goes into the – in his opinion – most important heretical teachings. Admittedly, he (Ma[ch]med) teaches that there is only one God and creator.

> "He says that Christ is God's Logos and his spirit (pneuma), but that he was created and a servant, and that he was born of Mary, the sister of Moses and Aaron (cf. surah 19:27-28) without conception. He says that God's Logos and the spirit entered Mary and she bore Jesus, who was the prophet and servant of God. And (he says) that the Jews wanted to crucify him in outrageous ways. After they had seized him, they (only) crucified his shadow (simulacrum); but Christ himself was not crucified, as he says, and did not die. God took him up to heaven because he loved him".[339]

In the following, he summarizes part of Surah 5 (116-117). When Jesus had been taken up to heaven, God asked him:

> "Jesus did you say: 'I am the son of God and God?' Jesus answered as he (Ma[ch]med) said: 'Have mercy on me Lord; you know that I did not say this and did not want to seem (to be) more than your servant in any way.'"

People wrote that he had said such things but they lied and were mistaken.

> "And God answered him himself, as he said to (Ma[ch]med); 'You did not say this sentence'".[340]

He writes that lots of other superstitious things, which are worthy of laughter, can be found in something put together in writing in this way. In response to the question, e.g. how the scripture came down on the prophet, they (the Ismaelites) say that it happened while he was asleep, and in response to the question where the (holy) scripture bears witness to him (Ma[ch]med), they had to keep quiet.[341]

John responds to the accusation (of the Ismaelites), "that we associate God with a companion if we call Jesus the son of God and divine", which he denies with reference to prophets and scriptures.[342]

This is intensified further; "Again we say to them (the Ismaelites): 'You say (yourself) that Christ is God's *logos* and spirit (*pneuma*), why do you then reproach us as associaters?'"[343] This accusation is invalidated in the following:

> "They taunt us as idolaters because we worship the cross (...) But we say to them; 'Why do you rub (touch) a stone/rock of your (near you, under your) cave/cupola (Chabatá) and cherish affectionately the tip of the stone/rock?' Some of them say that Abraham lay on it with Hagar, but others say that he (Abraham) tethered his female camel to it when he wanted to kill Isaac".

John states that this contradicts the Holy Scripture (several details are mentioned below). "They worship it (the stone) but at the same time they say it is Abraham's stone/rock".

Once again the accusation concerning the worship of the cross is rejected. Then John attacks the Ismaelites: "But this thing, which they call stone/rock, is (in actual fact) the head of Aphrodite, whom they worship and also call Chabár (great) (...)."[344]

> *Explanation:* The word 'Chabatá (Χαβαθά), masculine but declined like a feminine because of the 'a' ending [accusative: Chabathán Χαβαθάν) is difficult to interpret. John paraphrases the Arabic word "kabar" ([to be] big) with "Chabár" (Χαβάρ), thus transcribing the Arabic k-sound with the Greek "χ – chi" (Ancient Greek: aspirated [k^h]; Modern Greek: [x]). The term "Chabatá" might of course be interpreted as the equivalent of Arabic "ka'ba". There is, however, another possibility: For Arabic phonemes that do not exist in Greek the nearest possible equivalent must be used in the transcription. As the Arabic "q" (uvular plosive) might as well be transcribed with the letter *chi*, the term "Chabatá" might refer to the Arabic word "qubbat(a)". *Qubbat* means something like "cupola", "cave", "sepulchre (tomb)" (mausoleum). It suggests that the stone/rock worship (the touching or rubbing of a stone) which is associated with a cave or cupola can be understood as a reference to the Dome of the Rock, which has both a *cave* (tomb of Jesus) under the tips of

> the rock and a *cupola* above it and was well-known to John. Then the Greek katá (κατά) with the accusative (κατά τὸν Χαβαθάν) can be understood as a local preposition "under", "near" or "by". It has to be added that John, despite his other knowledge of Ismaelite statements, completely misunderstood the sense of the rock/stone, or wanted to misunderstand it for polemic reasons. Even so, he says that the stone was Abraham's stone for the Ismaelites but which he, with the reference to Aphrodite, does not want to accept.

The writer/editor of this text also knows Surah 4 "The Women (*al-nisā'*)" or, as he writes "the scripture (Surah) of the woman".[345] He says that it allowed "four wives (...) and in addition secondary wives, if possible thousands".[346] Divorce and marriage to someone else is also possible.[347] After this, he goes into the fact that Ma(ch)med coveted Zaid's "beautiful wife" and married her by order of God.[348] John judges this to be adultery and says that Ma(ch)med established a law after this: "Whoever wants to, should release his wife".[349] This cannot be found word for word in the Qur'ān, neither in this surah nor at any other place, but the following sentence is a quotation (cf. Surah 2:230): the rule that someone can only marry his divorced wife again after she has been married to another man.[350] Further aspects can be found as well.

The following remarks on a female camel (ἡ κάμηλος) are interesting. Considering the (short) length of Chapter 100, this is quite a broad and extensive explanation[351] of stories about the female camel, which was previously mentioned by John in the context of the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham. John thinks it is a separate "scripture" (graphḗ), thus a surah or part of a surah written by a pseudo-prophet, like the previous evidence. This surah can no longer be found in the (later) canonized text of the Qur'ān.

But it has left its marks in the Qur'ān. This female camel appears in several places without stories closely connected to it.[352] Therefore it must have belonged to the narratives of a certain stage of development of the later Qur'ān. After the deletion of the surah referred to by John (or alternatively its insertion in one of the longer ones), the rest of the mentions in the Qur'ān remain unexplained. However, the stories of a female camel have not been completely lost, as they have lived on in the wealth of Arabic sagas. A. Sprenger has already meticulously gathered and reproduced them.[353]

Further references to Qur'ānic material are then mentioned in the following few lines.[354] The first sentence already points out that this can be traced back to Ma(ch)med:

> "On the other hand, Ma(ch)med says: The scripture [surah; *author's note*] of the table [Surah 5, The Table Spread (al-mā'ida); *author's note*] says that Christ requested a table from God and it was given to him (...)."[355]

Furthermore, John mentions "the scripture (graphḗ) of the cow" (Surah 2) in which he, Ma(ch)med, in addition, said "other ridiculous words which I believe have to be overlooked because of the sheer number of them". John briefly names several further motives and ends with the statement that "he has completely forbidden the drinking of wine" (surah 2:219).[356]

Chapter 100 ends abruptly, without a real ending and the Qurʾānic material addressed in the text is very selectively chosen. To sum up, it provides relatively short subjects of discrepancy of doctrine dealt with, however, in a rather "internal" Christian way, i.e., presented as if this faith was in fact a "Christian" heresy, thus e.g. on the question of God and Christology and several further peripheral aspects. The statements about marriage and the secondary wives seem to be based on the interpretation of Qurʾānic teachings in the schools of jurisprudence. The closing remarks of the fairly recent Surahs 5 and 2 were probably written later and do not match the rest very well. The passages which were added to Christological statements are probably amendments by scribes from the 9th century, who added everything that came into their heads at the time to the prototype and which was in circulation in the Christian polemics of that time against the *then new religion*. The strangely extensive stories of the female camel are more archaic, but these were indeed also in circulation in the 9th century.

Insofar as the text can be attributed to John, several important things can be discerned about his knowledge of that time: He knows the name of the "pseudo-prophet" *Ma(ch)med* – *"Maḥmad"*, not *"Muḥammad"* – and traces a book back to him. He probably does not know about the term *Qurʾān* or *surah*, but he describes some material as scriptures (*graphḗ*) of the Ismaelites and sees them compiled into a book. What he or later editors explain about it, finds its equivalent to a large extent in the Qurʾān as we know it today. Still there are some major discrepancies. The "Surah of the Cow" (al-Baqarah) is thought to be a separate book, and the stories of the female camel cannot be found in the Qurʾān today, so the Qurʾān as a collection cannot have been fixed when this text was written, not even when the last amendments were made.

The remarks on the stone/rock worship are important, which do not have anything to do with the future Kaʿba in Mecca, but with the Temple Mount in Jerusalem; the indication of stone/rock in the "Chabathá" can only be aimed at the Dome of the Rock. This corresponds to the practices since ʿAbd al-Malik, but probably no longer in the second half of the 8th century. Likewise, John testifies to the probably vague, but roughly biblical Ismaelite interpretation of stone worship in the context of Abraham – instead of Jacob, as would be biblically correct. It seems as if this opinion really existed.

John of Damascus declines to go into further detail, he contrasts it polemically with the Christian worship of the cross and caricatures them as the continuation of the Aphrodite cult. Whether in the meantime this cult was

ascribed to the Christian Arabs for polemic reasons or whether it actually still played a role under Christian cover, cannot be decided for certain. The claim that for John of Damascus the Arabs were "predecessors of the Anti-Christ"[357] is not supported at all in this text.

5.22 Non-usable Evidence

The following examples are exemplary for further texts[358] which deal in some way with Arabs and other related subjects and name them every now and again. Not all of them shall be discussed here, as they, as well as several of the passages discussed previously, are out of the question as contemporary historical sources, because of their apparent later time of origin, and because of their completely unresolved text attestation.

An Anonymous Commentary (30)

In a fragment of a Syrian gospel manuscript from the 6th century, which now only provides the Gospels according to Matthew and Mark, an addition can be found in the margin which speaks of conquests of (troops, followers?) of Muḥammad, the fall of Homs and Damascus and undefined battles.[359] Even R. G. Hoyland classified this text as unreliable.[360] Y. D. Nevo and J. Koren, however, consider the events he speaks about not to be consistent with traditional reports, but they think that a dating in the late 7th century is possible,[361] because in their opinion the name of Muḥammad has been known since the inscriptions in the Dome of the Rock, which is not true (the form was not a name yet).[362]

A dating of this commentary is difficult. As Muḥammad is obviously mentioned as a historical figure, it could only have been added around the middle of the 8th century at the earliest. The conquests and battles talked about in this text cannot be verified. There is also talk of an (otherwise unknown) battle of the people of Muḥammad against the Romans in "Gabitha". Many commentators equate this to the Battle of Yarmūk they are familiar with from the traditional report. So the (presumably legendary) mention of Gabitha makes the likewise legendary Battle of Yarmūk a historical event.

Gabriel of Quartmin (31)

Gabriel of Beth Kustan (593-667?) was the abbot of the Quartmin monastery for a long time and then bishop of Dara. In his biography, the "Life of Gabriel",[363] it is said that he met ʿUmar (the caliph), the leader of the sons of Hagar. What is more, ʿUmar granted all Christians, their churches and monasteries tax exemption.

As the problems mentioned first arose in the 8th century, according to R. G. Hoyland, he considers the narrative to be "a later fabrication" which was

brought forward into the ʿUmar era in order to give it a higher authority ("authority by attributing it to Muslim figures").[364]

It can only be added to this that the fiscal questions mentioned only appeared around the end of the 8th century and the figure of ʿUmar only became "a famous figure" in the 9th century.

An Anonymous (West) Syriac Chronicle (32)

In an anonymous (West) Syriac chronicle from the year 819, of which fragments have survived (the manuscript was destroyed in 1915), about the year 945 (634) it is said:

> "Abu Bakr died and after him ʿUmar ruled (...) for 11 years. In the same year died (...) and Gabriel of Kustan became (...) bishop and abbot of Quartmin (...)."[365]

This chronicle could actually have already been written in 819. The names that he refers to from the traditional report could have been inserted into the Life of Gabriel, for which then a slightly later final edition must be assumed. However, it could also be possible that there were traditions in the last third of the 8th century which were first recorded in Islamic historiography in the 9th century. The chronicle does not provide relevant information on this.

Miracle Stories of the Saints Demetrius and George (33)

This also applies to the additions about Arabs occasionally mentioned in the "Miracles of the Saints Demetrius and George" which cannot be located historically and in addition to this, yield very little information. It may suffice to refer to R. G. Hoyland's remarks on their evaluation.[366]

5.23 Summary

Not all of the literature from the first two centuries concerning our questions could be introduced and examined, but this article discusses the most important texts in which there is talk of the Arab rulers that the Christian population were subordinate to.

As the Christian literature of this very complex region, both linguistically and culturally, has not been recorded nearly as completely and critically, as that of the Greek and Latin Church, it must be assumed that further unknown evidence exists. However, the sources up to now justify the reasonable assumption that the discovery of additional sources will not provide any completely new insights.

6 On the Arab Religion

6.1 Islam and Muslims Cannot be Found

The Christian literature of that time makes it clear that *Islam* is not named and is only indirectly dealt with as a subject of its own. The *Arabs/Saracens/Ismaelites/Hagarites* are not perceived as Muslims in the modern sense of the word. Instead, the substantial literary activities of theologians, clergymen and monks were still devoted almost exclusively to their "internal Christian" themes, conflicts and theological drafts.

If the Arabs should really have been *Muslims* and propagated a *new religion called Islam* in the Middle East, as the traditional report wants to make us believe, then these authors must have completely failed to notice it. Instead of dealing with this phenomenon literally, they went on about their usual business. This abstinence cannot be explained by a possible fear of repression because, apart from that, the new regime was often subjected to radical criticism. The Arab empire, for example, is caricatured and portrayed as the sum of all that is evil and is only surpassed by the Anti-Christ in the apocalyptic literature of this time. John of Damascus is not afraid of polemics which are also theological.

Indeed, these writers were never afraid. What should have prevented them from mentioning a new non-Christian religion or from fighting against it with theological arguments? This could have intensified the negative apocalyptic depictions. As numerous theologically highly sophisticated books about Monophysitism, Diphysitism, Monoenergetism, Monotheletism and so forth demonstrate, these authors possessed considerable literary and linguistic abilities. Why did they abstain from using them to face up to the new non-Christian religion of the new leaders if that really existed. But nothing can be read about this. This became different in the 8th century, although the Arab regime was now more stable and possibly more dangerous for the critics. However, real information about and conflicts with the new religion can now be found in the works of Christian authors writing in Arabic.[367]

Whenever the Arabs are insulted in the texts as sinful, wanton, murderous, oppressive and therefore also as "godless", it does not have anything to do with the *new religion* (yet). If they are confronted with "the" Christians, this can also refer to the "*old-established*" Christians. As nothing particular is explained about their religious idea at first, only indirect conclusions can be drawn.

6.2 Arabs as Christians, Heathens, Representatives of a Basic Monotheism

The key terms of the new religion – *Islam* and *Muslims* – cannot be found in the literature examined, as said before. According to all that is known, the majority of the ruling Arabs were Christianized and most of them would have advocated a Syrian-Aramaic Christianity in East Syria, but also a Monophysite-Jacobite Christianity in West Syria at first. This was especially true of the rulers in the Umayyad era, maybe even of those from later periods.

Occasionally the (Christian) Arabs are described as "pagan". Their characterization as "pagan", if the Arabs in the Syrian synods should be meant by this, should not be automatically understood as "a technical term". As already shown by "pre-Islamic" literature, *pagan* customs, rites and forms of worship were not rare among Christians, also Arab Christians. Modern institutions like carnival, Halloween and even Christmas are Christian re-interpretations of originally pagan cults. So if a Christian purist condemns Halloween as "pagan", that does not mean that young kids at a Halloween party are followers of a new religion. In addition, also John of Damascus, from whom we can learn a great deal about Qurʾānic ideas from the time before 750, admittedly sees the Ismaelites as *heretic Christians*, but likewise accuses them of maintaining their pagan traditions, especially the Aphrodite cult. Germanus of Constantinople criticizes their worship of stones, as Saint Jerome did before him.

The earliest evidence from the time of Muʿāwiya is difficult to evaluate. Y. D. Nevo and J. Koren assume a "Basic Monotheism" for some of the Arabs with an orientation toward the figure of Abraham.

In Biblical Studies there is a consensus that Abraham did not exist as a historical figure. But then the stories surrounding his name, from which the Arabs considered themselves to be Ismaelites/Hagarites and therefore descendants of Abraham, were all the more powerful, and even Syrian and Greek Christians classified the Arabs according to this biblical genealogy. Of course, "Abraham" as described in the Bible was not a monotheist, as monotheism in the modern sense first came into being in Judaism during or after the exile, i.e., from the 6th century BCE. But the Old Testament stories about Abraham had not been finally edited before this time so that they could be perceived to be monotheistic narratives.

It could indeed be that some of the Arabs advocated such a rudimentary monotheism relating to the "law", especially the Book of Genesis, because of their genealogical self-classification in biblical history. Should such a monotheism have been introduced in the Middle East, then it would not be surprising, but more to be expected that old Arab or common Near-Eastern practices, lifestyles and forms of worship would have survived in it, as mentioned by Saint Jerome or John of Damascus. These were not completely displaced by Christianity, as is shown by the sermons of Isaac of Antioch

from the 5th century.[368] The reverse idea is also possible – or even probable: that some of the Arabs had not been Christianized (yet) and practiced their inherited cults. The environment shaped by earlier Syrian Christians, the narratives of the Bible, especially the Pentateuch from the Old Testament, developed their influence and let a *Basic Monotheism* emerge which then continued to be a basis for the pagan forms of worship still practiced. Through the religious and cultural dominance of Christianity, Judaism, Mandaeism and, in addition to this, the quasi-monotheistic Zoroastrianism and Zurvanism at that time, *Basic Monotheism* could be widely spread as a fundamental conviction in the whole of the Near East.

Muʿāwiya was a Christian ruler, as the distinctly Christian symbols on his coinage prove. It cannot be identified exactly which Christian orientation he leaned towards. He was first the ruler of West Syria and then later also of the East, moreover he was praised by contemporary Christian authors, so he must have been tolerant and have kept out of disputes. This was also true of his governors.

With the arrival of the "people from the east" in the west with ʿAbd al-Malik as the new ruler, a specific kind of Christianity came to this area which had developed in isolation and intensified its doctrines on a pre-Nicean Syrian basis. Now it was advocated in a firm, sectarian way, together with apocalyptic expectations which were focused on Jerusalem. This Christianity is documented in old Qurʾānic material, on coinage as well as in inscriptions in and on the Dome of the Rock and indeed on the Umayyad mosque in Damascus and on the temple in Medina (middle of the 8th century), albeit in altered form.[369]

The glorification (*muḥammad* – the praised one) of the servant of God (*ʿabd allāh*), prophet (*nabī*), messenger (*rasūl*), the Messiah (*masīḥ*) Jesus, son of Mary (*ʿĪsa bn Maryam*) – all these terms appear in the inscription in the Dome of the Rock – was connected to the radical rejection of the *divine sonship of Jesus.* Instead it was linked to a unitary monotheism (Monarchianism). The approach of the rulers is testified – positively – by Anastasius of Sinai and negatively by John of Damascus in 'Liber de haeresibus'.

6.3 The Beginnings of a New Arab Religion

The rejection of this program was only possible after the death of the sons of ʿAbd al-Malik. But obviously it took much longer before not only, as hitherto, the divine sonship of the messenger and prophet Jesus had been contested, but also his "final relevance" and his "uniqueness". However, then he still stayed integrated in the order of the prophets and was the most important figure apart from Moses, according to the evidence of the most recent Qurʾānic material. There was still a widespread, Christian-rooted messia-

nism[370] until well into the 9th century, but now there was also a *Prophet of the Arabs* who was the *seal of the prophets* and whose proclamations offered a genuine revelation.

For the first time in this context – and exclusively in the apocalyptic literature – statements can be found which demand a dissociation of the rulers from the (sole) acknowledgement of Jesus as the (sole) Messiah. In these statements, which can be attributed to the last decades of the 8th century, the Arab religion appears as a *new, non-Christian religion*, without yet being described as *Islam*.

However, there is no certainty as to whether the apocalyptic remarks about a denial of the messiahship of Jesus actually reflect new religious-historical developments in the case of the ruling Arabs. Be that as it may, perspectives of this kind belong to the characteristics "of the end" given in the "Apocalypse of Mark" (Mk. 13 parr. [and passages in the other synoptic gospels]) in the New Testament. Christian apocalypses *had to* address these topoi: this eschatological scenario belongs to the apocalyptical repertoire, independent of the real activities of the Arabs.

If this should be the case, then the apocalypses, which have been the only documents that can be used for the historical evaluation of the Arabs up to now, provide no evidence of a new, non-Christian religion.

The occasional, but rather rare calls for the denial of the soteriological significance of Jesus or even the fact of Jesus' death on the cross might be a different matter. John of Damascus provides the earliest fairly certain evidence for this aspect. The denial of the death of Jesus and its soteriological relevance is not understood by him, however, as being *non-Christianity*, but as a heresy, and at the same time a peculiar form of Christianity. This aspect could not yet be understood as a complete turning away from Christianity until the texts from the last decades of the 8th century.

Now, the denial of the real death of Jesus on the cross had been widespread as an originally "*Docetic*"[371] motif in the whole of the Near Eastern and Greek Christianity for a long time. Also the function of the crucifixion is not the same in all culturally specific Christian theologies. The cross becomes the strongest, most crucial point of the salvation/justification in Latin Christianity ("staurocentrical Christology"), while in the Greek-Hellenistic theology ("incarnation Christology") the death of Jesus is ("only") a sign for the profound incarnation of the Logos and therefore the radical nature of God's love for us. In the Syrian tradition, which advocates a "probationary Christology (German: Bewährungschristologie)", Jesus' obedience to the Father is the focus, an obedience until (but not: through) death.

These ideas were advocated in the pre-Nicean Syrian Christology, but also in the post-Nicean Antiochene theology. However, the later opening of the Syrian church for "Western ideas" since the synod in Ctesiphon in 410, in

which the Nicene Creed was adopted, also led to the acceptance of the soteriological significance of the crucifixion of Jesus in the Syrian church.

This was, however, not completely self-evident. The Syrian-Christian "Cave of Treasures", written in the 6th century, explains that the inscription that Pontius Pilate had attached to the cross ("the King of the Jews" Mark 15: 26 parr.) was "in Greek, Latin and Hebrew. And why did Pontius Pilate not write a word of Syrian on it? Because the Syrians did not have a share in the blood of the Messiah (...)."[372] Obviously the Christian Syrians had nothing to do with the death of Jesus. This is certainly not only to be understood historically, but it also shows that his death was not very important to them.[373] According to them we are redeemed through the probation of Jesus Christ in his life (up to his death) – "Jesus' passing the test" – and by trying to emulate him.

The undaunted probationary Christology in the pre-Nicean theology was taken on and maintained by Arab Christians with their (early) missionary work. It was especially the ʿArabī/Arab Christians who had been deported far away to the East of Mesopotamia, who developed and intensified these ideas further in their isolation. So a denial of the crucifixion can be found in the Qurʾān, despite the other places where the death of Jesus is mentioned.[374]

Thus the attested dissociation of the Arabs from the crucifixion of Jesus in (later) Christian literature cannot be interpreted as evidence for a new religion without further explanation. The crucifixion of Jesus, for example, was fundamentally important for the "Byzantine" theologian John of Damascus, despite his Syrian background. Nevertheless, he understands its denial in Qurʾānic material as "only" heretic outlandishness. It should not be ignored that a denial of the ability of Jesus Christ to die also existed in other Christian movements, even if for completely different reasons.[375]

The denial of the soteriological significance of the cross can only be recognized and understood as the sign of a *new religion* in passages of (interpolations in) apocalypses which must be attributed to the last decades of the 8th century. There is, however, still no talk of *Islam*:

> "It was perhaps only with Dionysios of Tellmahre (died 846) that we really get a full awareness of Islam as a new religion. Early observers had not been able to distinguish the religion of the Arabs from paganism (...)."[376]

This statement was only true for the Syrian-Christian authors, but it can be extended to Greek and Coptic writers and others. Islam can first be spoken of as a new religion in the 9th century. But the beginnings of such a development were already perceived and severely criticized in the last decades of the 8th century. Several of the bishops, monks and theologians who commented on the subject of the Arab rule were indeed quite capable of differentiating

between paganism and Christianity, not like S. Brock thinks. As long as the accusation does not arise that the Arabs were not Christian, but only that they followed old pagan cults maintained from their time in desert, the basis for such an accusation was simply missing.

7 The Arab Prophet / Muḥammad

7.1 The Prophet of the Arabs

In the Christian literature of the first two centuries, a Prophet of the Arabs is occasionally mentioned, but rarely called by the name Muḥammad.

The chronological allocation of the corresponding passages, which can also be found in documents belonging to the 7th century, is difficult. But it must be assumed that they are more likely later amendments by editors/scribes who let their higher "knowledge" modify the text. Why?

Indeed the oldest testimonies talk about an Arab preacher and merchant or prophet who was a warrior. His name was still unknown and there is no conceivable reason why it would not have been mentioned if it had been known.

This evidence cannot come from the time before ʿAbd al-Malik because Qurʾānic material first became known in the course of its western migration." The "prophet" is always addressed in this material. Moreover, the more warlike statements, which were quite numerous, as well as the military activities of the Arabs could have brought about the designation "warrior".

These references to an Arab prophet, first possible since ʿAbd al-Malik, are easily recognized as later interpolations into the texts. In most cases the texts do not reveal any historical information about the Arabs/Ismaelites/Hagarites, apart from reports that – before Muʿāwiyah – there were gangs who took to looting, and that with Muʿāwiyah they seized control, which was mostly judged favorably. But from ʿAbd al-Malik onwards this rule was seen in a negative light. In addition to this, biblical patterns are almost exclusively used to describe the new masters. The insertions regarding a prophet seem to be contaminations in the context of the prototypical texts, because they exceed the biblical associations before and after the interpolations by using non-biblical notions.

In early texts the prophet is described as a warrior or a merchant. As already mentioned, the characterization as a warrior could be indirectly inferred from the unique character of the Qurʾānic statements. The Qurʾān itself – unlike the Sīra – knows nothing of the prophet as a *merchant* (cf. Texts 7 and 9).

"Warrior and merchant" were, however, descriptions of Jesus in the Marcionite literature, albeit in other contexts. They could have become popular in the Syrian-speaking area due to the anti-Marcionite works of

Ephrem the Syrian.[377] If they should have detached themselves from their origins and become mere motifs, then they might have influenced the description of the prophet. An old "wanderlegende" of a preacher and merchant who brought Christianity from al-Ḥīra to South Arabia might have influenced the emergence of such an idea.[378]

The mentions of a prophet "called Muḥammad" are even rarer and later. This name, which was originally a Christological title, was given to the prophet over time, in the last decades of the first half of the 9th century, as John of Damascus testifies.

For John of Damascus, Muḥammad is seen as the (pseudo-)prophet to whom the Qur'ānic material ("scriptures") can be traced back. However, in the first place, he is classed as a (Christian) heretic, not as the founder of a new religion. The latter can only have happened in the last decades of the 9th century, although he is not mentioned as the founder of a new religion by name in the Christian literature of this time.

7.2 Arabs, Saracens, Ismaelites and Hagarites

Due to the biblical character of the worldview of Christian authors, the *Arabs* only rarely appear under this designation. They appear occasionally as *Saracens*, but mostly as *Ismaelites* and *Hagarenes* in genealogical derivation from Abraham and his maidservant Hagar, as already mentioned in the "pre-Islamic" era. Even the term *Saracens* is occasionally traced back to the fact that they wanted to claim their descent from *Sarah*, the legitimate wife of Abraham.

Thus, the Arabs are paraphrased using biblical references, mostly from the Book of Genesis (and parallel passages in other Old Testament books) and also in the apocalypse ("kingdom of the south") from the Book of Daniel. These statements are the allegorical interpretation of biblical passages. They do not yield any historical information. If they are described as people who come out of the desert, this has nothing to do with the Arab invasion, but is rather relating to biblical statements that Ishmael lived in the desert (and so do his descendants). There is no geographical evidence given that a kingdom of the south is spoken of, but the Arab rule is classified within an apocalyptic scheme of history, described with patterns from the Book of Daniel.

Whenever we come across non-biblical indications of the home of the Arabs, it points to the "Arabs" from the Nabatean region as well as Mesopotamia, groups that were well-known in the pre-Islamic era, but *not* to the Arabian Peninsula. Yathrib/Medina is not mentioned until around the middle of the 8th century, and Mecca, the geographical location of which remains uncertain, even later.

In the literature examined there is no talk of an Arab invasion around the death of Muḥammad, as described in the traditional report. Occasionally battles are mentioned, sometimes with place names, which certainly happened during the acquisition of autocracy in West Syria and after the exclusion of these areas from the Byzantine Empire (622). These were finally lost for the Byzantines and firmly in the hands of the new Arab rulers after the death of Heraclius (640) and after the ultimate collapse of the Sassanian Empire in the East. At that time (in some cases up to the present day?), control could only be secured through violence. The conflicts which arise from it, as well as the place names given, do not correspond to the specifications of the traditional report and are therefore often re-interpreted by commentators (e.g. *Gabitha* into *Yarmūk* and the like).

In the time before Muʿāwiyah, uncertainty predominated in many areas of the Middle East because of the retreat of the Byzantines, but with his assumption of office, order is re-established, which is praised by Christian authors. The Arab rule is not perceived as a curse until the time of ʿAbd al-Malik and his sectarian movement and is described accordingly in the apocalypses, which also, at the same time, try to convey hope that this evil will – hopefully soon – end.

The overall fairly sporadic literary utterances by Christians under allegedly "Islamic rule" altogether show that both the political and the religious history took place differently to how the traditional report had constructed them until the end of the 8th century by projecting a later stage of the religion on a fictitious eon in Mecca and Medina. The examination of these historical processes, as well as their reflection in the Qurʾān, is a challenge to scholars of Islamic studies which they have not faced or have hardly faced up to now.

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Volk, Robert, Johannes von Damaskus, in: LThK3 5, p. 895-899.
Volk, Robert, Johannes von Damaskus, in: LACL, p. 344-347.

Abbreviations

BKV O. Bardenhewer, Th. Schermann, (from vol. 35 on: J. Jellinger) and C. Weyman, Bibliothek der Kirchenväter, Kempten 1911 ff.
CCG Corpus Christianorum, series Graeca, Tournhout 1977 ff.
CCL Corpus Christianorum, series Latina, Tournhout, Paris 1953 ff.
GCS Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte, Leipzig 1897 ff.
GSCO Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Paris 1903 ff.
LACL Lexikon der antiken christlichen Literatur, ed. by S. Döpp and W. Geerlings, Freiburg, Basel, Wien 1998.
LThK Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche, ed. by J. Höfer and K. Rahner, 2nd ed. Freiburg ^{2}1957 ff.; 3rd ed. by W. Kasper, K. Baumgartner und H. Bürkle, Freiburg, Basel, Wien 1993-2001.
MPG Migne, Patrologia Graeca, Paris 1878-1890.
MPL Migne, Patrologia Latina, Paris 1878-1890.
PO Patrologie Orientalis, Paris 1903 ff.

Endnotes
Karl-Heinz Ohlig: Evidence of a New Religion in Christian Literature "Under Islamic Rule"?, pp. 176-250

1 Cf. my article: Das Syrische und Arabische Christentum und der Koran, in: K.-H. Ohlig, Gerd-Rüdiger Puin (eds.), Die dunklen Anfänge. Neue Forschungen zur Entstehung und frühen Geschichte des Islam, Berlin [1]2005, [2]2006, p. 376-378; with further bibliography.

2 Robert G. Hoyland, Seeing Islam as Others saw it. A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam, Princeton, New Jersey 1997.

3 Yehuda D. Nevo and Judith Koren, Crossroads to Islam. The Origins of the Arab Religion and the Arab State, Amherst, New York 2003, p. 103-135; p. 207-245.

4 Cf. about this question V. Popp, From Ugarit to Samarrā', in the present volume.

5 Cf. about this question Robert G. Hoyland, Arabia and the Arabs, London 2001, 2.3.

6 Xenophon, Anabasis I, 5 (Ed. Books I-IV by M.W. Mather and J.W. Hewitt, Oklahoma [USA] 1962, 75).

7 Plinius Secundus, Naturalis Historia V, XX 85, in: Die geographischen Bücher (II, 242-VI Schluss) der Naturalis Historia des Plinius Secundus, ed. by D. Detlefsen, Berlin 1904, 107, or in: Pliny, Natural History (in Latin and English), Volume II: Libri III-VII, ed. by H. Rackham, London und Cambridge (Massachusetts) 1947, p. 284.

8 Cf. about this question the article in the present volume by V. Popp, From Ugarit to Sāmarrā'.

9 Cf. about this question A.C. Klugkist, Die beiden Homilien des Isaak von Antiocheia über die Eroberung von Bet Hur durch die Araber, in: H.J.W. Drijvers, R. Lavenant, C. Molenberg, G.J. Reinick (ed.), IV Symposium Syriacum 1984. Literary Genres in Syriac Literature (in the following cited as: IV Symposium Syriacum), Rom 1987, p. 237-256.

10 So e.g. Ephrem the Syrian (died 373) in a hymn *De ecclesia* 44:21-26, and in *De crucifixo* 3,3.12; cf. about this question R.A. Darling, The "Church from the Nations" in the Exegesis of Ephrem, in: IV Symposium Syriacum 1984, ibid. p. 115.

11 Cf. Plinius der Ältere, op. cit. V 65 (Arabia with the epithet "beata"), in: Ed. Detlefsen, op. cit. p. 101; cf. about Ptolemy, Geography, Lib. V., Chapter 17 (Arabia Petraea), § 3, in: Claudii Ptolemaei Geographia. Edidit Fridericus Augustus Nobbe. Editio stereotypa, Tomus II, Lipsiae 1845, p. 97-108 (ed. F.A. Nobbe); cf. also about Ptolemy: D. H. Müller, article "Agraioi 2", in: Paulys Realencyklopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft, new edition, ed. by Georg Wissovar, vol.1, Stuttgart 1893, p. 889.

12 Franz Altheim and Ruth Stiehl, Die Araber in der Alten Welt, first volume: Bis zum Beginn der Kaiserzeit, Berlin 1964, p. 6.

13 Cf. about this question the paragraph "Structures ecclésiastiques et rites liturgiques des Arabes chrétiens", in: Samir Abache, Les moines chez les Arabes chrétiens avant l'Islam, in: Patrimoine Syriac. Actes du colloque V: Le

monarchianisme Syriaque. Aux premiers sciècles de l'Église IIe – début VIIe siècles, vol. 2, Antélias (Liban) 1998, p. 300-302.

14 Cf. about this question K.-H. Ohlig, Das Syrische und Arabische Christentum und der Koran, op. cit. p. 366-404.

15 Cf. about this question e.g. Irfan Shahîd, Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century, Washington, DC, 1989, p. 330; 557-560.

16 I. Shahîd, ibid., p. 560.

17 Irfan Shahîd, Kap. IX. The Term Saraceni and the Image of the Arabs, in: Irfan Shahîd (ed.), Rome and the Arabs. A Prolegomenon to the Study of Byzantium and the Arabs, Washington, DC, 1984, p. 123-131.

18 Sven Dörper, Zum Problem des Völkernamens Saraceni, in: Neue Romania. Veröffentlichungsreihe des Studienbereichs Neue Romania des Instituts für Romanische Philologie (Sonderheft, ed. by Chr. Foltys and Th. Kotschi), N° 14, Berlin 1993, p. 95.

19 Hieronymus, In Hiezechielem VIII, 25,17; cf. S. Dörper, ibid. p. 92.

20 Irfan Shahîd, Rome and the Arabs, op. cit., p. 131-138.

21 Ptolemaius, Geographia, 5,17, §3, in: ed. F.A. Nobbe, p. 97-108.

22 Ammianus Marcellinus, Res Gestae, e.g. XXIV 1,10, in: Ammiani Marcellini Rerum Gestarum capita selecta, ed. Joannes Baptista Pighi (Bibliotheca Neocomensis, 2), Neocomi Helvetiorum 1948, p. 31. I. Shahîd mentions two more passages: XXII, 15:2; XXIII, 6,13.

23 S. Dörper, Zum Problem des Völkernamens Saraceni, op. cit., p. 97.

24 Eusebius of Caesarea, Onomastikon, Chapter about the book Genesis (Greek text with the Latin translation of St. Jerome, in: Eusebius. Das Onomastikon der biblischen Ortsnamen, ed. by Erich Klostermann [Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte – GCS – 11,1], p. 166.

25 Hieronymus, Vita Malchi (MPL 23, 53-60); German: "Leben und Gefangenschaft des Mönchs Malchus" (Life and Captivity of the Monk Malchus), in: BKV 15, 1914, p. 73-83.

26 Hieronymus, Vita Malchi, chap. 4 (German: BKV 15, op. cit. 76.77).

27 Hieronymus, Vita Hilarionis (MPL 23, 29-54); German: BKV 15, 33-72.

28 Hieronymus, chap. 25 (BKV 15, 54).

29 Hieronymus, Commentariorum in Amos prophetam libri III (Corpus Christianorum, series Latina [CCL], LXXVI, Turnholti MCMLXIX, p. 213-348).

30 Hieronymus, In Amos 5, p. 25-27 (CCL 76, 296).

31 A.C. Klugkist, Die beiden Homilien des Isaak von Antiocheia über die Eroberung von Bet-Hur durch die Araber, op. cit., p. 246.

32 A.C. Klugkist, Die beiden Homilien des Isaak von Antiocheia ..., ibid. 245, A. 28.

33 "He settled in defiance of all his relatives (עַל־פְּנֵי כָל־אֶחָיו נָפָל)" could also be translated as: "he settled down to the east of all his brothers".

34 A connection with Havilah or Nimrod, sons of Cush and grandsons of Ham (Gen. 10:7-8), is speculative. The following is said about his residence: "The beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar." (Gen. 10,10) – thus Mesopotamian cities. The connection with Havilah, a great-grandson of Shem (Gen. 10:29), is as unconvincing as a link with Gen. 2:11: "The name of the first is Pishon; it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold."

35 Harald Suermann, Die Geschichtstheologische Reaktion auf die Einfallenden Muslime in der Edessenischen Apokalyptik des 7. Jahrhunderts (Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe XXIII Theologie, vol. 256), Frankfurt a. M., Bern, New York 1985, p. 144.

36 Hieronymus, Liber de situ, chap. about the book Genesis (GCS 11:1, p. 167).

37 A text of Ephrem the Syrian would even be earlier. In the second sermon (Sancti Ephraemi Syri. Hymni et Sermones ... edidit, latinitate donavit, variis lectionibus instruxit, notis et prolegomenis illustravit Thomas Josephus Lamy, Tomus III, Meclelinia MDCCCLXXXIV [ed. Lamy], 110) he writes: "... and their screaming will rise up to heaven and from the desert a people will emerge, the son of Hagar, the handmaid of Sarah, who received the covenant with Abraham ...". It is not explicitly said in the text, but what is meant is probably the Arabs. Because of the apocalyptical structure of the speech, however, a late redaction can be suspected.

38 Hieronymus (St. Jerome), In Hiezechielem VIII, 25, 1:7 (CCSL 75, 335). Cf. about this question C.A. Willemsen, Sarazenen, in: LThK2 9, 326: St. Jerome tried to "prove that the S.(aracens), as descendants of Abraham's concubine (sic!) Agar rather deserved to be called Agareni. So the designation Agareni was, for a certain time, synonymous with S.(aracens)."

39 Summary in I. Shahîd, op. cit., p. 167, and S. Dörper, op. cit., p. 100, A. 12.

40 Isidore of Seville, Etymologia IX, 2:6 (Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX, ed. by W. M. Lindsay, Tomus I: libri I-X [Scriptorum classicorum bibliotheca Oxonensis], Oxonii 1911 [without pagination]).

41 One exception is St. Paul, who, struggling with Judaism, the religion of his upbringing, writes in the letter to the Galatians: "For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman." (Gal. 4:22). He asserts that this may not be understood literally: "This is allegorically speaking, for these women are two covenants: one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar." (Gal. 4:24). Paulus adds: "Now this Hagar ["cliff"] is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children." (Gal. 4:25). Here Paul calls the Jews themselves "children of Hagar", the Christians "children of promise" (Gal. 4:28), i.e. of Isaac. This is a rather violent iconographic theology, which was discontinued by Christians in the East. There the children of Hagar are always the "Arabs".

42 Die Schatzhöhle (The Cave of Treasures). Syrisch und Deutsch herausgegeben von Carl Bezold (edited in Syriac and German by Carl Bezold). First part: Übersetzung (translation). Aus dem syrischen Texte dreier unedirter Handschriften in's Deutsche übersetzt und mit Anmerkungen versehen von Carl Bezold, Leipzig 1883.

43 Die Schatzhöhle, ibid., p. 71.

44 Die Schatzhöhle, ibid., p. 37.

45 Pseudo-Sebeos, Histoire d'Héraclius, chap. 34, in: ed. Macler, p. 130 (concerning bibliographical information cf. 3.2, Text 7, about Pseudo-Sebeos).

46 Manuscript tradition is not good here. There are two manuscripts in Greek (Munich, 15th century, and Paris, 10th century); they have been edited by H. Usener, Weihnachtspredigt des Sophronius, in: (Rheinisches) Museum für Philologie, ed. by O. Ribbeke and F. Buecheler, NF 41. vol., Frankfurt a. M. 1886, p. 500-516; a Latin translation, which contains a few additions if compared to the Greek version, is from Lyon 1677 (MPG 87/3, 3.201-3.212).
47 This year can be considered as rather certain. In the introduction it is adduced that Christmas (25 December) in this year fell on a Sunday.
48 So also in the Latin version: MPG 87/3, 3.205 D.
49 So also in the Latin version: MPG 87/3, 3.206 B.C.
50 Y.D. Nevo and J. Koren, Crossroads to Islam, op. cit., p. 119.
51 R.G. Hoyland, Seeing Islam as Others saw it, op. cit., p. 72-73.
52 Cf. Y.D. Nevo and J. Koren, Crossroads to Islam, op. cit., p. 121: isolated incidents cannot be excluded, but the overall assessment is that "churches were not burnt or pulled down nor monasteries destroyed".
53 Lexikon der antiken christlichen Literatur (LACL), ed. by Siegmar Döpp and Wilhelm Gerlings, Freiburg, Basel, Wien 1998.
54 G. Röwekamp, Sophronius von Jerusalem, in: LACL, 364.
55 Doctrina Jacobi nuper baptizati, Greek text and French translation by Vincent Déroche, in: Gilbert Dagron, Vincent Déroche (ed.), Juifs et chrétiens dans l'Orient du VIIe siècle (Travaux et Mémores 11, revised by Gilbert Dagron and Denis Feissel [Collège de France. Centre de Recherche d'histoire et civilisaton de Byzance]), Paris1991, p. 47-229; immediately following: Gilbert Dagron, Commentaire, ibid., p. 230-273.
56 Harald Suermann, Juden und Muslime gemäß christlichen Texten zur Zeit Muhammads und in der Frühzeit des Islams, in: Holger Preißler, Heidi Stein (ed.), Annäherung an das Fremde. XXVI. Deutscher Orientalistentag vom 25. bis 29.9. 1995 in Leipzig, Stuttgart 1998, p. 145.
57 Vincent Déroche, ibid., p. 64.
58 H. Suermann, Juden und Muslime gemäß christlichen Texten zur Zeit Muhammads und in der Frühzeit des Islams, ibid., p. 145.146.
59 Doctrina Jacobi V 16; ed. V. Déroche, op. cit., p. 209-211.
60 H. Suermann, Juden und Muslime gemäß christlichen Texten zur Zeit Muhammads und in der Frühzeit des Islams, op. cit., p. 145.
61 H. Suermann, Juden und Muslime gemäß christlichen Texten zur Zeit Muhammads und in der Frühzeit des Islams, ibid., p. 147-148.
62 H. Suermann, Juden und Muslime gemäß christlichen Texten zur Zeit Muhammads und in der Frühzeit des Islams, ibid., p.148.
63 Theophanes Confessor, Chronographia, ed. by C. De Boor, Hildesheim 1963 (reprint of Leipzig 1883-1885), p. 336.
64 Chronicum ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens (CSCO 81; Scriptores Syri 36).
65 Y.D. Nevo and J. Koren, Crossroads to Islam, op. cit., p. 210.
66 Cf. about this question and about the apocalypses 3-4.
67 Pope Martin denied in a letter that during his captivity he had had any contact with Saracens including money business (Epistula 14, MPL 87, 199A). As nothing else can be inferred as to the contents, this letter and the question of its authenticity will not be discussed here.
68 B.R. Suchla, Maximus Confessor, in: LACL, p. 433.

69 Maximus Confessor, Epistula 14 (MPG 91, p. 533-544).
70 Maximus Confessor, ibid. (MPG 91, p. 539-540).
71 Y.D. Nevo and J. Koren, Crossroads to Islam, op. cit., p. 122.
72 Epistula 8 (MPG 91, p. 439-446).
73 Cf. Y.D. Nevo and J. Koren, Crossroads to Islam, ibid., , p. 121-122.
74 M. F.(rançois) Nau, Un Colloque du Patriarche Jean avec l'Emir des Agaréens et Faits Divers des Années 712 à 716 d'après le MS. du British Museum Add. 17193 ..., in: Journal Asiatique, 11e série, Tome 5, 1915, p. 225-279; Syriac text ibid., p. 248-256, French translation ibid., p. 257-267.
75 Harald Suermann, Orientalische Christen und der Islam. Christliche Texte aus der Zeit von 632-750, in: Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft 52, 1993, p. 126. In the following text Suermann keeps speaking about the Muslim interrogator and Islamic doctrine.
76 Y.D. Nevo and J. Koren, Crossroads to Islam, op. cit., p. 223-227.
77 Khalil Samir, Qui est l'Interlocuteur du Patriarche Syrien Jean III (631-648?), in: IV Symposium Syriacum 1984, p. 387-400: Samir discusses all possible hypotheses concerning the dialog partners and calls for a debate between John III and 'Umayr ibn Sa'd (ibid. 400).
78 Y.D. Nevo and J. Koren, Crossroads to Islam, ibid., p. 227.
79 A German translation of the most important passages can be found in: H. Suermann, Orientalische Christen und der Islam, op. cit.; p. 122-125.
80 Y.D. Nevo and J. Koren, Crossroads to Islam, op. cit. 224.
81 M.F. Nau translates, op. cit., p. 262, "la loi musulmane (Muslim law)", but adds in brackets: Mahgrân; H. Suermann, op. cit. 124, speaks of the "muslimischen Gesetz (Muslim law)". A preferable transcription of Mahgrân would be "m-Haggrāye"; Syriac text thus is concerned with the Law of the Hagarenes/Hagarites, or – as Nevo/Koren correctly translated – with the Law of the Arabs. There is no hint in the text which would justify a translation as "Muslim Law".
82 Y.D. Nevo and J. Koren, Crossroads to Islam, ibid., p. 225.
83 Y.D. Nevo and J. Koren, Crossroads to Islam, op. cit. p. 227.
84 Y.D. Nevo and J. Koren, Crossroads to Islam, ibid., p. 228.
85 Cf. Sebastian Brock, VIII Syriac Views of Emergent Islam, in: id., Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity, London 1984, p. 16.
86 'Iso'yaw patriarchae III., Liber epistularum, hrsg. und ins Lateinische übers. von (edited and translated into Latin by) R. Duval (Corpus Scriptorum christianorum orientalium, vol. 12, Scriptores Syri II, tomus 12), Löwen 1904, p. 182; German translation according to H. Suermann, Orientalische Christen und der Islam, op. cit., p. 128.
87 'Iso'yaw, ibid., p.172.; German: H. Suermann, Orientalische Christen und der Islam, op. cit., p. 129.
88 Cf. K.-H. Ohlig, Das syrische und arabische Christentum und der Koran, op. cit., p. 378-394.
89 'Iso'yaw, op. cit., p. 73; German: H. Suermann, op. cit., p. 128.
90 H. Suermann, Orientalische Christen und der Islam, op. cit., p. 128.

91 'Iso'yaw patriarchae III., Liber epistularum, edited and translated into Latin by R. Duval (CSCO Vol. 12), op. cit., p. 73.
92 Iso'yahw Patriarchae III liber epistularum (Syriac text), ed. by R. Duval (CSCO Vol. 11; Scriptores Syri, Tomus II), p. 97.
93 H. Suermann, Orientalische Christen und der Islam, op. cit., p. 129.
94 Iso'yaw, Brief an Mar Simeon aus Rew Ardasir, in: Iso'yaw Patriachae III liber epistularum, Latin translation (CSCO Vol. 12), p. 185-188.
95 Johannes Moschus, Pratum spirituale, Greek with Latin translation in: MPG 87/3, 2.847-3.116 (another Latin translation in: MPL 74, 119-240).
96 J. Pauli OSB, Johannes Moschus, in: LACL, 253.
97 Johannes Moschus, Pratum spirituale, c. CXXIII (MPG 87/3, 2.996.2.998).
98 Johannes Moschus, Pratum spirituale, c. CXXXVI (MPG 87/3, 3.000).
99 Johannes Moschus, Pratum spirituale, c. CLV (MPG 87/3, 3.024).
100 Johannes Moschus, Pratum sprituale, quoted according to R.G. Hoyland, Seeing Islam as Others saw it, op. cit., p. 63. In the Greek and Latin version of the Pratum spirituale in the "Migne" this remark cannot be found. Hoyland quotes it according to a translation of an Armenian version of the Pratum spirituale, p. 100-102, by Garitte. This one, however, is missing in his bibliography of Johannes Moschus (726). As this addition is not very important, the bibliographical information concerning Hoyland shall suffice.
101 Text edition: Histoire d'Héraclius par l'évêque Sebéos, traduite de l'Arménien et annotèe par F. Macler, Paris 1904 (ed. F. Macler); Armenian edition: Parmut'iwn Sebeosi, ed. G.V. Abgarian, Yerevan 1979; The Armenian History attributed to Sebeos, translated, with notes, by R.W. Thomson. Historical Commentary by James Howard-Johnston, Part I. Translation and Notes, Liverpool 1999 (ed. R.W. Thomson), Part II. Historical Commentary, Liverpool 1999.
102 Cf. about this question R.G. Hoyland, Seeing Islam as Others saw it, op. cit. 124.125. Y.D. Nevo and J. Koren, Crossroads to Islam, op. cit., p. 230, A. 68, mention that the manuscript, on the basis of which the History of Heraclius was edited, is from the 10th/ 11th century and obviously contains two parts of later authors. According to them, only the third book can be considered a genuine book of Sebeos. But even that one has a long transmission history, so that changes and additions in the text have to be assumed.
103 Pseudo-Sebeos, Histoire d'Héraclius, ed. F. Macler, p. 104-105.
104 Pseudo-Sebeos, Histoire d'Héraclius, chap. 30.
105 In ed. R. W. Thomas the Chapter numbering is different; the present text is in Chapter 42 (ibid. p. 95-97); Suermann has it as Chapter 40.
106 Pseudo-Sebeos, Histoire d'Héraclius, chap. 30; ed. F. Macler, op. cit., p. 94-102.
107 Pseudo-Sebeos, Histoire d'Héraclius, chap. 30; ed. F. Macler, ibid., p. 102.
108 The brackets inserted by me indicate a later addition; cf. about this question the following text.
109 Pseudo-Sebeos, Histoire d'Héraclius, chap. 30; ed. F. Macler, ibid., p. 95-96; German according to: H. Suermann, Juden und Muslime gemäß christlichen Texten zur Zeit Muhammads und in der Frühzeit des Islams, op. cit., p. 150.
110 H. Suermann, Juden und Muslime gemäß christlichen Texten zur Zeit Muhammads und in der Frühzeit des Islams, ibid.
111 H. Suermann, Juden und Muslime gemäß christlichen Texten zur Zeit Muhammads und in der Frühzeit des Islams, ibid., p. 154.

112 H. Suermann, Juden und Muslime gemäß christlichen Texten zur Zeit Muhammads und in der Frühzeit des Islams, ibid., p. 152.
113 Cf. about this Jewish apocalypse and text 22.
114 Y.D. Nevo and J. Koren, Crossroads to Islam, op. cit., p. 127.
115 Pseudo-Sebeos, Histoire d'Héraclius, Chap. 37, in: ed. F. Macler, p. 149.
116 Cf. above the text in brackets.
117 Surah 16:67 speaks positively about wine, surah 4:43 forbids to come drunk to prayer, while surahs 5:91 and 2:219 completely prohibit wine as a sin.
118 See also Claude Cahen, Note sur l'Accueil des Chrétiens d'Orient à l'islam, in: Revue de l'Histoire des Religions 2, 1964, p. 55.
119 Because of the totally different theological context, an influence of Marcionite notions of Jesus as a "fighter and merchant", which Ephrem the Syrian intensively deals with, seems very unlikely. Cf. about this question Han J.W. Drijvers, Christ as Warrier and Merchant. Aspects of Marcion's Christology, in: Id., History and Religion in Late Antique Syria, Aldershot (Great Britain), Brookfield (USA) 1994, XIII, p. 73-85. However, the possibility of such influences cannot be entirely dismissed, if we assume that they just survived as notions and motives.
120 Chronik von Seert, chap. 73, in: Addai Scher (Arabic edition) and Pierre Dib (French translation), Histoire Nestorienne (Chronique de Séert), première partie (II) (Patrologia Orientalis, éd. R. Graffin/F. Nau, tome V, fasc. 2), Paris 1950, p. 330-331.
121 René Tardy, Najrân. Chrétiens d'Arabie avant l'islam, Beyrouth 1999, p. 97-98; so also Irfan Shahîd, Nadjjran, in: The Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition, Volume VII, Leiden 1992, p. 871-872. The Kitāb al-Himyar here adduced is only extant in fragmentary form; the activities of the Jewish kings in the Yemen against the Christians, however, which were adopted into the Chronicle of Seert, are well attested. One can only surmise that concerning the passage mentioned, the chronicle of Seert is also based on older texts; cf. about the Book of the Himyarites: Irfan Shahîd, The Book of the Himyarites: Authorship and Authenticity, in: id., Byzantium and the Semitic Orient before the Rise of Islam, London 1988, p. 349-362.
122 As Y.D. Nevo and J. Koren, Crossroads to Islam, op. cit., p. 228, opine, these statements presuppose an interpolator, who assigns a "Basic Monotheism" to the Ismaelites. This, however, does not suffice: The clear appropriation of Muḥammad for Jewish interests, above all the return of Israel, hints at a Jewish redactor.
123 Pseudo-Sebeos, Geschichte des Heraklius, chap. 43, in: ed. R.W. Thomson, p. 102-103.
124 Pseudo-Sebeos, L'histoire d'Héraclius, chap. 36; in: ed. F. Macler, p. 139-140 (chap. 50 in: ed. R.W. Thomson, p. 144).
125 Cf. Y. S. Nevo and J. Koren, Crossroads to Islam, op. cit., p. 229-230.
126 F. R. Gahbauer, Anastasius Sinaita, in: LACL 27.

127 Anastasii Sinaitae Viae dux, (critical edition of the Greek text) by Karl-Heinz Uthemann (Corpus Christianorum, series Graeca [CCG], vol. 8), Turnhout, Brepols 1981 (Hodegos, ibid., p. 7-320).
128 Cf. about this question K.-H. Uthemann, ibid. XXX-CCXLVII.
129 Anastasius Sinaita, Viae dux I 1; ibid., p. 9, lines 45-49.
130 Anastasius Sinaita, Viae dux X 2,4; ed. Uthemann, ibid. p. 169-170, lines 5-12.
131 About Severus, Anastasios says, Viae dux VII 2; ed. Uthemann, ibid., p. 113, line 117-120, that he had teachers among the Jews, Greeks and Arabs, who only accepted parts of the scripture. This remark is dark, as neither Severus himself, nor Jews, Greeks (or at that time not even Arabs) could be reproached with this.
132 Anastasius Sinaiticus, Quaestiones et responsiones, in: MPG 89, p. 311-824 (Greek and Latin).
133 Anastasius Sinaita, Quaestiones et responsiones, 126, in: MPG 89, 776 BCE.
134 Jan J. van Ginkel, Jakob von Edessa in der Chronographie des Michael Syrus, in: Martin Tamcke (ed.), Syriaca. Zur Geschichte, Theologie, Liturgie und Gegenwartslage der syrischen Kirchen. 2. Deutsches Syrologen-Symposium (Juli 2000, Wittenberg; Studien zur Orientalischen Kirchengeschichte, Vol. 17), Hamburg 2002, p. 115.
135 According to J. J. van Ginkel, ibid., he was bishop from 682-686 and again in 708.
136 P. Bruns, Jakobus von Edessa, in: LACL, p. 327-329.
137 J. J. van Ginkel, Jakob von Edessa, op. cit., p. 116.
138 Jacob of Edessa, Scholion on 1 Kings 14:21ff., in: George Phillips, Scholia on Passages on the Old Testament by Mar Jacob, Bishop of Edessa, London 1864 (text and English translation).
139 Cf. J.J. van Ginkel, Jakob von Edessa, op. cit., p. 119: "Unfortunately, this chronicle has only been transmitted to us in fragmentary form" (including sources of information). About the authenticity and (il)legibility of the text many questions remain unanswered.
140 English translation in: The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles, introduced, translated and annotated by Andrew Palmer, including two seventh-century Syriac apocalyptic texts, introduced, translated and annotated by Sebastian Brock, with added annotations and historical introduction by Robert Hoyland, Liverpool 1993 (ed. A. Palmer), p. 39.
141 Engl. translation in: ed. A. Palmer, p. 37-38.
142 Engl. translation in: ed. A. Palmer, p. 37-39.
143 Cf. about this question the discussion in: Y.D. Nevo and J. Koren, Crossroads to Islam, op. cit., p. 129-131.
144 Synodicon Orientale, Canon 16, Canon 18, translat. and ed. by J.-B. Chabot, Paris 1902, vol. 2 (French translation), p. 488-489.
145 M.F. Nau, Littérature Canonique Syriaque Inédite (Syriac text and French translation), in: Revue de l'Orient Chrétien, Tome IV (XIV), 1909, p. 128-130.
146 Y.D. Nevo and J. Koren, Crossroads to Islam, op. cit., p. 218.
147 Y.D. Nevo and J. Koren, Crossroads to Islam, op. cit., p. 213.
148 Cf. A. Klugkist, Die beiden Homilien des Isaak von Antiocheia über die Eroberung von Bet Hur durch die Araber, op. cit., p. 238.
149 Cf. A.C. Klugkist, ibid., p. 243.
150 Cf. A.C. Klugkist, ibid.

151 Cf. about this question text 4.
152 Y.D. Nevo and J. Koren, Crossroads to Islam, op. cit., p. 107.
153 About the fragmentary Chronicle of Jacob of Edessa cf. text 9, about the anonymous (West) Syriac chronicle cf. text 32.
154 Latin version in: Chronica Minora, pars prior, ed. and transl. by Ignatius Guidi (SSCO, Scriptores Syri, series tertia, tomus IV), Paris 1903, p. 3-32.
155 Thus also the hypothesis of Cl. Cahen, Note sur l'Accueil des Chrétiens d'Orient à l'Islam, in: Revue de l'Histoire des Religions 2, 1964, p. 52.
156 Chronica Minora (SSCO, Scriptores Syri III,4), op. cit., p. 31; German according to: H. Suermann, Orientalische Christen und der Islam, op. cit., p. 130.
157 Thus also C. Cahen, Note sur l'Accueil des Chrétiens d'Orient à l'islam, op. cit., p. 54.
158 H. Suermann, Orientalische Christen und der Islam, op. cit., p. 130.
159 R.G. Hoyland, Seeing Islam as Others saw it, op. cit., p. 591.
160 John bar Penkaye, Chronicle, chap. 14, in: German translation from the Syriac by Rudolf Abramowski, Dionysius von Tellmahre. Zur Geschichte der Kirche unter dem Islam (including a translation of books 14 and 15 of Johannes bar Penkaye), Leipzig 1940, 5.6.
161 Bar Penkaye, Chronicle, chap. 15, ed. Abramowski, p. 8.
162 Harald Suermann, Das arabische Reich in der Weltgeschichte des Johannàn bar Penkàje, in: Nubia et Oriens Christianus. Festschrift (liber amicorum) für C. Detlef G. Müller zum 60. Geburtstag, ed. by Piotr O. Scholz and Reinhard Stempel, Köln 1988, p. 70.
163 A. Mingana, Sources Syriaques, Leipzig 1907, p. 135-138.
164 Cf. also R.G. Hoyland, Seeing Islam as Others saw it, op. cit., p. 197: "His reconstruction of events also follows remarkably closely the traditional Muslim account ... ." It is historically interesting that he tells us about the zeal of Zubaye against those from the West, because he considered them transgressors of the law (Hoyland, ibid., p. 197).
165 These are discussed in the above-mentioned article of H. Suermann, Das arabische Reich, op. cit.
166 Text in English translation in: ed. A. Palmer, p. 15-21.
167 Chronicle, in: ed. A. Palmer, p. 18-19.
168 Chronicle, in: ed. A. Palmer, p. 19.
169 In: ed. A. Palmer, p. 43-44.
170 A. Palmer, ibid.
171 In: ed. Palmer, p. 43.
172 A. Palmer, ibid.
173 A. Palmer, ibid. p. 49.
174 Engl. transl. in: ed. Palmer, p. 49-50.
175 A. Palmer, in: ed. A. Palmer, p. 29.
176 Thus A. Palmer, ibid.; English transl. ibid., p. 29-35.
177 Maronitische Chronik, in: ed. A. Palmer, p. 30.

178 Claude Cahen, Note sur l'Accueil des Chrétiens d'Orient à l'islam, op. cit., p. 54. C. Cahen discusses the different versions of this chronicle mentioned in a contribution by C. Dübler in al-Andalus, 1946.
179 The History of Heraclius of Pseudo-Sebeos, which was influenced by apocalyptic notions, was introduced under "text 7"; two Coptic apocalypses will be dealt with under "text 26 and 27".
180 M. Steinschneider, Apokalypsen mit Polemischer Tendenz, in: Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 28. Band, Leipzig 1874, p. 628.
181 Aphrahat, Homilien, in: G. Bert, Aphrahates des Persischen Weisen Homelien (TU III, 3/4), Leipzig 1888, p. 69-88.
182 Cf. about this question Ephrem, Second Sermon, in: ed. Lamy, p. 189-212.
183 Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel. German translation and introduction: Matthias Henze, Apokalypsen und Testamente. Syrische Danielapokalypse (Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit. Neue Folge, vol. 1, fasc. 4), Gütersloh 2006.
184 M. Henze, ibid., p. 20.
185 Bernard Lewis, An Apocalyptic Vision in Islamic History, in: Bulletin of School of Oriental and African Studies, Volume XIII, Part 1, London 1949, p. 308.
186 Harald Suermann, Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion auf die einfallenden Muslime in der edessenischen Apokalyptik des 7. Jahrhunderts (Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe XXIII Theologie, vol. 256), Frankfurt a. M., Bern, New York 1985, p. 117.
187 Cf. also text 18.
188 Ephrem der Syrian, Sermo 2, in: ed. Lamy, p. 111-112.
189 Syriac text: Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones III, ed. by Edmund Beck (CSCO, Volume 320, Scriptores Syri, tomus 138), Löwen 1972, p. 60-71; German translation in: Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones III, übersetzt von Edmund Beck (CSCO, Volume 321, Scriptores Syri, tomus 129), Löwen 1972, p. 79-94 (ed. E. Beck). The text is not subdivided into Chapters. Syriac text and German translation also in: H. Suermann, Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion, op. cit., p. 12-33.
190 G. J. Reinick, Pseudo-Ephräms "Rede über das Ende" und die syrische eschatologische Literatur des siebten Jahrhunderts, in: Aram 5: 1 u.2, Oxford 1993, p. 462. Contrary to Reinick's opinion, the ductus of the text does not hint at a Jacobite author.
191 W. Bousset, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Eschatologie I, in: ZKG 20, 1899, p. 116.
192 H. Suermann, Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion, op. cit., p. 111.
193 Pseudo-Ephrem, Sermo 5, lines 45-53 (ed. E. Beck, p. 80-81).
194 Pseudo-Ephrem, Sermo 5, lines 61-72 (ed. E. Beck, p. 81).
195 Thus e.g. H. Suermann, Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion, passim, e.g. p. 112.
196 Pseudo-Ephrem, Sermo 5, lines 73 (ed. E. Beck, p. 81).
197 Pseudo-Ephrem, Sermo 5, lines 73-78 (ed. E. Beck, 81). So also implicitly in Sermo 2 (ed. Lamy, p.110).
198 Pseudo-Ephrem, Sermo 5, lines 91-92 (ed. E. Beck, p. 82); "robbers" again in lines 93.
199 Pseudo-Ephrem, Sermo 5, lines 160-167 (ed. E. Beck, p. 84).
200 H. Suermann, Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion, op. cit. 116; cf. also p. 126.
201 Pseudo-Ephrem, Sermo 5, lines 349-354 (ed. E. Beck, p. 89).

202 Pseudo-Ephrem, Sermo 5, lines 356-468 (ed. E. Beck, p. 89-92).
203 Pseudo-Ephrem, Sermo 5, lines 555.556 (ed. E. Beck, p. 94).
204 H. Suermann, Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion, op. cit., p.118.
205 Thus Harald Suermann, Einige Bemerkungen zu syrischen Apokalypsen des 7 JHDS, in: IV Symposium Syriacum 1984, op. cit., p. 328.
206 Ephrem, Sermo 2, Text in: ed. Lamy, op. cit.
207 Cf. above chap. 3.4 Einführung.
208 Ephrem, Sermo 2 (ed. Lamy, p. 190).
209 Thus G. J. Reinick, Der edessenische "Pseudo-Methodius", in: Byzantinische Zeitschrift 83, 1990, p. 22.
210 Francisco Javier Martinez, The Apocalyptic Genre in Syriac: The World of Pseudo-Methodius, in: IV Symposium Syriacum 1984, op. cit., p. 340.
211 Die Syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius, ed. by G.J. Reinick (CSCO, Scriptores Syri, Tomus 220), Löwen 1993. German translation: Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius, übersetzt von G.J. Reinick (CSCO, Volumen 541, Scriptores Syri, Tomus 221), Löwen 1993 (ed. G.J. Reinick). The edition with translation published by H. Suermann (Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion, op. cit., p. 34-85) is considered by Reinick as "much too critical and full of mistakes" (Introduction to the Syriac version, op. cit., p. XVI). A French translation of the text of the Vaticanum can be found in: F.J. Martinez, Eastern Christian Apocalyptic in Early Muslim Period. Pseudo-Methodius and Pseudo-Athanasius, Volume 1, Washington D.C. 1985. Pseudo-Methodius: Part I, Chapter I: The Syriac Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius (MP), p. 2-205.
212 About these Greek and Latin translations cf.: Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius. Die ältesten griechischen und lateinischen Übersetzungen, ed. by W.J. Aerts und G.A.A. Kortekaas (CSCO, Vol. 570; Subsidia, tomus 98), Löwen 1998.
213 G. J. Reinick, in: CSCO, Tomus 220, VII.
214 G. J. Reinick, in: ibid.; p. VII-XIV.
215 The person after whom the apocalypse was named is the Syrian bishop and martyr Methodios of Olympos (died during the persecution of Decius, thus in the middle of the third century), who was erroneously thought to be the author.
216 A part of the sources are mentioned by H. Suermann, Die geschichtliche Reaktion, op. cit., p. 130-136. These sources are very interesting from the point of view of the history of religion, as some of the motives they contain have entered the Qur'ān (e.g. the tales of Gog and Magog or motives from the Alexander romance).
217 Cush is one of the sons of (C)ham, a son of Noah. He was the father of the hunter Nimrod, who founded a great empire in Mesopotamia (Gen. 10:6-12; similarly in 1 Chr. 1:8-10). This mythical genealogy is dealt with again in Pseudo-Methodios. At that time, C(h)ush was a designation for Ethiopia.
218 Pseudo-Methodius, chap. 9:8-9; German according to: ed. G. J. Reinick, p. 32.
219 The thesis of a Jacobite author is merely based on the great importance of Cush (כּוּשׁ Kūš; also: Ethiopia) for the salvation history as presented. At that time, Ethiopia had already become Monophysite.

220 Pseudo-Methodius, chap. 10.6; German: ed. G. J. Reinick, p. 39.
221 Pseudo-Methodius, chap. 12,3; German: ed. G. J. Reinick, p. 54-55.
222 Pseudo-Methodius, chap. 13,15; German: ed. G. J. Reinick, p. 65.
223 Pseudo-Methodius, chap. 13,19; German: ed. G. J. Reinick, p. 67.
224 Pseudo-Methodius, chap. 13,21; German: ed. G. J. Reinick, p. 69.
225 Pseudo-Methodius, chap. 14,13.14; German: ed. G. J. Reinick, p. 77-78.
226 G. J. Reinick, Der edessenische "Pseudo-Methodius", in: Byzantinische Zeitschrift 83, 1990, p. 39.
227 G. J. Reinick, ibid.
228 G. J. Reinick, ibid., p. 40.
229 G. J. Reinick, ibid., p. 42-43.
230 Pseudo-Methodius, final sentences of chap. 10.
231 Pseudo-Methodius, chap. 11,5; German: ed. G. J. Reinick, p. 43.
232 Pseudo-Methodius, chap. 11,3; German: ed. G. J. Reinick, p. 42.
233 Pseudo-Methodius, chap. 11,17; German: ed. G. J. Reinick, p. 50.
234 Because, like already in chap. 11, Sicily is mentioned, which was only conquered in 827, and the land of the Greeks and Romans, which were conquered even later, Suermann (ibid., p. 150) thinks that the author "simply expanded the boundaries of experienced history".
235 Pseudo-Methodius, Chap. 13,6; German: ed. G. J. Reinick, p. 60.
236 G. J. Reinick, in: ed. G. J. Reinick, p. 60, A.20.
237 Pseudo-Methodius 13,11; German: ed. G. J. Reinick, p. 62.
238 The number 60 is also important in the Islamic traditional literature.
239 Pseudo-Methodius, chap. 5,5; German: ed. G. J. Reinick, p. 13.
240 Pseudo-Methodius, chap. 5,6; German: ed. G. J. Reinick, p. 13-14.
241 Pseudo-Methodius, chap. 5,1.2; German: ed. G. J. Reinick, p. 11.
242 Pseudo-Methodius, chap. 5, p.3-4.
243 Pseudo-Methodius, chap. 5,7; German: ed. G. J. Reinick, p. 14.
244 Pseudo-Methodius, chap. 5,8; German: ed. G. J. Reinick, p. 14.15.
245 Pseudo-Methodius, chap.5,9; German: ed. G. J. Reinick, p. 15.
246 H. Suermann, Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion, op. cit., p. 159.
247 About Mecca cf. the following text.
248 Thus F.J. Martinez, The apocalyptic Genre in Syriac, op. cit., p. 341.
249 F.J. Martinez, ibid., p. 342.
250 Syriac text and German transl. in: H. Suermann, Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion, op. cit., p. 86-97.
251 H. Suermann, ibid., p. 162.
252 Cf. H. Suermann, ibid., p. 171-174.
253 Thus H. Suermann, ibid., p. 163.
254 The Gospel of the twelve Apostles, together with the apocalypses of each one of them, ed. from the Syriac Ms. with a Translation and Introduction by J. Rendel Harris (ed. J.R. Harris), Cambridge 1900.
255 H. Suermann, Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion, op. cit., p. 175.
256 Han J.W. Drijvers, The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles: A Syriac Apocalypse from the Early Islamic Period, in: Id., History and Religion in Late Antique Syria, Aldershot (Great Britain), Brookfield (USA) 1994, chap. VIII, 209; the sources of the script are discussed on p. 209-211.
257 H. Suermann, Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion, op. cit., p. 191.

258 J.R. Harris, in: ed. J.R. Harris, p. 20-23.
259 H.J.W. Drijvers, The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles, op. cit., p. 189.
260 H. Suermann, Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion, op. cit., p. 178-191.
261 H. Suermann, ibid., p. 189-190.
262 H. Suermann, ibid., p. 189-190.
263 Apokalypse des Johannes, in: ed. J.R. Harris, p. 34-36.
264 Ibid., in: ed. J.R. Harris, p. 36; German according to: H. Suermann, Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion, op. cit., p. 102.
265 Apokalypse des Johannes, in: ed. J.R. Harris, p.36; German acc. to H. Suermann, op. cit., p. 102.
266 H.J.W. Drijvers, The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles, op. cit., p. 203.
267 Apokalypse des Johannes, in: ed. J.R. Harris, p. 37; German acc. to H. Suermann, ibid.
268 H.J.W. Drijvers, The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles, op. cit., p. 201, considers the "Northern" emperor, who will "come in the end" to be Constantine.
269 Apokalypse des Johannes, in: ed. J.R. Harris, ibid., p. 38; German acc. to H. Suermann, ibid., p. 106.
270 Diglath "is the exact equivalent of the Arabic Dijla, the river Tigris" (H.J.W. Drijvers, The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles, op. cit., p. 208).
271 Apokalypse des Johannes, in: ed. J.R. Harris, ibid., p. 38-39; German acc. to H. Suermann, ibid., p. 108.
272 H.J.W. Drijvers, The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles, op. cit. 201.
273 Cf. H.J.W. Drijver, ibid. 206.
274 This opinion is shared by H.J.W. Drijvers, ibid. passim and H. Suermann, ibid. 179.
275 Cf. K.-H. Ohlig, From muḥammad Jesus to Prophet of the Arabs.
276 H.J.W. Drijvers, The Gospel of Twelve Apostles, op. cit., p. 213.
277 Cf. K.-H. Ohlig, From muḥammad Jesus to Prophet of the Arabs, and Volker Popp, From Ugarit to Samarrā', both in the present anthology.
278 For the first time published in 1743 in Saloniki, then again by A. Jellinek, Bet ha-Midrasch, Leipzig 1855, vol. IV, VIII, IX and printed again on p. 117-126.
279 Heinrich Graetz, Geschichte der Juden, vol. 5, Darmstadt 1998 [Reprint of Leipzig 1909], p. 465. About the sources of information cf. ibid., p. 464-471. Similarly Bernard Lewis, An Apocalyptic Vision of Islamic History, in: Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, Volume XIII: Part I, London 1949, p. 309-311.
280 An English translation based on the edition by A. Jellinek in: B. Lewis, An Apocalyptic Vision, ibid., p. 311-320.
281 Cf. B. Lewis, An Apocalyptic Vision, ibid., p. 331-335.
282 Secrets, quoted according to the English translation by B. Lewis, An Apocalyptic Vision, ibid., p. 321.
283 H. Graetz, Geschichte der Juden, op. cit., p. 465.
284 B. Lewis, An Apocalyptic Vision, op. cit., p. 327.
285 B. Lewis, ibid., p. 328.

286 Homily about the holy children of Babylon, as the first of three Coptic sermons printed about this subject; edited and translated by Henri de Vis: Panégyrique des Trois Saints Enfants de Babylone, 1. Premier Panégyrique. Acéphale, in: Homélies coptes de la Vaticane II, texte copte publié et traduit par Henri de Vis (Cahiers de la Bibliothèque copte, Strasbourg), Louvain, Paris 1990, p. 60-120.
287 H. de Vis in his introduction to Panegyricus, ibid., p. 60.
288 H. de Vis, ibid., p. 62.
289 H. de Vis, ibid.
290 R.G. Hoyland, Seeing Islam as Others saw it, op. cit., p. 120-121.
291 Sermon about the Holy Children of Babylon § 36, in: ed. de Vis, p. 100.
292 R.G. Hoyland, Seeing Islam as Others saw it, op. cit., p. 121.
293 P. Bruns, B. Windau, Benjamin von Alexandrien, in: LACL, p. 107-108.
294 R.G. Hoyland, Seeing Islam as Others saw it, op. cit., p. 134-135.
295 Harald Suermann, Die Apokalypse des Ps.-Athanasius. Ein Beispiel für die koptische Auseinandersetzung mit der islamischen Herrschaft im Ägypten der Ummayyadenzeit, in: Walter Beltz (ed.), Die koptische Kirche in den ersten drei islamischen Jahrhunderten (Beiträge zum gleichnamigen Leucorea-Kolloquium 2002, Hallesche Beiträge zur Orientwissenschaft), Halle 2003, p. 183-197. Id., Koptische Texte zur arabischen Eroberung Ägyptens und der Umayyaden-herrschaft, in: Journal of Coptic Studies 4, 2002, p. 167-186.
296 H. Suermann, Die Apokalypse des Ps.-Athansius, op. cit., p. 183.
297 Geschichte der Patriarchen 17 (Patrologia Orientalis 5, p. 68).
298 H. Suermann, Die Apokalypse des Ps.-Athanasius, op. cit., p. 192, with references to F.J. Martinez, Apocalyptic, p. 264-267.
299 Chronicle of John of Nikiu, chap. 121, 10.11; in: The Lines of John (c. 690 CE) Coptic Bishop of Nikiu, ed. and transl. by Robert H. Church, London 1916, p. 201.
300 Y. D. Nevo and J. Koren, Crossroads to Islam, op. cit., p. 233-235.
301 Christoph Luxenberg, Neudeutung der arabischen Inschrift im Felsendom zu Jerusalem, op. cit.
302 H. Suermann, Die Apokalypse des Ps.-Athanasius, op. cit., p. 184-185.
303 R. G. Hoyland, Seeing Islam as Others saw it, op. cit., p. 279-282.
304 English translation of the interpolation in R.G. Hoyland, ibid., p. 280-281.
305 Cf. Huge G. Evelyn White, The Monasteries of the Wadi 'n Natrun, vol. 2, New York 1932, p. 171-175.
306 H. Suermann, Die Apokalypse des Ps.-Athanasius, op. cit., p. 185.
307 H. Suermann, Die Apokalypse des Ps.-Athanasius, op. cit., p. 185.
308 H. Suermann, ibid., p. 186.
309 Henricus Tattam, Prophetae majores in dialecto Aegytiacae seu coptica, II, Oxford 1852, p. 386-405; French translation: Frédéric Macler, Les Apocalypses Apocryphes de Daniel, (Suite) III, in: Revue de l'histoire des religions 33, 1896, p. 163-176 (F. Macler, Les Apocalypses Apocryphes).
310 Cf. F. Macler, Les Apocalypses Apocryphes, p. 163: "Exaspérée par le malheur, elle (l'église copte) se réfugia dans des espérances apocalyptiques".
311 H. Suermann, Die Apokalypse des Ps.-Athanasius, op. cit., p. 196.
312 F. Macler, Les apocalypses apocryphes, p. 165.
313 F. Macler, ibid. p. 165.

314 Edition of the Coptic text by Francisco Javier Martinez, Sahidic Apocalyse of Pseudo-Athanasius, in: id., Eastern Apocalyptic, op. cit., p. 247-590 (Coptic/-Arabic p. 285-411).
315 Cf. H. Suermann, Die Apokalypse des Ps.-Athanasius, op. cit., p. 188-189.
316 Pseudo-Athanasius IX, 8 (ed. Martinez, p. 529).
317 H. Suermann, Die Apokylypse des Ps.-Athanasius, op. cit., p. 191.
318 Pseudo-Athanasius IX, 7 (ed. Martinez, p. 528).
319 F.R. Gahbauer, Germanus von Konstantinopel, in: LACL, 253.
320 Sancti Germani Patriarchae Constantinopolitani Epistolae Dogmaticae, in: MPG 98, 147 A -222 B.
321 All this in one column of a page in the "Migne".
322 Germanus, Dogmatische Briefe, MPG 93, 168 C.D.
323 Robert Volk, Johannes von Damaskus, in: LACL 344.345; id., Johannes v. Damaskus, in: LThK3 5, p. 895-896.
324 Johannes Damascenus (John of Damascus), Über die Häresien, Kapitel 100, in: Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskus, Vol. IV, Liber de haeresibus. Opera polemica, ed. by Bonifatius Kotter (PTS 22), Berlin, New York 1981, p. 60-67 (ed. B. Kotter).
325 Johannes Damascenus, Disputatio Christiani et Saraceni, in: Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskus, Vol. IV (PTS 22), ibid., p. 427-438. Greek with a French translation in: Jean Damascène, Écrit sur l'islam, ed. by Raymond Le Coz (Sources chrétiennes, 383), p. 228-250; the French version "translates" the term "Saracen" with "musulman (Muslim)", which in this case might be an admissible interpretation, but not an appropriate translation.
326 Disputatio Christiani et Saraceni, ed. B. Kotter, p. 432.
327 Ibid.; ibid., p. 438.
328 R. Volk, Johannes v. Damaskus, in: LThK35, p. 897.
329 Cf. B. Kotter, in: ed. B. Kotter, p. 71-77.
330 R. Volk, Johannes v. Damaskus, in: LThK35, p. 896.
331 If we assume that the 100th chapter is an addition by a later redactor, – which is possible, albeit not probable, – then that would mean that the point in time when Islam became a truly separate religion would have to be shifted to an even later era.
332 Liber de haeresibus 100; ed. B. Kotter, p. 60, lines 1-6. cf. about this question S. Dörper, Zum Problem des Völkernamens Saraceni, op. cit., p. 100.
333 He obviously considers the Morning Star and Aphrodite as two separate deities.
334 In John's treatise, Chabar (Xabar) is the Greek transcription of Arabic *kabar*, "(to be) great". As he adds the meaning "great" himself, no other interpretation is possible (as e.g. Syriac chabar = child, Arabisch ḫabar = news).
335 About the name of the pseudo-prophet cf. K.-H. Ohlig, From muḥammad Jesus to Prophet of the Arabs, in the present anthology, (see also A. 11, about the spelling "Mamed").
336 The theology of early surahs is pre-Nicean-Syrian. John did not know this history of theology and interpreted within the context of Arianism, a doctrine he knew well and which admittedly possesses similar traits.

337 Johannes Damascenus, Liber de haeresibus 100; ed. B. Kotter, p. 60, lines 7-13.
338 Johannes Damascenus, Liber de haeresibus 100; ed. B. Kotter, p. 60, lines 14, -61, lines 2.
339 Johannes Damascenus, Liber de haeresibus 100, ed. B. Kotter, p. 61, lines 17-25.
340 Johannes Damascenus, Liber de haeresibus 100; ed. B. Kotter, p. 61, lines 25-31.
341 Johannes Damascenus, Liber de haeresibus 100; ed. B. Kotter, p. 61, lines 32, -62, lines 54.
342 Johannes Damascenus, Liber de haeresibus 100; ed. B. Kotter, p. 63, lines 61-68; Johannes distinguishes between *hó theós* for "God" und *theós* (divine) for Jesus Christ.
343 Johannes Damascenus, Liber de haeresibus 100; ed. B. Kotter, p. 63, lines 69-70.
344 Johannes Damascenus, Liber de haeresibus 100; ed. B. Kotter, p. 64, lines 78-93.
345 Johannes Damascenus, Liber de haeresibus 100; ed. B. Kotter, p. 64, lines 96.
346 Johannes Damascenus, ibid.; ed. B. Kotter, p. 64, lines 96, -65, lines 99; cf. about this question surah 4:3.
347 Johannes Damascenus, ibid.; ed. B. Kotter, p. 65, lines 99.100; cf. surah 4:20.
348 Johannes Damascenus, ibid.; ed. B. Kotter, p. 65, lines 100-107.
349 Johannes Damascenus, ibid.; ed. B. Kotter, p. 65, lines 108.
350 Johannes Damascenus, ibid.; ed. B. Kotter, p. 65, lines 108-110.
351 Johannes Damascenus, ibid.; ed. B. Kotter, p. 65, lines 114 - 66, lines 148.
352 Cf. e.g. surahs 26:155-159; 11:65; 17:59.
353 A. Sprenger. Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammed nach bisher grösstentheils unbenutzten Quellen, 1st vol., Berlin ^{2}1869, p. 518-525.
354 Johannes Damascenus, ibid.; ed. B. Kotter, p. 67, lines 149-156.
355 Johannes Damascenus, ibid.; ed. B. Kotter, p. 67, lines 149.150; cf. surah 5:112-115.
356 Johannes Damascenus, ibid.; ed. Kotter, p. 67, lines 152-156.
357 Thus H. Suermann, Einige Bemerkungen zu syrischen Apokalypsen des 7. JHDS., op. cit., p. 332; with bibliographical references for his thesis.
358 Other texts would have to be mentioned here: A Frankish chronicle of Fredegar, the "Siegeszeichen von Damaskus", Notes of the Pilgrim Arculf, a Vision of Henochs the Just, a Greek interpolation of the Syrian pseudo-Methodios, a disputation of a monk from Beth Hale with an Arab, the introduction of a code of laws of Ishoboct of Fars and a tale of Stephen of Alexandria. The authenticity of all these text fragments is highly questionable, mostly they have to be dated as much later and/or they are irrelevant for our questions.
359 German translation in Theodor Nöldeke, Zur Geschichte der Araber im 1. Jahrhundert d.H. aus syrischen Quellen, in: Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft 1875, p. 76-82; English translation (with deviations if compared to Nöldeke) in: ed. A. Palmer, p. 2-4.
360 R.G. Hoyland, Seeing Islam as Others saw it, op. cit., p. 116.117
361 Y.D. Nevo and J. Koren, Crossroads to Islam, op. cit., p. 110-114.
362 Cf. about this question Chr. Luxenberg, Neudeutung der arabischen Inschrift im Felsendom zu Jerusalem, op. cit.
363 The biography was allegedly written in the year 774 and summarized together with the biographies of two other founders of monasteries as the Quartmin-trilogy.
364 R.G. Hoyland, Seeing Islam as Others saw it, op. cit., p. 123.124.

365 Chronicle of 819, in: ed. A. Palmer, p. 7.
366 Cf. about this question R.G. Hoyland, Seeing Islam as Others saw it, op. cit., p. 87-91.
367 Cf. about this question e.g. Samir K. Samir, The Prophet Muhammad as seen by Timothy I. and other Arab Christian Authors, in: David Thomas (ed.), Syrian Christians under Islam. The First Thousand Years, Leiden, Boston, Köln 2001, p. 75-106.
368 Cf. about this question above, p. 226 f.
369 Cf. about this question V. Popp, From Ugarit to Samarrā', op. cit., and K.-H. Ohlig, From muḥammad Jesus to Prophet of the Arabs.
370 Cf. about this question o. V. Popp, From Ugarit to Samarrā', op. cit.
371 Cf. K.-H. Ohlig, Fundamentalchristologie. Im Spannungsfeld von Christentum und Kultur, München 1986, p. 175.
372 Die Schatzhöhle, ed. Bezold, p. 70.
373 According to Latin theology the statement that the Syrians have no share of the blood of Christ would have led to the conclusion that they would not be saved by the blood, the only basis of justification (cf. e.g. Tertullian, De carne Christi [around 210-212] 5:3 (CCL 2, 881): the cross is "the only hope of the whole world". The function of the cross within the context of salvation is explicitly mentioned in St. Augustine (cf. K.-H. Ohlig, Fundamentalchristologie, op. cit. p. 343-359).
374 Cf. about this question K.-H. Ohlig, Das syrische und arabische Christentum und der Islam, op. cit., p. 395-396.
375 There was a thesis current in the area – which goes back to Monophysite motives – that the nature of the human Jesus was not influenced by desires and passions from his conception to his death, that he was not subject to suffering and indestructible. In the 7th and 8th century, it led to violent debates, e.g. in the Armenian Church. Cf. about this question Peter Cowe, Philoxenus of Mabbug and the Synod of Manazkert, in: ARAM. A Festschrift for Dr. Sebastian P. Brock, Volume 5, 1 and 2, Leuven 1993, p. 115-129.
376 S. Brock, Syriac Views of Emergent Islam, op. cit., p. 21.
377 Cf. o. A. 119.
378 Cf. text 7 above.