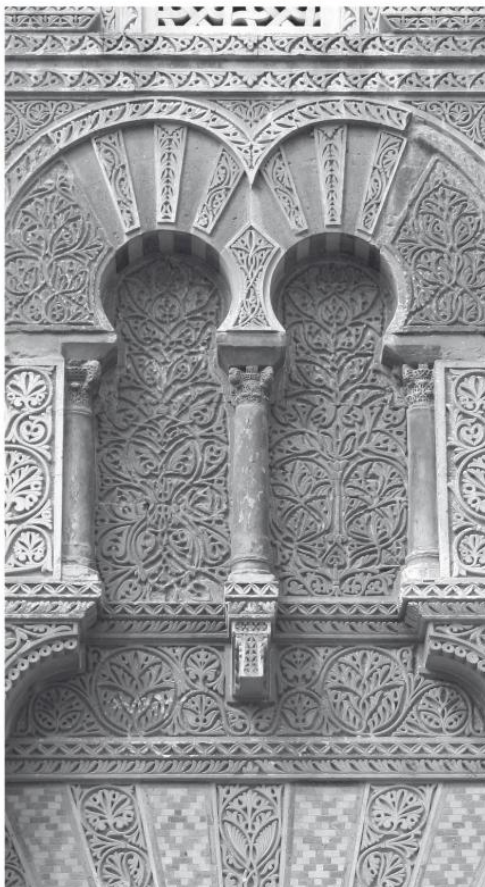


# Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History

*Volume 2 (900-1050)*

*Edited by David Thomas  
and Alex Mallett*



*With*

Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala

Johannes Pahlitzsch

Mark Swanson

Herman Teule

John Tolan

BRILL

Christian-Muslim Relations  
A Bibliographical History

# History of Christian-Muslim Relations

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Volume 14

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*front cover illustration:* This shows a detail from one of the doorways into the Great Mosque at Cordova, known as La Mezquita. Built on the site of a Visigoth chapel, it was begun in 785 and continued to be expanded in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. After the Christian conquest of Cordova in the 13<sup>th</sup> century it was converted into a church, and become the cathedral of the city.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Christians and Muslims have been involved in exchanges over matters of faith and morality since the founding of Islam. Attitudes between the faiths today are deeply coloured by the legacy of past encounters, and often preserve centuries-old negative views.

*The History of Christian-Muslim Relations, Texts and Studies* presents the surviving record of past encounters in authoritative, fully introduced text editions and annotated translations, and also monograph and collected studies. It illustrates the development in mutual perceptions as these are contained in surviving Christian and Muslim writings, and makes available the arguments and rhetorical strategies that, for good or for ill, have left their mark on attitudes today. The series casts light on a history marked by intellectual creativity and occasional breakthroughs in communication, although on the whole beset by misunderstanding and misrepresentation. By making this history better known, the series seeks to contribute to improved recognition between Christians and Muslims in the future.

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## FOREWORD

David Thomas

*Christian-Muslim Relations, a Bibliographical History 2 (CMR 2)* is the second volume of a general history of relations between Christians and Muslims as this is recorded in written sources. Volume 1 covers the years 600 to 900, this volume carries the history from 900 to 1050, volume 3 takes it on to 1200, and volume 4, which is currently in preparation, takes it further from 1200 to 1500. It is hoped to continue the history through the five hundred years from 1500 to 2000 in further volumes in the series. This and the other two volumes up to 1500 cover the geographical area of what can loosely be called the extended Mediterranean basin, while the other volumes will follow Muslims and Christians through all parts of the world as they have recorded their attitudes about one another and their mutual encounters in a multitude of new circumstances.

The intention of this project is to include within its scope documented accounts of all the known works written by Christians and Muslims about one another and against one another. These accounts are designed to provide a starting point for scholarly investigation into the works and their authors, and into whatever relationships exist between them, paving the way for a full and detailed history of Christian-Muslim relations and all the currents and influences comprised within it. Of course, it is more than a single individual or group could accomplish, and the project leaders have drawn upon the expertise of the wider scholarly community, which has been readily and generously given, and have been assisted by leading authorities in bringing together entries that hopefully reflect the latest scholarship, and in some instances take it forward. Naturally, this scholarship does not stand still, and so updates on details of the entries are invited, together with additions and corrections where, despite all best efforts, there are omissions and mistakes.

In this volume, like its predecessor and the others that are planned, there is an initial introductory essay that surveys relations between the faiths in the period, followed by a series of essays on works that are of main importance to Christian-Muslim relations but do not fit easily into the format adopted for entries on individual works. While



the topics covered in these essays include information of fundamental importance for the attitudes of Muslims and Christians towards one another, the individual elements of which they are made up – scattered mentions in historical and geographical works, single clauses in treaties and commercial agreements, and isolated legal statements amid large bodies of rulings and regulations – each presents a tiny part of a picture that only becomes more complete and comprehensible when they are all brought together.

Following these essays come the entries that make up the bulk of the work. Something should be said about the principles that have been used to determine what has and has not been included in the bibliographical history. As is mentioned above, the basic criterion was that a work is written substantially about or against the other faith, or contains significant information or judgements that cast light on attitudes of one faith towards the other. Thus, by their very nature apologetic and polemical works are included, while, with some notable exceptions, large historical and geographical works are usually not, even though they may refer to the other in passing. Only works that contribute in a major way towards building the picture of the one as seen by the other and of attitudes between them are included.

These principle criteria are easily applicable in many cases, but they prove difficult in a significant minority of instances. An inclusive approach has therefore been adopted, especially with respect to works that may contain only small though insightful details or only appear to touch obliquely on relations, and also to works that are no longer extant and whose contents can only be inferred from a title or a reference by a later author. It is possible that future discoveries will either confirm these decisions or show that they have been too broad.

Another criterion that should be explained is that inclusion of a work was decided according to the date of its author's death, not according to the date when it appeared. This is because so many works from this period have no indication of a date, though it has led to evident anomalies at either end, where authors are mainly or almost entirely active in one century but have died at the beginning of the next: to cite a glaring example, the historian al-Ya'qūbī, who gives a most instructive account of the life of Christ in his *Tārīkh*, is included in this volume because he (probably) died after 900, even though his history was complete before 880. If this seems arbitrary, it is balanced by the consideration that any other criterion would also involve decisions that might easily be challenged.

Each entry is divided into two main parts. The first is concerned with the author, and it contains basic biographical details, an account of his main intellectual activities and writings, the main primary sources of information about him, and the latest works by present day scholars on him and his intellectual involvements and achievements. Without aiming to be exhaustive, this section contains sufficient information for readers to pursue further details about the author and his general activities.

The second part of the entry is concerned with the works of the author that are specifically devoted to the other faith. And here completeness is the aim. This part is sub-divided according to the number of the author's works included. In each sub-division a work is named and dated (where possible), and then in two important sections its contents are described and its significance in the history of Christian-Muslim relations is appraised. There follow sections on the manuscript witnesses of the work (where a recent edition or study provides an authoritative list of these, this is cited instead of a complete list being given), published editions and translations, and lastly studies. It is intended that these will be completely up to date at the time of going to press.

With this coverage, *CMR 2* should provide sufficient information to enable a work to be identified, its importance appreciated, and its earliest witnesses and studies on it located. Each work is also placed as far as is possible in the historical progression of relations between the faiths, allowing it to be seen in the context of other works from the same time. Thus, a work written in Greek may be found next to a work written in Syriac, which may be followed by a Muslim Arabic work, which in turn will be followed by a Latin or Georgian work. This arrangement makes it possible to discern some sort of development in dealings between the faiths. Of course, proximity between works in the bibliography is definitely not an indication of any necessary direct relationship between them, let alone influence (though this may sometimes be deducible). What it does provide is a gauge of relations between the faiths in any stretch of time. But it must always be considered only a rough guide, and its limitations should be particularly borne in mind in the case of anonymous works or works by little-known authors which can only be allocated to a general period, and even more in the case of works whose dating is debated and disputed.

The composition of this history has been undertaken by more than two hundred individual contributors, who readily and often

enthusiastically accepted the invitations of the project leaders. The project was led by Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala (Iberian Arabic texts), Johannes Pahlitzsch (Greek texts), Alex Mallett (Research Fellow and minor languages), Mark Swanson (Christian Arabic texts), Herman Teule (Syriac texts), David Thomas (Director, and Muslim Arabic texts), and John Tolan (Latin texts). Particular advice was given by a group of close colleagues, and in addition Carol Rowe gave practical help in the form of careful copy editing, while the staff editors at Brill gave constant encouragement. The project team are deeply indebted to everyone who has contributed in one way or another.

The project was funded by a grant made by the Arts and Humanities Research Council of Great Britain, which is acknowledged with gratitude.

As has been said, strenuous efforts have been made to ensure the information given in each entry is both accurate and complete, though it would be not only presumptuous but also unrealistic to claim that these efforts have succeeded entirely and in every instance. Details (hopefully only minor) must have been overlooked, new works will have come to light, new editions, translations and studies will have appeared, and new datings agreed. Corrections, additions and updates are therefore invited; these will be incorporated into the on-line version of *CMR 2* and into further editions. Details of these should be sent to David Thomas, at [cmr@brill.nl](mailto:cmr@brill.nl).

## ABBREVIATIONS

‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt*

‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt dalā’il al nubuwwa*, ed. ‘A.-K. ‘Uthmān,  
2 vols, Beirut, 1966

Assemani, *BO*

J.S. Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana*,  
4 vols in 3, Rome, 1719-28 (repr. Hildesheim, 1975)

‘Bibliographie’

R. Caspar et al., ‘Bibliographie du dialogue islamo-chrétien’,  
*Islamochristiana* 1 (1975) 124-81; 2 (1976) 187-249; 3 (1977)  
255-86; 4 (1978) 247-67; 5 (1979) 299-317; 6 (1980) 259-99;  
7 (1981) 299-307; 10 (1984) 273-92; 13 (1987) 173-80; 15  
(1989) 169-74

*Biblioteca de al-Andalus*

J. Lirola and J.M. Puerta (eds), *Biblioteca de al-Andalus*,  
Almeria, 2004-6

BL

British Library

BNF

Bibliothèque nationale de France

Brockelmann, *GAL*

C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur*, 2 vols  
and 3 supplements, Leiden, 1937-49

BSOAS

*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*

BZ

*Byzantinische Zeitschrift*

CE

A.S. Atiya (ed.), *The Coptic encyclopedia*, 8 vols, New York,  
1991

CSCO

*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*

DOP

*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*

EI2

*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.

EI3

*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd ed.

EIr

*Encyclopaedia Iranica**Enciclopedia de al-Andalus**Enciclopedia de al-Andalus. Diccionario de autores y obras andalusíes*, ed. J.L. Delgado and J.M. Puerta Vílchez, Granada, 2002-

EQ

*Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*

Graf

G. Graf, *Catalogue de manuscrits arabes chrétiens conservés au Caire*, Vatican City, 1934

Graf, GCAL

G. Graf, *Geschichte der Christlichen Arabischen Literatur*, 5 vols, Vatican City, 1944-53

Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, 'Uyūn al-anbā'

Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *Kitāb 'uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, 2 vols, ed. A. Müller, Cairo, 1882Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān wa-anbā' abnā' al-zamān*, ed. I. 'Abbās, 8 vols, Beirut, 1968-72Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭabaqāt al-Mu'tazila*Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Kitāb ṭabaqāt al-Mu'tazila*, ed. S. Diwald-Wilzer, *Die Klassen der Mu'taziliten*, Beirut, 1988Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*Ibn al-Nadim, *Kitāb al-fihrist*, ed. M. Riḍā-Tajaddud, Tehran, 1971Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tā'rīkh Baghdād*Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tā'rīkh Baghdād*, 14 vols, Cairo, 1931

JAOS

*Journal of the American Oriental Society*

JSAI

*Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*

JSS

*Journal of Semitic Studies*Landron, *Chrétien et musulmans*B. Landron, *Chrétien et musulmans en Irak. Attitudes nestorienne vis-à-vis de l'Islam*, Paris, 1994

- MGH  
*Monumenta Germaniae Historica*
- MIDEO  
*Mélanges de l'Institut Dominicain d'Études Orientales du Caire*
- MW  
*Muslim World*
- Nasrallah, HMLEM  
J. Nasrallah, *Histoire du mouvement littéraire dans l'église melchite du V<sup>e</sup> au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Contribution à l'étude de la littérature arabe chrétienne*, Louvain, 1979-: volume ii.2: 750-X<sup>e</sup> s. (HMLEM ii.2); volume iii.1: 969-1250 (HMLEM iii.1)
- OC  
*Oriens Christianus*
- OCP  
*Orientalia Christiana Periodica*
- ODB  
A. Kazhdan et al. (eds), *The Oxford dictionary of Byzantium*, New York, 1991
- Pd'O  
*Parole de l'Orient*
- PG  
*Patrologia Graeca*
- PL  
*Patrologia Latina*
- PO  
*Patrologia Orientalis*
- Al-Qiftī, *Tārīkh al-ḥukamā'*  
Al-Qiftī, *Tārīkh al-ḥukamā'*, ed. A. Müller and J. Lippert, Leipzig, 1903
- RHC Occ.  
*Recueil des Historiens des Croisades. Historiens occidentaux*, Paris, 1844-95
- RHC Or.  
*Recueil des Historiens des Croisades. Historiens orientaux*, Paris, 1872-1906
- Sbath, *Fihris*  
P. Sbath, *Al-fihris (catalogue de manuscrits arabes)*, Cairo, 1938-40

Sezgin, GAS

F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, 13 vols to date, Leiden, 1967-

Al-Sharfī, *Al-fīkr al-Islāmī*

‘A.-M. al-Sharfī, *al-fīkr al-Islāmī fī l-radd ‘alā l-Naṣārā ilā nihāyat al-qarn al-rābi’/‘āshir*, Tunis, 1986

Simaika

M. Simaika Pasha, *Fahāris al-makhtūṭāt al-qibṭiyya wa-l-‘arabiyya*, 2 vols, Cairo, 1939-42

Tolan, *Saracens*

J. Tolan, *Saracens. Islam in the medieval European imagination*, New York, 2002

Tolan, *Sons of Ishmael*

J. Tolan, *Sons of Ishmael. Muslims through European eyes in the middle ages*, Gainesville FL, 2008

Vat

Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana

# Introduction

John Tolan

The articles collected in these two volumes, *CMR* 2 and *CMR* 3, deal with Christian-Muslim relations during the period 900-1200. By the beginning of this period, the Abbasid caliphate was firmly ensconced as the major power of a large region stretching from the Hindu Kush to the Atlantic. Within the caliphate lived large communities of Christians and significant (though smaller) communities of Jews and Zoroastrians. By 900, the status of *dhimmī* attributed to these minority communities was well established in law and custom, as we have seen in volume 1. A multitude of Christian churches flourished under the rule of the caliphs: East Syrians (or Nestorians), Melkites, Copts, Armenians, West Syrians (or Jacobites), Mozarab Catholics, to name just a few.

In the capital itself, the Nestorians enjoyed a privileged position. Many of their lay members still had official positions in the administration. Under the Caliph al-Muqtadir, the Nestorian patriarch was even appointed as the sole representative of all Christian communities in Baghdad (at the cost of the Melkites and the West Syrians.).<sup>1</sup>

It is of course impossible to generalize about the fates of *dhimmī* communities across this huge territory over the course of three centuries. Answers to the most fundamental questions remain tentative. When, for example, do Muslims become a numerical majority in these societies? No hard demographic evidence exists to tell us when Muslims passed from being a minority to a majority, but educated guesses are around 825 for Iran, 900 for Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century for Iberia.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For an introduction to this community: H. Teule, *Les Assyro-chaldéens*, Turnhout, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> These are the estimates of R. Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval period. An essay in quantitative history*, Cambridge MA, 1979, pp. 44, 82, 97, 109. Other scholars have questioned Bulliet's figures; for an overview of this debate, see M. Morony, 'The Age of Conversions. A reassessment,' in M. Gervers and R. Bikhazi (eds), *Conversion and continuity. Indigenous Christian communities in Islamic lands, eighth to eighteenth centuries*, Toronto, 1990), pp. 135-50. For the debate concerning the rate of conversion to Islam in Spain, see Bulliet, *Conversion*, pp. 44, 50-51; D. Wassertein,



Thus while for most of the period covered in *CMR* 1, Christians remained a numerical majority in Muslim-ruled societies, by the period covered in this volume they were becoming a minority – although they remained a quite significant one in most areas.

Effective control over this enormous territory had always been uneven, to say the least. At its edges, what could be hoped for at best was theoretical recognition of caliphal authority. Yet even this was, in the period that concerns us, rapidly to come to an end. In 909, the Ismaelite Shī‘ī leader Abū Muḥammad ‘Abdallāh (‘Ubaydallāh) al-Mahdī bi-llāh took the title of Caliph, establishing the Fatimid caliphate in Ifriqiya (roughly what is now Tunisia). The Fatimids conquered Egypt in 969 and named their new capital ‘the Victorious’ (al-Qāhira, Cairo); the Fatimids were a major power in the Middle East for the next two centuries. The Fatimids took advantage of Egypt’s position at the crossroads of international commercial routes that linked it with the Mediterranean and with the Red Sea and Indian Ocean. Egyptian merchants, both Muslim and *dhimmī*, prospered, as is clearly seen, for example, in the thousands of letters, contracts and other commercial documents contained in the Cairo Genizah.<sup>3</sup>

Two Christian churches existed in Egypt, each with its own patriarch, its own liturgy and its own hierarchy: the miaphysite Coptic Church and the duophysite Melkite Church. Christians, Jews and Sunnī Muslims faced persecution under the reign of the Caliph al-Ḥākim (996-1021), who ordered the destruction of many synagogues and churches (including the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem in 1009). Yet this was exceptional: on the whole Jewish and Christian communities flourished in Fatimid Egypt. Their merchants in general paid the same import duties as Muslim merchants; they were simply required to carry an attestation that they had paid the annual *jizya*. This is not to deny the burden that the *jizya* and other taxes and fines sometimes represented to the *dhimmī* communities. The preserved biographies of the Coptic Orthodox patriarchs during the period treated in this volume, for example, give much space to the financial challenges that these patriarchs faced, and periodic increases in the

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*The rise and fall of the party kings. Politics and society in Islamic Spain, 1002-1086*, Princeton NJ, 1985, pp. 168, 237-38; Morony, ‘Age of Conversions’, p. 136; M. de Epalza, ‘Mozarabs. An emblematic Christian minority in al-Andalus’, in S.K. Jayyusi (ed.), *The legacy of Muslim Spain*, Leiden, 1992, pp. 149-70.

<sup>3</sup> S. Goitein, *A Mediterranean society. The Jewish communities of the Arab world as portrayed in the documents of the Cairo Geniza*, 6 vols, Berkeley, 1966-88.

*jizya* could serve as a spur to conversion. And the situation of *dhimmīs* became more precarious in the chaotic final decades of Fatimid rule. When Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (Saladin) abolished the Fatimid caliphate in 1171, he tried to impose a higher tax rate on non-Muslim merchants, but was soon convinced not to do so.<sup>4</sup>

Spain (and at times parts of the Maghreb) had been controlled, since the mid-8<sup>th</sup> century, by the descendants of the former Umayyad caliphs. In 929, the Cordoban emir, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, took the title of Caliph: the Umayyad caliphate dominated the Iberian Peninsula and was the principal maritime power in the western Mediterranean until the early 11<sup>th</sup> century, when it imploded in succession struggles and gave way to a series of petty emirates (known to historians as ‘taifa kingdoms’). While the life of Christian communities is less well-documented than for earlier or later periods, large Christian communities continued to exist in many of the *taifas*. Apart from the immigration and deportation suffered by some Christians, most significant for the Christian communities living under Muslim rule in al-Andalus was their deep degree of Arabicization in the urban context, whereas in the rural environment they spoke Romance. The role played by the Eastern Christians who immigrated to al-Andalus was significant for the Christian communities from both the ideological and the textual viewpoints, as is evident from the settlements of Byzantine monks in the Ebro valley, and from Palestinian monks who arrived in al-Andalus in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, as well as from the Peninsular Christians who travelled in eastern lands or those who eventually settled there, among whom there were probably some Nestorians.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, the Eastern Roman (or Byzantine) Empire in the 10<sup>th</sup> century embarked on a military expansion both in the northwest (against the Bulgars) and in the east against Arabs. Nicephoros Phocas captured Crete in 961 and conquered much of Syria and Mesopotamia between 964 and 969; his successor John I Tzimiskes (969-76) pursued these conquests. In general, the Muslims in the conquered territory were reduced to slavery and sold throughout the empire, while Christians (both miaphysite Syrian Christians and Greek Orthodox) were settled in the conquered areas. Thus few free

<sup>4</sup> Goitein, *A Mediterranean society* i, pp. 344-45; see Swanson, *The Coptic papacy in Islamic Egypt*, chs 4 and 5.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. J.P. Monferrer Sala, ‘A Nestorian Arabic Pentateuch used in Western Islamic lands’, in D. Thomas (ed.), *The Bible in Arab Christianity*, Leiden, 2007, 351-68.

Muslims lived in Byzantine territory: most were slaves, captives, or temporary visitors (merchants or diplomats).

Abbasid suzerainty was thus threatened from three directions: by heirs to the Umayyads in Andalus, by Shi'ī Fatimids in Egypt, and by a renascent Byzantine military power. Yet the expansion of Byzantines and Fatimids, in the late 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, was confronted by another emerging power: the Seljuk Turks. The conversion of large numbers of Turks and their integration into the Iranian-Arab heartlands of the Muslim world had begun in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The Seljuks in the 11<sup>th</sup> century established a political empire that at its height stretched from the high plateaus of Afghanistan to the Aegean shores of Anatolia. The Sunni Seljuks, who recognized the spiritual authority of the Abbasid caliph in Baghdad, were frequently in conflict with the Fatimids, notably in Syria/Palestine, and with the Byzantines in Syria, Mesopotamia and Anatolia. In 1071, Seljuk Sultan Alp Arslan delivered a heavy blow to the Byzantines at the battle of Manzikert, where he defeated and captured Emperor Romanus Diogenes. Alp Arslan's successor, Malik Shāh (1072-92), ruled an empire stretching from the Aegean to what is now Afghanistan; the Seljuks took much of Syria and Palestine from the Fatimids. Yet after Malik Shāh's death in 1092, several of his *atabegs* asserted their power locally and fought with each other.

The Seljuk presence in eastern Anatolia affected of course the life of the local Eastern and Oriental Christians. Echoes of this can be found in the Chronicles of the West-Syrian Patriarch Michael the Syrian (d. 1195), who tells about the destruction of churches and the loss of church property due to 'Turkish' attacks, but is also proud of his personal contacts with the Sultan Qilij Arslan II.<sup>6</sup>

In 1098-99, another player erupted onto the stage of eastern Mediterranean political and military affairs: the *Ifranj*, as the Arab authors called them, the 'Franks', i.e. the European troops of the First Crusade. Launched by Pope Urban II at the Council of Clermont in 1095, the crusade mobilized thousands of Europeans who converged on Constantinople by land and sea between November 1096 and April 1097, then marched across Anatolia, fighting the Rum Seljuks, and besieged Antioch, which they captured in June 1098. The following year they marched to Jerusalem, which they took on 15 July 1099, massacring

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<sup>6</sup> J.-B. Chabot, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, Patriarche Jacobite d'Antioche (1166-1199)*, Paris, 1910, e.g. iii, pp. 373, 390-95.

many of the inhabitants. The crusaders established a series of polities in Jerusalem, Antioch, Edessa, and Tripoli. In these territories, the new European Christian princes ruled over a mix of Muslim, Jewish, Eastern Christian and Latin Christian subjects.

The late 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries also witnessed Christian European conquest of Muslim territories in Sicily, Spain and (for a fleeting few decades) North Africa. Sicily had by the year 1000 split into a series of rival emirates. The Normans of southern Italy intervened in Sicilian politics first, in 1060, as allies of various emirs in their struggles against their neighbors, but eventually asserting their suzerainty over the entire island; their conquest culminated in the capture of Palermo in 1091. The Norman counts (and subsequently kings) of Sicily ruled over a mixed population of Muslims, Greek Christians, Jews and Latin Christians (including immigrants from the Italian mainland over the course of the 12<sup>th</sup> century). Andalusian traveler Ibn Jubayr, who spent four months on the island in 1185, paints a complex picture of Christian-Muslim interactions: he praises King William II's attitude of respect for his Muslim subjects and deference to Muslim scholars and advisors. In many of the towns (Cefalu, Termini, Alcamo, Trapani), Ibn Jubayr met Muslims and describes their communities: their mosques, markets, houses. Traveling between Termini and Palermo he came to Qaṣr Ṣa'd, built in Muslim times and inhabited by pious Muslim ascetics from throughout the island and beyond. At its summit was 'one of the finest mosques in the world'<sup>7</sup>

Ibn Jubayr spent the night there and delighted in hearing the call to prayer, which he had not heard for many weeks. Yet he also describes the frequent humiliations suffered by Muslims and the pressures to convert. Sicily's Norman kings struck coins bearing text in Greek, Latin and Arabic. Roger II minted gold *tarins* which bear, on one side, a cross with the Greek legend: IC XC NIKA, 'Jesus Christ conquers'; the other side has an Arabic inscription bearing the place of mint (Palermo) and the king's *laqab* (honorary name): *al-Mu'tazz bi-llāh*, 'he who finds his force and his glory in God'. On the ceiling of his palatine chapel is an image of the king presented as an Arab potentate, sitting cross-legged, cup in hand, flanked by servants who fan him. This same King Roger II had a coronation mantle on which

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<sup>7</sup> Ibn Jubayr, *Rihla*, ed. W. Wright and M.J. de Goeje, *The travels of Ibn Jubayr edited from a Manuscript in the University Library of Leyde*, Leiden, 1907 (repr. Frankfurt am Main, 1994); trans. R. Broadhurst, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, London, 1952, pp. 345-46.

was represented, on each side of a central palm tree, a lion (symbol of royal power) devouring a camel; the Arabic inscription celebrates the martial virtues of the king.<sup>8</sup>

At the same time as the Normans asserted their domination over Sicily, the Christian kingdoms of northern Spain put increasing pressure on the *taifas* of Andalus. The emirs of the *taifas* in many cases paid hefty tributes (*parias*) to keep the peace with their northern neighbors (just as the Christian kings had once made similar payments to the Cordoban caliphs). Alliances between the many small principalities, it is true, often crossed confessional lines, yet it was the ascendant northern Christians who increasingly had the upper hand, and who expanded their territories by conquering Toledo (Alfonso VI of Castile and León in 1085), Saragossa (Alfonso I of Aragon in 1110) and other territories. The fate of the conquered Muslims in these territories was varied, depending on a variety of circumstances, not least on the stipulations of negotiated surrender treaties. In 12<sup>th</sup>-century Aragon, for example, Muslim residents were expelled from some areas but in others remained to work the lands for their new Christian lords, and continued to enjoy the right not only to practice their religion, but also to participate in the local economy, buying and selling land and its produce.<sup>9</sup>

This wave of conquest was checked by the rise of a new regional power, the Murābiṭūn (or Almoravids), a Berber dynasty that extended its dominion over much of northwestern Africa in the mid-11<sup>th</sup> century. At the behest of several *taifa* emirs, Murabit Emir Yūsuf ibn Tashfīn led his troops into Spain and crushed the forces of Alfonso VI at Zallaqa (or Sagrajas) in 1086, reversing the tide of expansion of Castile-León; the Almoravids annexed Andalus into their growing empire. The new Almoravid elite looked down on the Andalusian Muslims who, during the *taifa* period, not only had submitted to *parias* and made alliances with Christian rulers, but at home had fought amongst themselves and promoted *dhimmīs* to prominent positions in their courts. Almoravid *muftis* and *faqīhs* railed against dissolute Andalusians: 12<sup>th</sup>-century *mufti* Ibn ‘Abdun suggested having boats police the Guadalquivir in Seville to prevent

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<sup>8</sup> See P. Guichard and D. Menjot (eds), *Pays d’Islam et monde latin, X<sup>e</sup>-XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles: textes et documents*, Lyons, 2000, pp. 100-3.

<sup>9</sup> C. Stalls, *Possessing the land. Aragon’s expansion into Islam’s Ebro frontier under Alfonso the Battler, 1104-1134*, Leiden, 1995.

Muslims from sneaking across the river at night to drink wine in the Christian quarter.<sup>10</sup>

Almoravid rule brought in new restrictive legislation against *dhimmīs*, some of whom subsequently emigrated to the east or to the Christian kingdoms of the North. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, a new Berber dynasty, the Muwaḥḥidūn (or Almohads) arose in the Atlas mountains: their leader ‘Abd al-Mu’min (1130-63) took the title of Caliph and conquered large territories including Andalus and northern Africa from Morocco to Libya. The Almonads put increased pressures on *dhimmīs*, leading to widespread emigration and conversion.

Hence the political, social and economic situation of religious minorities differed widely over the three centuries covered in this volume, making impossible any facile generalizations about ‘Muslim’ or ‘Christian’ attitudes towards religious minorities or towards relations with members of other religions. Even within a society, be it Almoravid Seville, Fatimid Cairo or Norman Palermo, attitudes varied widely and could change radically. On the whole, the Muslim legal framework that instituted a protected but inferior status for *dhimmī* was firmly established by the beginning of our period and continued to be respected in most Muslim-ruled areas. By contrast, at the beginning of our period few Muslims lived in Christian-ruled areas. In the late 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, the conquests of Latin Christian rulers in Syria/Palestine, Sicily and the Iberian peninsula brought significant Muslim communities under Latin Christian rule. While treatment of these communities and the legal status accorded to them varied, in many cases they were given the status previously reserved to Jews: as a protected but clearly inferior religious community.<sup>11</sup>

The writers whose works are discussed in these two volumes had very different points of view, depending on their diverse situations: close collaborators with kings or sultans, members of minority religious communities who often resented their inferior social status, observers who feared conquest by a powerful ‘infidel’ neighbor, etc. Feelings of military, political or social superiority (or inferiority) color many of the texts studied here.

The context in which we need to place the authors and texts discussed in these volumes is of course not simply political and military:

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<sup>10</sup> Ibn ‘Abdūn, *Traité de Hisba*, trans. E. Lévi-Provençal, *Séville musulmane au début du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Le traité d’Ibn Abdun sur la vie urbaine et les corps de métiers*, Paris, 1947.

<sup>11</sup> J. Powell (ed.), *Muslims under Latin rule, 1100-1300*, Princeton NJ, 1990.

commercial, cultural, and intellectual exchanges between Christians, Muslims (and of course Jews) were constant and deep, and had a profound impact on medieval societies. Here, too, feelings of inferiority or superiority (intellectual, linguistic, cultural, economic) shaped portrayals of adherents of rival religions.

International commerce had a significant effect on virtually all medieval Christian and Muslim societies. Egyptian merchants, for example, Muslim, Jewish and Christian, were active from India to Portugal and Morocco. The abundant documents from the Geniza archives show that they bought and sold a wide variety of products: foodstuffs (grain, oil, wine, dried fruits), medicinal supplies, perfume, leather, cloth (both raw and woven: cotton, linen, wool), finished products (glass, jewelry, etc.) and spices (one of the mainstays of long-distance trade). While in the early part of our period, long-distance trade in the Mediterranean was dominated by Egyptian and Byzantine merchants, Italians gradually came to play an important (and, by the end of our period, preponderant) role. Merchants from Amalfi, who had become close allies of the Fatimids, assisted them in their conquest of Egypt and gained commercial privileges there. In the following centuries, it was the maritime republics of Venice, Genoa and Pisa that increasingly dominated Mediterranean trade. The representatives of these cities signed treaties of peace and commerce with Muslim rulers, through which they obtained trading privileges and favourable tariff rates, and often secured (in the various North African or Near Eastern ports) *funduqs*: these institutions, a veritable home away from home, contained warehouses, lodgings, chapels, and taverns. It is largely because of these Italian traders that, by 1200, one could buy Phocaeen alum or East Indian pepper in Bruges, or, in Damascus, purchase cloth made of English wool and woven on Flemish looms. This trade modified diets and lifestyles: Europeans discovered oranges, bananas, rice, sugar, pepper and numerous spices, as well as silk and henna. European exports to the Arab world were essentially raw products (iron, wood) but also woollen cloth. One should not of course exaggerate the volume of goods exchanged: only a small minority of the European elite could, in the Middle Ages, eat sugar and spices and dress in silk. Yet this gradual transformation of eating and dress habits would of course grow stronger in the following centuries.

On the merchants' ships travelled a wide variety of voyagers: crusaders, mercenaries and pilgrims (Muslims on their way to Mecca,

Christians on their way to Rome or Jerusalem). They also carried captives and slaves. Indeed, the borders were often thin between commerce, piracy and naval war: naval raids against enemy ships or hostile coasts were common and lucrative: captives could be ransomed or sold into slavery. Arab, Byzantine and Italian merchants made a lucrative business out of taking captives for ransom and buying and selling slaves.

The continual coming and going of ships and merchants, slaves, refugees and mercenaries, brought in its wake a melting pot of ideas, habits and customs. In the areas of the arts, architecture, in scientific and philosophical learning, in the theory and practice of glass-blowing, pharmacy, pottery, etc., techniques and ideas crisscrossed the Mediterranean in all directions. Let us look at several telling examples from architecture. Monk and chronicler Amatus of Montecassino tells that when (in the last quarter of the 11<sup>th</sup> century) his abbot wanted new mosaics for his monastery, he brought Greek and Arab artists from Constantinople and Alexandria; it was no doubt the merchants of Amalfi who brought these artists to Italy.<sup>12</sup>

In 12<sup>th</sup>-century Pisa, Andalusian and Maghribi pottery is all the rage; plates and bowls are even incorporated into the façades of the city's churches as decoration.<sup>13</sup>

In the Romanesque churches of southern France in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, one finds Arab architectural forms (polylobe or horse-shoe arches) and techniques (polychrome stone, ceramics). Even the Qur'anic text seen in mosques becomes a source of inspiration: carved into the stone of various churches are mock inscriptions in kufesque: an imitation of Arab letters as a purely decorative element. At times one finds real Arabic inscriptions, showing no doubt the presence of Arab artists from Spain. On the doors of the cathedral of Le Puy, one can read *mā shā' Allāh*, 'God wills it'.<sup>14</sup>

In the areas of science and philosophy, Latin Europe in 900 lagged far beyond the Arab world. It has often been said that as the Abbasid caliphs made Baghdad into the new world capital of science and

<sup>12</sup> Amato di Montecassino, *L'Ystoire de li Normant*, ed. F. Barthomaeis, Rome, 1935, 175.

<sup>13</sup> J. Tolan, 'Sarrasins et Ifranĵ. Rivalités, émulations et convergences', in H. Laurens, G. Veinstein and J. Tolan (eds), *L'Europe et l'Islam. Quinze siècles d'histoire*, Paris 2009, 17-115, pp. 100-3.

<sup>14</sup> V. Goss, 'Western architecture and the world of Islam in the twelfth century', in V. Goss and C. Bornstein (eds), *The meeting of two worlds. Cultural exchange between East and West during the period of the Crusades*, Kalamazoo MI, 1986, 361-75.



philosophy, Charlemagne and his successors were studiously applying themselves to learning how to write their names. Very few of the major scientific works of Greek antiquity were available in Latin translation in 900, yet they were virtually all available in Arabic: Galen and Hippocrates in medicine, Euclid in geometry, Ptolemy in astronomy, and of course Aristotle. Let us briefly look at the example of medicine. In 987, when Ibn al-Nadīm composed his *Fihrist*, a *catalogue raisonné* of scientific and philosophical works in Arabic, he listed 430 medical texts, of which 174 had been translated from other languages (Persian, Sanskrit, Syriac and especially Greek). For the whole medieval period, there were roughly one thousand Arabic texts of medicine.<sup>15</sup>

While Hippocrates and Galen provided the theoretical base for Arabic medicine, the medical science continued to advance through the incorporation of other traditions and through observation and practice. We see this, for example in the work of Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Rāzī (d. 925 or 935), 61 of whose 184 works dealt with medicine.<sup>16</sup>

Al-Rāzī affirms that he surpasses the ancients, since he has mastered the knowledge that they have accumulated over the centuries and to which he has added the fruits of his own experience and learning. Thus, when he describes various sicknesses, he relates information gleaned from the texts of his predecessors, and then offers his own analyses based in part on clinical experience, which he uses to confirm or refute the ideas of his predecessors. Hence, when he finds Galen's ideas erroneous (on scar tissue, for example), he refutes them methodically.

In the area of medical theory, one of the most influential texts of the Middle Ages was the *Canon* of Ibn Sinā (980-1037; Avicenna to the Europeans), which, once translated into Latin in 12<sup>th</sup>-century Spain, became the standard medical textbook in European universities for centuries.<sup>17</sup>

Before the 11<sup>th</sup> century, knowledge of Greek and Arabic medicine in Latin Europe was almost nonexistent. In 11<sup>th</sup>-century Italy Constantine the African, an immigrant from Ifrīqiya to southern Italy, composed a number of Latin treatises on medicine based on Arabic

<sup>15</sup> Jacquart et Micheau, *La médecine arabe et l'occident médiéval*, pp. 13-14, 229.

<sup>16</sup> Jacquart et Micheau, *La médecine arabe et l'occident médiéval*, pp. 57-68; L. Goodman, art. 'al-Razī, Abū Bakr Muhammad b. Zakariyyā, in *El2*.

<sup>17</sup> Jacquart et Micheau, *La médecine arabe et l'occident médiéval*, pp. 74-85; N. Siraisi, *Avicenna in Renaissance Italy. The Canon and medical teaching in Italian universities after 1500*, Princeton NJ, 1987.

originals. But the most important translations of medical works were made in Toledo, under the direction of Gerard of Cremona, between 1145 and 1187: ten texts of Galen, one of Hippocrates, and ten texts of Arab medical writers, including three by al-Rāzī and the *Canon* of Ibn Sīnā. While these translations represent only a small part of Arabic medical learning, they encompass the fundamental texts, and they revolutionized the teaching and practice of medicine in Europe. What is true of medicine is essentially true of other sciences, such as geometry, mathematics and astronomy. In philosophy, Gerard and his team translated a number of texts by Aristotle; these, along with commentaries by Moses Maimonides and Ibn Rushd (Averroes), made a profound impact on the curriculum of European universities, including in theology.

This intellectual exchange of course colors mutual perceptions of Christians, Muslims and Jews. Some Latin writers did not hesitate to express their admiration for Arabs (*Arabes*) and their erudition at the same time as they dismissed as a crude heresy the 'sect of the Saracens' (*Sarraceni*). Twelfth-century author Petrus Alfonsi [q.v.], for example, denounces Muḥammad as a false prophet and a fraud in his *Dialogi contra Iudaeos* (1110); yet his *Disciplina clericalis* is full of praise for the wisdom of the Arabs.<sup>18</sup>

In the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century, translator Hermann of Carinthia, in his scientific tract *De essentiis* (*On the elements*), indulges in anti-Muslim polemics: he says that the 'Hagarenes' (*Agareni*) affirm that Jesus is 'Roh Alla wa Kalimatu', yet refuse to acknowledge him as God. He uses astrological arguments to prove the superiority of Christianity: Muḥammad's violence and lechery are results of the nefarious influence of the planets Mars and Venus; Arab astrologer Abū Ma'shar supposedly acknowledged that ancient astrologers Hermes and Astalius both foresaw Christ's Virgin birth.<sup>19</sup>

Hermann is a prominent translator of astrological texts in mid-12<sup>th</sup> century Spain; he is also part of the team of translators recruited by Peter of Cluny to translate Arabic texts on Islam. These passages of his *De essentiis* show how, in an intellectual landscape dominated by Arabic science, Latin Christians sought arguments to bolster their faith and affirm its rationality.

<sup>18</sup> J. Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and his medieval readers*, Gainesville FL, 1993.

<sup>19</sup> Hermann of Carinthia, *De essentiis*, ed. and trans. C. Burnett, Leiden, 1982, pp. 80-82, 167-69.

In the Middle Ages, as today, Christians' and Muslims' mutual perceptions depended on a wide variety of factors, and for pre-modern periods, of course, we must rely almost entirely on written sources to apprehend them. The nature of these sources, their diverse textual traditions, their projected audiences, all of these factors determine, at least to a certain extent, how adherents of rival faiths are presented. It therefore seems important, after this general introduction to the two volumes, to present introductory essays on specific genres of medieval texts that deal with Christian-Muslim relations. In volume 1, we presented essays on Christians in the Qur'an, in Islamic exegesis, in the Sīra of Muḥammad, in Hadith, and in early and classical Sunnī law, as well as essays on Muslims in Christian canon law. In this volume (CMR 2), we have essays on Muslim regard for Christians and Christianity (by David Thomas), and Christian-Muslim diplomatic relations (by Nicholas Drocourt). In the companion volume (CMR 3) we have essays on crusade chronicles (by Marcus Bull), Christians in early and classical Shī'ī law (by David Freidenreich) and on Muslims in western canon law 1000-1500 (by David Freidenreich).

### Suggestions for further reading

- J. Brockopp (ed.), *The Cambridge companion to Muhammad*, Cambridge, 2009  
 O. Constable, *Housing the stranger in the Mediterranean world. Lodging, trade, and travel in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, Cambridge, 2003  
 F. Fattal, *Le Statut légal des non-musulmans en pays d'Islam*, Beirut, 1958, 1995<sup>2</sup>  
 Y. Friedman, *Encounter between enemies. Captivity and ransom in the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem*, Leiden, 2002  
 M. Gervers and R. Bikhazi (eds), *Conversion and continuity. Indigenous Christian communities in Islamic lands, eighth to eighteenth centuries*, Toronto, 1990  
 S. Goitein, *A Mediterranean society. The Jewish communities of the Arab world as portrayed in the documents of the Cairo Geniza*, 6 vols, Berkeley, 1966-88  
 C. Hillenbrand, *The Crusades. Islamic perspectives*, Edinburgh, 1999  
 R. Hillenbrand, *Islamic architecture. Form, function and meaning*, Edinburgh, 1994, 2000<sup>2</sup>  
 P. Horden and N. Purcell, *The corrupting sea. A study of Mediterranean history*, Oxford, 2000  
 S. Jayyusi, (ed.), *The legacy of Muslim Spain*, Leiden, 1992  
 B.Z. Kedar, *Crusade and mission. European approaches toward the Muslims*, Princeton NJ, 1984  
 A. Miquel, *La géographie humaine dans le monde musulman jusqu'au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 4 vols, Paris, 1967-88  
 C. Petry and M.W. Daly, *The Cambridge history of Egypt, vol 1. Islamic Egypt, 640-1517*, Cambridge, 1998  
 J. Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the idea of crusading*, Philadelphia PA, 1986  
 E. Rotter, *Abendland und Sarazenen. Das okzidentale Araberbild und seine Entstehung im Frühmittelalter*, Berlin, 1986

- H. Santiago Otero (ed.) *Diálogo filosófico-religioso entre cristianismo, judaísmo, e islamismo durante la edad media en la península ibérica*, Turnhout, 1994
- M. Swanson, *The Coptic papacy in Islamic Egypt*, Cairo, 2010
- H. Teule, *Christianity in Iraq, a historical introduction. Perspectives for the future* (forthcoming)
- H. Touati, *Islam et voyage au MoyenÂge*, Paris, 2000 (*Islam and Travel in the Middle Ages*, Chicago, 2010)



# Muslim regard for Christians and Christianity, 900-1200

David Thomas

Muslim attitudes towards Christians who lived within the increasingly fragmented Islamic world remained governed by the so-called Pact of 'Umar, though it is unclear how far its stipulations were applied beyond the exaction of the *jizya*.<sup>1</sup>

The evidence of such texts as the 11<sup>th</sup>-century *Khabar al-Yahūd wa-l-Naṣārā* (q.v.), in which the Fatimid Caliph al-Ḥākim retires from his meeting with the heads of the main client faiths to consult the sources about the treatment of *dhimmīs*, and of Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kātib's *Al-durr al-thamīn* (q.v.) from the later 12<sup>th</sup> century, which tells how the Ayyūbid Sultan Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn renewed the *dhimmī* regulations, indicates that they were not regularly enforced or even well-known, at least in Egypt. The fact that the Caliph al-Qādir (r. 991-1031) is specifically recorded as re-introducing them in Baghdad, and al-Ḥākim (r. 996-1021) eccentrically and cruelly in Cairo, suggests that while the regulations were always present in potential they were not systematically invoked.

It might well be that the majority of Christians living under Islamic rule were generally tolerated, if not welcomed as full participants in society. Certainly, Christian professionals who had something to offer, such as medical or linguistic skills, do not appear to feel any undue opprobrium: the leading 10<sup>th</sup>-century scholar Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī (q.v.) moved within Baghdad intellectual circles as an equal to any Muslim he knew, and among elite intellectuals exchanges about philosophical or medical matters were not impeded by religious barriers. But Christians always risked being dismissed from their jobs if they advanced too far. And the steady flow of converts who have left renunciations of their Christian beliefs – al-Ḥasan ibn Ayyūb (q.v.) and Naṣr ibn Yaḥyā (q.v.) are two of the most vocal – is a strong indication that the incentives to accept Islam, or disincentives to resist it, were never

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<sup>1</sup> The standard work remains A. Fattal, *Le statut legal des non-Musulmans en pays d'Islam*, Beirut, 1958. See also C. Hillenbrand, *The crusades, Islamic perspectives*, Edinburgh, 1999, particularly ch. 5.

completely absent from social and professional relations. Even Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī was pressurized to define and defend the intellectual probity of the doctrines he upheld.

While the evidence for widespread conversions to Islam remains inconclusive, the absence of extensive references in many Muslim works of history and geography in this period is at least consistent with the reality of a faith community that was in decline, lacking in momentum and increasingly marginalized in society. This period is marked by the first historical works written by Muslim authors that survive in more than fragmentary form. As might be expected, they contain mentions of Christians in accounts of day to day living within the Islamic world as well as of battles against the Byzantines and later the crusaders. But since many of these are only incidental and show little explicit awareness of Christians' religious status, they suggest that to their authors Christian communities were evidently not important or powerful religious or social elements.

Historians who do not appear to give special attention to Christians or Christianity are listed below, while notable exceptions are treated in separate entries in what follows. However, a word of caution should be added. It is possible that in some histories at least, Christians are singled out as alien and hostile by sophisticated structural elements and indirect portrayals such as actions rather than descriptions, as well as repetitive designations such as 'associator' or 'polytheist'. Fuller analysis of these histories, as well as similar apparently unyielding works, may show more widespread attitudes towards Christians than is immediately apparent.

The historians Abu l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn Wāḍiḥ al-Yaʿqūbī (d. 905 or after), Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 923), Abū Naṣr al-Muṭahhar ibn Ṭāḥir (or al-Muṭahhar) al-Maqdisī (d. after 966) and Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf ibn al-Azraq al-Fāriqī (d. 1176-77) give enough valuable information about Christianity or indications of their attitude towards it to merit entries in what follows. The attitudes of others are less clear, and the details they give about Christians are generally scanty.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The list given by C. Hillenbrand, 'Sources in Arabic', in M. Whitby (ed.), *Byzantines and crusaders in non-Greek sources 1025-1204*, Oxford, 2007, 283-340, pp. 310-13, 322-23 (including authors who did not only write about the Byzantines and crusaders) has been taken as the basis for what follows. It provides full listings of editions and studies of these works.

Among them, the Egyptian ‘Izz al-Mulk al-Musabbiḥī (d. 1030), of whose vast *Akḥbār Miṣr* (‘Accounts of Egypt’), supposedly 40 volumes in its original form, only one chapter covering the years 1023-25 survives, makes only passing references to the Christian community in Cairo, without introducing or describing them, except to say that it was their custom to celebrate their festival of *Yawm al-qallīla* together with Muslims in the city.<sup>3</sup>

Abū ‘Alī Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Miskawayh (d. 1030), who was secretary to a succession of Būyid viziers, and is known as a philosopher as well as historian, makes a number of indicative though brief mentions of Christians in his *Tajārib al-umam* (‘Experiences of the nations’), stating in passing that the vizier of the Caliph al-Muṭṭī extorted money from both *dhimmīs* and Muslims to pay the troops in 971-71,<sup>4</sup> that the Būyid amīr ‘Aḍud al-Dawla (d. 983) entrusted his Christian general Abū l-‘Alā ‘Ubaydallāh with the tasks of leading two attacks against renegades,<sup>5</sup> and gave his Christian vizier Naṣr ibn Hārūn permission to build churches and monasteries and distribute money to poor Christians,<sup>6</sup> that in 1002 rioters in Baghdad attacked Christians and set fire to a church, which fell on some Muslims, ‘a terrible affair’<sup>7</sup> and that in 1002 the patriarch of Baghdad was arrested and humiliated.<sup>8</sup>

These details show that some Christians were able to rise to high positions in the state at this time, but also that the Christian community was without influence in society and a potential target in times of unrest. Ḥamdān ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm (d. 1159) may well have made some telling comments about Christians and their ways, but his work has completely disappeared and almost nothing is known about it.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>3</sup> A.F. Sayyid and T. Bianquis (eds), *Tome quarantième de la Chronique d’Égypte de Musabbiḥī (le prince al-Muḥkhtār ‘Izz al-Mulk Muḥammad ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn Aḥmad)*, 366-420/977-1029, 2 vols, Cairo, 1978, i, pp. 19-20. See below the entry on al-Musabbiḥī’s lost *Kitāb darak al-bughyā*.

<sup>4</sup> *The eclipse of the ‘Abbasid caliphate. Original chronicles of the fourth Islamic century*, ed. and trans. H.F. Amedroz and D.S. Margoliouth, 6 vols (i-iii text and iv-vi trans.), Oxford, 1920-21, ii p. 308/v p. 331.

<sup>5</sup> *The eclipse of the ‘Abbasid caliphate*, ii p. 392/v pp. 431-32, and ii p. 398/v p. 437.

<sup>6</sup> *The eclipse of the ‘Abbasid caliphate*, ii p. 408/v p. 447.

<sup>7</sup> *The eclipse of the ‘Abbasid caliphate*, iii p. 418/vi pp. 443-44.

<sup>8</sup> *The eclipse of the ‘Abbasid caliphate*, iii p. 456/vi p. 485.

<sup>9</sup> See Hillenbrand, *The crusades. Islamic perspectives*, p. 258.



He himself lived within crusader territory on an estate that had been granted by Alan, lord of Athārib, and he administered the town of Ma'arat al-Nu'mān on behalf of the Franks. So his *Sīrat al-Afranġ al-khārijīn ilā bilād al-Shām fī hādhihi sīni* ('The way of the Franks who went out to Syria in those years') was evidently written on the basis of intimate knowledge of the Crusaders, making its loss unfortunate. The historians Abū Ya'lā Hamza ibn Asad ibn al-Qalānisī (d. 1160) (*Dhayl ta'rikh Dimashq*, 'Continuation of the history of Damascus'), Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-'Azīmī (d. after 1161) (*Ta'rikh*, 'History') and Ḥabīb al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī (d. c. 1186-87) (*Saljūqnāma*, 'The book of the Saljuqs') say nothing significant about Christians.<sup>10</sup>

The same applies by and large to Arab geographers writing in this period; they tend not to remark on the Christian world in any detail, and have little to say about Christians living within the Islamic world, suggesting that these communities were insignificant parts of the social framework and merited no particular attention. This can be illustrated from the references found in the following authors. Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Muqaddasī (c. 946-c. 1000), in his *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fī ma'rifat al-aqālīm* ('The best divisions for knowledge of the regions'), briefly remarks that there are many objectionable Christians in Jerusalem,<sup>11</sup> that in Syria and Egypt there are many Christian officials because their linguistic ability is respected by Muslims, that most medical doctors are Christians,<sup>12</sup> and that most Egyptian Christians are Copts.<sup>13</sup>

He also habitually refers to the Byzantine emperor as a 'dog'. His contemporary Abū l-Qāsim 'Alī ibn Ḥawqal (d. after 988), in his *Kitāb al-masālik wa-l-mamālik*, better known as *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* ('The form of the earth'), gives an account of Constantinople and its empire as well as the towns of southern Italy,<sup>14</sup> and describes Muslim Sicily at some length. But apart from a reference to a church in Palermo that had been converted into a mosque,<sup>15</sup> he says very little about Chris-

<sup>10</sup> Al-'Azīmī includes a brief paragraph on Jesus as a precursor of Muḥammad, *Ta'rikh Ḥalab*, ed. I. Zar'ur, Damascus, 1984, pp. 65-66.

<sup>11</sup> Ed. M. de Goeje, Leiden, 1906, p. 167; trans. B.A. Collins, *The best divisions for knowledge of the regions*, Reading, 1994, p. 152.

<sup>12</sup> Ed. de Goeje, p. 183; trans. Collins, p. 166.

<sup>13</sup> Ed. de Goeje, p. 202; trans. Collins, p. 186.

<sup>14</sup> J.H. Kramers and G. Wiet, *Configuration de la terre*, Paris, 1964, pp. 190-95.

<sup>15</sup> Kramers and Wiet, *Configuration*, p. 117. He says that Christians believed that a tomb in this church was that of Aristotle. A. Metcalfe, *Muslims and Christians in Norman Sicily. Arabic speakers and the end of Islam*, London, 2003, pp. 16-17, suggests that his reference to intermarriage practices between 'bastardised Muslims' and Christians

tians as people of religion. It is possible that his lost work about Sicily contained more. Earlier in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the little-known Aḥmad ibn Faḍlān wrote a detailed account of an embassy sent in the 920s by the Caliph al-Muqtadir along the Volga to the capital of the Bulgars. He remarks that among the Khazars Christians, like followers of other faiths, have the right to appeal to a judge of their own faith.<sup>16</sup>

The great 12<sup>th</sup>-century geographer Abū ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Idrīsī (1100-1165/66) is no exception to the general rule of disregarding Christians as religious people or spiritual and doctrinal competitors. In his *Nuzhat al-mushtāq fī ikhtirāq al-afāq* (‘Diversion for the desirous of ranging the regions’), generally known as the *Kitāb Rujār*, after the Norman King Roger II of Sicily for whom he wrote it in 1154, he describes how the inhabitants of the island of Socotra off southern Arabia became Christians, says that the nomads of northern Nubia and of the island of Qūṭruba near Baḥrayn are Christian, and lists the vizirs of the king of Sarandīb (Sri Lanka) as four of the native people, four Muslims, four Christians, and four Jews, but without further comment.<sup>17</sup>

He also describes with evident interest and awe some of the larger churches he has seen, but makes no comment about the faith that is expressed in them.<sup>18</sup>

An exception to the general disregard for Christians and Christian lands was Constantinople, which appears to have held a particular fascination for many historians and geographers, ‘a space fluctuating between the real and the imaginary.’<sup>19</sup>

Al-Ya‘qūbī (q.v.) in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century is just one among many historians who give dynastic lists of Constantine and his successors, while Ibn Khurrādādhbih (d. 911) in his *Kitāb al-masālik wa-l-mamālik* (‘Routes and realms’; a source used by many later geographers) is

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in remoter parts of the island may indicate the persistence of old customs between new converts to Islam and their former co-religionists (repeated in A. Metcalfe, *The Muslims of medieval Italy*, Edinburgh, 2009, p. 60).

<sup>16</sup> R. Frye, *Ibn Fadlan’s journey to Russia. A tenth-century traveler from Baghdad to the Volga River*, Princeton NJ, 2005, pp. 73-74.

<sup>17</sup> P.A. Joubert (trans.), *La géographie d’Édrisi*, 2 vols, Paris, 1836-40 (repr. Amsterdam, 1975), i, pp. 47-48, 35, 62, 72.

<sup>18</sup> Joubert, *La géographie d’Édrisi*, ii, pp. 22, 229, 250-51.

<sup>19</sup> N. El Cheikh, *Byzantium viewed by the Arabs*, Cambridge MA, 2004, p. 140. For further references to Muslim authors on Byzantium, see the bibliography listed in the book. See also M. Vaiou, *Diplomacy in the early Islamic world. A tenth century treatise on Arab-Byzantine relations: Ibn al-Farrā’s Kitāb rusul al-mulūk*, London, 2009.

intrigued enough by court life there to mention such details as the red buskins that only the emperor could wear.<sup>20</sup>

Ibn Zuhri (12<sup>th</sup> century) calls it one of the most beautiful cities of the world,<sup>21</sup> while for his part al-Mas'udi (q.v.) is clearly so enthralled that he refers to aspects of the life of the city, its major landmarks, rulers, ecclesiastical hierarchy and forms of worship in each of a long succession of works, and al-Muqaddasi, brief as he is, mentions the house near the hippodrome in which aristocratic Muslim prisoners were held, and gives a somewhat garbled account of the factional passions that were stirred up during chariot races.<sup>22</sup>

The most detailed account of the city known among Muslims in this period was that preserved by Abū 'Alī Aḥmad ibn Rusta in his early 10<sup>th</sup> century *Kitāb al-a'lāq al-naḥīya* ('Precious valuables')<sup>23</sup> from Hārūn ibn Yaḥyā, a prisoner (possibly a Christian) who was held there sometime just before or after the year 900. The latter describes many of the city's main buildings with a sense of wonder that makes it a treasure house of architectural and monumental gems, his wide-eyed appreciation providing a staple source for later Muslim authors.<sup>24</sup>

All this was despite the fact that the Byzantines were the among the main external enemies of the Islamic empire in this period, conducting periodic attacks on coastal and inland regions, at times forcing Muslims onto the defensive, and constantly reminding them of the enmity between them through the formal letters that were acknowledged elements in relations between emperors and caliphs. This is underlined by Sharaf al-Zamān Ṭāhir al-Marwazī (d. after 1120), physician to the Seljuk ruler Malik Shāh, who registers the ingrained hostility and fear of the city's inhabitants towards Islam in his comment about the chariot races, where 'if the king's team wins this is cause for joy and is a good omen, and it is said, "The victory over the Muslims is

<sup>20</sup> Ed. M. Makhzūm, Beirut, 1988, p. 97.

<sup>21</sup> D. Bramon, *El mundo en el siglo XII. Estudio de la versión castellana y del 'original' árabe de una geografía universal: 'El tratado de al-Zuhri'*, Barcelona, 1991, p. 128.

<sup>22</sup> Ed. de Goeje, pp. 147-48; trans. Collins, pp. 134-35.

<sup>23</sup> Ed. M. De Goeje, Leiden, 1892; trans. G. Wiet, *Les atours précieux*, Cairo, 1955; summarized by El Cheikh, *Byzantium viewed by the Arabs*, pp. 143-49.

<sup>24</sup> See also M. Canard, 'Les aventures d'un prisonnier arabe et d'un patrice byzantine à l'époque des guerres bulgarobyzantines', *DOP* 9 (1956) 49-72. Canard argues that the story of a Muslim prisoner in the Byzantine empire, as reported by the 10<sup>th</sup> century historian Muḥassin al-Tanūkhī, has more the flavor of a tale of adventure against an exotic background than of an historical account.

ours". But if the Emperor's team wins they take this as a bad omen and say, "The Muslims will defeat us".<sup>25</sup>

A number of historians of universal histories in this period include accounts of Jesus and his family among the events that anticipated the coming of Islam. A few, such as al-Ya'qūbī (q.v.) and al-Maqqdisī (q.v.), clearly referred to Christian sources for details about Jesus, though others appear to have restricted themselves to mainly to Muslim sources, including what are probably popular traditions. This also appears to be the case with authors of works in the related *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* ('tales of the prophets') genre, suggesting they felt little pressure to reconcile Muslim and Christian versions or justify the Muslim as the more truthful. The most substantial example is the *'Arā'is al-majālis fi qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of Abū Ishāq Aḥmad al-Tha'labī (d. 1036).<sup>26</sup>

In this the story of Jesus is based upon the qur'anic model with narrative and dramatic additions from a wide variety of sources (pp. 638-80). These include the Gospels (indirectly), though only where they do not conflict with the Muslim version. Thus, for example, the account of Jesus' last supper with his disciples is given in detail, and Jesus' actions of washing his disciples' feet and his final words to them are related at length. But when it comes to the arrest a disciple leads the Jews to Judas, and he is crucified in Jesus' stead (pp. 670-71). Nothing is said about a competing account, and no suggestion is made that there is disagreement between Muslims and Christians over this.<sup>27</sup>

The same is true of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's *Tārīkh al-anbiyā'*,<sup>28</sup> there is little to indicate any sense of tension between Muslim and Christian versions or that the Muslim version needs to be defended or its accuracy upheld.

By the beginning of this period, Muslim theologians had fashioned arguments that to their own satisfaction easily exposed the

<sup>25</sup> Al-Marwazi, *Ṭabā'ī al-ḥayawān*, trans. V. Minorsky, 'Marvazi on the Byzantines', *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves (Mélanges H. Grégoire 2)* 10 (1950) 457-69, p. 462 (repr. in V. Minorsky, *Medieval Iran and its neighbours*, London, 1982, no. VIII).

<sup>26</sup> Trans. W.M. Brinner, *'Arā'is al-majālis fi qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā', or 'Lives of the prophets'*, Leiden, 2002.

<sup>27</sup> See B.M. Hauglid, *Al-Tha'labī's Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'. Analysis of the text, Jewish and Christian elements, islamization, and prefiguration of the prophethood of Muḥammad*, Ann Arbor MI, 1998 (Diss. University of Utah).

<sup>28</sup> Ed. A. al-Bārīh, Beirut, 2004, pp. 317-34.

shortcomings of Christian doctrines, and they had answers to the main questions that were typically posed by Christians. The dextrous conciseness with which figures such as ‘Abd al-Jabbār (q.v.), al-Juwaynī (q.v.) and al-Ghazālī (q.v.), or the author – maybe a convert – of the refutation attributed to him, dismiss Christian teachings and defenses speaks eloquently of confidence about the rational soundness of Islam and the incoherence of rival faith traditions. And the frequency of works in defense of Muḥammad suggests that, while Muslims continued to think it necessary to deal with criticisms from Christians and others, they were not bereft of decisive arguments.

One of the major topics of Muslim apologetic works in this period was this theme of *dalā’il al-nubuwwa*, ‘proofs of prophethood’. It was already known in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, and is represented by a few surviving and many more lost works from the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The surviving examples show that among the arguments in many of these early works there were likely to have been proof texts taken from the Old and New Testaments that showed Muḥammad was foretold by earlier prophets and also that he was attested by miracles, both responses to Christian accusations. These elements continue through the period 900-1200, though since some of the surviving works in the genre from this time do not include them (often restricting their proofs mainly to Hadiths) and others make comparatively little of them, it cannot be assumed they were major elements in the evidence that was assembled by Muslim apologists, or that they featured consistently.<sup>29</sup>

This suggests that the criticisms made by Christians were no longer regarded as acute, and could be answered by reference to familiar sets of proof-texts and tried arguments. In consequence, unless a work is known to have centered on such arguments from Christians, it has not been included in a separate entry in what follows, but is listed here.

Authors who wrote surviving works in the genre that do not refer explicitly to Christian criticisms, though often give lists of verses from biblical books that predict the coming of Muḥammad and Islam, include: the traditionist Abū Bakr Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad al-Firyābī al-Saghīr (d. 913), (*Dalā’il al-nubuwwa*);<sup>30</sup> the major Shī‘ī theologian

<sup>29</sup> But see the comments of al-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq in the entry later in this volume to the effect that only People of the Book would challenge Muslims about proofs of Muḥammad’s prophethood.

<sup>30</sup> Ed. Umm ‘Abdallāh ibn Mahrūs, Beirut, 1980; see G.S. Reynolds, *A Muslim theologian in the sectarian milieu, ‘Abd al-Jabbār and the critique of Christian origins*, Leiden, 2004, p. 181.

Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī (d. 991) (q.v.), (*Kitāb al-nubuwwa*);<sup>31</sup> the preacher and ascetic Abū Sa'd (or Sa'id) 'Abd al-Malik ibn Muḥammad al-Khargūshī (d. 1016), (*Sharaf al-Muṣṭafā*);<sup>32</sup> the expert on Sufism and Shāfi'i legal scholar Abū Nu'aym Aḥmad ibn 'Abdallāh al-Iṣfahānī (948-1038), (*Dalā'il al-nubuwwa*);<sup>33</sup> the legal scholar and political theorist Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb al-Māwardī (974-1058) (q.v.), (*A'lām al-nubuwwa*);<sup>34</sup> and the traditionist and Shāfi'i legal scholar Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī (994-1066), (*Dalā'il al-nubuwwa*).<sup>35</sup>

To these may be added Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī (d. after 971) (q.v.), whose *Kitāb ithbāt al-nubuwwa*,<sup>36</sup> in its surviving parts a general defense of prophethood, lacks the last part on the prophethood of Muḥammad where any biblical quotations or references to Christianity may have occurred; and Abū l-Faṭḥ al-Shahrastānī (d. 1153) (q.v.), who in his *Nihāyat al-aqdām fī 'ilm al-kalām*<sup>37</sup> defends prophethood in principle (ch. 19) and the prophethood of Muḥammad (ch. 20) without mentioning anything to do with Christianity at all. Ibn Sīnā's (d. 1137) *Fī ithbāt al-nubuwwāt*, which is on the status of the prophet as recipient of transcendent knowledge, is likewise unrelated to these defences of the specific prophetic status of Muḥammad.

Authors of lost works of this kind, about which there is no clear information concerning references to Christian criticisms of the Prophet or allusions to biblical predictions of his coming, include the following: the traditionist Abū Bakr ibn Abī 'Aṣim al-Nabīl al-Ḍaḥḥāk

<sup>31</sup> Tehran, 2002.

<sup>32</sup> See *Manāḥil al-shifā wa-manāhil al-ṣafā bi-taḥqīq Kitāb Sharaf al-Muṣṭafā, riwāyat Abī l-Qāsim 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Hawāzin al-Qushayrī*, ed. Abū 'Aṣim Nabīl ibn Hāshim al-Ghamrī Āl Bā'ulwī, 6 vols, Mecca, 2003. The work is also known as *Sharaf al-Nabī, Sharaf al-nubuwwa* and *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa*.

<sup>33</sup> Ed. M.R. Qal'ahjī and 'A. 'Abbās, Beirut, 1986 (on pp. 587-625 there is a series of comparisons between the excellent qualities and miracles of Muḥammad and other prophets).

<sup>34</sup> Ed. M. Baghdādī, Beirut, 1987 (on pp. 36-38 there is a brief section on the three main Christian sects known in the Islamic world, and on pp. 197-216 a section on biblical prophecies about Muḥammad, which are derived from 'Alī al-Ṭabarī; see F. Taeschner, 'Die alttestamentlichen Bibelzitate, vor allem aus dem Pentateuch, in aṭ-Ṭabarī's Kitāb ad-Dīn wad-Daula und ihre Bedeutung für die Frage nach der Echtheit dieser Schrift', *Oriens Christianus* Series 3, 9 (1934) 23-38).

<sup>35</sup> *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa wa-ma'rifat aḥwāl ṣāhib al-sharī'a*, ed. 'A-M. Qal'ajī, 7 vols, Beirut, 1985.

<sup>36</sup> Ed. 'A. Tāmir, Beirut, 1966.

<sup>37</sup> Ed. A. Guillaume, *The Summa philosophiae of al-Shahrastānī*, London, 1930-34.

ibn Makhlad al-Shaybānī (d. 900), untitled *dalā'il* work;<sup>38</sup> the Shī'ī Abū l-'Abbās 'Abdallāh ibn Ja'far ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥimyarī (fl. 910), *Kitāb al-dalā'il*;<sup>39</sup> the Shī'ī Abū Sahl Ismā'il ibn 'Alī l-Nawbakhtī (d. 924), *Kitāb tathbit al-risāla*;<sup>40</sup> the Mālikī jurist Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Ḥammād ibn Ishāq (d. 935), *Kitāb dalā'il al-nubuwwa*;<sup>41</sup> the Qur'an reader Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Naqqāsh al-Mawṣilī (880-962), *Kitāb dalā'il al-nubuwwa*;<sup>42</sup> the traditionist Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥibbān al-Tamīmī l-Bustī l-Shāfi'ī (d. 965), untitled *dalā'il* work;<sup>43</sup> the student of the Shī'ī traditionist al-Kulaynī, Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ja'far al-Nu'mānī (d. 956 or 971), *Kitāb al-dalā'il*;<sup>44</sup> the Shāfi'ī legal expert Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Ismā'il al-Qaffāl al-Shāshī (904-76) (q.v.), untitled *dalā'il* work;<sup>45</sup> the traditionist Abū Muḥammad 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Ja'far ibn Ḥayyān al-Bustī l-Iṣfahānī, known as Abū l-Shaykh (887-979), untitled *dalā'il* work;<sup>46</sup> the traditionist Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Uthmān ibn Shāhīn (909-96), untitled *dalā'il* work;<sup>47</sup> the otherwise unknown Abū l-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad al-Sakūnī (10<sup>th</sup> century), *K. dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, which he transmitted from an earlier author named al-Sharīf Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān;<sup>48</sup> the traditionist Abū l-'Abbās Ja'far ibn Muḥammad al-Mustaghfirī al-Nasafī l-Ḥanafī (d. 1040), unnamed *dalā'il* work;<sup>49</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Ibn Taymiyya, *Al-Ṣarīm al-maslūl 'alā shātīm al-rasūl*, ed. M.'A. al-Ḥalwānī et al., 3 vols, Beirut, 1997, ii, pp. 432, 434.

<sup>39</sup> Ibn Ṭāwūs in E. Kohlberg, *A medieval Muslim scholar at work. Ibn Ṭāwūs & his library*, Leiden, 1992, p. 139.

<sup>40</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 225; Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Najāshī, *Kitāb al-rijāl*, ed. M. Jawād al-Nā'inī, 2 vols, Beirut, 1988, i, p. 122, gives it as *Kitāb al-ihtijāj li-nubuwwat al-Nabī*.

<sup>41</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 252.

<sup>42</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 36; Ḥajjī Khalifa, *Kashf al-zunūn 'an asāmī l-kutub wa-l-funūn*, ed. G. Flügel, 7 vols, London, 1842, iii, p. 237.

<sup>43</sup> Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Ṣarīm al-maslūl*, ii, p. 434.

<sup>44</sup> Ibn Ṭāwūs in Kohlberg, *A medieval Muslim scholar at work*, pp. 139-40; Kohlberg speculates that the first chapter of this work may have been about the proofs of Muḥammad's prophethood.

<sup>45</sup> This is mentioned without further reference by M. Kister, 'The *Sīrah* literature', in A.F.L. Beeston et al. (eds), *Arabic literature to the end of the Umayyad period*, Cambridge, 1983, 352-67, p. 355.

<sup>46</sup> Ibn Taymiyya, *Al-Ṣarīm al-maslūl*, ii, p. 432. It is mentioned without further reference by Kister, 'Sīrah literature', p. 355.

<sup>47</sup> Mentioned without further reference by Kister, 'Sīrah literature', p. 355.

<sup>48</sup> Ibn Ṭāwūs in Kohlberg, *A medieval Muslim scholar at work*, pp. 141-42.

<sup>49</sup> Ḥajjī Khalifa, *Kashf al-zunūn* iii, p. 237.

Abū Dharr al-Ḥarawī (1043), unnamed *dalā'il* work;<sup>50</sup> Muḥammad ibn Jarīr ibn Rustam al-Ṭabarī (fl. before c. 1050), *Kitāb dalā'il al-imāma* (or *al-a'imma*);<sup>51</sup> and Abū l-Qāsim Ismā'īl ibn Muḥammad al-Iṣbahānī (1140), *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa*.<sup>52</sup>

An intriguing feature of several works by authors with Fatimid and Ismā'īlī connections runs counter to dominant attitudes towards Christian beliefs in Jesus in this period. A number of them portray him in a manner that is more closely related to Christian than mainstream Islamic traditions. Abū Ḥāṭim al-Rāzī (d. 934) (q.v.), Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī (d. after 971) (q.v.) and the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' (q.v.) (writing in the mid 10<sup>th</sup> century) all refer to him being crucified and dying, while a text that survives in fragmentary form from before 920 refers to him as a 'man who was united [with the Holy Spirit], was one from One, descended from heaven and ascended there, and was Lord of the worlds'.<sup>53</sup>

This brief reference at the end of an argument about the forms in which God manifests himself on earth suggests that the author of this work, like others from this particular tradition, did not share the strictures on portrayals of Jesus that were observed by other Muslims.

The Fatimids themselves were no different from other ruling houses in their attitudes towards Christians, though with the exception of the Caliph al-Ḥākim they appear to have been pragmatic in using their subjects' talents to their best advantage.<sup>54</sup>

One important aspect of this, the prominence of Armenians in Egyptian public life in the last century of the Fatimid caliphate (1074-71), marks one of the most significant phases of Christian-Muslim relations in this period.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Mentioned without further reference by Kister, 'Sīrah literature', p. 356.

<sup>51</sup> Ibn Ṭāwūs in Kohlberg, *A medieval Muslim scholar at work*, pp. 140-41; Kohlberg points out that the published parts of this work (Najaf, 1949) lack the lost first sections, which included miracles of Muḥammad.

<sup>52</sup> Ḥajjī Khalifa, *Kashf al-zunūn* iii, p. 237.

<sup>53</sup> L. Massignon, *Recueil de textes inédits concernant l'histoire de la mystique en pays d'Islam*, Paris, 1929, pp. 215-17. Massignon published this fragment, which comes from a treatise named *Al-maqāla l-Masīhiyya*, as the composition of the fourth Fatimid caliph, al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh (931-75). But details in the MS itself indicate that it was a copy derived from a copy made in 920, near to the start of the Fatimid movement; see 'Bibliographie', *Islamochristiana* 3 (1977) p. 256, correcting the reference in *Islamochristiana* 2 (1976) p. 193. See the entry in *Al-maqāla l-Masīhiyya* in this volume.

<sup>54</sup> See S.K. Samir, 'The role of Christians in the Fāṭimid government services of Egypt to the reign of al-Ḥāfiz', *Medieval Encounters* 2 (1996) 177-92.

<sup>55</sup> The standard work on the Fatimid Armenians is S.B. Dadoyan, *The Fāṭimid Armenians. Cultural and political interaction in the Near East*, Leiden, 1997, which



It was the culmination of radical changes in the politics of the eastern Mediterranean, and its study links otherwise seemingly unconnected phenomena. During the 10<sup>th</sup> century, Byzantine re-insurgence, the fall of the Armenian kingdoms, and the Seljuk advance drove the majority of the Armenian people to the south and west of their historic homeland and into the Islamic empire. Armenian political-military energy broke down into unheralded new patterns, and interactions generated semi-autonomous principalities and powers in Cappadocia, Upper Mesopotamia, Cilicia, the Euphrates, al-Shām, and Fatimid Egypt.

Summoned to Cairo at the end of 1073 by the beleaguered Caliph al-Mustaṣir (1036-94), the Armenian Badr al-Jamālī, who was already the governor of al-Shām, not only saved the caliph with his mostly Muslim Armenian troops but also brought a predominantly heterodox Armenian element (initially Tʾondrakian sympathizers of Islam) into the army and administration. In the course of the next century seven Armenian viziers, all except one of them Muslims, ruled for a combined total of 60 years: the Shīʿī Badr al-Jamālī was vizier of al-Mustaṣir from 1074 to 1094; his son, the Sunnī sympathizer al-Afḍal Shāhanshāh (1094-1121), was vizier successively of al-Mustaṣir (very briefly), al-Mustaʿlī (1094-1101) who was his nephew, and al-Āmir (1101-30) who was his great nephew; Abū ʿAlī Aḥmad Kutayfāt (1131), a Twelver Shīʿī, was vizier of al-Āmir; and Yānis (1132), *mamlūk* of al-Afḍal, was vizier of al-Ḥāfiẓ (1130-49).

Armenian involvement in Fatimid Egypt developed along an 'orthodox' path as well. In 1075 the visit of the Catholicos Grigor II Martyrophil (1065-1105) provided a means of introducing the pro-Byzantine church and nobility. Two of Grigor's grandsons became particularly prominent: Bahrām or Vāhram (1135-37), vizier of al-Ḥāfiẓ, and Grigoris, who became Catholicos of the Egyptian Armenian community. Bahrām came from al-Shām with a personal army of 20,000 men with a mission to 'conquer'. His anti-Muslim measures and their

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provides a full bibliography on particular events and individuals. See also her 'The Armenian Intermezzo in *Bilād al-Shām*: 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> centuries', in D. Thomas (ed.), *Syrian Christians under Islam. The first thousand years*, Leiden, 2001, 159-183; *The Armenians and Islam. Paradigms of interactions - Prolegomenon to the history of the Armenians in the Near East, fourth-fourteenth centuries*, Leiden, forthcoming. Professor Dadoyan has kindly supplied the details in the following paragraphs about Armenians in Egypt.

bloody aftermath provoked the first and only anti-Armenian spasm in Fatimid Egypt. But the lingering reputation left by his predecessors was not dimmed by his excesses, because after less than two decades another Armenian, the Nuṣayrī Ṭalā'ī ibn Ruzzīk, was appointed to bring order after the assassination of the Caliph al-Zāfir (1149-54). He was vizier from 1154 to 1161 and was briefly succeeded by his son Ruzzīk (1161-62), though if everything had gone to plan the son of his daughter, who was married to the last Fatimid caliph al-ʿĀdid, would have attained the caliphate.

After the rise of Badr al-Jamālī the Armenian community in Egypt flourished, and in the general atmosphere of tolerance towards Christians it reached a hundred thousand in number. It is generally accepted that the Armenian involvement in government prolonged the caliphate for a century, restored some of its glory and prosperity, and kept the Seljuks and crusaders out of Egypt. In consequence of these achievements Christian Armenians in Egypt enjoyed freedom of faith, and Muslim Armenians had no difficulty in assimilating both cultural and political Islam – al-Afḍal and Ṭalā'ī wrote poetry in Arabic. With the exception of minor incidents, and also occasional criticisms about the Armenian-Christian origins of the ruling Armenian clans and individuals, no incidents were recorded. Strangely, they were always identified as *Armanīs*, even though there is no indication that they preserved their language, faith or folklore.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the Armenian period in Egypt is the manner in which Jamālī, Ruzzīk and their respective descendants manipulated Islam to achieve absolute power for themselves. But this went without challenge, because as long as the state apparatus ran properly and the people and country were secure and prosperous, the primarily Muslim Sunnī and Christian Coptic population had no complaints. The true nature of their faith is a matter of debate. They seem to have reconciled their ethnic background with a spirituality that was zeal beyond dogma and a ruthless yet fair sense of justice. In addition to their religious tolerance this spirituality granted them legitimacy and popularity in Muslim society.



# Christian-Muslim diplomatic relations. An overview of the main sources and themes of encounter (600-1000)<sup>1</sup>

Nicholas Drocourt

There is a multiplicity of sources available to historians and scholars of Christian-Muslim relations in the field of diplomatic contacts. These texts and documents show us, above all, the variety that exists in contacts of this kind between Muslim and Christian rulers, from the very beginning of Islam: official messages and letters, embassies or treaties, open negotiations and secret dealings, and in Arabic, Greek, Latin, Syriac, Coptic, Armenian and Persian.<sup>2</sup>

This multiplicity of documents is also important when we consider their nature: narrative as well as normative texts have to be studied. As medievalists know, at least for the period 600-1000, narrative texts are more numerous than normative ones, and extracts from the latter are often present in the former. Unpublished archives relevant to our subject are scarce: Egyptian papyri from the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries, or later monastic acts, may be helpful for understanding Christian-Muslim relations, but they do not detail diplomatic contacts. On the other hand, historians may refer to numerous chronicles, especially in Arabic, Greek and Latin, but these are of unequal value. Some provide great detail about one official contact, one embassy or one diplomatic episode during one specific reign, while shrouding diplomatic affairs linked to other periods or other reigns in silence.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, several

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<sup>1</sup> I thank Christine Darnaud and John Tolan for reading and commenting upon earlier versions of this article.

<sup>2</sup> Even if a state of war was considered normal between Islamic peoples and their neighbors, at least until the latter submitted to Islam, the practice of diplomacy existed from the time of the Prophet Muhammad (see M. Khadduri, *War and peace in the law of Islam*, Baltimore MD, 1955, pp. 239-40; M. Hamidullah, *The Muslim conduct of state*, Lahore, 1961<sup>4</sup>, pp. 142-45.

<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, if written communication between rulers during medieval times was the observed custom, it should be noticed, with A.A. El-Hajji, that few of these writings have survived, at least in the case of the first centuries of diplomatic relations between Christians and Muslims: A.A. El-Hajji, *Andalusian diplomatic relations with Western Europe during the Umayyad period (A.H. 138-366/A.D. 755-976)*, Beirut, 1970, p. 297. Oral communication must not be ignored, especially when some

decades of relations between two partners can be known only through authors from one side of the relationship.<sup>4</sup>

The aim of this study is not to present all these texts exhaustively, but to give careful consideration to some of them. Official messages and diplomatic letters will be treated first. More narrative texts, such as chronicles, will follow, notably those that provide information about peace treaties or pacific agreements. Thirdly, I will turn to the main themes found in this literature (the persons involved in this kind of contact, the movement and reception of delegations, ceremonial aspects, gifts exchanged, diplomatic negotiations and their economic aspects, etc.). All these are part of what we call diplomatic relations, i.e. official contacts between princes and courts, with political, military, cultural or economic aims, and personified in exchanges of emissaries, letters, gifts, treaties or other kinds of documents.

#### Letters, official messages and correspondence

Official correspondence between Christian and Muslim rulers seems, of course, to be of the greatest importance in our field of research. First, we must note that these letters are not numerous for the first centuries of diplomatic encounters. It is different if we consider those that are referred to in chronicles or other narrative texts, as we shall see later, for the sending of official messages is frequently noted when an author wants to describe or simply make brief mention of a diplomatic contact.

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written sources make reference to it in relation to diplomatic contacts: A. Beihammer, 'Die Kraft der Zeichen. Symbolische Kommunikation in der byzantinisch-arabischen Diplomatie des 10. und 11. Jahrhunderts', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 54 (2004) 159-89, pp. 165-73.

<sup>4</sup> One of the most famous examples is certainly the relations between Carolingians and Abbasids at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup>; several embassies, in both directions, are only described in Latin texts: G. Musca, *Carlo Magno e Hārūn al-Rashīd*, Bari, 1996<sup>2</sup>, with an edition of the main Latin sources, pp. 175-206; P. Sénac, 'Les Carolingiens et le califat abbasside (VIII<sup>e</sup>-IX<sup>e</sup> siècles)', in N. Prouteau and P. Sénac (eds), *Chrétiens et musulmans en Méditerranée médiévale (VIII<sup>e</sup>-XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle). Échanges et contacts*, Poitiers, 2003, 3-19, p. 3, and its analyses. One should note, with K.E.F. Thomson, that Byzantine-Fatimid relations in the major part of the 11<sup>th</sup> century can essentially be studied thanks to Arabic sources, which are much more informative than Byzantine ones (K.E.F. Thomson, 'Relations between the Fatimid and Byzantine Empires during the reign of the Caliph al-Mustansir bi'llah, 1036-1094/427-487', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 32 (2008) 50-62, p. 52.

However, the originals of some of these letters do exist and at least one of them is the subject of great controversy. At the very beginning of Islam, the Prophet Muḥammad supposedly sent a letter to the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius, calling him to Islam.<sup>5</sup> This is attested by subsequent writers, such as Ibn Sa'd in his *Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, and some modern scholars confirm that this message corresponds to a manuscript discovered in 1947.<sup>6</sup> The authenticity of this letter, and of all the others written and sent to other kings by the Prophet at the same date, has been amply discussed and questioned,<sup>7</sup> but whatever the case may be, subsequent chroniclers supported its authenticity and established a tradition relating how the Christian ruler respectfully handled the letter, read it with attention, and honored Muḥammad's ambassador.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Heraclius replied with deference to the Prophet and, even if he did not embrace Islam, explained to him that he recognized him as a messenger of God. As Nadia Maria El Cheikh has shown, this tradition conferred legitimacy on Muḥammad and the *umma*.<sup>9</sup> While it also gave a flattering impression of Heraclius, it established how the first posited diplomatic relations between a Muslim and a Christian ruler were marked by courtesy and mutual

<sup>5</sup> M. Hamidullah, *Documents sur la diplomatie musulmane à L'époque du Prophète et des khalifes orthodoxes*, Paris, 1935, 20, letter no. 14, and all the Arabic sources to which he refers. Idem, 'La lettre du Prophète à Héraclius et le sort de l'original', *Arabica* 2 (1955) 97-110, pp. 99-107, discusses all the objections to the authenticity of this letter made by modern historians.

<sup>6</sup> Idem, *Six originaux des lettres diplomatiques du Prophète de l'Islam*, Paris, 1986, pp. 147-73.

<sup>7</sup> For a recent and succinct presentation of this controversy, see: N.M. El Cheikh, *Byzantium viewed by the Arabs*, Cambridge MA, 2004, pp. 43-44. See also the commentaries of A.D. Beihammer, *Nachrichten zum byzantinischen Urkundenwesen in arabische Quellen (565-811)*, Bonn, 2000, no. 35, pp. 50-52. Kaegi has recently stated that, although it is possible that the Prophet sent a courier to Heraclius, 'such a messenger would not have reached him or received any kind of imperial audience or recognition' (W.E. Kaegi, *Heraclius. Emperor of Byzantium*, Cambridge, 2003, p. 236). Kaegi mentions a paper in preparation on this topic by Irfan Shahid, but I have not had access to it. See also S. Mourad, 'Christians and Christianity in the *Sira* of Muḥammad', *CMR* 1, pp. 67-68.

<sup>8</sup> Some Arab-Islamic medieval authors assert that a certain Dihya al-Kalbī was the emissary sent to Heraclius by Muḥammad, but confusion remains about the individuals he met in the Byzantine Empire, the places where the meetings took place, and so on (see S. Bashear, 'The mission of Dihya al-Kalbī and the situation in Syria', *Der Islam* 74 [1997] 64-91), and for an analysis of sources describing direct contact between the emissary and Heraclius, see S. Leder, 'Heraklios erkennt den Propheten. Ein Beispiel für Form und Entstehungsweise narrativer Geschichtskonstruktionen', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 151 (2001) 1-42, pp. 6-7, 22-25, 35, 38.

<sup>9</sup> El Cheikh, *Byzantium*, pp. 45-46.

respect. Other diplomatic contacts and exchanges of letters during the time of Muḥammad are referred to in the same terms, but the original letters – if they ever existed – are lost.<sup>10</sup>

More reliably, scholars can find original manuscripts of official letters from the Byzantine chancery. At the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the patriarch of Constantinople Nicolas Mysticus (q.v.) became regent of the Byzantine Empire for a few months (913–14), and he behaved as if he were emperor. During this period he sent official messages to the Abbasid caliph and to the emir of Crete, negotiating the political status of the Cypriots and an exchange of prisoners.<sup>11</sup> While the friendship between the two neighbors may be exaggerated here, one should note that the first letter introduces the two lords of the ‘Saracens’ and of the ‘Romans’ (i.e. the Byzantines) as the two supreme powers on earth, excluding *de facto* all others, and recognizes the official legitimacy of the Abbasid state, in contrast to the traditional Byzantine

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<sup>10</sup> Arabic sources speak of a second letter sent to Heraclius, as well as one sent to a bishop in Constantinople called Dughātir – the patriarch of Constantinople – who bore witness to Muḥammad and pronounced the *shahāda* (Hamidullah, *Documents sur la diplomatie*, pp. 21–22, letters 15 and 17; El Cheikh, *Byzantium*, p. 47, based on al-Ṭabarī). Furthermore, these first contacts were recalled by Arab authors and Muslim leaders: three centuries later, the Fatimid Caliph al-Mu‘izz made reference to Muḥammad’s letter to Heraclius and to the way the ‘King of *al-Rūm*’ replied kindly to it: El Cheikh, *Byzantium*, p. 48 (al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān); the Islamic literary tradition also relates that this letter arrived in the Iberian Peninsula, where it was kept in a golden box by the Christian king Alfonso VI and his successors: Hamidullah, ‘Lettre du Prophète’, pp. 107–10. The Arabic sources emphasize the difference in attitude between Heraclius and Chosroes II, the Persian king, who also received a message from the Prophet bidding him to embrace Islam or do battle: Chosroes tore the letter in pieces and decided to attack Medina (El Cheikh, *Byzantium*, pp. 44–45). Only one Greek author, Zonaras, mentions this first diplomatic contact between Heraclius and Muḥammad, but he wrote five centuries later and referred not to letters or messages but to a direct meeting between the two rulers (I. Zonaras, *Ioannis Zonarae Epitomae historiarum*, ed. M. Pinder, 3 vols, Bonn, 1897, iii, pp. 214–15. According to Ibn Hishām’s *Sira*, Muḥammad also met two official delegations of Christians, from the Negus of Abyssinia and from the Christians of Najrān; S. Mourad, ‘Christians and Christianity’, *CMR* 1, pp. 64–66.

<sup>11</sup> *Nicholas I, Patriarch of Constantinople, Letters*, ed. and trans. R.J.H. Jenkins and L.G. Westerink (*Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* 6), Washington DC, 1973, Letters 1 and 2, pp. 2–16, and the commentaries pp. 525–26 (these letters are available in the MS *Patmos* 178, 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> century); see also A.A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, 3 vols, Brussels, 1935, ii/1, pp. 182–83 (translation of Nicholas’ letters, pp. 399–411). For the date and context of the first letter, see F. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des Oströmischen Reiches, 1. Teil, 2. Halbband, Regesten von 867–1025*, ed. A.E. Müller and A. Beihammer, Munich, 2003, no. 571a.

political claims, which regard the *basileus* of Constantinople as the sole ruler.<sup>12</sup> We have another official letter, dated c. 922, also sent to the Abbasid Caliph al-Muqtadir, which tries to prove to its addressee that Muslim prisoners of war were well-treated in Byzantium.<sup>13</sup>

An Arabic manuscript linked to relations between the Umayyad dynasty of al-Andalus and Constantinople in the middle of the 10<sup>th</sup> century appears at the end of a manuscript of the 'Book of causes' by Pseudo-Apollonius of Tyana.<sup>14</sup> After the colophon of the book, we find an incomplete letter addressed to the Spanish Umayyad Caliph al-Ḥakam II by the 'Emperor of the Byzantines'.<sup>15</sup> The imperial author refers to a previous 'noble letter' from the caliph demonstrating his interest in 'science' and 'the books of the philosophers' – thus explaining the *basileus*' response and its being placed just after Pseudo-Apollonius' work. Although this document is genuinely interesting for the history of cultural relations between Islam and Christendom, its reliability cannot be assumed because it dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, it does not give an accurate date for this diplomatic contact. Scholars usually judge that it took place c. 971-72, given that in 972 the caliph received an embassy from the Emperor John

<sup>12</sup> *Nicholas I, Letters*, Letter 1, p. 2; on this theme, see the suggestive remarks of A. Ducellier, *Chrétiens d'Orient et Islam au moyen âge, VII<sup>e</sup> au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 1996, p. 195.

<sup>13</sup> *Nicholas I, Letters*, Letter 102, pp. 372-88, and commentaries, pp. 567-68. On this contact, as reflected in a primary Arabic source, see Vasilev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, ii/2, pp. 286-91 (al-Tanūkhī), and, more recently, the suggestions of A. Beihammer in Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 595b. Another official letter from the Byzantine chancery, written c. 928 by Theodore Daphnopates in the name of the Emperor Romanus Lecapenus, cannot be considered for our purposes – even though it is addressed to the 'emir of Egypt' – since historians have demonstrated that it would have been sent to an Armenian prince (*ibid.*, no. 620c).

<sup>14</sup> S.M. Stern, 'A letter of the Byzantine emperor to the court of the Spanish Umayyad Caliph al-Hakam', *Al-Andalus* 26 (1961) 37-42, and for what follows.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39, for the Arabic edition with an English translation; this text is also available in Spanish, with a commentary (J. Signes Codoñer, 'La diplomacia del libro en Bizancio. Algunas reflexiones en torno a la posible entrega de libros griegos a los árabes en los siglos VIII-X', *Scrittura e civiltà* 20 (1996) 153-87, p. 184).

<sup>16</sup> See the remarks of Signes Codoñer, 'La diplomacia', pp. 184-85; A. Beihammer, 'Reiner christlicher König – Πιστός ἐν Χριστῷ τῷ θεῷ βασιλεύς. Eine Studie zur Transformation kanzeleimäßigen Schriftguts in narrativen Texten am Beispiel kaiserlicher Auslandsbriefe des 10. Jahrhunderts an muslimische Destinatär', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 95 (2002) 1-34, pp. 16-17.



Tzimiscès, as we know from Ibn Ḥayyān and this document,<sup>17</sup> but Juan Signes Codoñer has recently proposed an earlier date.<sup>18</sup>

During his papacy, Gregory VII exchanged letters with a Muslim Berber ruler, al-Nāṣir ibn ‘Alennās. The letter sent first by the latter is lost, but the pope’s answer has been preserved in the well-known *Registrum Vaticanum* 2, in the Vatican Archives.<sup>19</sup> It deals with the emir’s attitude towards his Christian subjects. Gregory VII notably thanks al-Nāṣir for his decision to free captives.

In addition to these documents, manuscripts of a few other official letters still exist.<sup>20</sup> There is a change at the end of the period under consideration here, during and after the 12<sup>th</sup> century, when the expansion of commercial relations in the Mediterranean gave rise to diplomatic contacts between rulers, and consequently to an increase in official correspondence: the letter written in 1157 by ‘Abdallāh ibn Abī Khurāsān, emir of Tunis, to the Pisans, which is known in both Arabic and Latin versions, may be cited as an example.<sup>21</sup>

That being said, most diplomatic messages have come to historians’ attention through the work of chroniclers, who provide all the information they can about official contacts. Chronicles regularly refer to the sending of official messages, and it seems unlikely that an embassy would have been sent from one ruler to another without a letter, from the very beginning of diplomatic relations between Islamic coun-

<sup>17</sup> D. Wasserstein, ‘Byzantium and al-Andalus’, *Mediterranean Historical Review* 2 (1987) 76-101, pp. 83 and 99, n. 25; F. Roldán, P. Díaz and E. Díaz, ‘Bizancio y al-Ándalus, embajadas y relaciones’, *Erytheia* 9 (1988) 263-83, p. 274; Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 742a.

<sup>18</sup> J. Signes Codoñer proposes c. 961 (‘Bizancio y al-Ándalus en los siglos IX y X’, in I. Pérez Martín and P. Bádenas de la Peña (eds), *Bizancio y la península ibérica. De la antigüedad tardía a la edad moderna*, Madrid, 2004, 177-245, pp. 243-244).

<sup>19</sup> *Das Register Gregors VII*, ed. E. Caspar, in *MGH Epistulae selectae* 2, 3.21, pp. 287-88; for an English trans., see H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Register of Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085. An English translation*, Oxford, 2002, pp. 204-5. This letter dates from June or July 1076.

<sup>20</sup> We may include here scraps of original correspondence that deal with diplomatic relations, such as that dated between 1052 and 1056 which linked ‘Ali ibn Mujāhid, ruler of Denia, to Almodis, countess of Barcelona, though only its fragmentary preamble survives. It must be placed in a broader diplomatic context, recently explained in T. Bruce, ‘An intercultural dialogue between the Muslim taifa of Denia and the Christian county of Barcelona in the eleventh century’, *Medieval Encounters* 15 (2009) 1-34, pp. 23-25, and n. 84.

<sup>21</sup> L. de Mas-Latrie, *Traité de paix et de commerce et documents divers concernant les relations des chrétiens avec les Arabes de l’Afrique septentrionale au moyen âge*, Paris, 1856, pp. 38-39.

tries and their Christian neighbors.<sup>22</sup> As a result, letters of this kind, copied either in full or in part, can be found in narrative texts, from the beginning until the end of the period under consideration here and, logically, scholars should also turn to authors who composed their chronicles from the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century up to the end of the Middle Ages. If we look at the decades following the 11<sup>th</sup> century in the Mediterranean area, we must count among the commentaries on diplomatic contacts the well-known letter sent to the Norman King Roger II by the Fatimid Caliph al-Ḥāfiz.<sup>23</sup> This letter is known through the transcription made at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, or beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, by al-Qalqashandī in his *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā*, which contains transcriptions of numerous documents and official decrees. The interval between a historical diplomatic contact and the later transcription of an official letter is not always as long as this. Ibn Ḥayyān, an 11<sup>th</sup>-century Iberian author, thus provides a letter from a Cordovan emir, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān II, to the Byzantine Emperor Theophilus c. 839-40 – a letter that he transcribed relying on the works of two 10<sup>th</sup>-century authors.<sup>24</sup>

Historians know how tricky it is to analyse these letters, on account of their being written out centuries after the event. Some recent studies have considered this problem, in particular with regard to diplomatic letters exchanged between Byzantium and the Muslim world in the 10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>25</sup> In the introduction (*Prooimion*) of the official Byzantine letter to the Caliph al-Rāḍī, known through the versions of Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1257), al-Dhahabī (d. 1348) and Abū l-Maḥāsīn ibn

<sup>22</sup> A. Kaplony, *Konstantinopel und Damaskus. Gesandtschaften und Verträge zwischen Kaisern und Kalifen, 639-750. Untersuchungen zum Gewohnheits-Völkerrecht und zur interkulturellen Diplomatie*, Berlin, 1996, pp. 365, 377; Khaddury, *War and peace*, p. 241.

<sup>23</sup> The Arabist and Islamicist Marius Canard drew historians' attention to this more than 50 years ago ('Une lettre du calife fatimide al-Ḥāfiz (524-544/1130-1149) à Roger II', in *Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi Ruggeriani*, 2 vols, Palermo, 1955, I, pp. 125-46). Canard suggests that the original letter was written in 1137.

<sup>24</sup> Ibn Ḥayyān, *Crónica de los emires Alhakam I y Abdarraḥman II entre los años 796 y 847 (Almuqtābis II-1)*, trans. M.A. Makki and F. Corriente, Saragossa, 2001, pp. 295-98; E. Lévi-Provençal, 'Un échange d'ambassades entre Cordoue et Byzance au IX<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Byzantion* 12 (1937) 1-24, with an Arabic transcription and a French translation, pp. 17-24. On this contact and its context, to which we shall return later: Signes Codoñer, 'Bizancio y al-Ándalus', pp. 199-208, especially pp. 200-4.

<sup>25</sup> Beihammer, 'Transformation', *passim*; see also the general and introductory considerations of W. al-Qadi, 'Early Islamic state letters. The question of authenticity', in A. Cameron and L.I. Conrad (eds), *Problems in the literary source material (The Byzantine and early Islamic Near East 1)*, Princeton NJ, 1992, 215-75, pp. 215-21 and 245-48.

Taghrībīrdī (d. 1469), one finds, for instance, Qur'anic expressions that are unusual in Byzantine chancery practice. According to Alexander Beihammer's analysis, these seem to be later deliberate modifications by subsequent writers, rather than alterations made by official translators working in the chancery in the time of al-Rāḍī.<sup>26</sup>

We should also note that letters known through later transcriptions may be documents in which a Muslim prince invites his addressee to embrace Islam – in line with the first diplomatic letters thought to have been written and sent by the Prophet – explains to him what Islam is, and/or discusses one or several religious topics. Heraclius is said to have received such a delegation from Abū Bakr, the first caliph and Muḥammad's successor, with a new message inviting him to convert to Islam – a mission which was not successful.<sup>27</sup> These first official relations set the tone for future contacts. Indeed, this kind of official correspondence, including theological and religious discussions, appears several times subsequently.

The most frequently cited is that between the Umayyad Caliph 'Umar II and the Byzantine Emperor Leo III, between 717 and 720, versions of which exist in many languages, including Greek,<sup>28</sup> Arabic<sup>29</sup> and Armenian (see the entries on these in *CMR* 1).<sup>30</sup> It consists of two letters, the first sent by 'Umar II, and the second being Leo's. The late 8<sup>th</sup>-century Armenian chronicler, Lewond, gives a detailed account of

<sup>26</sup> Beihammer, 'Transformation', pp. 13-15, 27-28, and his conclusions, pp. 33-34; Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 633. This letter is also known from later Arab authors, and from the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Syriac author, Bar Hebraeus. He is the only one who gives the Byzantine emperor's *Intitulatio* correctly and in full (O. Kresten, 'Zur Chrysographie in den Auslandsschreiben der byzantinischen Kaiser', *Römische Historische Mitteilungen* 40 (1998) 139-86, pp. 160, n. 67, and 159, n. 63; Beihammer, 'Transformation', pp. 22-23.

<sup>27</sup> El Cheikh, *Byzantium*, pp. 52-53 (al-Bayhaqī); Hamidullah, *Documents sur la diplomatie*, p. 51.

<sup>28</sup> *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History A.D. 284-813*, trans. C. Mango and R. Scott, Oxford, 1997, pp. 550, and 551, n. 10.

<sup>29</sup> Agapius of Manbij and al-Mubarrad, see: Kaplony, *Gesandtschaften*, p. 207, who also presents Armenian sources (see next footnote). See also the entries on this correspondence by B. Roggema and M. Swanson in *CMR* 1, pp. 375-76, 381-85 and 377-80 respectively.

<sup>30</sup> *History of Lewond, the Eminent Vardapet of the Armenians*, trans. Z. Arzoumanian, Philadelphia PA, 1982, §§ 13-14. Thomas Artsruni and other Armenian authors also mention this exchange. For a recent analysis, with an extensive bibliography, see R.G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it. A survey and evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian writings on early Islam*, Princeton NJ, 1997, pp. 490-501; I. Rochow, 'Zu den diplomatischen Beziehungen zwischen Byzanz und dem Kalifat in der Zeit der syrischen Dynastie (717-802)', in C. Sode and S. Takács (eds), *Novum millenium*, Aldershot, 2001, 305-323, p.309, n. 23; the entry by T. Greenwood in *CMR* 1, pp. 203-8.

this contact, with a long transcription of the two official letters, though this may not be the full transcription he claims.<sup>31</sup> The letters raise the usual themes of Muslim-Christian dispute texts,<sup>32</sup> but Łewond and other authors unfortunately do not give further information about the diplomatic context in which the messages between the two rulers were exchanged. We only know that, afterwards, 'Umar II 'exercised more temperance and indulgence toward the Christian people'.<sup>33</sup> Should we doubt the historicity of this diplomatic contact? In his exhaustive survey of diplomatic relations between Constantinople and Damascus (639-750), A. Kaplony does not.<sup>34</sup> But he does not include in his analysis recent historical studies on the authenticity of the Arabic of the two letters, pointed out by I. Rochow.<sup>35</sup> Two facts should be considered which indicate that there was indeed official contact between the two rulers. The first is that references to diplomatic emissaries are found in two different sources: Łewond states that Leo's letter was sent to 'Umar II 'by one of his trusted servants',<sup>36</sup> and al-Mubarrad, a 9<sup>th</sup>-century Arab author, details the mission of two emissaries of 'Umar II, giving the name of one of them ('Abdallāh ibn 'Abd al-A'lā).<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, although the precise date of this mission remains unclear – maybe during the year 100 AH (between August 718 and July 719) – it evidently took place between 717 and 720, when Leo and 'Umar were both ruling, and also to a period of important diplomatic activity between the caliph and the *basileus*.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> The authenticity of his account has been a subject of controversy, which is not examined here; see Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 491-501, with references to the studies of S. Gero, A. Jeffery, R.W. Thomson and J.-M. Gaudeul; Rochow, 'Byzanz und das Kalifat', pp. 309-10, nn. 24-26.

<sup>32</sup> A.-T. Houry, *Les théologiens byzantins et l'islam, textes et auteurs (VIII<sup>e</sup>-XIII<sup>e</sup> s.)*, Louvain, 1969, pp. 200-18; Agapius states that Leo's reply developed theological arguments based on the 'revealed Books', as well as on 'the insights and inclinations of the Qur'an' (Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 490).

<sup>33</sup> *History of Lewond*, § 15, p. 106; before his transcription of the two letters Łewond has already said that the caliph released Christian captives, at least those who had been taken into captivity from Armenia at the time of Muḥammad.

<sup>34</sup> Kaplony, *Gesandtschaften*, pp. 207-37, and especially his discussion on pp. 208-10.

<sup>35</sup> Rochow, 'Byzanz und das Kalifat', p. 310.

<sup>36</sup> *History of Lewond*, § 15, p. 105.

<sup>37</sup> Rochow, 'Byzanz und das Kalifat', p. 310; Kaplony, *Gesandtschaften*, pp. 224-25, 228-29 with a description, based on al-Mubarrad, of the discussion between Leo III and the Muslim ambassadors.

<sup>38</sup> Kaplony, *Gesandtschaften*, p. 237, for discussion about the date; for diplomatic activity during this period, see *ibid.*, pp. 203-41, 289-316, 349-50, with reference to nine contacts; it is true that most of these contacts are idealized or totally fictitious (see also Rochow, 'Byzanz und das Kalifat', pp. 308-12), but one cannot conclude with

Historians may consider that ‘Umar II’s attitude towards his Christian neighbor in sending him a letter calling him to Islam, deliberately follows the precedent set by the Prophet,<sup>39</sup> and one finds other letters of this kind in later times. One of the most famous is that written at the time of Hārūn al-Rashīd to the Byzantine Emperor Constantine VI, around 796 (q.v.). It essentially consists in an apologetic treatise, with an invitation to choose between conversion to Islam or payment of the *jizya*.<sup>40</sup> If we read between the lines, references to the benefits of peaceful relations are indicative of some aspects of daily life on the borders,<sup>41</sup> but the diplomatic context is not explained in the letter, and we must refer for information about this to other Arabic or Greek chroniclers.<sup>42</sup> We should also note with Rochow that, although no official emissary is explicitly referred to in the letter, it must inevitably have been brought by an ambassador of the caliph.<sup>43</sup>

Religious references can also be found in the correspondence between Muslim and Western Christian rulers. As Benjamin Z. Kedar has recently shown, Pope Gregory VII was meticulous in his choice of words in his official letter to the Berber ruler al-Nāṣir ibn ‘Alennās in 1076.<sup>44</sup> He wrote that it was ‘God, the creator of all’ who inspired

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Kennedy that the Arab invasion of the Byzantine Empire in 717 put an end to contact, or reduced it to a minimum (H. Kennedy, ‘Byzantine-Arab diplomacy in the Near East from the Islamic conquests to the mid-eleventh century’, in J. Shepard and S. Franklin (eds), *Byzantine diplomacy*, Aldershot UK, 1992, 133-43, p. 136.

<sup>39</sup> See the remarks of A.M.H. Shboul, ‘Arab attitudes toward Byzantium. Official, learned, popular’, in *KAΘHGHTRIA, Essays presented to Joan Hussey for her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday*, Camberley: Porphyrogenitus, 1988, 111-28, p. 116.

<sup>40</sup> *Lettre du calife Hārūn al-Rachīd à l’empereur Constantin VI*, ed. H. Eid, Paris, 1992, *passim*. This letter is known from the version provided by the Arab historian Abū Faḍl Aḥmad Ibn Tayfūr (d. 893), but the original version was written by Abū l-Rabī‘ Muḥammad ibn al-Layth, a contemporary of the caliphs al-Mahdī, al-Hādī and Hārūn al-Rashīd (*ibid.*, pp. 7, 16-19). And see the entry by B. Roggema in *CMR* 1, pp. 347-53.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80 (French trans.), pp. 181-83 (Arabic text); see the remarks of El Cheikh on this passage (*Byzantium*, pp. 92-93).

<sup>42</sup> See the explanation of H. Eid, *Lettre du calife*, pp. 15ff., especially pp. 30-31; the letter refers to the breaking of an earlier peace between Byzantines and Abbasids in 785 (see Beihammer, *Nachrichten*, no. 346 (the treaty was concluded in July or August 782)).

<sup>43</sup> Rochow, ‘Byzanz und das Kalifat’, p. 320. For another example of an official letter addressed to a *basileus* inviting him to accept Islam or pay an indemnity, see Shboul, ‘Arab attitudes’, p. 118.

<sup>44</sup> B.Z. Kedar, ‘Religion in Catholic-Muslim correspondence and treaties’, in A. Beihammer, M.G. Parani and C.D. Schabel (eds), *Diplomatics in the Eastern*

al-Nāṣir to release his Christian captives and stated that charity was central in relations between Christians and Muslims. Gregory also declared that both groups believed in one God, admittedly in different ways, honoring him as creator and ruler of the world. Furthermore, to designate this 'God' he avoided the word *Christus*, preferring to use *Deus* seven times. A specific context explains this choice, which has been analysed by modern historians as an official recognition of Islam's monotheism, and so its proximity to Christianity.<sup>45</sup>

In contrast, more than a century earlier, in the early 950s, a letter sent by the caliph of Cordova, 'Abd al-Raḥmān III, to the Emperor Otto I of Germany, appears to have contained blasphemies against Christ.<sup>46</sup> We may conclude with Kedar that this letter made reference to Islamic tenets considered insulting by the Christian court.<sup>47</sup> Otto's response, conveyed to Cordova by the monk John of Gorze, rebutted the caliph's 'errors', but its content was divulged before the monk's arrival. Being the bearer of such a letter, John would have been put to death by the caliph. In spite of this risk, he maintained his intention to deliver the letter, but was kept in isolation for months – until he received new instructions from Otto, and delivered a 'milder letter'.<sup>48</sup>

However, religious considerations were not the only subject of such correspondence, nor the only reason why a Christian ruler would begin diplomatic negotiations with a Muslim ruler, or vice versa. Political or military motives in fact took priority,<sup>49</sup> which was logical

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*Mediterranean 1000-1500. Aspects of cross-cultural communications*, Leiden, 2008, 407-21, p. 408, with the references cited there.

<sup>45</sup> These views were certainly novel, as Kedar remarks, but the letter also refers to the Muslims as pagans and to their cruelty and ferocity (Kedar, 'Religion', pp. 408-9). One should also note that in the short fragmentary preamble of a letter sent by the Muslim ruler of Denia to the Christian ruler of Barcelona, translated from Arabic to Latin in the Denian court, the word *Deus* appears eight times (Bruce, 'An intercultural dialogue', p. 23, n. 84). This may also be seen as an argument that good diplomatic relations were being established and/or confirmed between these two rulers.

<sup>46</sup> *Vita Iohannis abbatis Gorziensis*, ed. and French trans. M. Parisse, *La vie de Jean, abbé de Gorze*, Paris, 1999, § 115, pp. 142-43.

<sup>47</sup> Kedar, 'Religion', p. 407.

<sup>48</sup> *Vita Iohannis*, § 130, pp. 156-57. For an overview of all the sources on diplomatic relations between the Umayyad Caliph 'Abd al-Raḥmān III and Otto the Great, see El-Hajji, *Andalusian diplomatic relations*, pp. 207-27.

<sup>49</sup> Political and religious motives usually both have a place in official correspondence, and a letter may explain that religious differences should not hinder diplomatic and peaceful relations (see M. Canard, 'Une lettre de Muḥammad ibn Ṭugj al-Ihsīd émīr d'Égypte à l'empereur Romain Lécépène', *Annales de l'Institut d'Études Orientales de la Faculté d'Alger* 2 (1936) 189-209, pp. 195-205, especially p. 204.

when the rulers were neighbors, and was sometimes also the case in correspondence between distant rulers, as the letter and embassy sent by Bertha, queen of Tuscany, in 906, to the Caliph al-Muktafi in Baghdad proves. This well-known letter, conserved in an 11<sup>th</sup>-century Fatimid manuscript, details the gifts sent by the queen, and the reasons for this contact. She wants to establish peaceful relations with Baghdad in order to confront their mutual neighbors, notably Byzantium.<sup>50</sup> Considering Byzantium, we should observe that a significant number of the most official documents produced by its chancery, the chrysobulls, concerning relations with Islam, are known through Arabic and Syriac chroniclers.<sup>51</sup>

#### Diplomatic contacts in chronicles and narrative texts. Peace treaties and official agreements

The examples referred to above show how official contacts between Islam and Christendom are usually known: through chronicles and narrative texts. Even if we were to consider peace treaties, we would have to read and to take these narrative texts into account for a complete understanding of the issue.

Theoretically, peace established with a Christian neighbor was considered in Islam to be a limited peace, since Muslims were under obligation to conquer all the territories that did not recognize the sovereignty of a Muslim ruler (the *dār al-ḥarb*) and join them to those

<sup>50</sup> M. Hamidullah, 'Embassy of Queen Bertha of Rome to caliph al-Muktafi Bilah in Baghdad 293H./906', *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* 1 (1953) 272-300, pp. 273-85 (Arabic text and English trans.); Hamidullah explains the real identity of Queen Bertha, thus completing other data on this diplomatic contact, known through two Arab writers (Ibn al-Nadīm and al-Ghuzūlī). This letter is extracted from a text called *Kitāb-al-dhakhā'ir wa-l-tuhaf*, now fully translated: *Book of gifts and rarities, Kitāb al-hadāyā wa al-tuhaf*, trans. G. al-Hijjāwī al-Qaddūmī, Cambridge MA, 1996, here § 69. For light recently shed on this contact, and bibliographical references, see C. Renzi Rizzo, 'Riflessioni sulla lettera di Berta di Toscana al califfo Muktafi: l'apporto congiunto dei dati archeologici e delle fonti scritte', *Archivio Storico Italiano* 159 (2001) 3-47.

<sup>51</sup> Otto Kresten, 'Zur Chrysographie', pp. 157-60 (chrysobull from Romanos I to Abbasid Caliph al-Rādī, in July 938, inserted in the history of Ibn al-Jawzī, *Al-Muntazam*, and in other later Arabic texts = Dölger, *Regesten*, no.633), pp. 161-67 (chrysobull from Constantine VII and Romanos II to Umayyad Caliph 'Abd al-Raḥmān III, probably in 948, known through the works of Ibn Abī Uṣaybī'a, Ibn Ḥayyān, Ibn 'Idārī, and other references in Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 657), pp. 170-72 (chrysobull from Constantine IX to Abbasid Caliph al-Qā'im, in 1051-52, known through Bar Hebraeus = Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 900).

already under Muslim rule (the *dār al-islām*).<sup>52</sup> Was this concept clearly understood by Christian rulers? In 957-58, for instance, a Byzantine ambassador met the Fatimid Caliph al-Mu'izz and asked him to establish a permanent peace with the *basileus*. The caliph rejected his proposal and explained why such a peace could not be possible. As the *qāḍī* al-Nu'mān describes it, al-Mu'izz told the envoy that 'the religion and the canon law (*sharī'a*) did not sanction the conclusion of a perpetual truce as requested [...]'; that 'a peace may be concluded only for the duration of a specified period'; because 'had the truce been a perpetual one, then the holy war (*jihād*) which is enjoined on Muslims would have been negated, the call for Islam would have ceased and the command of the Qur'an been contravened'.<sup>53</sup> Yet this text is particular, as we shall note later, in the way it presents the subordination of the Byzantines to the Fatimids. A few years before, indeed, a *basileus* sent an official letter to Symeon, the Bulgar king, recognizing that Byzantines could not conclude a perpetual truce with Muslims, since they had a different faith from the Christians.<sup>54</sup>

Of course, other reasons than religious might lead a caliph to conclude a peace treaty with the Byzantines, or other Christian sovereigns, especially al-Mu'izz, at that time.<sup>55</sup> However, we must recognize that historical sources stress that peace agreements were temporary truces more than real peace treaties.<sup>56</sup> Unfortunately, many of the

<sup>52</sup> M. Khadduri, *War and peace*, pp. 202, 239; idem, art. 'Hudna', *ELZ*. These considerations are based on Q 9:29.

<sup>53</sup> A. Tibi, 'Byzantine-Fatimid relations in the reign of al-Mu'izz li Din Allah (953-975 A.D.) as reflected in primary Arabic Sources', *Graeco-Arabica* 4 (1991) 91-107, p. 102. On this episode, see also S.M. Stern, 'An embassy of the Byzantine emperor to the Fatimid Caliph al-Mu'izz', *Byzantion* 20 (1950) 239-58, pp. 245-46; J. Shepard, 'Aspects of Byzantine attitudes and policy towards the West in the tenth and eleventh century', in J.D. Howard-Johnston (ed.), *Byzantium and the West: c. 850-c. 1200*, Amsterdam, 1988, 67-118, p. 77.

<sup>54</sup> Théodore Daphnopatès, *Correspondance*, ed. and French trans. J. Darrouzès and L.G. Westerink, Paris, 1978, Letter 6, p. 71. The emperor adds that periods of peace between Islam and Christendom are not scrupulously respected for more than two or three years – and he blames his addressee, a Christian ruler, for having broken the peace first.

<sup>55</sup> See Tibi, 'Byzantine-Fatimid relations', p. 100.

<sup>56</sup> M. Khadduri, art. 'Sulḥ', in *ELZ*: these truces could not be concluded for more than a ten-year period, but see the contrasting observations of G. Weigert, 'A note on hudna. Peacemaking in Islam', in Y. Lev (ed.), *War and society in the Eastern Mediterranean, 7<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries*, Leiden, 1997, 399-405, pp. 401-3. In a category between *dār al-ḥarb* and *dār al-islām*, some regions paying tribute to Islam by written agreement, could be described as *dār al-'ahd*, 'the land of treaty': for a global reflection on the topic, and an analysis of the case of Iberia, see M. de Epalza, 'Ahd: Muslim/Mudejar/Morisco communities and Spanish-Christian authorities', in R.I. Burns and P.E.



original versions of these agreements are lost and authors who mention treaties usually give only scant details. Medievalists are able to write a chronological history of Christian-Muslim diplomatic relations on the basis of the treaties alone – as Vismara did more than 50 years ago – but it would be an incomplete record of limited value.<sup>57</sup> Two 11<sup>th</sup>-century peace treaties concerning northern Iberia are an exception, for they exist in their original versions. They established peace and union between the king of Navarre, Sancho IV Garcés, and the Muslim ruler of Saragossa, al-Muqtadir, in 1069 and 1073.<sup>58</sup>

Fortunately, some treaties whose originals have been lost are well known, thanks to authors who detail them, and even provide full or partial transcriptions. A 13<sup>th</sup>-century Arab writer, Kamāl al-Dīn, gives us such an example, which is confirmed by other authors. It concerns a treaty concluded in 969 between Byzantium and the emirate of Aleppo<sup>59</sup> and has been the subject of several studies, including a full analysis made by W. Farag more than 30 years ago.<sup>60</sup> What we now call the ‘Truce of Safar’, because it was concluded during the month of Safar 359 (December 969/January 970), is a very interesting case for various reasons. It transforms this emirate into a client-state of Byzantium, in the same year in which the Christian empire conquered Antioch. Seen from Byzantium, these two events are usually analysed

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Chevedden (eds), *Negotiating cultures. Bilingual surrender treaties in Muslim crusader Spain under James the Conqueror*, Leiden, 1999, 195-212, pp. 195-206, 209-12, and for the eastern Mediterranean, C. Holmes, ‘Treaties between Byzantium and the Islamic world’, in P. de Souza and J. France (eds), *War and peace in ancient and medieval history*, Cambridge, 2008, 141-57, p. 143.

<sup>57</sup> G. Vismara, Milan, 1950; see, more recently, Holmes’ study (‘Treaties’, *passim*), which focuses on the 10<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the works of the jurists, especially in Islam, scholars can study in detail both the theory of war and peace, and the legal constitution of treaties: Khadduri, *War and peace*, pp. 202-22, Hamidullah, *Muslim conduct*, pp. 267-77.

<sup>58</sup> J.M. Lacarra, ‘Dos tratados de paz y alianza entre Sancho el de Peñalen y Mocatdir de Zaragoza (1069 y 1073)’, in *Homenaje a Johannes Vincke para al II. de Mayo de 1962*, 2 vols, Madrid, 1962-63, ii, 121-34, *passim*.

<sup>59</sup> Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 728a, has all the references; Vismara, *Bisanzio e l’Islam*, pp. 19, 27; Holmes, ‘Treaties’, pp. 151-53.

<sup>60</sup> W. Farag, *The Truce of Safar A.H. 359, December-January 969-970 A.D.*, Birmingham, 1977, with a translation, 1-8, but I was not able to consult this study; idem, ‘The Aleppo question. A Byzantine-Fatimid conflict of interests in northern Syria in the later tenth century’, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 14 (1990) 44-60, pp. 45-46. French trans. and analysis in M. Canard, *Histoire de la dynastie des H’amdaniides de Jazira et de Syrie I (Publications de la faculté des lettres d’Alger, 2nd série 21)*, Algiers, 1951, pp. 833-37.

as a consequence of both military and diplomatic success against eastern Islam.<sup>61</sup> The treaty gives concrete information about the poll-tax the emirate would have to pay, the rebuilding of churches, the control of potential espionage between the two neighbors, and the easiest route for trading caravans to take from one territory to the other.<sup>62</sup>

The transcription of this treaty (*hudna*) in a narrative text, as in other cases too, can be problematic, because it is reconstructed for official correspondence, but we should note, with C. Holmes, some similarities between this treaty and others concluded elsewhere between Christian and Muslim rulers. As she points it out, we can find similar protection agreements in Christian Spain and Sicily during the 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>63</sup> A parallel should also be drawn with the so-called 'Treaty of Tudmir' established in the month of Rajab 94/April 713, at the beginning of the Muslim conquests of the Iberia, between Theodomir, a local Visigoth landowner in Murcia, and 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Mūsā, the second Muslim governor of Iberia. This may be considered as the earliest official document preserved for the history of al-Andalus, and it shows us that Christians under Muslim domination in this area kept a large degree of autonomy, namely by retaining their possessions, their lords and their religion, in return for their loyalty to the Muslim authorities and payment of an annual tribute.<sup>64</sup>

Negotiating from a position of strength after their military successes, Muslim conquerors drew up treaties or conventions with populations and local governors who recognized them as their new political masters.<sup>65</sup> These Christians paid the *jizya* in return for

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<sup>61</sup> J. Shepard, 'Byzantine diplomacy, A.D. 800-1204. Means and ends', in J. Shepard and S. Franklin (eds), *Byzantine diplomacy*, Aldershot UK, 1992, 41-71, pp. 42-43.

<sup>62</sup> Kennedy, 'Diplomacy', pp. 142-43.

<sup>63</sup> Holmes, 'Treaties', p. 152, with the references in n. 39; such official agreements, which put one of the two diplomatic partners in a position of dependency on the other, though not without a kind of independence in its internal administration, can be found between Normans and Muslims in Sicily at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and between Roger II of Sicily and emirs of coastal North Africa about 50 years later. For the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Holmes mentions the case of James I of Aragon and his relations with the cities of the Muslim kingdom of Valencia; see Burns and Chevedden, *Negotiating cultures, passim*.

<sup>64</sup> Burns and Chevedden, *Negotiating cultures*, pp. 201-4, 231-32 (with three translations based on three different and later versions of the original treaty, those of 'Umar ibn al-Dalā'i, al-Ḍabbī and Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥimyarī); H. Kennedy, 'The Muslims in Europe', in R. McKitterick (ed.), *The new Cambridge medieval history*, vol 2, c. 700-c. 900, Cambridge, 1995, 249-71, p. 257.

<sup>65</sup> For the case of contacts with Byzantine regions or cities in Syria and Mesopotamia,

Muslim protection, and became part of the *dhimmī* populations under Islam. These conventions seem in many cases to have been written down; this provided a solid guarantee for both parties and also proves that official dealings and/or secret negotiation took place beforehand, opening the door to traditional diplomatic relations between Christians and Muslims. Of course, as Holmes stresses, the details of these agreements ‘have to be pieced together from scraps of evidence or much later historical narratives’.<sup>66</sup>

One text among many may be given specific attention: an extract from the chronicle of John, bishop of Nikiou (q.v.). This text was written in Coptic, between 650 and the 690s, but only survived in a 17<sup>th</sup>-century Ethiopic translation of an Arabic translation based on the Coptic version.<sup>67</sup> The extract that concerns us deals with the negotiation that occurred before the capture of Alexandria by the Arabs in 641. Here, John describes events that he witnessed, providing interesting details of these negotiations. Briefly, the extract first shows us the dealings that led to an agreement which resembles the ‘Treaty of Tudmir’. Second, it underlines the fact that, faced with the Muslims, Christian governors of the city and the rest of the population held two different views. The former, led by the Patriarch Cyrus, were ready to negotiate peace and pay tribute to the Muslims – and so they did – while the latter still wanted to resist.<sup>68</sup> Although we should always be very cautious when a Coptic author describes the political attitudes of the Chalcedonian élite, we should note how this passage illustrates a theme present in other sources produced in this context:

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see W.E. Kaegi, *Byzantium and the early Islamic conquests*, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 144–80. As H. Kennedy, *The great Arab conquests. How the spread of Islam changed the world we live in*, Philadelphia, 2007, pp. 19–20, recalls, it is important to distinguish between towns and regions that were conquered peacefully and those that were taken by force.

<sup>66</sup> Holmes, ‘Treaties’, p. 143.

<sup>67</sup> Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 152–53 – both the original Coptic text and the Arabic version are now lost; see the entry by G. Fiaccadori in *CMR* 1, pp. 209–18.

<sup>68</sup> *Chronique de Jean évêque de Nikiou*, ed. and French trans. H. Zotenberg, Paris, 1883, CXX, 455–56. Though discrepancies may exist between them, all other non-Muslim sources on the events also describe the way Cyrus chose to negotiate with the Muslims (Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 574–90 [with reference to an English translation by R.H. Charles of *The Chronicle of John (C. 690 AD)*, Coptic Bishop of Nikiu, London and Oxford, 1916, pp. 193–94]). Hoyland dates the diplomatic contact in Babylon between Cyrus and ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ, the Muslim conqueror, to between 14 September 641 and 30 November 641 (*Seeing Islam*, p. 582, n. 162). See also the testimonies in Arabic sources to all the negotiations led by Cyrus (Beihammer, *Nachrichten*, nos 180–83 [with a long commentary], 187, 212 and 213); Kennedy, *Great Arab conquests*, pp. 158–59.

the treachery of the Christian elite in coming to terms with the Muslims, in contrast to the rest of the population, who took the opposite position.<sup>69</sup>

Examples of these sources include negotiation between Muslims and Christians in Muslim territory, but the procedure for negotiating and concluding a treaty or a truce remains the same between Muslims and Christians outside *dār al-islām*. In both cases, historians have to deal with reports of these negotiations, and sometimes accounts of peace treaties, through the writings of later authors. Although information about peace treaties is usually scarce or lacking in detail, we do have examples for the whole period under consideration, in the western, eastern and central Mediterranean area, since the beginning of Islam.

Apart from the instances already presented, a few others are worthy of attention. For 11<sup>th</sup>-century Iberia, reference should be made to the so-called *parias* treaties. As a consequence of the military weakness of the Muslim rulers of petty states in al-Andalus,<sup>70</sup> compared with the strength of the Christian kings, both Christian and Muslim princes established treaties that confirm the Christian superiority, illustrated in the treaties by the stipulation of regular payment or the transfer of fortresses following Christian military threats towards the Muslims. In his *Al-bayān al-mughrib*, Ibn ʿIdhārī, for example, details how the king of Castile, Fernando I, persuaded the Emir al-Muẓaffar ibn al-Aḥṣā to conclude such a pact after a show of force in 1045. He explains that Fernando could negotiate from a position of strength, meeting the emir across the Tagus River, in Santarém, and compelling him to pay a heavy tribute – as he did with other emirs.<sup>71</sup> So Muslim rulers of petty states in al-Andalus had to buy peace, which is one explanation for the massive transfer of precious metals from al-Andalus to Christian northern Spain.<sup>72</sup>

On the other hand, more than a century earlier it was Byzantium who paid tribute to avoid Fatimid aggression from Sicily and to

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<sup>69</sup> Ducellier, *Chrétiens d'Orient*, pp. 40-42, but this attitude changes (ibid., pp. 45-47). But we should note that separatist truces or treaties could have been angrily criticized by Emperor Heraclius, and not only in the case of Egypt (Kaegi, *Heraclius*, pp. 247, 255, 281-83, 286-87, with references to the sources).

<sup>70</sup> The well-known *mulūk al-ṭawāʾif*, hispanized as *reyes de taifas*.

<sup>71</sup> Ibn ʿIdhārī, *Al-bayān al-mughrib*, cited and translated by F. Maíllo Salgado, *La caída del califato de Córdoba y los reyes de Taifas*, Salamanca, 1993, p. 198.

<sup>72</sup> Note the amount of gold referred to in two original treaties already mentioned (Lacarra, 'Dos tratados de paz', pp. 132-33 (texts) and pp. 125, 127 (commentary)).

defend southern Italy.<sup>73</sup> At the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the balance of power between these two neighbors seems to have been in equilibrium. Arabic, and to a lesser extent Greek, sources provide evidence that peace treaties were concluded between Constantinople and Cairo in 1000-1,<sup>74</sup> 1027-28,<sup>75</sup> 1036,<sup>76</sup> 1045,<sup>77</sup> and 1054.<sup>78</sup> These texts allude to exchanges of embassies before and after the ratification of the treaties, and to the details of some clauses in them (exchanges of prisoners, restoration of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher after al-Ḥākim's depredations, and other economic considerations).<sup>79</sup>

In earlier times, narrative texts prove that peace treaties could have been rapidly established between new Islamic states and Christian ones. In Iberia, for instance, the first treaty between an Umayyad ruler and a Christian prince, Fruela I, king of León, in northern Iberia, was drawn up in 759.<sup>80</sup> In southern Italy, a decade after their arrival in Sicily, the Arabs concluded a treaty with Naples in 837, which enabled

<sup>73</sup> Tributes are known to have been paid, for example, in the years 914-15 and 924 (Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 577a [and A. Beihammer's discussion of its dating] and 603; the dating of the first was initially established as around 917, agreed by Vismara, *Bisanzio e l'Islam*, pp. 17-18, 39, and also by Y. Lev, 'The Fatimids and Byzantium, 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries', *Graeco-Arabica* 6 (1995) 190-208, p. 196. Lev counts as a tribute the money sent by the emperor to the Fatimid caliph in 913 (Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 574); but this is a special case, only referred to by Liudprand of Cremona, because the money was in recompense for the military aid provided by the caliph to the emperor. Byzantine embassies to the Fatimids in the 940s certainly had the same goal – to prevent Fatimid aggression against the Empire and/or to dissuade them from aiding Crete (Shepard, 'Byzantine attitudes', p. 81).

<sup>74</sup> Dölger, *Regesten*, nos 788, 789e and 792b; Kennedy, 'Diplomacy', p. 143; Vismara, *Bisanzio e l'Islam*, pp. 22, 42; Lev, 'Fatimids', pp. 204-5; W. Felix, *Byzanz und die islamische Welt im früheren 11. Jahrhundert : Geschichte der politischen Beziehungen von 1001 bis 1055*, Vienna, 1981, pp. 48-49.

<sup>75</sup> Lev, 'Fatimids', p. 206; Felix, *Byzanz*, pp. 80-81; Vismara, *Bisanzio e l'Islam*, p. 24; Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 823b. This treaty followed another, four years earlier, which was in the end not concluded (*ibid.*, 816c; Kennedy, 'Diplomacy', p. 143; Lev, 'Fatimids', p. 206; Felix, *Byzanz*, pp. 41, 73-74.

<sup>76</sup> Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 843; Lev, 'Fatimids', p. 208; Felix, *Byzanz*, p. 107; Vismara, *Bisanzio e l'Islam*, p. 24; Thomson, 'Relations', pp. 53-54.

<sup>77</sup> Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 873b; Felix, *Byzanz*, p. 114; Vismara, *Bisanzio e l'Islam*, p. 25; Lev, 'The Fatimids and Byzantium, 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries', *Graeco-Arabica* 7-8 (1999-2000) 273-81, p. 273.

<sup>78</sup> Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 912; Felix, *Byzanz*, 119-120; Vismara, *Bisanzio e l'Islam*, pp. 25, 42; Thomson, 'Relations', p. 58.

<sup>79</sup> The Byzantine court rhetoric emphasizes the reality of these regular exchanges of embassies between the *basileis* and the caliphs in Cairo: John Mauropous, one of the great Byzantine courtiers of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, speaks of embassies from Egypt coming to Constantinople 'continuously... day by day' (Shepard, 'Ends and means', p. 55, n. 55).

<sup>80</sup> El-Hajji, *Andalusian diplomatic relations*, pp. 61-63.

them to conquer towns on the northern coast of Sicily, such as Messina, in 842.<sup>81</sup> As historians have frequently pointed out, these Arabs were ready to make alliances with local Christian rulers and to take advantage of rivalries between the Byzantine authorities and Lombard princes in that part of the Mediterranean world.<sup>82</sup>

Diplomatic relations were frequent, and religious difference seems not to have been considered an obstacle to such relations and understandings.<sup>83</sup> Each ruler acted to further his own ambitions and interests. It was not uncommon for Christians to call on Muslims to help them maintain their independence from other Christian powers. Abdurrahman Ali El-Hajji cites, for example, the case of Vermudo, brother of Alfonso III 'the Great', king of León (866-910), who asserted his independence as ruler of Astorga with Muslim help.<sup>84</sup> A similar attitude is well attested in the case of relations between Byzantium and its Muslim neighbors. Desirous of seizing power in Byzantium, Thomas the Slav revolted against the *basileus* in the eastern parts of the Empire in about 821-24. He made an alliance with the Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mūn, who recognized him as emperor; the Melkite patriarch of Antioch, which was under Abbasid domination, crowned Thomas *basileus*, with al-Ma'mūn's consent, in return for Thomas's promise to surrender certain territories and pay tribute to al-Ma'mūn.<sup>85</sup> Although Arab raids on Sicily began in 652, it was the revolt against imperial authority by Euphemius, the Byzantine naval commander in the island, in 826 that led to an Arab invasion from North Africa, one of the points that marked the start of their lasting

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<sup>81</sup> Kennedy, 'Muslims in Europe', p. 252.

<sup>82</sup> As Kennedy has noted, they acted as allies of one party in inter-Christian disputes: for example, in 837, they helped Naples to preserve its independence from the advancing Lombard Prince Sicard of Benevento (*ibid.*, pp. 253-54; F.E. Engreen, 'Pope John the Eighth and the Arabs', *Speculum* 20 (1945) 318-30, pp. 321-22).

<sup>83</sup> On this topic, see the introductory considerations of P. Sénac (*Le monde carolingien et l'Islam. Contribution à l'étude des relations diplomatiques pendant le haut Moyen Âge (VIII<sup>e</sup>-X<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, Paris, 2006, p. 8), who agrees with the observations of M. Talbi (*L'émirat aghlabide, 184-296/800-909. Histoire politique*, Paris, 1966, p. 529; see also the *considerazioni conclusive* made by C. Renzi Rizzo ('I rapporti diplomatici fra il re Ugo di Provenza e il califfo 'Abd ar-Ramān III. Fonti cristiane e fonti arabe a confronto', *Reti Medievali* 3 [2002-2] 1-19, pp. 16-18, available at [www.storia.unifi.it/\\_RM/rivista/saggi/Renzi.htm](http://www.storia.unifi.it/_RM/rivista/saggi/Renzi.htm)).

<sup>84</sup> El-Hajji, *Andalusian diplomatic relations*, p. 53. For 12<sup>th</sup>-century Iberia, see Bruce, 'An intercultural dialogue', pp. 9, 23-25, 26.

<sup>85</sup> *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis historiarum*, ed. I. Thurn, (*Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* 5), Berlin, 1973, pp. 31-32; art. 'Thomas the Slav', *ODB*.

presence in Sicily. Euphemius offered the Aghlabid ruler suzerain rights over the island on condition that he himself remain governor of the island, with the title of *basileus*.<sup>86</sup>

Mutual interests leading to diplomatic contacts between Christians and Muslims were not only characteristic of rebels.<sup>87</sup> Official powers and rulers might also find it in their interest to negotiate with an infidel neighbor. We find these kinds of diplomatic contacts throughout the period under consideration, as we have already indicated briefly in the previous examples. Each part of the Mediterranean area, in the broad sense, provides examples of it – even sometimes unexpectedly, between rulers who entered into relations in spite of being separated by great distances.<sup>88</sup> As we have seen, diplomatic relations are both longstanding and frequent between Umayyad rulers of Cordova and Christian princes, including both northern Iberian princes and Frankish sovereigns, particularly Carolingians, as A.A. El-Hajji and, more recently, Philippe Sénac have shown.<sup>89</sup> In the case of the Iberians, the contacts could be close, since marriages were concluded between Umayyad rulers and Christian princesses.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> *Ioannis Scylitzae*, pp. 46–47, is one of the numerous testimonies to this revolt; see the recent overview and suggestive analysis by V. Prigent ('La carrière du tourmarque Euphémios, *basileus* des Romains', in A. Jacob, J.-M. Martin and G. Noyé (eds), *Histoire et culture dans l'Italie byzantine. Acquis et nouvelles recherches*, Rome, 2006, 279–317, *passim*, and more specifically pp. 303–7 for relations with the Aghlabids before their conquest of the island in 827 [with references to an Arabic text, the *Riyād al-nufūs*, ed. Michele Amari]).

<sup>87</sup> On the question of diplomatic activities led by rebels, see El-Hajji, *Andalusian diplomatic relations*, pp. 99–117 (relations between Andalusian rebels and Christian states in northern Spain), pp. 140–53 (relations between the same rebels and the Franks); Muslim rebels also went into exile in neighboring territories, and vice-versa; for examples between Byzantium and its Muslim neighbors, see M. Canard, 'Les relations politiques et sociales entre Byzance et les Arabes', *DOP* 18 (1964) 35–56, pp. 42–45; Ducellier, *Chrétiens d'Orient*, pp. 209–16.

<sup>88</sup> See the recent analysis in H. Kennedy, 'The Mediterranean frontier. Christianity face to face with Islam, 600–1050', in F. Thomas, X. Noble and J. Smith (eds), *The early medieval Christianities, c. 600–c. 1100* (*Cambridge History of Christianity* 3), Cambridge, 2008, 178–96, especially the parts of this study devoted to diplomatic contacts, pp. 184, 188, 191–93.

<sup>89</sup> P. Sénac, *Les Carolingiens et al-Andalus (VIII<sup>e</sup>–IX<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, Paris, 2002; El-Hajji, *Andalusian diplomatic relations*, pp. 39–153. El-Hajji also studies aspects of contacts with the Germans, under the Caliphs 'Abd al-Rahmān III and al-Hakam II (pp. 207–81), as well as relations with Italy and Rome (pp. 283–88), with reference to one of his former studies.

<sup>90</sup> El-Hajji, *Andalusian diplomatic relations*, p. 57, gives as one explanation for the development of diplomacy the policy of religious tolerance followed by the Muslims since the beginning of their conquest. As a result of this policy of intermarriage, the Caliph 'Abd al-Rahmān III was the grandson of a Navarre princess. See also

In southern Italy, diplomatic relations also began early and were sometimes continuous, as in the case of the Christian dukes of Naples and Sicilian Muslims. The treaty in 837 is significant from this point of view, and close relations followed during the same century, leading to a papal condemnation of the Neapolitan dukes.<sup>91</sup> Before they were established in Sicily, the Muslims seem to have had relations for diplomatic purposes with Byzantine governors (*strategoï*) of the island. A papal letter addressed to Charlemagne in November 813 informs us, for instance, that *missi Saracenorum* met the Byzantine *strategos* in Syracuse, having traveled there on Venetian ships. The *missi* declared that they were perplexed by Muslim acts of piracy against Christian territories because the ruler who sent them was weak and still a minor; but they nevertheless concluded a ten-year truce before returning whence they came.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, this letter is of great interest because the papal legate, who passed on all this information to the pope, who then informed the emperor, referred to two earlier peace treaties concluded between the same partners, one less than ten years earlier in 804-5 and the other 85 years before that in 728 (this was broken by the Muslims in 734).<sup>93</sup>

This last example leads us to the Byzantine eastern frontier and confrontation with Muslim polities. As we have already said, diplomatic relations in this area existed from the very beginning of Islam.

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P. Sénac, *La frontière et les hommes (VIII<sup>e</sup>-XII<sup>e</sup> siècle). Le peuplement musulman au nord de l'Ebre et les débuts de la reconquête aragonaise*, Paris, 2000, pp. 372-73; Kennedy ('Mediterranean frontier', p. 184) underlines that such intermarriages did not take place within diplomatic contacts between Byzantium and its Muslim neighbors.

<sup>91</sup> Kennedy, 'Mediterranean frontier', p. 188; B.M. Kreutz, *Before the Normans. Southern Italy in the ninth and tenth centuries*, Philadelphia PA, 1991, pp. 20, 22, 28, 51, 58-59, 61-62, 73-74. The *Chronicon Salernitanum* explains how the Arabs developed their diplomacy with the Salernitans, the Capuans and the Neapolitans, changing alliances and enemies continuously: *Chronicon Salernitanum*, ed. U. Westerbergh, Stockholm, 1956, § 139, p. 142.

<sup>92</sup> This letter has been recently re-edited by P. Sénac ('Le Maghreb al-Aqsâ et l'Occident chrétien (VIII<sup>e</sup>-IX<sup>e</sup> siècles)', in idem, *Le monde carolingien et l'Islam*, pp. 85-87, with a presentation and analysis, pp. 84-91. Sénac asserts that the envoys came from the Emir Idris II, but this remains questionable, and they might also have been Aghlabids; see Talbi, *Emirat aghlabide*, pp. 395-96, n. 3; M. McCormick, *Origins of the European economy. Communications and commerce, A.D. 300-900*, Cambridge, 2001, pp. 900-901, with further reference to previous studies and scholars such as Michele Amari, who argued for the Aghlabid origin of the envoys; on the diplomatic activity of the Sicilians' *strategoï*, see M. Nîchanian and V. Prigent, 'Les stratèges de Sicile. De la naissance du thème au règne de Léon V', *Revue des Etudes Byzantines* 61 (2003) 97-141, and specifically p. 131.

<sup>93</sup> Sénac, 'Le Maghreb al-Aqsâ', pp. 85, 88; Nîchanian and Prigent, 'Stratèges de Sicile', pp. 107, 128.



In spite of military conflicts and Muslim expansion into Byzantine territories, diplomacy never ceased, either under the first caliphs or in the time of the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties.<sup>94</sup> Some agreements may appear curious at first glance, but attest that mutual respect was possible early in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. One should note for instance that in 649–50 the *basileus* Constans II concluded a truce with Mu'āwiya, governor of Syria and future founder of the Umayyad dynasty, in order to avoid Muslim naval offensives against Byzantium, at a time when the emperor had to turn his attention to disturbances in the Balkans.<sup>95</sup> However, the aims of this active diplomacy changed over five centuries, due to the evolution and interests of each partner. We shall underscore this later, but we must keep in mind that, from the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, Islam appeared divided in its confrontation with Byzantium.<sup>96</sup> Logically the latter would take advantage of this, using diplomacy as well as military action to recapture territories lost three centuries earlier. In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the emergence of the Fatimid caliphate as a maritime power in the eastern Mediterranean and the conquests of the Seljuk Turks in Byzantine Asia Minor and northern Syria changed the balance of power, but diplomatic practices remained unchanged.<sup>97</sup>

Within this intense diplomatic activity, some alliances between Muslim and Christian rulers are, nevertheless, surprising and reveal that neither religious difference nor geographical distance was a bar to negotiation. This is shown by relations between Constantinople and Cordova: the two capitals developed official contacts in the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>98</sup> and also during the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup>, when

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<sup>94</sup> Recent German historiographical works prove this in detail (Kaplony, *Gesandtschaften, passim*; Beihammer, *Nachrichten, passim* and introduction pp. lxxiv–lxxxv, with a detailed chronology of embassies and treaties [c. 649–50–c. 807–8]; Rochow, 'Byzanz und das Kalifat', *passim*; see also Kennedy's general survey, 'Byzantine-Arab diplomacy', *passim*).

<sup>95</sup> Kaplony, *Gesandtschaften*, pp. 23–32; Beihammer, *Nachrichten*, no. 254, with an extensive bibliography and a view on the date (one year earlier than the date given by Kennedy, 'Byzantine-Arab diplomacy', p. 134, and 'Mediterranean frontier', p. 191).

<sup>96</sup> The Byzantine administration was well aware of this – the mid-10<sup>th</sup>-century text describing imperial foreign affairs clearly confirms it (Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, ed. G. Moravcsik and English trans. R.H.J. Jenkins, Budapest, 1949, ch. 25, pp. 106–8, describes the emergence of three rival caliphates).

<sup>97</sup> Felix, *Byzanz, passim*; Ducellier, *Chrétiens d'Orient*, pp. 240–45; C. Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey. A general survey of the material and spiritual culture and history, c. 1071–1330*, London, 1968, pp. 66–84.

<sup>98</sup> Ibn Ḥayyān, *Crónica...* (*Almuqtabis II–1*), pp. 228–40, 294–98; two recent studies focus on these relations (Signes Codoñer, 'Bizancio y al-Ándalus', pp. 199–208, and

the Byzantines and Umayyads tried to cooperate against a common enemy, the Fatimid caliphate, whose emergence at a time when it was moving from Ifrīqiya to Egypt was a matter of concern to both Cordova and Constantinople.<sup>99</sup> Earlier, the Fatimids, while they were still in Ifrīqiya, conducted negotiations against Byzantium with the Christian Bulgars. Only one Greek chronicler describes this, relating how the Fatimid and Bulgarian emissaries were captured *en route* off Calabria by a Byzantine ship. The alliance failed and the envoys were presented to the emperor in Constantinople, but the latter did not treat them equally. The Bulgars were imprisoned while the Fatimids were cordially welcomed and sent back to Ifrīqiya with dignity and gifts.<sup>100</sup> Such an alliance at the expense of Byzantine interests was not really new; one should not forget the efforts made by Queen Bertha

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E.M. Moreno, 'Byzantium and al-Andalus in the ninth century', in L. Brubaker (ed.), *Byzantium in the ninth century. Dead or alive?*, Aldershot UK, 1998, 216-27, pp. 220-22. The Emperor Theophilus first sent an embassy to Cordova in 839-40 to offer a treaty of friendship to the emir 'Abd al-Rahmān II; in his reply, the *basileus* encouraged the emir to regain his legitimate rule in the east against the Abbasids, insisting on the fact that Byzantines and Umayyads had common enemies, specifically the Abbasids and their vassals, the Aghlabids; Theophilus also encouraged 'Abd al-Rahmān II to fight against the Muslims in Crete, which had been lost by Byzantium more than a decade earlier and was now occupied by Muslims from Spain. Cordova's response to all these proposals was negative, even though an embassy was sent to Constantinople. See also E. Eickhoff, *Seekrieg und Seepolitik zwischen Islam und Abendland. Das Mittelalter unter byzantinischer und arabischer Hegemonie (650-1040)*, Berlin, 1966, pp. 65-68, 175.

<sup>99</sup> References to sources and to the historical perspectives can be found in Signes Codoñer, 'Bizancio y al-Ándalus', pp. 212-44. This detailed study attempts to establish a firm chronology for these numerous contacts between 946 and 972 (see pp. 241-44), not without challenging earlier studies and chronologies proposed by scholars such as A. Beihammer (in Dölger, *Regesten*, nos 651a, 657, 659, 663a, 706a and 742a), Kresten ('Zur Chrysographie', pp. 161-67, 185-86), and C. Zuckerman ('Le voyage d'Olga et la première ambassade espagnole à Constantinople en 946', *Travaux et Mémoires* 13 [2000] 647-72, pp. 654-60). One of the questions is, who was the first to make diplomatic contact in 946 or 947? In spite of their chronological contradictions, Arabic sources insist on the cultural and artistic dimension of this diplomacy, rather than on its military implications with regard to the Fatimids. The last diplomatic contact between Constantinople and Cordova is known to have been in the year 1006: Signes Codoñer, 'Bizancio y al-Ándalus', p. 240, n. 174.

<sup>100</sup> *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis historiarum*, pp. 264-66, who gives no date for an episode usually placed around 924, see Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, ii/1, pp. 251-52; in response to the Byzantine stance, the Fatimid Caliph al-Mahdī decided to reduce the tribute paid to Byzantium by the Calabrians which was established in 914-15 (Dölger, *Regesten*, nos 577a and 603). M. Canard ('Arabes et Bulgares au début du X<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Byzantion* 11 (1938) 213-23, p. 216) dates it earlier and also mentions another attempt by the Bulgarians and Arabs from Tarsus to make a joint attack (*ibid.*, pp. 216-23; Eickhoff, *Seekrieg*, pp. 303-304).

of Tuscany a few years before to unite her military forces with the Abbasids.<sup>101</sup>

Last but not least, every medievalist knows that the Carolingians and Abbasids were in diplomatic contact at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. These contacts have been widely studied by a number of scholars,<sup>102</sup> most recently Philippe Sénac, who provides a helpful bibliography<sup>103</sup> and analyses the three main reasons for contacts between 765–68 and 831: strategic, religious and commercial.<sup>104</sup> Whatever the exact situation may have been, each reason shows that, as in other instances referred to above, multilateral relations between not only two but several actors must be considered by historians who focus on diplomatic contacts.

A large-scale analysis is also necessary if we take into account the diplomacy that developed between Christian rulers and Muslims. The confrontation of the latter with Christians during the high Middle Ages might have developed diplomacy and a policy of friendship between Christian rulers, or at least endeavors in that direction and some aspects of this will be indicated here. From the year 720, the papacy turned to Frankish princes for a response to the Infidel conquests, as Gregory II and Gregory III's letters to Eudes of Aquitania and Charles Martel prove.<sup>105</sup> A century later, the popes would try to defend Rome and the papal territories by seeking a naval alliance with the south Italian cities of Amalfi, Gaeta and even Naples.<sup>106</sup> The military and diplomatic efforts made by John VIII should also be remem-

<sup>101</sup> See above, n. 50.

<sup>102</sup> Numerous studies have been devoted to this topic; three of them are: M. Borgolte, *Der Gesandtenaustausch der Karolinger mit den Abbasiden und mit den Patriarchen von Jerusalem*, Munich, 1976; G. Musca, *Carlo Magno, passim*; Sénac, 'Carolingiens et le califat abbasside', *passim* (with a French trans. of Notker the Stammerer's *Gesta Karoli magni imperatoris* detailing a part of these contacts).

<sup>103</sup> See Sénac, 'Carolingiens et califat abbasside', p. 4.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11–15; these three reasons are not mutually exclusive; see also the suggestive analysis of M. McCormick, 'Pepin III, the embassy of Caliph al-Mansur, and the Mediterranean World', in M. Becher and J. Jarnut (eds), *Der Dynastiewechsel von 751. Vorgeschichte, Legitimationsstrategien und Erinnerung*, Münster, 2004, 221–41.

<sup>105</sup> M. Rouche, 'La papauté face à l'Islam au VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* 32 (1996) 205–16, pp. 206–8. Nevertheless, the same Eudes was able to conclude a pact of friendship in 729 with Munuza, a Berber and Muslim leader, certainly to ensure peace in the southern part of his duchy while he was threatened by Charles Martel in the north (Sénac, *Carolingiens et al-Andalus*, pp. 21–23).

<sup>106</sup> Rome was sacked in 846, and Pope Leo IV organized such an alliance three years later, not without doubt about Naples' commitment, given that city's previous contacts with Arabs (Kreutz, *Before the Normans*, pp. 26–28, based on the *Liber pontificalis*).

bered.<sup>107</sup> This policy cannot be compared to a crusade, as Fred E. Engreen has suggested,<sup>108</sup> but two centuries later the correspondence of Pope Gregory VII with western Christian princes in 1074, after an exchange of embassies with Byzantium, which had been weakened by Turkish conquests in Asia Minor, is usually presented as preparatory to a crusade.<sup>109</sup>

Before then, Christian princes were able to establish military and diplomatic alliances without the participation of the papacy. Between 839 and 842, it was Byzantium that first tried such an initiative, in the form of embassies sent to the West.<sup>110</sup> The Byzantine chancery also developed large-scale diplomacy with Venice and the Franks, but the project failed.<sup>111</sup> Such a coalition was still difficult to establish, more than 20 years later, between the Carolingian King Louis II and the *basileus* Basil I, even if their efforts led to the capture of Bari, putting an end to the Muslim emirate in that part of Apulia.<sup>112</sup> The alliance of 915 was also to be successful, bringing together a large coalition and preceded by diplomatic negotiation.<sup>113</sup> In 941 or 942, King Hugh of Provence sent *nuntii* to the *basileus* Romanus Lecapenus seeking naval support against the 'Saracens' present in the *Fraxinetum*.<sup>114</sup> Even

<sup>107</sup> Engreen 'John the Eighth and the Arabs', *passim*; Kreutz, *Before the Normans*, pp. 57-62; the entry by D. Arnold in *CMR* 1, pp. 804-8, with references.

<sup>108</sup> Engreen 'John the Eighth and the Arabs', p. 321.

<sup>109</sup> H.E.J. Cowdrey, 'Pope Gregory VII's "crusading" plans of 1074', in B.Z. Kedar, H.E. Mayer and R.C. Smail (eds), *Outremer. Studies in the history of the crusading Kingdom of Jerusalem presented to Joshua Prawer*, Jerusalem, 1982, 27-40, with precise references to Gregory VII's *Registrum* (notably *Registrum*, 1.49, 2.31, and 2.37).

<sup>110</sup> D. Nerlich, *Diplomatische Gesandtschaften zwischen Ost und Westkaisern, 756-1002*, Bern, 1999, pp. 42-43, n. 132, and 272-73 (extracts from Latin and Greek sources); W. Ohnsorge, 'Das Kaiserbündnis von 842-844 gegen die Sarazenen', *Archiv für Diplomatik* 1 (1955) 88-131; Eickhoff, *Seekrieg*, pp. 178-79.

<sup>111</sup> This was a far-reaching diplomatic and military project; Theodosius Babouthzikos, Byzantine's emissary, was sent to Venice and to Lothar I, and two lead seals bearing his name and official titles have recently been found at Haithabu and Ribe (Denmark), suggesting that he was in communication with Jutland, perhaps recruiting Viking mercenaries for military campaigns against the Arabs (McCormick, *Origins*, pp. 227 (fig. 8.1.) and 920; idem, 'La lettre diplomatique byzantine du premier millénaire vue de l'Occident et l'énigme du papyrus de Paris', in M. Balard, E. Malamut and J.-M. Spieser (eds), *Byzance et le monde extérieur. Contact, relations, échanges*, Paris, 2005, 135-49, p. 140, n. 17.

<sup>112</sup> Eickhoff, *Seekrieg*, pp. 215-20; Nerlich, *Gesandtschaften*, pp. 45-47, 283-85; Kreutz, *Before the Normans*, pp. 41-45.

<sup>113</sup> O. Vehse, 'Das Bündnis gegen die Sarazenen vom Jahre 915', *Quellen und Forschungen aus Italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, Rome, 1927, 181-204; Eickhoff, *Seekrieg*, pp. 298-99.

<sup>114</sup> Liudprand of Cremona, *Antapodosis*, V, 9, in *The Complete Works of Liudprand of Cremona*, trans. with an introduction and notes by P. Squatriti, Washington DC,

though, during this episode, two Christian princes tried to unite against a common Muslim enemy, diplomacy with the Muslims and military reversals were never far away. Indeed, Liudprand of Cremona describes how the Christian king of Provence finally concluded a pact (*foedus*) with them, using their forces against his rival Berengar, Margrave of Ivrea. This complex situation led to large-scale diplomacy, marked by mutual exchanges of embassies between Hugh of Provence, the Emperor Otto I of Germany and the Spanish Umayyad caliph.<sup>115</sup>

### Main themes of encounter

Narrative texts such as chronicles not only detail peace agreements, official treaties and correspondence. They also provide us with information about other aspects of diplomatic activity: the kind of people involved in this kind of contact and how they were chosen, the movement and reception of delegations, ceremonial aspects, gifts exchanged, the cultural and economic consequences of negotiations, etc. Historians must incorporate this into their analysis, even if some aspects of this information may appear biased, anecdotal, partially false or totally fictitious. Anyone who studies diplomatic relations during the Middle Ages must bear in mind that describing these contacts is never insignificant. These relations involve the renown and prestige of rulers, and expose their power, real or exaggerated. Biased views are frequent within our sources, whether narrative or normative. If a prince depicted by an author who is linked to him by personal, religious or linguistic ties is not superior as a matter of historical fact, he must be made to appear so in the account the author gives of diplomatic contact with another prince, through an emissary for example.

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2007, pp. 175-76; on this episode and the Muslim presence in that part of Provence, as reconstructed recently from texts and archaeological resources, see P S nec, 'Le califat de Cordoue et la M diterran e occidentale au X<sup>e</sup> si cle. Le Fraxinet des Maures', in J.-M. Martin (ed.), *Castrum 7. Zones c ti res littorales dans le monde m diterran en au moyen  ge. D fense, peuplement, mise en valeur*, Rome, 2001, 113-26, p. 116 (earlier, in 931, the first Byzantine maritime assistance to King Hugh is attested in a Latin source). Nerlich, *Gesandtschaften*, p. 295, also dates the embassy to 942, but it seems that it should be dated one year earlier, before the military and naval offensive.

<sup>115</sup> Liudprand of Cremona, *Antapodosis*, V, 16-17, pp. 181-82; S nec, 'Le Fraxinet des Maures' pp. 116-17; Renzi Rizzo, 'I rapporti diplomatici', *passim*, with new chronological considerations; John of Gorze's embassy, already mentioned, was one of these diplomatic contacts in 953-56.

Conversely, the author will minimize his diplomatic or military failures.<sup>116</sup>

Official historiography and propaganda can thus contaminate and disguise historical realities. In all the texts we have to deal with, a foreign embassy meeting a prince, whether Christian or Muslim, is usually described as imploring him, or in a position of apparent inferiority to the prince – unless the description is written by a chronicler from the side of the embassy. Al-Nu‘mān, detailing the meeting in 957-58 between the Fatimid Caliph al-Mu‘izz and a Byzantine emissary, relates how the envoy repeatedly pressed the caliph to send an ambassador to the emperor, recalling that the latter regularly sent envoys to the caliph and his predecessors without any ambassador dispatched in return by them to Constantinople.<sup>117</sup> Al-Mu‘izz answered that people send ambassadors for two reasons: ‘Either because they are in need of something or because they have an obligation towards the person to whom they direct the ambassador’. In this case, the caliph explained that he was not in need of the emperor nor he was ‘in any way obliged to him’. The Byzantine envoy went back to his master, and more emissaries, as well as gifts, were sent to al-Mu‘izz by the emperor, ‘showing submission and sending presents in order to obtain a truce’, according to al-Nu‘mān.<sup>118</sup> From the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, Constantinople and Baghdad exchanged several embassies before concluding official exchanges of prisoners on the frontier. Some Arab-Islamic chroniclers (al-Mas‘ūdī, al-Maqrīzī and, to a lesser extent, al-Ṭabari) detail these negotiations. If we accept what they say, it was the Byzantines who asked first for the exchanges, sending emissaries to Baghdad and thus demonstrating their inferiority – even though the army of the *Rūm* (Byzantines) had previously been victorious against the Muslims, and the number of prisoners they had taken and released was higher than the number set free by the Abbasids.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> On these considerations, see Sénac, *Les Carolingiens et al-Andalus*, pp. 6-8, about testimonies in Latin and Arabic sources depicting the relations between Carolingians and Islam; see McCormick’s concluding remarks, ‘Embassy of Caliph al-Mansur’, p. 240, concerning the continuer of Fredegar.

<sup>117</sup> Shepard, ‘Byzantine diplomacy’, p. 52, for the study and translation I follow here; Stern, ‘Embassy’, pp. 247-48, 250.

<sup>118</sup> The same logic can be observed in Ibn Hānī’s account: see M. Canard, ‘L’impérialisme des Fatimides et leur propagande’, *Annuaire de l’Institut d’Etudes Orientales de la Faculté d’Alger* 6 (1942-1947) 156-93, pp. 186-87.

<sup>119</sup> See the considerations and analysis of M. Campagnolo-Poithou, ‘Les échanges de prisonniers arabes entre Byzance et l’Islam aux IX<sup>e</sup> et X<sup>e</sup> siècles’, *Journal of Oriental and African Studies* 7 (1995) 1-56, p. 47, n. 249; according to these sources, the

As we have already emphasized, some contacts are known through later writers, sometimes living several centuries after the facts they relate, and medievalists must be wary of distortion and tampering. In the case of relations between Damascus and Constantinople (639–750), Kaplony has suggested that an ambassador would deliver an oral report to his ruler and that this report would certainly be written down and stored in the archives. Unfortunately, none of the reports of Christian-Muslim contacts for the period under consideration here have been preserved, but subsequent medieval writers did rely on them.<sup>120</sup> This leads to another problem concerning the interpretation of these testimonies: how far did these later writers respect the reports they read? This question has recently been a central point in the rich analysis by Alexander Beihammer of the 10<sup>th</sup>-century account of Ibn Sharhām, as reported by a certain Abū Shujā' al-Rūdhrawārī a century later.<sup>121</sup> The document now available to us thanks to Abū Shujā' seems to indicate that he may have used notes written by the Buyid ambassador, in that he concentrates on the negotiation rather than on ceremonial aspects, writing a kind of *exemplum* for future emissaries.<sup>122</sup> It clearly shows how far a kind of *bellum diplomaticum* had developed between Constantinople and Baghdad – and certainly not only at that time.

Analysing Christian-Muslim relations generally leads historians to note that truth is not so easy to disentangle from rumor, propaganda, anachronisms, discrepancies and contradictions in the texts.<sup>123</sup> This seems to be more marked in sources describing diplomatic contacts,

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request for an exchange of prisoners in 966 came from the Arabs; the details of the 946 exchange remain unclear (see al-Mas'ūdī, in Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, ii/2, p. 407, and the commentary in Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, ii/1, p. 314). This change in the tone of Arabic sources implicitly demonstrates that the Byzantines were perceived as superior to their oriental Muslim neighbors, at least during this mid-10<sup>th</sup> century period.

<sup>120</sup> Kaplony, *Gesandtschaften*, pp. 373, 385, and its conclusion: pp. 399, 403.

<sup>121</sup> A. Beihammer, 'Der harte Sturz des Bardas Skleros. Eine Fallstudie zu zwischenstaatlicher Kommunikation und Konfliktführung in der byzantinisch-arabischen Diplomatie des 10. Jahrhunderts', *Römische Historische Mitteilungen* 45 (2003) 21–57; English translation of the report in H.F. Amedroz, 'An embassy from Bagdad to the Emperor Basil II', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (1914) 915–42, pp. 918–31 (Arabic text: pp. 933–42). Ibn Sharhām was sent in 981–82, on behalf of the Buyid dynasty in Baghdad, to negotiate issues raised by the rebellion of Bardas Skleros and his flight to Baghdad, and the question of the frontiers between the Byzantine Empire and the Abbasid caliphate.

<sup>122</sup> Beihammer, 'Kommunikation und Konfliktführung', pp. 28–30.

<sup>123</sup> El Cheikh, *Byzantium*, p. 5.

where embellishment and invention may also appear. Kaplony has tried to separate historical accounts from those that are partially or totally fictitious,<sup>124</sup> but even some false accounts must be taken into consideration because they reflect part of the reality and have their place in the literary construction of medieval 'diplomatic rhetoric'.

Another feature in our sources is a kind of condemnation of specific Christian-Muslim diplomatic alliances that were considered impious by Christian or Muslim authors. As we have already said, relations and alliances between Neapolitan dukes and Sicilian Muslims could lead to official disapproval from the Roman pontiffs.<sup>125</sup> Such alliances might be described as *peccata*, especially in monastic chronicles. These texts, more than others, stress the Saracens' perfidy.<sup>126</sup> Nevertheless, wrong attitudes and perfidy may also be characteristics of a Christian prince described by the same monastic authors. Furthermore, concrete situations have already shown us that Christians and Muslims could negotiate with each other according to their interests, notwithstanding this kind of criticism. Scholars should be careful in their interpretation of such texts. The *Chronicon Salernitanum* details, for example, how a Salernitan bishop gave accommodation to a Muslim emissary in his personal residence, an act of hospitality that finally plunged him into a state of utter confusion, and drove him to come to Rome in expiation of his crime. He went back to Salerno

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<sup>124</sup> Kaplony (*Gesandtschaften, passim*) collected 51 embassies and treaties: 29 are historical, 14 idealize historical aspects of an unknown number of these embassies and treaties, and six are in his view totally fictitious. Beihammer has recently completed this inventory (*Nachrichten*, see his nos 267, 274, 309, 312), and discusses the historicity of some of them, such as the first (A 1 in the terminology of Kaplony, *Gesandtschaften*, pp. 19-21) in another study: A. Beihammer, 'The first naval campaigns of the Arabs against Cyprus (649, 653)', in *Graeco-Arabica* 9-10 (2004) 47-68, p. 67, n. 60. See also the views of Rochow, 'Byzanz und das Kalifat', *passim*. Marius Canard was one of the first to incorporate into his study what he called '*historiettes*' on diplomatic contacts in Arabic sources: 'Quelques "à-côté" de l'histoire des relations entre Byzance et les Arabes', *Studi orientalistici in onore di Giorgio Levi della Vida*, Rome, 1956, 98-119, *passim*.

<sup>125</sup> In 849, in response to a papal appeal against the Muslims, the Duke of Naples went to Rome to prove the purity of his intentions to the pope (Kreutz, *Before the Normans*, p. 28). Commercial cooperation between the Amalfitans and the Arabs was also condemned by the pope, and his threat to pronounce an anathema because the *pactum iniquum* established by the Amalfitans went unheeded (A.O. Citarella, 'The relations of Amalfi with the Arab world before the crusades', *Speculum* 42 (1967) 299-312, p. 309, n. 71).

<sup>126</sup> The south Italian case has been studied by L.A. Berto, 'I musulmani nelle cronache altomedievali dell'Italia meridionale (secoli IX-X)', in M. Maschini (ed.), *Mediterraneo medievale. Cristiani, musulmani ed eretici tra Europa e Oltremare*, Milan, 2001, 3-27, pp. 7, 18.



but chose a new residence.<sup>127</sup> His attitude may be understood as ‘natural’ religious antipathy, which would logically have been emphasized in that kind of text, between a Christian dignitary and a Muslim – although this text does not disguise the fact that diplomacy was possible between the two, and was sufficiently developed for a bishop to house a Muslim ambassador.<sup>128</sup>

Diplomatic alliances between Christian and Muslim rulers in Iberia are also frequent from the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> century and military support for Christians by Muslim princes did not shock anyone in al-Andalus. By contrast, it seems highly significant that some Arab Muslim authors started to condemn it firmly at the end of our period, when al-Andalus was in a position of weakness in relation to the Christians, so that this kind of policy of friendship could be perceived as leading to illegitimate and treacherous agreements.<sup>129</sup>

Nevertheless, one should underline that Christian chroniclers, even monastic authors, could portray their Muslim neighbors as respected princes, especially in diplomatic relations. Luigi A. Berto has recently demonstrated this in the case of southern Italy: Muslim rulers could be much more respectful of mutually exchanged oaths when a treaty was concluded than Lombard princes were; the anonymous author of the *Chronicon Salernitanum* condemns a Christian prince for breaking such a pact at the expense of one of his Muslim neighbors.<sup>130</sup> This also seems to be a common feature in other areas of contact; Greek chroniclers could be strongly critical of a Byzantine emperor who

<sup>127</sup> *Chronicon Salernitanum*, §§ 99, p. 100; Berto, ‘I musulmani’, p. 19.

<sup>128</sup> One should also note that the envoy came from Sawdān, emir of Bari, and that the *Chronicon Salernitanum* presents him as an emissary from *Satan*, playing with words: *Chronicon Salernitanum*, § 99, p. 99. The perfidy of the last emir of Bari is a commonplace in various testimonies, especially when Sawdān is conducting diplomatic negotiations with his neighbors (see the Hebrew *Chronicle of Ahimaas* in G. Musca, *L’émirato di Bari, 847-871*, Bari, 1964, pp. 79-81, and also the Greek texts which relate that Sawdān did not respect a Christian official envoy sent by the prince of Benevento to Constantinople, and killed him [*Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis historiarum*, 150, and Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ch. 29, pp. 132-34]).

<sup>129</sup> See the examples collected in P. Jansen, A. Nef and C. Picard, *La Méditerranée entre pays d’islam et monde latin (milieu X<sup>e</sup>-milieu XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, Paris, 2000, pp. 57-58, 62; this change of attitude is also linked to the presence of new masters in Muslim Iberia, the Almoravids, and to the policy of *reyes de taifas* which is condemned because the *parias*’ treaties increase the land taxes paid by Muslims.

<sup>130</sup> Berto, ‘I musulmani nelle cronache’, pp. 23-25, and especially p. 24, n. 101; cf. *Chronicon Salernitanum*, § 126, pp. 139-40; breaking an official treaty with a Christian neighbor could be a moral problem for Muslims as well, see Prigent, ‘Euphémios’, pp. 304-305.

thoughtlessly broke an official treaty established with Muslims. A parallel must be drawn with two separate military offensives, the first led in 692 by Justinian II, the second in 1030 by Romanus III, when the Empire was at peace with its eastern neighbors. Both emperors received embassies from the opposing side, who had been surprised by an attack and asked the *basileus* to put an end to his policy. Romanus rejected both the emissaries and the offer of a treaty, continuing in his policy, and, finally, enduring a defeat.<sup>131</sup> At the other end of the Mediterranean, breaking an official and respected peace was perceived as an offense on both sides of the Christian-Muslim frontier, as well as a legitimate *casus belli*.<sup>132</sup>

The importance attributed to these diplomatic contacts is also clear if we consider the persons involved in them, i.e. the ambassadors. With very few exceptions, they should be considered as persons who belong to an elite, close to the rulers they represent.<sup>133</sup> This is well attested wherever Christians and Muslims exchanged embassies.<sup>134</sup> Sometimes an embassy might be led by a prince in person, and his retinue might include notables. Illustrations include two cases in Spain, in 958 and 962, when northern Christian princes led embassies to the Umayyad caliph with a following of nobles and clergymen in the first case, and 20 of the prince's most prominent companions in the second.<sup>135</sup> High-ranking civil servants were usually chosen, especially for Byzantine embassies. Umayyad caliphs of Damascus

<sup>131</sup> On these two episodes, see N. Drocourt, 'Rompre la paix. Entre l'idéologie de la paix et la réalité de l'irrespect des traités diplomatiques à Byzance (VII<sup>e</sup>-XI<sup>e</sup> siècles)', *Erytheia* 24 (2003) 47-75, pp. 52-56, with an analysis of various Greek and Arabic testimonies. In the first attack, in 691-92, the Greek chronicler called the Byzantine army the 'impious army'; see also, in a broader analysis, Ducellier, *Chrétiens d'Orient*, pp. 188-93, with a correction to the dating in Kaplony, *Gesandtschaften*, pp. 159-60.

<sup>132</sup> See the cases collected by Epalza, 'Ahd', p. 206 (for the Balearics), El-Hajji, *Andalusian diplomatic relations*, pp. 53-54, 80, and Sénac, *Frontière*, p. 380; more recently, see P. Buresi, *La frontière entre chrétienté et islam dans la péninsule ibérique*, Paris, 2004, p. 127.

<sup>133</sup> See Ibn al-Farrā', *Kitab rusul al-mulūk*, trans. M. Vaiou, *Diplomacy in the early Islamic world. A tenth century treatise on Arab-Byzantine relations*, London, 2010, for a portrait of the ideal envoy, based upon actual examples.

<sup>134</sup> El-Hajji, *Andalusian diplomatic relations*, p. 67: an embassy sent by García Íñiguez of Navarre to 'Abd al-Rahmān II in 843 was led by the Christian prince's son and 61 notables. For eastern views, see Kaplony, *Gesandtschaften*, pp. 363-65 (Byzantine ambassadors), pp. 375-76 (Muslim emissaries), in the 7<sup>th</sup> century; in later times, respected individuals, such as vizirs or sheikhs, could be diplomats; see Canard, *Hamdanides*, pp. 824-25, El Cheikh, *Byzantium*, p. 110, and Felix, *Byzanz und Islam*, p. 59.

<sup>135</sup> El-Hajji, *Andalusian diplomatic relations*, pp. 75, 78.

responded to the latter by sending emissaries of different religious origins: they might be Muslims, Christians or even Zoroastrians.<sup>136</sup> Christian bishops also appear regularly as envoys between Christian rulers and Cordova, such as Dulcideo, bishop of Salamanca, chosen in 883 to represent Alfonso III.<sup>137</sup> A century later, the caliphs also chose to send bishops, such as the bishop of Seville in 973, and Rabīʿ ibn Zayd, also known as Recemundo, bishop of Elvira, who was an emissary twice, to Frankfurt (955) and to Constantinople the following year.<sup>138</sup> Also, at the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Fatimid caliphs sent two Melkite patriarchs of Jerusalem, Orestes during the year 1000 and Nicephorus 24 years later, to negotiate in the Byzantine Empire.<sup>139</sup>

Yet being a Christian, a bishop or even a patriarch was not a sufficient reason to be chosen as an official emissary on behalf of a Muslim ruler. A close relationship with the latter seems to have been more important,<sup>140</sup> along with linguistic abilities. Many, though not all, emissaries who set out for Byzantium, for instance, knew Greek.<sup>141</sup>

<sup>136</sup> Kaplony, *Gesandtschaften*, pp. 375–76.

<sup>137</sup> El-Hajji, *Andalusian diplomatic relations*, p. 68.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 93, 213, 218–23; *Vita Iohannis abbatis Gorziensis*, §§ 127, p. 154, presents *Recemundus* as *adprimae catholice, et litteris optime tam nostrorum quam ipsius inter quos versebatur lingue Arabicæ institutus*; Signes Codoñer, ‘Bizancio y al-Ándalus’, pp. 232, 243, n. 10; Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, ii/1, p. 332, presents him as an ‘évêque de Cordoue’. Recemundo was involved in diplomacy and thus connected to many of the actors in it who were linked to Byzantium and Germany (N. Drocourt, ‘Al-Andalus, l’Occident chrétien et Byzance. Liens et réseaux de personnes autour des évêques Recemundo et Liutprand de Crémone: quelques hypothèses’, in P. Sénac (ed.), *Le Maghreb, al-Andalus et la Méditerranée occidentale (VIII<sup>e</sup>–XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, Toulouse, 2007, 57–79, *passim*).

<sup>139</sup> Felix, *Byzanz und Islam*, pp. 39, 41, 48–49, 73–74; Kennedy, ‘Byzantine-Arab diplomacy’, p. 143. Monks and abbots appeared within official circles more often than one might expect: John, monk at Gorze, who would become abbot of that monastery after his mission to Cordova on behalf of Otto I, as already mentioned in the *Vita Iohannis abbatis Gorziensis*, is an example. They could intervene to obtain the release of other monks taken into captivity following Muslim attacks: see, among others, the cases collected by Bruce (‘Intercultural dialogue’, pp. 19–21) and Ducellier (*Chrétiens d’Orient*, p. 204). Hagiographic texts should therefore be included in our field of research, since a saint may appear as a major actor in peace negotiations; see Rochow, ‘Byzanz und Kalifat’, p. 319 (St Euthymios of Sardis in Baghdad in the name of the *basileus*, end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century), and Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 571a (St Demetrianos of Cyprus, also in Baghdad).

<sup>140</sup> The Fatimid envoy Orestes of Jerusalem in the year 1000 was also the Fatimid caliph’s uncle.

<sup>141</sup> An Abbasid envoy named Abū ‘Umayr ‘Adī ibn Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Bāqī appears frequently in Arabic and Greek sources in numerous diplomatic contacts with Byzantium, in part due to his knowledge of Greek – negotiating prisoner exchanges in Constantinople in 905 and 946, or as a translator in Baghdad in 917, and again in 924–25, both for the same purposes, and with Byzantine emissaries (Vasiliev, *Byzance*

Confidence in the person who would represent them and defend their position was also a factor for princes when they chose an emissary, and explains why the same person might be chosen several times; an example is Hasdāy ibn Shaprūt, a physician and courtier, who acted on behalf of ʿAbd al-Rahmān III for diplomatic purposes.<sup>142</sup> His is a rare case of a Jew acting as emissary for a Muslim prince.<sup>143</sup> Whoever they were, and whatever their religion, all these official, temporary emissaries enjoyed personal immunity during their mission – even if the ruler they represented was at war with the one who received them.<sup>144</sup> Theoretically, they could never be ill-treated, at least physically, but there were ample means of applying pressure on them, ranging from a refusal to read the documents they carried to long periods of isolation, if not imprisonment, that might be imposed on them.<sup>145</sup>

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*et les Arabes*, ii/1, pp. 193, 240-43, 253, 314-15, with references to the sources). See also the case of a certain ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿAbd al-Aʿlā, reported by al-Mubarrad, who spoke Greek and carried on a theological discussion with the Byzantine Emperor Leo III (Kaplony, *Gesandtschaften*, pp. 224-30; Rochow, 'Byzanz und das Kalifat', pp. 309-10). However, the use of translators who were not official ambassadors is also attested, and this was certainly the most frequent way for a ruler to communicate with a foreign envoy, as in the tale of an Abbasid envoy in Byzantium, in 860, known through the *History of al-Ṭabarī* (Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, i, pp. 320-22). Christian Mozarabs may have been translators in al-Andalus (El-Hajji, *Andalusian diplomatic relations*, pp. 78, 84, 89, 92).

<sup>142</sup> He was for instance an envoy to northern Christians, notably when he was officially sent to Sancho the Fat, King of León, to cure his excessive corpulence and defend him from being overthrown by Christian nobles (El-Hajji, *Andalusian diplomatic relations*, pp. 73-75); he also played a major role during negotiations with King Otto I's envoys (*Vita Iohannis abbatis Gorziensis*, §121, pp. 146-49), and he was in contact with Byzantium through one of his emissaries, Isaac bar Nathan (Drocourt, 'Al-Andalus', pp. 71-74, with references to other studies).

<sup>143</sup> See the cases cited in P. Sénac, 'Note sur les relations diplomatiques entre les comtes de Barcelone et le califat de Cordoue au X<sup>e</sup> siècle', in P. Sénac (ed.), *Histoire et archéologie des terres catalanes au moyen âge*, Perpignan, 1995, 87-101, pp. 89-90; the case of Isaac, Charlemagne's emissary to Baghdad in 797, who was chosen for his linguistic abilities and for commercial reasons, should not be forgotten (references to the *Annales regni Francorum* in Musca, *Carlo Magno*, pp. 178-79, and its analysis, pp. 161-62; Sénac, 'Carolingiens', pp. 9-10). Ideological or religious reasons could lead Christian princes to avoid choosing a Jew as an official representative; Pope Honorius III, in 1220, officially condemned it (Buresi, *Frontière*, p. 127, and his references).

<sup>144</sup> Hamidullah, *Conduct of state*, pp. 147-48; Canard, 'Relations politiques', pp. 37-38; El-Hajji, *Andalusian diplomatic relations*, pp. 92-93.

<sup>145</sup> The case of John of Gorze, already mentioned, is certainly the most famous (*Vita Iohannis abbatis Gorziensis*, §§ 118-131, pp. 144-58). For an eastern example, see what happened to Nicephorus Ouranos, the Byzantine envoy in Baghdad (*Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis historiarum*, p. 327; Beihammer, 'Kommunikation und Konfliktführung', pp. 32-36 [and his references to Yahyā ibn Saʿīd al-Anṭākī]). On the other hand, chroniclers do give examples of great respect for envoys' immunity, even if a military offensive against the ruler they represented had been decided upon (N. Drocourt,

Official authorities who received envoys well knew that they and their retinue might be spies.<sup>146</sup>

Another important aspect of Christian-Muslim diplomatic relations concerns official receptions and court ceremonial. Our sources generally describe these in detail, especially those that were conducted within the capitals of the empires and caliphates, i.e. Cordova, Constantinople, Baghdad and Cairo, and, to a lesser degree, Aix-la-Chapelle. They all emphasize the splendor of the ceremonial, the presence of high dignitaries, who came in large numbers, wearing luxurious clothes, and the hierarchical attitude of the ruler on his throne, greeting foreign emissaries with great pomp and solemnity. The emissaries are described as dazzled by what they saw. Descriptions of this kind can be found in Arabic, Greek and Latin sources depicting such receptions in Cordova during the 10<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>147</sup> as well as in Constantinople,<sup>148</sup> Fatimid Cairo<sup>149</sup> and

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'Ambassades latines et musulmanes à Byzance. Une situation contrastée (VIII<sup>e</sup>-XI<sup>e</sup> s.)', *Byzantion* 74 (2004) 348-81, pp. 367-68.

<sup>146</sup> N. Koutrakou, 'Diplomacy and espionage. Their role in Byzantine foreign relations, 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries', *Graeco-Arabica* 6 (1995) 125-44, and idem, "'Spies of town'. Some remarks on espionage in the context of Arab-Byzantine relations (VII<sup>th</sup>-X<sup>th</sup> centuries)', *Graeco-Arabica* 7-8 (2000) 243-66.

<sup>147</sup> El-Hajji, *Andalusian diplomatic relations*, pp. 75-76, 78, 84-85, 295-96 (conclusion §15, 19); for a biased Arabic description of a Christian embassy in 956-57, in Madinat al-Zahrā', see Sénac, 'Comtes de Barcelone', pp. 91-92 (French translation of Ibn al-'Arabī); see also, *ibid.*, p. 94, for references to the long description by Ahmad al-Rāzī of another embassy received by al-Ḥakam II, in 971. The solemnity of diplomatic receptions outside Cordova, appears in Calahorra in 934, when 'Abd al-Rahmān III received Toda of Navarre (Sénac, *Frontières*, p. 380). For the reception of Byzantine embassies in the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century, see Vasilev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, ii/2, pp. 218-19 (Ibn 'Idhārī), pp. 276-81 (al-Maqqārī based on Ibn Ḥayyān), and Dölger, *Regesten*, nos 657 and 659, with the additional comments of A. Beihammer.

<sup>148</sup> Thus in 946, a ceremonial in the Great Palace known through chapter 15 of the second book of the famous *De cerimoniis aulae byzantinae*, the 10<sup>th</sup>-century treatise of Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, now available in an English translation (J.M. Featherstone, 'Di' *endeixin*: Display in court ceremonial (*De Cerimoniis*, II, 15)', in A. Cutler and A. Papaconstantinou (eds), *The material and the ideal. Essays in medieval art and archaeology in honour of Jean-Michel Speiser*, Leiden, 2007, 75-112, based on J.J. Reiske's edition. Muslim emissaries from the city of Tarsus (Cilicia) were present in Constantinople, as well as a Hamdanid ambassador, and an embassy from Cordova – though the last could have arrived in 947, rather than a year earlier (see Kresten, 'Zur Chrysographie', pp. 185-86, *contra* Zuckerman, 'Ambassade espagnole', pp. 648-49, 660 [who argues for 946], and the overview of the problem by A. Beihammer in Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 659, and Signes Codoñer, 'Bizancio y al-Andalus', pp. 217-18, 241-42).

<sup>149</sup> *Book of Gifts and Rarities*, § 173, pp. 163-64. This late 11<sup>th</sup>-century author, al-Qāḍī al-Rashīd ibn al-Zubayr, describes here the reception of a Byzantine envoy at the court of the Caliph al-Ḥakim, who 'wanted to furnish the throne room with unusual

Abbasid Baghdad.<sup>150</sup> One must make allowance for the exaggeration and rhetoric common in these descriptions, such as the depiction of envoys having to wait for lengthy periods before being admitted to the palace, meeting officials and courtiers who took them through various inner courts, and, finally, being received by the ruler (whether a Christian prince or a Muslim caliph).<sup>151</sup> Nevertheless, it has been demonstrated that some aspects of this ambassadorial ceremonial had ancient and Persian origins that were common to Byzantine and eastern Islamic courts, and that exchanges of embassies and diplomatic relations tended to make them emulate each other.<sup>152</sup> Even allowing for the rhetorical construction of the texts, this aspect seems important since diplomatic contacts were a way of peacefully maintaining an opposition that might otherwise be more brutal. As Beihammer has stated, in this kind of *bellum diplomaticum*, it is not surprising to find detailed descriptions of all the means employed by envoys to avoid and spurn formal etiquette.<sup>153</sup>

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furniture and to hang up rare hangings (*ta'āliq*), see the commentaries of A. Shalem, 'Manipulations of seeing and visual strategies in the audience halls of the early Islamic period. Preliminary notes', in F.A. Bauer (ed.), *Visualisierungen von Herrschaft. Frühmittelalterliche Residenzen Gestalt und Zeremoniell* (= *Byzas* 5 [2006]) 215-32, p. 225. This must be considered with al-Maqrīzī's account (Beihammer, 'Symbolische Kommunikation' [as noted in n. 2 above], pp. 176, n. 58 [with German translation]).

<sup>150</sup> The most famous is certainly the reception in 917, when the caliph received Byzantine ambassadors: see the Arabic texts in French translation in Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, ii/2, pp. 60-61, 66-69, 73-79, 169-71 (for the *Book of gifts and rarities*, see next footnote); references to other texts in Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 578.

<sup>151</sup> Shalem, 'Manipulations', pp. 221-23, from the *Book of gifts*, §§161-64, pp. 148-55, to compare with the tale of Ibn al-'Arabī in al-Andalus (Sénac, 'Comtes de Barcelone', pp. 91-92). For the 946 reception in Byzantium, see F.A. Bauer, 'Potentieller Besitz. Geschenke im Rahmen des byzantinischen Kaiserzeremoniells', in idem, *Visualisierungen von Herrschaft. Frühmittelalterliche Residenzen Gestalt und Zeremoniell*, (= *Byzas* 5 [2006]) 135-64, p. 162. To a lesser extent, one should note the information given by Notker the Stammerer about Charlemagne's reception of Abbasid envoys (Sénac, 'Carolingiens et califat abbasside', pp. 17-19).

<sup>152</sup> M. Canard, 'Le cérémonial fatimide et le cérémonial byzantine, essai de comparaison', *Byzantion* 21 (1951) 355-420, pp. 355-56, 371, 412-13; A. Cutler, 'Constantinople and Cordoba. Cultural exchange and cultural difference in the ninth and tenth centuries', in M. Morfakidis and M. Alganza Roldán (eds), *La religión en el mundo griego de la Antigüedad a la Grecia moderna*, Granada, 1997, 417-36, pp. 418-21.

<sup>153</sup> In Byzantium, for instance, the *proskynesis*, a common gesture of supplication or reverence to the emperor, could be problematic for some Muslim envoys, who invented stratagems to avoid it; Arab authors who describe the scene can then present the emissaries as triumphant against the *basileus* (Beihammer, 'Symbolische Kommunikation', pp. 175-78, and Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 766b [case of al-Bāqillānī, in 980-81]; J. Signes Codoñer, 'Diplomatie und Propaganda im 9. Jahrhundert. Die

Unfortunately, the sources focus on these ceremonial descriptions at the expense of the political aspects of the negotiations themselves. The case of Ibn Shahrām's embassy to Constantinople is an exception, as we have already seen.<sup>154</sup> Although references to treaties are not so rare, one has to recognize with Andreas Kaplony that very little can be known of the phase of negotiation between the first official and ceremonial contact and the delivery of the official letter containing details of the diplomatic agreement. When the negotiations were finished, a written treaty was concluded in the presence of witnesses and ratified by mutual oaths.<sup>155</sup> The same observations can be made in the case of diplomacy between al-Andalus and its Christian neighbors.<sup>156</sup> This gap in our sources is understandable because of the secrecy that prevailed during these negotiations; they had to take place *viva voce*, as Latin sources sometimes say.<sup>157</sup> What is certain is that these dealings were the main reason for diplomatic encounters between Christians and Muslims. Exchanging and ransoming prisoners, for instance,

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Gesandtschaft des al-Ghazal nach Konstantinopel', in C. Sode and S. Takács (eds), *Novum millenium. Studies on Byzantine history and culture dedicated to Paul Speck*, Aldershot UK, 2001, 379-92, pp. 385-91, a study that deals with other symbolic aspects of the presence of Yahyā al-Ghazāl, Umayyad envoy in Constantinople (839-40); see also El Cheikh, *Byzantium*, pp. 159-62). For other cases, in other contexts, see *ibid.*, p. 154 (where the solemnity in the Byzantine court contrasts with the simplicity of the early Muslim court); the way an Abbasid envoy, 'Umāra b. Ḥamza, compels the emperor to explain to him the mechanisms of automata near his throne, mechanisms which must initially have frightened him, should be underlined (A. Miquel, *La géographie humaine du monde musulman jusqu'au milieu du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 3 vols, Paris, 1973-75, ii, 438-39 [references to Ibn al-Fāqī al-Hamadhānī], and Beihammer, *Nachrichten*, no. 340, Rochow, 'Byzanz und das Kalifat', pp. 313-15). This attitude is found not only among Byzantine and Arab envoys, but also among Turks, as noted by *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis historiarum*, p. 454.

<sup>154</sup> Beihammer, 'Kommunikation und Konfliktführung', *passim*.

<sup>155</sup> Kaplony, *Gesandtschaften*, *passim*, and more precisely his analyses (pp. 387-93) and conclusions (pp. 398-99, 402-3); the ratification has two stages: a preliminary agreement is concluded in one court and confirmed in a treaty in the second court. For treaties and contacts between Byzantium and Islam after the period studied by Kaplony until the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, some information can also be gathered from Beihammer, *Nachrichten*, nos 340-43, 345-46, 348, 349, 351, 354, 355. For the second part of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, Ibn Shahrām's account of his mission to Constantinople provides rich detail on the procedure of concluding a treaty, such as the written confirmation (or not) of a previous agreement or the official authority given to the envoy to conclude it (Amedroz, 'Embassy', pp. 921-29, and Beihammer, 'Kommunikation und Konfliktführung', *passim*, and more precisely at pp. 36-39, 50-53).

<sup>156</sup> El-Hajji, *Andalusian diplomatic relations*, p. 297 (§24).

<sup>157</sup> The Arabic version of the Latin letter sent by Queen Bertha of Tuscany to the Abbasid caliph insists that the eunuch 'Alī, Bertha's envoy, must deal secretly, i.e. orally, with the caliph (Hamidullah, 'Embassy of Queen Bertha', p. 281); on the possible reasons for this secrecy, see the hypothesis of Renzi Rizzo, 'Riflessioni', pp. 15-19.

became a major motivation during the 9<sup>th</sup> century, notably between Constantinople and Baghdad<sup>158</sup> and also at the other end of the Mediterranean world.<sup>159</sup> The state and delimitation of the shared borders, as well as the status of certain fortresses along them, were also major topics of negotiation.<sup>160</sup> Religious questions are not central here, but they may be mentioned in some texts on the margin of political or military discussions. Theological controversies seem to be as old as the contacts themselves. What is important here is to note that they frequently took place officially, in court, between envoys, rulers and/or high-ranking official courtiers and dignitaries – and that they also appear in official correspondence, as already seen.<sup>161</sup> However, some religious topics could be central within specific diplomatic contexts, particularly Byzantium's relations with the Fatimids and Seljuks.

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<sup>158</sup> Kennedy, 'Byzantine-Arab diplomacy', p. 137, who states that 'until this time negotiations had been basically concerned with issues of war and peace', and explains that in the 9<sup>th</sup> century the balance of power was more in equilibrium between the two states, leading to such exchanges. It is true that, following exchanges of embassies, these become frequent and regular between the two empires, at least until the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century, but they had existed before, though to a lesser extent (see Rochow, 'Byzanz und das Kalifat', pp. 311, 313-15, 317); the first case attested in an Arabic source appears in August 718-July 719), or during the six subsequent years (Beihammer, *Nachrichten*, no. 325).

<sup>159</sup> El-Hajji, *Andalusian diplomatic relations*, pp. 65-66, 83 (in 971, 30 Muslim captives were offered as diplomatic gifts by a Christian emissary to the Caliph al-Ḥakam II); Sénac, *Frontières*, p. 380.

<sup>160</sup> In al-Andalus: El-Hajji, *Andalusian diplomatic relations*, pp. 71-76, 85; between Byzantium and the Abbasids: see the account by al-Mutawakkil's envoy in 860, known through al-Ṭabarī, in Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, I ii/1, pp. 321-22; the question of fortresses on the borders was central during Ibn Shahrām's presence in Constantinople (Beihammer, 'Kommunikation und Konfliktführung', pp. 36-39; Amedroz, 'Embassy', pp. 922-25).

<sup>161</sup> Thus at the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> century (Kaplony, *Gesandtschaften*, pp. 207-37). Earlier cases can be found, even if they may be partially or totally fictional: *ibid.*, pp. 341-42 (Mu'āwīya answers an emperor's question with the aid of the Qur'an); Canard, 'Quelques "à-côté"', pp. 99-100. In 981/982, the famous *qādī* and Abbasid envoy al-Bāqillānī had theological discussions during his stay in Constantinople face to face with 'priests' and the patriarch of the city (Qādī 'Iyāḍ, *Tartīb al-madārik wa-taqrīb al-masālik bi-ma'rīfat madhab Mālik*, ed. S.A. A'rāb, Tétouan, 1982, pp. 63-67; I owe this reference to my colleague Muhammad Tahar Mansouri who translated this passage for me). This also related to Christian relations with the Turks: an official letter written by the famous 11<sup>th</sup>-century Byzantine courtier Michel Psellos informs us that a Byzantine envoy took part in a theological debate with 'wise' people in the entourage of the Seljuk Sultan Mālik Shāh during one of the first official contacts between Byzantium and the Seljuks (P. Gautier, 'Lettre au sultan Malik-Shah rédigée par Michel Psellos', *Revue des Études Byzantines* 35 [1977] 73-97, p. 82); the letter is a presentation of the main Christian dogmas and must be dated to 1073 or 1074 (Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 996a).



Arabic texts refer to the ‘the mosque of Constantinople’ and its importance as the site of the preaching of the *khutba* in the name of one of the two rulers rather than the other.<sup>162</sup>

Diplomatic encounters also had cultural, artistic and commercial purposes, as we shall understand from the last but not least aspect of our subject: gifts. Even if they describe diplomatic contacts laconically, our sources usually mention, and sometimes describe carefully, the gifts offered by one ruler to another, through emissaries. Scholars have long noted the variety as well as the similarity of these gifts, wherever they were exchanged between Christian and Muslim rulers. It may be quite surprising that gifts of swords, spears, luxurious clothing and fabrics, wild and domestic animals such as falcons, hawks, hunting dogs and horses, as well as Slav eunuchs and girls are commonly referred to in the descriptions that have survived of Christian-Muslim relations in the Italian and Iberian peninsulas, and in the peripheral regions of Byzantium.<sup>163</sup> They prove that there was a shared culture and interest in particular kinds of objects between Christian and Muslim élites, and that this was emphasized within diplomatic contacts. Since Marcel Mauss’ surveys on the functions of gifts, much has been said about the social and political value of such exchanges, notably in the case of relations between Byzantium and Islam, with attempts to apply his well-known anthropological and sociological analysis.<sup>164</sup> The curiosity aroused by these rare, original and precious

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<sup>162</sup> See the recent overview in G.D. Anderson, ‘Islamic spaces and diplomacy in Constantinople (tenth to thirteenth centuries C.E.)’, *Medieval Encounters* 15 (2009) 86–113, pp. 99–102, 111–112, with further references; Muslim emissaries thus witness the evolution of Byzantine diplomacy in encounter with its oriental neighbors (Drocourt, ‘Ambassades’, p. 374).

<sup>163</sup> For more details on these gifts, see El-Hajji, *Andalusian diplomatic relations*, p. 83; Sénac, ‘Comtes de Barcelone’, p. 93; Hamidullah, ‘Embassy of Queen Bertha’, pp. 279–80; Renzi Rizzo, ‘Riflessioni’, pp. 5, 29–45; for Byzantium’s relations and exchanges of gifts with Abbasids, Fatimids, and Turks, see the *Book of gifts and rarities, passim*, and more specifically the chapters on the Fatimid court in this important source written at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, selected by M. Hamidullah (‘Nouveaux documents sur les rapports de l’Europe avec l’Orient musulman au Moyen Âge’, *Arabica* 10 [1960] 281–301), and O. Grabar (‘The shared culture of objects’, in H. Maguire [ed.], *Byzantine court culture from 829 to 1204*, Washington DC, 1997, 115–29). A luxury object must be added to this list, as a chrysobull was given to the Abbasid Caliph al-Rāḍī in 938 (Kresten, ‘Zur Chrysographie’, p. 159, n. 63).

<sup>164</sup> A. Cutler, ‘Les échanges de dons entre Byzance et l’Islam (IX–XI<sup>e</sup> s.)’, *Journal des Savants* (January–June 1996) 51–66; Mauss’ analyses about gift and counter-gift seem to apply in the case of animals, as we have tried to demonstrate (N. Drocourt, ‘Les animaux comme cadeaux d’ambassade entre Byzance et ses voisins (VII<sup>e</sup>–XII<sup>e</sup> siècle),’

gifts should be underlined here, partly because it is so much in accord with the way medieval authors depicted official contacts, as we have already seen.<sup>165</sup> This was not to change when Muslim Turks entered into contact with Christian powers, as attested by Ibn al-Athīr.<sup>166</sup>

Furthermore, gifts and other objects circulating with diplomatic delegations could also have a considerable cultural impact.<sup>167</sup> Much has been written about the circulation of manuscripts between Byzantium and the Abbasid capital, Baghdad. We may simply underline here that these texts moved essentially through official, i.e. diplomatic, channels, and that the caliphs took the initiative in asking their close Western Christian neighbors for them. As for the Byzantines, it was an opportunity to send one of the most famous scholars of the 9<sup>th</sup> century in a delegation to the Arabs, intensifying their own intellectual hunger for ancient Greek knowledge.<sup>168</sup> As J. Signes Codoñer has pointed out, a kind of 'diplomacy of books' developed in Byzantium, especially with Muslim partners. Ancient or luxury books could

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in B. Doumerc and C. Picard (eds), *Byzance et ses périphéries*, Toulouse, 2004, 67-93, p. 90), but gifts could have other functions, as will be suggested below.

<sup>165</sup> Among many gifts, Naṣr ibn al-Azhar, al-Mutawwakil's envoy in Constantinople, brought the emperor objects and things 'curious and new' (Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, i, p. 320; we find similar exchanges between the Abbasids and their Western Christian partners: Queen Bertha sent 'pieces of cloth, much of a special wool that is in an oyster from the bottom of the sea and assumes different colors according to the hours of the day' (Grabar, 'Shared culture', p. 125, whose translation I borrow here); on this wool, see Renzi Rizzo, 'Riflessioni', pp. 31-32; and the Carolingians sent gifts described by Notker the Stammerer and the *Annales regni Francorum* (Sénac, 'Carolingiens et califat abbasside', pp. 7-8, 17-19; and Musca, *Carlo Magno*, pp. 27-38, 178-80).

<sup>166</sup> Ibn al-Athīr, *The annals of the Saljuq Turks: Selections from al-Kāmil fi'l-ta'rikh of 'Izz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr. Studies in the history of Iran and Turkey 1000-1700 AD*, trans. and annotated by D.S. Richards, London, 2002, p. 144: a Byzantine emperor sent to the Seljuk Tughril Beg 'more than had ever been sent in past ages, namely 1,000 brocade robes... 500 head of horses and other animals... and also 200,000 dinars, 100 ingots of silver, 300 Shihri mules, 300 Egyptian asses, 1,000 white-wool goats with black eyes and horns'. This must have been linked with Byzantium's pro-Seljuk policy and diplomacy in the East, which started in 1055 (see Thomson, 'Relations', pp. 58-59).

<sup>167</sup> For a recent overview, see N. Koutrakou, 'Highlights in Arab-Byzantine cultural relations (IX<sup>th</sup>-XI<sup>th</sup> centuries AD). An approach through diplomacy', in Y.Y. Al-Hijji and V. Christidès (eds), *Cultural relations between Byzantium and the Arabs*, Athens, 2007, 85-102, *passim*.

<sup>168</sup> On these specific aspects of a broad subject, see D. Gutas, *Arabic thought, Greek culture. The Graeco-Arabic translation movement in Baghdad and early Abbasid society (2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries)*, London, 1998, *passim*; P. Magdalino, 'The road to Baghdad in the thought-world of ninth-century Byzantium', in L. Brubaker (ed.), *Byzantium in the ninth century. Dead or alive?*, Aldershot UK, 1998, 195-213; Signes Codoñer, 'Diplomacia del Libro', pp. 159-81; all these studies have extensive bibliographies.

have been chosen by the Byzantine political authorities to be used as a tool with these neighbors, much more than with others, such as Western Christians.<sup>169</sup> It seems important to emphasize here that, viewed from Byzantium, this aspect of diplomatic and cultural relations was shared with Eastern as well as Western Muslims. In the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century, particularly, Cordova received much from diplomatic contacts with Constantinople,<sup>170</sup> reminding us that technical skills and artistic talents also moved with the rhythm of official delegations between Christian and Muslim princes. One should keep in mind that Umayyad caliphs in Damascus received positive responses from the Byzantines when they asked them, through diplomatic channels, for workmen, gold and quantities of mosaic tiles, whether to rebuild the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina or to convert a Christian church into a mosque in Damascus.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Signes Codoñer, 'Diplomacia del Libro', *passim*; on the relative scarcity of this kind of tool within Byzantium's relations with the Latin Christian world, see J. Lowden, 'The luxury book as diplomatic gift', in J. Shepard and S. Franklin (eds), *Byzantine diplomacy*, Aldershot UK, 1992, 249-60; no books were exchanged between the Carolingians and Abbasids, if we are to trust Latin sources, as underlined by Sénac ('Carolingiens et califat abbasside', p. 8). A bishop, sent by the count of Barcelona, offered a chronicle describing the history of the Frankish kings to the Umayyad caliph's son, but this seems to be an exception (Sénac, 'Comtes de Barcelone', p. 90). On the other hand, one Arab author states that at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century an emperor might even choose to offer a Qur'an to a Muslim emir (Beihammer, 'Symbolische Kommunikation', pp. 184-85).

<sup>170</sup> Cutler, 'Constantinople and Córdoba', *passim*. A Byzantine embassy brought the caliph a Greek manuscript of Dioscorides' treatise on botany and a Latin one of Orosius' world history (Signes Codoñer, 'Libro', pp. 182-84, with reference to the manuscript of Pseudo-Apollonius of Tyana already mentioned); the Umayyad envoy Rabī' ibn Zayd also brought back from Constantinople a carved and gilded marble fountain basin and a green onyx fountain basin, both intended for the caliphal palace (on the mosaic specialist sent by Nicephorus Phocas to Cordova, see the next footnote).

<sup>171</sup> H.A.R. Gibb, 'Arab-Byzantine relations under the Umayyad Caliphate', *DOP* 12 (1958) 221-23, p. 225 (al-Ṭabarī); these contacts are not thought to be fictitious (Kaplony, *Gesandtschaften*, pp. 167-81 [Medina], pp. 183-99 [Damascus]). Byzantine technical and artistic assistance with the Umayyad mosque in Cordova, more than two centuries later, follows the same logic, as Ibn 'Idhārī has pointed out (Cutler, 'Constantinople and Córdoba', p. 431). Architectural interactions were frequent between Byzantium and Islam throughout the period, and were sometimes the direct result of what an emissary saw during his stay abroad (A.N. Esami, 'Architettura tra Bisanzio e l'Islam, dagli Omayyadi ai Comneni: incroci e interazioni', in A.C. Quintavalle (ed.), *Medioevo mediterraneo. L'Occidente, Bisanzio e l'Islam*, Milan, 2007, 477-88, esp. p. 482, with further references to the so-called Bryas Palace in Constantinople). It is not surprising that some authors detail the way official envoys criticized architectural aspects of the palaces they visited, face to face with the caliphs who welcomed them,

Among the gifts that circulated officially between Muslim and Christian rulers, some have a particular place: relics. Some pieces were negotiated, such as the famous *mandīl* or mandylion, obtained by the Byzantines after negotiation in 944, due to the fact that it was also venerated by Muslims.<sup>172</sup> To interfere in the relations between Byzantines and Fatimids, the Mirdasid emir of Aleppo sent more than the required tribute to Constantinople: a relic of John the Baptist, indicating that this kind of gift was never insignificant and was, on the contrary, a symbolic and effective choice.<sup>173</sup> At this time, relics were also valuable items, both negotiated for and presented, at the other end of the Mediterranean world.<sup>174</sup>

Lastly, Christian-Muslim diplomatic relations had an economic and commercial dimension, as we have already noted. Official gifts should therefore also be interpreted as objects with economic, as well as cultural and social, dimensions, as suggested by Anthony Cutler.<sup>175</sup> A close relationship between the quantity or value of specific gifts and the conclusion of a peace treaty may be noted in some cases, such as when a new peace was concluded between Cairo and Constantinople in 1045,<sup>176</sup> but this does not seem to have been an absolute rule.<sup>177</sup> Historians have underlined that commercial activities were related to war and peace during these first centuries of contact between Christians

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symptomatic of the legendary rivalries between princes (Rochow, 'Byzanz und das Kalifat', pp. 313-14; Beihammer, *Nachrichten*, no. 343).

<sup>172</sup> Aspects of these negotiations are detailed in Yahyā ibn Sa'īd al-Anṭākī, while other descriptions are provided by Greek authors, such as *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis historiarum* (pp. 231-32); see Dölger, *Regesten*, nos 641 and 641b, and Beihammer, 'Symbolische Kommunikation', pp. 183-84.

<sup>173</sup> Felix, *Byzanz und Islam*, pp. 100-101, with references. For other examples of relics in Byzantine-Muslim relations, see Beihammer, 'Symbolische Kommunikation', p. 184, n. 79 (end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century), and Felix, *Byzanz und Islam*, pp. 143-44 (summer 1031). Relics sometimes became central objects when official relations were in difficulty (see Thomson, 'Relations', p. 58).

<sup>174</sup> King Sancho I of León sent an embassy to al-Ḥakam II seeking peace, and asked the caliph's permission to remove the body of San Pelayo to León; al-Ḥakam II agreed and the transfer was the occasion of an impressive ceremony in León (El-Hajji, *Andalusian diplomatic relations*, p. 82).

<sup>175</sup> A. Cutler, 'Gifts and gift exchange as aspects of the Byzantine, Arab, and related economies', *DOP* 55 (2001) 247-78, *passim*; see also his recent analysis, 'Significant gifts. Patterns of exchange in late Antique, Byzantine and early Islamic diplomacy', *Journal of Medieval and Modern Greek Studies* 38 (2008) 79-102, *passim*.

<sup>176</sup> See the details and commentaries in Grabar, 'Shared culture', p. 121; Thomson, 'Relations', p. 56; Lev, 'Fatimids', p. 273.

<sup>177</sup> The costly and numerous gifts sent by Queen Bertha to the Abbasid caliph in support of her intention to form a military alliance were insufficient to bring it about.

and Muslims.<sup>178</sup> Concrete proof of this can be found in a few peace treaties already mentioned. In northern Syria, the text of the ‘Truce of Safar’ in 969–70 includes clauses that facilitate the movement of trading caravans,<sup>179</sup> while commercial negotiations regularly appear within Byzantine-Fatimid relations during the first part of the 11<sup>th</sup> century and preceding the conclusion of peace treaties.<sup>180</sup> Official correspondence also provides evidence, though the examples are rare. At the end of his letter addressed to Emperor Romanus Lecapenus, the emir of Egypt, al-Ikshīd, stated that he permitted the Byzantine emissaries who had recently arrived in his country ‘to trade with goods the emperor had sent’ – making it clear that there were neither religious nor political reasons to prevent this.<sup>181</sup>

However, evidence of economic relations through diplomatic contacts in other texts, such as chronicles, is infrequent.<sup>182</sup> As M. Talbi and P. Sénac convincingly demonstrate, relations between the Abbasids and Carolingians did have economic implications.<sup>183</sup> It is possible that there were similar motivations for relations between Cordova and Constantinople or other Christian places during the subsequent century, even if neither Arabic nor Greek sources state this directly.<sup>184</sup> Whatever may be the case, we should underline that

<sup>178</sup> See the introductory remarks in Sénac, *Monde carolingien et Islam*, pp. 8–9; Talbi, *Emirat aghlabide*, pp. 528–36.

<sup>179</sup> See references in Canard, *Hamdanides*, pp. 835–36, nn. 56–59.

<sup>180</sup> In 1024, for instance, the emissary sent by the Fatimids to Constantinople had to negotiate the return of Muslim merchants held in Byzantium, as well as the restoration of commercial activities across the Byzantine-Fatimid frontier (Felix, *Byzanz und Islam*, p. 74). Thomson (‘Relations’, p. 54) recognizes that during that period, ‘economically it was foolish to be on poor terms, as each empire was a major trading partner of the other’ and links this to the treaty concluded in the second part of the 1030s. The treaty of 1054 also had economic implications since it was preceded by a caliph’s request to Byzantium to supply grain because Egypt was struck by famine (*ibid.*, p. 58).

<sup>181</sup> Canard, ‘Une lettre de Muḥammad ibn Ṭugj al-Ihsīd’, p. 204. On the other hand, during the early Islamic conquests, agreements concluded in Syria and Mesopotamia applied a certain commercial pressure on Christian Greeks (Kaegi, *Islamic conquests*, pp. 183–84).

<sup>182</sup> Some cases seem exceptional: Arabic and Latin texts provide interesting information on diplomatic and economic contacts between the Muslim *taifa* of Denia and the county of Barcelona during the 11<sup>th</sup> century, as demonstrated in Bruce, ‘An intercultural dialogue’, *passim*, and especially pp. 21–23, 26, 32–34 (with references to the treaty of 1058 and its commercial dimension).

<sup>183</sup> Sénac, ‘Carolingiens et califat abbasside’, pp. 14–15; Talbi, *Emirat aghlabide*, pp. 399–403.

<sup>184</sup> This is also a hypothesis proposed by Philippe Sénac, ‘Contribution à l’étude des

Western economic expansion in the Mediterranean Sea started at the same time, as is well-known, with Italian cities such as Amalfi and Venice. This expansion was also marked by official contacts and the sending of envoys to establish commercial agreements. Ibn Ḥayyān describes how Amalfitain merchants came to al-Andalus and Cordova in 942, bringing brocades or pure silver ingots, and asking the Caliph ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, through an envoy from Sardinia, to establish a peace treaty.<sup>185</sup> Two or three years before, the same caliph had received a delegation from Hugh of Arles, king of Italy, asking him for safe-conduct (*ta’mīn*) for Christian merchants, and this was accepted.<sup>186</sup> Pietro Orseolo, the doge of Venice between 982 and 1008, also sent envoys to various Muslim territories from Syria to Ifrīqiya in order to negotiate commercial treaties.<sup>187</sup> Such initiatives were in part responsible for the enrichment of these cities, and this kind of practice developed further after 1100.

Concluding this short survey, we should underline that there is still a great deal to learn concerning Christian-Muslim diplomatic relations during the first centuries of their contacts in the Mediterranean area. Historians must draw on all the kinds of texts available to them to understand this subject, not to mention the idiosyncracies

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relations diplomatiques entre l’Espagne musulmane et l’Europe au X<sup>e</sup> siècle. Le règne de ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān III (912-961), *Studia Islamica* 61 (1985) 45-55, pp. 52, 55.

<sup>185</sup> Sénac, ‘Contribution’, pp. 47, 55; Renzi Rizzo, ‘I rapporti diplomatici’, p. 9; for a new interpretation of the presence of silver ingots and of an envoy from Sardinia, see C. Renzi Rizzo, ‘Annotazioni sulla circolazione dei doni nel Mediterraneo altomedievale (secoli VIII-X). La testimonianza delli fonte arabe’, in *Atti del Convegno Uomini, merci e commerce nel Mediterraneo da Giustiniano all’Islam (VI-X sec.)*, Bordighera, 3-4 dicembre 2004, forthcoming, with an analysis of other testimonies such as the *Book of gifts and rarities* (I thank C. Renzi Rizzo for sending me an advance copy of this article). Amalfi’s commercial expansion took place more in North Africa than in al-Andalus, as is demonstrated by Citarella, ‘Relations of Amalfi’, pp. 299-312, but although the earliest official document dates from the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century, Citarella argues that commercial and diplomatic agreements between Amalfi and the Arabs of North Africa must have appeared shortly after the Arab conquest of North Africa (p. 302).

<sup>186</sup> Sénac, ‘Contribution’, pp. 46-47; this initiative must be linked with the diplomacy between the caliph and the count of Barcelona (idem, ‘Comtes de Barcelone’, p. 89; Renzi Rizzo, ‘I rapporti diplomatici’, p. 8, and pp. 9-14 for a broad analysis with a new dating [939 instead of 940 as indicated by Ibn Ḥayyān]; idem, ‘Le relazioni tra cristiani e musulmani nella prima metà del X secolo: una prospettiva italiana’, in F. Cardini and M.L. Ceccarelli Lemut (eds), *Quel mar che la terra inghirlanda. In ricordo di Marco Tangheroni*, Pisa, 2007, 651-654, pp. 659-60, also noting that the marquis Guy of Tuscany sent an embassy to Cordova in 950, as did the pope four years later (p. 663) [Ibn Khaldūn and al-Maqqarī]).

<sup>187</sup> Jansen, Nef and Picard, *Méditerranée*, p. 186.

of diplomatic language and attitudes found in the sources. Diplomatic relations also have their own rhythm and evolution,<sup>188</sup> and at the very end of our period, when the First Crusade was moving against Muslim Syria and Egypt, a place for diplomacy quite rapidly appeared.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> See the analysis for the period they study made by Sénac, 'Contribution', pp. 54-55; Renzi Rizzo, 'Rapporti diplomatici', pp. 18-19; Kaplony, *Gesandtschaften*, p. 401.

<sup>189</sup> H. Dajani-Shakeel, 'Diplomatic relations between Muslim and Frankish rulers 1097-1153 A.D.', in M. Shatzmiller (ed.), *Crusaders and Muslims in twelfth-century Syria*, Leiden, 1993, 190-215, pp. 192-200.

Works on Christian-Muslim relations  
900-1050





# Al-Ya‘qūbī

Abu l-‘Abbās Aḥmad ibn Abī Ya‘qūb ibn Ja‘far ibn Wahb  
ibn Wāḍiḥ, al-Ya‘qūbī

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown; early or mid-9<sup>th</sup> century

PLACE OF BIRTH Baghdad

DATE OF DEATH Egypt

PLACE OF DEATH 905 or later

## BIOGRAPHY

Born in Baghdad, al-Ya‘qūbī worked for most of his life in Khurāsān and then Egypt, though, according to details he gives in his own works, he travelled widely throughout the Islamic world and maybe beyond.

From a young age, al-Ya‘qūbī held a secretarial position under the Ṭāhirid rulers of Khurāsān, and may have made journeys to gather intelligence on their behalf. When the dynasty fell in 872-3, he moved to Egypt, where he worked under the Ṭulūnid governors. References in his works indicate that he was still alive in the early 10<sup>th</sup> century, and so he must have lived beyond the year 897, the date that is often given by later Muslim writers for his death.

Al-Ya‘qūbī was probably a Shī‘ī, and traces of Shī‘ī beliefs can be seen informing some of his views (see e.g. Adang, p. 38). He is known for six works, of which the *Kitāb al-buldān*, ‘Countries’, and *Mushākalat al-nās li-zamānihim*, ‘People’s adaptation to their times’, have survived. Among his lost works was a history of the Byzantine Empire, which he mentions in his *Kitāb al-buldān* (ed. M. de Goeje in *Bibliotheca geographorum arabicorum*, 8 vols, Leiden, 1892, vii, 231-360, p. 323).

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

Yāqūt, *Irshād al-arīb ilā ma‘rifat al-adīb*, ed. D. Margoliouth, 7 vols, London, 1923-31, ii, pp. 157-60

*Secondary*

C. Adang, *Muslim writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible. From Ibn Rabban to Ibn Hazm*, Leiden, 1996, pp. 36-39

A. Ferré, 'Al-Ya'qūbī et les Évangiles', *Islamochristiana* 3 (1977) 65-83, pp. 66-67

W.G. Millward, 'Al-Ya'qūbī's sources and the question of Shī'a partiality', *Abr-Nahrayn* 12 (1971-72) 47-75

W.G. Millward, *A study of al-Ya'qubi with special reference to his alleged Shī'a bias*, Princeton, 1961 (PhD diss. Princeton University)

Al-Ya'qūbī, *Les pays*, trans. G. Wiet, Cairo, 1937, introduction

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Ta'rīkh*, 'History'

DATE 872 or soon after

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The *Ta'rīkh* is a universal history with a structure similar to the works of al-Ṭabarī (q.v.), al-Mas'ūdī (q.v.) and later historians. It is the earliest such work that is accessible, and it has been claimed as the first work of this kind. It begins with an account of the creation of the world (now lost), then in the first part traces the history from Adam to the coming of Islam, and in the second part traces Islamic history to the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century, ending at the year of the downfall of the Ṭāhirids. In the first part, it gives accounts of the kingdoms of the ancient world and the Arabs, including the Byzantine Empire, the works of Greek philosophers, and pre-Islamic prophets, including Jesus.

Al-Ya'qūbī's biography of Jesus (pp. 52-63 in the Najaf edition) is more or less unique for its time in that it employs the canonical Gospels as its main sources. Al-Ya'qūbī describes in detail Jesus' genealogy and birth, his ministry, including his teachings (though no parables are mentioned) and miracles, and his passion, death and resurrection, and he concludes with a brief sketch of the Apostles, led by Peter and Paul. As Griffith points out (pp. 150-51), he uses his New Testament sources in order to supplement the details given in the Qur'an, and carefully weaves together the biblical and qur'anic accounts into a single narrative. Significantly, over the opposing accounts of the crucifixion and death of Jesus, where he cannot deny a contradiction, he gives the Gospel versions in detail and limits himself to a single quotation from Q 4:157 in disagreement.

What appears to be interest in facts about Jesus in their own right is also reflected in al-Ya'qūbī's later account of Byzantine history from the time of Constantine and his conversion to Christianity up to the early 8<sup>th</sup> century (pp. 123-28). This includes references to schisms and doctrinal disagreements, but there are no criticisms or obvious signs of disapproval.

Whatever immediate sources al-Ya'qūbī employed have not been identified. While he is indebted to the Syriac *Cave of treasures* (q.v.) for his outline of world history and to the Peshitta for biblical passages, it is not possible to say in detail how he accessed these. In the *Kitāb al-buldān* he describes his method of gathering information as being to note the answers given by people he met (ed. De Goeje, pp. 232-33), and so it might be supposed that he followed something similar here, though he must have been able to read a text of the Gospels for himself in order to provide such full and faithful summaries of what they say about Jesus.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The *Ta'rikh* is very unusual for its full and more or less objective treatment of the biblical Jesus. While al-Ya'qūbī clearly does not depart in any major way from the qur'anic accounts of him and, in briefly identifying the Paraclete as Muḥammad and drawing attention to the differences between the Gospels, he hints that he accepts traditional Muslim views about the Gospels, he is generally silent about the value or authority of the details he sets down. The result is an account of the life of Jesus that readers familiar with the Christian tradition would recognize as largely true to what they know.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

Manchester, John Rylands Library – 231 (14<sup>th</sup> century)

Cambridge, University Library – Qq.10 (1685)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

A. Ferré, *L'histoire des prophètes d'après al-Ya'qūbī. D'Adam à Jésus*, Rome, 2000

Ferré, 'Al-Ya'qūbī et les Evangiles', pp. 67-77 (French trans.)

*Ta'rikh al-Ya'qūbī*, 2 vols, Beirut, 1999

M.I. Āyatī, *Tārikh-i Ya'qūbī*, Tehran, 1977 (Persian trans., repr. 1995)

*Ta'rikh al-Ya'qūbī*, Beirut, 1960

*Ta'rikh al-Ya'qūbī*, Najaf, 1939

- D.M. Donaldson, 'Al-Ya'qūbī's chapter about Jesus Christ', in *The Macdonald presentation volume*, Princeton NJ, 1933, 89-105
- G. Smit, 'Bijbel en legende' bij den arabischen Schrijver Ja'qubi, 9<sup>th</sup> eeuw na Christus, Leiden, 1907, pp. 1-105 (Dutch trans. of the section on the biblical prophets including Jesus)
- Ibn Wādih qui dicitur al-Ja'qūbī, Historiae*, ed. M. Houtsma, 2 vols, Leiden, 1883

## STUDIES

- F.-C. Muth, "Sichtungen des Christlichen bei arabischen Historikern. Die Evangelienauszüge bei al-Ya'qūbī (gest. um 292/095)", in D. Kreikenbom et al. (eds), *Arabische Christen-Christen in Arabien*, Frankfurt am Main, 2007, 85-104
- S. Griffith, 'The Gospel, the Qur'ān, and the presentation of Jesus in al-Ya'qūbī's *Ta'riḫh*', in J. Reeves (ed.), *Bible and Qur'ān. Essays in scriptural intertextuality*, Atlanta GA, 2003, 133-60, pp. 143-60
- Adang, *Muslim writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible*, pp. 117-20, and see index
- T. Khalidi, *Arabic historical thought in the classical period*, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 115-32
- B. Radtke, *Weltgeschichte und Weltbeschreibung im mittelalterlichen Islam*, Beirut, 1992, pp. 11-15
- A.A. Duri, *The rise of historical writing among the Arabs*, Princeton NJ, 1983, pp. 64-67
- Y. Marquet, 'Le shi'isme au IX<sup>e</sup> siècle à travers l'histoire de Ya'qūbī', *Arabica* 19 (1972) 1-45, 101-38
- R. Ebied and L. Wickham, 'Al-Ya'qūbī's account of the Israelite prophets and kings', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 29 (1970) 80-98
- F. Rosenthal, *A history of Muslim historiography*, Leiden, 1952, pp. 114-16
- A. Götze, 'Die Nachwirkung der Schatzhöhle', *Zeitschrift für Semiotik und verwandte Gebiete* 3 (1924) 53-71, pp. 60-71
- Smit, 'Bijbel en legende' bij den arabischen Schrijver Ja'qubi, pp. 105-34
- M. Klamroth, 'Der Auszug aus den Evangelien bei dem arabischen Historiker Ja'qūbī', in *Festschrift zur Einweihung des Wilhelm-Gymnasiums in Hamburg am 21. Mai 1885*, Hamburg, 1885, 117-28

# David of Damascus

DATE OF BIRTH	Presumably in the early decades of the 9 <sup>th</sup> century
PLACE OF BIRTH	Unknown
DATE OF DEATH	Sometime after 884
PLACE OF DEATH	Perhaps Damascus

## BIOGRAPHY

David was a 9<sup>th</sup>-century Melkite metropolitan of Damascus. In the year 884, a controversy between him and his patriarch occasioned an exchange of letters, some written by him, others written in his defense. Taken as a whole, these letters show David to have been a figure of some standing in the church, able not only to resist the will of his patriarch, but also to summon the assistance of a variety of powerful allies, including the patriarchs of Jerusalem and Alexandria and the most powerful laymen of Antioch itself. Given the political influence David was able to wield, he was likely a senior figure in the church by the year 884, and thus presumably of a fairly advanced age. If this supposition is correct, David would likely have been born in the early decades of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. As the patriarch's efforts to depose David were almost certainly ineffective, it may be presumed that David retained the episcopacy of Damascus until his death, which must have occurred after 884, the year of the controversy and exchange of letters. Apart from these letters, no other record of David appears to have survived.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### *Primary*

MS Milan, Ambrosiana – X 201 supp., fols 94r-137v (c. 1000; the corpus of letters concerned with the controversy between David and Patriarch Symeon)

*Secondary* —

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

No title, though the scribe introduces the corpus of letters as follows: *Nuskhat al-shakwā alladhī ishtakāhu anbā Dāwīd maṭrabulīṭ Dimashq ilā anbā Mīkhāyil [Mīkhā'īl] baṭriyark al-Iskandariyya wa-ilā anbā Iliyyā baṭriyark Bayt al-Maqdas min fi'l anbā Simiyūn baṭriyark Anṭākiyya, wa-mā ḥakamā bihi fī dhālika wa-athbatā khuṭūṭahumā fīhi*, 'A copy of the complaint that Abba David, the metropolitan of Damascus, presented to Abba Michael, the patriarch of Alexandria, and Abba Elias, the patriarch of Jerusalem, concerning the action of Abba Symeon, the patriarch of Antioch, as well as what the two of them ruled on the matter and that to which they affixed their signatures'

DATE 884

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

This letter is the first of a series exchanged between David, Melkite metropolitan of Damascus, Elias, the patriarch of Jerusalem, and Michael, the patriarch of Alexandria. Other letters were written by the two patriarchs to Symeon, their colleague in Antioch. Yet another letter (a petition of commendation and support for David) is addressed to the same by the Christian notables of Antioch. All of these letters concern the recent behavior of Symeon, the patriarch of Antioch. They constitute, in effect, a legal dossier, describing Symeon's recent visit to Damascus, his interference in the finances and discipline of the church there, and his attempt to depose David. The letters further record David's efforts to rally the support of the other two patriarchs, the decisions of the latter as to the non-canonical nature of Symeon's behavior, and the response of the people of Antioch to the imperious behavior of their patriarch.

The majority of the corpus treats matters of canon law, particularly whether and to what extent metropolitans are independent of their patriarchs. However, the first letter, David's account of Symeon's behavior, stands apart from the rest for its detailed description of the events that precipitated the controversy. It offers unique documentary insight into the affairs of the church of Syria in the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century: the financial affairs of the church of Damascus, the distribution of its estates and their management, the names and sees of Syrian bishops, and the identity of various factions of notable Christians, both lay and clerical. No other similar text has been preserved from this period, for this region. Indeed, the text may well be the only such document to have survived between the time of the Muslim conquests and the Byzantine reconquest of Syria.

Of particular concern to the issue of Christian-Muslim relations is the central part of the first letter (fols 96r-100r), which gives a detailed account of competition between Muslims and Christians in Damascus for control of the production and distribution of bread. We are told at length how Symeon, during a visit to Damascus, undertook a detailed investigation of the church's finances and properties. Of these, the bakery was of especial interest, seemingly because of the large revenue it brought the church. Prior to David's metropolitanate, this bakery had been leased by the church to certain Muslims. The holders of the lease were responsible for the production and sale of *sāj* (a type of flatbread) and for the upkeep of the premises. For their efforts, they were entitled to whatever monies remained after payment of the annual lease of 40 dinars. The bakery operated, at least in part, as a charitable foundation. The holders of the lease were thus contractually obliged to sell at below-market rates, the price of their bread being fixed at two-thirds of the price of bread sold in the local markets.

Through a long and difficult process, David had managed to transfer the lease back into Christian hands, seemingly employees of the church itself. While the text is oblique as to the reasons for the transfer, there are some indications that the prior holders of the lease had been charging more than was allowed by the terms of the contract. Whatever the case, David was able to boast that the discounted price of bread was restored and that the direct administration of the bakery had resulted in a nearly fivefold increase in its revenue (now 230 dinars per year).



The transfer of the lease was not unopposed. David's action angered a substantial number of powerful Christian laymen in Damascus, as well as the former holders of the lease. It was in fact they, David claims, who were responsible for the slander that roused the patriarch to anger. Be that as it may, shortly after his arrival in Damascus, Symeon took possession of David's episcopal residence and renegotiated both this and other contracts. In turn, David was forced to leave Damascus in search of support, going first to Jerusalem and then to Alexandria. During his absence, Symeon assumed complete control of the church in Damascus: he offered the Eucharist in the cathedral church; within David's metropolitanate, he ordained some bishops and deposed others; and he suppressed David's remaining supporters, even denouncing some to the city's ruler, with the result that they were imprisoned and tortured and not released until the church had paid certain monies.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

David's letter offers a unique documentary glimpse into the life of the Melkite Church in Syria in the later decades of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. It provides a number of tantalizing hints as to the practical realities of Muslim-Christian relations. These include: the business interests in which Muslims and Christians shared and for which they competed; the factional alignment of Christians and Muslims in pursuit of common goals; the invocation of Muslim executive authority by members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy; and the ease of communication and travel between the three patriarchates. Further, taken as a whole, the corpus provides our most detailed evidence for the question of institutional continuity of the Melkite Church in 9<sup>th</sup>-century Syria. Of particular importance are the long lists of signatories and witnesses, whose names are attached to the various letters and petitions of the dossier. Dozens of officials are mentioned by name, almost all of them otherwise unknown.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS Milan, Ambrosiana – X 201 supp., fols 94r-137v (c. 1000)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

The text is unpublished. An edition and English translation are currently being prepared by J.C. Lamoreaux and A.M. Saadi.

#### STUDIES —

**John C. Lamoreaux**

## *Tultusceptru de libro domni Metobii*

Unknown author

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown  
PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown  
DATE OF DEATH Unknown  
PLACE OF DEATH Unknown

BIOGRAPHY —

### MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Primary —

Secondary —

### WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

#### *Tultusceptru de libro domni Metobii*

DATE 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century  
ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Latin

#### DESCRIPTION

This brief biography of Muḥammad relates that an angel came to a certain Bishop Osius and bade him send a messenger to ‘the satraps who dwell in Erriborn’ to lead their people back from error to the true religion. Osius sent a young monk named Ozim. When he arrived in Erriborn, he was met by a false ‘angel of temptation’, who renamed him Muḥammad and ordered him to say *Alla occuber alla occuber situ leila citus est Mohamet razulille*. The text explains that the words *alla occuber* comprise an invocation of demons. Hence, by trickery, the demon led Ozim and the people of Erriborn to perdition.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

This is one of several brief polemical lives of Muḥammad written in Latin by 9<sup>th</sup>- and 10<sup>th</sup>-century authors in Spain. The purpose, in a codex consisting primarily of Latin Chronicles from Isidore to Alfonso III, seems to be to discredit Muslim claims for the legitimacy

of Muḥammad's revelation by affirming that he was duped by a false angel. The author shows familiarity with the *shahāda* (if in a somewhat garbled form) and with Muslim beliefs concerning Gabriel's revelations to Muḥammad.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS Madrid, Biblioteca de la Academia de la Historia – 78, known as the 'codex of Roda' (late 10<sup>th</sup> century; available online at <http://bibliotecadigital.rah.es/dgbrah/i18n/consulta/registro.cmd?id=101>)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

K. Wolf, 'The earliest Latin lives of Muhammad', in M. Gervers and R.J. Bikhazi (eds), *Conversion and continuity. Indigenous Christian communities in Islamic lands, eighth to eighteenth centuries*, Toronto, 1990, 89-101 (reproduces Diaz y Diaz's Latin edition, pp. 99-100, and gives an English trans., p. 100)

M. Diaz y Diaz and I. Ceinos, 'Los textos antimahometanos más antiguos en codices españoles', *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age* 37 (1970) 149-68 (Latin edition pp. 163-64)

#### STUDIES

A. Christys, *Christians in Al-Andalus, 711-1000*, Richmond UK, 2002, p. 63

K. Wolf, 'Christian views of Islam in early medieval Spain', in J. Tolan (ed.), *Medieval Christian perceptions of Islam*, New York, 1996, 85-108, pp. 100-2

Wolf, 'The earliest Latin lives of Muhammad'

**John Tolan**

# Al-Nāshi' al-Akbar

Abū l-ʿAbbas ʿAbdallāh ibn Muḥammad al-Anbārī,  
Ibn Shirshīr

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown  
PLACE OF BIRTH Anbār, near Baghdad  
DATE OF DEATH 906  
PLACE OF DEATH Egypt

## BIOGRAPHY

Little is known about al-Nāshi' al-Akbar's life, except that he lived in Baghdad until about 893 and was employed as a government official, and that he moved to Egypt, where he remained until his death.

Al-Nāshi' was remembered for his singular theological views about God's radical distinctiveness from creation, according to which humans cannot share in any real sense characteristics possessed by God, and about human responsibility, according to which faith was an act of belief irrespective of actions (showing sympathies for the teachings of the Murji'a). For these, he was sometimes mocked and condemned as an atheist. He was best known for his criticisms of grammarians and poets and for his disagreements with supporters of Greek philosophy, among them Abū Yūsuf al-Kindī (q.v.). His concern about philosophical developments in Islam may explain why he is one of the very few individuals mentioned in the *Risāla fī tathbīt waḥdāniyyat al-Bāri' wa-tathlīth khawāṣṣihi*, which was probably written by the 9<sup>th</sup>-century Nestorian bishop Israel of Kashkar.

The titles of six of al-Nāshi's works are known. Reflecting his intellectual concerns, these include refutations of poetry, logic and medical matters.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 217

al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab wa-ma'ādin al-jawāhir*, ed. and trans. C. Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille, 9 vols, Paris, 1861-77, ii, p. 244, vii, pp. 88-89

- ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl al-i’tizāl wa-ṭabaqāt al-Mu’tazila wa-mubāyanātuhum li-sā’ir al-mukhālifin*, in *Faḍl al-i’tizāl wa-ṭabaqāt al-Mu’tazila*, ed. F. Sayyid, Tunis, 1974, pp. 299-300
- Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghḍādī, *Ta’riḫ Baghḍād*, i, pp. 92-93
- Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭabaqāt al-Mu’tazila*, pp. 92-93

*Secondary*

- J. van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra. Eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam*, 6 vols, Berlin, 1991-97, iv, pp. 141-46, vi, pp. 366-68
- ‘A.I. Abū Zayd, *Binā’ al-qasīda fī shi’r al-Nāshi’ al-Akbar*, Cairo, 1994
- J. van Ess, *Frühe mu’tazilitische Häresiographie*, Beirut, 1971, pp. 1-17, 123-54

WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Kitāb al-awsaṭ fī l-maqālāt*, ‘The middle way among the teachings’; *Fī l-maqālāt*, ‘On the teachings’

DATE Probably before 893

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

The work has not survived intact, but has come down as a series of excerpts preserved by the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Coptic author Abū l-Faḍāl al-Ṣafī ibn al-‘Assāl from a copy of the work made in 923 by Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī (q.v.). Since Yaḥyā lived in Baghdad and would have been aware of authors active there rather than as far away as Egypt, it is likely that the work was written before 893 while al-Nāshi’ was still living in the Abbasid capital. This is supported by details in the *Maqālāt* itself, where the normative Christian position is assumed to be that of the Nestorian Church, which was prevalent in and around Baghdad.

The title of the work is unknown for sure. Van Ess suggests *Kitāb al-awsaṭ fī l-maqālāt* (*Frühe mu’tazilitische Häresiographie*, pp. 20-24), while Thomas suggests that it may simply have been *Fī l-maqālāt* (*Christian doctrines*, pp. 23-24). Since it is identified as *al-kitāb al-awsaṭ*, the latter alternative implies that it would have been one of a possible trio of works, together with longer and shorter versions which have vanished without trace.

In its surviving incomplete form, the work comprises brief sections on dualists, Zoroastrians and Jews, a more substantial section

on Christians, and further sections on Muslims and ancient philosophers. The section on Christians, in which the detail that is preserved must be the result of the interest shown by its Christian transmitters, itself falls into two parts: a description of the main Christian doctrines, and a refutation. The description comprises accounts of Trinitarian Christian teachings: the Trinity and Incarnation, together with a list of more than 20 groups remembered for their contrasting teachings about the nature of Christ; and Unitarian teachings, represented by the Arians. References to other groups indicate clearly that the original has been truncated in a number of places.

The refutation centers entirely on the doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation without any further mention of the Unitarians or the divergent Christologies. It is divided into three parts: arguments against those who base themselves on scripture, against those who employ reason, and, in what could be an addition by al-Nāshi' to his original structure, against contemporary Christians (*qawm min muḥdathihim*). Al-Nāshi' employs some arguments that are familiar from other polemicists, and some that do not appear elsewhere. Among the latter, one striking point (although in the original this may have been minor) is the attempt by Christian opponents to explain how the divine Persons are both identical with one another and also distinct by drawing an analogy between them and the various accidents that give characteristics to physical matter (Thomas, *Christian doctrines*, pp. 66-71).

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The work is one of the few 9<sup>th</sup>-century refutations that have survived in any length. In its descriptions it exhibits remarkable factual knowledge of Christian doctrines, from sources that cannot now be traced, and in its arguments it witnesses to an extremely lively dialogue between Muslims and Christians, in which both sides were able to employ the same concepts and logic. In particular, it shows Christians readily employing distinctive elements of Muslim *kalām* thinking in order to explain and defend their doctrines.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate – 370, fols 1r-50v (1752) (Graf, pp. 152-53, no. 418; Simaika, ii, p. 161, no. 370)

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

D. Thomas, *Christian doctrines in Islamic theology*, Leiden, 2008, pp. 35-77 (edition and trans.)

J. van Ess, *Frühe mu'tazilitische Häresiographie*, Beirut, 1971, pp. 76-87 (edition), 65-89 (German analytical paraphrase and commentary)

## STUDIES

Thomas, *Christian doctrines in Islamic theology*, pp. 19-34

D. Thomas, 'Regard and disregard in early relations between Muslims and Christians', *Chronos, Revue d'Histoire de l'Université de Balamand* 14 (2006) 7-30, pp. 11-12

Al-Sharfī, *Al-fikr al-Islāmī*, pp. 140-41, and see index

A. Wadī', 'L'apologétique d'al-Ṣafī ibn al-'Assāl', in S.K. Samir (ed.), *Actes du deuxième congrès international d'études arabes chrétiennes*, Rome, 1986, 183-86

Van Ess, *Frühe mu'tazilitische Häresiographie*, pp. 65-89

**David Thomas**

# Leo VI ‘the Wise’

Leo VI ‘ho Sophos’

DATE OF BIRTH 19th(?) September 866  
PLACE OF BIRTH Constantinople  
DATE OF DEATH 11 May 912  
PLACE OF DEATH Constantinople

## BIOGRAPHY

Leo VI ascended the throne in 886 at the age of 20 and ruled for 26 years until his death in 912. His literary and intellectual endeavors earned him the epithet ‘the Wise’, and his reputation rests on his inspiration or production of significant codifications of law, the urban economy, and, in the case of the *Taktika*, military science. Foreign affairs presented constant difficulties throughout his reign. He had first to deal with a serious threat from the resurgent Bulgar kingdom along Byzantium’s north-western frontier. After a fragile peace was established with the Bulgars in 896, Leo was compelled to deal with constant Arab attacks by land and sea.

The Byzantines met with a number of defeats, losing Sicily in 902, suffering the sack of Thessaloniki in 904, and failing to recapture Crete in 911. These and other reversals have prompted harsh verdicts from scholars on Leo’s judgment and policies in military matters, but recent scholarship has pointed to the measures taken by the emperor to improve the performance of the Byzantine army and navy. Although he broke with the pattern of his imperial predecessors by not going on campaign himself, the restructuring of the eastern frontiers and the revival of military science during his reign are now seen to have laid the groundwork for the Byzantines’ success against the Arabs during the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### *Primary*

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#### WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Tōn en polemois taktikōn syntomos paradosis*,  
 'Concise account of the tactics used in war',  
 'Tactical constitutions'; *Taktika*, 'Tactica'

DATE Approximately 900

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Greek

#### DESCRIPTION

Within the lengthy compilation of military knowledge and precepts known as the *Taktika* of Leo VI, the dossier on the Arabs (PG 107, cols 971b-981b, Constitution XIII.109-42/Dennis, *Taktika*, pp. 474-89, Constitution XIII. 103-35) stands out as one of the few contemporary, original contributions to a mainly derivative work. By far the greater part of the *Taktika* paraphrases Leo's two principal sources, the *Strategikon* of Maurice (c. 600) and the treatise on generalship by Onasander (1<sup>st</sup> century). For information on the Arabs, however, in particular those dwelling in Tarsus, Adana, and other Cilician towns, the emperor states that he has consulted commanders long acquainted with these foes, read the campaign reports of his imperial predecessors, and, above all, drawn upon the experiences recounted by his late

father Basil I (r. 867-86), who took the field many times against them (PG XVIII.123/Dennis XVIII.117). Leo also declares that the Arabs in his day pose no less a threat to the realm than the Persians did in earlier times. It is precisely in reaction to the 'Saracen race' and the incessant raids afflicting his subjects that the emperor has undertaken the task of composing not only this section but the entire *Taktika* (PG XVIII.142/Dennis XVIII.135).

The section on the Arabs was added to the survey of foreign peoples that Leo adapted from the *Strategikon* of Maurice (Dagron, 'Ceux d'en face', pp. 216-25). He follows the pattern of his source's descriptions, noting the origins of the enemy, their panoply, battle formations and tactics, and the ways to oppose them in combat. According to Leo, the Arabs first dwelt along the margins of Arabia Felix before spreading into Syria and Palestine as settlers. The seeds of conflict were sown after Muḥammad created their 'devilish superstition' and they went on to seize Egypt, Mesopotamia and other regions, at a time when the Byzantines were distracted by the struggle against the Persians. Seeing them as unbelievers and religious rivals, he singles them out for disparagement ('blasphemers', a 'barbarous people') not applied to the empire's Christian adversaries. Another common line of attack twists their virtues into vices; for instance, the Arabs seem pious but are in truth godless, appear courageous in battle but are driven by greed for plunder, observe their laws faithfully yet indulge in the pleasures of the flesh and dishonor the soul. The physical and psychological determinism typical of ancient ethnology is evident in passages where Leo recommends campaigning against the Arabs in winter since they are used to living in a hot climate, or attacking them at night since they are sound sleepers. There is a touch of the exotic in Leo's comments on the terror inspired in the Byzantines' horses by the sight of the Arabs' camels and the din of their cymbals and drums, and in his reports of lightly clad 'Ethiopians', i.e. dark-skinned soldiers, employed as archers in the front ranks of Arab armies.

In the passages where Leo turns to an analysis of the institutions and ideology of the Arab enemy (PG XVIII.128-32/Dennis XVIII.122-27; Dagron, 'Byzance et le modèle islamique'), his dossier assumes its greatest significance as a source for Christian-Muslim relations. For all his invective and hostility, the ruler of an empire as confident of its God-given mission and place among the nations as Byzantium sees in the Muslim arch-enemy a model to be emulated by his own subjects. Leo cites two reasons for the Arabs' military successes against

the Byzantines: first, they go on campaign in great numbers, not by compulsion but as volunteers, hopeful of spiritual as well as material rewards; second, those unable to participate, even the women, contribute arms and supplies to the expedition in the belief that it is materially and spiritually profitable to equip the combatants.

Although Leo nowhere uses a term equivalent to *jihād* or holy war, it is clear that he believes that spiritual incentives have given the Arabs greater motivation in war. He therefore urges the Byzantines to rise to the same level of intensity, 'confronting the Arabs bravely for the salvation of our souls, convinced that we are fighting for God himself, for our people and all our Christian brethren'. Despite the impassioned rhetoric calling upon the people of Christ to unite against the Arab threat, Leo stops well short of proposing a Byzantine holy war. The Orthodox Christian empire is defending itself, not seeking to conquer or recover holy places, nor to propagate the Christian faith by force of arms; and although the fallen receive honored burial and a special liturgy, there is no mention whatsoever of the remission of penance or sin, automatic entry into Paradise, or other benefits commensurate with the rewards of a holy war.

Leo's description of the donations made by the non-combatants to Arab expeditions appears to refer to Muslim institutions (the *waqf* or *ḥubus fī sabil Allāh*) that the emperor also deems worth imitating. He envisions a similar mobilization of manpower and equipment on the part of the Byzantines, with the entire populace coming together to fill the army's ranks, equip the combatants, and ensure that soldiers from poorer families obtain any supplies or weapons they may lack. Such a select force, brave and well armed, 'will with the help of God easily win victories against the barbarous Saracens'.

Application of these measures is evident in Leo's reign, but the emperor's appeals for greater religious zeal and institutional reform, inspired by the Muslim model, took most dramatic effect during the reigns of his son Constantine VII (r. 945-59) and his soldier-emperor successors. The reorganization of the eastern frontiers, already under way in Leo's time, brought the creation of small military districts settled by soldiers or by non-combatants able to contribute to their military obligations. The age-old customary system of military recruitment and service was regulated in law, and all lands capable of supporting military obligations were assessed and registered so as to exact the maximum contribution. On the level of ideology, Leo's exhortations to the people and soldiers of Christ echo in two harangues composed

by Constantine VII. They were carried to their limit by Nicephorus II Phocas (r. 963-69) 'the white death of the Saracens', whose family had risen to prominence under Leo VI and who looked back to the *Taktika* when formulating an aggressive military policy that eventually led to the destruction of the Arab centers in Cilicia and northern Syria. The famous attempt by Phocas to have soldiers who had been killed in battle against the Arabs honored as martyrs (refused by the patriarch in Constantinople) shows how receptive an audience Leo found among the military magnates, who saw themselves as the champions of Christian Byzantium in the struggle against the Arabs along the empire's eastern frontiers.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The *Taktika* of Leo VI is an important source for Muslim-Christian relations in several respects. It revived the tradition of military literature in Byzantium, dormant for three centuries, and inspired the treatises written in the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century (*De velitatione* and *Praecepta militaria*), which are themselves valuable records for the military and cultural history of the Byzantine-Arab borderlands. The section on the Arabs offers insight into Byzantine perceptions of Islam and Arab society and reveals the Byzantine fascination with a rival faith and people. In turn, the passages displaying the influence of the Islamic model on Byzantine society and ideology have inspired research into the question of holy war in Eastern Christianity – a concept which, despite the long encounter with the Muslim *jihād* and the crusades, never took root in Byzantium.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

The *Taktika* is found in over 100 manuscripts, the earliest of which dates from the reign of Constantine VII (945-59). The text has come down in two recensions, worth noting briefly since they indicate that Leo's concern with Arab attacks was not confined to the empire's south-eastern frontiers. The first recension, preserved in MS *Laurentianus* LV-4 (c. 950), contains a preliminary version of the work to which three constitutions (i.e. chapters) were later added, forming the fully realized text of the *Taktika* copied into MS *Ambrosianus* B 119 sup. (c. 960) and three closely related MSS from the early 11<sup>th</sup> century (*Vaticanus* gr. 1164; *Scorialensis* Y-III-11; *Barberinianus* gr. 276). This second recension is the basis for the text printed in modern editions.

One of the constitutions inserted into this expanded version of the text deals with naval warfare and reflects Leo's efforts to protect

the Byzantine littoral and the Aegean islands from Arab raids by sea (Pryor and Jeffreys, *Age of the ΔPOMΩN*, pp. 50-76, 483-519). The manuscript tradition of the *Taktika* of Leo VI is laid out in the works of Alphonse Dain (cited below); there is also a detailed study of the *Ambrosianus* by C.M. Mazzucchi.

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## STUDIES

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- A.T. Khoury, *La polémique byzantine contre l'islam, VIII<sup>e</sup>-XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Leiden, 1972, pp. 243-59
- A. Dain and J.-A. de Foucault, 'Les stratégestes byzantins', *Travaux et Mémoires* 2 (1967), 317-92 (the Laurentian and Ambrosian recensions of the *Taktika* are outlined on pp. 354-57, 372, 382-88; excerpts from the *Taktika*, including the piece on 'How to fight against the Saracens' [PG, Constitution XVIII.109-142/Dennis, *Taktika*, Constitution XVIII.103-35] are noted on pp. 362, 365-66, 367)
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Eric McGeer



## Moses bar Kephā

DATE OF BIRTH	813, or more probably 833
PLACE OF BIRTH	Balad (near Mosul, Eski Mosul)
DATE OF DEATH	12 February 903
PLACE OF DEATH	Probably in (the neighbourhood of) the Monastery of Mār Sargis, near Balad, where he is buried

### BIOGRAPHY

Moses bar Kephā was baptized Moses after his learned uncle, who was a teacher of the reformer of Syriac church music, David bar Paulus d-Bēt Rabban, which points to the intellectual milieu in which bar Kephā grew up. The sources for his life are two *Vitas*, of which *Vita A* is extant in a shorter (10<sup>th</sup>-century) and a longer (12<sup>th</sup>-century) recension, and some notes in later chronicles. *Vita B* is based on the longer recension of *Vita A*. Moses' name Bar Kephā (Kephā meaning stone) goes back to his father, Simeon Kephā/Petrus, but is also attributed to the fact that, according to a venerable tradition, after the early death of his mother, he was fed by an icon in precious stone.

Moses studied under Abbot Kuryakos of the Monastery of Mar Sarkis near Balad, where he took monastic vows at the age of 20. According to a relatively late tradition (*Vita A, recensio longior*), he became 'Bishop of Bēt Rāmān, Nineveh (Mosul) and Bēt Kyonāyē (Ḥaburā)' under the name of Severus. 'Bishop of Mosul' probably only means that as Bishop of Bēt Rāmān and the nearby Bēt Kyonāyē, both situated south of Mosul, he was also the visitator/supervisor (*sa'urā*) of the West Syrians from Tagrit living in Mosul, since in *Vitas A* (longer recension) and B he is presented as the incumbent of the *sā'urutā* of the 'people of Tagrit'. That the 'people of Tagrit' in Mosul had their own *sa'urā* can be explained by the fact that, as in other cities with their own local bishops, the people from Tagrit remained under the authority of the Great-Archbishop (in later times designated as Maphrian) of Tagrit. This would also explain why Moses' name is absent from the extant episcopal lists of the Bishops of Mosul.

At the request of several of his teachers and pupils, Moses wrote an important corpus of exegetical, liturgical and theological works, as well as a now lost book of history. Apart from his Treatise on free will

and predestination, directly addressed to the Muslims and presented below, the Muslim political, cultural and theological world is also present in the background of some of his internal Christian writings. In his commentary on the *Hexaemeron* (Schlimme, p. 644), he refers to one of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil's military expeditions against the Armenian Patrician Biqrāt (Bagarat Bagratuni). It cannot, however, be proved with certainty that in the long fragment on marriages of Christians with a man or woman 'who does not believe', the author is also thinking of Muslims. An argument in favor of this possibility is that, in the canonical literature of this period, marriages with Muslims were already a common theme (see the entry on Jacob of Edessa), and also that the unbelieving person is called *ḥanpā*, a term often, though not exclusively, used in this period to indicate Muslims. In general, however, the fragment goes back to John Chrysostom (cf. Reller, pp. 55-56). The most notable example of a Muslim context for Moses' internal Christian writings is the introduction to his *Hexaemeron*. Here, he paraphrases what could be a Mu'tazilī treatise on *tawḥīd*, which can be reconstructed on the basis of such surviving works as the *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* by the non-Mu'tazilī Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturidī (d. 944) (q.v.). The exact source cannot be identified, but in different ways and to different degrees Moses appropriates (and adapts) certain themes dear to practitioners of *kalām*, such as God's existence and unity, the reasons for his creative activity, the existence and necessity of prophethood, God's pre-knowledge, and so on.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### *Primary*

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- Brief note in Gregory Barhebraeus, *Chronicon ecclesiasticum*, ed. A. Abbeloos and T. Lamy, Louvain, 1872, i, cols 393-95; ii, cols 215-18

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## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Luqbal Mhagrāyē da-mrimin af henon l-ḥirutā  
w-āmrin d-min Alāhā ktibā 'layn ṭabtā aw bishtā,*  
'Against the Hagarenes, who also reject freedom  
and say that good or evil is prescribed for us by  
God'

DATE Unknown; late 9th or early 10th century, before 903

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Syriac

## DESCRIPTION

This treatise belongs to a general work on free will and predestination, which is preserved in only one manuscript, which is defective at the beginning so that we have no title for the whole volume. It consists of four Discourses (*memrē*), containing discussions on key concepts and themes, such as freedom, autonomy, measured term, end of life, free will, God as the cause of evil, etc., as well as the refutation of anti-Christian adversaries on the matter of free will, such as the Marcionites and the followers of Mani. The last two discourses contain fragments on the fortunes of peoples and kingdoms and discuss the significance of natural disasters. As pointed out by S. Griffith, these themes may be interpreted as indirect allusions to the Islamic context in the same way as chronicles, and especially apocalypses, try to find meaning in the successes of non-Christian conquerors, presented as punishment for sin.

Chapter VI of Discourse II, the title of which is given above, explicitly deals with Islamic conceptions of free will. Moses first gives a description of the Muslim position, which he considers as strictly determinist, to which he opposes traditional Syriac views, especially that of Ephrem the Syrian, on the freedom of mature, conscious people who can be held accountable for their deeds.

The discussion is made more specific with the classical example of a person who commits adultery. Moses highlights the absurdity of the Muslim position according to which God compels human beings to sin while also laying down laws forbidding sin. He next discusses some possible Muslim objections: foreknowledge (because God foreknew that people would sin, he had already prescribed it for them), God commanding good and evil, God creating in mankind alone a power by which human beings act (which, according to Moses means that God is accountable). Finally, he discusses the incompatibility between ascribing to God's all encompassing justice his creation of good and bad people, and then declaring them righteous or guilty.

The tone of the whole work and the presentation of the Islamic position is such that this treatise does not reflect a real discussion between a Muslim and a Christian scholar, but is rather an inner Christian work, refuting Muslim conceptions of free will as they were known among Syriac-speaking Christians.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Despite its lack of originality, this work is one of the rare examples of a discussion on freedom and free will in Syrian circles, taking into account the Muslim theological and cultural context. The Syriac terminology sometimes reflects Muslim technical theological concepts, showing the author to be someone who had a certain knowledge of Islamic theology.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS London, BL – 827 add. 14731, fols 1r-104v (11<sup>th</sup> century)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

#### STUDIES

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W. Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum II*, London, 1871, pp. 853-55

**Herman G.B. Teule**

# T'ovma Artsruni

Thomas Arcruni

DATE OF BIRTH	Unknown
PLACE OF BIRTH	Unknown
DATE OF DEATH	Unknown; after 904 and probably before 908
PLACE OF DEATH	Unknown

## BIOGRAPHY

T'ovma is an elusive figure, unattested outside his *History* and a reluctant presence within it. Only once does he refer to himself by name. As this point in the text coincides with the conclusion of one of his principal sources, the *History* of Movsēs Khorenats'i, which also contains a short autobiographical passage in its conclusion, it seems that it was literary precedent that prompted this rare disclosure.

T'ovma does not identify his family background, although he has universally been viewed as a member of the Artsruni house. Nor does he indicate his status or rank; it is only in the 13<sup>th</sup> century that the Armenian historian Kirakos first defined him as a *vardapet*, a spiritual teacher within the Armenian church. There can be little doubt that he was a cleric. Not only is his work suffused with biblical quotations and allusions, but he also states that he was beside Ashot Artsruni, the eldest son of Grigor Derenik, when he was on his death-bed in autumn 903. T'ovma reports both Ashot's last confession and his dread as death approached – 'Will God forgive the multitude of my trespasses? Tell me, answer me' – suggesting that he attended and observed in a clerical capacity.

T'ovma states that he was asked to compile this family history by Grigor Derenik, lord of the Artsrunik' and prince of Vaspurakan; however he later refers to his patron as Gagik, second son of Grigor Derenik: 'We have presented it to you, most valiant lover of words, Gagik [prince of] Vaspurakan and great commander of Armenia.' Since Grigor Derenik was killed in 887, it follows that T'ovma started work before that date. Although it has been suggested that the solitary reference to Grigor as patron may be a scribal error for Gagik, they are always titled differently in the text and the distinction should be

maintained. In any event, T'ovma must have finished his composition before 908, since the text contains no hint of the coronation of Gagik Artsruni in that year. Rather, the original text concludes on a somber note, with heavy Artsruni losses in battle and the threat of invasion from all sides.

Two further propositions relating to T'ovma's life and career may be advanced. First, although the two sponsors of the work are prominent figures in the text, along with Grigor Derenik's eldest son, Ashot, it is striking that a third member of the Artsruni house, namely Gurgēn son of Apupelch, prince of Andzavats'ik', is given considerable exposure. Gurgēn was a 'noble, glorious and victorious champion' deserving of 'the most abundant praises'. On two occasions, T'ovma acknowledges that he has been using an account of the deeds of Gurgēn. Evidently he had access to records from another branch of the extended Artsruni house; Gurgēn and Grigor Derenik were regularly in conflict with one another and this may account for the less than flattering portrait of Grigor Derenik at several points.

Second, T'ovma refers sparingly to local bishops. He refers to Sahak Vahevuni, bishop of Nakhichevan and Mardpetakan, as the brother of the martyred Apusahak Vahevuni. He describes the return of the blessed bishop of Artsrunik', Yovhannēs, from captivity in Samarra in 862 and the succession of Yovhan to his see. He also reports the death of Grigor, bishop of Rshtunik' in the earthquake that struck the city of Dvin in 892. The see of Rshtunik' was located in the region of Vaspurakan and was one of several dioceses under Artsruni influence. Bishop Grigor does not otherwise feature in the text and the presence of this otherwise isolated notice is surprising. One solution is to argue that T'ovma included it because he succeeded Grigor to this office. If T'ovma was a bishop, this would account for his presence at the death of Ashot, his familiarity with the contested and fluid world of Artsruni politics and his access to records from rival branches of the Artsruni house. This, however, remains speculative.

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*Secondary*

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- M. Mkryan, 'Veratsnut'yan skzbnavorman artats'olumē X dari hay patmut'yan meġ', *Banber Erevani Hamalsarani* (1975/1) 89-108
- V. Vardanyan, 'Patmut'yun tann Artsruneats' erkum hishatakvats mi k'ani teghanunneri masin', *Patmabanasirakan Handēs* (1973/1) 111-22
- N. Tsovakan [N. Pogharean], 'T'ovma Artsruni: bnagrakan srbagrut'iwinner', *Sion* (1965) 319-20

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Patmut'awn tann Artsruneats'*, 'History of the House of Artsrunik'

DATE After 903 and before 908

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Armenian

## DESCRIPTION

The work offers an extended study of the history of the Artsruni family from the time of Noah down to 904. Of this, some three-fifths, extending to 162 pages of Patkanean's edition, is relevant to Christian-Muslim relations. After a brief and highly individual biography of the Prophet Muḥammad, according to which he was taught by an Arian monk named Sargis Baḥīrā and influenced by Salmān the Persian, the text then offers a list of caliphs with brief biographical details extending as far as al-Mutawakkil (r. 847-61).

The remaining 154 pages cover the period between 851 and 904. They provide a very detailed study of political and social interaction between Christians and Muslims across the districts of southern Armenia, collectively known as Vaspurakan, which were controlled by the extended noble house of Artsrunik'. Almost two-thirds of this account is focused upon the devastating sequence of campaigns undertaken by Bughā al-Kabīr across Vaspurakan in the years after 851, and their aftermath. During this decade, a significant number of

the Armenian elite were captured and despatched to Samarra. The remainder were driven into exile, apart from a select few who were promoted as pliable clients. Several themes are developed within the narrative. There is a brief refutation of Islam, arguing that it relied on the 'unsupported and uncontrolled' argument of a single person and contrasting this with Muslim legal practice, which respected multiple witnesses.

T'ovma records a sequence of martyrdoms, largely of Armenian nobles (Gēorg Akets'i, Khosrov Gabeghean, Grigor Artsruni, Mukat'l of Vanand) but also of an unnamed Persian Muslim who had converted to Christianity. On the basis of their form and their content, these appear to be based on independent martyrologies. T'ovma also names Armenian nobles who had converted to Islam (including Bagarat Bagratuni, Vasak Artsruni and Ashot Artsruni, father of Grigor Derenik), and implies that those who returned from captivity in Samarra had all been guilty of apostasy. The apostasy of Bagarat Bagratuni prompts T'ovma to consider the subject at length. This digression, whilst decidedly atypical in the *History*, is not a wholly original study but is based upon Eusebius' account of Novatian and the Elkasites in his *Ecclesiastical history*.

The death of Ashot Artsruni provides T'ovma with a second opportunity to offer a more personal reflection: 'I do not mock his remorse and repentance...but it is unclear whether they were effective, for with difficulty are scars cleaned away by the exercise of words. However, in the house of Christ's Father there are many mansions. Perhaps they will remain free from torments...' Such uncertainty over Ashot's eternal fate reveals T'ovma's anxiety and evident discomfort over the clash of lay and spiritual loyalties.

T'ovma's debt to Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical history* supplies a timely reminder that his *History* was both constructed from and influenced by earlier compositions. Some were mined for their information, which was then recapitulated, abbreviated or adapted. Others provided a literary and historical template. As Thomson has shown, many of the passages dealing with Bughā's campaigns are modelled upon Eghishē's [Elišē's] *History of Vardan and the Armenian war* which describes an analogous situation for Armenians in the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, when they were oppressed by Sasanian Persia. In these passages, T'ovma's graphic portraits of the caliph, al-Mutawakkil, of Bughā, and more generally of Armenian disunity, all depend upon



Eghishē's earlier *History*; they are not the independent, near-contemporary representations that they might appear to be.

As noted above, T'ovma's *History* offers a detailed study of Christian–Muslim relations in a region of competing lordships and political rivalries. Three different tiers of Muslim authority can be discerned: the caliph, the caliph's representative and the local emir. These relationships are repeatedly renegotiated as the various parties advance their influence or suffer losses. By the time T'ovma was writing, it is clear that local emirates were a familiar feature of the political landscape, to be attacked, courted or resisted by Armenian nobles in much the same way as any other rival lordship. These ties could extend to marriage alliances: Muḥammad Afshīn ibn Abī l-Sāj, *ostikan* or governor of Azerbaijan, was married to the daughter of Shapuh Bagratuni, and so a niece of Ashot Bagratuni, prince of princes and king of Armenia after 24 August 884. At the same time, it is possible to discern signs of cultural fusion. T'ovma's *History* is populated with members of the Armenian elite bearing names such as Hasanik ('little Ḥasan'), Apumkdēm, Apuset', Apusakr and Apujap'r.

T'ovma reveals much less about relations outside the elite. He reveals that merchants were responsible for recovering the corpse of Grigor Derenik after his murder at the hands of Aplbers (Abū l-Faris ibn Abī Maṣṣūr), emir of Her. T'ovma does not reveal whether they redeemed his body for a price, or why they did this, or why they were successful. Elsewhere he notes that the widow of Sahak, emir of Tiflis, went round Bughā's camp 'unveiled, which was not customary for the women of the Muslim people.' Such incidental comments on cultural interaction and difference are frustratingly rare.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of this work lies in its sustained coverage of contested relations across southern Armenia in the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, when local lordships were split between Christian and Muslim elites. It also resides in its unaltered state; although several continuators appended separate narratives to the end of the text, there is no indication that they reshaped T'ovma's *History*. This is not a work of great political or theological sophistication, but it does offer a unique insight into the politics of power at a local level.

## MANUSCRIPTS

The single manuscript of the work is located in the Matenadaran Institute of Manuscripts in Yerevan but is not listed in that institution's published catalogues. It was copied on the island of Aght'amar in Lake Van in 1303.

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Tsovakan [N. Pogharean], 'T'ovma Artsruni: bnagrakan srbagrut'iwnner'

**Tim Greenwood**

# Abū ʿĪsā Aḥmad ibn al-Munajjim

Abū ʿĪsā Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn Yaḥyā l-Munajjim

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown, probably mid-9<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF BIRTH Baghdad  
DATE OF DEATH Unknown, probably early 10<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF DEATH Unknown, probably Baghdad

## BIOGRAPHY

Abū ʿĪsā Aḥmad was a member of the illustrious al-Munajjim family, which had served ʿAbbāsīd caliphs from the very start of the dynasty. His grandfather, Abū ʿAlī Yaḥyā, had converted from his original Zoroastrianism to Islam at the time of the Caliph al-Maʿmūn, while his father, Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī (815/16-888) (q.v.), was a close companion of al-Mutawakkil and his successors.

Almost nothing is known about Abū ʿĪsā Aḥmad himself. Samir (*Correspondance*, p. 540) suggests that, since Ibn al-Nadīm (*Fihrist*, p. 161) mentions him first among the sons of Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī, he was probably the eldest, and was therefore born in about 850 (a brother is known to have been born in 856). An indication of his distinguished status and the circles in which he moved is that, while he was still in his youth, al-Jāḥiẓ wrote him two letters, one of them containing advice about care of speech (*Fihrist*, p. 211 margin).

Ibn al-Nadīm credits Abū ʿĪsā Aḥmad with one work, the *Kitāb tāriḫ sinī al-ʿālam*, ‘History of the chronology of the world’ (*Fihrist*, p. 161). As Samir suggests (and see also Stern, p. 438), this is the work al-Masʿūdī has in mind when, among the sources of his *Murūj al-dhahab*, he mentions ʿAbū ʿĪsā ibn al-Munajjim’s history concerning what the Torah reports and other stories of the history of prophets and kings’ (*Murūj*, i, pp. 14-15).

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

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*Secondary*

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S.K. Samir and P. Nwyia, 'Une correspondance islamo-chrétienne entre Ibn al-Munagġim, Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq et Quṣṭā ibn Lūqā', *PO* 40 (1981), 524-723, pp. 538-43

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Risāla fī nubuwwat Muḥammad*, 'Letter on the prophethood of Muḥammad'

DATE Just before 908

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

This work has not survived, and while there are good reasons to think that it was actually written as part of a protracted correspondence between members of the al-Munajjim family and the Christians Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq (q.v.) and Quṣṭā ibn Lūqā (q.v.), its existence is confirmed mainly by circumstantial evidence.

The one accessible manuscript that contains the surviving correspondence of which this was probably a part relates that a Muslim called Abū 'Īsā Yaḥyā ibn al-Munajjim wrote a work entitled *Al-burhān* to the Christian Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq, 'with another to Quṣṭā ibn Lūqā', giving the impression that it was this single Muslim work that prompted the two Christian responses. But the original course of events may have been rather different.

In the first place, the name of this Muslim correspondent cannot be identified as it stands. The member of the al-Munajjim family who is most likely to have written to Ḥunayn (d. 873) is his contemporary Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Yaḥyā (d. 888). This is supported by a remark from Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, that Ḥunayn replied to a letter from 'Alī ibn Yaḥyā which invited him to convert to Islam ('*Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, ed. Nizār Riḍā, Beirut, 1965, p. 272, quoted in Samir, *Correspondance*, p. 539). And it suggests that the name of the original Muslim correspondent became garbled in the process of copying.

To complicate this, there is a report from Ibn al-Nadīm that Quṣṭā replied to a letter from Abū 'Īsā al-Munajjim about the prophethood of

Muḥammad when he was in Armenia (*Fihrist*, p. 353). Here the name of the Muslim correspondent is close to that in the manuscript, but the circumstances of writing are different, because Qusṭā is known to have travelled to Armenia during the caliphate of al-Muqtadir (908-32), and to have died there sometime between 910 and 920. Since the opening words of his reply give the strong impression that his correspondent's letter had just arrived (Samir, *Correspondance*, p. 592), it is impossible to think of this as coming directly from the same author who had written to Ḥunayn 40 years earlier. In addition, comparison between the contents of Qusṭā's reply and the extant letter from the Muslim member of the al-Munajjim family that is preserved in the same manuscript shows that, while some of its remarks are addressed to points found in the letter, others are not (Samir, *Correspondance*, pp. 541-42).

All these pieces of evidence make it difficult to place together the three surviving letters that are preserved in the unique manuscript as related items of correspondence between a single Muslim and two Christians. The gap in time is too large.

A solution to the complexity is offered by Samir (following M. Allard, 'Les Chrétiens à Baḡdād', *Arabica* 9 (1962) 375-88, pp. 384, 385), who plausibly argues that the letter sent to Qusṭā came not from Ḥunayn's correspondent, Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Yaḥyā, but from his son, Abū 'Īsā Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Yaḥyā. The latter would have lightly reworked his father's original, and sent it in a new form to Qusṭā either just before he went to Armenia or after he had arrived (neither R. Haddad, 'Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq apologiste chrétien', *Arabica* 21 (1974) 292-302, pp. 298-99, who favors Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī, nor J. Nasrallah, 'Dialogue islamo-chrétien. À propos de publications récentes', *REI* 46 (1978) 121-51, pp. 134-39, who favors Abū 'Īsā Aḥmad, take into account this reference to Armenia). While this introduces a fourth, otherwise unknown element into the exchange between Christian and Muslim correspondents, it does account for the circumstantial details given by Ibn al-Nadīm and others, and also for the otherwise awkward timing.

Some caution should, however, be taken over too definite an identification. Brockelmann, *GAL S i*, p. 225, refers to a work by Abū 'Īsā Aḥmad's brother Abū Aḥmad Yaḥyā (855-912) entitled *Risāla ilā Qusṭā ibn Lūqā wa Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq* (Fleischhammer in *EI* 2 vii, p. 559, says that it is to be found in MS Şehit Ali 2103), which would appear to identify this latter as the author. And, in addition, 'Abd

al-Jabbār (*Tathbīt*, p. 352) relates that Abū Aḥmad Yaḥyā's son Abū l-Ḥasan Aḥmad (q.v.) wrote a work in defense of the prophethood of Muḥammad (cf. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 220 margin), which appears to have been on the same theme. In such circumstances, where authors and letters are multiplied, the true story may never be known (Nasrallah, 'Dialogue islamo-chrétien', p. 136, comments that it is maybe not 'worth the candle' to work this out). Furthermore, it is not outside the realm of possibility that there was some tradition in the al-Munajjim family to write works on this topic – maybe successive revisions of the one original.

The contents of this letter cannot be recovered with certainty, though it is likely from comments made by Quṣṭā ibn Lūqā that it followed the outline of Abū 'Īsā Aḥmad's father Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī's extant letter and, like it, focused on Muḥammad's status as prophet, and the Qur'ān as the miracle that guarantees his authenticity.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The letter, if it existed, shows on the one hand the confidence of Muslims in the divine origins of Islam, and the keenness that some felt to make Christians acknowledge this, and on the other the urgency that was still felt to establish Muḥammad's credentials as a divinely sent prophet. The acquiescence of leading Christians in conceding this doctrinal point was evidently thought to be crucial.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

**David Thomas**

# John Caminiates

Iōannēs Kaminiatēs

DATE OF BIRTH	Unknown; possibly between 870 and 875
PLACE OF BIRTH	Unknown
DATE OF DEATH	Unknown; maybe Thessaloniki
PLACE OF DEATH	Unknown; probably early or mid-10 <sup>th</sup> c.

## BIOGRAPHY

All the information we have about John Caminiates comes from the only work he wrote, *Eis tēn halōsin tēs Thessalonikēs* ('The sack of Thessaloniki'). There, he says he came from a family of wealthy clerics, and his father, who became lector in one of the city's churches, is also said to have been *exarchos* of the whole Byzantine church province of Hellas. He himself was not born at Thessaloniki, but came to the city as a boy; he mentions four brothers, one sister and one uncle. He tells us that he married and was the father of three young children.

John's family must have been wealthy because they all were carried off after Thessaloniki was captured by Leo of Tripoli. His sister-in-law was sold in Crete, the youngest of his children died a little later, and the family was finally imprisoned in Tarsus, where they waited to be ransomed. Finally, an exchange of prisoners was arranged between the Arabs and Byzantines, and this allowed John to return to Byzantine territory. As mentioned in the heading as well as in the subscription of the book, at some point John was made *kouboukleisios*, an honorific given by the emperor to the chamberlain either of the patriarch of Constantinople or of an important archbishop.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

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### Secondary

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#### WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Eis tēn halōsin tēs Thessalonikēs syngrapheis para tou Kouboukleiou Iōannou tou Kaminiatou*,  
 'The sack of Thessaloniki written by the  
 Kouboukleisios John Caminiates', 'The sack of  
 Thessaloniki'

DATE Approximately 905-10

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Greek

#### DESCRIPTION

John Caminiates' account is the only detailed report in Greek of the sack of Thessaloniki by the Arabs. There are also references in other Greek sources, as well as in Arabic texts, some of them dating the capture of the city to 903. John's is a typical Byzantine report about a sack of a city, and it only stands out from other accounts like it by the



names it gives of people and buildings. For this reason A. Kazhdan has doubted its authenticity, and his arguments have still not been fully answered. Nevertheless, the circumstantial evidence given by John Caminiates is credible: following a long period of political weakness, the Byzantines regained strength under the reign of the Macedonian dynasty, and frequent struggles with the Arabs, especially at sea or in Asia Minor, became a common occurrence. For this reason, both sides were interested in holding prisoners valuable enough to be exchanged or used for political extortion.

The work comprises three main parts. The first gives a detailed account of the city of Thessaloniki, and of its struggles against the neighboring Slavs (chs 1-15). The second part is about the siege and capture of the city by the renegade Leo of Tripoli, who converted to Islam as Ghulām Zurāfa and later took the name Rashīq al-Wardāmī. (According to Byzantine literary tradition, the siege was caused by the wrath of God as punishment for the misconduct of the inhabitants, and was also a consequence of the city authorities' neglect of the walls.) The Arab fleet entered the city through the harbor, plundering the city and killing about 22,000 people, and taking the wealthy prisoner (chs 16-59).

The third part is about the continuing story of John and his family. They were among those taken hostage, and were carried off in Leo's ships. They first touched at Crete, where his sister-in-law was among those sold into slavery, and then Cyprus, and finally Tripoli on 14 September. Intended to be ransomed or exchanged as prisoners with Byzantium, they were then transferred to Tarsus in Cilicia and kept in the castle.

At this point John's account ends, with a declaration that it was requested by a certain Gregorius of Cappadocia, who was among those still waiting to be ransomed or exchanged by his Byzantine compatriots.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

If this report is authentic, it is an important witness to Byzantine-Muslim relations at the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Continuous warfare, the taking of hostages and the exchange of prisoners seem to have been the main issues, rather than theological controversies. If the text is not authentic, it will be an expression from a later period of the Byzantine view of a typical account of the sack of a city by Muslims.

## MANUSCRIPTS

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MS Athos, Laura Λ – 55, fols 147-205v (c 1511)

MS Paris, BNF – Gr. 1031, fols 15-62v (16<sup>th</sup> century; one other late MS is of no value)

The late date of these MSS causes some modern authors to doubt the work's authenticity.

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## STUDIES

Karpozelos, *Byzantinoi historikoi kai chronographoi*

Kouphoupoulou, 'Paratērēseis sto ergo tou Iōannou Kaminiatou Eis tēn halōsin tēs Thessalonikēs'

Frendo, 'The miracles of St Demetrius and the capture of Thessalonike'

Khoury Odetallah, 'Leo Tripolites – Ghulam Zurafa and the Sack of Thessaloniki in 904'

Livadas, 'Some questions of medieval nautical technology in Kameiniates' "Sack of Thessaloniki" (904)'

Farag, 'Some remarks on Leo of Tripoli's attack on Thessaloniki in 904 a.d.'

O'bweng Okwess, 'Le portrait du soldat noir chez les Arabes et les Byzantines'

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Kazhdan, 'Some questions addressed to the scholars who believe in the authenticity of Kaminiates' "Capture of Thessalonike"

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**Lars Martin Hoffman**

# Leo Choiosphactes

Leōn Magistros Choiosphaktēs,  
Leo Magistrus Choiosphactes

DATE OF BIRTH Early 840s  
PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown  
DATE OF DEATH After 913  
PLACE OF DEATH Stoudiou Monastery, Constantinople

## BIOGRAPHY

Leo Magistrus Choiosphactes belonged to a family that enjoyed a certain influence at the court of the early Macedonian emperors Basil I (867-86) and Leo VI (886-912). There were also bonds of kinship with the ruling dynasty through Leo VI's fourth wife Zoe Carbonopsina. An Arab account transmitted by al-Ṭabarī designated Leo Choiosphactes as 'maternal uncle' of the emperor's son (Constantine VII). Through a career in the imperial chancery, Leo achieved the rank of *mystikos* under Basil I and that of *epi tou kanikleiou* with the titles of *magistros*, *anthypatos* and *patrikios* under Leo VI, thus ranking among the most elevated officials of the central government. As head of the imperial chancery and a productive writer, Choiosphactes had apparently acquired an education that met the highest standards of his time, but it cannot be verified whether he actually studied with Leo the Philosopher and Photius, as George Kolias suggests.

Under Leo VI, Choiosphactes also distinguished himself as a successful diplomat in missions to Symeon of Bulgaria (894-96, 901-2 and 904) and to the caliphal court of Baghdad (904-7). After his return from Baghdad, however, he fell victim to court intrigues and was expelled from Constantinople. While in exile, he also faced strong opposition regarding his theological views from leading ecclesiastical authorities, such as Arethas of Caesarea, who most probably wrote a severe invective against him in 913. Choiosphactes' involvement in the seditious movement of Constantine Doucas in 913 brought about his confinement in the Stoudiou Monastery, where it is very likely he died a few years later.

In the surviving manuscript tradition, Choiosphactes appears as the author of *anakreontea*, epigrams and liturgical poems, of theological commentaries on the Old and New Testaments, and of a didactic poem on theology bearing the title *Chiliostichos theologia*, which was most probably addressed to the co-emperor, Constantine VII. In addition, there survives a small letter collection of about 20 pieces, containing interesting details on his embassy to Baghdad in 904-6. R. Jenkins' suggestion that a small treatise on dogmatic differences between Islam and Christianity commonly known as 'Arethas (of Caesarea's) letter to the emir at Damascus' should be attributed to Leo Choiosphactes has not found acceptance in modern scholarship.

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#### Secondary

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## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

## ‘Letters concerning Choïrosphactes’ mission to Baghdad’, ‘Letters’

DATE 906 and 910

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Greek

## DESCRIPTION

Among Choïrosphactes’ letters is one written in Baghdad in late 906 to the *anthypatos patrikios* Genesisius (ed. Koliias, no. 15), letters from this Genesisius, the *koiastor* Anastasius, the *patrikios* Thomas, and the *spatharios* Procopius, addressed to Choïrosphactes in Baghdad (ed. Koliias, nos 16-19), and two letters written by Choïrosphactes to the Emperor Leo VI in 910 (ed. Koliias, nos 23, 25), in which the author refers to his diplomatic mission to Baghdad.

Letter no. 15 is a short note on the achievements of Choïrosphactes’ embassy. The ambassador announces the conclusion of a peace treaty with the Caliph al-Muktafi (r. 902-8), the ensuing exchange of prisoners, and an agreement with the patriarchates of Antioch and Jerusalem concerning a delegation of representatives participating in a synod summoned by the Emperor Leo VI to discuss the issue of his fourth marriage. The message, despite its laconic brevity, clearly reflects the ambassador’s joy at his personal success in the mission’s outcome.

The letters written by several Constantinopolitan dignitaries in response to this message (nos 16-19) are of congratulatory character, praising Choïrosphactes’ qualities as diplomat and wishing him quick relief from an illness he was suffering from by that time. Especially noteworthy is letter no. 19, in which the *spatharios* Procopius presents Choïrosphactes as an example of a good ambassador’s virtues and skills: his wisdom, rhetorical abilities, and intelligence made him ‘the best intermediary between the two nations’ and earned the emperor’s high esteem for his person, which even became a topic of imperial table talk.

Letters nos 23 and 25 form part of Choïrosphactes’ exile correspondence with the imperial court. No. 23 lists again the achievements of his embassy ‘to the Arab *amīr al-mu’minīn*’, mentioning further details of the embassy, such as partial agreements with the frontier emirates of Tarsus and Melitene, and the newly achieved tributary status submission of the Arab local commanders *Apembasan* (Abū

l-Ḥasan) and *Abdelomelech* ('Abd al-Malik). Letter no. 25, among other things, accuses his associate emissary, most probably to be identified as a eunuch called Basil, of slandering him, appearing thus 'beloved to the Arabs' and 'a good man for the worst barbarians'. The background to these charges cannot be entirely clarified, but it was obviously linked with Choirospactes' unexpected downfall after his return in early 907.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Choirospactes' letters are one of the very few surviving examples of statements reflecting immediate experiences and attitudes of a Byzantine ambassador to the Arabs, and can thus be considered an important source for Byzantine-Arab diplomacy in the early 10<sup>th</sup> century and in general. The religion of the Muslim Arabs, however, was not an issue that Choirospactes dealt with specifically in his letters.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS Patmos – 178, fols 268-282 (10<sup>th</sup> century)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

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#### STUDIES

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**Alexander Beihammer**

# Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn

Abū Ya‘qūb Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq al-‘Ibādī

DATE OF BIRTH About 830  
PLACE OF BIRTH Possibly Baghdad  
DATE OF DEATH 910-11  
PLACE OF DEATH Baghdad

## BIOGRAPHY

Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn was the son of the great East Syrian (‘Nestorian’) Christian translator Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq (q.v.). He was trained by his father as a physician and translator, and worked with him (and his cousin Ḥubaysh) on translations from Greek into Arabic, especially of medical and philosophical texts. Ibn al-Nadīm considered Ishāq to be a greater master of Arabic style than his father, and indeed, as Ḥunayn’s team translated texts from Greek into Syriac and then into Arabic, it was often Ḥunayn who had primary responsibility for the first step and Ishāq for the second.

It is reported that Ishāq was boon companion of al-Qāsim ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh (vizier from 901 until his death in 904, under the Abbasid caliphs al-Mu‘taḍid and al-Muktafi), and of the Caliph al-Muktafi (r. 902-8) himself. Al-Bayhaqī claimed that Ishāq converted to Islam and was a good Muslim. Ishāq suffered a stroke and died in Rabī‘ I or II, 298 (November 910-January 911).

The list of Ishāq’s translations is too lengthy to reproduce here; a helpful listing is given in Alon, ‘The Arabic version’, pp. 179-81. What is striking is that Ishāq was involved in the translation of works that were utterly fundamental for the subsequent development of Arabic philosophy and science. For example, the translations of the Aristotelian corpus (which he made with his father) ‘had an immediately perceptible influence on the newly born Peripatetic School of Baghdad’ (Peters, *Aristotle and the Arabs*, p. 160). In addition, the mathematically proficient Ishāq (Ṣā‘id al-Andalusī, *Ṭabaqāt al-umam*, p. 50) made translations of Euclid’s *Elements* and Ptolemy’s *Almagest*. In addition to his translations, Ishāq composed a number of works, including the *Tārīkh al-aṭibbā’*, the first Arabic collection of biographies of physicians.



## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

*Primary*

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- Abū Dā'ūd Sulaymān ibn Ḥassān ibn Juljul al-Andalusī, *Les générations des médecins et des sages (Ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā' wal-ḥukamā')*, ed. F. Sayyid, Cairo, 1955, p. 69
- Abū l-Qāsim Ṣā'id ibn Aḥmad ibn Ṣā'id al-Andalusī, *Ṭabaqāt al-umam*, ed. Ḥ. Mu'nis, Cairo, 1998, p. 50
- Zahīr al-Dīn Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Zayd al-Bayhaqī, *Tatimmat ṣiwān al-ḥikma*, ed. M. Shafī', Lahore, 1935, pp. 4-5
- Al-Qiftī, *Tārīkh al-ḥukamā'*, p. 80
- Ibn Abī Uṣaybī'a, *'Uyūn al-anbā'*, i, pp. 200-201
- Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, i, 205-7; *Ibn Khallikān's biographical dictionary*, 4 vols, trans. M. de Slane, Paris, 1842-1871, i, 187-89
- Ibn al-'Ibrī [Barhebraeus], *Tārīkh mukhtaṣar al-duwal*, ed. A. Ṣāliḥānī, Beirut, 1890, p. 252

*Secondary*

The literature on Işhāq ibn Ḥunayn is abundant. What follows is a selection that gives some idea of the scope of his work.

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- D. Gutas, *Greek thought, Arabic culture. The Graeco-Arabic translation movement in Baghdad and early 'Abbāsīd society (2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries)*, London, 1998, pp. 125, 131, 134, 139-40, 142, 148, 183
- J.N. Mattock, 'The early translations from Greek into Arabic. An experiment in comparative assessment', in G. Endress (ed.), *Symposium graeco-arabicum II*, Amsterdam, 1989, 73-102 (compares Işhāq's translation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* with an early translation)
- I. Alon, 'The Arabic version of Theophrastus' *Metaphysica*', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 6 (1985) 164-217 (edition and trans. of a text translated by Işhāq, with a helpful list of Işhāq's works at pp. 179-81)
- G. Strohmaier, art. 'Işhāq b. Ḥunayn', in *EL2* (with good bibliography)
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- P. Kunitzsch, *Der Almagest. Die Syntaxis Mathematica des Claudius Ptolemäus in arabisch-lateinischer Überlieferung*, Wiesbaden, 1974, pp. 67-71 (on the version of the *Almagest* made by Iṣhāq, reworked by Thābit ibn Qurra, and much used in the East)
- N. Shehaby, art. 'Iṣhāq ibn Ḥunayn, Abū Ya'qūb', in C.C. Gillispie (ed.), *Dictionary of scientific biography*, 18 vols, 1970-90, vii, pp. 24-26
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- F.E. Peters, *Aristotle and the Arabs. The Aristotelian tradition in Islam*, New York, 1968, pp. 270-71 and passim
- Sezgin, *GAS* iii, pp. 267-68 (medicine); iv, p. 344 (botany); v, pp. 272-73 (mathematics); vi, p. 171 (astronomy)
- F. Rosenthal, 'Iṣhāq b. Ḥunayn's *Ta'riḥ al-aṭibbā'*', *Oriens* 7 (1954) 55-80
- Graf, *GAL* ii, 129-30
- Brockelmann, *GAL* i (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), p. 227; S i, p. 369

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

### *Maqāla fī l-tawḥīd*, 'Treatise on the unity [of God]'

DATE Unknown; before 910-11

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

According to Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, Iṣhāq composed a *Maqāla fī l-tawḥīd*, 'Treatise on the unity [of God]' (*Kitāb 'uyūn al-anbā'*, i, p. 201); P. Sbath reported the existence of a copy in a private collection in Aleppo (*Fihris* i, p. 28, no. 194). Unfortunately, the work is lost. It could be an apology for the Christian understanding of God's triunity. On the other hand, if al-Bayhaqī is correct in his claim that Iṣhāq converted to Islam (*Tatimmat ṣiwān al-ḥikma*, p. 5), the work could develop an understanding of God's *tawḥīd* closer to Islamic conceptions.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Iṣhāq's significance to the history of Christian-Muslim relations is secure, given his contributions to an Arabic-language civilizational project in which Christians (and others) as well as Muslims played major roles. As for the significance of the *Maqāla fī l-tawḥīd* attributed to him, we must hope that a copy can be discovered.

## MANUSCRIPTS

MS Aleppo, ‘Abdāllah Ḥimṣī Shawkatli Collection (inaccessible

MS in private collection; see S bath, *Fihris* i, p. 28, no. 194)

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

**Mark N. Swanson**

## Al-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq

Abū l-Ḥusayn Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Qāsim ibn  
Ibrāhīm al-Ḥasanī l-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq al-Rassī

DATE OF BIRTH 835  
PLACE OF BIRTH Medina  
DATE OF DEATH 911  
PLACE OF DEATH Ṣaʿda, Yemen

### BIOGRAPHY

Al-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq was born in Medina into a Zaydī Shīʿī family. His paternal grandfather was al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm (d. 860) (q.v.), leader of the Zaydī ʿAlids in the Ḥijāz, founder of the principal school of theology and jurisprudence among the Yemenī Zaydīs, and author of an important anti-Christian treatise. Al-Hādī was raised in the village of al-Faraʿ, south of Medina, where he excelled in the study of *fiqh*. His family background and his reputation for learning, a quality seen by the Zaydiyya as a virtue of Imāms (al-Hādī himself would later argue that knowledge, along with the sword, is a necessary mark of an Imām), led to the expectation that al-Hādī would claim the Imāmate. In 897, having been invited by the local ruler Abū l-ʿAtāhiya, al-Hādī established himself in Ṣaʿda, 180 km north of Ṣanʿāʾ in Yemen.

In 901, al-Hādī was proclaimed Imām and ʿcommander of the faithfulʼ in Yemen. After campaigns against both the ʿAbbasids and the Qarāmiṭa (al-Wāsiʿī remarks that al-Hādī was the only one after ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib to fight with *dhū l-fiqār*, ʿAlīʼs own sword), he later conquered Ṣanʿāʾ, establishing control over northern Yemen and the southern Ḥijāz (al-Wāsiʿī reports that his name was proclaimed at Friday prayers in Mecca for seven years). The Zaydī community of Yemen in the present day, dwindling as it may be, is the legacy of al-Hādīʼs state. After his death in 911, his sons Muḥammad al-Murtaḍā (d. 922) and Aḥmad al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh (d. 934) ruled successively as Imāms.

Although al-Hādī worked on two lengthy Qurʾan commentaries (*Kitāb al-tafsīr*, begun by his grandfather al-Qāsim, and *Kitāb maʿānī al-Qurʾān*), he is remembered most for the jurisprudential treatises

*Kitāb al-aḥkām fī l-ḥalāl wa-l-ḥarām* and *Kitāb al-muntakhab min al-fiqh*. His legal arguments therein are based largely on those of al-Qāsim, although Madelung ('Zaydiyya', p. 479) concludes that he moved towards Imāmī Shī'ī teachings on a number of matters. Al-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq's doctrine forms the foundation of the Hādawiyya, the current legal school of the Yemenī Zaydis. Like the Zaydī scholars in the Caspian region, in theological matters he followed the Mu'tazila closely, supporting the doctrine of free will and opposing anthropomorphisms of God (see his *Kitāb al-mustarshid fī l-tawḥīd*). He also shared with the Mu'tazila an interest in polemical debates, writing controversial treatises on the Qur'an, the prophethood of Muḥammad, the Imāmate of 'Alī, the question of determination of acts, and the question of a sinful believer's moral standing. A number of other treatises are addressed to individual opponents, suggesting that al-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq was actively involved in the religious disputes of his day.

#### MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 244

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Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad al-Hamdānī, *Al-iklīl*, 20 vols, Cairo, 1949, x, pp. 118, 181, 210

Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Kūfī, *Sīrat imām al-hudā wa-l-ṣidq amīr al-mu'minīn al-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq*, MS A. Emiri 2469 (see Sezgin, *GAS* i, p. 346)

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##### Secondary

W. Madelung, art. 'Zaydiyya', in *EL2*

Sezgin, *GAS* i, pp. 563-66

M.A. Allah and S. Zakkar, *Sīrat al-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq Yahyā ibn al-Ḥusayn*, Beirut, 1972

W. Madelung, *Der Imam al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm und die Glaubenslehre der Zaiditen*, Berlin, 1965, pp. 166-75, 193-212

Brockelmann, *GAL* Si, pp. 315-16

- C. van Arendonk, *De Opkomst van het Zaidietische imamaat in Yemen*, Leiden, 1919, pp. 115-280; trans. J. Ryckmans, *Les débuts de l'Imamat Zaidite au Yemen*, Leiden, 1960, pp. 127-305
- ʿAbd al-Wāsī ibn Yaḥyā al-Wāsī, *Taʾriḫ al-Yaman*, Cairo, 1346 AH (1927-28), pp. 21-23

#### WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Tathbīt nubuwwa Muḥammad*, 'Confirmation of the prophethood of Muḥammad'; *Al-dalīl ʿalā nubuwwa Muḥammad*, 'Proof for the prophethood of Muḥammad'

DATE Unknown; before 911

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

The *Tathbīt nubuwwa Muḥammad* is a short unpublished treatise, two folios in length, on the evidentiary signs or miracles which, al-Hādī argues, prove that Muḥammad was a prophet. It forms part of a group of brief treatises that al-Hādī wrote either to address specific topics (e.g. *Al-radd ʿalā man zaʿama anna l-Qurʾān qad dhahaba baʿḍuhu*; *Tathbīt imāmat amīr al-muʾminīn*; *Kitāb al-manzila bayna l-manzilatayn*, etc.) or in response to questions from specific individuals (e.g. 'A man from Qumm'; 'al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī l-Ṭabarī', 'His son Abū l-Qāsim Muḥammad'). In fact, of the 39 extant works of al-Hādī recorded by Sezgin, 32 are ten folios or fewer in length. The predominance of this literary format in al-Hādī's corpus presumably reflects the demands of his military and political career.

The treatise itself provides no indication of the date or place of its composition. It has no direct references to any of al-Hādī's other works (although an even briefer work entitled *Bāb ithbāt al-nubuwwa* is also attributed to him; cf. Sezgin, *GAS* i, p. 566). However, the work is shaped as a teacher's instructions to a disciple (al-Hādī employs repeatedly the formula, 'If they say...then say'), and presumably reflects a stage of al-Hādī's career when he had achieved considerable religious authority.

*Tathbīt nubuwwa Muḥammad*, even if ostensibly not a work of religious polemic, is written in the context of inter-religious debate. By addressing the question of the proofs for Muḥammad's prophethood,

al-Hādī means to address the Jewish and Christian rejection thereof. As he explains at the opening of the work, ‘If someone asks you, “What is the proof for Muḥammad’s – God’s blessing and peace be upon him and his family – prophethood?”’, say to him, “There are many proofs for it.” But no one would ask about this matter except for the People of the Book, who believe with us in monotheism and prophets.’

In *Tathbīt nubuwwa Muḥammad*, al-Hādī instructs his unnamed disciple to argue for Muḥammad’s prophethood on the basis of the miracles attributed to him: ‘If a Jew or a Christian, one of the People of the Book who believes with us in monotheism, asks us, we would say to him: “There are many proofs for the validity of his prophethood. . . . He accomplished things which humans are unable to accomplish and we know that such things cannot be done by human ability. It was the Creator who did them.”’ Al-Hādī proceeds to relate a number of the Prophet’s miracle stories, including the manner in which Muḥammad summoned a tree that approached and greeted him, and the manner in which a cooked shoulder of lamb that had been poisoned by a treacherous Jew called out to Muḥammad, warning him to not to eat it. Al-Hādī does not, however, show any particular knowledge or awareness of Christianity.

The ‘questions and answers’ (*masā’il wa-ajwiba*) structure of the treatise suggests that it was written in a context where Muslims and Christians (and Jews) were discussing religious matters. There were indeed Christians in al-Hādī’s state, notably in Najrān (one report has al-Hādī making an agreement with the Jews and Christians there when he arrived in Yemen). However, ‘questions and answers’ is a structure frequently used even for the abstract discussion of ideas, and the situation that al-Hādī addresses in *Tathbīt nubuwwa Muḥammad* might have been purely theoretical.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

*Tathbīt nubuwwa Muḥammad* is part of a wider Muslim literary genre, sometimes referred to as *dalā’il* works, on the ‘signs’ (*āyāt*; *a’lām*) of, or ‘proofs’ (*dalā’il*, *ḥujaj*) for, Muḥammad’s prophethood. The genre itself, as al-Hādī states explicitly, is a response to Jewish and Christian incredulity. Like other authors of *dalā’il* works before him, al-Hādī seeks to make his case by citing various miracles attributed to Muḥammad. The miracles of the tree and the shoulder of lamb are both brought up, for example, in the *Kitāb al-dīn wa-l-dawla fī ithbāt nubuwwa Muḥammad* of ‘Alī l-Ṭabarī (d. c. 860) (q.v.).

There is no sign that al-Hādī's brief treatise had an impact on the development of Islamic thought on Christianity. It is worth noting, however, that his recourse to traditional miracle stories marks a stark contrast to the *kalām*-minded anti-Christian polemics of his grandfather al-Qāsim and of Mu'tazilī theologians (with whom the Zaydiyya were closely aligned), such as his elder contemporary Abū 'Īsā l-Warrāq (d. c. 861).

MANUSCRIPTS

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EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

**Gabriel Said Reynolds**



# *Life of St Demetrianus of Kythrea/Chytri*

Unknown author

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown  
PLACE OF BIRTH Uncertain; perhaps Cyprus  
DATE OF DEATH After about 911/913  
PLACE OF DEATH Uncertain; perhaps Cyprus

## BIOGRAPHY

The anonymous author of the *Life* of St Demetrianus must have been a native of Cyprus, but it is not certain when he lived or in what circumstances he became acquainted with the biography of the saint.

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#### WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Bios kai politeia tou en hagiois kai thaumatourgou patros hēmōn Dēmētrianou, episkopou Chytridōn, mias tōn hypo tēn Kypriōn nēson*, 'Life and conduct of our father among the saints and miracle worker Demetrianus, bishop of Chytroi, one of [the towns of] the island of Cyprus', 'Life of St Demetrianus'

DATE Soon after about 911/913

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Greek

#### DESCRIPTION

The *Life* of St Demetrianus (*BHG* 495) relates the biography of a native of Cyprus who was born at the beginning of the reign of the iconoclastic, 'Christ-hating' Emperor Theophilus (829-42), in the village of Sykai in the province of Chytroi (Kythrea). His parents (his father was a priest in the village) had him married at the age of 15 but, when he was widowed three months later (without consummating the marriage), he was tonsured as a monk in the monastery of St Antony.

The fame he acquired for his ascetic feats there led Eustathius, the bishop of Chytroi, to ordain him a presbyter and offer him the office of *oikonomos*. Upon the death of the abbot of St Antony's monastery, Demetrianus succeeded him; not long afterwards, when the

archbishop of Salamis also died and was succeeded by Eustathius, Demetrianus was designated as bishop of Chytroi, a consecration which he was violently forced to accept.

His service as bishop was to last for 25 years and reached its peak in the early 10<sup>th</sup> century when the saint travelled to Baghdad to intercede with the caliph for the release of the countless fellow-countrymen, including members of his flock, who were taken prisoner after an Arab attack on the island. As the hagiographer has it, the incursion of the 'Babylonian barbarians' came about not after the islanders failed to pay taxes, nor as a response to a revolt, but was due to their 'plundering intentions and intrinsic aggressiveness'. Demetrianus appeared before the caliph and, full of tears, denounced the violation of the Arab-Byzantine treaty with regard to Cyprus. The Arab ruler was persuaded to set free the captives and return to the saint the spoils that had been taken. This achievement, the author exclaims, outweighed his fasting and other ascetic skills. When Demetrianus died at around the age of 80 (this would be in about 911/913), myrrh flowed from his relic.

Demetrianus of Chytroi is to be distinguished from another St Demetrianus, of Tamassos (commemorated on 27 January), who may be identified with a third Demetrianus mentioned in the Cypriot *Chronicle of Machairas*.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The Life of St Demetrianus attests to an Arab raid on Cyprus which caused devastation and resulted in the taking of captives, and is reported as having caused violation of the rights established by the Byzantine-Arab condominium of the island, first set up in 688. The veracity of this account can be confirmed by an extant letter of the Patriarch Nicolas I Mysticus of Constantinople (q.v.) to the Caliph al-Muqtadir in Baghdad, originally written in the spring of 912. In this letter the caliph is reproached for the 'Saracen' pillaging of Cyprus, a 'most populous island'.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

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## STUDIES

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Grégoire, 'Saint Démétrianos, évêque de Chytri (île de Chypre)'

**Stephanos Efhymiadis**

# Al-Bāhili

Abū 'Umar Muḥammad ibn 'Umar  
ibn Sa'īd al-Bāhili al-Baṣrī

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown, early 9<sup>th</sup> century

PLACE OF BIRTH Basra

DATE OF DEATH About 915

PLACE OF DEATH Baghdad

## BIOGRAPHY

Al-Bāhili spent the first part of his life in his native Basra, where he gained a reputation as a skilled theologian. He was a student and close associate of Abū 'Alī l-Jubbā'ī (q.v.); Ibn al-Murtaḍā reports 'Abd al-Jabbār recounting how the two were inseparable, and Ibn al-Nadīm says that they attended public sessions together. He also served as a judge, and it is maybe in this capacity that he was called to Baghdad, where he became an intimate of the Caliph al-Muhtadī (r. 879-80). He remained there after the caliph died until his own death many years later.

Al-Bāhili was an adept at stories about Islamic history, and could move people to tears with his narratives. Among his works, the *Kitāb al-ma'ānī*, which was on language, was the subject of commentaries by two grammarians, while his Mu'tazilī theological work *Al-uṣūl al-khamsa* attracted a refutation from al-Māturīdī (q.v.).

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

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v, p. 320

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Secondary —

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, 'Proofs of prophethood'

DATE Unknown; before about 915

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

Almost nothing is known about this work, not even its proper title. It is not listed among al-Bāhili's works by Ibn al-Nadīm, and the only reference is given by 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt*, p. 511, who mentions it together with other works about the miracles of Muḥammad that are not referred to in the Qur'ān.

From what 'Abd al-Jabbār says about these works, it appears that this one, like the others mentioned with it, made the point that even though the miracles generally credited to Muḥammad do not have the authority of the Qur'an, they have the support of the numerous people who have accepted them and should thus be acknowledged as authentic.

The work was evidently apologetic in character, and may well have been written in the face, or with the fresh memory, of criticisms from Christians about the prophetic status of Muḥammad and the miracles adduced by Muslims to prove this.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The work shows that discussions about the status of Muḥammad as prophet were far from over in the Islamic world at this time, and raises the possibility that arguments from Christians forced Muslims onto the defensive. Points about miracles not attested in the Qur'ān suggests that the attack that provoked the work, maybe led by Christians, was formulated in terms of the legitimacy of information that could only be supported by communal memory and not by scripture.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

David Thomas

# Abū ‘Alī l-Jubbā’ī

Abū ‘Alī Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ibn Salām  
al-Jubbā’ī

DATE OF BIRTH 849-50  
PLACE OF BIRTH Jubbā in Khūzistān  
DATE OF DEATH 915-16  
PLACE OF DEATH Basra

## BIOGRAPHY

Abū ‘Alī l-Jubbā’ī was regarded as the leader of the Basra Mu‘tazila in the latter part of the 9<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. His teachings added nuance and detail to thinking that had gone before, and while he is not known for any particular innovative theory of his own, he had lasting influence upon theology in the 10<sup>th</sup> century and later among both the Mu‘tazila and their opponents, although he was eclipsed in many respects by his son.

Abū ‘Alī was a pupil of the leader of the Basra Mu‘tazila in his day, Abū Ya‘qūb al-Shahhām, who had succeeded Abū al-Hudhayl (q.v.) in this position. In his turn, he himself was teacher of two important pupils, his son Abū Hāshim (q.v.), and Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī (q.v.), whose differences with him over theological principles, summed up in a question about predestination he was unable to answer, reputedly caused an irrevocable split, and led to al-Ash‘arī dedicating himself to exposing the weaknesses of Mu‘tazilī doctrines.

None of Abū ‘Alī’s works has survived. From what was regarded as a vast output of maybe 300,000 pages according to Ibn al-Murtaḍā (*Ṭabaqāt*, p. 82), all that now remains are fragmentary quotations. Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (*Lisān*, p. 271) mentions 70 titles that were originally listed in the *Fihrist* (though that part of Ibn al-Nadīm’s work is no longer complete), and Gimaret (‘Matériaux’, 1976 and 1984) lists 42 titles, among them expositions and explorations of Mu‘tazilī doctrine, discussions of the nature of God’s actions and justice, a Qur’an commentary, and refutations of other Muslim scholars and their works.

Quotations in later works show Abū ‘Alī contributing to discussions about the being of God, human action and other typical Mu‘tazilī issues, and championing the primacy of human reason. Such

quotations also show that in his attitude to Jesus he reflected typical elaborations of the Qur'an. In his *tafsīr*, for example, he interprets the reference in Q 4:157 to Jesus not being killed to mean that one of the disciples was made to look like him and crucified in his place (Gimaret, *Lecture mu'tazilite*, pp. 252-53), and the reference in Q 4:171 to Jesus as word and spirit from God to mean that he guided people with his teachings and gave them new life in religion (Gimaret, *Lecture mu'tazilite*, p. 255). In his little known *Kitāb al-maqālāt*, which included opinions on Muslim teachings about the end, human responsibility and Islamic sects, he discussed (possibly with some references to Christianity) Muslim beliefs about the coming of the Antichrist and the return of Jesus, Jesus and 'Uzayr (evidently a discussion of Q 9:30), and Jesus among the prophets (Ansari, 'Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī, pp. 32-34).

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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#### WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

### *Radd 'alā al-Naṣārā*, 'Refutation of the Christians'

DATE Unknown; before 915-16

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

The work has not survived, and its original title, if different from that given above, is not known. 'Abd al-Jabbār mentions in the *Tathbīt*, p. 198, that Abū 'Alī wrote a work against the Christians, but says nothing more about it. It is quite likely that the anti-Christian arguments he quotes from Abū 'Alī by name in the *Mughnī*, although without identifying any source, are from this work.

According to the sequence of fragments preserved by 'Abd al-Jabbār, the refutation began with a short descriptive account of the main Christian doctrines of the Trinity and the act of Uniting between the divine and human natures in Christ. Here Abū 'Alī betrays his real interest as being the key points of the doctrines themselves: he does not mention any Christian sects as holders of differing beliefs, and condenses the doctrines virtually into short uncontextualized propositions.

His first set of arguments clearly center on the Trinity. Here he takes up what are evidently Christian explanations based on Muslim doctrines of the divine attributes and shows in a succession of ways

that, according to this logic, the hypostases must be more than three, and that they must be independent Divinities.

From here he moves on to a question first recorded by al-Jāḥiẓ and discussed by other theologians in the early 9<sup>th</sup> century, including al-Nazzām, that since God took Abraham as friend he could also take Jesus as adopted son. Abū 'Alī adduces a series of reasons, many of them his own, to reject this comparison.

Lastly, he refutes the act of Uniting. He shows that the coming together of the human and divine would entail Jesus worshipping himself, and that the divine and human natures would be confused in their different modes of acting.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

If this sequence of quotations preserved by 'Abd al-Jabbār approximates to the structure of Abū 'Alī's original refutation (there must be some slight uncertainty because his last set of quotations, placed in the part of the *Mughnī* chapter that focuses on the Incarnation, summarizes additional anti-Trinitarian arguments), it comprised a simple three-part structure of descriptive introduction and refutations of the two main Christian doctrines. In this it would have resembled closely Abū 'Īsā l-Warrāq's surviving mid-9<sup>th</sup>-century refutation, and may well represent a standard structure followed by other lost anti-Christian theological works from this period. The appearance of the comparison between Abraham and Jesus from al-Jāḥiẓ's *Radd 'alā l-Naṣārā* suggests that Abū 'Alī's *Radd* may also preserve anonymous arguments from other lost 9<sup>th</sup>-century Mu'tazili works.

While the severe brevity of the arguments in the *Radd* may be the result of 'Abd al-Jabbār's editing and summarizing work, the fact that Abū 'Alī takes Christian doctrines as simple theological propositions detached from any context, and refutes them according to standard *kalām* logic and method, suggests that his refutation was not the outcome of live debate but of an encounter with opposing views in written form. These could easily be treated in the same way as any Muslim views, safe from objections by their Christian authors.

This feature of the work suggests that Muslim and Christian theologians were ceasing to explore one another's views in active meetings, as they had in the earlier 9<sup>th</sup> century, and that Christian arguments and doctrinal presentations had less interest and challenge for Muslims than previously and could now be refuted with ease in what had become familiar and recognized ways.

## MANUSCRIPTS —

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

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## STUDIES

- Thomas, 'A Mu'tazilī response to Christianity'

**David Thomas**

# Stepane of Tbeti

Stepane Mtbevari

DATE OF BIRTH Mid 9<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF BIRTH Georgia  
DATE OF DEATH 10<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF DEATH Georgia

## BIOGRAPHY

Stepane Mtbevari was the first 10<sup>th</sup>-century bishop of Tbeti. Educated in many languages, he was a leading figure in the Tao-Klarjeti literary school, and a famed writer and hagiographer in the Georgian Church of the period. There is no firm evidence about the year of his death, but it has been traditionally placed in the third decade of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. As well as writing the *Martyrdom* of Mikael-Gobron, he also played an important role in church life, being mentioned in the 10<sup>th</sup> century by Dachi and Giorgi Merchule and in the Shatberdi collection, and in the 11<sup>th</sup> century in the Matiane Kartlisa chronicle and by the historian Sumbat.

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#### WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

### *Camebay cmidisa motsamisa Gobronisa*, 'The Martyrdom of St Mikael-Gobron'

DATE 914-18

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Georgian

#### DESCRIPTION

The relatively short *Martyrdom* of Mikael-Gobron and his 133 companions affords insights into Arab action in eastern Georgia in the early 10<sup>th</sup> century. Stepane Mtbevari, who was a contemporary of Mikael-Gobron, describes the punitive expeditions of Abū l-Qāsim Yūsuf ibn Abī l-Sāj in the Caucasus region, when he ravaged Armenia and Caucasian Albania, and then went on to Georgia, passing through Kartli before reaching Samtsxe-Javaxeti and the fortress of Qveli in 914. The Georgian nobles, among them Mikael, called Gobron ('courageous' in Arabic), put up a defense, and held out for a month. Eventually, the Muslims breached the walls, overran the fortress, and captured all the defenders, including Mikael-Gobron.

Although he was sent a large ransom, Abū l-Qāsim refused to release all his prisoners, holding on to Mikael-Gobron and others. Abū l-Qāsim attempted to make them convert to Islam but in vain. When the Muslims compelled Mikael-Gobron to bow his head and twice brandished their swords above him, he made the sign of the cross in blood on his brow and exclaimed, 'I thank you, Lord Jesus

Christ, that you have accounted me, the most contemptible and chief among sinners, worthy to lay down my life for your sake!' At this, the furious Abū l-Qāsim ordered him and the 133 soldiers with him to be executed. After their death, their bodies were left to the wild beasts, but they remained unconsumed and so the bodies were buried. The Georgian Church canonized them, and their feast day is celebrated on 17 November, the day of their martyrdom.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Composed between 914 and 918, the *Martyrdom* would have been written at a time when Muslim power was starting to threaten Georgia. Its description of Mikael-Gobron's refusal to convert to Islam, preferring death to apostasy, would have served as an example to Georgian Christians and provided an encouragement to remain true to their faith.

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- M-21, fols 55-60 (1842)
- H-487, fols 1-12 (1852)
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- S- 1272 (18<sup>th</sup> century; Metaphrastes)

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**Medea D. Abashidze**

## Al-Wāsiṭī

Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn Zayd (or Yazīd) al-Wāsiṭī

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown; probably mid 9<sup>th</sup> century

PLACE OF BIRTH Wāsiṭ

DATE OF DEATH 918-19

PLACE OF DEATH Unknown; possibly al-Faṣīl

### BIOGRAPHY

Almost nothing is known about al-Wāsiṭī apart from the information given by Ibn al-Nadīm, who identifies him as a student and relative of the leading Basran Muʿtazilī Abū ʿAlī l-Jubbāʾī (q.v.), dying four years after him. He settled at al-Faṣīl (which Dodge, p. 430, suggests may have been an outlying village of the capital) and was included among the Baghdad Muʿtazila. Ibn al-Nadīm remarks on his good humor and lightness of spirit, and ʿAbd al-Jabbār adds the detail that he was a *kātib* (‘secretary’), raising the possibility that he was employed in the government service.

He was the author of a defence of the Qurʾan, the *Kitāb iʿjāz al-Qurʾān fī nazmihi wa-taʿlīfihi*, ‘The inimitability of the Qurʾan in its order and composition’, and of *Al-imāma*, ‘The Imamate’, which would have been about the legitimate leadership of the state.

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ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt*, p. 352

#### *Secondary*

Al-Sharfi, *Al-fikr al-Islāmī*, p. 166

### WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

#### *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa*, ‘Proofs of prophethood’

DATE Unknown, before 919

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic



## DESCRIPTION

The only reference to this work is given by ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt*, pp. 352-53. He names al-Wāsiṭī among others who wrote to expound and defend the prophethood of Muḥammad by adducing references from books of the Bible, though he does not give actual titles. He explains that al-Wāsiṭī and the other authors, among them Ibn Qutayba (q.v.), Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā ibn al-Munajjim (q.v.) and al-Zuhayrī (q.v.), wrote in response to Q 21:105-7, in which a link can be made between earlier revelations, the Qur’an and Muḥammad.

‘Abd al-Jabbār briefly paraphrases some of the biblical verses that must have appeared in al-Wāsiṭī’s and the other works. Among them, the reference to the ‘descendant of Ismā’īl, son of Hajar and Abraham, who rises up from Fārān’ combines a clear allusion to Deuteronomy 33:2-3, a favourite proof verse for Muslim authors (see C. Adang, *Muslim writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible, from Ibn Rabban to Ibn Hazm*, Leiden, 1996, p. 264, and index), with possible use of the mid 9<sup>th</sup>-century ‘Alī al-Ṭabari’s *Kitāb al-dīn wa-l-dawla*, where Ismā’īl and Hajar feature prominently.

## SIGNIFICANCE

To be singled out more than half a century after it was written, the work must have been a significant example of the ‘proofs of prophethood’ genre. It underlines how firmly established this kind of work had become by the early 10<sup>th</sup> century, and also how it was able to draw upon a tradition of arguments in defense of Muḥammad.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

**David Thomas**

## Qusṭā ibn Lūqā

Qusṭā ibn Lūqā al-Baʿlabakkī, Costa ben Luca

DATE OF BIRTH Possibly around 830-40

PLACE OF BIRTH Baʿalbek

DATE OF DEATH Possibly around 920

PLACE OF DEATH Armenia

### BIOGRAPHY

Qusṭā ibn Lūqā, the Melkite Christian physician, translator, and scholar, was one of the most significant participants in the 9<sup>th</sup>-century, Baghdad-centered movement to translate and develop Greek philosophy and science. Ibn al-Nadīm speaks of him in glowing terms, suggesting that by rights he should have preceded the renowned Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq (q.v.) in his list of translators (*Fihrist*, ed. Flügel, p. 295); Ṣāʿid al-Andalusī places Qusṭā with the Muslim al-Kindī (c.800-c.870) (q.v.) and the ‘Sabian’ Thābit ibn Qurra (836-901) as the three ‘luminaries of philosophical learning in their time in the realm of Islam’ (*Ṭabaqāt al-umam*, ed. Ḥ. Muʿnis, p. 51). Wilcox has spoken of a figure ‘as well acquainted with all the intellectual heritage and all the trends of his time as any mortal could be’ (‘Transmission’, p. 4), and has counted ‘25 translations from Greek into Arabic and 91 original works in Arabic’ in Qusṭā’s literary corpus, in medicine, mathematics, astronomy, physical sciences, philosophy, and other fields (‘Our continuing discovery’, p. 58).

As important as Qusṭā is to the history of philosophy and science, the details of his life are sketchy. Born in Baʿalbek – precisely when, we do not know – and Greek in heritage, he clearly received a superb education and was a master of the Greek, Arabic, and Syriac languages. He traveled in the Byzantine Empire in search of manuscripts, and eventually made a brilliant career for himself as a translator and author (especially of scientific treatises) in Baghdad, arriving there in time to execute at least three translations for the Caliph al-Mustaʿin (r. 862-66). At a certain point, perhaps decades later, he accepted the invitation of an Armenian prince or noble called Sanḥārīb (Senekʿerim) to move to Armenia, where he spent the remainder of

his life. It was there that Qusṭā wrote his ‘Response’ to the ‘Proof’ of Muḥammad’s prophethood by Ibn al-Munajjim (q.v.) (see below), as well as a number of medical treatises for princely patrons, including one Abū Ghānim al-‘Abbās ibn Sambāt, perhaps the son of King Smbat I (r. 890-914), brother of King Ashot II (r. 915-28), and himself the future King Abas (928-53). It is reported that, when Qusṭā died, a dome was built over his grave as a sign of honor.

The date of Qusṭā’s death, like that of his move to Armenia, is unknown. Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a reports that Qusṭā was active into the reign of the Caliph al-Muqtadir (r. 908-32), that is, beyond 908. Assuming that this is correct and that Qusṭā only moved to Armenia after that date, we may suggest that he survived until about 920, after a very long and fruitful career. (The year 912-13 is commonly reported for his death, but this is merely a conversion from the round number AH 300.)

Qusṭā’s literary output is too vast to discuss in any detail here; for an overview, Gabrieli, ‘Nota biobibliografica’ is still important (but see Sezgin, *GAS*, and the variety of specialized treatments in the bibliography), while Wilcox, ‘Transmission’, pp. 13-30 provides a narrative and to some degree chronological rendering of the list of Qusṭā’s works. A sampling of significant works might include: Qusṭā’s translation of *On the opinions of the philosophers* by Aetius (ed. H. Daiber), which was widely used in the Arabic-speaking world; his translation of Hero’s *Mechanics*, which preserves for us a work that has been lost in the original Greek (see Drachman, *Mechanical technology*); his treatises *On incantations*, *On the difference between the spirit and the soul*, and *On the use of the celestial globe*, which were translated into Latin and which helped to bring the name ‘Costa ben Luca’ to the awareness of scholars in the West (see Wilcox, ‘Our continuing discovery’); his *Response* to Ibn al-Munajjim’s *Proof* for the prophethood of Muḥammad, discussed below; a now lost work of history, *The paradise (al-Firdaws fī l-tārīkh)*, which may have played a role in the development of Melkite historiography (see Panchenko, ‘Kosta’); and his treatise *On the regimen for the pilgrimage* (ed. with commentary by G. Bos). This last treatise is quite striking: the Christian Qusṭā provides advice from the Greek medical heritage (Hippocrates, Galen, Paul of Aegina) for a Muslim seeking to remain healthy during the pilgrimage to Mecca! The work not only illustrates Qusṭā’s concern for the practical, down-to-earth application of scientific knowledge, but

can almost serve as a symbol of the ecumenicity of the 9th-century Arabic-language scientific enterprise.

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- H. Fährdrich, *Abhandlung über die Ansteckung von Qusṭā ibn Lūqā (Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 48,2)*, Stuttgart, 1987 (edition and trans. of Qusṭā's treatise on contagion)
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- J. Wilcox, 'The transmission and influence of Qusta ibn Luqā's "On the difference between spirit and the soul"', New York, 1985 (Diss. City University of New York) (see especially ch. 1, 'Qusta ibn Luqā', pp. 5-41)
- [S.]K. Samir and P. Nwyia, *Une correspondance islamo-chrétienne entre Ibn al-Munaḡḡim, Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq et Qusṭā ibn Lūqā*, *PO* 40 (1981) 519-723, pp. 546-49 (introduction to Qusṭā), 592-685 (edition and trans. of Qusṭā's 'Response' to Ibn al-Munajjim)
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- Graf, *GCAL* ii, 30-32
- W.H. Worrell, 'Qusta ibn Luqa on the use of the celestial globe', *Isis* 35 (1944) 285-93 (English trans. of part of Qusṭā's widely disseminated text)
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#### WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

### *Jawāb*, 'Response', to the *Risāla*, 'Treatise', or *Burhān*, 'Proof', of Ibn al-Munajjim

DATE Possibly 910-20

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

Qusṭā ibn Lūqā's *Jawāb* ('Response') to *Al-burhān* ('The proof') of ['Alī ibn Yahyā?] ibn al-Munajjim (q.v.) is a booklet-length (55 pages in its PO edition), point-by-point refutation of Ibn al-Munajjim's attempt to construct an irrefutable Aristotelian demonstration (*burhān muṭlaq* or *burhān handasī*) for the prophethood of Muḥammad. Qusṭā, while expressing his reluctance to respond to Ibn al-Munajjim's surprising venture, goes right to the point: Ibn al-Munajjim's 'proof' is no such thing. Qusṭā calls each premise of Ibn al-Munajjim's argument into question, only then to allow it so as to go on the next premise, which is similarly called into question. Thus (and simplifying the argument slightly), Qusṭā will *not* concede 1. that Muḥammad was recognized by 'all the people' as the most perfect in intelligence (as other peoples and religious communities have their own candidates for that honor); 2. that an intelligent person could not have issued a challenge such as

that of Q 2:23 – to produce ‘a single *sūra*’ like the Qur’anic revelation – without the certain knowledge that it could not be met (since intelligent people regularly take calculated risks); 3. that certain knowledge of the unseen (*al-ghayb*) comes from God (since human predictions of the unseen are normal in meteorology, augury, medicine, and astrology, to say nothing of visions); and 4. that the one who receives certain knowledge of the unseen from God is a Prophet (since God may well vouchsafe others such knowledge, as may be seen in examples from biblical as well as recent history). In the course of the argument, Qusṭā challenges the common apologetic notions that the Qur’an is purely Arabic; that the Qur’an is in any special way inimitable; and that the alleged inimitability of the Qur’an is a greater miracle than [Moses’] parting of the sea or [Jesus’] raising the dead.

Although Qusṭā writes in quite a straightforward manner, his erudition is on display throughout his ‘Response’: he shows an easy familiarity with the Greek scientific and literary traditions, Islamic history, and both the Bible and the Qur’an.

Scholars are divided as to the precise identity of Qusṭā’s correspondent (for the arguments, see B. Roggema, ‘‘Alī ibn Yaḥyā ibn al-Munajjim’, in *CMR* 1, pp. 764-66). Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Yaḥyā ibn al-Munajjim died in 888; if Qusṭā was in fact writing to the living Abū l-Ḥasan from Armenia, this would require a shift in the dates for Qusṭā’s life that have been suggested above. Another candidate for the recipient of Qusṭā’s *Jawāb* is Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī’s son, Abū ‘Īsā Aḥmad (or Abū ‘Īsā’s brother Abū Aḥmad Yaḥyā, d. 912). Yet another possibility is that Qusṭā’s claim to be addressing a living interlocutor who was demanding a response from him is merely a literary device. If this is the case, Qusṭā could have been writing a long-delayed response to Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī’s *Burhān*, one that he only felt secure in writing (or sharing with others) after he had established himself in Christian Armenia.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Qusṭā’s ‘Response’ is interesting as a witness to the influence of Aristotelian logic on Christian-Muslim controversy – and to its limits. In the course of the ‘Response’, Qusṭā makes brief but interesting forays into a number of topics of importance in Christian-Muslim controversy: ‘foreign’ words in the Qur’an, the doctrine of the inimitability of the Qur’an, and the Qur’an as evidentiary miracle.

Although the work is not widespread in the manuscript tradition, it was known and praised by the great Coptic apologist al-Ṣafī ibn al-ʿAssāl (Samir and Nwyia, *Correspondence*, pp. 526-27, note 7).

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- MS Beirut, Bibliothèque Orientale – 664 (1876), pp. 233-36
- MS Damascus, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate (not further specified, 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century; see Zilio-Grandi and Samir, *Una corrispondenza*, p. 42, n. 6)

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- Samir and Nwyia, *Une correspondance islamo-chrétienne*, pp. 549-52

**Mark N. Swanson**



# The disputation of Abū Ishāq and a Jew

Unknown author

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown; possibly late 9<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF BIRTH Possibly Syria, Homs in particular  
DATE OF DEATH Unknown; possibly 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF DEATH Possibly Syria, Homs in particular

## BIOGRAPHY

The author of this text cannot be identified. Given the geographical focus of his work, he may have been a Syrian, or perhaps from the city of Homs itself. He was likely a Melkite, as the Melkites alone have preserved his work. As argued below, he may have been writing after about 800, the possible *floruit* of one of the characters mentioned in the disputation. At the same time, he must have been writing before about 1000, the date of the only manuscript that preserves his work. The disputation gives every indication of having been an original composition in Arabic.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

*Primary* —

*Secondary* —

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

Unknown; a scribal note in the MS reads:  
*Hādhihi mujādala bayna l-Naṣārā wa-l-Yahūd,  
 wa-dhālika kāna rajul Naṣrānī wa-Yahūdī kānā  
 bi-Ḥimṣ, wa kānū yatajādālūna fīmā baynahum,*  
 ‘This is a disputation between the Christians  
 and the Jews – that is to say, there was a certain  
 Christian and a certain Jew [who] were in  
 Homs and were disputing with one another,  
 The disputation of Abū Iṣḥāq and a Jew, in the  
 presence of the Muslim notable Junāda ibn  
 Marwān of Homs’

DATE Unknown, possibly 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The account of the disputation between Abū Iṣḥāq and his unnamed Jewish interlocutor is a relatively short text, some 13 folios in the unique manuscript in which it has been preserved. While the disputation treats of Jewish-Christian theological concerns, the presentation is framed with reference to the Muslims of Homs, under whose auspices the disputation takes place and who are responsible for determining the victor.

An approximate date of composition is determined by the following items. The text mentions a certain Junāda ibn Marwān of Homs and his brother ‘Abdallāh. This Junāda may be none other than the minor and poorly reputed *muḥaddith* Junāda ibn Marwān al-Ḥimsī (that is, of the city of Homs), who flourished around 800 (al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, xv, p. 482, with the additional references there cited). ‘Abdallāh, on the other hand, may be the relatively obscure Syrian transmitter of apocalyptic traditions, ‘Abdallāh ibn Marwān. He too flourished around 800 and was closely associated with the city of Homs (see Madelung, ‘Sufyānī between tradition and history’, pp. 21, 42-45). At the same time, the text must have been written before 1000, the date of its unique manuscript witness. Given the legendary and folkloric quality of the disputation, a date nearer 1000 may be preferable.

The disputation contains few concrete details. It is thus difficult to determine whether and to what extent it evinces a kernel of historicity. That said, if the proposed identifications of Junāda and ʿAbdallāh are correct, it is unlikely that the text is totally without historical foundation. It is simply too difficult to imagine why a later author would choose to frame his account by reference to such obscure figures.

The disputation opens with an account of how Abū Iṣḥāq, a Christian of Homs, had humiliated the local Jews through his logical prowess. The Jews, we are told, summon from Damascus the most skillful of their correlative religionists, a figure who remains unnamed. On his arrival, the rules of the debate are settled on terms acceptable to both Christians and the Jews, as well as to the Muslims Junāda and ʿAbdallāh. It is decided, in particular, that the loser is to put a halter on his neck and a saddle on his back, and allow himself to be ridden around the streets of Homs by a young man from the winner's community. Junāda then appoints his brother ʿAbdallāh as arbiter of the disputation.

As for the theological topics treated, the dispute is divided into seven well-defined sections. Each serves to demonstrate that the Jews are not now, nor ever were, the chosen people of God. The point is argued largely through an analysis of the events surrounding the exodus and the early history of the Jewish people in Israel. In every case, the author takes a familiar episode from the Torah and inverts its seeming significance. The exodus, for instance, shows not God's love for the Jews, but his hatred, as he allowed them to suffer slavery for over 400 years. Similarly, it was not out of love for Israel that God destroyed the Egyptians at the Red Sea, but rather on account of the misdeeds and idolatrous practices of the Egyptians. Or again, for 40 years the clothes and shoes of the Israelites were miraculously preserved from corruption during their wandering in the desert. While this might seem a blessing, it was actually a curse: 'so that you Jews would spend forty years in a single dirty shift, amongst lice and filth, spending both your sleeping and your waking hours in it, having relations with your women in it – such clothes reeking of the sepulcher, permeated through and through with the blood and grease of quail, as well as the odor of the filth of manna.' The mark of God's hatred for the Jews is lastly demonstrated by the manner of their punishment for their having failed to acknowledge Christ. Jerusalem was destroyed. The priesthood came to an end. The monarchy ceased. The Jewish nation was deprived of political autonomy. Individual Jews were

subjected to disgraceful occupations, becoming ‘tanners, cleaners of cesspools, makers of sieves, and glaziers, in every case [occupations] marked by shame and stench’.

In the end, the Jewish interlocutor is forced to recognize the truth of Abū Iṣḥāq’s arguments. So, too, the Muslim judge proclaims that victory belongs to the Christians. The Jews of Homs gather before Junāda and ‘Abdallāh, and tearfully beg that their community be saved from the shame that would result from the execution of the stipulated punishment. Junāda and ‘Abdallāh, in turn, intercede with Abū Iṣḥāq. He consents to cancel the stipulated punishment. A document attesting his victory is then drawn up, with the signatures of 30 witnesses from the local Muslim, Christian, and Jewish communities. Immediately on mention of this document, the disputation comes to an end.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The text is a fine (if noxious) example of a particular type of Christian-Jewish disputation literature from the early medieval Middle East. This literature is usually presented in the format of a dialogue, with debate occurring in the presence or under the auspices of one or more Muslim officials. Some such texts culminate in a thaumaturgic contest. At times, the disputations are presented as winning political concessions from the Muslims, or even their conversions. Roughly contemporary examples include: the *Life* of Theodore of Edessa (q.v.); the *Disputation* of Patriarch John (q.v.); and the *Life* of John of Edessa (q.v.).

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS Milan, Ambrosiana – X 201 supp., fols 214v-227r (c. 1000)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

The text is unpublished. An edition and English translation are currently being prepared by J.C. Lamoreaux.

#### STUDIES

Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a‘lām al-nubalā’*, 25 vols, Beirut, 1994 (for the identity of Junāda ibn Marwān)

W. Madelung, ‘The Sufyānī between tradition and history’, *Studia Islamica* 63 (1986) 4-48 (for the identity of ‘Abdallāh ibn Marwān)

**John C. Lamoreaux**

## Ḥanūn ibn Yūḥannā ibn al-Ṣalt

DATE OF BIRTH	Unknown; perhaps mid-9 <sup>th</sup> century
PLACE OF BIRTH	Unknown; perhaps near al-Anbār
DATE OF DEATH	Unknown; but after 900
PLACE OF DEATH	Unknown; perhaps near al-Anbār

### BIOGRAPHY

Ḥanūn ibn Yūḥannā ibn al-Ṣalt was an East Syrian ('Nestorian') Christian who composed *Thalāth rasā'il* ('Three treatises'), a work of spiritual theology consisting of Arabic reformulations of material from the Syriac writings of the late 7<sup>th</sup>-century ascetical master of the Church of the East, Mār Isaac of Nineveh (d. c. 700). In his introduction to the first treatise (Sbath, *Traités religieux*, pp. 10-12), Ḥanūn shares something of his spiritual-intellectual autobiography. From an early age, he was drawn to the study of books and was seeking answers to deep theological questions. One day, 'one of the fathers' informed him that his way of thinking rhymed with that of Mār Isaac of Nineveh – but that all but experienced monks were discouraged from reading Isaac's books. However, this kindled a great desire in Ḥanūn's heart; finally he made his way to the monastery at al-Anbār (presumably the Convent of Mār Yōnān), and there was finally given permission to study the writings of Mār Isaac, which he came to master. 'Three treatises' was written in response to a request from a friend who desired to learn from the writings of Mār Isaac, but who lacked the necessary competence in Syriac.

'Three treatises' bears witness not only to Ḥanūn's profound knowledge of the writings of Mār Isaac, but also to his knowledge of the Bible, some acquaintance with Greek thinkers, and his fine command of the Arabic language (in addition to Syriac). In his introduction to the third treatise (Sbath, *Traités religieux*, pp. 54-55), Ḥanūn tells us that he borrowed the Syriac book of which that treatise was an extract and translation from Abū l-'Abbās 'Īsā ibn Zayd (q.v.), who reported to him a conversation about Isaac of Nineveh that he had had with the Catholicos John II bar Narsai (in office 884-92). A few pages later (Sbath, *Traités religieux*, pp. 58-59), Ḥanūn recounts his conversation

(on the possibility of love for the enemy) with the Catholicos John IV ibn ʿĪsā al-Aʿraj (in office 900-5).

Troupeau ('Sur un astrologue', p. 90) has identified this Ḥanūn with an astrologer mentioned in the *Fihrist* of Ibn al-Nadīm (ed. Flügel, p. 280): Abū Zakariyyā Jannūn [*sic*; read 'Ḥanūn'] ibn ʿAmr ibn Yūḥannā ibn al-Şalt, author of an apology for astrology (*Kitāb al-iḥtijāj fi şihḥat al-nujūm wa-l-aḥkām fiḥā*, 'The book of vindication for the correctness of the stars and judgments made on the basis of them'). In addition to this work, an 'Astrological-medical compendium' (*Al-kunnāsh al-ṭibbī l-nujūmī*) by this author, in ten chapters, has been preserved. It is difficult, however, to see the 'Three treatises' and the 'Astrological-medical compendium' as works of the same author; indeed, the edited text of the latter ends with an invocation upon the Prophet Muḥammad (Klein-Franke, *Iatromathematics*, p. 99).

Graf (GCAL ii, p. 150) and Landron (*Chrētiens et musulmans*, p. 88) plausibly suggest that Ḥanūn the spiritual theologian was the son of the East Syrian author Yūḥannā ibn al-Şalt (q.v.). If the spiritual theologian and the astrologer were the same person, however, the form of Ḥanūn's name reported in the *Fihrist* would suggest that he was the *grandson* of Yūḥannā ibn al-Şalt. Perhaps, in fact, there were two Ḥanūns: the theologian uncle (Ḥanūn ibn Yūḥannā ibn al-Şalt), and the astrologer nephew (Ḥanūn *ibn* ʿAmr ibn Yūḥannā ibn al-Şalt).

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

P. Sbath, *Traités religieux, philosophiques et moraux extraits des oeuvres d'Isaac de Ninive (VII<sup>e</sup> s.) par Ibn al-Salt (IX<sup>e</sup> s.)*, Cairo, 1934, pp. 10-12, 54-55, 58-59 (Arabic text), pp. 71-73, 109-10, 112-13 (French trans.)

### Secondary

S. Chialà, *Dall'ascesi eremitica alla misericordia infinita. Recerche su Isacco di Ninive e la sua fortuna*, Florence, 2002, pp. 59-63, 334-35

H. Alfeyev, *The spiritual world of Isaac the Syrian*, Kalamazoo MI, 2000, p. 28

B. Landron, *Chrētiens et musulmans*, p. 88

F. Klein-Franke, *Iatromathematics in Islam. A study on Yuhanna ibn aṣ-Şalt's book on astrological medicine*, Hildesheim, 1984

Sezgin, GAS iii, pp. 269-70; vii, pp. 155-56

- G. Troupeau, 'Sur un astrologue mentionné dans le *Fihrist*', *Arabica* 16 (1969) 90 (makes the identification of Ḥanūn the astrologer and Ḥanūn the spiritual theologian, and points out Ḥanūn does *not* say in 'Three treatises' that he became a monk, but only that he visited the monastery)
- J.M. Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne III*, Beirut, 1968, pp. 236-39 (on the Convent of Mār Yōnān at al-Anbār)
- Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 150-51
- Sbath, *Traité religieux, philosophiques et moraux*, pp. 3-8

#### WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Thalāth rasā'il min kalām Mār Ishāq al-Nīnawī  
fī l-zuhd wa-l-rahbana mimmā istakhrajahu  
wa-naqalahu Ḥanūn ibn Yūḥannā ibn al-Ṣalt,*  
'Three treatises from the words of Mār Isaac  
of Nineveh about asceticism and monasticism,  
extracted and translated by Ḥanūn ibn Yūḥannā  
ibn al-Ṣalt'

DATE After 900; early 10<sup>th</sup> century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic (translating and refashioning material from Syriac)

#### DESCRIPTION

The three treatises offer a total of 350 maxims (or short paragraphs) extracted from the Syriac works of Isaac of Nineveh and fashioned in an elegant Arabic. A key to their significance may be provided by an introduction to these maxims in the form of six theological questions, followed by the answer of 'some people' (*ba'd al-qawm*), and then the answer of Mar Isaac. The questions (somewhat paraphrased) are as follows:

1. Did God create Adam immortal (although immortality was lost, due to disobedience) or mortal from the beginning?
2. Is it possible that God be moved to wrath by the disobedience of creatures?
3. Is it possible, in the justice of God, for a temporary sin to be requited with eternal punishment?
4. In the next world, will the mercy of God encompass both the good and the wicked?

5. Are humans' fortunes in this world measured out by God, or achieved by human action and merit?

6. Does the soul, when it departs the body, lose or retain its knowledge obtained in this world?

Mar Isaac's answers to such questions are those that stress the infinite mercy of God, rather than commonsense notions of justice and merit.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Does this work have any significance for the history of Christian-Muslim relations? Landron (*Chrétiens et musulmans*, p. 88) points out, with an allusion to the first part of the *Kitāb al-masā'il wa-l-ajwiba* of 'Ammār al-Baṣrī (q.v.), that the theological topics that exercised Ḥanūn (and that are on display in the six questions above, e.g. sin and punishment, mercy and wrath, God's 'measuring-out' or *qadar*; reward and punishment in the world to come) were current in the Christian-Muslim discussions of the time. Is there any possibility that we can see Ḥanūn as a Christian theologian who, in the Syriac works of Isaac of Nineveh, sought wisdom for the present apologetic task in Arabic? It is striking that Ḥanūn, as a scholar living in the complex interreligious world of 'Abbāsīd Iraq, should find answers to his theological questions in the work of an ascetic theologian who taught the overwhelming love and mercy of God for *all* creatures – in the world to come as well as in this world.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

Sbath's edition was made on the basis of a MS in his possession, acquired in Cairo and dated to 1480, copied by the Syrian monk Dā'ūd ibn Buṭrus. Graf (*GCAL* ii, 151) provides a list of other known manuscripts:

MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 173, fols 127r-146v (14<sup>th</sup> century; first treatise only?)

MS Aleppo, Fondation Georges et Mathilde Salem – Ar. 214 (Sbath 1016), fols 109r-123r (14<sup>th</sup> century; first treatise only)

MS Aleppo, Fondation Georges et Mathilde Salem – Ar. 222 (Sbath 1024) fols 70r-102v (1796; all three treatises)

MS Cairo, 'Abd al-Masiḥ Ṣalīb al-Baramūsī al-Maṣ'ūdī Collection (inaccessible MS in private collection; see Sbath, *Fihris* i, p. 14, no. 58)



## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

- Chialà, *Dall'ascesi eremitica alla misericordia infinita*, pp. 60-63  
 (Italian trans. of several paragraphs, including the six questions  
 and answers of the Prologue)
- P. Sbath, *Traitées religieux, philosophiques et moraux extraits des oeuvres d'Isaac de Ninive (VII<sup>e</sup> s.) par Ibn al-Salt (IX<sup>e</sup> s.)*, Cairo, 1934  
 (introduction, Arabic text, and French trans.)

## STUDIES

- Chialà, *Dall'ascesi eremitica alla misericordia infinita*, pp. 59-63,  
 334-35 (and see the index under 'Hanun', p. 395)
- Troupeau, 'Sur un astrologue'
- Graf, *GCAL* ii, 150-51
- I. Hausherr, review of Sbath, *Traitées religieux, philosophiques et moraux*, in *OCP* 2 (1936) 511-13
- G. Graf, review of Sbath, *Traitées religieux, philosophiques et moraux*, in *OC* 32 [= 3. ser., 10] (1935) 272-73
- Sbath, *Traitées religieux, philosophiques et moraux*, pp. 3-8

**Mark N. Swanson**

# Theodosius of Syracuse

Theodosios Monachos kai Grammatikos,  
Theodosius the Monk and Grammarian

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown; possibly mid-9<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown  
DATE OF DEATH Unknown; possibly mid-10<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF DEATH Unknown

## BIOGRAPHY

For the life of Theodosius we only have the scant information given in his letter. Its title indicates that he was *Grammaticus*, a kind of notary, and as a monk and cleric he would have been a member of the Greek elite of Syracuse. When the city was besieged by the Arabs, famine and disease forced the inhabitants into surrender, and some of the wealthier people were taken as prisoners to Palermo, the new capital of Sicily. Theodosius writes as one of these prisoners, who is waiting to be ransomed.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### *Primary*

C.O. Zuretti (ed.), 'Italohellenika. La espugnazione di Siracusa nell' 800. Testo greco della lettera del monaco Teodosio', in *Centenario della nascita di Michele Amari*, 2 vols, Palermo 1910, i, pp. 165-68

### *Secondary*

- F. Maurici, *Breve storia degli Arabi in Sicilia*, Palermo, 1995, pp. 46-49
- R. Anastasi, 'L'Epistola di Teodosio Monaco', *Archivio Storico Siracusano* n.s., 5 (1978-79) 169-82
- A.A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, 3 vols in 4, Brussels, 1968, ii/1, pp. 70-79
- B. Lavagnini, 'Siracusa occupata dagli Arabi e l'epistola di Teodosio monaco', *Byzantion* 29/39 (1959-60) 267-77
- S.G. Mercati, 'Sul codice perduto della Lettera di Teodosio Monaco Siracusano', in G. Mercati (ed.), *Per la storia dei manoscritti greci di Genova, di varie badie basiliane d'Italia e di Patmo (Studi e Testi 68)*, Vatican City, 1935, 320-29
- Zuretti, 'Italohellenika. La espugnazione di Siracusa nell' 800', pp. 170-83

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Theodosiou Monachou tou kai Grammatikou  
epistolē pros Leonta Archidiakonon peri tēs  
alōseōs Syrakousēs*, ‘Letter of Theodosius, the  
Monk and Grammaticus, to Leo the Archdeacon  
about the capture of Syracuse’, ‘On the conquest  
of Syracuse’

DATE Beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Greek

## DESCRIPTION

About a third of the original letter is lost. In what remains, Theodosius records that during the siege of Syracuse, which took place in 878, such great fear of the Arabs arose amongst the inhabitants that, when their water gave out, they preferred to drink urine rather than opening the gates, and may even have resorted to cannibalism. When the Arabs finally forced their way in, Theodosius reports that many people were killed or led off into slavery, and the main buildings were destroyed.

The accuracy of this reporting should not be accepted without question, because Theodosius’ account repeats many familiar conventions from earlier literature, and there is no hint that the people were in particular fear of the different religion of the invaders. Modern scholars emphasize the rhetorical and inflated character of the letter, and it has been suggested with good reason that the letter was written at the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, some decades after the reported events took place.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The fall of Syracuse was the beginning of the end of Byzantine domination in Sicily, and later efforts to retake the island proved unsuccessful. The letter attests to the common practice of conquerors taking hostages, although, since its end is incomplete, any judgement about the Arabs based on their religion is lacking.

## MANUSCRIPTS

MS Paris, BNF – Gr. 3032, fols 150v-152v (10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> century; incomplete)

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

Zuretti, 'Italohellenika. La espugnazione di Siracusa nell' 800',  
pp. 165-68 (edition and Latin trans.)

Anastasi, 'L'epistola di Teodosio Monaco', (partial Italian translation)

## STUDIES

F. Maurici, *Breve storia degli Arabi in Sicilia*, Palermo, 1995, 46-49

Anastasi, 'L'Epistola di Teodosio Monaco'

Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*

B. Lavagnini, 'Siracusa occupata dagli Arabi e l'epistola di Teodosio  
monaco', *Byzantion* 29/39 (1959-60), 267-77

Mercati, 'Sul codice perduto della Lettera di Teodosio Monaco  
Siracusano'

Zuretti, 'Italohellenika. La espugnazione di Siracusa nell' 800',  
pp. 170-83

**Lars Martin Hoffman**

# Abū Muḥammad al-Nawbakhtī

Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan ibn Mūsā l-Nawbakhtī

DATE OF BIRTH	Unknown; probably mid or late 9 <sup>th</sup> century
PLACE OF BIRTH	Baghdad
DATE OF DEATH	Early 10 <sup>th</sup> century; possibly between 912 and 923
PLACE OF DEATH	Probably Baghdad

## BIOGRAPHY

The Nawbakhtī family was known for its close association with the Abbasid dynasty throughout the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, and for its support of Shī'ī doctrines and beliefs. Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan himself was a prominent Shī'ī intellectual in the latter part of the 9<sup>th</sup> and early 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, and was remembered for his sympathies with Mu'tazilī principles. He and his uncle Abū Sahl Ismā'īl (d. 923) were regarded as the first major Shī'īs who expressed their tradition of belief in terms of Mu'tazilī thought.

Despite his family's prominence in the public and cultural life of Baghdad, little is known specifically about Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan, and even the actual date of his death has not been recorded. Ibn al-Murtaḍā places him in the same generation of Mu'tazilīs as Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā'ī (d. 933) (q.v.), while Ibn al-Nadīm, who calls him a theologian and philosopher, remarks that he was a contemporary and acquaintance of the translators Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn (d. 910) and Thābit ibn Qurra (d. 901), and Ibn Ṭāwūs attributes to him a refutation of a work against astrologers by Abū 'Alī l-Jubbā'ī (d. 915) (q.v.). These details indicate that he was active in the early years of the 10<sup>th</sup> century (Iqbāl suggests between 912 and 922).

Al-Nawbakhtī was clearly acquainted fully with the tradition of theology and philosophy of his time. He wrote more than 40 works (Ritter lists 44), including translations of philosophy and refutations of earlier thinkers such as the proponents of transmigration of souls and the independent monotheist Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq (q.v.). He wrote a number of works on the Shī'ī Imamate, among which his unfinished *Firaq al-Shī'a* contains a discussion of this doctrine as well as an account of Shī'ī sects.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

*Primary*

Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, pp. 225-26

Al-Ṭūsī, *Fihrist*, ed. A. Sprenger, Calcutta, 1855, p. 98

Ibn Ṭāwūs in E. Kohlberg, *A medieval Muslim scholar at work. Ibn Ṭāwūs and his library*, Leiden, 1992, p. 311

Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭabaqāt al-mu'tazila*, p. 104

*Secondary*

M.J. Mashkour, *Les sectes Shiites. Traduction annotée avec introduction*, Tehran, 1980<sup>2</sup>

W. Madelung, 'Imāmism and Mu'tazilite theology', in T. Fahd (ed.), *Le Shi'isme imāmite*, Paris, 1979, 13-30, pp. 15-16

M.J. McDermott, *The theology of al-Shaikh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022)*, Beirut, 1978, pp. 23-25

W. Madelung, 'Bermerkungen zur imamitischen Firaq-Literatur', *Der Islam* 43 (1967) 37-52 (trans. 'Some remarks on the Imāmi Firaq literature', in E. Kohlberg (ed.), *Shi'ism*, Aldershot UK, 2003, 153-67)

ʿAbbās Iqbāl (Eghbal), *Khāndān-i Nawbakhtī*, Tehran, 1932-33, pp. 125-65

H. Ritter (ed.), *Firaq al-Shī'a*, Istanbul, 1931 (introduction)

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Kitāb al-ārā' wa-l-diyānāt*, 'Opinions and confessions'

DATE Unknown; probably early 10<sup>th</sup> century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

This work, which Ibn al-Nadīm (p. 225) says al-Nawbakhtī did not finish, has not survived. It is known through quotations contained in later works, particularly al-Mas'ūdī and Ibn al-Jawzī (see Iqbāl, *Khāndān-i Nawbakhtī*, p. 139, and D. Thomas, *Anti-Christian polemic in early Islam*, Cambridge, 1992, p. 42, for references). These show that it covered a wide range of beliefs and doctrines, referring to such groups as the Greek philosophers, dualists, Barāhima, Ṣābians, Zoroastrians, astronomers and astrologers; and several individual Muslim scholars (Ritter, *Firaq al-Shī'a*, pp. kb-kj, reproduces the passages from Ibn al-Jawzī). It appears to have been a heresiographical work, like al-Shahrastānī's *Kitāb al-milal* (q.v.), and the

lost *Kitāb al-maqālāt* of Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq (q.v.) and *Maqālāt ghayr al-Islāmiyyīn* of Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (q.v.).

Among these groups and scholars, the *Kitāb al-ārāʾ wa-l-diyānāt* also contained a section on Christianity. This is referred to in Mānkḏīm Shashdīw's *Taʿlīq Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa* (q.v.), which is a commentary on ʿAbd al-Jabbār's lost *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*. The reference there is very brief (ed. ʿA.-K. ʿUthmān, *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*, 2 vols, Cairo, 1965, p. 291—ʿUthmān assumed this was ʿAbd al-Jabbār's work), and it is impossible to say whether it originates from Mānkḏīm Shashdīw in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century or from ʿAbd al-Jabbār himself between 970 and 990.

Despite its brevity, this reference is informative: it comments that al-Nawbakhtī's account is enough to show the obscurity of Christian doctrines, and the difficulty scholars have in grasping what Christians say (a complaint ʿAbd al-Jabbār voices in his refutation of Christianity in the *Mughnī*). And it goes on to identify the two main doctrines that call for refutation, the Trinity and Incarnation, though this may be ʿAbd al-Jabbār or Mānkḏīm Shashdīw's continuation.

There is nothing here (granted the reference is very brief) to indicate that the *Kitāb al-ārāʾ wa-l-diyānāt* contained any more than a summary account of Christian doctrines. It is not possible to say how extensive or detailed this was.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The presence of an account of Christian doctrines in a work that covered non-Muslim and Muslim beliefs reflects a continuing interest in the 10<sup>th</sup> century in the teachings of Christianity, and maybe a curiosity in them as part of the variety of alternatives known at the time. Comments about the difficulty in understanding them are an implicit criticism of their lack of logical coherence.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

**David Thomas**

# Nicolas Mysticus

Nikolaos Mystikos

DATE OF BIRTH 852  
PLACE OF BIRTH Italy  
DATE OF DEATH 15 May 925  
PLACE OF DEATH Possibly Constantinople

## BIOGRAPHY

Nicolas was born to a slave-woman in Italy, either on the estate or in the house of Photius, the future patriarch of Constantinople. He studied together with the future Emperor Leo VI, and became a close friend of Photius. After Photius fell from favor and was deposed from the patriarchate in 887, Nicolas withdrew to the Tryphon monastery near Chalcedon, where he was tonsured, but Leo VI (r. 886-912) brought him back to the capital and made him his private secretary (*mystikos*). On 1 March 901, he was elected patriarch of Constantinople.

He opposed Leo's fourth marriage (the 'tetragamy'), and though he baptized the child of this marriage, the future Constantine VII, he forbade the emperor from entering the church. He also supported the rebel Andronicus Doucas. In 907, he was deposed, replaced as patriarch by Euthymius, and exiled to his own monastery of Galacrenae, though he returned to office on the death of Leo VI in May 912. When Leo's successor Alexander died, Nicolas became the head of the regency council (June 913-February 914), and as such undertook initiatives in diplomatic and military affairs. Thus, he dealt with the Bulgarian war, and handled negotiations with the Bulgarian ruler Symeon after his attack on the capital in August 913.

In February 914, Nicolas was expelled by the Empress Zoe, who wanted to restore Euthymius to the patriarchate, but, when the latter refused, Nicolas resumed his position. He acted as advisor to the Emperor Romanus I Lecapenus (r. 920-44), and continued to carry out negotiations with Symeon and to correspond with foreign rulers. He died on 15 May 925 and was buried in his monastery.



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#### WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Nikolaou patriarchou homilia eis tēn halosin tēs Thessalonikēs, rhētheisa en to amboni tēs megalēs ekklēsiās meta tēn eisodon*, 'Sermon of Nicolas the Patriarch on the capture of Thessaloniki, delivered from the pulpit of the Great Church after the entry'; *Homilia eis tēn halosin tēs Thessalonikēs*, 'Sermon on the capture of Thessaloniki'

DATE Probably 12 August 904

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Greek

#### DESCRIPTION

This sermon, which was delivered during the liturgy in the Church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, was preached in the aftermath of the capture of Thessaloniki by the renegade Leo of Tripoli (Ghulām Zurāfa, called Rashīq al-Wardāmī after his manumission) on Tuesday, 31 July 904. Nicolas uses it as an opportunity to reflect on the reasons why the disaster happened and, like other Christians before him who had had to explain for themselves and others why the empire had failed in the face of Arab advances, he ascribes it to lack of faith among the people and sees it as divine punishment that compels sincere penitence (cf. D.H. Constantelos, 'The Moslem conquests of the

Near East as revealed in the Greek sources of the seventh and eighth centuries,' *Byzantion* 42 (1972) 325-57, pp. 328-30, 332). The people should have followed the true teachings of the Orthodox faith, but instead they fell short and evil struck. The Byzantines are God's chosen and beloved people, though they have disobeyed him and caused his wrath, losing his favor in their sinfulness. They should turn from their ways and follow the example of Christians in former times, who trusted in God and followed his will.

While he portrays Christians as erring in their faith and selfish in their conduct, Nicolas insists that the Arabs, a 'mixed rabble of Assyrians and Egyptians' (*ex Assyriōn symmiktos kai Aigyptiōn anthrōpiōn*), are to be seen not as the heroes they claim to be, but as 'paralysed and almost skinless weaklings'. To call them 'Egyptians' would, at this time, be to portray them as evil, demonic and heretical (Koutrakou, 'The image of Egypt', pp. 213, 222-23), and this is exemplified by their cruel and godless conduct: cities are emptied of their inhabitants, churches and relics are desecrated, monks and priests are killed or enslaved, women raped and their husbands slaughtered. Finally, Nicolas calls upon Demetrius, the patron saint of Thessaloniki, as the last hope for the city, asking the cause of this great evil which is such a change from earlier times when the city flourished under his protection.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

True to its character as a sermon, this does not attempt to chronicle events but to draw a moral and religious lesson. The information it provides about the suffering of Christians and the inhumanity of the attack is corroborated by John Caminiates' eye-witness account (q.v.), and the reasons it gives for the disaster reflects earlier explanations of Arab victories.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

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### *Tō hautō*, 'Letter 2: To the same'

DATE Probably late 904 or early 905

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Greek

#### DESCRIPTION

Following the Arab assault on Thessaloniki in July 904, Nicolas wrote to a Muslim ruler, probably the emir of Crete, Muḥammad ibn Shu'ayb (895-910), requesting an exchange of prisoners. Although they are not identified, these were quite probably the captives from Thessaloniki, many of whom were sold on the island (see the entry on John Cameniates). There is disagreement about the identity of the addressee: Vasiliev, followed by the majority of scholars, identifies him as the emir of Crete (Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, ii/ 1, p. 410, giving the date of the letter as the end of 904 or the beginning of 905), Jenkins identifies him as the Abbasid Caliph al-Muktafi (r. 902-8) (Jenkins, 'The mission of St Demetrianus of Cyprus to Baghdad', p. 275, n. 5).

The authenticity of the letter is not in dispute. Like other 10<sup>th</sup>-century diplomatic exchanges between Byzantine and foreign rulers, it falls into the category of *dimigoriai*, intended to persuade (Koutrakou, 'Logos', p. 12), and it avoids polemic. Headed 'To the same', it provides a glimpse into the ongoing practice of negotiating exchanges of prisoners, one of the many aspects of Muslim-Byzantine relations at this time. But its effectiveness remains open to question; it has a standard form similar to many others, which is maybe the result of its origin as one of many compositions from the imperial chancery (see Beihammer, 'Reiner christlicher König', p. 10).

As a diplomatic message intended to make a request of its recipient, the letter is constructive in tone and uses forms of address such as 'your nobility', 'your wisdom', and 'my best and most excellent of friends'; these make clear that the emperor, on whose behalf it is written, honors the emir. Although there is no direct reference to

persons and events, Mysticus outlines the principles that govern the relationship between the empire and the emir, and urges him to proceed according to past precedents, alluding to the Patriarch Photius' relations with the recipient's father (probably Shu'ayb I ibn 'Umar [r. c. 855-80]; see G.C. Miles, 'A provisional reconstruction of the genealogy of the Arab emirs of Crete', *Krētika Chronika* 15 (1963) 59-73), and his own past exchanges with the emir himself. In accordance with this constructive and friendly approach, Nicolas expresses his faith in the one universal God, and stresses the importance of the values of mercy, pity and gentleness as God's attributes. He significantly makes no distinction between the God of the Christians and the God of the Muslims, and stresses that both faiths share the perception of God as compassionate, life-giver, carer, and supporter.

The liberation of prisoners, the real business of the letter, is referred to within this context of divine compassion, and the promise of reward for those who act in this way. This, Nicolas points out, is a religious duty, as well as an act that will promote humanity and friendship. He urges the emir to think of the reputation he will gain if he performs this act of mercy, and he details the evils of captivity and the suffering caused by families split apart. In this way, he appeals to the emir's sense of justice, which should go beyond differences of religion and the greed that results in the affliction of Christians.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

As in other official letters from Byzantium to Muslim rulers, here there is no criticism of Islam or Muslim beliefs. This letter is very different from stories such as saints' lives, where Arabs feature as heartless monsters who inflict martyrdom and destruction upon Christians.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS Patmos – 178, f. 70r

MS Vat – Gr. 1780, part II (a copy of Patmos – 178)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

*Nicholas I Patriarch of Constantinople. Letters*, ed. Jenkins and Westerink, pp. xxxv-xxxvii (discussion about editions of the letters), pp. 12-17 (text and trans. of Letter 2)

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A.A. Vasiliev, *Vzantija I Araby, II, B*, Petrograd, 1902, pp. 203-5 (Russian trans.)

PG 111, cols. 36-37

Mai, *Spicilegium Romanum*, x, pp. 161-67 (from MS Vat Gr. 1780)



## STUDIES

See the list of Studies for Nicolas' Sermon above.

*Tō peridoxō kai lamprotatō amira tēs Krētēs kai  
hēgapemenō philō*, 'Letter 1: To the most glorious  
and brilliant emir of Crete, my beloved friend'

DATE Between August 913 and February 914

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Greek

## DESCRIPTION

Nicolas wrote this letter following the attack by the Arab admiral Damian (Damiana, Dimyana, Dimnāna) on the people of Cyprus in 911. It is addressed to the emir of Crete, though it has been suggested that it was really intended for the Abbasid Caliph al-Muqtadir (r. 908-32). It would have been sent either with or before the official embassy of the Cypriot Bishop Demetrianus (d. 911-13) to Baghdad to protest against the capture of Cypriots by Damian, and to request their liberation (on similarities between the 'Life of Demetrianus' and this letter, see Jenkins, 'The mission of St Demetrianus of Cyprus', p. 273; Canard, 'Deux épisodes', p. 65, considers that the letter was sent in advance of the embassy).

Nicolas begins his letter by stressing the God-given nature of all earthly authority, both Muslim and Christian. He invokes the belief in one God shared by both Muslims and Christians and urges greater daily contact, especially since the 'brotherhood' between the two is superior in nature because Saracens and Romans are the two greatest powers. This reference, and the forms of address throughout the letter, such as 'your Majesty', 'your God-given authority', and 'my dear Sir', reflect the high esteem in which the Byzantines generally held the Abbasids at this time, as is corroborated by evidence in the Emperor Constantine VII's *De ceremoniis* (q.v.), and Philotheus' *Kleterologion*, where it is laid down that Arab envoys should be given the best places at the emperor's table (cf. Beihammer, 'Reiner Christlicher König', p. 33).

Damian's attack on Cyprus was apparently a reprisal for an earlier attack by the Byzantine admiral Himerius (d. 912/13) in defiance of a long-standing treaty made between the Byzantines and the éArabs in 685. Mysticus rejects the charge that Christian Cypriots broke the

treaty by assisting Himerius instead of helping the Arabs he killed, and complains that an attack on the people of the island rather than on the Byzantine admiral is out of all proportion: Damian is thus both a 'denier of the Christian faith' and 'disgrace to the Saracen religion.'

Nicolas asks the caliph to make good the wrong that has been done, and to restore the Cypriots' rights. He stresses the importance of ending bloodshed and invokes Christ's teachings about compassion and non-violence.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

This and the other diplomatic letters that Nicolas sent to Muslim leaders show that relations between the Byzantines and Muslims at the highest level were not always polemical and aggressive. His reference to practices of the Prophet Muḥammad and his appeal to the caliph to follow them show both knowledge of Islamic history and skill in calling the caliph to obey an unimpeachable authority.

Despite the differences between them, the idea of two lordships in the world suggests a considerable degree of communication and understanding between the two empires. It is maybe not too far-fetched to understand this in terms of the idea of togetherness that features in popular tales, Hadith, and apocalyptic traditions, according to which the two kingdoms of Baghdad and Constantinople, united in religion and blood relations, will rule in a new world.

Despite its rhetorical character, the letter shows the rationale behind the lenient treatment of Muslim prisoners in Constantinople that is attested to by Arab authors. It expresses no less than respect of the other's religious practices even though they differ and rival one's own.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

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*Tō hyperphyestatō paneugenestatō megalodoxō  
philō hymōn ho deina to kata Theou psiphōn  
tou Sarakenōn ethnous tēn epikrateian lachonti  
kai kyriotita*, 'Letter 102: To our most excellent,  
most noble, most glorious friend, by God's  
appointment sovereign Lord over the Saracen  
nation', 'Letter 102'

DATE July 922

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Greek

## DESCRIPTION

This letter, addressed to the Caliph al-Muqtadir, is an official reply to an Abbasid embassy from the vizier ʿAlī ibn ʿĪsā (q.v.), sent between his two vizierates of August 913 to June 917 and March 926 to January 929 to enquire about the conditions of Muslim prisoners in the Byzantine Empire. (Accounts of this embassy are given in Arab sources, such as Abū ʿAlī l-Tanukhī [d. 995], *Nishwār al-muḥādara*, who draws on an eye-witness account.)

The Abbasid embassy evidently complains about the treatment of Muslim prisoners at the hands of the Byzantines, but Nicolas rejects their allegations and instead complains about the caliph's measures against Christians under his rule: in reprisal for the alleged mistreatment of Muslims in Byzantium, Nicolas says the caliph has ordered a number of churches to be destroyed. He acknowledges that the caliph may have been misled into taking these steps, and denies any Byzantine mistreatment of prisoners. In order to prove this, just as the caliph sent Christian representatives to Constantinople, so he will send Muslims to Baghdad on his behalf to attest to the truth of what he is saying.

Nicolas takes pains to assure the caliph – 'mighty sovereign of the Saracen race' – that the Byzantines are concerned for the welfare of prisoners, and explains that it is the policy of the empire to treat prisoners of war as subjects with the privileges of good housing and their own place of worship (*euktirion*; see Reinert, 'Muslim presence', p. 128, n. 12). This, he suggests, contrasts with the ways Muslims treat their Christian prisoners, and he asks ironically what new forms of torture are now being practiced.

Even if the caliph ignores his pleas, Nicolas calls upon him to follow the ancient ways of his faith, referring to the Prophet's written guarantee (*asphaleia*) to his subjects. He concludes by asking the caliph not to listen to lies and to act with benevolence and compassion.

## SIGNIFICANCE

See the comments under Letter 1 above.

## MANUSCRIPTS

See the list under Letter 1 above.

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

*Nicholas I, Patriarch of Constantinople, Letters*, ed. and trans. Jenkins and Westerink, pp. 372-83

Grumel, *Les registes des actes du patriarcat de Constantinople*, i/2,

no. 659

PG 111, cols 309-20

Mai, *Spicilegium Romanum*, x, pp. 375-82

STUDIES

See the list under Letter 1 above.

**Maria Vaiou**

# Al-Ṭabarī

Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr ibn Yazīd al-Ṭabarī

DATE OF BIRTH	Uncertain; probably 839
PLACE OF BIRTH	Āmul, Ṭabaristān
DATE OF DEATH	17 February 923
PLACE OF DEATH	Baghdad

## BIOGRAPHY

Al-Ṭabarī's unusual intellectual abilities were evident from a young age. As early as his mid-teens he began his travels in search of learning, and visited scholars in Rayy, Basra and Kūfa as well as further afield in Syria, Palestine and Egypt. In about 870 he settled in Baghdad, where he followed legal studies under the Shāfi‘ī expert al-Rabī‘ al-Murādī, as well as representatives of other schools, before establishing his own *madhhab* (this barely survived his death). The opinions he expressed about legal matters brought him into bitter conflict with Ḥanbalī scholars, who hounded him both professionally and personally for years.

Even in his own lifetime al-Ṭabarī was recognized for his surpassing expertise in a range of disciplines, including *tafsīr* (to which his Qur’an commentary is an eloquent witness, providing important information about earlier interpretations of verses pertaining to Christianity), medicine (which he may have studied under the convert ‘Alī al-Ṭabarī, whose *Firdaws al-ḥikma* he certainly possessed), and history.

Al-Ṭabarī's comprehensive *Ta’rīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk* (‘History of messengers and rulers’) is regarded as the most important history from the early centuries of Islam. Like other known works from the same period and later, it begins on a universal scale, narrating events from the creation and through the pre-Islamic kingdoms, but then, from the time of Muḥammad onwards, it focuses very much on the succession of rulers in Islam.

The *Ta’rīkh* shows little interest in matters Christian and, unlike many other historical works from the 10<sup>th</sup> century, it contains little about Constantine and other Byzantine emperors (trans. vol. iv, pp. 98

and 117), or the empire itself. Nor does it say much about Christians under Islamic rule, relating isolated events such as 'Ali's execution of Christian converts who reverted to their faith (trans. vol. xvii, pp. 187-88), and the enforcement of *dhimmī* regulations by Hārūn al-Rashīd and al-Mutawakkil (trans. vols xxx, p. 268, xxxiv, pp. 89-94, 129) without comment. Occasional remarks, e.g. that the Christians and Jews exalted themselves after the death of Muḥammad (trans. vol. x, p. 14), and that someone appeared so cowardly he might have been a Christian (trans. vol. xviii, p. 189), point to possible antipathy. It could be that editorial choices and references to selected events betray an opinion that the position of Christians and other *dhimmīs* in society was appropriate (see Ward, 'Expel the Jews and Christians', p. 420).

The Jesus of the *Ta'rikh* fits very easily into an Islamic mold, though with details derived from Gospel accounts (trans. vol. iv, pp. 112-25). His biography begins with the annunciation to Mary and Joseph's doubts, the panic of the devils when he is born, the visit by followers of a star, and the flight to Egypt. It includes his miracles (his spectacular raising of Ham son of Noah is recounted elsewhere, trans. vol. 1, p. 357), the last supper, his arrest and the crucifixion of a substitute, his ascension and the sending out of the disciples, and it ends with a reference to his grave being known near Medina. There is nothing here that shows acceptance of Christian portrayals, or indeed much interest in them.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

Listed by F. Rosenthal, *The history of al-Ṭabarī*, vol. i, Albany NY, 1989, pp. 7-10

### Secondary

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C. Gilliot, 'Les oeuvres de Ṭabarī', *MIDEO* 19 (1989) 49-90

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## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

### *Fatwā*, 'Legal opinion'

DATE Unknown; before 923

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

An opinion given in the name of al-Ṭabarī on the status of non-Muslims in areas under Muslim control is preserved in a treatise written in 1353 by the scholar Taqī l-Dīn al-Subkī. There must be some measure of uncertainty over the authenticity of this opinion, first because al-Subkī declares that he does not know which work it originally came from, and second because its character differs from al-Ṭabarī's known works, for while they comprise collected views of other scholars with al-Ṭabarī's comments, this contains an extended comment by al-Ṭabarī himself.

The opinion focuses on the Hadith, 'Expel the Jews and Christians from the Arabian peninsula (*jazīrat al-'Arab*). Al-Ṭabarī, or the author, takes the term *jazīrat al-'Arab* to represent all Muslim lands, and on this basis rules that Jews and Christians must be expelled from them, 'when there is no specific need for them'. He singles out Muslim cities in particular as places where *dhimmīs* should not be allowed to settle; they cannot be allowed to own property within them, since owning property is like owning a slave, which only a Muslim is allowed to do.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

This harsh opinion reflects an attitude that discouraged in the clearest terms mingling between the faiths. It is possible that, at the time when it was expressed, *dhimmīs* were under few real restrictions and the differences between them and Muslims were blurred to the extent that they were able to move through society without hindrance and also to ascend with impunity to its highest levels.

## MANUSCRIPTS —

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

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## STUDIES

- Y. Friedmann, *Tolerance and coercion in Islam. Interfaith relations in the Muslim tradition*, Cambridge, 2003, pp. 90-93
- S. Ward, 'A fragment from an unknown work by al-Ṭabarī on the tradition "Expel the Jews and Christians from the Arabian Peninsula (and the lands of Islam)"', *BSOAS* 53 (1990) 407-20
- S. Ward, *Construction and repair of churches and synagogues in Islamic law. A treatise by Taqī al-Dīn 'Alī b. 'Abd al-Kāfī al-Subkī*, Yale, 1984 (Diss. Yale University)

**David Thomas**

# Abū l-Qāsim al-Balkhī

Abū l-Qāsim ʿAbdallāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Maḥmūd  
al-Balkhī, al-Kaʿbī

DATE OF BIRTH Mid-9<sup>th</sup> century

PLACE OF BIRTH Balkh

DATE OF DEATH 931

PLACE OF DEATH Balkh

## BIOGRAPHY

Born in Balkh in Khurāsān, al-Balkhī traced his ancestry back to the tribe of Kaʿb. He studied in Baghdad under the grammarian Mubarrad (d. 898) and the Muʿtazilī Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Khayyāṭ (d. 913), and remained in the capital long enough to attract the attention of notable scholars, who reacted to a number of his works. But he spent his mature years back in his native Khurāsān, and must have returned while al-Khayyāṭ was still alive because the two corresponded from their respective homes. In his own town, his ideas won him both admiration and opposition, and his writings again provoked reactions, not least from his contemporary Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī (q.v.), who wrote responses to a number of his works.

The titles of 46 of al-Balkhī's works can be listed (Sayyid, *Faḍl al-iʿtizāl*, pp. 46-55), nearly all of them lost. They included discussions of points of *kalām*, responses to other Muslim thinkers, including Ibn al-Rāwandī, Abū ʿAlī l-Jubbāʿī (q.v.) and the philosopher Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, refutations of opposing points of theology, a Qurʾan commentary, and histories of the Muʿtazila and of towns known to al-Balkhī.

Significant among these works was the *Kitāb al-maqālāt*, 'Doctrines'. Very little is known about it, however, though its title and other works that share this name, as well as scant details about it, indicate that it was concerned with heresiography. Although in the references to it there is no mention of the beliefs of non-Muslims, including Christians, the possibility that they appeared alongside the views and opinions of various Muslim groups cannot be ruled out.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

*Primary*

- Abū Mansūr al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, ed. F. Kholeif, Beirut, 1970, pp. 49-65, and see index
- Ibn al-Jawzī, *Al-muntaẓam fī tārikh al-mulūk wa-l-umam*, 6 vols, Hyderabad, 1938-40, vi, p. 238
- Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta'rikh Baghdād*, ix, p. 384
- Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭabaqāt al-Mu'tazila*, pp. 88-89

*Secondary*

- R. el-Omari, 'Abu l-Qāsim al-Balkhī al-Ka'bi's doctrine of the Imāma', in C. Adang, S. Schmidtke and D. Sklare (eds), *A common rationality. Mu'tazilism in Islam and Judaism*, Würzburg, 2007, pp. 39-57
- C. Gilliot, 'Lexègèse du Coran en Asie Centrale et au Khorasan', *Studia Islamica* 89 (1999) 129-164, p. 150
- J. van Ess, art. 'Abu'l-Qāsem al-Balkī al-Ka'bi', in *Elr*
- F. Sayyid (ed.), *Faḍl al-i'tizāl wa-ṭabaqāt al-Mu'tazila*, Tunis, 1974, pp. 43-56

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Awā'il al-adilla fī uṣūl al-dīn*, 'Fundamentals of the proofs for the principles of religion'

DATE Unknown; before 931

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The *Awā'il al-adilla* appears to have been a compendium of Muslim doctrines according to Mu'tazilī principles, and it was evidently a significant work. It attracted refutations from al-Ash'arī (q.v.), al-Māturīdī (q.v.), Ibn Fūrak, and others, while the historian Abū Naṣr al-Muṭahhar ibn Ṭāhir (or al-Muṭahhar) al-Maqdisī (q.v.) praises its argument for the existence of a Creator (*Kitāb al-bad' wa-l-ta'rikh*, 6 parts in 2 vols, Cairo, s.d., i, p. 135). Al-Ash'arī gives some scanty details about this particular section when he comments that in his own refutation he exposed the obscurities in what al-Balkhī had written about God and refuted his arguments about the divine attributes (Ibn 'Asākir, *Tabyīn kadhib al-muftarī*, ed. Ḥ. al-Qudsī, Damascus, 1928-29, p. 130, trans. R. McCarthy, *The theology of al-Ash'arī*, Beirut, 1953, p. 216, no. 17).

In addition to these sections, which appear to have been proofs for the existence of God and accounts of his being, arguments that might be expected from the opening parts of a systematic treatise, the work also contained a refutation of Christian beliefs and claims, and probably a further refutation of Jewish beliefs. Fragments from al-Balkhī's arguments against the Christians are the only extant parts of the work, surviving as seven brief statements in a refutation made by the Jacobite Ibn Zur'a (943-1008) (q.v.). They suggest that the original refutation ranged over many issues, and that it included a number of arguments familiar from other works.

Fragments 1 and 2 form an introduction in which al-Balkhī explains that the main difficulties between Christians and Muslims concern the Trinity, anthropomorphism and the Prophet Muḥammad, and that his procedure will be to argue against his opponents according to their own methods, while with regard to the Prophet, the argument is the same as against the Jews. In fragment 3, he responds to the proof that God must have a Son because a being with a son is more complete than one without. In fragment 4, he replies to the claim that God must have Word and Life, because otherwise he would be dumb and lifeless. In fragment 5, he argues on the basis of the favorite Muslim proof-text, John 20:17, that if Jesus was God's Son then so must his disciples have been. In fragment 6, he summarizes an argument from the 9<sup>th</sup>-century Baghdad Mu'tazilī al-Iskāfī (d. 854) (q.v.) that if the Father has a Son and they are identical, the Son must also have a son. And in fragment 7, he shows that if Jesus was human Christians commit the sin of unbelief by worshipping him.

Many of these arguments can be found in earlier Muslim refutations: the one in fragment 3, for example, can be traced back to the Melkite Theodore Abū Qurra, possibly via Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq's reply (D. Thomas, *Anti-Christian polemic in early Islam. Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq's 'Against the Trinity'*, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 164-65, and p. 206, n. 67), while the use of John 20:17 was widespread among Muslim polemicists. Their appearance here, together with arguments concerning the prophethood of Muḥammad, which are referred to by Ibn Zur'a but not preserved, suggests that this refutation in the *Awā'il al-adilla* was a compendium of Muslim polemical points familiar from earlier times.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The main significance of the work was that it brought together what appear to have been arguments fashioned through the preceding century, presumably by Baghdad Muʿtazilīs in the main, against the Christian doctrines of the Trinity and the divine Sonship of Christ, together with replies to points about Muḥammad. And it was also significant in the way it followed the same procedure as can be seen in works that start to appear from the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, which was to incorporate a refutation of Christian doctrines into a work in which elements of Muslim theological discourse were also discussed. This juxtapositioning suggests that the refutation of Christian and other non-Muslim teachings (hinted at in the reference to arguments against the Jews) served to prove the strength of Muslim teachings by demonstrating the weakness of alternative forms.

## MANUSCRIPTS —

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

P. Sbath, *Vingt traités philosophiques et apologétiques d'auteurs arabes chrétiens*, Cairo, 1929, pp. 52, 60, 60-61, 62, 64, 65, 66-67 (edition of Ibn Zurʿa's response in which al-Balkī's seven points are briefly quoted)

## STUDIES

Al-Sharfī, *Al-fikr al-Islāmī*, pp. 146-47, and see index

**David Thomas**

# *Life of Euthymius, patriarch of Constantinople*

Unknown Author

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown; probably mid-9<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown  
DATE OF DEATH Unknown; probably early 10<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF DEATH Unknown; probably Psamathia monastery

## BIOGRAPHY

This author was probably a monk of the Psamathia monastery in Constantinople, where Euthymius (843-917) served as abbot. It can be assumed that Euthymius and his anonymous hagiographer were personally acquainted.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### *Primary*

P. Karlin-Hayter, *Vita Euthymii Patriarchae CP. Text, translation, introduction and commentary*, Brussels, 1970, pp. 3-147

### *Secondary*

R.-J. Lilie et al., *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit. II, Prolegomena*, Berlin, 2009, p. 59

D.Z. Sophianos, 'Ho Bios tou Euthymiou (Vita Euthymii) patriarchou Kōnstantinoupoleōs († 917) kai ho chronos syngraphēs autou', *Epetēris Hetaireias Byzantinōn Spoudōn* 38 (1971) 289-96

Karlin-Hayter, *Vita Euthymii*, introduction, p. 9

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

### *Vita Euthymii*, 'The Life of Euthymius, patriarch of Constantinople'

DATE 920s or soon after 932

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Greek

### DESCRIPTION

The work is a hagiographical biography of Euthymius, who was born in 843 in Seleukeia (Isauria), was patriarch of Constantinople from

907 to 912, and died in 917. The single preserved manuscript of the *vita*, which is now lost, was fragmentary: the first chapters, up to the reign of Leo VI (886), including the title page, as well as an extensive passage about the last years of Euthymius' patriarchate and his deposition, are missing (for details about the MS see Karlin-Hayter, *Vita Euthymii*, Introduction, p. 5). Karlin-Hayter (*Vita Euthymii*, Introduction, pp. 9-10) holds that its composition is to be dated between 920 and 925, while Sophianos, 'Ho Bios tou Euthymiou', pp. 289-96, suggests soon after 932.

The main topic of the *vita* is the role played by Euthymius in the political life of 9<sup>th</sup>- and 10<sup>th</sup>-century Constantinople. As the spiritual father of Leo VI, Euthymius was not only appointed abbot of the Psamathia monastery (which was founded especially for him), but was also a member of the senate and a *synkellos*. Euthymius' nomination as patriarch in place of Nicolas I Mysticus was the result of his support of Leo VI in the schism of the Tetragamy (see Karlin-Hayter, *Vita Euthymii*, Introduction, pp. 6-9).

Two passages in the *vita* concern Muslim-Byzantine relations:

1. The report of the revolt of Andronicus Doucas in 906-7.

The *vita* recounts that Andronicus went from Constantinople to Kabala (near Ikonion) to hide. After six months, he turned to the caliphate (ed. Karlin-Hayter, XI, pp. 68-71, 84). More details about this revolt, especially concerning the connections between Andronicus Ducas and the Caliph al-Muktafi and Andronicus' eventual conversion to Islam, are known from Byzantine historiography and Arabic sources (see art. 'Andronicus Ducas', in *PmbZ* II [forthcoming]). It seems that the author of the *vita Euthymii* deliberately mentions this episode in order to highlight the role of Nicolas I Mysticus as a secret supporter of Andronicus Doucas' revolt against the Byzantine emperor (a role which is presented only in this source).

2. The report of the capture of Thessaloniki by the Arabs under the renegade Leo of Tripoli (in Arabic sources known as Ghulām Zurāfa) on 31 July 904.

In this context, the *vita* relates how the Byzantine legate Symeon *asekritēs* saved Thessaloniki from destruction by the Arabs. On a mission from Constantinople to the Bulgars, Symeon was staying in Thessaloniki when the Arabs captured the town. On condition that Leo of Tripoli did not sack the town, Symeon offered him the gift intended for the Bulgars as well as a certain amount of gold (ed.



Karlin-Hayter, XV, pp. 100-1). Here too, more details about the capture of Thessaloniki and the preservation of the town by Symeon are known from Arabic sources and Byzantine historiography (see 'Leon von Tripolis' and 'Symeon asekrites', in *PmbZ II* [forthcoming]).

The author of the *vita* was obviously well informed about the political situation in Constantinople during the reign of Leo VI and his successors. For this reason, the *vita* is highly valued as a historical document, providing details not contained in other sources. At the same time, the author often describes events differently from other sources, mostly deliberately, to defend Euthymius against his opponent Nicolas I Mysticus (his hinting that Nicolas was involved in Andronicus Doucas' revolt). In consequence, a proper determination of the actual course of events is not always possible. For the dependencies and discrepancies between the *vita* and other elements of Byzantine historiography, see Karlin – Hayter, *Vita Euthymii*, Introduction, pp. 11-62.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the *vita* lies in its value as an important source of information concerning the political life of Constantinople in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, especially during the reign of the Emperor Leo VI (886–912). Concerning Muslim-Byzantine relations, the *vita* contains only sporadic information about historical events known in much greater detail from other sources.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

The only manuscript of the *vita*, which was fragmentary, the former Berol. – Gr. f. 55 (11<sup>th</sup> century), disappeared in World War II (for details of the MS see Karlin-Hayter, *Vita Euthymii*, Introduction, pp. 5-6).

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

A. Alexakis, *Gamoi, kēdeies kai autokratorikes metameleies. Ho Vios tou Patriarchē Euthymiou*, Athens, 2006 (edition with modern Greek trans.)

Karlin-Hayter, *Vita Euthymii Patriarchae*, pp. 3-147

C. de Boor, *Vita Euthymii*, Berlin, 1888, pp. 1-78

A. Kazhdan, 'Psamafijskaja chronika', in *Dve vizantijskie chroniki X veka*, Moscow, 1959, 7-139 (Russian trans.)

#### STUDIES

R.-J. Lilie et al., *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit*, pp. 59-61

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- A. Kazhdan, art. 'Euthymios, patriarch of Constantinople', in *ODB*
- A. Kazhdan, art. 'Euthymios, Patriarch von Konstantinopel', in *Lexikon des Mittelalters* iv, Munich 1989, 119-20
- B. Flusin, 'Un fragment inédit de la vie d'Euthyme le patriarche?', *Travaux et Mémoires* 9 (1985) 111-31; 10 (1987) 233-60
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- L.G. Westerink, *Nicholas I Patriarch of Constantinople. Miscellaneous writings*, Washington DC, 1981, no. 194, I, and no. 197, pp. 84-88
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- Karlin-Hayter, *Vita Euthymii Patriarchae CP*, pp. 5-63
- H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich*, Munich, 1959, pp. 549-50
- H. Grégoire, 'Rapport sur la direction d'études et les enseignements de M.H. Grégoire. Cours d'histoire byzantine', *AIPHOS* 12 (1952/53) 642-43
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**Bettina Krönung**

# Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā'ī

Abū Hāshim 'Abd al-Salām ibn Muḥammad ibn  
'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Jubbā'ī

DATE OF BIRTH 861 (or less probably 890)

PLACE OF BIRTH Basra

DATE OF DEATH 933

PLACE OF DEATH Baghdad

## BIOGRAPHY

Abū Hāshim was the son of the leading late 9<sup>th</sup>-century Basra Mu'tazilī Abū 'Alī l-Jubbā'ī (q.v.) and, together with Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī (q.v.), one of his pupils. He also studied under the philologist al-Mubarrad (d. 898; this makes it improbable that he was born in 890). He was the best known among the Basra Mu'tazila in the generation following Abū 'Alī, whom he succeeded as head of the Basra school, and he was remembered among both Mu'tazilīs and their opponents for distinctive contributions to theological thought. Although little definite is known about his life, except that he moved to Baghdad in his latter years, he must have been an impressive intellect because his ideas continued to influence Mu'tazilī thinking more than his father's throughout the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. He is credited by al-Baghdādī and later authors with founding his own theological 'school', the Bahshamiyya.

Abū Hāshim was remembered mainly for his contribution to the long-running debate about the divine attributes, which, since they threatened the absolute unity of God, presented the Mu'tazila with acute difficulties. His solution was to employ the grammatical term *ḥāl*, 'state', in order to define the attributes as descriptive states or modes of God's being (analogous to saying 'Zayd came riding' where the *ḥāl* 'riding' indicates the mode of Zayd's coming), allowing them to be acknowledged in distinction from God himself but not to be accorded any separate identity.

Despite his high standing among later Mu'tazila, none of Abū Hāshim's works has survived, and his ideas are known entirely from references and quotations in later authors. Ibn al-Nadīm (p. 222) lists

only 10 works, though al-Malaṭī (p. 32) refers to 160 on theological controversy alone. Gimaret lists 41 titles, among them works of systematic theology, opinions about details of matters discussed by contemporaries, replies to questions from individuals and refutations of the works of earlier theologians.

Among these lost works was the *Naqḍ al-farīd*, 'Refutation of "The peerless"', a response to Ibn al-Rāwandī's *Kitāb al-farīd*, which questioned the evidence for the prophethood of Muḥammad. The few brief descriptions of arguments from Abū Hāshim's *Naqḍ* that are preserved by 'Abd al-Jabbār (q.v.) and Ibn al-Jawzī (q.v.) (see references in Gimaret, 'Matériaux pour une bibliographie des Ğubbā'ī', pp. 328-29) indicate that a major and maybe the central contention was to prove that the multiple attestations to the Qur'an and Muḥammad's miracles from early generations of Muslims guarantee their authenticity.

While this work was directed at another Muslim, there is a possibility that it either reflected or actually responded to criticisms from Christians that were similar to those made by Ibn al-Rāwandī.

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#### WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

### *Al-masā'il al-Baghdādiyyāt*, 'Baghdad questions', *Al-Baghdādiyyāt*

DATE Before 933, and if written after Abū Hāshim's move to Baghdad late in his life, not much earlier.

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

According to al-Juwaynī (*Al-shāmil fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. A.S. al-Nashshār, F. Budayr 'Awn and S. Muhammad Mukhtār, Alexandria, 1969, p. 471), this lost work consisted of a series of Questions in which views of the Baghdad school of the Mu'tazila were discussed. Extracts in later works show that many of these were concerned with differences between Baṣrī and Baghdādi teachings over theological issues such as human volition, generated acts, and divinely imposed obligation. According to 'Abd al-Jabbār (*Tathbīt*, p. 198), among these was one Question concerned with the refutation of Christians.

It is impossible to say how this may have related to the other contents of the *Baghdādiyyāt*, though in the light of Abū Hāshim's preoccupation with the issue of divine attributes it may have centered on

Christian explanations of the Trinity in terms of the *ṣifāt*, such as that attempted in the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century by the Nestorian 'Ammār al-Baṣrī.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The appearance of this Question among others that appear to be concerned solely with the technicalities of Muslim and Mu'tazilī theology indicates that by the early 10<sup>th</sup> century matters raised by Arabic-speaking Christians, and maybe apologetic defences of their doctrines, were no longer regarded as alien matters to be addressed in isolation. They were treated as part of internal Muslim religious discourse, where they could be subjected to the same logic and reasoning as other issues within *kalām*.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

**David Thomas**

# Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī

Abū Ḥātim Aḥmad ibn Ḥamdān al-Rāzī

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown, mid-9<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF BIRTH District of Bashāwūy near Rayy  
DATE OF DEATH 934  
PLACE OF DEATH Āzarbāyjān

## BIOGRAPHY

Abū Ḥātim was an Ismāʿīlī, and spent his life working for the Ismāʿīlī missionary cause. He was first lieutenant to the *dāʿī* who led the missionary activity in Rayy, and later succeeded as the leading *dāʿī* of the region himself. He claimed to be the *khalīfa* of the hidden Imām, and was one of those who predicted his return in 928. As supporters and opponents of Ismāʿīlism gained control in the region of Rayy and Daylam, and as the cause succeeded and was then lost, he traveled to where the position was strongest. He ended up in Āzarbāyjān in (or after) 931, and appears to have died there. It has been pointed out that, through his commitment to the prediction of the hidden Imām's return, Abū Ḥātim showed strong sympathies with the Qarmaṭian branch of the Ismāʿīlīs, though he was later disappointed in this (Madelung, *Religious trends*, pp. 98-100).

Abū Ḥātim was known for his passion for philology, and one of his best-known works is *Al-zīna*, 'Embellishment', a dictionary of theological terms. He also wrote significant works on legal thinking (which may suggest an effort to establish specific Ismāʿīlī legal principles), and works against other Shīʿī authors. As is demonstrated in the *Aʿlām al-nubuwwa*, he was a keen opponent of the philosopher Abū Bakr al-Rāzī.

In one of his surviving works, the *Kitāb al-iṣlāḥ* ('Correction'), Abū Ḥātim situates Christianity in a hierarchy with other 'reproachable' religions (pt. 3, ch. i). As part of a schematic account of religious history, he compares the Christians to the Rāfiḍa-Shīʿa because, just as the Rāfiḍa accept the authority of Muḥammad and ʿAlī, the Christians accept the authority of Moses and Jesus (unlike the Sunnīs and Jews, who accept only Muḥammad and Moses respectively). They are

‘reproachable’, because they do not accept Muḥammad and the new historical cycle he inaugurated.

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## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

### *A'lām al-nubuwwa*, 'Signs of prophethood'

DATE Unknown; before 934

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

This work is a refutation of the philosopher-physician Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (labelled *mulḥid*, 'heretic', in the text) and his *Kitāb makhāriq al-anbiyā'* ('The fraudulent tricks of the prophets'), which may well have been an attack on the validity of all the revealed religions, including Islam, as sources of knowledge and of individual and communal well-being (see Stroumsa, *Freethinkers*, pp. 95-107). For its attempt to prove the necessity of prophethood and the Imamate (possibly in a Shī'ī sense), the *A'lām* can be regarded as an example of the *a'lām* or *dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, 'signs of prophethood', genre (Walker, 'Political implications', pp. 83-84). It comprises 318 pages in the edition of Ṣ. al-Ṣāwī and G.-R. A'vānī, where the discussion on Jesus, Christians, Christianity and the New Testament can be found on pp. 43-46, 50-54, 58-59, 69-74, 89-92, 123-26, 132, 156-57, 193-98, 278-79, 281, 287. Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d. after 1020), another influential Ismā'īlī

theologian-philosopher, suggests that the debate between these two 'Rāzīs' actually took place in the presence of Mardāwīj ibn Ziyār (d. 935), the founder of the Ziyārid dynasty (931-1090) (al-Kirmānī, *Al-aqwāl*, pp. 2-3).

One of Abū Bakr al-Rāzī's main arguments against revealed religions is that there are a number of points of disagreement (*ikhtilāf*) and contradiction (*tanāquḍ*) in their teachings. Refuting this idea, Abū Ḥātim maintains that, while the external expressions of the religions, such as 'coined parables' (*amthār maḍrūba*) in their scriptures and the words (*alfāz*) of the prophets, may appear to contradict one another, there is agreement between their inner meanings (*ma'ānī*) (*A'lām*, pp. 70-76). Relying on this principle, he dismisses Abū Bakr al-Rāzī's proposition that disputed teachings of the Christians, such as the divine sonship of Jesus and his crucifixion, are evidence of disagreement between the religions. Jesus' description of himself as 'God's Son' and similar expressions in fact denote Jesus' and his disciples' closeness to God (*A'lām*, pp. 161-66).

Contrary to mainstream Muslim denials of Jesus' death on the cross, Abū Ḥātim holds that the Gospel and the Qur'an agree, in the sense that, as with any martyr, Jesus could not be killed in reality (even if he was killed in the body), but rather he was lifted to heaven and lives in the presence of God (*A'lām*, pp. 168-70). (Significantly, in the *Kitāb al-iṣlāḥ*, p. 243, Abū Ḥātim simply points out the disagreement on this between Muslims, Jews and Christians, without any attempt at reconciliation.)

Abū Ḥātim interprets Jesus' miracles of healing the sick and resuscitating the dead as signs of his prophethood, just like the miracles of Moses and Muḥammad. These signs indicate the extraordinary excellence of these figures in such attributes as reason, discernment and control, although Jesus and Moses do not match the excellence of Muḥammad (*A'lām*, pp. 73-76, 88-91). Furthermore, Christianity was superseded by Islam, and its sacred law was discontinued (*A'lām*, pp. 110, 156-59).

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Regarded as a main source of information about the anti-prophetic religious thought of Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, the *A'lām al-nubuwwa* is something rare for its time, as one of only a few texts that recognize that Jesus died on the cross, even if only physically. This recognition can also be found among later Ismā'īlīs such as Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī

(q.v.), who sees the crucified Jesus' naked body as a symbol of the mission of the Qā'im (a messianic figure) of unveiling (*kashf*) all truths (al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-yanābī'*, pp. 73-74; 93-94 [English trans.]; 97-98 [French trans.]). The *A'lām* is one of the oldest extant Ismā'īlī texts in which this view appears. The roughly contemporary Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' (q.v.), who have sometimes been thought to have Ismā'īlī sympathies, express the same view (see Netton, *Muslim Neoplatonists*, pp. 59-62).

Several passages from the New Testament, as well as from the Hebrew Bible, are faithfully quoted in the *A'lām* (though not without minor changes of and additions to the canonical text), making this work a rare example from this time of a detached, objective attitude towards Christianity and its scripture. It should be said, however, that Abū Ḥātim's main purpose in quoting these passages is to present them as evidence of the unity and agreement of all the monotheistic scriptures and teachings, rather than to study them in and for themselves.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

Nine manuscripts of the *A'lām al-nubuwwa* are known, dating from the early 18<sup>th</sup> to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. See:

Halm, *Kosmologie und Heilslehre*, p. 174

Poonawala, *Biobibliography*, p. 39

Talbani, *The debate about prophecy*, pp. 177-78

al-Ṣāwī and A'vānī, *A'lām*, p. 7

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**Shin Nomoto and David Thomas**



# Al-Ash‘arī

Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Ismā‘īl ibn Ishāq al-Ash‘arī

DATE OF BIRTH 873  
PLACE OF BIRTH Basra  
DATE OF DEATH 935  
PLACE OF DEATH Baghdad

## BIOGRAPHY

Al-Ash‘arī was a descendant of the leading Companion of the Prophet, Abū Mūsā l-Ash‘arī. Born in Basra, he became a student of Abū ‘Alī l-Jubbā‘ī (q.v.), the leader of the Basra Mu‘tazila in the later 9<sup>th</sup> century, and followed his teacher’s intellectual lead throughout his early life. But then, at the age of about 40 according to the accounts, he had a decisive change of heart; he turned against Mu‘tazilī principles and set himself to show the fallibility of his former colleagues’ intellectual stance. He made attempts to associate himself with the followers of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, though here he met with some suspicion because the rational arguments he continued to employ went against more traditional methods.

A number of accounts of al-Ash‘arī’s ‘conversion’ are given. Whatever the truth in them, they show a decisive change of heart and mind. This is underlined by the series of refutations that were written by the pupil and his former teacher against each other.

Later in his life al-Ash‘arī moved to Baghdad, where he died and was buried.

As the founder of the main theological school of Sunnī Islam, al-Ash‘arī came to be seen as the master who had overthrown the rationalist Mu‘tazila by using their own argumentative methods against them. The finer details of his approach to theology are, however, largely lost, since, from the 100 or so of his works that can be listed (Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tabyīn*, pp. 128-36, trans. McCarthy, *Theology*, pp. 211-30, drawing upon a list given by Abū Bakr ibn Fūrak, which is in turn based upon a list given by al-Ash‘arī himself in a work written in 932), only a handful of mostly shorter compositions have survived. His longest extant work is the *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, ‘Teachings of

the Muslims', possibly a combination of three shorter works, which gives the fullest available descriptive account of the main opinions of Muslim theological thinkers up to the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Shorter works, with more argumentative content, are the *Luma'*, 'Highlights', which is an epitome of a longer lost work, the *Kitāb al-ibāna 'an uṣūl al-diyāna*, 'Exposition of the principles of religion', at first glance a more conservative work, and the *Kitāb al-ḥathth 'alā l-baḥth*, 'Incitement to investigation', a defence of rational methods. Other works, now lost, included contributions to discussion about the divine attributes, human capability to act, and other theological issues, refutations of Mu'tazilī and other opponents, and answers to questions put by individuals and groups.

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#### WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

### *Maqālāt ghayr al-Islāmiyyīn*, 'The doctrines of non-Muslims'; *Kitāb jumal al-maqālāt*, 'Compendium of doctrines'

DATE Unknown, probably between 900 and 932

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

This work has disappeared almost without trace. It is known through references by Ibn Taymiyya (*Minhāj al-sunna l-nabawiyya*, ed. M.R. Sālim, 9 vols, s.l., 1986, v, p. 283, and *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-mantiqiyyīn*, ed. S. al-Nadwī, Bombay, 1949, p. 334), who says that it was much larger than al-Ash'arī's extensive *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*. The title does not appear in this form in Ibn 'Asākir's list of al-Ash'arī's works, though it is probably the same as the work there called *Kitāb jumal al-maqālāt*, 'Compendium of doctrines', and briefly described as 'about all the doctrines of the atheists and all the teachings of the monotheists' (*Tabyīn*, p. 131, McCarthy, *Theology*, p. 216, no. 19; cf. Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-mantiqiyyīn*, p. 334, n. 1).

If, as its title and Ibn Taymiyya’s comparison suggest, it was similar in character to the *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, it would have been almost entirely descriptive in content, listing the various non-Islamic religions in turn, and giving their main teachings, and maybe as well the main differences of belief and doctrine within them.

It would certainly have included a section on Christianity, and this may have given details of the main sects known in the Islamic world, their differences over the Trinity and person of Christ, and possibly individual scholars’ views.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

If it was like the *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn* in character and content, the work would have been a kind of heresiography, exhibiting a detached, almost antiquarian approach on al-Ash‘arī’s part. He may have intended to describe Christianity and other religions as a preliminary step to writing refutations of them, or he may have been exercising a curiosity about beliefs that in his opinion no longer threatened Islam and could be treated as curiosities.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

### *Al-fuṣūl*, ‘Chapters’

DATE Unknown, probably between about 900 and 932

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

The work has not survived. Ibn ‘Asākir (*Tabyīn*, p. 128, McCarthy, *Theology*, pp. 211-12) describes its contents as follows: ‘A refutation of the atheists and those who are outside the religion of Islam, such as the philosophers, the naturalists, the materialists, the assimilators and those who teach about the eternity of destiny, according to the differences of their views and the varieties of their positions; then he [al-Ash‘arī] refuted in it the Barāhima, the Jews, the Christians and the Zoroastrians. It is a large book (*kitāb*), comprising 12 volumes (*kitāb*): the first volume is an affirmation of speculative thinking and the evidence of reason, and a refutation of those who deny this; then he referred to the pretexts (*‘ilal*) adduced by the atheists and

materialists for the eternity of the world, and argued against these; and he treated in full what Ibn al-Rāwandī mentions in his book known as *The crown* – he is the one who defended in it the teaching about the eternity of the world.'

This was an immense work, and was evidently some kind of systematic treatment of current religious and philosophical teachings, with a clear polemical edge. In this respect it anticipated al-Baqillānī's (q.v.) *Kitāb al-tamhīd*. And like that work, which at its beginning summarizes its intention as mainly apologetic and polemical but in execution contains a good proportion of its author's interpretations of Islam, this work of al-Ash'arī may also have been more positive in its presentation of Islamic teachings than is suggested by this summary.

Christianity is treated alongside other non-Islamic religions (as in al-Bāqillānī's and other later theologians' treatises), as one of a number of accounts of belief opposed to Islam. It is likely that Christian teachings had been pared down to the Trinity and Incarnation, as in other Muslim works from the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries.

As McCarthy suggests, the work that is listed after this, the *Kitāb al-mūjiz*, 'The epitome' (also lost), may have been a shortened form of the *Fuṣūl*; it also comprised 12 volumes, 'according to the various doctrines of those who differ both outside the community and within it' (Ibn 'Asākir, *Tabyīn*, p. 129, McCarthy, *Theology*, pp. 212-13, no. 2). In this case, one of the volumes of this work would also have included something on Christianity.

The *Kitāb al-mūjiz* was itself related to the *Kitāb idāh al-burhān fī l-radd 'alā ahl al-zaygh wa-l-tughyān*, 'The elucidation of the proof in refutation of the people of deviation and excess' (Ibn 'Asākir, *Tabyīn*, p. 130, McCarthy, *Theology*, pp. 214-15, no. 10), which was an introduction to it and contained the same kind of discussions. This, therefore, may also have contained references to Christianity.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

In this early example of an Islamic systematic treatise, Christian teachings have been incorporated into an array of views that rival Islam. They are essentially included in the work in order to be refuted, and presumably to demonstrate the weakness of versions of faith that do not adhere to the strict monotheism of Islam itself.

If this was al-Ash'arī's main purpose in including Christian teachings in the *Fuṣūl*, it shows that the faith was no longer regarded by

Muslims as a serious challenge to Islam since its claims could be overturned by appropriate arguments.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

### *Bayān madhhab al-Naṣārā*, ‘An explanation of the doctrine of the Christians’

DATE Unknown, between 932 and 935

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

The work is lost, and its original title is unknown. All that is known is this brief description of it in a list of al-Ash‘arī’s late works by Ibn Fūrak, which Ibn ‘Asākir incorporated into his list (*Tabyīn*, p. 135; McCarthy, *Theology*, p. 227, no. 84). As the reference indicates, it set out what were in all likelihood the main Christian teachings of the Trinity and Incarnation, possibly going into details about the differences between the denominations. In light of what Ibn Fūrak says about the presumably related refutation of Christianity (see below), it is also likely that it contained details about Christian scripture.

The contents of the work may well have been extracted from the much larger *Kitāb jumal al-maqālāt*.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

It would have been an example of the current Muslim practice of setting out, probably in abbreviated and schematic form, the main Christian doctrines. The intention was almost certainly to detail them as a preliminary to refuting them.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

*Kitāb fihi l-kalām 'alā l-Naṣārā mimmā yaḥtiju bihi 'alayhim min sār al-kutub allatī ya'tarifuna,*  
 'A book containing arguments against the  
 Christians from what can be brought against  
 them from all the books they acknowledge'

DATE Unknown, between 932 and 935

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

Since this description appears in Ibn Fūrak's additions to al-Ash'arī's own list, which Ibn 'Asākir incorporated into his (*Tabyīn*, p. 135, McCarthy, *Theology*, p. 227, no. 86), the work can be dated to the last few years of al-Ash'arī's life. It appears to have focused expressly on Christian scripture, rather than doctrines, and al-Ash'arī must have felt sufficiently familiar with it to use this against Christians themselves. It follows that his attitude towards Christian scripture was that corruption had taken the form of misinterpretation, rather than textual distortion.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The work is reminiscent of the 9<sup>th</sup>-century convert 'Alī al-Ṭabarī's (q.v.) extant *Radd 'alā al-Naṣārā*, which employs biblical verses to expose the inconsistencies in the Creed and Christian beliefs.

It points to the possibility that there was a vigorous tradition of such arguments through the 9<sup>th</sup> and early 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, and that many more Muslims than other evidence suggests knew about anti-Christian proof texts from the Bible.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

**David Thomas**

## ‘Alī ibn ‘Īsā al-Jarrāḥ

Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn ‘Īsā ibn Dāwūd ibn al-Jarrāḥ

DATE OF BIRTH 11 August 859

PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown, possible Dayr Qunnā, south-east of Baghdad

DATE OF DEATH 1 August 946

PLACE OF DEATH Dayr Qunnā or Baghdad

### BIOGRAPHY

‘Abd al-Jabbār (*Tathbīt*, p. 343) names the author of a reply to a letter from the Byzantine emperor as ‘Īsā ibn Dāwūd ibn al-Jarrāḥ. This would appear to identify him as the father of ‘Alī ibn ‘Īsā, ‘the good vizier’, but the circumstances in which ‘Abd al-Jabbār says the letter was written make this identification very unlikely and indicate rather that the author was more probably ‘Alī himself.

In a passage concerned with the uprisings of the Carmathians and incursions by the Byzantines into Islamic territory, ‘Abd al-Jabbār describes how, after the Byzantines captured Melitene, they were informed about the depredations of the Carmathians under Abū Ṭāhir ibn Abī Sa‘īd al-Jannābī, and especially their raid on Mecca, where they murdered pilgrims and carried off the Black Stone from the Ka‘ba. At this, the Byzantine emperor (or rather his representative) wrote a letter (*kitāb*) ‘to the Muslims’, in which he gloated over the Carmathian uprising and their humbling of Islam. This attracted replies from Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā ibn al-Munajjim, *nadīm al-sultān* (q.v.), and ‘Īsā ibn Dāwūd ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *wazīr al-sultān*.

The events to which ‘Abd al-Jabbār refers took place in 930 and the following years, so the earliest at which the emperor’s letter could have been read and answered would have been about 935. By this time, ‘Alī ibn ‘Īsā himself was 66, and his father would have been improbably old. Little is known about ‘Īsā ibn Dāwūd: he was at one time a chief secretary in the government service, but had almost certainly died before ‘Alī ibn ‘Īsā became vizier for the first time in 913 (Bowen, p. 33). He cannot therefore have been the author of this reply, and it seems preferable to read the text as referring to ‘Alī ibn ‘Īsā and not his father. The title *wazīr al-sultān* appropriately applies to ‘Alī but not to ‘Īsā.



‘Alī was involved in politics at the highest level of the caliphate from the time he first became vizier until his death. Born in 859 to a family that had long been in government service, and that prided itself on its Persian origins and possibly Christian connections, he first became a secretary at the age of about 20. He occupied various positions until he was appointed vizier in 913. His administration lasted until 917, when he was forced from office. He was again appointed vizier in 927, but was dismissed after a year. From that time he held a series of lower administrative positions and acted as adviser to a number of viziers. He was repeatedly exiled and fined at the instigation of his opponents, but just as frequently he was brought back to advise on policy and administration. Since he was an intimate of chief government officers and of many caliphs and their families, it is understandable that he would be called upon to write an official reply to a letter such as the one sent by the emperor.

‘Alī was evidently not without some qualifications for this task. He would have known the Jacobite theologian Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī (893-974), because his son ‘Īsā ibn ‘Alī studied with him (Platti, pp. 18-19), and Yaḥyā also wrote a brief reply to a question on the Trinity that was raised in his presence (*jawāb ‘an mas’ala jarrat bayna yaday ‘Alī ibn ‘Īsā ibn al-Jarrāḥ fi l-tawḥīd wa-l-tathlīth*) (G. Endress, *The works of Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī*, Wiesbaden, 1977, pp. 104-5). He must therefore have possessed at least a passing knowledge of Christian theological thinking.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Jawāb ‘an kitāb malik al-Rūm*, ‘Reply to the letter of the Byzantine emperor’

DATE Unknown, about 935

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

‘Abd al-Jabbār says that the emperor’s letter was sent after the Byzantine capture of Melitene, which took place in 934. It would thus have been composed for Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (r. 911-59). It must have been taken to Baghdad in the mid 930s, and ‘Alī ibn ‘Īsā would have sent his reply, which was accompanied by another from Abū l-Ḥasan Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā ibn ‘Alī ibn al-Munajjim (d. 939) (q.v.), soon afterwards.

‘Alī evidently composed this in an official capacity, writing with the title *wazīr al-sultān* together with Abū l-Ḥasan ibn al-Munajjim as *nadīm al-sultān*, and so it may have been largely a diplomatic retort (not unlike al-Shāshī’s response to the letter from Nicephorus Phocas to al-Muṭī’ a few decades later, on which see the entries on ‘Nicephorus Phocas’ representative’ and ‘al-Qaffāl al-Shāshī’). Nevertheless, one may justifiably suppose that it contained a defense of Islam and the Islamic state as founded on the teachings of the Qur’an and the Prophet, and possibly arguments for the supremacy of Islam over Christianity.

Coincidentally, a very different letter sent at about this time from the Byzantine emperor is recorded by Bar Hebraeus. This was written in Greek in letters of gold with an Arabic translation in letters of silver, and it spoke of love between the rulers and sued for peace. It was sent in 937 by Romanus I Lecapenus in his and Constantine’s names, and it was accompanied by precious gifts (*The chronography of Bar Hebraeus*, trans. E.A. Wallis Budge, Amsterdam, 1932, p. 161; this lavishly produced work resembles the elaborately detailed manuscripts that emperors were accustomed to send as diplomatic gifts to neighboring rulers in this period, about which see J. Lowden, ‘The luxury book as diplomatic gift’, in J. Shepard and S. Franklin (eds), *Byzantine diplomacy. Papers from the twenty-fourth spring symposium of Byzantine studies, Cambridge, March 1990*, Aldershot UK, 1992, 248-60). While not beyond the bounds of possibility, it is curious

that this letter should have been sent so soon after the earlier letter, since its contents and intention were so very different. Can there have been some confusion, in which ‘Abd al-Jabbār, 50 years later, turned what was a peaceful initiative into something very different for his own apologetic purpose? If so, the whole historicity of Constantine’s letter and the replies from ‘Alī and Abū l-Ḥasan ibn al-Munajjim is placed in doubt.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The exchange of what have the appearance of official letters shows the virulent hostility which the Islamic and Byzantine empires were capable of expressing in the early and mid-10<sup>th</sup> century.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

**David Thomas**

# Ibn al-Ikhshīd

Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn Maʿjūr Ibn al-Ikhshīd

DATE OF BIRTH 883

PLACE OF BIRTH Baghdad

DATE OF DEATH 938

PLACE OF DEATH Baghdad

## BIOGRAPHY

Ibn al-Ikhshīd (his name also appears as Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn Bayghjūr Ibn al-Ikhshād or al-Ikhshādh or al-Ikhshīdh), whose family owned property in Baghdad, was known for his devotion to learning: Ibn al-Nadīm relates that he gave half of his income to support scholarship and scholars. He died in Baghdad at the age of 56 Islamic years (giving an equivalent birth date of 883), and he lived there throughout his life, apart from a visit to Egypt. He was a member of the Baghdad Muʿtazila, though he came into disagreement with Abū l-Qāsim al-Balkhī (q.v.) and was a vehement opponent of Abū Hāshim al-Jubbāʾī (q.v.). His singular opinions were remembered by ʿAbd al-Jabbār, who remarked that he ‘upheld the least endorsed views’ (Ibn al-Murtaḍā).

These would have been views opposed to Abū Hāshim, though it is difficult to be specific because Ibn al-Ikhshīd’s works have not survived. He wrote a number of books on legal matters, almost certainly a work of *tafsīr*, and he also made an abridgement of Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭabari’s (q.v.) *tafsīr*.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Kitāb al-ma'ūna fī l-uṣūl*, 'Assistance, on the principles'

DATE Before 938

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The work has not survived. Since it was never finished, it may have been begun towards the end of Ibn al-Ikhsīd's life. According to later reports, it was on the principles of Mu'tazilī theology (see Mourad, p. 84), though it also contained an examination of Christian doctrines, possibly among those of other faiths. This examination was evidently very accomplished, since 'Abd al-Jabbār singles it out from other refutations of Christianity as a *qiṭ'a ḥasana*, 'fine piece' (*Tathbīt*, p. 198).

'Abd al-Jabbār gives one further detail about the argumentation of this section, when he relates that, like other polemicists, Ibn al-Ikhsīd related that uneducated Christians believed that God had chosen Mary because he desired her, and also that if he had not been a Begetter he would have been sterile, which is a flaw (*Tathbīt*, p. 148). As 'Abd al-Jabbār says, this report goes back to the 9<sup>th</sup>-century Baghdad Mu'tazilī Abū Ja'far al-Iskāfī (q.v.), from whom it is also reported by Ibn al-Ikhsīd's Baghdad contemporary Abū l-Qāsim al-Balkhī (q.v.). It quite probably reflects an argument in favor of God having a Son that was originally formulated by the Melkite Theodore Abū Qurra (q.v.), though there is no indication that Ibn al-Ikhsīd or any other Muslim who reports it was aware of this.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The inclusion of a set of refutations of Christianity in a work on the principles of Mu'tazilī theology suggests that, like other works that began to appear around the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, the *Kitāb al-ma'ūna* combined the presentation of positive Islamic teachings with the refutation of non-Islamic beliefs. The overall purpose would have been to show the correctness and superiority of the former by demonstrating the inconsistencies in the latter, and the main function served by Christian doctrines in the work was to highlight the comparative strength of Islam. The challenge of Christian beliefs as rivals to Islam was no longer considered acute.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

**David Thomas**

# Sa'īd ibn Baṭrīq

Eutychius of Alexandria

DATE OF BIRTH 17 August 877  
PLACE OF BIRTH Fustāṭ, Egypt  
DATE OF DEATH 12 May 940  
PLACE OF DEATH Fustāṭ, Egypt

## BIOGRAPHY

Little can be established with certainty about the life and career of Sa'īd ibn Baṭrīq, a 10<sup>th</sup>-century Melkite patriarch of Alexandria. The earliest source to provide some detail is a 13<sup>th</sup>- or 14<sup>th</sup>-century copy of Ibn Baṭrīq's historiographical treatise, allegedly written by the patriarch himself (Ibn Baṭrīq, *Eutychii*, ed. Cheikho, Carra de Vaux and Zayyat, ii, pp. 69-70, 86-87). It is here that we are informed for the first time that Ibn Baṭrīq, the *mutaṭabbib*, i.e. a practitioner of medicine, was born in Fustāṭ in the eighth year of the caliphate of al-Mu'tamid (r. 870-92), i.e. 877, and was appointed in 933 as patriarch of Alexandria by the Caliph al-Qāhir (r. 932-34), whereupon he was named Eutychius; he died in 940.

Michel Breydy suggests fixing the year of his election as 935 (Breydy, *Études*, p. 5). Further information about Ibn Baṭrīq is given in the historiographical treatise of Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd al-Anṭākī (d. approximately 1066), the Melkite historian who continued Ibn Baṭrīq's historiographical endeavor (al-Anṭākī, *Kitāb al-dhayl*, ed. and trans. Kratchkowsky and Vasiliev, pp. 713-19). Al-Anṭākī relates that Ibn Baṭrīq died in Egypt in 328 AH, following an illness. It was surmised that he contracted his fatal illness in the course of practicing medicine. As for his ecclesiastical office, according to Breydy, Ibn Baṭrīq had not received the regular intellectual and theological training of the Melkite clergy of his time and was well immersed in the Fustāṭ milieu of Muslim traditionists (Breydy, *Études*, p. 1).

Al-Anṭākī also reports that in Ibn Baṭrīq's time there was a great dispute between the latter and members of his flock. The source of this dispute, we are told, was opposition to the patriarch that came from the direction of a group of physicians from Fustāṭ. The opposition, led by a one of the Melkite bishops, reached the point where

Ibn Baṭrīq's name was banned in some of the Egyptian bishoprics and their churches.

Al-Anṭākī also appears to be the source on which a substantial part of Ibn Baṭrīq's biography in the 13<sup>th</sup>-century biographical dictionary of Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a (d. 1270) is based. Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a attributes three works to Ibn Baṭrīq: *Kitāb fī l-ṭibb, 'ilm wa-'amal*, 'A treatise on medicine, theory and practice' or *Kunnāsh [fī-l-ṭibb]*, 'The principles of medicine', of which a manuscript was found in Aleppo (Sbath, *Al-Fihrist*, i, p. 9, no. 23; Sezgin, *GAS* iii, p. 297); *Kitāb al-jadal bayn al-mukhālif wa-l-Naṣrānī*, 'A treatise on the debate between the heretic and the Christian'; and *Kitāb naẓm al-jawhar*, 'The string of pearls'. A work that has been wrongly attributed to Ibn Baṭrīq is the *Kitāb al-burhān*, 'The book of proof', now believed to have been composed by Peter of Bayt Ra's (q.v.).

Of the above-mentioned works of Ibn Baṭrīq, however, it is the third, *Kitāb naẓm al-jawhar*, also known as *Kitāb al-ta'rikh al-majmū' alā l-taḥqīq wa-l-taṣdīq* ('The book of history, compiled through investigation and verification') for which the Melkite patriarch is most famous. This is a historiographical treatise, called the *Annales* by Edward Pococke in his edition and Latin translation of the work in 1658-59. According to al-Anṭākī, Ibn Baṭrīq finished writing it in 938, two years before his death in 940.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

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*Secondary*

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WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Kitāb al-ta'rikh al-majmū' 'alā l-taḥqīq wa-l-taṣdīq*, 'The book of history, compiled through investigation and verification'; *Kitāb naẓm al-jawhar*, 'String of pearls', also known as the *Annales*

DATE 938

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The Arabic historiographical treatise known as the *Annales*, following its Latin translation by E. Pococke in 1658-59, is also known as *Kitāb nazm al-jawhar*, 'String of pearls' and *Kitāb al-ta'rikh al-majmū' alā l-tahqīq wa-l-taṣdīq*, 'The book of history, compiled through investigation and verification.' Although the work has often been referred to as a Byzantine universal history, nothing in the composition suggests its classification within a particular category of historiographical works. Rather, the work reflects a mixture of diverse historiographical traditions, among which one can list Eusebian chronography, Sasanian and Muslim historiographies, Palestinian hagiography, and legendary tales of various sorts. It was completed, according to al-Anṭākī, in 938.

The oldest manuscript copy of the work, MS Sinai, Monastery of St Catherine – Ar. 582 (163 folios), represents the oldest known text of the *Annales*. Indeed, Michel Breydy, who has presented the most detailed study of the manuscript, has argued that the text is the autograph of Ibn Baṭrīq himself. The manuscript has the dimensions of a notebook and consists of 163 folios. According to Breydy, it lacks roughly two parts of the beginning of the original work and six of its end. Furthermore, the part referring to the caliphs al-Qāhir (r. 932-34) and al-Rāḍī (r. 934-40), could not have been composed by Ibn Baṭrīq himself. The original manuscript may have consisted of 242 folios, of which 23 are missing at the beginning and about 56 at the end. A comparison of the text of MS Sinai Ar. 582 with the texts conserved in later manuscripts, reveals evident traces of successive manipulations, as well as divergences of the later texts from the earliest (and possibly original) version.

Breydy's analysis has yielded what is now a generally accepted distinction between MS Sinai Ar. 582 and those that came after it, thus designating the former as part of a so-called Alexandrian recension and the latter as a so-called Antiochene recension. Whereas MS Sinai Ar. 582 is believed to have originated in Alexandria, perhaps written by the patriarch himself, the subsequent manuscripts, of which the earliest can be dated to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, appear to have originated in Antioch.

Ibn Baṭrīq, like Muslim traditionists (*muḥaddithūn* or *ahl al-ḥadīth*), did not compose a historiographical work in the scientific sense of the word. He compiled traditions whose historical value remains to be established. The scheme of the principal sections of the work is as follows: 1) Biblical history – from the creation of Adam till the reform of Joshua son of Jehozadak, following the return of the

Babylonian captives to Judah. In MS Sinai Ar. 582, where the two first sections are missing, this first section begins with the rescue of Moses from the waters of the Nile. 2) Secular history – up to the coming of Christ, including the history of ancient Persia, Alexander the Great, Cleopatra, and the Roman emperors of that period. 3) Evangelical history – from the birth of Christ till the end of the reign of Constantine, with special reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, the Diocletian persecutions, the legend of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus under the emperor Decius, and the heresy of Arius. 4) Secular and religious history of the Near East – until the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, containing details regarding the Emperor Theodosius and the Patriarch Theophilus of Alexandria, the rest of the legend of the Seven Sleepers, with fragments of Sasanian history and hagiographical extracts on the monks of Palestine, Epiphanius of Cyprus, Apollinarius of Alexandria, and the Emperor Maurice, with the legend of the brigand of Thrace. This part concludes with the last Sasanian kings, the recovery of Jerusalem, the life of John the Almsgiver, and the exploits of the Emperor Heraclius. 5) Arab-Muslim history – from the migration (*hijra*) of Muḥammad till the period of Ibn Baṭrīq, including the Arab conquest of south Palestine, the history of Sophronius of Jerusalem, and the Muslim takeover of Damascus, the rest of Palestine and Egypt. Whereas the continuation of the narrative of the last section in the Antiochene recension follows the order of succession of the caliphs till al-Rāḍī in 935, in MS Sinai Ar. 582 it is mutilated after f. 161, where we find only two fragments of this continuation. These fragments concern the end of the history of Thomas of Jerusalem and the beginning of the narrative about the Coptic revolt in Lower Egypt during the reign of the Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mūn.

In addition to parts of the Bible, Ibn Baṭrīq also made extensive use of Judaeo-Christian apocrypha, such as the *Cave of treasures*, *The lives of the prophets*, and *The martyrdom and ascension of Isaiah*. It is unclear to which version of the Bible Ibn Baṭrīq had access or whether he did in fact rely on a written version of it. The section on secular history is mainly based on extracts taken from the famous *Alexander Romance*. The third section, dealing with the life of Christ and the sending out of the Apostles, depends on chapters of the New Testament and the Acts of the Apostles. In the fourth section, which deals with the secular and religious history of the Near East, we can verify a number of immediate sources in Arabic hagiographic writings, well disseminated among the Melkites of Palestine and Sinai. These

include the *Life of St Epiphanius of Cyprus* and Cyril of Scythopolis' (d. 558) *Lives* of St Euthymius and St Sabas. Finally, a particular work from which Ibn Baṭrīq drew much of his narrative is the Arabic translation of the history of the Sasanid kings, prepared by the Muslim convert 'Abdallāh ibn al-Muqaffa' (d. c. 756). A strikingly literal correspondence between the last section of MS Sinai Ar. 582 and Muslim sources that conserve a textual transmission that had originated with the Egyptian *muḥaddith* 'Uthmān ibn Ṣāliḥ (d. 834) regarding the conquest of Egypt, allows us to believe that Ibn Baṭrīq had similarly transcribed extracts from other Muslim authors as well.

In addition to his explicit reliance on Muslim sources for relating the period following the Muslim conquest, Ibn Baṭrīq's work suggests an awareness of the Muslim environment. Two examples are particularly striking. The first is his presentation of Judaeo-Christian apocryphal narratives in a manner that had been adapted by Muslim authors, particularly narrators of *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* ('Tales of the prophets'). We see this, for example, in his reference to Muslim prophets such as Shu'ayb and al-Khiḍr (Sinai Ar. 582, fols 1, 5, 19). The second example pertains to his description of the encounter between the second caliph, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 644) and the patriarch of Jerusalem, Sophronius (d. 638). The version of events presented in the *Annales* is the only extant account that includes a commitment on the part of the new Muslim sovereigns to preserve the rights of the Christians in the Holy City (fols 138-40).

The *Annales* also stand in affinity with the works of Ibn Baṭrīq's Muslim contemporaries. Thus, for example, there appears to be a remarkable correlation between the *Annales* and al-Ya'qūbī's *History* in their account of the biblical history of the patriarchs up to the time of Abraham. It has therefore been suggested that the two authors were making use of a common Arabic translation of the *Cave of treasures* (Griffith, 'The Gospel, the Qur'ān'). Furthermore, not only does the Muslim historian and geographer al-Mas'ūdī (d. 956) inform us that he has seen Ibn Baṭrīq's work, but various parts in his historiographical composition, *Murūj al-dhahab* ('The meadows of gold'), suggest that he may even have consulted Ibn Baṭrīq's work before putting down his own narrative. The Melkite historian Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd al-Anṭākī (d. c. 1066) considered himself as the formal continuator of Ibn Baṭrīq's historiographical endeavor through his work *Kitāb al-dhayl* ('The supplement'). As for later reliance on Ibn Baṭrīq's work, one can mention among the authors who made

use of the *Annales* the Catholic Archbishop William of Tyre (d. 1186), who in his chronicle relied on Ibn Baṭrīq's list of Muslim caliphs, and the Coptic historians Ibn al-Rāhib (d. c. 1290-95) and al-Makīn (d. 1273), who had adopted the literary model found in Ibn Baṭrīq's composition. It is this latter literary tradition that later also served the Mamlūk historian al-Maqrīzī (d. 1442).

#### SIGNIFICANCE

While Ibn Baṭrīq's narrative is not always loyal to its sources (for example, in the case of the reference to the Sasanids, which was most likely borrowed from 'Abdallāh ibn al-Muqaffa's translation), it should be noted that we have no way of ascertaining whether the sources on which the *Annales* are based were revised directly by Ibn Baṭrīq or by intermediate authors. In fact, the only parts of the work that we can attribute to Ibn Baṭrīq with confidence are those few instances of personal reflections the historian chose to insert in his narrative. That said, some consideration should be given to the role played by Ibn Baṭrīq both in selecting his sources and in dictating the thematic arrangement of his work.

The *Annales* are currently extant in some 30 manuscripts, copied both in the Near East and in the West. However, nothing in Ibn Baṭrīq's biography helps to explain the importance of his work. The historiographical objective of the work notwithstanding, it has been suggested that it was its apologetic aspect that has sustained its relevance over the centuries. The treatise triggered an apologetic literary response by some of the leading theologians of Ibn Baṭrīq's time and afterwards, such as the Copt Sāwīrus (Severus) ibn al-Muqaffa (d. after 987) (q.v.), the East Syrian Iliyyā (Elias) of Nisibis (d. c. 1049) (q.v.), and the Muslim Ḥanbalī scholar Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) (q.v.). Like his Melkite contemporaries, Ibn Baṭrīq appears to have been preoccupied with matters pertaining to his denominational affiliation, as can be discerned from various parts in the work that refer to rival Christian groups. At the same time, however, he was firmly embedded within a Muslim cultural milieu, which increases our confusion as to the author's objectives, particularly as we note his resort to Muslim sources, to the extent of exact quotation.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

For a detailed survey of the extant manuscripts, see Breydy, *Études*, ch. iv; Graf, *GAL* ii, pp. 34-35; Nasrallah, *HMLEM*, ii.2, pp. 26-28. See also B. de Slane, *Catalogue des mss. orientaux de la Bibliothèque*

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**Uriel Simonsohn**



# Abū l-Ḥasan ibn al-Munajjim

Abū l-Ḥasan Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā ibn ʿAlī ibn Yaḥyā ibn  
Abī Manṣūr ibn al-Munajjim al-Nadīm

DATE OF BIRTH 875  
PLACE OF BIRTH Probably Baghdad  
DATE OF DEATH 939  
PLACE OF DEATH Probably Baghdad

## BIOGRAPHY

Abū l-Ḥasan Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā was the son of Abū Aḥmad Yaḥyā ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Munajjim (855-912/13) and the grandson of Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Yaḥyā (815-88) (q.v.), who may both have taken part in written exchanges with the Christians Ḥunayn ibn Iṣḥāq (q.v.) and Qusṭā ibn Lūqā (q.v.).

Ibn al-Nadīm remarks on Abū l-Ḥasan Aḥmad's refinement (which would be expected from a companion of the caliph) and acknowledges his expertise in theology. He also says that he was an expert on the legal thinking of Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭabarī (q.v.). Ibn al-Murtaḍā largely concurs with this, though he does not consider that Abū l-Ḥasan was among the leaders of theology (*min al-shuyūkh*). Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī thinks he was one of the foremost members of the Muʿtazila in his time.

Among Abū l-Ḥasan's books were two on theology, *Al-tawḥīd* ('[Divine] oneness'), and *Al-radd ʿalā l-mushabbihā* ('Refutation of the anthropomorphists'), and two on al-Ṭabarī's jurisprudence.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, pp. 219-20 (margin), 292  
Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Taʾrikh Baghdād*, v, p. 424  
Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭabaqāt al-muʿtazila*, pp. 100, 102

### Secondary

M. Fleischhammer, art. 'al-Munadjjim, Banū', in *EL2*  
S.M. Stern, 'Abū ʿIsā ibn al-Munajjim's chronography', in S.M. Stern, A. Hourani and V. Brown (eds), *Islamic philosophy and the classical tradition*, Oxford, 1972, 437-66, pp. 437-39

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## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

### *Kitāb ithbāt nubuwwa Muḥammad*,

### 'Confirmation of the prophethood of Muḥammad'

DATE Unknown, before 939

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

Writing in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century, 'Abd al-Jabbār (q.v.) (*Tathbīt*, p. 352) mentions a work by Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā ibn al-Munajjim, together with works by Ibn Qutayba (q.v.), al-Wāsiṭī (q.v.) and al-Zuhayrī (q.v.), that was written in response to Q 21:105-7, in which a link can be made between earlier revelations, the Qur'an and Muḥammad. The work employed verses from the Bible in order to explain and defend the prophethood of Muḥammad.

This must have been the work which Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 220 (margin), names as the *Kitāb ithbāt nubuwwa Muḥammad*. Nothing is known about its precise contents, though an idea is given by 'Abd al-Jabbār, who briefly paraphrases some of the biblical verses that must have appeared in Abū l-Ḥasan's and the other works. Among them, the reference to the identification of Muḥammad as the 'descendant of Ismā'īl, son of Hagar and Abraham, who rises up from Fārān', combines a clear allusion to Deuteronomy 33:2-3, a favourite proof verse for Muslim authors (see C. Adang, *Muslim writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible, from Ibn Rabban to Ibn Hazm*, Leiden, 1996, p. 264, and index), with possible use of works such as the mid-9<sup>th</sup>-century 'Alī al-Ṭabarī's *Kitāb al-dīn wa-l-dawla* (q.v.), where Ismā'īl and Hagar feature prominently.

While this ascription by 'Abd al-Jabbār seems to be secure, it must be noted that a work with the same or a similar name is also attributed to Abū l-Ḥasan's uncle, Abū 'Isā Aḥmad (q.v.), or possibly to his own father. Confusion over the names of this family of prominent courtiers was common from a relatively early stage, so it cannot be entirely ruled out that 'Abd al-Jabbār was mistaken in attributing the work to the son rather than to the uncle or father.

## SIGNIFICANCE

To be singled out half a century after it was written, the work must have been a significant example of the ‘proofs of prophethood’ genre. It underlines how firmly established this kind of work had become by the early or mid-10<sup>th</sup> century, and also how it was able to draw upon a tradition of Bible-based arguments in defense of Muḥammad.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

### *Jawāb ‘an kitāb malik al-Rūm*, ‘Reply to the letter of the Byzantine emperor’

DATE About 935

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

Elsewhere in the *Tathbīt* (p. 343), ‘Abd al-Jabbār refers to a reply which Abū al-Ḥasan wrote to a letter (*kitāb*) from the Byzantine emperor. In his letter, which was written after the Byzantine capture of Melitene in 935, the emperor rejoiced at the misfortunes brought on the Islamic state by the Carmathians, and especially their attacks on Mecca and murder of pilgrims. This emperor would have been Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (r. 911-59), and he was referring in particular to the depredations of Abū Ṭāhir al-Jannābī, which culminated in the looting of the Ka’ba in January 930. His letter must have arrived in Baghdad in the mid 930s, and Abū al-Ḥasan would have written his reply soon afterwards.

Abū al-Ḥasan evidently composed this in an official capacity – ‘Abd al-Jabbār calls him here *nadīm al-sultān*, ‘his majesty’s companion’, and his reply was accompanied by another from ‘Alī ibn ‘Īsā ibn Dāwūd ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *wazīr al-sultān*, ‘his majesty’s minister’ (q.v.; in the text his name appears as ‘Īsā ibn Dāwūd ibn al-Jarrāḥ, but he is more likely to have been ‘Īsā’s son ‘Alī). And so it may have been mainly a diplomatic retort. Nevertheless, one may justifiably suppose that it contained a defense of Islam and the Islamic state as founded on the teachings of the Qur’an and the Prophet, and may even have incorporated the same biblical verses as Abū l-Ḥasan’s *Ithbāt*

*nubuwwat Muḥammad* to demonstrate the supremacy of Islam over Christianity.

For further discussion about the circumstances and historicity of this exchange of letters, see the entry on ‘Alī ibn ‘Īsā.

SIGNIFICANCE

The exchange of official letters shows the virulent hostility that existed between the Islamic and Byzantine empires at times in the early 10<sup>th</sup> century.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

**David Thomas**

# Al-Qaḥṭabī

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Qaḥṭabī

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown  
PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown  
DATE OF DEATH Before 940  
PLACE OF DEATH Unknown

## BIOGRAPHY

The author of a refutation of Christianity that is virtually unknown is himself almost completely unknown. Ibn al-Nadīm links an al-Qaḥṭabī with a certain Ibn al-Baṭrīq, saying that the latter translated a work of the Greek physician Alexander of Tralles for him (*Fihrist*, p. 352), and he also lists the Christian sects that appeared in al-Qaḥṭabī's refutation of Christianity (p. 405). In addition to this, Abū Maṣṣūr al-Baghdādī says that Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Qaḥṭabī was a Mu'tazilī and a contemporary of Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī (q.v.), but deserted the Mu'tazila for belief in metempsychosis and other unorthodox teachings (Halkin, pp. 93-94, n. 8, and see *Fihrist*, ed. G. Flügel, p. 342, n. 2). And he also summarizes a brief reflection from al-Qaḥṭabī on Q 59:16 (*Farq*, p. 259, trans. Halkin, p. 98, van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, vi, p. 221).

The Ibn al-Baṭrīq mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm can presumably be identified as Sa'īd ibn Baṭrīq (877-940), who was elected Melkite Patriarch of Alexandria in 933 (though Dunlop, p. 146, identifies him as Yaḥyā ibn al-Baṭrīq). This suggests that al-Qaḥṭabī was intimate with senior church figures in Egypt, and would have been in his maturity in the early years of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. As patron of a work of translation, he was probably a man of means; he seems to have been interested in a range of intellectual pursuits, but was led by speculative thinking from rational Islamic beliefs into religiously reprehensible teachings.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### *Primary*

Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*

Abū Mansūr al-Baghḏādī, *Al-farq bayn al-fīraq*, ed. M. Badr, Cairo, 1910; trans. A.S. Halkin, *Moslem schisms and sects. Al-farq bain al-fīraq, being the history of the various philosophic systems developed in Islam. Part 2*, Tel Aviv, 1935

*Secondary*

J. van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra, eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam*, 6 vols, Berlin, 1991-97, iii, pp. 442-45

H. Preissler, 'Die arabische "Sektenliste" des Qaḥṭabī', in H. Preissler and H. Seiwert (eds), *Gnosisforschung und Religionsgeschichte*, Marburg, 1994, 495-506, pp. 495-98

J. van Ess, *Frühe mu'tazilitische Häresiographie*, Beirut, 1971, pp. 70-71

D.M. Dunlop, 'The translations of al-Biṭrīq and Yaḥyā (Yuḥannā) b. al-Biṭrīq', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1959) 140-50

WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Al-radd 'alā al-Naṣārā*, 'Refutation of the Christians'

DATE Unknown; before about 940

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

All that has survived from this work is a list of the names of 60 Christian sects, as given by Ibn al-Nadīm (*Fihrist*, p. 405), who also supplies its generic title. It is unclear whether al-Qaḥṭabī went on to describe each sect, in the way that al-Nāshī' al-Akbar (q.v.) does in his work from the same period, or whether he merely listed the names as part of a general description of Christianity that may have focused on teachings or some major sects.

Van Ess (*Häresiographie*, pp. 81-83) shows that this list is closely related to similar lists of Christian sects that appear in the works of Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq (q.v.) and al-Nāshī' al-Akbar. The relationships indicate that al-Qaḥṭabī was relying directly upon Abū 'Īsā, and independently using the source shared by al-Nāshī'. The Arabic forms of sect names indicate that this source reflected a Syriac original, and it also appears to have regarded Nestorian beliefs as normative (see D. Thomas, *Christian doctrines in Islamic theology*, Leiden, 2008, pp. 27-28). This suggests Iraq as a possible place of writing, where Syriac predominated as an ecclesiastical language and the Nestorians were the strongest Christian group.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Al-Qaḥṭabī's knowledge of Christian sects, and his interest in them, suggests a lively concern to know about the characteristics of this rival faith and some thoroughness in exploring them.

## MANUSCRIPTS —

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

## STUDIES

Preissler, 'Die arabische "Sektenliste" des Qaḥṭabī', pp. 499-506

**David Thomas**

# Maḥbūb ibn Qusṭanṭīn al-Manbijī

Agapios (Aghābiyūs) of Manbij (Mabbūg, Hieropolis),  
Agapius of Manbij

DATE OF BIRTH Last quarter of the 9<sup>th</sup> c.  
PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown  
DATE OF DEATH After 942  
PLACE OF DEATH Presumably Manbij

## BIOGRAPHY

We know very little about the author of an early Christian Arabic universal history that is usually (but rather oddly) known as *Kitāb al-‘unwān*, ‘The Book of the title’. The author’s name is given in the manuscripts Sinai Ar. 456 and 580 as Maḥbūb ibn Qusṭanṭīn *al-Rūmī al-Manbijī*, that is, the ‘Byzantine’ from Manbij (Mabbūg or Hierapolis, northeast of Aleppo in Syria); the title-statement of the MS of Florence (BML Or. 132) identifies him as the *bishop* of that city. His name is also often given in its Greek form, Agapios (*Aghābiyūs*).

Maḥbūb was apparently at work on the latter part of his history in the early 940s; at one point he states that ‘from the reign of the Arabs until the present, 1273 in the years of Alexander [Dhū l-Qarnayn], are 330 years and 8 months’ (Vasiliev, *Kitāb al-‘unwan* ii.2 [PO 8.3], p. 456). The latter, understood as a *hijrī* date, converts to May of AD 942 (in fact, 1253, not 1273, in the Seleucid era). Not too long afterwards, the exceptionally well-read Muslim scholar al-Mas‘ūdī (q.v.) saw a copy of the book and praised it highly in his *Kitāb al-tanbīh* (completed in 956).

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### *Primary*

For the editions of Maḥbūb’s universal history, see below.

Al-Mas‘ūdī, *Kitāb al-tanbīh wa-l-ishrāf*, ed. M.J. de Goeje, Leiden, 1894, p. 154; B. Carra de Vaux (trans.), *Maçoudi. Le livre de l’avertissement et de la revision*, Paris, 1896, p. 212



ʿIzz al-Dīn Abū Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn al-Shaddād, *Al-aʿlāq al-khaṭīra fī dhikr umarāʾ al-Shām wa-l-Jazīra. Tārīkh Lubnān wa-l-Urdun wa-Falastīn*, ed. Sāmī al-Dahhān, Damascus, 1962, pp. 129, 187; *Al-juzʾ al-thālith [Tārīkh al-Jazīra]*, ed. Yaḥyā ʿAbbāra, Damascus, 1982, p. 83 (and see the editor's Introduction, p. 35, and the biographical notice on Maḥbūb at p. 697)

*Secondary*

M. Breydy, 'Richtigstellungen über Agapius von Manbij und sein historisches Werk', *OC* 73 (1989) 90-96

Nasrallah, *HMLEM* ii.2, pp. 50-52

Sezgin, *GAS* i, p. 338

Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 39-40

A.A. Vasiliev, 'Agapius de Manbidj, historien chrétien arabe du X<sup>e</sup> siècle' [in Russian], *Vizantijskij Vremennik* 11 (1904) 574-87

WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Kitāb al-tārīkh*, 'The book of history'; *Kitāb al-unwān*, 'The book of the title'; 'Histoire universelle', 'Historia universalis'

DATE 942 or shortly thereafter

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

The odd title by which Maḥbūb's universal history is usually known, *Kitāb al-unwān*, 'The book of the title', requires comment. Recent students of the work (Breydy, Hoyland, Samir) all point out that the actual title of the work, preserved in Sinai Ar. 580 (and also in Sinai Ar. 456), is simply *Kitāb al-tārīkh*, 'The book of history'. Breydy ('Richtigstellungen', pp. 92-93) points out that the word *unwānuhu* ('its title') appears to be an addition to the opening paragraph of the work in Sinai Ar. 580, indicating where the title is to be found; later copyists incorporated the addition into the title itself. (See the texts in Vasiliev, *Kitāb al-unwan* i.1 [PO 5.4], p. 565.)

Maḥbūb's work is a universal history in two parts: the first relates the history of the world from the creation through the Incarnation, while the second begins with the Roman Empire and the birth of Christ. Presumably Maḥbūb recorded events up until his own day (942 or afterwards), but the unique manuscript that preserves the second part of his history breaks off at the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Leo IV (r. 775-80).

Maḥbūb made use of a variety of sources in his history, including (for the first part of his work) a variety of apocryphal and legendary sources; scholars of the ancient world and early Christianity have found a number of passages of interest (see the works by Dubarle, Pines, Vajda, and the bibliography listed under 'Literatur zu Einzelheiten' in Graf, *GICAL* ii, p. 40). For the Islamic period, Hoyland has found that most of Maḥbūb's material comes from the 'Syriac common source' (for Theophanes, Dionysius of Tellmahre, and Maḥbūb) tentatively identified with the *History* of Theophilus of Edessa (Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 400-8, 441-42; Hoyland also discerns Maḥbūb's use of a Muslim chronology). Just so, Maḥbūb provides an important witness to an important source for the early history of Islam; the use to which Maḥbūb's *History* has been put may be seen in a variety of works treating topics of early Islamic history (e.g. the works of Hoyland, Kaegi, and Gero included below).

Maḥbūb's history has enjoyed a good reputation. As mentioned above, it was praised by al-Mas'ūdī. It was quoted a number of times by the Muslim geographer Ibn al-Shaddād (d. 1285; see the references to his works above). Coptic historians made use of it, notably the great 13<sup>th</sup>-century historians al-Nushū' Abū Shākir ibn al-Rāhib and al-Makīn Jirjis ibn al-'Amīd (see Sidarus, den Heijer, and also Cheikho, *Agapius*, pp. 381-409, where there is a lengthy list of excerpts from Maḥbūb found in al-Makīn's universal history).

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Maḥbūb's universal history is of significance to the history of Christian-Muslim relations both by virtue of its preservation of an early witness to the rise of Islam, the Arab conquests, and the Umayyad era; and by its contributions to a joint historiographical enterprise, in which Christians and Muslims shared texts and techniques.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

See Nasrallah, *HMLEM* ii.2, pp. 51-52, for lists of MSS of the work, and Breydy, 'Richtigstellungen', for a number of observations about the MSS.

For Part 1 of Maḥbūb's history (from the creation to the Incarnation), the fundamental manuscript is:

MS Sinai, Monastery of St Catherine – Ar. 580 (usually dated 989; but see Breydy, 'Richtigstellungen', pp. 93-94, who redates it to the later 13<sup>th</sup> century)

For Part 2 of Maḥbūb's history (the part of special interest for the history of Christian-Muslim relations), there is a single known manuscript:

MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana – Or. 132 (1288)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Salām Tadmurī, *Al-muntakhab min Tārīkh al-Manbijī*, Tripoli, 1986 (not seen)

S. Pines, *An Arabic version of the Testimonium Flavianum and its implications*, Jerusalem, 1971, pp. 7-13 (English trans. of a passage from Maḥbūb on the crucifixion of Christ, including the so-called *Testimonium Flavianum* of Josephus)

A. Vasiliev (ed.), *Kitab al-ʿunvan, Histoire universelle, écrite par Agapius (Mahboub) de Menbidj*, 2 parts in 4 fascicles, *Première partie* (PO 5.4 and 8.3), Paris, 1910 and 1913; *Seconde partie* (PO 7.4 and 11.1), Paris, 1912 and 1915 (edition, for Part 1, from Sinai Ar. 456, Sinai Ar. 580, and Oxford, Bodl. Ar. Chr. Nicoll 51 [Hunt 478]; for Part 2, from Florence, BML Or. 132; with French trans.)

L. Cheikho (ed.), *Agapius episcopus Mabbugensis. Historia universalis* (CSCO ser. III, t. 5 [= 65, ar. 10]), Beirut, 1912 (edition, for Part 1, from Beirut, Bibl. Or. 3 and 4 and Sharfeh Ar. 16/1; for Part 2, from Florence, BML Or. 132)

#### STUDIES

R.G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it*, Princeton, 1997, pp. 440-42 (also pp. 400-8 on one of Maḥbūb's sources; and the index, p. 829, under 'Agapius of Manbij', for Maḥbūb's witness to various topics)

J. den Heijer, 'Coptic historiography in the Fāṭimid, Ayyūbid and early Mamlūk periods', *Medieval Encounters* 2 (1996) 67-98, pp. 79, 86, 91

W.E. Kaegi, *Byzantium and the early Islamic conquests*, Cambridge, 1992 (see the index, p. 306 under 'Agapius')

S.K. Samir, 'La littérature melkite sous les premiers abbassides', *OCP* 56 (1990) 469-86, pp. 471-73

Breydy, 'Richtigstellungen'

Nasrallah, *HMLEM* ii.2, pp. 50-52

A. Sidarus, *Ibn ar-Rāhib's Leben und Werk. Ein koptisch-arabischer Enzyklopädist des 7./13. Jahrhunderts* (*Islamkundliche Untersuchungen* 36), Freiburg, 1975, pp. 35-39 and Tafel 8 (for Ibn al-Rāhib's use of Maḥbūb's *History*)

- A.M. Dubarle, 'Le témoignage de Josèphe sur Jésus d'après la tradition indirecte', *Revue Biblique* 80 (1973) 481-513 (builds on the study of Pines and confirms the importance of Maḥbūb's text)
- S. Gero, *Byzantine iconoclasm during the reign of Leo III* (CSCO 346), Louvain, 1973, pp. 199-205 (on the witness to early iconoclasm in Maḥbūb's *History* and its relationship to other sources)
- Pines, 'An Arabic version'
- Sezgin, *GAS* i, p. 338 (gives the title as *Al-'unwān al-kāmil bi-faḍā'il al-ḥikma*, 'The complete title of the virtues of wisdom')
- G. Vajda, 'Le témoignage d'al-Māturīdī sur la doctrine des manichéens, des daysanites et des marcionites', *Arabica* 13 (1966) 1-38, p. 9 (Maḥbūb's witness to the teaching of Mani)
- F. Rosenthal, *A history of Muslim historiography*, Leiden, 1952, pp. 96 and 119; Ṣāliḥ Aḥmad al-'Alī (trans.), *Ilm al-tārīkh 'inda l-Muslimīn*, Baghdad, 1963, pp. 151-52, 189-90
- Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 39-40 (with bibliography of some older studies making use of Maḥbūb's universal history)

**Mark N. Swanson**

# *The Life of Elias the Younger*

Unknown Author

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown; probably late 9<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown  
DATE OF DEATH Unknown; probably mid-10<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF DEATH Unknown

## BIOGRAPHY

All we know about the author of the *Vita* of Elias the Younger is that he was a monk of the Salinas monastery in Calabria, southern Italy, which was founded by Elias the Younger (823-903). A personal acquaintance between Elias and his hagiographer cannot be assumed, and there is no proof to support the view of Costa-Louillet ('Saints', p. 96) that Elias' disciple and travelling companion, Daniel, was the author of the *Vita*; it is more likely that Daniel was the mediator who gave the author details about Elias' life. The composition of the *Vita* should therefore be dated soon after Elias' death, probably in the 930s or 940s (see Rossi Taibbi, *Vita di Sant' Elia*, p. xviii).

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### *Primary*

G. Rossi Taibbi, *Vita di Sant' Elia il Giovane, testo inedito con traduzione italiana pubblicato e illustrato*, Palermo, 1962, pp. 1-123

### *Secondary*

Art. 'Elias the Younger', in *Dumbarton Oaks Hagiography Database*, Introduction

S. Efthymiadis, 'Hagiographica Varia', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 48 (1998) 46-48

J.M. Howe, art. 'Elias the Younger', in *ODB*

G. Rossi Taibbi, *Vita di Sant' Elia il Giovane*, Palermo, 1962, pp. xvi-xviii

G. da Costa-Louillet, 'Saints de Sicile et d'Italie Méridionale aux VIII<sup>e</sup>, IX<sup>e</sup>, X<sup>e</sup> siècles', *Byzantion* 29/30 (1959/1960) 89-173, pp. 95-96

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Bios kai politeia tou hosiou patros hemon Eliou tou Neou*, 'Life and particular account of our holy father Elias the Younger'; *Vita Eliae*, 'Life of Saint Elias'

DATE Early 10th century; probably 930s or 940s

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Greek

## DESCRIPTION

This *Vita* is generally dated to the 930s or 940s, soon after Elias' death (Rossi Taibbi, *Vita di Sant' Elia*, p. xviii), though Costa-Louillet ('Saints', p. 96) suggests 905/6. It tells how Elias, who was born in Enna (Sicily) in 823 to a noble Byzantine family, and was baptized John, was captured in his youth in an attack by the Aghlabids and was carried off to North Africa, where he served as a slave in a Christian household (chs 1-14).

Released after some decades, he went to Jerusalem, where he was consecrated as a monk by the Patriarch Elias III, who gave him his name Elias (around 878, see Rossi Taibbi, *Vita di Sant' Elia*, pp. 139-40) (ch. 18). Further journeys brought him to Sinai (chs 19-20) and Alexandria (ch. 21). After a divine revelation, Elias planned to travel to Persia in order to visit the site of the Three Youths in the Fiery Furnace and the grave of the prophet Daniel, but was prevented by a revolt in Persia (probably the Zanj uprising in southern Iraq, 877-83; see Rossi Taibbi, *Vita di Sant' Elia*, p. xii) and turned back to Antioch (ch. 22). From there, he returned to Sicily in about 880. Travelling through North Africa on his return journey, he converted 12 Muslims to Christianity (chs 23-25), and in Sicily he consecrated his future disciple Daniel as a monk (ch. 26) and travelled with him through the Peloponnese (ch. 27), Epirus (ch. 28) and Kerkyra (ch. 29). Finally arriving at Reggio, he founded a monastery in Salinas (ch. 30).

Elias worked numerous miracles and made a variety of prophesies that were fulfilled (chs 31-65). His fame reached Constantinople and he received a letter from the Emperor Leo VI, who invited him to the capital. Elias started out, but died in Thessaloniki on 17 August 903 at the age of 80 and did not complete his journey (chs 66-71). The

remaining chapters deal with the return of his relics to Salinas, and stories of posthumous miracles (chs 72-76).

According to the literary style of hagiography, in the *Vita* the Arab enemies are described as infidel barbarians whose faith should be resisted by Chalcedonian Christianity, as it is embodied in Elias. Correspondingly, any military success of the Muslim enemy is always judged as a result of sinful behavior by the Byzantines. Whoever does not follow Elias' requirements regarding a religious life and does not heed his prophetic warnings will be punished by being captured or murdered by the Muslims (e.g. the capture of Reggio in 901, ch. 41; the capture of Taormina, ch. 49). On the other hand, anyone who follows Elias' instructions and leads a pious life will be protected from danger and rewarded by victory over the Muslim enemy (e.g. the victory of the Byzantine commander Michael shortly after the fall of Reggio in 901, ch. 43).

Concerning the historical background of the work, the main interest lies in the accounts of the attacks, sieges and devastations by the Aghlabids, which, in most cases, are anticipated by Elias' prophecies. In the first part of the *Vita*, the accounts of Muslim incursions are general and not connected to specific historical events. Beginning from the year 880, however, they become more detailed and their connection with known historical events can be identified. The most important of these include: the Byzantine victory at Stelai by the imperial admiral Nasar on 1 August 880 (ch. 25); the Byzantine defeat at Taormina by the *stratēgos* Barsacius in 881 (chs 26, 29-30); the seizure of Reggio by the Aghlabid Abū l-'Abbās 'Abdallāh ibn Ibrāhīm on 10 June 901 (chs 41-42); the conquest of Taormina by the Aghlabid Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad al-Aghlab on the 1 August 902 (ch. 49); the capture of Thessaloniki by Leo of Tripoli in 904 (chs 68-69).

Although the *Vita* glorifies Elias with accounts of numerous wonders and excerpts from older hagiographical texts, there cannot be any doubt of his historical existence. Likewise, the author's historical knowledge, especially in the last third of the *Vita*, cannot be doubted, although, in the literary style of hagiography, accounts of historical facts are brief, imprecise and adorned with stories of miracles.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Of main significance for Byzantine-Muslim relations are the general descriptions of the permanent danger to the Byzantine population in southern Italy and Sicily from incursions by the Aghlabids in the

9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. The *Vita* mentions numerous attacks, sometimes with details not known from other sources and, even though it provides little new factual information overall, it provides a valuable insight into the response to the Muslim threat by Byzantine orthodoxy: using the strategy of constructing the concept of 'the enemy' in order to maintain its own identity.

## MANUSCRIPTS

- MS Messina, Biblioteca Universitaria – 29, fols 190r-204v (1307/8; the oldest surviving MS on which all others are based)  
 MS Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale – II A. A. 26, fols 251r-282v (15<sup>th</sup> century)  
 MS Palermo, Biblioteca Nazionale – II E 15, fols 90-125v (16<sup>th</sup> century)  
 MS Brussels, Bibliothèque de la Société des Bollandistes – 196, fols 183-220r (17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century)  
 (See Rossi Taibbi, *Vita di Sant' Elia*, pp. xxiv-xxxi)

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

- Rossi Taibbi, *Vita di Sant' Elia il Giovane, testo inedito con traduzione italiana pubblicato e illustrato*, pp. 1-123

## STUDIES

- R.-J. Lilie et al., *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit II. Prolegomena*, Berlin, 2009, pp. 54-55  
 'Elias' (no. 1497), in R.-J. Lilie et al., *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit I*, Berlin 1999, p. 480  
 'Elias the Younger', in *Dumbarton Oaks Hagiography Database*, Introduction  
 D. Abrahamse, 'On the afterlife of the Italo-Greek Saints' lives', *Byzantinische Forschungen* 20 (1994) 59-71  
 E. Malamut, *Sur la route des saints byzantins*, Paris, 1993, pp. 256-58  
 P.D. Hester, *Monasticism and spirituality of the Italo-Greeks*, Thessaloniki, 1992, pp. 164-68  
 Howe, art. 'Elias the Younger'  
 D. Kalamakis, 'Glossaire de la Vie de S. Élie le Jeune, accompagné d'un vocabulaire non identifié', *Athena* 80 (1985-89) 279-91  
 E.E. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*. II 1, clarify vols? *La dynastie macédonienne (867-959)*, Brussels, 1968, pp. 105, 135, 166  
 M. Talbi, *L'émirat aghlabide 144-296/800-909. Histoire politique*, Paris, 1966, pp. 491-92  
 Rossi Taibbi, *Vita di Sant' Elia il Giovane*, pp. 127-219



Costa-Louillet, 'Saints de Sicile et d'Italie Méridionale aux VIII<sup>e</sup>, IX<sup>e</sup>, X<sup>e</sup> siècles', 95-109  
M. Amari, *Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia*, 3 vols, Catania, 1933<sup>2</sup>, i, pp. 554-55

**Bettina Krönung**

# Al-Māturīdī

Abū Maṣṣūr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn  
Maḥmūd al-Māturīdī

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown, about 870  
PLACE OF BIRTH Māturīd, Samarkand  
DATE OF DEATH 944  
PLACE OF DEATH Samarkand

## BIOGRAPHY

Little is known about al-Māturīdī's life, except that he was active in Samarkand in the first part of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, and that his distinctive teachings attracted a large following of students. He gave his name to one of the main Sunnī schools of theology, and the similarities and differences between his teachings and those of al-Ash'arī, eponym of the other school, were compared in later times. As a Ḥanafī, he tended to favor the use of reason more than al-Ash'arī, though his conceptuality was less directly influenced by Mu'tazilī thinking.

The titles of 20 works by al-Māturīdī are known, comprising writings on legal matters, exegesis and theology. In theology he wrote refutations of the Qarāmiṭa, Shī'a, and Mu'tazila (*Kitāb bayān wahm al-Mu'tazila*, 'Demonstration of the delusion of the Mu'tazila'), and attacks on the Mu'tazilī scholars Abū 'Umar al-Bāhilī (q.v.) and Abū l-Qāsim al-Balkhī (q.v.), the latter of whose teachings appear to have particularly incensed him since he composed three works against them.

Only two of these works are extant, the *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, and his Qur'an commentary, the *Tā'wīlāt ahl al-sunna*, 'Interpretations of the people of the Prophet's way'.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

*Tā'wīlāt ahl al-sunna*, ed. F. al-Khīmī, 5 vols, Beirut, 2004

Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Bazdawī, *Kitāb uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. H.P. Linss, Cairo, 1963, see index

- Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī, *Tabṣīrat al-adilla fī uṣūl al-dīn ʿalā ṭarīqat al-Imām Abī Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī*, ed. C. Salamé, 2 vols, Damascus, 1990, see index (also Muḥammad ibn Tāwīt al-Ṭanjī, 'Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī', *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Facültesi Dergisi* 4 [1955] 1-12)
- Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir ibn Abī l-Wafāʾ, *Al-jawāhir al-muḍīʾa fī ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanaḥīyya*, ed. ʿA.F. Muḥammad al-Ḥulw, 3 vols, s.l. [Cairo], 1978-79, iii, 360-61

### Secondary

- D. Thomas, *Christian doctrines in Islamic theology*, Leiden, 2008, pp. 79-80
- C. Gilliot, 'L'embarras d'un exégète musulman face à un palimpseste. Māturīdī et la sourate de l'Abondance (al-Kawthar, sourate 108) ...', in R. Arnzen and J. Thielmann (eds), *Words, texts and concepts cruising the Mediterranean Sea*, Leuven, 2004, 33-69
- C. Gilliot, 'Lexégèse du Coran en Asie Centrale et au Khorasan', *Studia Islamica* 89 (1999) 129-164, p. 155
- H. Özcan, 'Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī's religious pluralism', *Islamochristiana* 23 (1997) 65-80
- U. Rudolph, *Al-Māturīdī und die sunnitische Theologie in Samarkand*, Leiden, 1997, pp. 135-61
- M. Cerić, *Roots of synthetic theology in Islām. A study of the theology of Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī* (d. 333/944), Kuala Lumpur, 1995, pp. 17-35
- K. Lewinstein, 'Notes on eastern Ḥanafite heresiography', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 114 (1994) 583-98
- J.M. Pessagno, 'Irāda, ikhtiyār, qudra, kasb: the view of Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 104 (1984) 177-91
- M. Mustafizur Rahman, *An introduction to al-Maturīdī's Ta'wīlāt ahl al-sunna*, Dacca, 1981
- W. Madelung, art. 'al-Māturīdī', *EI2*
- F. Kholeif, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, Beirut, 1970, pp. 1-26 (Arabic)
- G. Vajda, 'Le témoignage d'al-Māturīdī sur la doctrine des Manichéens, des Daysanites et des Marcionites', *Arabica* 12 (1966) 1-38, 113-28
- M. Allard, *Le problème des attributs divins dans la doctrine d'al-Aṣʿarī*, Beirut 1965, pp. 419-27
- M. Götz, 'Māturīdī und sein Kitāb ta'wīlāt al-Qurʾān', *Der Islam* 41 (1965) 27-70 (repr. in A. Rippin [ed.], *The Qurʾan*. Formative interpretation, Aldershot UK, 1999, 181-214)

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

### *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, 'Divine Unity'

DATE Unknown, before 944

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The *Kitāb al-tawhīd* is the earliest surviving Muslim work that can be regarded as a systematic theology, in that it brings together individual questions debated among theological specialists into a structured whole. It can be divided into five parts: epistemological introduction, the contingent nature of the world and existence of God, prophethood, divine and human action, and faith (see the discussion in Thomas, *Christian doctrines*, pp. 80-82). Like other works of its kind from slightly later in the same period, it combines the presentation of positive theological teachings with refutations of opposing views, and among these is a brief examination of Christian claims for the divinity of Jesus Christ. This comes at the end of the third part of the work, on prophethood, and follows defenses of the position of prophet in principle and of Muḥammad as prophet in particular. As a consequence, this refutation focuses almost entirely on the question of the divinity of Jesus without reference to other Christian doctrines.

While the structure of this section is not immediately easy to see (like the rest of the work, it contains few indications of a change of topic), it begins with a brief exposition of Christian teachings about the divine and human natures of Christ, and then turns to arguments against these. Al-Māturīdī starts by questioning the relationship between the Son and the other divine Persons in the Incarnation, and then proceeds to compare Jesus' miracles with those of Moses and other prophets, employing a source that was almost certainly known to the other 10<sup>th</sup>-century theologians, al-Ḥasan ibn Ayyūb (q.v.) and al-Bāqillānī (q.v.). He next comments on the old question of Jesus as Son of God in adoptive terms, which is discussed by Ibrāhīm al-Nazzām and his pupil Abū 'Uthmān al-Jāhīz in the early 9<sup>th</sup> century, and he almost certainly refers to al-Nazzām's arguments. He moves on to show, with the aid of quotations from the Qur'an, that Jesus' human traits rule out his divinity, and concludes with a series of brief points that reinforce his earlier arguments (see Thomas, *Christian doctrines*, pp. 83-92).

In this sequence of seemingly original and borrowed arguments, all presented in the severely compressed language that characterizes the *Kitāb al-tawhīd*, al-Māturīdī proves to his own satisfaction that the Christian teachings about Jesus are logically unsustainable, with the obvious implication that the teachings of Islam about him are correct. The refutation thus serves the twin purposes of disproving Christianity and vindicating Islam.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The position of this refutation in the *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* is significant in that the exposition of prophethood shows that both what Islam teaches about it is right and what other faiths teach is rationally unsupportable. As an element in the treatise, the refutation thus functions primarily as part of the structure of Islamic theology and only secondarily as a direct response to Christians. This feature suggests that, for al-Māturīdī, the activity of engagement with followers of the other faith was less important than the systematic exposition of Islamic theological teachings.

Al-Māturīdī's borrowings from earlier theologians point to the strength and richness of the anti-Christian polemical tradition in Islam in the early 10<sup>th</sup> century.

## MANUSCRIPTS

MS Cambridge, University Library – Add. 3561 (1737)

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

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*Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, ed. B Toploğlu and M. Aruçi, Ankara, 2003

D. Thomas, 'Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī on the divinity of Jesus Christ', *Islamochristiana* 23 (1997) 43-64, pp. 50-59 (edition and trans. of the section on Christianity)

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## STUDIES

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Thomas, 'Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī on the divinity of Jesus Christ', pp. 43-49

Cerić, *Roots of synthetic theology in Islām*, pp. 49-60, 167-68 and passim

Al-Sharfī, *Al-fikr al-Islāmī*, p. 147, and see index

Kholeif, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, pp. xiv-xliii (English), 26-51 (Arabic)

## *Narratio de Imagine Edessena*

Unknown Author

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown; probably late 9<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown  
DATE OF DEATH Unknown; probably latter part of the  
10<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF DEATH Unknown

### BIOGRAPHY

Although this work has been attributed to Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, the real author is unknown. He was probably a cleric close to the court writing on behalf of the emperor.

### MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Primary —

Secondary —

### WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Kōnstantinou en Christō basilei aiōniō basileōs  
Rōmaiōn diēgēsis apo diaphorōn athroistheisai  
historiōn peri tēs pros Augaron apostaleisēs  
acheiropoiētou theias eikonos Iēsou Christou tou  
theou hēmōn, kai hōs ex Edesēs metekomisthē pros  
tēn pandaimona tautēn kai basilida tōn poleōn  
Kōnstantinoupolin*, ‘The narration of Constantine,  
Emperor of the Romans in the eternal Emperor  
Christ, collected from different stories, about the  
divine image not made by hands of Jesus Christ  
our God, which was sent to Abgar, and how it  
was translated to this all-blessed queen of cities,  
Constantinople’; *Narratio de Imagine Edessena B*

DATE Mid-10<sup>th</sup> century, after 944

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Greek

DESCRIPTION

The *Narratio de Imagine Edessena*, which must have been written after 944, since it describes the arrival of the Image in Constantinople in that year, tells the story of the Image of Edessa, an image of Christ that, according to tradition, was of miraculous origin. According to the legend, Abgar, the king of Edessa and contemporary of Jesus of Nazareth, suffered from a skin disease and thanks to one of his messengers who was passing through Jerusalem, found out that there was a miracle worker and healer in the city. Abgar decided to write a letter to Christ and invite him to come and live in Edessa (the setting was just a few days before the crucifixion, and Abgar knew that the Jews were planning to kill Jesus).

The messenger (Ananias or Hanan) returned to Jerusalem and, according to most accounts, following Abgar's orders, tried to make a sketch of Christ's face to take back to Edessa. He was unable to do this as Jesus kept looking this way and that. Eventually Jesus sent one of the disciples to call Ananias over, and before the messenger could hand over the letter from Abgar, Jesus told him of its contents. Jesus then wrote a reply to Abgar explaining that it was impossible for him to go to Edessa as he had a mission to fulfil. When he had ascended into heaven, however, he would send one of his disciples to cure Abgar and lead him into all truth. Before Ananias left, Jesus fulfilled the second part of Abgar's request. Asking for a cloth, he wiped his face with it and left a miraculous imprint of his features on it.

At first, the letters (from Abgar to Jesus and the reply) were the central part of the story; copies were made, and were eventually used as a kind of talisman to ward off evil. The text developed over time – perhaps the most significant addition was the promise that the city of Edessa would be invincible to enemy attacks. Later versions contain detailed instructions of when to carry and read the letter in order to obtain personal safety (for the different versions of the *Narratio de Imagine Edessena* cf. *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit*, II, *Prolegomena*, pp. 96-99).

Meanwhile, Ananias took the cloth with Christ's image back to Edessa. Abgar wiped his whole body with it and was cured of his skin disease. He had the cloth with the image on it placed in a niche above the city gate, in the place of a pagan idol. Abgar died, as in turn did

his son. When his grandson became king, he reverted to paganism; wishing to destroy the Image of Edessa, he placed a pagan image back in the niche.

The bishop was made aware of the king's intentions and bricked the Image up into the niche, together with a lighted lamp, and covered it with a tile and bricks just like the rest of the wall. The hiding place was so successful that the Image fell out of knowledge and memory, until the Persians under King Chosroes attacked Edessa in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. The attackers were tunnelling their way under the city walls when the city's bishop had a dream in which a woman told him about the Image and where to find it. Following her instructions, he took the Image to where the Persians were lighting a fire, and the flames were blown back onto the invaders, defeating them.

The Image was kept in Edessa even when the city was lost to the Byzantine Empire (and was thus conveniently far removed from the iconoclastic crisis). Towards the middle of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, it was finally taken to Constantinople. After a ceremonial arrival, it was kept in the Boucoleon and, apart from making an appearance in some pilgrims' lists of relics they had seen, is hardly mentioned again. After the sack of the capital during the Fourth Crusade in 1204, the Image of Edessa is never heard of again.

After the Muslim conquest of Edessa, the Image of Edessa was unique in that it was the only significant icon that had not been taken to Constantinople, and in fact was now in a small provincial city that was outside the Byzantine Empire. Its fame grew beyond all expectations when the iconoclastic crisis broke out with the decree of Leo the Isaurian during the period 726 to 730.

Our text is silent about the years from the Muslim conquest of Edessa in 639 until the Image was taken to Constantinople in 944 and there is nothing in other texts to fill in this gap, potentially rich for the study of Christian-Muslim relations. The matter comes to the fore in 944, when the aging Emperor Romanus Lecapenus decided that it was time for the Image of Edessa to be taken to the capital, the queen of cities, Constantinople.

Edessa was besieged in 943 by troops under John Courcouas, although he informed the city authorities that he would spare the city, pay the city rulers the amount of 12,000 silver coins and return 200 prisoners if he could take the Image back to the capital. The Muslim ruler of Edessa was aware of the tradition that his city would remain invincible as long as the Image stayed within its walls, although he



obviously did not place as much faith in the tradition as his Christian counterparts did. The situation was delicate and difficult, and the ruler decided that he should consult with the caliph in Baghdad before taking a decision. According to Arab chronicles, the Abbasid Caliph al-Muttaqī (r. 940-44) immediately convened a meeting to discuss the proposal. Opinions were divided – many preferred not to accept Courcouas' proposal, as despite the fact that a Christian image had no intrinsic value for them as Muslims, it had been in their hands for over 300 years and to give it up now would be nothing less than humiliating. One of those called on to give an opinion was the Vizier 'Alī ibn 'Isā (q.v.). He declared that surely the fate of 200 Muslim lives was worth more than anything else involved; he convinced the rest and answer was given to the governor of Edessa to go ahead with the exchange. According to our text, the ruler of the city requested a guarantee of the conditions in writing, sealed with the emperor's own golden seal; also included was a promise that the Byzantine armies would not attack the four cities of Edessa, Charan, Sarotzi and Samosata. Once this was given, an order was issued to surrender the Image to the Byzantine general.

The Christians of Edessa were loath to give up the Image, especially under orders from the Muslims. The bishop of Samosata was entrusted with the task of obtaining the Image, and there were various attempts to fob him off with fakes and copies. Disturbances organized by the Christian population of the city were put down by force. Our text includes two miraculous interventions – a thunderstorm convinced the Christians that the Image should not be removed from the city, and finally the boat with the Image crossed the Euphrates with no helmsmen, thus showing that the divine will did indeed wish the Image to be taken to Constantinople. It eventually reached the capital on 15 August.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

On the one hand, the silence of the text concerning the Image under Muslim rule in Edessa (a period of 300 years) is witness to tolerance and coexistence with the city's different denominations of Christians. On the other hand, when it came to surrendering the Image in 944, the Muslim policy of placing more value on the lives of 200 prisoners than on the Image was applied by force and there was no doubt about who was in charge in Edessa.

One of the indirect consequences of the Image's being kept and respected in Muslim Edessa is that it was far away and safe from the iconoclastic movement.

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 MS Paris, BNF – Gr. 1474, fols 212-227 (11<sup>th</sup> century)  
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 MS Patmos – Gr. 258, fols 108v-123v (11<sup>th</sup> century)  
 MS Rome, Biblioteca Vallicelliana – B 14, fols 235v-245r (11<sup>th</sup> century)  
 MS Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale – B II 24, fols 154-166 (11<sup>th</sup> century)  
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 MS Athos, Megistes Lavras – 644, fols 287r-308r (12<sup>th</sup> century)  
 MS Athos, Protaton – 36, fols 222r-238r (12<sup>th</sup> century)  
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- MS Athos, Vatopedi – 635, fols 455-476 (15<sup>th</sup> century)
- MS Paris, BNF – Coisl. Gr. 307, fols 525-535 (1552?)
- MS Athos, Dionysiou – 145, fols 524r-538r (16<sup>th</sup> century)
- MS Athos, Iveron – 595, fols *sine numeris* (16<sup>th</sup> century)
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**Mark Guscini**

# Nicetas Clericus

Nikētas Klērikos

DATE OF BIRTH Between about 900 and 920  
PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown  
DATE OF DEATH Between 950 and 1000  
PLACE OF DEATH Unknown

## BIOGRAPHY

In 947, the imperial cleric (*vasilikos klērikos*) Nicetas, in a letter to the Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, described a confrontation between the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Christodoulos, and Muslims in the city over the celebration of Easter. It had broken out when the Muslims doubted the miracle of the fire on Holy Saturday. Nicetas had been present at this ceremony, when he took a gift of money from the emperor to the patriarch.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

*Historia Nikēta basilikou klērikou*, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, St Petersburg, 1895, pp. 2, 6

‘Lettre du clerc Nicētas à Constantin VII Porphyrogénète sur le feu sacré (Avril 947)’, ed. P. Riant, in *Archives de l’Orient Latin* 1 (1881) 375-92, pp. 377-79

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M. Canard, ‘La destruction de l’Eglise de la Resurrection et la descente du feu sacré’, *Byzantion* 35 (1965) 16-43, pp. 30-34

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Historia Nikēta basilikou klērikou*, ‘Report of the imperial cleric Nicetas’

DATE 947

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Greek

## DESCRIPTION

This letter is about the miracle of the fire in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher on Holy Saturday 947. Nicetas Clericus writes to the Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus about the ceremony, and in particular about the difficulties connected with it that year.

An emir had come from Baghdad with the express purpose of informing the patriarch that this ceremony would no longer be allowed because it was no more than a trick. The patriarch replied that he wished the emir could actually see the miracle rather than form an opinion on the basis of hearsay, for there was no trickery, and in fact his predecessor had ordered the wick of the lamp to be replaced with iron, and this had ignited.

Nicetas relates that the local Muslim governor drew the emir's attention to the fact that there would be substantial tax losses if the festival were cancelled. This annoyed the emir, and he demanded 7,000 gold pieces from the patriarch to allow the festival to go ahead. Nicetas was able to provide 2,000 pieces immediately, and a guarantee was given for the remaining 5,000, so permission was granted.

While these negotiations were taking place, God had filled two of the candlesticks in the Holy Sepulcher with divine light. Christians and Arabs rushed to the church, the 'godless Arabs' with daggers and spears to massacre any Christian they caught with a lamp lit from this source, but the light did not spread, and the patriarch and some Arabs secured the area of the tomb of Jesus. The Easter celebrations later proceeded, and the miracle of the fire took place in the usual way.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The letter makes clear that Muslims in Jerusalem, as well as Christians, showed interest in the Holy Saturday celebration and attended it, even allowing for Nicetas' evident antipathy in what he writes. Arabs securing the area of the tomb together with the patriarch can be interpreted as high-ranking Muslims exercising duties they had in the church.

## MANUSCRIPTS

MS Jerusalem, Patriarchate – 73, pp. 307-12 (according to Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 1895; there may be other MSS)

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

*Historia Nikēta basilikou klērikou*, ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus  
 'Lettre du clerc Nicetas à Constantin VII Porphyrogénète sur le feu sacré (Avril 947)', ed. Riant

STUDIES

Canard, 'La destruction de l'Eglise de la Resurrection et la descente  
du feu sacre'

**Thomas Pratsch**



# The Letter of Pseudo-Pisentius

Unknown author

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown, perhaps late 9<sup>th</sup> to early 10<sup>th</sup> century

PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown; presumably Egypt

DATE OF DEATH Unknown; perhaps middle to late 10<sup>th</sup> century

PLACE OF DEATH Unknown; presumably Egypt, possibly in the region of Qift (Coptos) in Upper Egypt

## BIOGRAPHY

Nothing is known about the Coptic Christian author of this pseudonymous apocalyptic text (or of the redactors of the later recensions) beyond what can be deduced from the extant texts themselves

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

*Primary* —

*Secondary* —

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Sharḥ risālat al-ab al-qiddīs... anḇā Bisantīyūs usqf madīnat Qift*, 'Exposition of the letter of the holy father... Abba Pisentius, bishop of the town of Qift' (in MS Paris, BNF Ar. 150); 'The Letter of Pseudo-Pisentius'; 'The Letter of Pisentius'; 'Pseudo-Pisentius of Qift'; 'Let Pis'; 'Pis'

DATE Unknown; a 'primitive' Coptic or Greek recension, now lost, may have been composed around 935-50.

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Coptic or Greek

## DESCRIPTION

This apocalyptic sermon is known from a fairly large number of Arabic manuscripts, and in about half of them it is preceded by a version

of the *Life of Pisentius*. It purports to be a pastoral letter addressed by Bishop Pisentius of Qift (d. 632) to the people of his diocese, and dictated on his deathbed to his secretary John, 'after they had informed him about this alien nation (*al-umma l-gharība*) that it had seized Egypt, but before it would seize the town of Qift'. The work falls into two parts: a homiletic discourse about the 'right orthodox faith' and an apocalyptic testament dealing with Arab rule over Egypt.

The homiletic part exhorts both priests and lay people to steadfastness in the right faith and to a virtuous life. Among its most striking features are a brief list of past heresiarchs (including Arius, Melitius, and Eutyches), a catalogue of heretical beliefs, and a credal formulation of the orthodox faith (particularly close to the Constantinopolitan Creed); the exhortation then switches from theology to the denunciation of a number of social evils, in a style reminiscent of the Church canons and with a strong interest in matters of family life and marriage. From the choice of topics, and especially from the choice of heretical opinions that are condemned (that the Son of God was created, that he was only a prophet, that someone else was crucified in his stead, etc.), it appears that a particular concern of the discourse is with the influence of Islam and Arab-Muslim culture on the beliefs and practices of the Copts (cf. MacCoull). At the same time, the language used is that of traditional intra-Christian polemic, and there is nowhere in the discourse any explicit mention of Muslims. Because of this, but also because it aims to delineate the main doctrines and practices of the Christian (miaphysite) faith, this part of the *Letter* has a close affinity with medieval Christian Arabic catechetical texts.

The second part consists of *vaticinia ex eventu* on Arab rule, followed by eschatological prophecies. First, Pisentius informs his pupil John that the 'Arabs' will initially be few in number and rule justly, but will then multiply, tighten their control over their expanding territory, and gradually become oppressive, 'especially [in] the land of Egypt'. What follows is a general description of the oppression of the Arabs. In a rich mix of apocalyptic *topoi* and reflections of historical events (mostly, it seems, from the first half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century), Pisentius foretells land-measuring campaigns, censuses, the collection of taxes such as the *kharāj* and *jizya*, people fleeing their homes to avoid taxation, monetary reforms, and the like; it also dwells upon the plundering and desecration of churches, and on natural disasters such as a low Nile flooding, bad harvests, famine, and pestilence. While some elements have no parallel in other known apocalypses (e.g., the brief but

interesting allusions to the foundation of Fustāt), this catalogue draws heavily on the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* and the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Athanasius*, which are both dated to the Umayyad period (see *CMR*1, pp. 163-71 and pp. 274-77 respectively).

Three episodes conclude the part on the Arab-Muslim domination of Egypt. First, 'a nation will burst forth from the west, and it will oppose the kings of Babylon of Egypt for a short time'. Next, 'another king with the name of their prophet will rise', whose 'yoke will weigh heavily on the land of Egypt', after which 'the Turk (*al-Turkī*) will burst forth from the east, and he will fight him for some time. After this, they will make peace, and they will eat and drink at one table. The Turks (*al-Turk*) will rule from the south (*min nāḥiyat al-tayman*), from Acre up to the border of the land of the Ethiopians, and there will be much injustice on the earth'. The Christians will be heavily taxed and persecuted, and a great number of them will convert, with the result that many churches will be deserted.

In what is definitely an eschatological prophecy, the *Letter* describes how God will then remember his people and send the king of the Romans (*al-Rūm*), called Constantine, who will re-take Egypt from the 'Sons of Esau' and kill many of them; others secretly convert to Christianity or flee Egypt. Next, a war breaks out between Constantine, who is 'Chalcedonian', and the miaphysite 'king of the Ethiopians' over who possesses the True Faith. This war only comes to an end through divine intervention: during the simultaneous celebration of two competing masses, the Holy Spirit descends upon the altar of the miaphysite patriarch of Alexandria, thus showing God's preference; after this the king of the Romans and his people convert and burn all the Chalcedonian books. During the ensuing 40-year period of peace and bliss, ten Roman kings will reign. The last of them will hand over his authority to God in Jerusalem and die, to be succeeded by an evil ruler who will usher in the era of the Antichrist. The eschatological part, which has much in common with that of the *Prophecy of Daniel to Athanasius* (q.v.), ends with a version of the Antichrist Legend and a description of the Last Judgment.

Various dates of composition have been proposed for the *Letter*, from the 760s (MacCoull) to as late as Mamlūk times. One of the most detailed and attractive hypotheses identifies the three-part sequence 'nation from the west – king with the prophet's name – Turk from the east' with, respectively, the Fatimid attacks upon Egypt in 913-15 and 919-21, the reign of Aḥmad ibn Kayghalagh (933-35), and

the rise to power of the Ikhshidids, starting with Muḥammad ibn Tughj (935-46), thus yielding a date of about the middle to second part of the 10<sup>th</sup> century (Martinez; Hoyland). But other possibilities of interpretation exist: the same sequence has been used by others to place the final redaction of the *Letter* in either the early Ayyūbid or the Mamlūk periods (Suermann and Kruk, respectively).

Another problem is that, in its present form, the *Letter of Pisentius* is clearly a composite work, which may well be the result of one or more redactions. The present author is inclined to the theory that the entire homiletic first part is a later addition to the original text. Evidence for this includes the unpublished short recension of the *Letter* uniquely preserved in MS Birmingham, Mingana – Syr. 225 (*karshūnī*; incomplete at end). This important recension offers various clues for the reconstruction of the *Letter's* history, which – very tentatively! – might be outlined as follows. (For a full updated discussion, see Van Lent, 'Coptic apocalyptic writings'.)

#### 1. A lost common *Vorlage*

The two extant recensions of the *Letter of Pisentius* seem to give evidence of a now lost common *Vorlage* whose contents were more similar to those of the short recension of the Mingana manuscript than to those of the long common recension: apocalyptic prophecies, perhaps not yet in the form of a pastoral letter but rather in the form of a testamentary speech to John. Perhaps reworking an 8<sup>th</sup>-century apocalyptic text unknown to us, it may indeed have been composed as early as around the middle of the 10<sup>th</sup> century (see above), against the background of political anarchy and a perceived deterioration of the Copts' situation in Upper Egypt, with the aim of explaining the course of history and providing hope that Muslim rule would soon end. This hope was perhaps triggered by the Byzantine recovery and Nubian incursions into southern Egypt attested for that period, which are reflected in the author's Egypt-centered adaptation of *Pseudo-Methodius'* legend of the Last Roman Emperor. Moreover, in view of the mass conversion predicted for the period of 'the Turk', the prophecy may have served to discourage people from abandoning their faith. To these ends, Arab-Muslim domination is stereotyped as an oppressive regime about to perish, but serving to separate the sheep from the goats; the religious challenge of Islam is simply ignored.

The author was a miaphysite Copt, presumably from the same monastic milieu in Upper Egypt where Pisentius had worked and

lived, near Qift and the monastery of Tsenti. He may have written the apocalyptic testament in Coptic (or even Greek), which would explain the possible traces of this language in the extant short recension, most notably the systematic use of the form *durkus* for ‘Turk’, probably a transcription of a Coptic or Greek word equivalent to Arabic *turk/turkī*.

## 2. The long (common) recension

A later redactor from the same milieu then worked this text into the apocalyptic sermon summarized above by adding the homiletic discourse. It is furthermore possible that other ingredients were introduced only as part of this reworking: the identification of the work with an ‘authentic’ pastoral letter by Pisentius known from the hagiographic tradition; the incorporation of various other elements from the *Lives* (see Gawdat Gabra Abdel Sayed, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 295–98); and the enrichment of the *vaticinia ex eventu* with motifs borrowed from the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Athanasius*, and, perhaps, the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Samuel* (q.v.).

This recension may have been produced at any time between the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century and the date of the oldest textual witness, MS Louvain–Lefort Ar. A. 5bis (15<sup>th</sup> century). A most likely date would be the latter part of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, under the early Ayyūbids (who in some contemporary sources are called ‘Turks’; see the entry on the *Fourteenth Vision of Daniel*). The concerns reflected in the homiletic discourse seem to fit well in this period; indeed, the recension can be interpreted as a local response to the catechetical crisis of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries caused by the decline of competence in the Coptic language, and as such may be a variant of the catechetical works known from that time (for a brief introduction, see Swanson, ‘Recent developments’, p. 248) – hence, e.g., the full citation, in Arabic, of a form of the Creed, arguably for those no longer knowing or understanding the Coptic version. Arabic, then, would appear to be the original language of this recension; the phrase, ‘Some say, “the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit”, and they eliminate the *mā* and the *nā*, which have the sense of the *wāw*’, is not proof at all for the Coptic-language origin of the *Letter* (see Zaborowski, ‘From Coptic to Arabic’, p. 29, n. 54, *contra* MacCoull) but, in this particular context, suggests (flawed) praying in Coptic. (The phrase itself may have been borrowed from an older Coptic text.)

### 3. The short recension

Finally, there is the extant short recension, which according to the present tentative interpretation is a revision of the 10<sup>th</sup>-century *Vorlage* and is perhaps to be dated to the same period as the common recension: again, because of the possible identification of ‘the Turk’ with the Ayyūbids, but also due to interpolations such as the one identifying the church where the two competing masses will be held as the Mu‘allaqa Church, which only became really prominent in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century. Another possibility is that this recension is actually the result of a (hasty) reworking of the apocalyptic sermon by someone from the region of Qift whose main interest was to connect its prophecies with recent regional events, and who thus simply omitted the homily and abridged the *vaticinia ex eventu* regarding the more distant past; this might even have happened shortly after the composition of the common recension. In any event, in its present form the short recension shows traces of Syrian influence, notably in its Antichrist Legend, which contains features that are more typical of Christian texts from Syria than those from Egypt.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The existence of several versions of the *Letter of Pisentius* from the Fatimid and Ayyūbid periods attests not only to the popularity of this apocalyptic work, but also to that of Bishop Pisentius, the 7<sup>th</sup>-century saint to whom it was attributed. Together with the various Arabic versions of his *Life*, they give evidence of the survival of a local Coptic Christian identity well into the 12<sup>th</sup> century, even if, as their contents show, it was one in difficulty. The common recension is particularly significant in its reflection of the concerns and aspirations of medieval Upper Egyptian Copts struggling with a catechetical crisis, presumably as the result of the language shift from Coptic to Arabic. In addition, the *Letter* gives good and ample examples of the recycling of texts and literary motifs in order to respond to new realities. Of particular interest in this respect is its adaptation of the originally Syrian Legend of the Last Roman Emperor (cf. the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*) to the Egyptian context.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

Long (or common) recension:

MS Monastery of St Macarius – Hag. 75 (Zanetti 488), 3<sup>rd</sup> MS of the four bound together, fols 223r-229v (16<sup>th</sup> century; incomplete at the end)

- MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 150, fols 2r-13r (1606)
- MS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate – Hist. 62 (Simaika 623), fols 103r-123v (1642)
- MS Vat – Ar. 498, fols 125r-146v (17<sup>th</sup> century)
- MS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate – Hist. 26 (Simaika 646; Graf 467), fols 83r-95v (1720)
- MS Cairo, Monastery of St Menas – Theol. 29 (serial no. 196), fols 152r-171r (1736)
- MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 4794, fols 164r-193r (1794)
- MS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate – Hist. 44 (Simaika 638, Graf 545), fols 180r-197v (18<sup>th</sup> century)
- MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 6147, fols 39r-56v (1832)
- MS Monastery of St Macarius – Hag. 23 (Zanetti 389), fols 87r-105r (1859)
- MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 4785, fols 215v-242v (19<sup>th</sup> century)
- MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 4878, fols 118r-150v (19<sup>th</sup> century)
- MS Cairo, Coptic Museum – Hist. 468 (Simaika 125), fols 62v-73r (19<sup>th</sup> century)
- MS Cairo, Franciscan Center of Christian Oriental Studies, Muski – 324, fols 144r-164v (19<sup>th</sup> century)
- MS Monastery of St Anthony – Hist. 222, fols 74v-85v (19<sup>th</sup> century; an abridgement of the long recension, containing only the prophetic part of the *Letter* but different from the ‘short recension’)
- MS Monastery of St Macarius – Comm. 23 (Zanetti 318), 2<sup>nd</sup> MS of the two bound together, fols 1r-15v (19<sup>th</sup> century)
- Graf, *GCAL* i, p. 280, mentions several witnesses to the common recension that are now considered lost:
- MS Louvain, Lefort – Ar. A. 5bis, fols 15v-20v (15<sup>th</sup> century)
- MS Aleppo – Sbath 1278 (19<sup>th</sup> century; not in the Aleppo Salem Collection and presumed lost)
- Three other inaccessible (and probably lost) MSS, from the private collections of Murqus Jirjis, ‘Abd al-Masiḥ Ṣalīb, and Sbath himself, listed in Sbath, *Fihris* i, p. 46 (no. 352)
- Short recension:
- MS Birmingham, University Library – Mingana Syr. 225, fols 105v-108v (c. 1450; *karshūnī*, incomplete at the end)

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

- J. van Lent, *Coptic apocalyptic writings from the Islamic period*, Leiden, forthcoming (Diss. Leiden University) (critical English trans. of both MS Mingana–Syr. 225, fols 105v-108v and MS Paris–Ar. 150, fols 2r-13r)
- A. Périer, 'Lettre de Pisuntios, évêque de Qeft, à ses fidèles', *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 19 (1914) 79-92, 302-23, 445-46 (edition and French trans. based on MS Paris–Ar. 6147)

## STUDIES

- Van Lent, *Coptic apocalyptic writings*
- J.R. Zaborowski, 'From Coptic to Arabic in medieval Egypt', *Medieval Encounters* 14 (2008) 15-40, pp. 28-29, n. 54
- H. Suermann, 'Koptische arabische Apocalypsen', in R.Y. Ebied and H.G.B. Teule (eds), *Studies on the Christian Arabic heritage*, Leuven, 2004, 25-44, pp. 37-39
- M.N. Swanson, 'Recent developments in Copto-Arabic studies, 1996-2000', in M. Immerzeel and J. van der Vliet (eds), *Coptic studies on the threshold of a new millennium. Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Coptic Studies, Leiden, 27 August–September 2000*, 2 vols, Leuven, 2004, i, 239-67, p. 248
- E.J. Martinez, 'La literatura apocalíptica y las primeras reacciones cristianas a la conquista islámica en Oriente', in G. Anes y Álvarez de Castrillón (ed.), *Europa y el Islam*, Madrid, 2003, 143-222, p. 217, n. 181
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- H. Möhring, *Der Weltkaiser der Endzeit. Entstehung, Wandel und Wirkung einer tausendjährigen Weissagung*, Stuttgart, 2000, pp. 185-86, 347
- J. van Lent, 'An unedited Copto-Arabic apocalypse of Shenute from the fourteenth century', in S. Emmel et al. (eds), *Ägypten und Nubien in spätantiker und christlicher Zeit*, 2 vols, Wiesbaden, 1999, ii, 155-68, pp. 157-58
- R. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it*, Princeton NJ, 1997, pp. 288-89
- A.M.J.M. van Lent and J. van der Vliet, 'De vele levens van Pisen-tius van Koptos. Een Egyptische heilige aan de vooravond van de Arabische verovering', *Het Christelijk Oosten* 48 (1996) 195-213, pp. 207-13



- R. Kruk, 'History and apocalypse. Ibn al-Nafis's justification of Mamluk rule', *Der Islam* 72 (1995) 324-37, p. 330
- V. Frederick, art. 'Pseudo-Pisentius of Qift', in *CE*
- E.J. Martinez, 'The king of Rūm and the king of Ethiopia in medieval apocalyptic texts from Egypt', in W. Godlewski (ed.), *Acts of the third international congress of Coptic studies, Warsaw 1984*, Warsaw, 1990, 247-59, pp. 250-51, 254-57
- L.S.B. MacCoull, 'The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Pesyntheus. Coptic protest under Islamic rule', *Coptic Church Review* 9 (1988) 17-22
- Yūḥannā William, *Anbā Bisantā'ūs (Bisantā) al-lābis al-rūḥ usquf Qift wa-diyārāt ābā' bariyat al-Asās*, Cairo, 1986, pp. 103-8
- Gawdat Gabra Abdel Sayed, *Untersuchungen zu den Texten über Pesyntheus, Bischof von Koptos (569-632)*, Bonn, 1984, pp. 295-98
- Graf, *GCAL* i, pp. 279-80
- R. Griveau, 'Notes sur la lettre de Pisuntios', *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 19 (1914) 441-43

**Jos van Lent**

# Quryāqus al-Rāhib

Quryāqus (ibn Zakariyyā al-Ḥarrānī?) al-Rāhib

DATE OF BIRTH Possibly early 10<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown; perhaps Ḥarrān  
DATE OF DEATH Possibly later 10<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF DEATH Unknown

## BIOGRAPHY

Quryāqus was an East Syrian monk, *possibly* identical with the East Syrian theologian Quryāqus ibn Zakariyya, from Ḥarrān, who composed a refutation of some of the anti-Nestorian arguments formulated by Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī (d. 974) (q.v.) in his letter to Abū l-Ḥasan al-Qāsim ibn Ḥabīb, to which Yaḥyā developed an elaborate counter-argument.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

E. Platti, *Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī. Théologien chrétien et philosophe arabe. Sa théologie de l'Incarnation (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 14)*, Louvain, 1983, pp. 5\*-61\* (text of Yaḥyā's refutation of Quryāqus' treatise), pp. 135-88 (French trans.)

### Secondary

B. Landron, *Chrétiens et musulmans*, p. 94

Platti, *Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī*, p. 60

E. Platti, *La grande polémique anti-nestorienne de Yaḥyā b. 'Adī*, Louvain, 1981, p. vii

P. Khoury and R. Caspar, 'Ibn Zakariyyā al-rāhib Qūryaquis (Cyriakos) ibn Zakariyya al-Ḥarrānī', in 'Bibliographie', *Islamochristiana* 1 (1975) 152-69, p. 159

Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 154-55

A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der Syrischen Literatur*, Bonn, 1911, p. 322

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Kitāb al-radd*, 'The refutation'DATE Possibly mid-10<sup>th</sup> century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

Our knowledge of this work is limited to Sbath's notice in *Fihris* i, p. 57, no. 445, that it was a 'Refutation of Islam, in two parts'.

## SIGNIFICANCE

It is not possible to say what the significance of the work was.

## MANUSCRIPTS

MS Aleppo, Qusṭanṭīn Khudārī Collection (inaccessible MS in private collection, dated to 1390, but now lost; see Sbath, *Fihris* i, p. 57, no. 445)

EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

**Herman G.B. Teule**

# Ibn Khallād

Abū ‘Alī Muḥammad ibn Khallād al-Baṣrī

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown; possibly early 10<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF BIRTH Basra  
DATE OF DEATH Unknown; mid-10<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF DEATH Unknown; maybe Baghdad

## BIOGRAPHY

Born in Basra, Ibn Khallād was a student of Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā‘ī (d. 933) (q.v.), and followed his master when he moved to Baghdad in later life. He was remembered as one of Abū Hāshim’s best students and was in turn the teacher of Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Baṣrī (d. 980) (q.v.) and Abū Ishāq ibn ‘Ayyāsh (d. 996), who were the teachers of ‘Abd al-Jabbār (d. 1025) (q.v.). According to Ibn al-Murtaḍā, he did not live into old age.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### *Primary*

Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 222

Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭabaqāt al-mu‘tazila*, p. 105

### *Secondary*

S. Schmidtke and C. Adang, ‘Mu‘tazilī discussions of the abrogation of the Torah. Ibn Khallād (4th/10th century) and his commentators’, in M.A. Gallego and J. Olszowy-Schlanger (eds), *Reason and faith in medieval Judaism and Islam*, Leiden, forthcoming

G.S. Reynolds, *A Muslim theologian in the sectarian milieu. ‘Abd al-Jabbār and the critique of Christian origins*, Leiden, 2004, see index

M. Heemskerk, *Suffering in the Mu‘tazilite theology. ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s teaching on pain and divine justice*, Leiden, 2000, pp. 30-31

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

### *Kitāb al-uṣūl*, ‘Principles’

DATE Unknown; before about 950

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The work has not survived in its original form, and may well have been left unfinished by Ibn Khallād, to be completed by ‘Abd al-Jabbār; see D. Gimaret, ‘Les uṣūl al-ḥamsa’, p. 69. As Gimaret (pp. 68-73) shows, some idea of its contents can be gained from the *Ziyādāt sharḥ al-uṣūl*, a composite of at least three commentaries that were made on it successively by ‘Abd al-Jabbār, the Zaydī Imām Abū Ṭālib Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Nāṭiq bi-l-ḥaqq (d. 1033), and a certain Abū l-Qāsim, possibly the Imām’s disciple Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Mahdī al-Ḥasanī. There may also be traces of other commentaries woven in with these (Schmidtke and Adang).

The *Ziyādāt*, which can be assumed to follow the outline of Ibn Khallād’s original work, indicates that the *Kitāb al-uṣūl* comprised discussions of key Mu‘tazilī teachings within a general systematic framework that began with proofs of the contingent nature of the world and the existence and character of the Originator, leading on to refutations of groups that held opposing views. Among these were dualists, Christians, Indian Barāhima, Jews and Muslim followers of Ibn Kullāb (Gimaret, pp. 70-71). This structure resembles that of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s much longer *Mughnī*, particularly in the way it juxtaposes these refutations with arguments for the being of God. It allows the surmise that Ibn Khallād’s purpose in including these refutations was, at least in part, to demonstrate the strength and correctness of Islamic, and Mu‘tazilī, doctrines by exposing the flaws and weaknesses in rival versions. The refutation of the Christians, which ‘Abd al-Jabbār mentions in his *Tathbīt* (p. 198), presumably comprised arguments against the Trinity and Incarnation, as in similar works from the time.

The *Kitāb al-uṣūl* was evidently regarded as a key Mu‘tazilī work. Not only did Ibn Khallād himself write a commentary on it, but so did ‘Abd al-Jabbār (not his *Uṣūl al-khamsa*, which forms the basis of his disciple Mānkdim Shashdīw’s extant *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*, but more likely his lost *Takmilat al-sharḥ*) and the Zaydī Imām al-Nāṭiq bi-l-ḥaqq and his disciple, who added super-commentaries to this work. There is yet another partially extant commentary, which has been attributed to ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s successor Abū Rashīd al-Nīsābūrī, though this attribution has been challenged (Gimaret, pp. 72-73; Schmidtke and Adang).

## SIGNIFICANCE

The work attests to the way in which, among Muʿtazilī theologians, the two key Christian doctrines were increasingly regarded as illustrations of the unsustainability of alternatives to their own radical form of monotheism. This shows how Christian doctrines were increasingly employed by Muslims in order to demonstrate the superiority of their own doctrines as much as to prove the incoherence of Christian teachings.

## MANUSCRIPTS —

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

## STUDIES

R.C. Martin, 'The identification of two Muʿtazilite MSS', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 98 (1978) 389-93

D. Gimaret, 'Les uṣūl al-ḥamsa du Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ġabbār et leurs commentaires', *Annales Islamologiques* 15 (1979) 47-96

(An edition of the *Ziyādāt sharḥ al-uṣūl* is currently being prepared by C. Adang, W. Madelung and S. Schmidtke.)

### *Al-Sharḥ*, 'The explanation'

DATE Unknown; before about 950

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The work is lost. It was a commentary on Ibn Khallād's own *Kitāb al-uṣūl* and, according to ʿAbd al-Jabbār in his *Tathbīt* (p. 198), like that earlier work it contained polemic (*al-masāʿil lahum wa-l-radd ʿalayhim*) against the Christians.

The *Sharḥ* was presumably noteworthy to the later Muʿtazilī because it contained more elaborate versions of the arguments from the work on which it was a commentary, and maybe also additional arguments borrowed from other Muslim polemical works. It must have followed the structure of the *Kitāb al-uṣūl*, and would hence have included refutations of Christian doctrines in a section following its presentation of the existence and character of God.

It is entirely possible that this work, as opposed to the original *Kitāb al-uṣūl*, was the object of the later commentaries and amplifications that are mentioned above.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Like the *Uṣūl*, the *Sharḥ* attests to the way in which Mu'tazilī theologians increasingly regarded the two key Christian doctrines as illustrations of the fact that versions of teaching about God other than their own radical form of monotheism were logically unsustainable.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

**David Thomas**

# Ibn Albar al-Qūṭī

DATE OF BIRTH	Latter 9 <sup>th</sup> century
PLACE OF BIRTH	Unknown; possibly Cordova
DATE OF DEATH	Unknown
PLACE OF DEATH	Unknown; possibly Cordova

## BIOGRAPHY

We have very little information about the exact identity of this Arabized Christian author. All we know about him is that he was the qāḍī of the Christian community in Cordova and one of the most outstanding intellects of all Christian priests. He was probably born in Cordova in the 9<sup>th</sup> century and probably died there in the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

Two suggestions have been made about the identity of Ḥafṣ ibn Albar al-Qūṭī: first, that he was the well-known Paul Alvarus (q.v.), one of the leaders of the Christian community in Cordova in the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century; and second, from information given by the historian Ibn al-Qūṭīyya (q.v.), that he was the ‘judge of the non-Arabs’ (*qāḍī al-‘ajam*), by which would be meant the Christians. In confirmation, al-Imām al-Qurṭubī in his *Al-i‘lām* calls him ‘the judge of the Christians’ (*qāḍī al-Naṣārā*). Ibn al-Qūṭīyya also suggests that he was a descendant of Romulus, one of the three sons of the Visigothic king Witiza.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

Ibn al-Qūṭīyya, *Ta’rīkh iftitāḥ al-Andalus*, ed. I. al-Abyārī, Cairo, 1989, p. 31  
Al-Imām al-Qurṭubī, *Al-i‘lām bi-mā fī dīn al-Naṣārā min al-fasād wa-l-awhām wa-iḥḥār maḥāsīn dīn al-Islām wa-ithbāt nubuwwa nabīyyinā Muḥammad*, ed. A. Ḥijāzī al-Saqqā, Cairo, 1980, pp. 34, 57, 58, 61, 80-81, 88, 422, 424, 427, 432-33

### Secondary

J.P. Monferrer Sala, art. ‘Ibn Albar al-Qūṭī’, in J. Lirola Delgado and J.M. Puerta Vilchez (eds), *Diccionario Enciclopédico de al-Andalus. Diccionario de autores y obras andalusíes*, Granada, 2002



- H. Goussen, *Die christlich-arabische Literatur der Mozaraber*, Leipzig, 1909, pp. 9, 13-15 (Spanish trans., J.P. Monferrer Sala, *La literatura árabe cristiana de los mozárabes*, Cordova, 1999, pp. 17-18, 23-25)
- T.E. Burman, *Religious polemic and the intellectual history of the Mozarabs, c. 1050-1200*, Leiden, 1994, pp. 14-15, 17, 99, 104, 156-59
- P.S. van Koningsveld, 'La literatura cristiano árabe de la España Medieval y el significado de la transmisión textual en árabe de la Collectio Concilio-rum', in *Concilio III de Toledo. XIV Centenario 589-1989*, Toledo, 1991, 697-700 (trans., 'Christian Arabic literature from medieval Spain. An attempt at periodization', in S.K. Samir and J.S. Nielsen (eds), *Christian Arabic apologetics during the Abbasid Period (750-1258)*, Leiden, 1994, pp. 206-12)
- 'Umar Kuḥayla, *Kitāb al-Naṣārā fī l-Andalus*, Cairo, 1993, p. 132
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- G. Levi della Vida, 'Manoscritti arabi di origine spagnola nella Biblioteca Vaticana', in *Collectanea vaticana Albareda in honore Anselmo M. Card. Albareda*, Vatican City, 1962, pp. 163-64
- D.M. Dunlop, 'Sobre Ḥafṣ ibn Albar al-Qūṭī al-Qurṭubī', *Al-Andalus* 20 (1955) 211-13
- E. García Gómez, 'Dunlop, D.M. "Ḥafṣ ibn Albar – the last Goths"', *Al-Andalus* 19 (1954) 481-482 (review)
- D.M. Dunlop, 'Ḥafṣ ibn Albar – the last of the Goths?', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1954), pp. 137-51
- A. Neubauer, 'Hafs al-Qouti', *Revue des Études Juives* 30 (1895) 65-69

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

### *Kitāb al-masā'il al-sab' wa-l-khamsīn*, 'The book of fifty-seven questions'

DATE End of the 9th or beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century  
 ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

The book is no longer extant. A few fragments are preserved in quotations by al-Imām al-Qurṭubī, which suggest that it was an anti-Muslim polemical treatise in which the doctrine of the Trinity was explained in order to describe the various heresies that had arisen over it.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The main interest of this work lies in the evidence it gives of the influence of Eastern Christian theological terminology used for the Trin-

ity, of the heresies that arose over it, and of eschatological concepts about rewards and punishment in the afterlife.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

See al-Imām al-Qurṭubī, *Al-i'lām*, pp. 61, 80-81, 128, 432-33, for quotations from the work.

STUDIES

Van Koningsveld, 'La literatura cristiano-árabe de la España medieval', p. 69 (trans. 'Christian Arabic literature from medieval Spain', pp. 210-11)

Monferrer Sala, art. 'Ibn Albar al-Qūṭī'

### *Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh*, 'The book of Orosius'

DATE Before 950

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

A comparison of the Arabic *Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh* with Orosius' *Historiae adversus paganos*, a universal history from the creation up to the 5<sup>th</sup> century, shows that the Arabic version was not a mere translation, but a revision of the Latin text. It was made by the Christian Ḥafṣ ibn Albar al-Qūṭī and the Muslim Qāsim ibn Aṣḡagh (d. 951).

SIGNIFICANCE

The cooperation between a Christian and Muslim in this translation is striking, and anticipates instances in later centuries. The work was very influential on later Muslim histories, transmitting geographical and historical stories and details, and also biblical narratives, which were used by Muslim historians as late as the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

MANUSCRIPTS

MS New York, Columbia University – X, 893.712 H (presumably 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> century; opening and closing fols missing)

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

*Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh (Traducción árabe de las Historiae adversus paganos de Orosio)*, ed. M. Penelas, Madrid, 2001

*Ūrūsiyūs, Ta'rīkh al-'ālam*, ed. 'A.-R. Badawī, Beirut, 1982

## STUDIES

- Penelas (ed.), *Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh*, pp. 27-96
- M. Penelas, 'A possible author of the Arabic translation of Orosius' *Historiae*', *Al-Masāq* 13 (2001) 113-35
- L. Molina, 'Orosio y los geógrafos hispano-musulmanes', *Al-Qanṭara* 5 (1984) 63-92
- G. Levi della Vida, 'La traduzione araba delle Storie de Orosio', in G. Levi della Vida, *Note di storia letteraria arabo-ispánica*, ed. M. Nallino, Rome, 1971, 79-107

**Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala**

# *Life of Basil*

Grēgorios, Gregorius, Gregory

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown; probably late 9<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown  
DATE OF DEATH Unknown; mid or late 10<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF DEATH Unknown

## BIOGRAPHY

Nothing is known about this Gregory, who wrote the *Life of Basil*, except that he was a pupil of the saint. He obviously died after Basil, so sometime later than 26 March 944, or 952.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### *Primary*

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## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Bios kai politeia kai merikē diēgēsis thaumatōn tou hosiou patros hēmōn Basileiou tou Neou, syngrapheis para Grēgoriou tou mathētou autou,*  
 ‘Life, conduct and detailed record of the miracles of our holy father Basil the Younger, written by his pupil Gregory’, ‘Life of St Basil’

DATE After 26 March 944, or 952

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Greek

## DESCRIPTION

Muslims do not play a significant part in this work. We only find a single reference to the *parakoimomenos* Samon, who is called an (*H*)*agarēnas* (son of Hagar) by birth, but converted to Christianity and in the reign of the Emperor Leo VI eventually attained the high position of a *patrikios*. It was for this reason that when, in the *Vita*, Samon interrogates Basil, the ascetic does not deign to answer his questions.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Although the text is not of prime importance for Christian-Muslim relations, it shows that Byzantine society was open in the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century, allowing a former Muslim to enter a very high official position, though it is worth remembering that the same thing took place on the Muslim side with Leo of Tripoli (see the entry on John Caminates). Since the conversion of Samon is also attested by other sources, there is no reason to doubt the *Vita Basilii iunioris* on this point, even though it generally conforms to the norms of hagiography in containing many fictitious elements (a critical edition is an urgent need).

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MS Moscow, State Historical Museum (Depository of the Synodal Library) – 249, fols 1-350v (16<sup>th</sup> century)

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Version B:

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MS Venice, Marcian Library – App. II. 125, fols 35-239v (15<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Athos, Monastery of St George – 25 (15<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Moscow, State Historical Museum (Depository of the Synodal Library) – 249, fols 351-378v (16<sup>th</sup> century)

Version C:

MS Athos, Iviron Monastery – 478 (13<sup>th</sup> century)

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**Lars Martin Hoffman**

# Aḥmad al-Rāzī

Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn  
Mūsā al-Rāzī al-Kinānī

DATE OF BIRTH April 888  
PLACE OF BIRTH Cordova  
DATE OF DEATH 1 November 955  
PLACE OF DEATH Cordova

## BIOGRAPHY

Aḥmad al-Rāzī was the son of a merchant from al-Rayy (hence his patronymic al-Rāzī), whose professional dealings led him to North Africa and al-Andalus. His family were in Cordova when Aḥmad was born, in April 888. When Aḥmad's father died, the family remained in al-Andalus, and Aḥmad continued to live in Cordova throughout his life.

Aḥmad al-Rāzī was known as a great memorizer and transmitter of historical reports. He is reported to have written a number of books on the achievements of western Islam, though none is extant. He is particularly famous for *Akhbār mulūk al-Andalus*, and another three works of his are mentioned: the *Kitāb al-istī'āb*, 'Full comprehension', described as one of the most beautiful and largest books on the genealogies of famous people of al-Andalus; the *Kitāb a'yān al-mawālī bi-l-Andalus*, 'Eminent *mawlās* of al-Andalus' (mentioned by al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, *Tartīb al-madārik wa-taqrīb al-masālik*, ed. M. Bencherifa et al., 8 vols, Rabat, 1983, vi, p. 126; and Ibn al-Abbār, *Al-takmila li-kitāb al-Ṣila*, ed. 'A.S. al-Harrās, 4 vols, Casablanca: Dār al-Ma'rifa, s.d., i, p. 22, ii, p. 82, iv, p. 156), which may be a part of the former; and a description of Cordova written in the style of Abū l-Faḍl Aḥmad ibn Abī Ṭāhir's (d. 893) *Tārīkh Baghdad*.

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WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Akhbār mulūk al-Andalus*, 'Reports on the kings of al-Andalus'

DATE First half of the 10th century; before 955

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

This history is not preserved in its original form, its contents being known through quotations in later works and translations into other languages. Devoted exclusively to the Iberian Peninsula, it was divided into three parts: geographical description, pre-Islamic history, and history from the arrival of the Arabs to the author's own time. It included a detailed account of the Arab conquest, according to which most of the towns were conquered by force, and consequently the properties of the natives passed into Muslim hands. It also described relations, both peaceful and hostile, with the Christians of the northern peninsula and with the Carolingians.



At the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century al-Rāzī's book was translated into Portuguese by Gil Pérez, in collaboration with an Arab, but this is also lost. In its turn it was translated into Spanish, and it is only this translation, entitled *Crónica del moro Rasis*, that is extant in three 15<sup>th</sup>-century manuscripts: MS Ca, from Santa Catalina of Toledo, currently in Toledo Cathedral (box 26, no. 24); MS Es, in El Escorial (no. X-i-12); and MS Mo, in the private library of A. Rodríguez Moñino in Madrid.

The *Crónica del moro Rasis* comprises the first and second sections of the original, namely, the geographical description and the pre-Islamic history of the Iberian Peninsula. However, whereas it is widely accepted that the geographical section is a fairly faithful reflection of the original Arabic text, the authenticity of the pre-Islamic section is much debated. This draws upon a number of Latin works (including the *Chronicon* of Saint Jerome, *Breviarium ab urbe condita* of Eutropius, *Historiae adversus paganos* of Orosius, and the *Historia Gothorum* and *Etymologiae* of Isidore of Seville), and, according to Matesanz, even a Greek work, the Roman History of Appian. Thus, while such scholars as Sánchez-Albornoz, Catalán and Matesanz maintain that this part is a more or less accurate translation of *Akḥbār mulūk al-Andalus*, others, such as Gayangos and Molina, think that it is mostly Gil Pérez's own composition, as can be demonstrated by comparison with quotations in later Arabic works.

The Portuguese *Rasis* was the main source of the Portuguese *Cronica geral de Espanha de 1344* (Cr1344) of Pedro Alfonso, count of Barcelos, which is also lost. Again, it is only the Spanish translation of this Portuguese work that has been preserved, in two manuscripts from between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries: MS M, from the Royal Palace of Madrid, currently in the University Library of Salamanca (no. 2656); and MS E, originally belonging to Ambrosio de Morales, in El Escorial (no. &-II-I). Cr1344 draws from *Rasis* the geographical section, the conquest, and the history of the Iberian Peninsula under Muslim rule, though it gives a much shorter version of the latter than al-Rāzī's original.

Aḥmad al-Rāzī was not the first Andalusī historian, nor was his work the first history written in al-Andalus, but it was a landmark in Andalusī historiography and became widely known throughout the peninsula. Its contents and structure were a model for later authors: almost every geographer followed al-Rāzī's description, and his his-

torical section was directly or indirectly known to most historians writing on al-Andalus, up to al-Maqqarī in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The most significant element in Aḥmad al-Rāzī's work is his account of the Muslim conquest of Iberia, which tells of their advance into the peninsula with the encouragement of the enigmatic count Julian. He asserts that their subjugation of the peninsula mostly by force meant that Christian properties became their possessions by right. This invasion is interpreted as the consequence of the immorality of the Visigothic rulers and of the treachery of the people, who did not hesitate to betray their king in order to further their own interests.

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**Mayte Penelas**

# Hrotsvit of Gandersheim

Hroswitha, Hrosvit, Roswitha

DATE OF BIRTH	Approximately 935
PLACE OF BIRTH	Saxony
DATE OF DEATH	Approximately 1000
PLACE OF DEATH	Gandersheim, between the dioceses of Hildesheim and Mainz

## BIOGRAPHY

Hrotsvit lived as a canoness at the abbey of Gandersheim where she was a prolific writer and playwright. Little is known about the details of her life aside from a small number of biographical clues contained within her writings. An independent Benedictine community of women, both nuns and canonesses, Gandersheim was associated with the court of Otto I. It is likely that Hrotsvit entered the community as a young child and resided there during what is considered the abbey's 'golden age' under Abbess Gerberga II (niece of Otto I), when it was renowned for its scholastic, cultural and religious activities. Hrotsvit names Gerberga as one of her teachers, along with another nun, Rikkardis. Together they tutored Hrotsvit in the standard Latin curriculum of the *trivium* and *quadrivium*. Hrotsvit was exposed to both patristic and Roman authors too. There is some speculation that Hrotsvit also spent time at the court of Otto I, given the stylistic similarities between her writing and that of several court authors.

Hrotsvit's literary output consists of eight legends, six plays, two epics and a short poem. Only the poem is no longer extant. Of the two epics, one focuses on a history of the abbey of Gandersheim, while the other narrates Otto I's ascendancy and reign, portraying him as an ideal Christian ruler. The plays are the best known of her works. Based on Latin and Byzantine sources, they are hagiographical in nature and extol the virtues of virgin martyrs and resolute hermits with surprising wit and slapstick comedy. The eight legends are similar in source and theme, with the exception of one, which tells the story of a Christian martyr who lived in Islamic Spain. It is this

work that makes Hrotsvit of interest to scholars of Christian-Muslim relations.

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## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Pelagius*, 'Pelagius'

DATE Unknown; probably about 955

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Latin

## DESCRIPTION

Written in leonine hexameters and running to 413 lines, *Pelagius* tells the story of the martyrdom of a young Christian man in Cordova in 925 on the order of the Caliph 'Abd al-Raḥmān III. Among Hrotsvit's legends and plays, this is the only work focused on a contemporary figure and not based on written sources. Hrotsvit tells us that her source for the tale is a firsthand witness's account. This would seem possible, given the presence of a diplomatic party from al-Andalus in the court of Otto I during the 950s. While there is a Spanish account of Pelagius' martyrdom, there is no evidence that this text travelled over the Pyrenees until well after the 10<sup>th</sup> century. And while this account agrees with Hrotsvit's work in broad outline, there are enough differences in detail to confirm that her work is independent.

Hrotsvit begins the legend with a brief history of the Islamic conquest of Spain, a basic primer on Islamic culture, a summary of the conditions endured by Christians living under Islamic rule, and a scathing portrait of the Caliph 'Abd al-Raḥmān III. She then goes on to narrate the particulars of Pelagius' story. The young man is given as a hostage to the Islamic ruler in lieu of his father after a Galician border skirmish. While in prison, his beauty and charm come to the attention of 'Abd al-Raḥmān, who in the central dialogue of the work offers Pelagius favor and riches in exchange for a sexual liaison. Pelagius resists this offer first with wit but eventually by hitting the caliph on the nose. The livid ruler then orders the boy killed. As is typical of Hrotsvit's virgin martyrs, Pelagius proves difficult to slay – he survives being launched in a trebuchet onto a rocky shoal, and is finally decapitated. The story ends with the recovery and testing of Pelagius' body as a relic and the triumphal proclamation of his sainthood.

Hrotsvit gives a surprisingly nuanced view of both the general history of Islamic Spain and the life of Christians living there. Her tale reflects the uneasy economic and religious compromises of multicultural Andalusian society, where a dominant Islamic ruling class sought to control a large Christian minority. She knows, for example, that the Christians live openly within this society and form an important tax

base for the ruler. Her theology, however, is much less nuanced. She portrays Muslims as pagan idol worshipers – a popular but misguided stereotype that was to be a part of northern European literature for centuries to come.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

In her account of the martyrdom of Pelagius, Hrotsvit presents her audience with an alarming view of their southern Islamic neighbors. Both in their military prowess and in their aggressive pagan otherness, Muslims are portrayed as a clear and present danger to Western Christendom. Hrotsvit's story is not overly alarmist, however. Despite failed rebellions and unlucky border skirmishes, God continues to support and defend this community with the blood of virgin martyrs – a most powerful weapon. Pelagius is able to humiliate his royal enemy and expose him as a weak and silly buffoon. But by naming this buffoon – 'Abd al-Rahmān III – Hrotsvit adds an additional layer of political satire to her work. Her audience can both laugh at and take comfort in this caricature of a real contemporary Islamic figure. One can wonder if Hrotsvit might even be casting some aspersions on the wisdom of Otto's attempts at international diplomacy. In any case, Hrotsvit's *Pelagius* succeeds as the best of 'cold war' propaganda – a cautionary tale about a real but rather distant enemy served a humiliating defeat by a mere boy and his all-powerful Christian God.

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Linda A. McMillin



# Al-Mas'ūdī

Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Mas'ūdī

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown; probably before 893  
PLACE OF BIRTH Baghdad  
DATE OF DEATH September 956  
PLACE OF DEATH Cairo

## BIOGRAPHY

Despite the continuing popularity of his *Murūj al-dhahab*, little is known about al-Mas'ūdī's life apart from the information found in his own surviving works, *Murūj al-dhahab* itself and the later *Tanbīh wa-ishrāf*. He was born in Baghdad, sometime just before about 893 according to intimations in the latter work (the exact date is not given). He studied with many leading authorities, including the Shī'ī expert Abū Muḥammad al-Nawbakhtī (d. 922) (q.v.), and the Mu'tazilī theologian Abū 'Alī l-Jubbā'ī (d. 915) (q.v.), presumably getting to know Abū 'Alī's son Abū Hāshim (q.v.), and his pupil Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī (q.v.). He was probably a willing student, because the many authorities he cites in his works and the journeys he undertook indicate that he was highly motivated to find things out for himself.

How he financed his journeys is not disclosed, and it must be supposed that he drew on private funds. Between about 915 and the 950s he made a series of journeys inside and outside the Islamic empire, before settling in Egypt, where he died in 956.

As the titles of some of his lost works and references in his extant works indicate, al-Mas'ūdī was an Imāmī Shī'ī, though the extensive details in his works about the history of the caliphate up to his own time suggest that he felt little bias against Sunni government.

The titles of 36 of his works are known, including the two extant works. A number of them were closely related in theme and probably structure, culminating in *Murūj al-dhahab*.

Important among these works was the *Kitāb akhbār al-zamān wa-man abādahu l-ḥidhān min al-umam al-māḍiya wa-l-aghyāl al-khāliya wa-l-mamālik al-dāthira*, 'Reports of the times, and the events into which past communities, defunct races and disappeared empires have

sunk' (it is possibly this work to which Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 171, refers under the title *Kitāb al-ta'rikh fī akhbār al-umam min al-'arab wa-l-'ajam*), to which al-Mas'ūdī repeatedly refers for fuller treatments of items he mentions in the *Murūj* and *Tanbīh*. These include a number connected with Christianity: the beliefs among the Byzantines about the meaning of the clerical hierarchy and the eucharist (*Murūj*, i, pp. 200-1); full reports of a series of debates held in the presence of the governor and later ruler of Egypt, Aḥmad ibn Ṭulūn (r. 868-84), between a centenarian Copt (who took the view that speculation was futile and that the teachings of all religions were equivalent) and a range of exponents of other religions, including Muslims (*Murūj*, ii, p. 391; he excerpted the most interesting details of these meetings in his lost *Maqālāt fī uṣūl al-diyānāt*, on which see below); accounts of Christian and Zoroastrian views about the Magi who visited the infant Jesus, and the exaggerations that gradually crept into the stories about them (*Murūj*, iv, p. 80); extensive accounts of Constantine and other Byzantine emperors (*Tanbīh*, pp. 144 and 175); and a report about Jacob Baradaeus, the eponym of the 'Jacobite' church, and the ecclesiastical events of the time (*Tanbīh*, p. 151). It should be added that, in the light of the diverse information it evidently contained, there must be some hesitation about the relationship between this clearly encyclopaedic work and the work that has been published under the same title (cf. Pellat, art. 'al-Mas'ūdī').

Closely related to the *Kitāb akhbār al-zamān* was the *Kitāb al-awsaṭ*, 'The medium book', which was an abridgement of the larger work, and like it written before *Murūj al-dhahab*. References to this shorter work in the *Murūj* and *Tanbīh* show that it gave more or less the same information about Christianity as the *Kitāb akhbār al-zamān*.

A work of a different kind that appears to have touched on Christianity in passing was the *Kitāb sirr al-ḥayāh*, 'The secret of life'. This contained accounts of divisions among the early Shī'a (*Murūj*, viii, pp. 40-41), and of the beliefs of the Khurrāmiyya (*Tanbīh*, p. 353), descriptions of various beliefs in the transmigration of souls (*Murūj*, iii, p. 313; vii, p. 118), discussions about the nature of the soul, as held by Christians, among others (*Murūj*, iii, p. 364), and a description of works written by a number of Christian scholars such as Maḥbūb of Manbij, Sa'īd ibn Baṭrīq (whom al-Mas'ūdī had met in Cairo) (q.v.) and a certain Abū Zakariyyā' Denkhā, with whom al-Mas'ūdī says he had debated about the Trinity and other teachings in both Baghdad and Takrit (*Tanbīh*, p. 155).

*Murūj al-dhahab*, al-Mas'ūdī's longest surviving work, dating in its final form to 943, contains a wealth of details about Christianity, together with a long history of the Christian Byzantine Empire. Much of this is taken from the *Kitāb akhbār al-zamān* and is an abridgement of it (see *Murūj*, i, pp. 2-4), attesting to the length and comprehensiveness of that work.

The history of the Byzantine Empire occupies Chapters 29 and 30 of the *Murūj* (vol. ii, pp. 311-55), starting with the conversion of Constantine and continuing to the year 332 (943). It names the emperors in turn, giving some details of their reigns, and refers to church councils and other ecclesiastical events. From the beginning of the Islamic era, it follows the relations between the two empires, in particular the competition between Hārūn al-Rashīd and Nicephorus I.

In addition to this connected narrative, the *Murūj* gives an account of early Christian history, from the life of Christ (who it says was taken up to heaven, *rufī'a al-Masīh*, in the reign of Tiberius), through the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul, and the expansion of the Church under the first disciples (vol. ii, pp. 299-303; see a further account of Jesus' life as part of the prophetic history of Islam in vol. i, pp. 122-24). It goes on to describe events at the time of the early councils, and the schisms from which the Nestorians and other eastern sects originated (vol. ii, pp. 327-29). Elsewhere, it gives detailed accounts of the calendars of the Copts and Syrian Christians, including the religious festivals held in the churches of Antioch (vol. iii, pp. 399-410), and a lengthy description of the views on Christianity and other faiths, as well as geographical features of Egypt, offered by the centenarian Copt to Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn, which first appeared in the *Kitāb akhbār al-zamān* (vol. ii, pp. 372-92). Recollections about visits to Christian places that al-Mas'ūdī had made in the course of his travels attest to his interest in unusual elements of Christianity, in addition to his knowledge of the faith and its history.

Other lost works written after the *Murūj* that referred to topics connected with Christianity included the *Khazā'in al-dīn wa-sirr al-'ālamīn*, 'Treasures of faith and the secret of humankind' (based on the *Akhbār al-zamān*, the *Murūj* and other earlier works; see *Tanbih*, p. 101), which treated the Byzantine emperors (*Tanbih*, p. 161); the *Masā'il wa-l-'ilal fī l-madhāhib wa-l-milal*, 'Problems and pretexts concerning doctrines and confessions', which contained the same account of books by Christians as the *Kitāb sirr al-ḥayāh* (*Tanbih*,

p. 155); the *Kitāb funūn al-ma'ārif wa-mā jarā fī l-duhūr al-sawālif*, 'The varieties of knowledge and what happened in times past', which contained an account of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, the *aṣḥāb al-kaḥf* of the Qur'an (*Tanbīh*, p. 147), and a description of the doctrinal differences between Christian sects, both major and minor (*Tanbīh*, p. 151), and comments on church councils and the main patriarchal sees (*Tanbīh*, p. 159); the *Kitāb dhakhā'ir al-'ulūm wa-mā kāna fī sālif al-duhūr*, 'Treasures of the sciences and what took place in past times', which appears to have covered the same ground as the *Kitāb funūn al-ma'ārif*, with which it is always mentioned; and other similar works that appear to have been based on the *Kitāb akhbār al-zamān* and its main successors.

The title of the *Kitāb taqallub al-duwal wa-taghayyur al-ārā' wa-l-mīlāl*, 'Change of regimes and alteration of opinions and religious communities', suggests that it may have contained discussions about aspects of Christianity, though the only surviving mention of its contents (*Tanbīh*, p. 334) concerns the Ismā'īlīs in North Africa.

The *Kitāb al-tanbīh wa-l-ishrāf* itself continues the themes of earlier works, and in the many details it contains shows further the extent of al-Mas'ūdī's factual knowledge about Christianity. Its main treatment of Christian matters comes in the long series of accounts of the Byzantine emperors, beginning with Constantine and his conversion and coming up to the Islamic year 345 (956) (pp. 137-239), and of the provinces of the empire (pp. 176-89). While these are essentially historical and geographical in character, they contain short essays on the major schisms in the Church and the emergence of the main sects known within the Islamic empire. There is also a brief account of the birth of Jesus and his life, following Christian versions, and of his crucifixion, which al-Mas'ūdī recounts here with only one mild indication of disagreement (p. 125).

From all this, it is evident that throughout his works al-Mas'ūdī has some fascination for the Byzantines and their empire, and he treats them not only as competitors and enemies of the Islamic state, but also as people with their own traditions and beliefs (see further Shboul, *Al-Mas'ūdī and his world*, pp. 227-83). In the same way, he appears to have been interested in Christianity in its own right. The references he gives show that he possessed more than a passing knowledge of its beliefs and practices, and that his regard went far beyond the polemical (see Shboul, pp. 289-95).

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Al-ibāna 'an uṣūl al-diyāna*, 'An elucidation concerning the principles of religion'

DATE Unknown; before 943

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The work has not survived. Its title, which recalls the work of Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī from slightly earlier in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, suggests that it was an investigation into the true religion, and in turn a refutation of alternative forms. The references to it in the *Murūj* and *Tanbīh* bear this out.

In *Murūj*, vi, pp. 23-24, al-Mas'ūdī says that in this work he listed the disagreements between a number of Muslim groups, particularly

the Mu'tazila and Shī'a. And in *Tanbīh*, p. 354, he says that he wrote at length about dualist groups, and those who upheld the eternity of the world and denied monotheism and the teachings of Islam. So, when he says in *Murūj*, i, p. 201, that he refuted the opinions of Christians and others about their beliefs, and in particular their claims about the origins of their ecclesiastical hierarchy (they said it was divine in origin, though he knows it was derived from the Manicheans), it is clear that these and any other anti-Christian arguments were only one element in a much larger set of refutations.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The *Ibāna* appears to have been a combination of description and refutation, and to have been directed at both Muslim and non-Muslim groups. In this respect it was not unlike al-Nāshī' al-Akbar's (q.v.) fragmentary *Kitāb fī l-maqālāt* and other earlier works that were probably intended to demonstrate how only one version of faith was logically coherent.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

*Kitāb al-istirjā' fī l-kalām*, 'Cancellation,  
concerning theology'

DATE Unknown, before 943

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The work is lost, and is known only from references in some MSS of the *Murūj* (see Shboul, *Al-Mas'udi* and his world, p. 62 and n. 53). It was a polemical work, and contained refutations of the Zoroastrians and Christians, attacking the latter for their teachings about the two natures of Christ.

## SIGNIFICANCE

It is impossible to say how detailed or extensive the refutations of Christianity were, though it seems unlikely that arguments against one particular doctrine would not be accompanied by others against such key doctrines as the Trinity. For his attack on Christianity, one

might surmise that al-Mas'ūdī drew on arguments from his teacher Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī and other earlier anti-Christian polemicists.

The work was evidently directed at a number of faiths, following precedents set by earlier scholars (e.g. Abū 'Īsa al-Warrāq), who wrote descriptive accounts of the faiths known to them, and then, in works that were probably built on these, refuted them.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

### *Maqālāt fī uṣūl al-diyānāt*, 'Discourses on the principles of the religions'

DATE Unknown; before 943

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

The work is lost. References in the *Murūj* and *Tanbīh* indicate that, not unlike the *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn* of Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, it was primarily a descriptive account of various religious groups, though outside as well as inside Islam. There are no indications that it contained explicit polemic against any of them.

In *Murūj*, iv, p. 407 (see also v, p. 320), al-Mas'ūdī says it described the different positions among Muslims over the outcome of the arbitration between the representatives of 'Alī and Mu'āwiya following the battle of Ṣiffīn; in *Murūj*, v, pp. 181, 230, the different beliefs among Muslim groups in general; in *Murūj*, v, p. 473, and also vi, p. 68; vii, pp. 56, 117-18; and viii, p. 41, the divisions among the Shī'a; and in *Murūj*, vi, p. 188, the divisions among the Khurramiyya. It must have been a very detailed work because, according to *Murūj*, vi, p. 212, it even included biographies of individuals. In addition, it also contained accounts of the views of various peoples, including Indians and other ancient races (*Tanbīh*, p. 161), about 'the four worlds', and a long and detailed account of the Khurramiyya (*Tanbīh*, p. 353).

Among these diverse accounts, the *Maqālāt* described Christian beliefs about their ecclesiastical hierarchy and its origins (*Murūj*, i, p. 201), a full description of the debates held before Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn between an aged Copt and various Muslim opponents (*Murūj*, ii,

p. 392), and an account of the founder of the Maronites and his differences with the Nestorians and Melkites over Christology (*Tanbih*, p. 154).

SIGNIFICANCE

The work was clearly a heresiographical compendium of the religious teachings known in al-Mas'ūdī's time. The fact that it apparently contained anecdotal accounts suggests that it was loosely set out, though it is unclear whether religious affiliation or theological or philosophical theme was the main structural determinant.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES—

**David Thomas**



## Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ

DATE OF BIRTH	—
PLACE OF BIRTH	—
DATE OF DEATH	They were active in about 956
PLACE OF DEATH	Baghdad and Basra

### BIOGRAPHY

The pen-name Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ ('Brethren of Purity') was used by the otherwise anonymous authors of the compendium of 52 treatises on various disciplines entitled *Rasāʾil ikhwān al-ṣafāʾ wa-khillān al-wafāʾ* ('Epistles of the brethren of purity and friends of loyalty'). The date of the Epistles is not known, but they must have been finished by the middle of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, writing in the 980s, attributes them to a group of intellectuals based in Basra in the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century, and he names them in his *Kitāb al-imtāʿ*. An alternative theory, held by Marquet and Hamdani, claims that the Epistles, or at least an embryonic form of them, were originated by the 9<sup>th</sup>-century leaders of the Ismāʿīlī movement, who were hiding from Abbasid persecution in Syria.

### MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

#### Primary

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ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt*, pp. 610-11

#### Secondary

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- H.F. Hamdani, 'A compendium of Ismā'īlī esoterics', *Islamic Culture* 2 (1937) 210-20
- There are also numerous studies in Arabic.

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

### *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Şafā' wa khillān al-wafā'*, 'The Epistles of the Brethren of Purity and Friends of Loyalty'

DATE About 956

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

The work is divided into 52 epistles (*rasā'il*), arranged into four sections (propaedeutical sciences, including mathematics, logic, music and ethics; natural sciences; sciences of the soul and the intellect; theological sciences). They total 1,900 pages in the 1957 Beirut edition.

The Epistles are arguably one of the most interesting works in Arabic-Islamic culture regarding Christianity. The attitude towards Christianity of the Ikhwān al-Şafā' must be understood within the context of their respectful regard for all religions: for them, truth is one and it is contained as much in revelation as in philosophy (the aim of both being the same – the purification of the soul from matter), the differences between religions being merely on the level of practice and culture. The Ikhwān al-Şafā' understand prophethood as a series of adaptations of the same inner reality to changing times, with the idea of a progression, each revelation abrogating the ritual practice, but not the essence, of the previous one.

Scattered throughout the *Rasā'il*, there are elements, references and quotations related to Christianity, which can be divided into three groups: the Gospels, Jesus, and Christians and their beliefs.

The Gospels: The Ikhwān al-Şafā' accept the truth of the previous revealed books, and the Gospel takes a place of honor among these

scriptures. The Ikhwān al-Şafā' encourage their readers to read the Gospels, and the *Rasā'il* show a high level of awareness and accurate knowledge of them, and seem to display a preference for that of John. The same interpretive stance (which is closely related to Ismā'īlī *ta'wīl*) is applied to the Gospels as to the Qur'an and other scriptures. They suppose that 'the people of the Torah, the people of the Gospels and the people of the Qur'an' have different commandments, precepts and parables, but these are all symbolic allusions (*ishārāt*) to remind souls of what they have forgotten regarding their origin and their return.

There are numerous mentions of the Gospels in the *Rasā'il*, and there are also a number of quotations of Jesus' sayings; some are direct citations from the Gospels, others are reminiscent of them (including apocryphal gospels), yet others are more in line with the qur'anic account of Jesus, and finally other sayings are not traceable to any surviving Christian sources. Further, reciting a verse from the Gospels is said to be as protective in times of peril as reciting a verse from the Qur'an or the Torah.

Jesus: Jesus figures prominently in the *Rasā'il*, as one of the exemplars who embodied the views of the Ikhwān al-Şafā': belief in the eternity of the soul and the pursuit of the purification of the soul from matter by detachment from the bodily realm. His life, teachings, death and crucifixion are all referred to in this connection. On some occasions, the authors also quote the sayings of Jesus alongside others, such as Muḥammad and Socrates. Jesus' use of parables is seen in connection with the Ikhwān al-Şafā''s conception of religious language as being fundamentally figurative and allegorical. The life of Jesus basically follows the accounts in the Gospels, with his interaction with the disciples, his preaching, his miracles, arrest, crucifixion and resurrection all being narrated.

By far, the most important element for the history of Muslim-Christian relations, is the Ikhwān al-Şafā''s interpretation of the crucifixion. Unlike most Muslim commentators, who are inclined to interpret Q 4:157 as meaning that someone other than Jesus was killed, the authors of the *Rasā'il* affirm that Jesus did die on the cross. However, they emphasize that it was only his human reality (*nāsūt*) that was killed. The deception into which the Jews fell, and to which the Qur'an refers, was to believe that they had really killed him. The Ikhwān al-Şafā' deny this, since Jesus' real, spiritual being (*lāhūt*) lived on, because the soul is eternal and cannot be killed. Their interpretation of the verse is thus one which is in harmony with their worldview

and their conception of the soul. Two things are worth mentioning in this regard. First, that the terms *nāsūt* and *lāhūt* originate in the Christian debates on the divinity and humanity of the person of Christ, and their use in the *Rasā'il* probably betrays Nestorian influences. Second, the Ikhwān al-Şafā's reading coincides with other Ismā'īlī authors, among them Abū Ḥatim al-Rāzī (q.v.), who had no quandaries about accepting the crucifixion of the body, which in their view highlighted the supremacy of the spiritual over the physical realm.

Two further points highlight the affinity that the Ikhwān al-Şafā' feel with Jesus. The first is that he is portrayed as a spiritual healer, capable of curing sick souls of their blindness to spiritual realities, which is the stated aim of the *Rasā'il* themselves. Jesus is also portrayed as a missionary who counts on the help of his disciples; in the same way, the authors see themselves as a broad movement to harmonize religion and philosophy with a view to educating and advancing the spiritual status of their contemporaries.

Christians: The Ikhwān al-Şafā' admire the attitude of Christian monks towards this world, abstaining from its pleasures and devoting their lives to the contemplation of the eternity of the soul. They exalt monasticism (*tarahhub*) as 'the Christian way', as much as they praise asceticism (*tazahhud*), *taşawwuf*, the pondering of divine matters of the Socratic school, and the religion of the *ḥunafā'*. They describe the ideal person (a description containing a series of traits related to particular regions or groups), among other things, as 'Christian in conduct and Syrian in devotion'.

There is no doubt that the Ikhwān al-Şafā' knew Christians very well. Among the different Christian denominations, they cite the Nestorian (*Nasṭūrī*), Jacobite (*Ya'qūbī*) and Melkite (*Malkānī*). They refer to the hierarchy of the church as being composed of monks (sing. *rāhib*), priests (*qissīs*), deacons (*shammās*) – in that order – archbishops (*muṭrān*) and patriarchs (*jāthiliq*), who are specified as people who should not be killed in warfare. The Ikhwān al-Şafā' were also familiar with the ambiance inside churches, which they describe as being 'lit with candle lamps, illuminated with images, filled with crosses', with 'priests and monks dressed in coarse wool habits', with belts tied around their waists, swinging censers with their hands, spreading incense perfumed 'with costus (*qusṭ*) and frankincense (*kundur*)', reciting words in praise of God and 'chanting them repeatedly'. This is all described as seen in a dream, in which 'a group of bishops (*asāqifa*)' appear 'with goblets full of wine', holding in cloths

the sacramental loaves 'which they divided for the people and made them taste from that wine'.

Christian beliefs: Even though the general attitude towards Christians is largely positive, there are points of belief of which the Ikhwān al-Şafā' disapprove. Thus, they reject the attitude of the monks who indulge in misery and suffering in their ascetic practices. Belief in the Trinity (or 'the third of three') is criticized in passing, as is the eating of pork and the worship of the cross. The *Rasā'il* also condemn those who believe that their God was the holy spirit whose *nāsūt* was crucified by the Jews.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The main significance of the *Rasā'il* for Christians-Muslim relations is the acceptance they show of the universality of the Gospels and the message of Jesus. Moreover, the interpretation they give of the Qur'anic verse on the crucifixion, in view of their philosophy and their acceptance of the actual historical death of Jesus, may prove to be fertile common ground between Christianity and Islam, especially in their more esoteric interpretations.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

There are more than a hundred catalogued MSS of the *Rasā'il*.

The oldest dated MS is Istanbul, Atif Efendi Library – 1681 (1182; see

I.K. Poonawala, 'Why we need an Arabic critical edition with an annotated English translation of the *Rasā'il* Ikhwān al-Şafā'', in El-Bizri, *The Ikhwān al-Şafā' and their Rasā'il*, 33-57)

For other MSS see [http://www.musicologie.org/publireme/jmw/notices/ikhwan al Safa.html](http://www.musicologie.org/publireme/jmw/notices/ikhwan_al_Safa.html)

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#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

Most epistles have been translated into a variety of languages, but there is no comprehensive translation.

Currently there are five uncritical editions, very similar to each other:

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ed. K.D. al-Ziriklī, Cairo, Al-Maktaba al-Tijāriyya al-Kubrā, 1928

ed. N.D. al-Kutubī, Bombay, Maṭba' Nukhbat al-Akhbār, 1888

A complete new critical edition and English trans. of the *Rasā'il* is being published by Oxford University Press in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies as *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity Series*.

## STUDIES

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**Omar Ali-de-Unzaga**

# Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus

Kōnstantinos VII Porphyrogennētos

DATE OF BIRTH 17 or 18 May 905  
PLACE OF BIRTH Constantinople  
DATE OF DEATH 9 November 959  
PLACE OF DEATH Unknown

## BIOGRAPHY

The only son of the Byzantine Emperor Leo VI by his fourth wife Zoe Carbonopsina, Constantine was made co-emperor as a child, probably on 15 May 908, and finally ruled as emperor from 945 to 959. From the age of 8 to 16 he was under the shadow of his mother, his uncle Alexander, the patriarch Nicolas Mysticus, and Romanus Lecapenus, and from 920 until 944 he was cut off from power, but then in 945 he expelled his co-rulers, Stephen and Constantine Lecapenus, and became emperor for the next 14 years.

His greatest contribution is in the fields of diplomacy, military science, land legislation, and the encouragement of learning and the promotion of education. His reign is marked for the intensification of warfare against the Muslims in Cilicia, northern Syria, and Crete, and the diplomatic success of the conversion to Christianity of the Russian princess, Olga of Kiev, who visited Constantinople in 957. Among Byzantine emperors, he stands as the greatest rival to the Emperor Manuel II Palaiologus as a cultural personality.

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*Philoponēma Kōnstantinou basileōs hyiou Leontos peri tōn thematōn tōn anēkontōn tē basileia tōn Rhomaiōn. Pothen eschon tas onomasias kai ti sēmainousin hai toutōn prosēgoriai kai hoti ta men autōn archaizousi ta de nean ektēsanto tēn prosēgorian*, ‘The work of love of the Emperor Constantine son of Leo on the themes which belong to the empire of the Romans. From where do they have their names, what do the appellations of these mean and that some of them are of ancient origin and others have new appellations’; *De thematibus*, ‘On the themes’

DATE 934-44 or after 952 or after 944

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Greek

#### DESCRIPTION

This treatise was composed by the Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus or under his auspices. Questions about its dating, authorship (e.g. Pertusi in his edition argues for the late dating of Book II and its authorship), historical validity, and lack of accuracy in the use of sources have led scholars to dismiss it as an unimportant work marred by inaccuracies and misunderstandings (Gibbon, *Decline and fall*, p. liii; Hunger, i, p. 532). Others argue that it should be judged according to its aim, which is merely philological (von Falkenhausen, ‘Italy in Byzantine literature of the tenth century’). Its contribution to legal literature and learning, thanks to its methodology, has also been

pointed out (Pieler, 'Hē symbolē tou Kōnstantinou Porphyrogennētou', p. 81).

The aim of *De thematibus* is to give a historical and geographical description of the Byzantine provinces (*ODB*, art. 'Theme'), but though it dates from the 10<sup>th</sup> century, it does not fully represent the 10<sup>th</sup>-century reality. It draws on many older sources, especially Greek, Roman and Byzantine geographers and historians, who are often named, though occasionally referred to in general as the *palaioi*, and it also uses more recent sources, such as Paul the Deacon on the etymology of names (Falkenhausen, pp. 35-36). Together with the *De administrando imperio* and the *De ceremoniis*, it forms a trio of works on the empire, and it shares with them a common belief in the importance of the knowledge of the past and its value for the future, and in the image of the empire as a reflection of the divine order and part of the providential plan.

*De thematibus* lists 24 themes (though it refers overall to 31), and divides them into eastern and western groups. They were first brought into being in response to the Arab invasions (*atheōn Agarenōn*, p. 62), and they were increased as the defense of the empire against the Arabs required. In 780, there were nine themes, though by 842 there were 21 (see W. Treadgold, *The Byzantine revival 780-842*, Stanford, 1988, pp. 337-41; and in general Haldon, 'Military service').

The work has been criticized for its omission of the names of certain cities (Louggis, 'Thema Optimatōn', p. 239) and themes, and also for exaggerations (Louggis, 'Thema Optimatōn', p. 243), unsatisfactory explanations for the origin of the names of themes, and other historical and geographical inaccuracies. In some instances, the information it contains contradicts the *De administrando imperii*, which is usually more accurate (Zakythinis, p. 304).

#### SIGNIFICANCE

*De thematibus* is a unique attempt to explain the origin of the Byzantine themes and their names, and it is in this that its importance lies. Despite errors, anachronisms, and omissions, it remains an informative guide to the history of the Byzantine provinces. It contributes to the understanding of the transformation of regional administrative structures, and the transition of provinces into military territories. It increases our understanding of the function, character, and decisive role of the themes in the defense of Asia Minor against Islamic expansion.

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The manuscript tradition is detailed in Pertusi's edition of *De thematibus*, pp. 3-18.

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*Kōnstantinou en Christōi basilei aiōniōi basileōs  
Rōmaiōn pros ton idion huion Rōmanon ton  
Theostephē kai porphyrogennēton basilea,*  
‘Constantine in Christ the eternal emperor,  
emperor of the Romans to his son Romanus  
the emperor crowned of God and born in the  
purple’; *De administrando imperio*, ‘Imperial  
administration’

DATE 952

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Greek

DESCRIPTION

*De administrando imperio*, a manual of how to rule addressed by Constantine to his son Romanus to teach him how to be a wise ruler, provides a wide range of historical and political information on the relations between Byzantine Christians and Muslims. The work is similar to Ibn al-Farrā’s treatise, and shows how diplomacy was favored in the empire’s 10<sup>th</sup>-century dealings with foreigners.

*De administrando imperio* gives information on Muslim history and traditions from the rise of Islam up to the 10<sup>th</sup> century, and displays good understanding of the history of the Muslim dynasties. Drawing on Theophanes and other sources (for archival material and diplomatic reports, see the Commentary to *De administrando imperio*, pp. 2, 19, 101), Constantine refers to various historical events that mark early Arab-Byzantine relations and describes continuities of interaction on the diplomatic and military levels. He gives information on military and political events for the early history of the caliphate in the context of its relations with the empire, and talks about the fate of the Christians in the East after the conquests and the violent destruction of churches in Palestine in the early 9<sup>th</sup> century, and the aid despatched by Charlemagne to Palestine and the monasteries there.

Despite wars being fought on the eastern frontier and elsewhere during Constantine’s reign, his account of the Muslims and others is devoid of any hostile or warlike references to them. Instead, Constantine urges his son to view them like other peoples, such as the Russians, Petchenegs, Turks, Bulgarians, Khazars, and Romans, and to consider what danger and advantage they present to the empire

(chs 1-5, 9-13; Commentary, pp. 12-14, 16-69). His emphasis on understanding Muslims constructively reminds us of Ibn al-Farrā's similar advice to his patron on how to deal with the despatch of embassies abroad on the basis of knowledge of former practices. Similarly, the importance attached to experience and the value of education is a prerequisite in both sources.

Following Theophanes, Constantine calls Muslims heretics, and stresses their belief about war and reward, as is clearly reflected in 10<sup>th</sup>-century military manuals such as *De velitatione* of Nicephorus Phocas (cf. the entry on Leo VI's *Taktika*).

Only ten chapters out of 53 deal specifically with the Arabs, with only occasional references in others. These are among the earliest parts of *De administrando imperio* and they correspond to an earlier work entitled *Peri ethnōn*, which was probably intended to be used as a companion volume to the *Peri thematōn* (*De thematibus*) (Commentary, p. 3) and which reported the former state of territories then occupied by Arabs. They start with ch. 14 and continue in ch. 22 (pp. 76-99 of the edition), concluding with ch. 25 (pp. 107-9). Constantine's presentation is often patchy and repetitive, with errors in chronology; for example, his accounts of the Caliph Mu'awiya and his successors in chs 21 and 22 are extremely confusing and not in order (for a hypothesis about the arrangement of the material, cf. Bury, 'Treatise', pp. 531-33).

For ch. 14, entitled 'On the genealogy of Muḥammad' (Greek text pp. 76, 78; trans. pp. 77, 79), Constantine draws on George the Monk (Bury, 'Treatise', p. 526), who in turn depends on Theophanes (*Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, vol. 1, Leipzig, 1883, pp. 333-34). But Constantine is more polemical than his sources, calling the Prophet 'blasphemous', 'obscene', 'crazy' and 'deluded', and the religion of Islam a 'lying fraud', 'wicked imposture' and heresy. Here he is closer to the assessments of John of Damascus (q.v.) and Theodore Abū Qurra (q.v.). He gives Muḥammad's genealogy, and describes his early life, including details about his marriage to 'Chadiga', his meetings with Jews and Christians in Palestine, his epilepsy (following George the Monk who misunderstands his source; see Bury, 'Treatise', pp. 526-27, 532), and his call to prophethood, which is based solely on his own claim and therefore is assessed as a Christian heresy. Regarding his beliefs, Muḥammad taught that he who slays an enemy or is slain by an enemy enters paradise (this is taken up again in ch. 17), while

Muslims worship both God and Aphrodite, because their exclamation, *Allah oua Koubar* (a debased form of *Allāhu akbar*), shows they invoke God himself, *Allah*, and, *oua*, Aphrodite, *Koubar*.

Ch. 15, which is entitled 'Of the tribe of Fatimids,' includes references that indicate its source must have been written after 909. This source has not been identified, and it has been argued that this and ch. 25 are later insertions (Commentary, p. 72).

Ch. 16 returns to the later years of Muḥammad's life, with some inaccurate dates for his migration to Medina and death, while ch. 17, entitled 'From the chronicle of Theophanes, of blessed memory' (pp. 80, 81; see Bury, 'Treatise', pp. 526-27), covers the succession to Muḥammad and the laws he imparted, stressing the Jewish influence upon him (following George the Monk, *Vitae imperatorum recentiorum* [in *Theophanes Continuatus*, ed. Bekker, Bonn, 1838, pp. 700-6]), and the carnal character of the Islamic paradise.

Chs 18-22, which again follow Theophanes, cover the rules of the first four caliphs, the start of the Umayyad dynasty, the coming of the Abbasids, and the establishment of the Umayyad caliphate in Spain, and conclude with the early Abbasid caliphs as far as the civil war between the sons of Hārūn al-Rashīd (for a comparison with Theophanes, see Bury, 'Treatise', pp. 528-30). There is much confusion about the succession of events here, as well as repetitions of stories and events.

Chs 23 and 24 focus on Spain (see Bury, 'Treatise', p. 531), and ch. 25 on the contemporary Islamic world, including the dynasties that rule in various parts. Constantine's knowledge of these dynasties is also demonstrated in the accounts of embassies described in his *De ceremoniis* and the imperial protocol of address to Muslim rulers.

Elsewhere in *De administrando imperio*, ch. 29 contains references to the Muslim invasion of southern Italy and reprisals against this; chs 43-46 give hints about the importance of maintaining links with Armenia as a buffer against Muslim advances, stressing the symbolic importance of gifts for the rulers in order to keep them loyal; and elsewhere there are incidental mentions of Muslim military manoeuvres against parts of the Byzantine Empire.

For the period of the Prophet, chs 14, 16, 17, *De administrando imperio* uses the term *Sarakēnoi*, 'Saracens', but later changes this to 'Arabs', and occasionally '[H]agarenes' (e.g. ch. 21). In addition to transliterated names, it also transliterates and adapts titles, such as *amermoumneis*, 'commanders of the faithful' (ch. 25), *amiras*, 'emir'

(ch. 21), *amiradia*, ‘emirate’ (ch. 25), *amireuō*, ‘rule as amir’ (ch. 18), and *amiraios* for *amīr*, ‘military commander’ (ch. 21).

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The importance of *De administrando imperio* lies not only in the antiquarian data it contains, but also in contemporary information about the caliphates of the Fatimids, Umayyads of Spain and Abbasids. In addition, it portrays 10<sup>th</sup>-century military and diplomatic realities in Armenia and the Caucasus, and stresses the importance of the empire’s relations with the Christian rulers there in view of the Muslim attempts to advance in the region. It recommends diplomatic interaction with the Umayyads, Abbasids and Arab emirates in Armenia as examples to be followed by the future Emperor Romanus. Like Ibn al-Farrā’s work, it is a lesson in 10<sup>th</sup>-century diplomacy and the benefits to be gained from knowing how to deal with foreign peoples.

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*Kōnstantinou tou philochristou kai en autō tō  
Christō tō aiōniō basilei basileōs hyiou Leontos  
tou sophōtatou kai aeimnēstou basileōs syntagma  
ti kai basileiou spoudēs ontōs axion poiēma,  
‘Treatise and work worth the imperial effort of  
Constantine, friend of Christ and emperor in the  
same Christ’, the eternal emperor, son of Leo,  
the most wise emperor of eternal memory; *De  
ceremoniis*, ‘On ceremonial’*

DATE Before 959

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Greek

DESCRIPTION

*De ceremoniis* is intended to restore rhythm and orderliness to imperial ceremonial, so as to demonstrate how the harmony in the structures of the empire represents the harmony imparted by its Creator. Constantine VII, or the actual author from whom he commissioned the work, makes numerous references to relations between Byzantium and the Islamic empire, showing the same degree of interest in the Arabs as he does in his *De administrando imperio*, though here the emphasis is on ways to receive Muslim envoys.

References to dealing with Muslims are found mainly in Book 2. The first, in ch. 15, is concerned with the reception of envoys. At their entry into the emperor’s presence, on which they were accompanied by palace officials, they were to perform the *proskynēsis*, the prostration before the emperor, to the accompaniment of music and the roaring of mechanical lions and singing of artificial birds. Their gifts were then delivered, and at the end of the audience, after another prostration, they withdrew. References to actual embassies, such as the visit of representatives from the emir of Tarsus on 31 May 946, and from the Umayyad caliph of Andalus on 24 October 946, show that ambassadors normally remained at court for a period of time, would engage in a series of meetings with the emperor and would be lavishly entertained, with exchanges of many gifts. This was all done to impress and to demonstrate the power and wealth of the empire.

Ch. 47 gives information about the forms of greeting (*chairētismoi*) used in receptions by the envoys from various nations to the emperor, and also about the different forms of reference for, example, the representatives of the caliph (*amērmoumnē*), of autonomous emirates, and so on.

Ch. 49 briefly refers to arrangements for settling Muslim prisoners of war who converted to Christianity (see Haldon, 'Theory and practice', p. 237): they were given land to settle on and were exempt from tax and public service for three years.

Muslim prisoners took part in the triumphs held in the hippodrome following victories over Islamic armies. According to ch. 19, they were required to prostrate publicly before the emperor while their banners and arms were inverted. More gorily, the emperor sometimes appeared with his foot on the head of a slaughtered leader. Prisoners also attended banquets held during religious festivals, including Christmas and Easter.

Ch. 52, which draws on the *Klētērologion* of Philotheos (d. 899) (Bury, 'Ceremonial book', pp. 215-16), specifies that Arab envoys ('Saracen friends') were to be given places of honor on ceremonial occasions, ranking equal to *patrikioi* and *stratēgoi*, and following in precedence the ecclesiastical representatives of Rome, Antioch and Jerusalem.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

*De ceremoniis* generally shows a positive attitude towards Muslim envoys and prisoners: representatives were honored by being invited to imperial audiences and receptions, to attend the races, and to take designated places at dinners, to which prisoners were also invited. However, their participation in courtly rituals had a clear propaganda value, because through this means they could be impressed with the splendor and power of the empire. As they witnessed the ceremonial, they could not fail to notice the supreme importance of the emperor as he was symbolically presented as God's representative on earth and the impartor of God-like qualities.

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**Maria Vaiou**

# Al-Khushanī

Abū ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn Ḥārith  
ibn Asad al-Khushanī

DATE OF BIRTH    Latter 9<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF BIRTH    Uncertain; probably Qayrawān  
DATE OF DEATH    971  
PLACE OF DEATH    Cordova

## BIOGRAPHY

Jurist, poet and renowned author of biographical dictionaries of scholars, al-Khushanī first studied in Qayrawān with Aḥmad ibn Naṣr and Aḥmad ibn Ziyād. Sometime after 923, he travelled to Tunis and Egypt. In 924, he moved to al-Andalus with his father, and finally settled in Cordova. There he continued his studies, and entered the circle close to the future al-Ḥakam II. He acted as *ṣāhib al-mawāriṭh* (‘administrator of unclaimed inheritances’) in Pechina (Almeria) and became a member of the Cordova advisory board of jurists.

As well as the two biographical dictionaries of Andalusī scholars referred to below, al-Khushanī also wrote on North African scholars, *Kitāb ṭabaqāt ‘ulamā’ Ifrīqiya*, and a book ‘on the principles of the art of legal opinion according to the doctrine of Malik ibn Anas’, *Uṣūl al-futyā fī l-fiqh ‘alā madhhab al-imām Mālik*. In addition to these, he is credited with about 100 books, of which only one, *Al-ittifāq wa-l-ikhtilāf fī madhhab Mālik* (‘Agreement and divergence of opinions in the Mālikī school’), appears to have survived.

Among his students is named the jurist ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad al-Tujībī, known as Ibn Ḥawbayl.

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WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Akhbār al-fuqahā' wa-l-muḥaddithīn*, 'Reports on legal scholars and traditionists'

DATE Before 961

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

This book comprises 527 biographies of Andalusī scholars who lived between the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century and 954 and who came mostly from Cordova, Elvira and Toledo. Entries are arranged in alphabetical order and, as well as the expected geographical and intellectual details about each scholar, al-Khushanī's accounts abound in anecdotes and other details, which bring the individuals to life.

According to M.L. Ávila and L. Molina, two versions of the text, one short and one extended, circulated in al-Andalus. It was regarded as an important source by later authors of biographical dictionaries, among them Ibn Mufarrij and Ibn al-Faraḍī (q.v.).

Christians as such are not mentioned, but Muslim scholars whose Christian origin becomes clear in their genealogies are. These include Ibrāhīm ibn Ḥusayn ibn Khālīd ibn Martinīl who was a *mawlā* of the emir 'Abd al-Raḥmān I (see *Akhbār*, p. 9, no. 1); his cousins,

Aḥmad and Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh (pp. 11, no. 4, and 139, no. 143); Aḥmad ibn Biyaṭayr, whose father was a *mawlā* of a woman of the Cordovan court (p. 14, no. 11); and his uncle, Muḥammad ibn Khālīd ibn Martinīl (p. 111 no. 126). Other scholars with Christian origins are Abū ‘Uthmān Sa‘īd ibn Kursulīn, from Badajoz (p. 327, no. 451); Shukūḥ, from Cordova (p. 336, no. 471); Walīd ibn Qarlamān, from Cordova (p. 343, no. 483); Qūṭī ibn Rāniq from Rayya (Malaga) (p. 312, no. 424); Lubb ibn ‘Abd Allāh from Saragossa (p. 109, no. 124); Muḥammad ibn Bakr/ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Kilā‘ī, known as Ibn al-qmlah (the vocalisation is uncertain), as ‘pronounced in Romance’ (*bi-l-lafẓ al-‘ajamī*) (p. 170, no. 201).

Among them stand out ‘Abd Allāh ibn Masarra, whose father was a client of a Persian (p. 218, no. 279) and his son Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Masarra (p. 178, no. 209). The latter took the first steps in developing Andalusī theological thought of which there is written evidence.

In most cases, however, the Christian origin of certain scholars can only be presumed from the shortness of their genealogies, such as ‘Abdallāh al-‘Arshānī from Saragossa (pp. 220-21, no. 285) and Muḥammad ibn Fayrah/Firruh (p. 147, no. 156).

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Given the chronological span covered by the *Akḥbār*, it is of use in following the process of Islamization of the Christian population of al-Andalus, down to the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

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## *Kitāb al-quḍāt bi-Qurṭuba*, 'The qadis of Cordova'

DATE Before 971

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

### DESCRIPTION

The book contains 36 biographies of *qāḍīs* of Cordova, preceded by an account of ten scholars who refused the position when it was offered. The entries are arranged in chronological order, from the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> to the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century.

This is al-Khushanī's most famous work. He wrote it at the request of the heir to the caliphate, al-Ḥakam, using both written and oral sources. This explains, at least in part, the wealth of anecdotes that illustrate his biographical accounts.

A large number of the biographies collected in the work were transmitted by later authors, especially al-Faraḍī (q.v.) and Ibn Ḥayyān (q.v.).

### SIGNIFICANCE

The *Kitāb al-quḍāt bi-Qurṭuba*, like the *Akhbār al-fuqahā' wa-l-muḥaddithīn*, contains details about the Islamization of al-Andalus. This process is illustrated in the biography of the mythical, and probably non-historical, figure of Mahdī ibn Muslim (no. 1), who was allegedly a very pious man who converted to Islam. In this entry, al-Khushanī relates the story of 'Uqba ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Salūlī, one of the first governors of al-Andalus, who, apart from promoting Mahdī to be a *qāḍī*, offered captives the opportunity of conversion in exchange for their lives, telling them about the advantages of the new religion. It is no surprise that he converted 2,000 people.

The Islamization and Arabization of al-Andalus did not mean the disappearance of the earlier language (*al-'ajamiyya*); Andalusī scholars spoke it in their daily lives (see no. 1), with no adverse effect on their integrity or reputation (see no. 19). Its use also emerges in such place-names as the Magrāna quarter of Seville (see no. 16), and the name of a village close to Toledo, Naḥāris (Nohares), where death surprised Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Abī 'Īsā (no. 34).

On occasion, the judges of Cordova participated in military expeditions against the Christian enemy, among them 'Amr ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Layth (no. 24).



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**Delfina Serrano Ruano**

# Rabīʿ ibn Zayd

Recemundo, Recemund

DATE OF BIRTH	Unknown; early 10 <sup>th</sup> century
PLACE OF BIRTH	Cordova
DATE OF DEATH	Late 10 <sup>th</sup> century or early 11 <sup>th</sup> century
PLACE OF DEATH	Unknown

## BIOGRAPHY

Rabīʿ ibn Zayd, whose baptismal name was Recemund (Recemundo), was a leader of the Christian communities in al-Andalus. He was a Christian official at the Cordovan court under the Caliph ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III (r. 912-61), and in 955-56 he was chosen to lead an embassy to the Emperor Otto I (*Hūtū*) in Germany. This was in response to a mission sent by Otto to Cordova, led by John of Gorze (q.v.). He also took part in two other embassies, to Constantinople and Jerusalem. At some point during ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's reign, Rabīʿ was made bishop (*al-usquf al-Qurṭubī*).

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## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

### *Tafṣīl al-zamān wa-maṣāliḥ al-abdān*, 'Division of seasons and benefits of bodies'

DATE About 961 or soon after

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

Rabī' ibn Zayd's *Kitāb tafṣīl al-zamān wa-maṣāliḥ al-abdān* (also known as *Kitāb al-azmān*), which was evidently a liturgical calendar, is extant only as a series of quotations in the *Kitāb al-anwā'* of 'Arīb ibn Sa'īd al-Kātib (d. 980) (q.v.). This work is preserved in an Arabic version written in Hebrew letters, and also in a Latin translation, the *Liber anoe*. This translation contains more saints' names than the Arabic. Many of the passages about Christian activities are introduced with the words, (*wa-*) *fīhi li-l-'ajam* ('[and] on that [day] the Christians'), while others come at the end of the information about a given day or month. The *Tafṣīl* was dedicated to the Caliph al-Ḥakam II (r. 961-76).

Although it cannot be certain whether this Christian information scattered through the text of the *Kitāb al-anwāʾ* is from Rabīʿ ibn Zayd or ʿArīb ibn Saʿīd, it seems reasonable to attribute it to the work of the bishop.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The section on each month concludes with a summary of the agricultural activities of the month. This information from Rabīʿ ibn Zayd preserved in ʿArīb ibn Saʿīd's *Kitāb al-anwāʾ* gives insights into administration and agriculture, making it an important source for the social and economic history of 10<sup>th</sup>-century al-Andalus.

It is evident from the calendar that the Muslims of al-Andalus and Ifrīqiya used both the Christian and Muslim calendars, and celebrated many Christian festivals. For this reason, some Mālikī theologians condemned these practices as contrary to Islamic norms.

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**Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala**

# Theodosius the Deacon

Theodosios Diakonos

DATE OF BIRTH	Before 937
PLACE OF BIRTH	Unknown
DATE OF DEATH	Unknown; probably late 10 <sup>th</sup> century
PLACE OF DEATH	Unknown

## BIOGRAPHY

The only information on Theodosius the Deacon that we have is what can be gleaned from his only extant work, his panegyric poem on the Byzantine conquest of Crete by Nicephorus II Phocas in 961.

According to the poem's title, Theodosius was a deacon, certainly in Constantinople and probably close to the imperial court, therefore perhaps one of the clerics of the patriarchate in Constantinople or one of the clerics of the imperial palace.

The only datable events of Theodosius' life are the composition of his extant poem, between March 961 and fall 962, and the dedication of this same poem to Nicephorus Phocas some months later, between March and July 963 (for the reasons for these dates see below). As a deacon, he would have reached the canonically prescribed age of at least 25 years, so we may assume that he was born in about 937 at the latest. However, his exact lifespan remains unknown.

Theodosius twice refers to his intention to write another panegyric (*Praefatio*, l. 8; vv. 264–72), but we do not know whether he ever put this plan into effect, or whether he ever wrote anything else.

Whether Theodosius the Deacon is also the author of an *akoloutheia* (liturgical commemoration) of the Byzantine Emperor Nicephorus Phocas (d. 10/11 December 969), as the editor of this work, L. Petit, suggests (*Office inédit*, p. 400), is rather to be doubted.

In his extant work, Theodosius shows himself to be a learned man, who has read the great Greek authors. While he alludes to classical tragedy (Aeschylus, Sophocles, and especially Euripides) and authors such as Xenophon and Plato, he refers to Homer and Plutarch explicitly, often comparing the military campaign against Crete with Homer's Trojan War.

N. Serikoff has recently suggested that Theodosius the Deacon knew some Arabic because he inserted two lines of Arabic speech, phonetically rendered into Greek script, into his poem (vv. 349-50). While the editors of the Greek text could make no sense of the Greek letters in these two lines, Serikoff reconstructed two Arabic phrases from them which are perfectly intelligible and whose meaning seems to fit well into the context, apparently even matching a later passage in which the encouraging speech of the Arab emir of Crete is given in Greek translation (vv. 387-95). Serikoff goes on to conclude that Theodosius the Deacon must have been an eyewitness of the events he describes. If Serikoff is right, Theodosius took part in the military campaign of Nicephorus Phocas against Crete (960-61). However, it should be stressed firstly that speakers of Arabic could be found in Constantinople, e.g. amongst interpreters at court or prisoners of war brought from Crete, any one of whom may have provided Theodosius with the sound of one or two Arabic phrases, secondly that Theodosius nowhere reveals an eyewitness's first-hand knowledge of events or locations, and finally that he always remains within the confines of rhetoric and conventional Byzantine perceptions of a Muslim enemy. To venture an unguarded appraisal: Theodosius rather gives the impression of a bookish courtier who has seen no bloodshed or act of war himself, and who is most concerned about his educated audience and his literary allusions.

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## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Halōsis Krētēs ponētheisa para Theodosiou diakonou tapeinou tō philanthrōpō kai krataiō basilei Rōmanō*, 'The Conquest of Crete, written by Theodosius the Deacon, the humble, for the benevolent and mighty Emperor Romanus'; *Theodosius diaconus, De Creta capta*, 'On the conquest of Crete'

DATE Composed between March 961 and autumn 962, dedicated between March and July 963

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Greek

## DESCRIPTION

This panegyric poem consists of 1,039 iambic verses, arranged in five 'hearings' (*akroaseis*), which in the most recent edition cover 38 pages in print. As the title informs us, Theodosius the Deacon wrote it for the Byzantine Emperor Romanus II (r. 10 November, 959–15 March, 963). This information is in perfect accordance with the recurring addresses to Romanus – in the second person ('you', 'your', etc., together with the name vv. 274, 541, 729; without the name vv. 264, 358, 539, 583f., 594-612, 754, 779, 941) – throughout the poem. Romanus is continually praised, and the success of the Byzantine campaign against Arab Crete is credited to his efforts (e.g. vv. 771-78). In contrast, the commander of the Cretan expedition, general Nicephorus



Phocas, is mentioned only in the third person and, although he is of course praised for his feats, this praise never surpasses that for the emperor.

The Byzantine expedition against Crete and its successful conclusion with the conquest of the Cretan capital of Chandax (Candia, now Herakleion) form the major subject of the poem. The chronology of these events is well established by other sources (for the most detailed study of the events see Christides, *The conquest of Crete*, pp. 172-91): The Byzantine troops landed on Crete in July 960; Chandax was besieged and starved for several months in the winter of 960-61 and was eventually conquered on 7 March, 961. The Arab emir of Crete, 'Abd al-'Azīz, and his son Nu'mān (Greek: Anemas) were taken to Constantinople, where they were paraded as defeated enemies in the triumphal celebration of Nicephorus' victory. In the fifth and final *akroasis* of the poem, the focus shifts from the subject of Crete to impending new campaigns against Arab territory, this time in the East. The Arab emirates of Tarsus and especially Aleppo, under its emir 'Chaudas' (Sayf al-Dawla), are warned of a similar fate (vv. 937, 944f., 1036-39). The celebration of the Byzantine victory in Crete and the anticipation of the Syrian campaign date the poem's composition safely between the conquest of Chandax in March 961 and the start of the Syrian campaign in the fall of 962.

Apparently, Theodosius never got the chance to present his elaborate poem to its intended recipient because of Romanus II's early death. Theodosius' ensuing dilemma can be inferred from his *praeformatio* (in prose) to his poem, which precedes the poem in the manuscript as in the editions, but which was written only after the completion of the poem. In this preface, Theodosius dedicates the poem to the hero of the Cretan expedition, Nicephorus Phocas, who is addressed as 'sun of the magistroi' and 'avenger of Rome [= Byzantium]', but not yet as emperor. Theodosius mentions the death of Romanus II and the Byzantine conquest of Aleppo (23 December, 962). The preface must therefore have been written between Romanus' death on 15 March 963, and Nicephorus' proclamation as emperor by his troops in Cappadocia on 2 July 963. The most likely date for the presentation and the public declamation of the poem seems to be April 963, just after Nicephorus' triumphal return from the East and before he left the capital for Cappadocia in later spring. Theodosius had clearly not been able or willing to rework his poem after Romanus' death, but chose instead only to re-dedicate it to a new addressee. In the final

sentence of his preface, Theodosius glosses over the awkward incongruence between the 'you' of the poem and the new addressee by simply apologizing for the late emperor's prominence in the poem and by assuring his new addressee that he is nevertheless the true hero of the poem. We do not know whether Theodosius' request to Nicephorus Phocas to commission him to praise Nicephorus' conquest of Aleppo as well (*praefatio*, l. 8), met with any success.

Theodosius the Deacon supplies only a few details that contribute to our understanding of the historic events. As a source for the reconquest, he is therefore of limited value. As an author, he is less interested in recording events and facts or analysing causes and effects that he could expect his audience to know already – presumably even better than himself – than in dramatizing and eulogizing the Cretan success in a way his educated audience would appreciate. Although Theodosius in his *praefatio* professes that his aim is to prevent the feats of Nicephorus Phocas from falling into oblivion, he cares to preserve not so much the facts as the glory in his writing. In other words, it is more important to liken the hero to Achilles than to relate the historical events.

Concerning Christian-Muslim relations, we thus learn less about the war itself in Theodosius' poem than about a Constantinopolitan author's conception of a Muslim enemy, of God's will and of justice: the Arabs of Crete are often called *barbaroi* ('strangers', and above all 'uncultured strangers') by Theodosius the Deacon. But other terms are more derogatory and discriminatory: Theodosius dwells on the presumed descent of the Arabs from Abraham's slave-girl Hagar ('born from slaves', vv. 533, 804, 838; cf. 985). Their character is evil (see e.g. vv. 90, 104), lawless (v. 715) and bloodthirsty (vv. 688, 837). Collectively, the enemy (or individually their ruler) is called 'the beast' (*to thērion*, e.g. vv. 686, 924-26) or 'the serpent' (*ho drakōn*, e.g. vv. 157, 383, 417, 680), but we also find 'sea monster' (*kētos*, v. 925) or 'wound of the earth' (*trauma gēs*, v. 926). Their death is termed 'just punishment' (*timōria*, vv. 128, 508).

Theodosius sometimes gives glimpses of what he knows about Islam: he has the Arab emir in his encouragement of his soldiers refer to the paradise that the Prophet Muḥammad promised to those who die in battle (vv. 392-95). And he mentions that the Prophet has permitted camel meat (v. 68). But more often he simply denounces the Prophet as 'pseudo-prophet' (v. 70, cf. v. 983), 'teacher of whoring' (*pornomystas*, v. 69; undoubtedly because of Muslim polygamy); and

'liar' (*pseudoplokos*, v. 67). The Byzantine emperor's order to his army not to rape Muslim women is explained by Theodosius as solicitude for his soldiers' spiritual well being, 'so that holy baptism [of the Byzantine soldiers] may not be defiled by un-baptized women, and the army may not be soiled' (vv. 1024-25). Theodosius' belief in the justice of defeating and killing Muslim enemies goes so far that he can even rejoice in the Byzantine massacre of Cretan women, children and old people (vv. 114-28).

#### SIGNIFICANCE

In making these statements Theodosius appears as a typical representative of conventional Byzantine anti-Muslim propaganda. Since his poem is the only extant panegyric in verse of a military campaign of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, he might appear to hold a unique place in the literary history of the middle Byzantine period, though this should be looked upon as result of the coincidences of text transmission and not as proof of the singularity of his literary achievement. Theodosius continues the tradition of (and heavily borrows from) George Pisides, who in the 620s wrote several encomiastic poems on the military expeditions of the Byzantine emperor Heraclius (610-41). And from the 10<sup>th</sup> century we have some other extant examples of court poetry besides Theodosius the Deacon (e.g. Constantine Rhodius, *Ekphrasis of the seven wonders of Constantinople and the church of the Holy Apostles* [981 vv.], Leo Magistrus [*Choirosphaktes*], *Chiliostichos Theologia* ['Theology in a thousand lines', more than 1,200 vv.] and *De thermis* ['On the bath-house in Pythia']), all designed to please the emperor in terms of and by means of Greek classical literature (poetry). Theodosius' singularity within 10<sup>th</sup>-century literature thus lies only in the military subject of his poem, though panegyrics on successful military operations existed as well, e.g. we know of a – now lost – panegyric on the feats of the famous general of the 920s and 930s, John Courcouas, written by the judge Manuel (cf. *Theophanes Continuatus*, VI 42, in *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus*, ed. I. Bekker, Bonn, 1838, pp. 427-28).

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**Beate Zielke**

## Mundhir ibn Sa'īd al-Ballūṭī

Abū l-Ḥakam Mundhir ibn Sa'īd ibn 'Abdallāh ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kuznī l-Nafzī l-Ballūṭī l-Qurṭubī l-Mālikī

DATE OF BIRTH 886

PLACE OF BIRTH Cordova

DATE OF DEATH 966

PLACE OF DEATH Cordova

### BIOGRAPHY

Of Berber origin, Mundhir ibn Sa'īd al-Ballūṭī belonged to a family that had come to al-Andalus at some earlier date from the area of Qayrawān. He travelled to the East for more than three years, starting in 920-21, and visited Mecca and Egypt. Back in al-Andalus, he became famous for his great knowledge of literature and for his quickness in improvisation in literary and poetic gatherings. He served the Umayyad Caliph 'Abd al-Raḥmān III in different capacities, as diplomatic emissary to the Berber allies in North Africa in 940, as Friday preacher (*khaṭīb*) and director of prayer (*ṣāhib al-ṣalāt*) in the mosque of Cordova, and as *qāḍī* in Mérida, the frontier areas and later in Cordova. As a loyal servant to the Umayyads, he rebuked the caliph for not attending the Friday prayer a number of times when he was busy with the construction of Madīnat al-Zahrā', and for going too far in its luxurious decoration.

Al-Ballūṭī's legal school was the Zāhirī, but as judge he applied the predominant Mālikī legal doctrine. He has been described as a Mu'tazilī interested in polemics (*jadāl*) and rational theology (*kalām*), with a creed that deviated from orthodoxy. His opinion regarding whether the Paradise in which Adam and Eve lived was the eternal Paradise was attacked by other Andalusīs. Some of his four sons may have been associated with the teachings of the mystic Ibn Masarra (d. 931).

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- Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, 23 vols, Beirut, 1985, xvi, pp. 173-78
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### Secondary

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- 'A.-R. ibn Muḥammad al-Hibawī al-Sijilmāsī, *Qāḍī l-Andalus al-mulham wa-khaṭībuhā al-mufawwah al-imām Mundhir ibn Sa'īd al-Ballūṭī (al-mutawwafā 355 H.) ma'a taḥqīq Risālatayn makhtūṭayn min turāthihi*, Beirut, 2002
- H. de Felipe, *Identidad y onomástica de los beréberes de al-Andalus*, Madrid, 1997, pp. 200-20, 298
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## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Khuṭba*, 'Sermon'

DATE Probably 948-49 (or perhaps 945-46)

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

An emissary from the Byzantine emperor arrived in Cordova and the Caliph 'Abd al-Raḥmān III asked his heir al-Ḥakam to select someone who excelled in oratory to deliver a welcome speech. He chose the Baghdādī grammarian Abū 'Alī al-Qālī, but this expert was unable to perform in the manner required by the occasion. At this, Mundhir saved the situation by delivering an excellent (and largely lost) *khuṭba* that left everybody, including the Christian emissary, amazed at his skill.

This event could be dated to the first diplomatic exchange between the Umayyad Caliph 'Abd al-Raḥmān III and the Byzantine emperor in the years 948-49 (or perhaps earlier in 945-46), when a Byzantine embassy arrived in al-Andalus after almost a century without any diplomatic contacts. No details are given about the specific reasons behind it, although Byzantine and Fatimid rivalry in the Mediterranean, especially in southern Italy, made it advisable to establish contact with the enemies of Byzantium's enemy.

The letter brought by the ambassador and addressed to the caliph by Constantine VII was written in gold on blue parchment and it was accompanied by two precious books. One was Dioscorides' pharmacological treatise written in Greek, which prompted the caliph to ask the emperor for a translator because he could not find anyone proficient in al-Andalus. Three years later, the monk Nicholas arrived in al-Andalus, and the translation process started with a team including the Jew Ḥasday ibn Shaprūt. The other gift was the Latin text of Orosius' history, which would have then been translated into Arabic, although some modern scholars think that Orosius' book was already known in al-Andalus and that its translation had started earlier. A Cordovan embassy was then sent in exchange to Constantinople, and the Christian Recemund took part in it.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The anecdote seems intended to show that Andalusīs were superior to foreigners in oratory, knowledge and performance, and also to

indicate that the Cordovan caliphate was the equal of the Byzantine Empire.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

Fragments of the *khuṭba* are mentioned in al-Bunnāhī (= al-Nubāhī), *Kitāb al-marqaba l-'ulyā*, pp. 66-69 (trans. Marqués,

*'Al-marqaba al-'ulya' de al-Nubahi*, pp. 231-34

al-Ḥumaydī, *Jadhwat al-muqtabis*, no. 811

Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'* xix, p. 176

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STUDIES

*Kitāb Hūrūshiyus. Traducción árabe de las 'Historiae adversus paganos' de Orosio, edición y estudio Mayte Penelas*, Madrid, 2001, pp. 27-42 (with mention of earlier bibliography)

D. Wasserstein, 'Byzantium and al-Andalus', *Mediterranean Historical Review* 1 (1987) 76-101

## *Risāla*, 'Letter'

DATE Unknown; before 966

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

In the conversion document (*wathīqa*) of a Christian, Mundhir ibn Sa'īd objects to the formula: 'He witnesses that Muḥammad is the servant of God and his Messenger and that Jesus is God's Messenger and his Word (*'Īsā rasūl Allāh wa-kalimatuhu*)', a partial quotation of Q 4:171. Mundhir's argument is that, as it stands, the formula implies that if Jesus was the Word of God and also a created being, it would follow that God's utterance is created. This would support the claim that the Qur'an was created and not eternal with God. The formula should be either a complete quotation of the qur'anic verse, or just 'Jesus son of Mary is the Messenger of God'.

Mundhir also points to the polemical use of the erroneous formula. He recalls how the Byzantine emperor wrote to the Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mūn, rebuking him as follows: 'You say that Jesus is the Word of God, and you believe that God's speech is uncreated. If God's speech is, according to you, uncreated and if Jesus is a Word of God's



speech, then Jesus is also uncreated. Why then do you kill us, take our possessions from us and take our children as prisoners?’

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The letter suggests the sensitive character of Muslim-Christian debate, and also of the intra-Muslim debate about the Qur'an. It shows that Mundhir did not hold the createdness of the Qur'an, despite being called a Mu'tazilī. Andalusī documents of conversion of Christians preserved by the Cordovan Ibn al-ʿAṭṭār (d. 1009) include the formula in the form suggested by Mundhir, which may be an indication that his argument was accepted.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS Rabat, al-Khizāna al-ʿĀmma – majmūʿ 209 qāf, fol. 178 (unknown)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

Al-Sijilmāsī, *Qāḍī l-Andalus al-mulham wa-khaṭībuhā al-mufawwah*, pp. 252-53

#### STUDIES

On 10<sup>th</sup>-century Andalusī documents of conversion, see P. Chalmeta and F. Corriente (eds), *Formulario notarial hispano-árabe por el alfaquí y notario cordobés Ibn al-ʿAṭṭār* (s. X), Madrid, 1983, pp. 405-6 (Spanish trans. P. Chalmeta and M. Marugán, *Formulario notarial y judicial andalusí*, Madrid, 2000, pp. 632-35, no. 163, and pp. 643-44, no. 166); P. Chalmeta, 'Le passage à l'Islam dans al-Andalus au X<sup>e</sup> siècle,' *Actas del XII Congreso de la Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants (Málaga, 1984)*, Madrid, 1986, 161-83.

**Maribel Fierro**

# Al-Maḡdisī

Abū Naṣr al-Muṭahhar ibn Ṭāhir  
(or al-Muṭahhar) al-Maḡdisī

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown; late 9<sup>th</sup> or early 10<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown; possibly Jerusalem  
DATE OF DEATH Unknown; after 966  
PLACE OF DEATH Unknown; possibly Bust in Sijistān

## BIOGRAPHY

Nothing is known about al-Maḡdisī (or al-Muḡaddasī), apart from what is mentioned in his only surviving work, the *Kitāb al-bad' wa-l-ta'riḡh*, which he wrote in about 355 AH (966; ed. Huart, i, pp. 6 [Arabic]/6 [French]) in the city of Bust. Passing references in the various parts indicate that he travelled widely in the Islamic world, including Egypt and Iran, where in 936 he visited the city of Shīrjān, 30 years before this composition. He was connected with the Sāmānid court, though he does not reveal in what capacity.

Although al-Maḡdisī presents the *Kitāb al-bad' wa-l-ta'riḡh* as a universal history down to his own time, its markedly theological nature suggests that his interests were more than historical pure and simple. The comparisons between Islamic and other teachings in the opening chapters show some concern for comparative religion, while the rational emphases in many parts suggest Mu'tazilī sympathies, particularly with the Baghdad school and Abū l-Qāsim al-Balkhī (d. 931) (q.v.). Some also see signs of Shī'ī sympathies in the work.

In his history, al-Maḡdisī mentions other books of his. One of these, the *Kitāb al-ma'ānī* or *Kitāb ma'ānī al-Qur'ān* ('Meanings' or 'Meanings of the Qur'an) he had already written, and others he was intending to write, including the *Kitāb al-diyāna wa-l-amāna* ('Religion and confidence'). He refers to this in the chapter on divine unity (ed. Huart, i, pp. 70-71/64), saying he plans it as a work on this same subject and also as a defense of religion and a prompt to reflection, a brief description that raises the possibility of it containing arguments against Christian doctrines about God. If it was ever written, neither this nor any of the other works he mentions has survived.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

*Primary*

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*Secondary*

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## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Kitāb al-bad' wa-l-ta'rikh*, 'Creation and history'

DATE About 966

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The work is divided into 22 chapters: 1-4 on sources of knowledge, and proofs of God and prophethood; 5-10 on the creation, Adam and the end of time; 10-14 on descriptions of the world and events before the coming of Muḥammad; and 15-22 on the life of Muḥammad, Muslim sects and Islamic history to the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century.

In the opening chapters, al-Maqdisī shows that he is fully aware of different teachings within and outside Islam about the points that he makes, and he mentions the most significant. While he says nothing about differences between Muslims, Jews and Christians concerning the oneness of God and the function of prophets (fundamental points of disagreement at this time), he records Jewish views about the creation taken from Genesis and comments briefly that Christians agree with them 'because they read the Torah' (ed. Huart, i, pp. 146/135), and elsewhere he adds the detail that Christians believe the world began on a Monday and will end on a Sunday (ed. Huart, ii, pp. 53/50).

More substantially, in ch. 10, on the pre-Islamic prophets, he gives a full account of Mary and Jesus (ed. Huart, iii, pp. 118-27/122-31), in which numerous harmonizing details from the Gospels and Christian,

Muslim and other traditions are woven into the Qur'an narrative. A significant element is a brief account of views about the death of Jesus, including an explanation of the crucifixion, which he says he heard at first-hand from a Copt, and views expressed by some Muslim exegetes that the reference in Q 3:55 to Jesus being taken by God is an indication that he actually suffered death (others interpret this to mean his death will be eschatological). Then, in ch. 12, he describes the doctrines and customs of the major Christian sects (ed. Huart, iv, pp. 42-48/40-46) and, in ch. 17, on the biography of Muḥammad, he discusses a number of predictions of his coming in the Torah and Gospel (the Paraclete verses in John) (ed. Huart, v, pp. 28-33/30-35).

#### SIGNIFICANCE

There is little in these references to show that al-Maḥdisī made a special study of Christianity. His accounts of the life of Jesus and of Christian doctrines and customs reflect extensive knowledge, some of it undoubtedly acquired in the course of his travels, but many details are openly derived from earlier Muslim sources. The presence of a biography of Jesus among the pre-Islamic prophets, and of biblical predictions in the biography of Muḥammad, indicate that these were by now conventional elements in the kind of general history that al-Maḥdisī intended to write. There is nothing to suggest that Christian communities or their leaders were important in the society that al-Maḥdisī knew, or that their teachings were thought to pose any challenge to Islamic beliefs at this time.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

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MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye – Reisülküttap Mustafa Efendi 701, 226 fols (1006 AH [1597-98])

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#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

Adang, *Muslim writers*, pp. 257-63 (laws and regulations of the Jews from ch. 12)

*Āfarīnash va-tārīkh*, tr. M.R.S. Kadkanī, Tehran, 1970 (Persian trans.)

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## STUDIES

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T. Khalidi, 'Mu'tazilite historiography. Maqdisī's *Kitāb al-bad' wa-l-ta'rikh*', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 35 (1976) 1-12

V.M. Beylis, 'Narody vostochnoi Evropy v kratkom opisaniĭ Mutakhkhara al-Makdisi (X v.) (La population de l'Europe orientale dans l'écrit de Mutahhar al-Maqdisi)', in A.S. Tveritinovoi (ed.), *Vostochnye istochniki po istorii narodov Yugo-Vostochnoi i Tsentral'noi Evropy*, 2 vols in 1, Moscow, 1969, ii, 304-11

F. Rosenthal, *A history of Muslim historiography*, Leiden, 1968, pp. 114-15

**David Thomas**

# Representative of Nicephorus Phocas

## BIOGRAPHY

Nothing is known about the author of a polemical poem that was sent on behalf of the Byzantine emperor to the Muslim caliph in the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century, apart from what can be gleaned from the poem itself. The poem names this caliph as al-Muṭīʿ (r. 946-74), and the Muslim response names the emperor as Nicephorus Phocas (r. 963-69).

The author was evidently a native Arabic speaker, with a facility for poetical composition. The knowledge of the Arab empire he displays, including details of its history and the layout of Baghdad, indicates that he was intimately acquainted with the life and culture of the Abbasid world. A passing allusion to Jesus' throne being above the heavens (v. 53; cf. v. 92), which appears to place the Christian Christ in majesty on the qur'anic throne of God (e.g. Q 23:86), and also a reference to Q 12:20 in v. 49, suggests he could deftly make use of the Qur'an to the discomfort of his Muslim readers.

Since he wrote on behalf of the emperor, it is likely he was a Melkite.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### *Primary*

G. von Grunebaum, 'Eine poetische Polemik zwischen Byzanz und Bagdad im X. Jahrhundert', *Analecta Orientalia* 14 (1937) 41-64, pp. 47-50, lines 1-54 of the poem (repr. in von Grunebaum, *Islam and medieval Hellenism. Social and cultural perspectives*, London, 1976, no. 19)

### *Secondary*

N. El Cheikh, *Byzantium viewed by the Arabs*, Cambridge MA, 2004, pp. 173-74

Von Grunebaum, 'Eine poetische Polemik', pp. 43-47

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Risāla malik al-Rūm ilā l-Muṭīʿ*, The letter of the Byzantine emperor to al-Muṭīʿ

DATE 966

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The poem comprises 54 verses written in *ṭawīl* meter. After a brief introduction (vv. 1-2), it details the Byzantine conquests of Muslim towns in the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century up to Nicophorus' most recent in the year 966 (vv. 3-28). Then it goes on to predict how Baghdad and regions to the east and south will be conquered, including Mecca itself (vv. 29-47). It concludes with a brief justification for this: that Islamic institutions are corrupt and that since Christ is enthroned in heaven while Muḥammad lies in his tomb, the faith of the cross is to be spread throughout the earth (vv. 48-54).

With its pronounced hostile tone, the poem bears a resemblance to the letter described by 'Abd al-Jabbār (q.v.) (*Tathbīt*, p. 343) as being written on behalf of the Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (r. 911-59) in the mid-930s. In a similar way, the earlier letter gloats over internal difficulties within the Islamic empire, and it may also have detailed Byzantine military successes (see the entry on 'Alī ibn 'Īsā ibn al-Jarrāḥ). The confidence with which Nicephorus' letter boasts of spreading Christianity throughout the world signals an aggressiveness that marked an unprecedented and not wholly welcome change in Byzantine ideology (see El Cheikh, p. 174, and n. 88; Kraemer, pp. 94-95).

## SIGNIFICANCE

The poem is undisguised in its disdain for Islamic military and political weaknesses, and implies strongly that Byzantine successes are due to the faith on which they are based. This link is commonplace in early polemical works by both Christians and Muslims, and typifies the confident belief that while the other side is in error one's own side follows the true faith from God.

It evidently provoked considerable indignation among Muslim readers because, in addition to the reply made on behalf of the caliph by al-Qaffāl al-Shāshī (q.v.), it also attracted another from the Andalusī theologian Ibn Ḥazm (q.v.).

## MANUSCRIPTS

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## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

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- G. Schlumberger, *Un empereur byzantin au dixième siècle, Nicéphore Phocas*, Paris, 1890, pp. 427-30 (French trans.)
- V. Rosen, *Imperator Vasilij Bolgarobojca, izvlečenija iz letopisi Jaxi Antioxijskago*, St Petersburg, 1883, pp. 110-18 (edition and Russian trans.)
- Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi‘iyya l-kubrā*, 6 vols, Cairo, 1906, ii, pp. 179-81

## STUDIES

- El Cheikh, *Byzantium viewed by the Arabs*, pp. 173-74
- J. Kraemer, *Humanism in the renaissance of Islam*, Leiden, 1986, pp. 95-96
- Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, ii, pp. 375-76
- Von Grunebaum, 'Eine poetische Polemik', pp. 43-47, 53-59
- M. Canard, 'La guerre sainte dans le monde islamique et dans le monde chrétien', *Revue Africaine* 79 (1936) 605-23, pp. 617-20 (repr. in Canard, *Byzance et les musulmans du Proche Orient*, London, 1973, no. VIII)

**David Thomas**



# Al-Qaffāl al-Shāshī

Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Ismāʿīl al-Qaffāl  
al-Kabīr al-Shāshī

DATE OF BIRTH 903-4  
PLACE OF BIRTH Tashkent (Shāsh)  
DATE OF DEATH August 976  
PLACE OF DEATH Tashkent

## BIOGRAPHY

Abū Bakr al-Qaffāl was regarded as one of the leading exponents of Shāfiʿī jurisprudence of his day, and was known for his erudition in a range of scholarly disciplines. He travelled widely from his native Shāsh in search of knowledge, and as a young man he was a student of the great historian al-Ṭabarī (d. 923) (q.v.). After abandoning Muʿtazilī principles, he also studied with the theologian al-Ashʿarī (d. 935) (q.v.), who in turn is supposed to have studied jurisprudence from him. He was one of Abū l-Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī's (d. 1023) teachers, and must have moved in the same intellectual circles of Baghdad as other teachers of al-Tawḥīdī, such as al-Rummānī (q.v.) and Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī (q.v.).

He wrote authoritative works on legal matters, including a commentary on al-Shāfiʿī's *Risāla*, and a commentary on the Qurʾān. He also wrote a lost defence of the Prophet (see above, p. 24), which, in the way of some *dalāʾil al-nubuwwa* works, may have alluded to biblical verses or responded to Christian accusations.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### *Primary*

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*Secondary*

C. Gilliot, 'Lexégèse du Coran en Asie Centrale et au Khorasan', *Studia Islamica* 89 (1999) 129-64, pp. 137-38

L. Massignon, *La passion de Husayn ibn Mansūr al-Hallāj*, 4 vols, Paris, 1975<sup>2</sup>, ii, pp. 214-15

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Radd al-Muṭīʿ ʿalā risāla malik al-Rūm,*  
 'Al-Muṭīʿ's refutation of the Byzantine emperor's  
 letter'

DATE 966

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

This work is a response to the polemical poem sent in the name of the Byzantine Emperor Nicephorus Phocas (r. 963-69) to the Caliph al-Muṭīʿ in 966 (see the entry on Nicephorus Phocas' representative; there was also another response by the Andalusī theologian Ibn Ḥazm [q.v.]), following a series of Byzantine victories in the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century, which are named there. It is written in the same *ṭawīl* meter as that poem, as convention demanded, and it seeks to answer the jibes made by the emperor in appropriate and hardly less unrestrained terms.

Al-Qaffāl begins by challenging the arrogance and supposedly Christian sincerity of the emperor (vv. 55-61), and goes on to argue that the conduct of the Byzantines in the victories they won has been ignoble. On the other hand, the long history of Muslim victories shows they act justly, and their conduct will soon give them the upper hand (vv. 62-87).

He then turns to Christian beliefs, declaring that Jesus was not divine but God's messenger and Mary's son, that the Gospel confirms this, as it also predicts Muḥammad whom it names Paraclete, and that Jesus' death as Christians relate it was despicable (vv. 88-105).

In the last part of the poem he praises the Būyid and Sāmānid rulers of his day as defenders of Islam, and foresees their armies taking Constantinople in Nicephorus' own time (vv. 106-28).

## SIGNIFICANCE

The poem combines sound awareness of contemporary political realities with knowledge of Christian beliefs and morality. It unremittingly

reflects the same hostility as its Christian counterpart, and displays an equally sure confidence in the correctness of its author's beliefs.

The passage in which it summarily corrects Christian teachings about Christ attests to unflinching certainty about the Muslim doctrines concerning him, and suggests that there was nothing more to argue. The brevity of this passage and the references it contains together show how familiar the two respective positions about him were to both author and audience.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS Vienna, National Library – A.F. 435 (1103)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

N. El Cheikh, *Byzantium viewed by the Arabs*, Cambridge MA, 2004, pp. 174-76 (partial trans.)

G. von Grunebaum, 'Eine poetische Polemik zwischen Byzanz und Bagdad im X. Jahrhundert', *Analecta Orientalia* 14 (1937) 41-64, pp. 50-53 (repr. in von Grunebaum, *Islam and medieval Hellenism. Social and cultural perspectives*, London, 1976, no. 19; edition and annotated German trans.)

Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya*, ii, pp. 181-84

G. Schlumberger, *Un empereur byzantin au dixième siècle, Nicéphore Phocas*, Paris, 1890, pp. 431-34 (French trans.)

#### STUDIES

Von Grunebaum, 'Eine poetische Polemik', pp. 43-47, 59-64

C. Brockelmann, 'Arabische Streitgedichte gegen das Christentum', in, *Mélanges de géographie et d'orientalisme offerts à E.-F. Gauthier*, Tours, 1937, 96-106

**David Thomas**

## Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Miṣrī

Abū l-Ḥusayn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Miṣrī

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown, possibly late 9<sup>th</sup> or early 10<sup>th</sup> century

PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown, possibly Egypt

DATE OF DEATH Unknown, mid or late 10<sup>th</sup> century

PLACE OF DEATH Unknown, probably Baghdad

### BIOGRAPHY

Nothing is known about Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Miṣrī except what can be gathered from the Jacobite Christian Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī’s contribution to a polemical correspondence between the two. This comprised three elements: Yaḥyā’s letter to his fellow Jacobite Abū l-Ḥasan al-Qāsim ibn Ḥabīb in refutation of Nestorian Christology, Abū l-Ḥusayn’s reply in refutation of the Jacobites largely by comparison with the Nestorians, and Yaḥyā’s response. Abū l-Ḥusayn’s reply has not survived independently, though in his response Yaḥyā preserves some information about this otherwise unknown figure in occasional remarks he makes about him, as well as the systematic quotations he gives from Abū l-Ḥusayn’s refutation.

In Abū l-Barakāt’s introductory heading to Yaḥyā’s reply, Abū l-Ḥusayn is mysteriously called Rmq (Ramaq?) al-Miṣrī (Platti, *Grande polémique*, i, Arabic, p. 54, and *Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī*, p. 61), but without further explanation. His family name clearly denotes Egyptian descent, though other evidence suggests that this connection was distant. In the first place, he was a close acquaintance of the Baghdādī Jacobite Yaḥyā, who calls him his brother and whom he in turn calls one of his closest friends (Platti, *Grande polémique*, i, Arabic, pp. 55, 59), and he knew well Yaḥyā’s thought and writings. In the second place, he understood the doctrines of the Jacobites and of the Nestorians, who predominated in Iraq, well enough to set them against one another. These details suggest that he had either lived in the capital for many years, and had got to know leading Christians there, or he had been born there.

Abū l-Ḥusayn was obviously a contemporary of Yaḥyā, who died in 974. It is known that Yaḥyā wrote his first letter in 965-66 (Platti,

*Grande polémique*, i, French, p. VIII, and *Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī*, p. 59), and Abū l-Ḥusayn's reply and Yaḥyā's response must have followed in the next few years (certainly before 974). Since the two address each other with respect and a certain intimacy, it is not unlikely that they were roughly the same age.

It is clear that Abū l-Ḥusayn was a Muslim, and one who favored a rational approach to matters of religion. Like Yaḥyā, he was as interested in philosophical thinking as in the traditions of theology, though it is not easy to locate him in any specific school of theology (not unlike his 9<sup>th</sup> century predecessor Abū ʿĪsā l-Warrāq [q.v.], who was also the target of one of Yaḥyā's major refutations). He emerges from his letter as more of a questioner of received religious teachings than an advocate of any particular dogmatic position.

#### MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

##### *Primary*

Yaḥyā's response in E. Platti (ed. and trans.), *La grande polémique antinestorienne de Yaḥyā b. Adī* i (CSCO 427, 428), Leuven, 1981, pp. 54-113 (text), pp. 43-97 (trans.); ii (CSCO 437, 438), Leuven, 1982 (text and trans.)

##### *Secondary*

E. Platti, *Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī*. Théologien chrétien et philosophe arabe, Leuven, 1983, p. 63 (and see index)

#### WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

Unknown title; *Radd Abī l-Ḥusayn Aḥmad Muḥammad al-maʿrūf bi-Ramaq al-Miṣrī ʿalā mā qāla Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī fī raddihi ʿalā l-Nastūriyya*, 'The refutation of Abū l-Ḥusayn Aḥmad Muḥammad, known as Ramaq (?) the Egyptian, against what was said by Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī in his refutation of the Nestorians'

DATE Soon after 965-66

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

Abū l-Ḥusayn's refutation was occasioned by a letter written by Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī in response to a request from his fellow Jacobite Abū l-Ḥasan al-Qāsim ibn Ḥabīb, who had asked Yaḥyā to write about the Christological differences between the Nestorians and Jacobites. The refutation follows the structure of this letter, and replies to it in detail. It can be divided into three main parts (Platti, *Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī*, pp. 62-63).

The first part (Platti, *Grande polémique*, i, §§ 1-79) focuses on the fundamental issue of difference between the Nestorians (and Muslims) and Jacobites, that two separate and different entities cannot logically be thought to become one, as the latter contend in their Christology.

The second part (Platti, *Grande polémique*, ii, §§ 80-195) comprises detailed arguments against the main points of Yaḥyā's letter to his fellow Jacobite, arranged in 17 questions concerning the basic differences between the two Christian sects over the Incarnation .

Finally, in the third part (Platti, *Grande polémique*, ii, §§ 196-203) Abū l-Ḥusayn takes up the scriptural texts that Yaḥyā has cited to support the Jacobite Christology, and shows that they do not necessarily yield to the interpretation that Yaḥyā places upon them.

This third part reveals an unusual and striking aspect of Abū l-Ḥusayn's approach to Christianity. Almost alone among known Muslim polemicists of this time, he not only refutes the logic of his opponent's interpretation of scriptural passages, but adduces patristic authorities such as Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus and John Chrysostom to back up what he says, hinting that he knows of further similar sources, § 196. This knowledge of the Fathers goes far beyond the immediate needs of polemic, as does Abū l-Ḥusayn's extensive understanding of the differences between the Jacobite and Nestorian Christologies, illustrated in such a telling comment as that the diophysite Christology is preferable (to him as a Muslim) because it involves the uniting of the human and divine volitions rather than the substances of the two, § 34.

A further element offers a possible explanation for this unusual depth of knowledge about Christian teachings. Abū l-Ḥusayn shows that he knows Yaḥyā's methods intimately, to the extent that he is able to bring him before the judgement of Aristotle and make him see that his arguments contravene the norms set by the supreme authority (e.g. §§ 30, 64, 66). Such ploys suggest that he may have been part

of a circle where Muslims and Christians mixed closely, and that he studied and learnt about Christian teachings there.

## SIGNIFICANCE

This refutation exhibits a rare knowledge of the detailed teachings of one faith by a follower of another, going beyond the immediate requirements of polemic and suggesting some intellectual curiosity in them. Among 10<sup>th</sup>-century Muslims this is virtually unknown, and throughout the early Islamic centuries it is only matched by a handful of others, among whom the 9<sup>th</sup>-century Abū 'Īsā l-Warrāq stands out. This extensive knowledge explains why Abū l-Ḥusayn and Abū 'Īsā attracted responses from Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī; their arguments were too well-informed to be allowed to pass.

## MANUSCRIPTS —

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

Platti, *La grande polémique antinestorienne de Yaḥyā b. Adī*, i (CSCO 427, 428), Leuven, 1981, pp. 54-113 (text), pp. 43-97 (trans.); ii (CSCO 437, 438), Leuven, 1982 (quoted *in extenso* by Yaḥyā in the course of his response)

## STUDIES

Platti, *Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī*, pp. 61-63, 93-96

**David Thomas**

# Raguel

DATE OF BIRTH	Unknown; early 10 <sup>th</sup> century
PLACE OF BIRTH	Unknown; probably Cordova
DATE OF DEATH	Unknown; late 10 <sup>th</sup> century
PLACE OF DEATH	Unknown; possibly Cordova

## BIOGRAPHY

The name Raguel does not appear in the text of the *Passio*, though at the beginning of MS El Escorial b-1-4, which is dated to the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, there is a marginal note that reads '*Raguel presbyter doctor fuit huius passionis Cordobensis [auctor]*'. This in itself does not necessarily indicate, as is sometimes believed, that Raguel was himself a priest of Cordova, but simply that he was a priest and also the author of a text that reported events that occurred in Cordova. Details in the *Passio*, however, indicate that he knew the city intimately, and was probably a native.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

*Primary* —

*Secondary* —

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

### *Passio Pelagii*, 'The Passion of Pelagius'

DATE Before 967

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Latin

#### DESCRIPTION

The *Passio Pelagii* tells the story of the young Pelagius, nephew of Bishop Ermogius of Tuy in Galicia. In 920, Ermogius was captured in battle, and his ten-year-old nephew Pelagius was sent to Cordova as a hostage in his place, only to be martyred in 925, when he was not yet 14 years old, because he refused to yield to the advances of the emir.

The *Passio Pelagii* (BHL 6617) is a fairly short text of about six pages in modern editions. It is conserved in at least six manuscripts,



all Spanish, of which the earliest dates to the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The cult of Pelagius spread rapidly throughout the northern and Christian part of the Iberian peninsula, and from the 10<sup>th</sup> century it seems to have had particular importance in female monastic life

The author writes that the head of Pelagius was conserved at Saint-Cyprien and his body at Saint-Gines, two Cordovan monasteries mentioned by Eulogius of Cordova. In 967, the relics of the young martyr were transferred to Leon, which would place the final redaction of the *Passio* before this date. The author is without doubt Cordovan. He does not explicitly say so, but he knows the town and seems to assume that his readers do too. At the end of his work, he soberly mentions the name of Abdirrahman (‘Abd al-Raḥmān) and the date of the martyrdom. It may have been written between 925 and 967 (or, according to M.C. Díaz y Díaz, between 961 and 966). At the beginning of the work, a phrase signals that the exemplary conduct of Pelagius in prison was attested by his companions in misfortune (*sodales non tacent*), which seems to indicate that the author knew them personally. According to this hypothesis, it would appear that the redaction was made in the 960s, shortly after the events themselves.

Raguel’s work is clearly inspired by Passions from antiquity, but it is not explicitly an attack on Islam. Islam is not alluded to directly, and the Muslims are not characterized by their religion, apart from their general opposition to Christians. They represent a ‘rule of strangers’ (*dominatio extera*), though the author knows that Muḥammad is called a prophet (*nostrum prophetam*). As in many other texts, Hispania is called al-Andalus.

The work is characterized by a contrast between the wealth and dissoluteness of the rulers and the chaste simplicity of Pelagius. When he is introduced before the emir (who is not yet caliph and whom the author invariably refers to as *rex*), he is clothed for the occasion in a ‘royal habit’ (*trabea regalis*), and the ‘king’ attempts to make him convert with promises of gold, silver, fine clothes and *ornamenta*, palaces, servants and horses, and even the chance to bring his family to live with him. In classical style, Pelagius refuses, and recalls Jesus in the desert.

The ruler then changes his approach, and makes sexual advances to the young man. This evokes a reprimand, which is doubtless directed against all Muslims, or at least those in power in Cordova: ‘Do you think that I am effeminate, like your people?’ After several

vain attempts at seduction, Abdirrahaman has Pelagius tortured. The boy does not deny Christ, even when he is cut to pieces. His body is thrown into the Guadalquivir, but it is recovered by the faithful and interred in the two monasteries.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Written around a century after the work of Eulogius of Cordoba (q.v.), Raguel's *Passio Pelagii* hardly accords any importance to the religious identity of the Muslims, who are perceived as persecutors in the same mold as the pagans of antiquity, and also as dissolute and degenerate.

The characterization of Muslims as inclined towards homosexuality can also be found in another work written in honor of Pelagius at about the same time. This was clearly much longer and in verse, written by the Saxon Hrotsvit of Gandersheim (d. after 975) (q.v.). Hrotsvit did not know Raguel's text and was presumably inspired by an oral report from Jean de Vandières (later abbot of Gorze in Lorraine) (q.v. John of St Arnoul), who went to Cordova in the years 954-56 as the ambassador of the Emperor Otto I. Hrotsvit's narrative characterizes the Muslims as being like 'pagans', who worship 'gods made of gold'. Pelagius is made the son of the 'chief' of the Galicians and, before being decapitated, he is catapulted from the city walls, though without harm. He is later buried in only one monastery, 'dedicated to Christ'.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS El Escorial, Real Biblioteca – b-I-4, fols 127r-131r (early 11<sup>th</sup> century; from the monastery of St Peter of Cardena)

MS Paris, BNF – Nouvelles acquisitions latines 239, fols 68-83 (early 11<sup>th</sup> century; possibly from the monastery of St Pelayo de Salas de los Infantes)

MS Paris, BNF – Nouvelles acquisitions latines 2.179, fols 187r-189v (11<sup>th</sup> century; in a Visigothic hand, from the abbey of Silos)

MS Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional – 822, fols 47v-51r (11<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Tuy, Cathedral Library – 1, fols 182r-184r (possibly from the last quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Toledo, Cathedral Library – 44.11, fols 167v-169r (13<sup>th</sup> century; a note on f. 167v indicates that it is a copy of Escorial, b-I-4)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

J.A. Bowman, 'Passio Pelagii', in T. Head (ed.), *Medieval hagiography. An anthology*, New York, 2000, pp. 227-35 (trans.)

- P. Riesco Chueca, *Pasionario hispánico. Introducción, edición crítica y traducción*, Seville, 1995, pp. 308-21 (edition and Spanish trans.)
- C. Rodriguez Fernandez, *La Pasión de San Pelayo. Edición crítica, con traducción y comentarios*, Santiago de Compostela, 1991 (edition and Spanish trans.)
- J. Gil, 'La Pasión de San Pelayo', *Habis* 3 (1972) 161-202 (edition)
- M.C. Diaz y Diaz, 'La Pasión de San Pelayo y su difusión', *Anuario de Estudios Medievales* 6 (1969) 87-116 (edition)
- E. Florez, *España sagrada*, vol. 23, Madrid, 1867, pp. 230-35 (edition)

## STUDIES

- A. Suarez Gonzalez, 'Dos testigos leoneses de la Passio sancti Pelagii', *Estudios Humanísticos. Geografía, Historia y Arte* 22 (2001) 101-8
- M.D. Jordan, 'Saint Pelagius, ephebe and martyr', in J. Blackmore and G.S. Hutcheson (eds), *Queer Iberia*, Durham, 1999, pp. 23-47
- M.D. Jordan, *The invention of sodomy in Christian theology*, Chicago, 1997, pp. 10-28
- H. Walz, 'Die Rezeption von Hrotsvits Passio sancti-Pelagii im iberischen Raum', *Ibero-Romania* 62 (1975) 19-40

**P. Henriët**

# Abū Ya‘qūb al-Sijistānī

Abū Ya‘qūb al-Sijzī

DATE OF BIRTH	Unknown
PLACE OF BIRTH	Sijistān
DATE OF DEATH	Unknown, after 971
PLACE OF DEATH	Sijistān

## BIOGRAPHY

Personal information about Abū Ya‘qūb al-Sijistānī (or al-Sijzī) is very scanty. He was an Iranian and belonged to the Ismā‘īlī Shī‘ā, of which he was a leading *dā‘ī* and theologian in the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century. It is known that he became involved in a feud between leading Ismā‘īlis in the earlier decades of the century, when he wrote a refutation of Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 934) (q.v.), who had questioned a work of his friend and associate Abū ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad Nasafī (d. 943), and it is clear from a reference in his *Kitāb al-iftikhār* that he was still alive in 971. He was executed sometime after this by the Ṣaffārid governor of Sijistān.

About 20 works by Abū Ya‘qūb are known, all concerned with Ismā‘īlī doctrines expressed in Neoplatonic form; as yet they are little studied. Among them, the *Kitāb ithbāt al-nubuwwa* is a general defense of prophethood along Ismā‘īlī lines, in its published parts containing nothing that shows awareness of the kind of Christian criticisms that appear in earlier instances of such works (its last part, which contained evidence for Muḥammad and where any possible reaction to Christian criticisms or use of biblical proof verses would have appeared, is lost).

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### *Primary*

For the few passing references to Abū Ya‘qūb in classical sources, see the secondary sources below, particularly works by P.E. Walker.

### *Secondary*

F. Daftary, *The Ismā‘īlis. Their history and doctrines*, London, 2007<sup>2</sup>, pp. 154-55, 225-28, and see index

- P.E. Walker, art. 'Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī', in *EI*3
- P.E. Walker, *Abu Ya'qub al-Sijistānī. Intellectual missionary*, London, 1996
- W. Madelung, 'Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī and the seven faculties of the intellect', in F. Daftary (ed.), *Mediaeval Ismā'īli history and thought*, Cambridge, 1996, 85-88
- P.E. Walker, *Early philosophical Shī'ism. The Ismā'īlī Neoplatonism of Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī*, Cambridge, 1993
- W. Madelung, 'Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī and metempsychosis', in D. Amin and M. Kasheff (eds), *Iranica varia. Papers in honor of Professor Ehsan Yarshater*, Leiden, 1990, 131-43
- P.E. Walker, art. 'Abū Ya'qūb Sejestānī', in *EIr*
- S.M. Stern, 'The early Ismā'īlī missionaries in north-west Persia and Khurāsān and Transoxania', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 23 (1960) 56-90 (repr. in Stern, *Studies in early Ismā'īlism*, Jerusalem, 1983, 189-233)
- W. Ivanow, *Ismā'īli literature. A bibliographical survey*, Tehran, 1963, pp. 27-30

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

### *Kitāb al-yanābī'*, 'Wellsprings'

DATE Unknown; before about 971

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

The *Kitāb al-yanābī'* is a work of Ismā'īlī Neoplatonic theosophy, moving from speculative reflections about the first Principle (*al-Mubdī'*), who is beyond all characterization, and the higher spiritual beings, to the mundane sphere and the nature of the world. In 40 short chapters (the whole work is less than 100 pages in Corbin's edition), it shows the intimate connections that exist between the parts of the noumenal and phenomenal worlds, and how correspondences can be detected between the higher realities and elements that can be witnessed in human experience.

One remarkable feature of the work is the unusual attitude it exhibits towards Christianity. While it does not treat Christian doctrines as such, it clearly reflects none of the conventional animosity towards Christian scripture or beliefs that is typically found in Muslim works of this time (Abū Ya'qūb was a contemporary of al-Bāqillānī [q.v.], who amassed a comprehensive series of arguments against the Trinity and Incarnation in his *Kitāb al-tamhīd*, and of the Mu'tazilī masters upon whom 'Abd al-Jabbār [q.v.] later drew for his refutations of

Christian scriptures and doctrines in the *Mughnī*). In the references it makes, it shows that Abū Ya'qūb both knew something about Christianity and held it in some respect.

In Wellspring 38, Abū Ya'qūb discusses the logic of eternal punishment for wickedness. As part of his contention that the Creator is above all need for revenge, he quotes the eschatological parable from Matthew 25:35-46, in which the Judge repays each individual in accordance with the ways they have treated the poor, needy and oppressed on earth, and he points out that here the judge cannot be the first Principle himself but is the universal Soul (*al-Nafs al-kull-iyya*). While there is some implicit criticism in his re-identification of the Lord (*Rabb*) and God (*Allāh*) of the parable as the universal Soul, and one detail is reinterpreted, so that 'whenever you did it for the least of these' becomes 'whenever you have done it for yourselves (*bi-anfusikum*)', he nevertheless quotes the passage from 'the Gospel' without any comment on its validity or apparent need to justify its use, seemingly assuming that his reader will both know it and accept the text as a legitimate part of his argument.

More strikingly still, Abū Ya'qūb elsewhere makes ingenious use of the cross to highlight a correspondence between Christ and the expected figure of his own beliefs. Earlier, in Wellspring 31, which is entitled 'On the significance of the cross of the community of Jesus', he allusively draws connections between the cross 'on which a man was crucified', and the coming Master of the resurrection (*Ṣāhib al-qiyyāma*), who will bring into the open the concealed meaning that the cross and Christ's crucifixion represent. The cross is therefore an anticipatory sign of the full meaning that will be revealed, an indication that this full meaning is founded on what was instituted by earlier messengers, and also, he concludes, an object to be venerated. Continuing this reflection in Wellspring 32, which is entitled 'On the correspondence of the cross with the declaration of faith', he rather fancifully goes on to show points of correspondence between the components of which the cross is made up and its angles and surfaces, and the figures of the pre-Islamic and Islamic dispensations. 'Thus, just as the declaration of faith (*shahāda*) is only complete when it is connected with Muḥammad, may God bless him and give him peace, so the cross only acquires dignity when on it is found the Leader of this age (*Ṣāhib dhālika al-dūr*)'.

In the speculative intricacies of these two Wellsprings, Abū Ya'qūb suggests that the cross is an anticipation of Islam as he comprehends

it, and achieves its full meaning when interpreted according to his methods. Surprisingly, maybe, while he evidently accepts that Christ was crucified, he says nothing about his sufferings, though it is difficult to ignore an implicit connection between this and the sufferings of the Imāms.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Not only does Abū Ya'qūb know about elements of Christian scripture and belief, but he uses them freely and unselfconsciously. In this he confers on them a measure of validity that few other Muslims did, and a significance that defies the majority attitude towards them. At the same time, he clearly regards them as achieving their full meaning only when understood within the context of his own beliefs, therefore without entire significance in themselves. He signals that only Islam can give these Christian elements their true meaning, and in this important respect conforms to more general Muslim attitudes towards the earlier faith.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

Actual MSS of the *Kitāb al-yanābī'* are difficult to access: see the accounts of Ghālib (pp. 53-54) and Corbin (pp. 8-9) in the prefaces of their editions, both relating how they had used copies that were owned by private individuals. Walker, *Wellsprings*, pp. 31-32, discusses these and other known copies.

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

P.E. Walker (ed.), *The wellsprings of wisdom. A study of Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī's Kitāb al-yanābī', including a complete English translation with commentary and notes on the Arabic text*, Salt Lake City UT, 1994 (Wellsprings 31 and 32 repr. in H. Landolt, S. Sheikh and K. Kassam [eds], *An anthology of Ismaili literature*, London, 2008, pp. 197-98)

*Kitāb al-yanābī'*, ed. M. Ghālib, Beirut, 1965

*Kitāb al-yanābī'*, ed. and French trans. H. Corbin, in idem, *Trilogie ismaélienne*, Tehran, 1961

#### STUDIES

T. Lawson, *The crucifixion and the Qur'an. A study in the history of Muslim thought*, Oxford, 2009, pp. 84-85

Walker, *The wellsprings of wisdom*, ad loc.

H. Corbin, 'De la gnose antique à la gnose ismaélienne', in *Oriente e Occidente nel Medioevo*, Rome, 1957, 105-43 (repr. in

- H. Corbin, *Cyclical time and Ismaili gnosis*, trans. R. Manheim and J. Morris, London, 1983, 151-93, pp. 162-65, 192)
- A.M. Heinem, 'The notion of *ta'wīl* in Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī's Book of the sources (*Kitāb al-yanābī'*)', *Hamdard Islamicus* 2 (1979) 35-45
- H. Corbin, 'Épiphanie divine et naissance spirituelle dans la gnose ismaélienne', *Eranos-Jahrbuch* 23 (1955) 141-248, pp. 175-76, 191-93

**David Thomas**



## Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī

Abū l-Faraj ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad  
ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Haytham al-Umawī al-Iṣbahānī  
(al-Iṣfahānī)

DATE OF BIRTH 897  
PLACE OF BIRTH Probably Baghdad  
DATE OF DEATH About 973-74  
PLACE OF DEATH Probably Baghdad or Basra

### BIOGRAPHY

A man of letters, historian, musicologist and poet, Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī (both al-Iṣbahānī and al-Iṣfahānī are found in the sources) was a descendant of the Umayyads and belonged to a family of higher civil servants. After studying in Kūfa and Baghdad with renowned scholars, including the historian al-Ṭabarī, he had a career in the administration. He belonged to the circle round al-Muhallabī, vizier of the Buyid Mu‘izz al-Dawla, and was greatly appreciated for his encyclopaedic knowledge of the music, poetry, history, language and culture of the Arabs up to his own day. After al-Muhallabī's death, he disappeared from public life and died in obscurity.

The sources list 25 titles of his, mainly on historical, genealogical, literary and musical subjects. Four have survived, including his masterpiece, the *Kitāb al-aghānī* ('Book of songs'). This is constructed around lists of songs, and gives information about the composers of their words and music, the events that gave rise to them and the circumstances in which they were performed. Containing as it does material from pre-Islamic and Islamic times up to the 10<sup>th</sup> century, it includes poems by a few pre- and early Islamic Christian poets and also anecdotes portraying social contacts between Muslims and Christians. The world of music appears to have been particularly conducive to harmonious relations.

Another major work is the *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, which recounts the violent deaths of descendants of the Prophet's uncle, Abū Ṭālib. Less ambitious is the *Adab al-ghurabā'* ('On being a stranger, illustrated in poetry and prose'), which as its title suggests treats of absence from the homeland and loved ones and other related themes.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

*Primary*

Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, pp. 127-28

Al-Thaʿālibī, *Yatīmat al-dahr fī maḥāsini ahl al-ʿaṣr*, ed. M. Muḥyi l-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, 4 vols in 2, Cairo, 1947, 1956<sup>2</sup>, iii, pp. 114-18

Al-Ṭūsī, *Fihris kutub al-Shīʿa*, Calcutta, 1853, p. 379

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## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Kitāb al-diyārāt*, ‘Monasteries’

DATE Before 973-74

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

Abū l-Faraj's *Kitāb al-diyārāt* has not survived. The *Kitāb al-diyārāt li-Abī l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī* (‘Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī's Monasteries’) edited by Jalīl al-ʿAṭīyya (London, 1991) is in fact a compilation of passages that mention monasteries drawn from writings by Abū l-Faraj and other Muslim authors of belles-lettres and geographers of the ʿAbbāsīd and post-ʿAbbāsīd periods.

Some 20 passages may be considered quotations from the original *Kitāb al-diyārāt* preserved in later works. They include accounts of Muslim caliphs and other notables visiting monasteries and being appropriately received by the monks, and of outings by pleasure-seekers wanting wine and women (or boys) in beautiful surroundings with accompanying poetry; these are standard elements of *diyārāt* books.

Some of the monasteries Abū l-Faraj saw himself, and he mentions the condition in which he found them. The quotations from the lost work also reflect a particular interest of Abū l-Faraj the historian: the origins of the monasteries and their connections with pre-Islamic Arab Christian rulers. And – again a specific trait – some poetry quotations are followed by performance indications for the melodies to which they were set. It is likely that these historical and musical components set Abū l-Faraj's *Kitāb al-diyārāt* apart from some other similarly entitled books.

The rest of *Kitāb al-diyārāt li-Abī l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī* is made up of quotations from Abū l-Faraj's *Kitāb al-aghānī* and *Adab al-ghurabā'* and other works of belles-lettres, many of them describing visits by notables and parties of pleasure. But other poetry refers to monasteries as landmarks close to which battles took place or the setting of a long-past love affair, while poetry graffiti in monasteries record the emotions of strangers. A few anecdotes contain accounts of conversations and other relationships where folklore elements are prominent.

In short, the compilation made by Jalīl 'Aṭīyya usefully brings together information about monasteries scattered through a variety of Arabic literary texts, not all of which are easily accessible. It is a supplement to the only surviving work on monasteries, al-Shābushtī's *Kitāb al-diyārāt* (q.v.).

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Abū l-Faraj's *Kitāb al-diyārāt* belongs to a small group of compilations by Muslim authors of the 10<sup>th</sup> century which convey the image of monasteries as celebrated by poets and perceived by cultured court circles. The presence of Christians and monasteries is accepted as a fact of life; religious polemic is absent. But the interaction between Muslims and Christians often betrays an awareness on both sides that Christians belong to a socially inferior community. Monasteries, which are generally in the countryside, attract visitors because of their well-kept grounds, fine buildings and traditional hospitality, as well as for the wine which they produce and the opportunities they offer for free mixing between the sexes, notably at religious festivals. They may also possess shrines visited for their healing powers by Muslims as well as Christians.

As can be seen from the dates of the texts drawn on by Jalīl 'Aṭīyya for his compilation, the 10<sup>th</sup>-century *Diyārāt* books continued to be

quoted from in geographical works and belles-lettres anthologies for several centuries thereafter.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

See above

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**Hilary Kilpatrick**

# Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī

Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī ibn Ḥamīd ibn Zakariyyā  
al-Takrītī al-Manṭiqī

DATE OF BIRTH 893 or 894  
PLACE OF BIRTH Takrīt  
DATE OF DEATH 13 August 974  
PLACE OF DEATH Baghdad

## BIOGRAPHY

Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī is one of the most outstanding Christian Arab thinkers of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. He was a Jacobite theologian and a philosopher, born in the then Christian town of Takrīt in 893 or 894. He spent his active life in Baghdad, where he died on 13 August 974 at the age of 81, and was buried at the Church of St Thomas, in the area called al-Qaṭīʿa, in north-western Baghdad. He earned his living as a copyist, but became famous as master of the Baghdad School of philosophers, the so-called School of ‘the Baghdad Peripatetics’, whose last representative in Baghdad was Abū l-Faraj ʿAbdallāh Ibn al-Ṭayyib (d. 1044) (q.v.), a contemporary of Avicenna (d. 1037). Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī was himself a disciple of the Nestorian philosopher, Abū Bishr Mattā (d. 940), and his disciple, Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (d. 950).

He was a renowned translator or re-translator of parts of Aristotle’s *Organon*, other works of Aristotle and ancient commentators (Badawi, *Manṭiq* and *Rasāʿil*). He wrote several treatises and short commentaries concerning logic, physics, metaphysics, and ethics. From al-Qiftī’s *Tārīkh*, we know that his brother, Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAdī al-Kātib, was closely associated with al-Fārābī. Some of Yaḥyā’s disciples themselves became outstanding commentators, logicians, and philosophers, such as ʿĪsā ibn Zurʿa (also a Jacobite; d. 1008), al-Ḥasan ibn Suwār (d. 1017), Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī (d. after 1001) (q.v.), and others mentioned by Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 1023) in his detailed account of Yaḥyā’s numerous *majālis*, sessions with disciples and other intellectuals. Not only from these discussions attended by individuals from various denominations, but also from treatises and correspondence, we learn about the positive interaction that existed between intellectuals related in one way or another to the School of

Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, and which was based on their common knowledge of ancient logic and philosophy.

Following on from his master Abū Bishr, whose discussion with the grammarian al-Sirāfi on the merits of logic and grammar became famous, Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī defended the rules of demonstration established by Aristotle as the universal foundation of knowledge. For him, as for Abū Bishr, what is correct can only be established through the art of logic, and not through the art of grammar, because only logical demonstration can distinguish between true statements and false ones. In his treatise on the difference between the arts of philosophical logic and of Arabic grammar, he defended the superior claim of logic, maintaining that 'grammar is neither concerned with the meaning (*al-ma'nā*, the thing signified), nor with significant utterances as such.... Significant utterances are the subject of logic – only those, however, which denote the *universalia*, because only these are constituent parts of logical demonstration; valid demonstration requires the combination of utterances in accordance with the actual reality signified through them' (Endress, *The debate*, p. 321). We cannot underestimate this basic position on demonstration, as Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī applied the tools of demonstrative logic in defending his miaphysite Christian creed, as well as in discussing various topics of religious philosophy.

Two texts on ethical subjects are attributed to Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī. The first is a collection on sexual abstinence, only extant in MS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate – Theol. 83 (Mistrih, *Continence*, p. 3); some texts are in response to 'a friend', who is unknown but who could be Muslim. The second is part of the common Arabic literary legacy, which has also been attributed to Ibn al-'Arabī, al-Jāḥiẓ, and Ibn al-Haytham, and has been edited many times, as early as 1871 and recently, in 2002, by S.H. Griffith under the title *The reformation of morals* (*Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*). Manuscripts, editions, and questions of attribution are presented in detail, with a reprint of Samir's edition (Cairo, 1994), by 'Āṭif Khalīl al-Ḥakīm (*Al-ḥikma al-'amaliyya*, 2006). While al-Ḥakīm has doubts, most modern scholars agree with Endress' conclusion, quoted by Griffith, 'that there is no intrinsic evidence against the authorship of Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī'; thus, recent editions (Samir, Urvoy, Naj al-Takrītī, Hatem, etc.) attribute this work to Yaḥyā. According to Griffith, this treatise on the improvement of morals represents 'a high degree of cultural integration on the part of a Christian writer in the Islamic milieu'; and it may 'be seen as a Christian contribution to the

burgeoning Arabic/Islamic intellectual culture of the early Abbasid period' (Griffith, *Reformation*, p. xxix).

Most significant in the field of Christian-Muslim relations are, on the one hand, Yaḥyā's refutations in defense of the Christian concepts of Incarnation and Trinity and, on the other, his treatises on topics of religious philosophy directly linked to important concepts of Islamic theology, such as the unity of God (*tawḥīd*), the status of the human act and 'acquisition' (*kisb* or *iktisāb*), the nature of the possible (*ṭabī'at al-mumkin*), and divine foreknowledge. These two fields are to be properly distinguished, as is clearly formulated by Griffith: 'On one level it is certainly true that a clash of theologies characterized the relationship between Muslims and Christians in the early Islamic period, in the sense that their shared reasoning issued in radically opposed conclusions on major religious topics. But on another level it is also true that the dialogue between them, which the public culture they shared made possible, allowed them to discuss together such issues as the ontological status of the divine attributes, or the effects of the acts of the divine will on human freedom' (Griffith, *The church in the shadow of the mosque*, p. 158).

The positive interaction between Muslim correspondents and Yaḥyā is not only apparent in the treatises concerning subjects of Islamic *kalām* or Christian theology, but also in other works in which Muslim correspondents are referred to. In the case of Yaḥyā's responses to 14 questions on logic, physics, metaphysics, and medicine, it is mentioned that the questions were submitted by renowned Jewish correspondents: Bishr ibn Simsān al-Yahūdī transmitted these questions on behalf of Ibn Abī Sa'īd 'Irs ibn 'Uthmān al-Yahūdī l-Mawṣilī, member of the Jewish family of the Banū 'Umrān, while Yaḥyā expresses his highest esteem for 'his friend and brother' (*ṣadiqunā wa-akhūnā*) Abū Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Bakkūs, a well-known physician. It appears from these questions and also from al-Tawḥīdī's reports that Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī was involved in discussions concerning not only theology and religious philosophy, but also other sciences linked to physics, chemistry, or mathematics.

In the whole of Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī's work, there are some strictly confessional treatises on questions of theology, Christian worship, and biblical exegesis (as clearly mentioned in Endress, *Inventory*). It is sometimes quite difficult to distinguish between apologetic treatises concerning internal discussions between Christian denominations and polemical work involving anonymous Muslim correspondents. The criterion for distinguishing between them is simply the relevance

of the text to questions raised by Muslims throughout history, mostly concerning the Trinity, the Incarnation, and redemption.

#### A note on the manuscript tradition

Most of the works of Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm and al-Qiftī, and others are extant in the following categories of manuscripts: 1. MSS of philosophical treatises (especially in Iran); 2. MSS of his refutation of Abū ʿĪsā I-Warrāq (Egyptian origin); 3. MSS with a collection of 33 treatises (especially in Egypt); 4. MSS with a collection of 12 treatises (Egyptian origin); 5. MSS of epitomes made by the Coptic author al-Ṣafī ibn al-ʿAssāl (d. before 1260), and parts of it preserved in his brother Muʿtaman al-Dawla's *Kitāb majmūʿ usūl al-dīn*, written sometime after 1260.

In order to preserve space below, the MSS of the collection of 33 treatises, those of the collection of 12 treatises, and those of a collection of al-Ṣafī's epitomes are listed here.

#### Collection of 33 treatises:

MS Eastern Desert, Egypt, Monastery of St Anthony – Theol. 130 (1570)

MS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate – Theol. 184 (Simaika 400, Graf 641) (1783)

MS Eastern Desert, Egypt, Monastery of St Anthony – Theol. 129 (1788)

MS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate – Theol. 183 (Simaika 526, Graf 642) (1875, copy of St Anthony – Theol. 129)

MS Dayr al-Muḥarraḡ, Egypt – Theol. 37 (1848)

MS Wādī Naṭrūn, Egypt, Monastery of St Bishoi – Theol. 303 (1882) (copy of Coptic Patriarchate – Theol. 184)

(For a description of the MSS in this Collection, see Holmberg, *Treatise*, pp. 107-17.)

#### Collection of 12 treatises:

MS Aleppo – Sbath 1001 (missing from Salem collection) (Sbath: 11<sup>th</sup> century? or, more probably, 14<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Aleppo, Fondation Georges et Mathilde Salem – Ar. 240 (= Sbath 1042) (Sbath: 14<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Aleppo, Fondation Georges et Mathilde Salem – Ar. 239 (= Sbath 1041) (Sbath: 18<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 169 (1654)

MS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate – Theol. 192 (Simaika 388) (1772)

MS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate – Theol. 177 (Simaika 320, Graf 534) (19<sup>th</sup> century)



(For the Sbath manuscripts, now see F. del Rio Sanchez, *Catalogue des manuscrits de la Fondation Georges et Mathilde Salem (Alep, Syrie)*, Stuttgart, 2008.)

Collections of epitomes by al-Ṣafi:

MS Vat – Ar. 115 + MS Munich, Bavaria National Library – Ar. 242<sup>m</sup> (1260)

MS Vat – Ar. 134 (13<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Lebanon, Dayr Sharfeh – 5/4 (14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century?)

(Below, the epitomes will be identified by their number in the list in Platti, 'Compilation')

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#### WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Maqāla fī l-tawḥīd 'alā madhhab al-Naṣārā*,  
 'Treatise on the Unity (of God) according to the  
 doctrine of the Christians', *Maqāla fī l-tawḥīd*,  
 'Treatise on the Unity (of God)'

DATE April-May 940

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī refers to this early treatise in his *Maqāla fī wujūb al-ta'annus*, 'Treatise on the necessity of the Incarnation' (*wa-kāna qad tabayyana fī maqālatinā fī l-tawḥīd...*), and also in his *Demonstration of the error of Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq*, § 70 (ed. Platti).

Before giving his own view on what is meant by 'one' (*ma'nā al-wāḥid*), Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī criticizes four different positions on the Unity of the Creator: first, that the Unity of the Creator is only the negation of plurality; second, that the Creator has no equal; third, the view – attributed to a contemporary *mutakallim* (*raḡul min mutakallimī 'aṣrinā*) – that the Creator is the principle of number; and fourth, that the meaning (*ma'nā*) of the Unity of the Creator is a meaning also applied to other beings.

After describing how what is one can be one as a genus, a species, by relation, as something continuous, as something indivisible, or in definition (*wāḥid bi-l-ḥadd*), he concludes that the First Cause is one only by definition. But this implies that there can also be plurality according to the plurality by which the First Cause is defined: according to what is predicated of the First Cause (*al-ma'ānī...allatī tūṣafu bihā al-'illa al-'ulā*). In this way, the First Cause can indeed be defined as one according to one aspect, while plurality can be attributed according to another aspect.

The constituent attributes (*ṣifāt*) of the First Cause are evident from the effects (*āthār*) of his activity, while the substance itself remains hidden. What is to be attributed in this way to the Creator are bounty (*jūd*), wisdom (*ḥikma*), and power (*qudra*); and these three attributes are necessary (*yudṭarru ilayhā*), but also sufficient (*yustaghna bihā*).

See Endress (*Inventory*, pp. 72-73) for philosophical background information.

Appended to this treatise on the unity of the Creator, and sometimes found separately, is a short explanation of a 'doubt, and the solution' (*shakk wa-ḥalluhu*) concerning Yaḥyā's doctrine (*madhhabunā*), mentioned both by the editor of this treatise, [S.]K. Samir, *Le traité de l'Unité*, ch. 16 (not 13), and by G. Endress in his *Inventory*. There is no doubt, according to Yaḥyā, that multiplicity can coexist with unity.

## SIGNIFICANCE

This early treatise on monotheism gives evidence of Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī's trust in demonstration models inspired by the Aristotelian tradition. It appears that he was also an Arab Christian apologist whose concern

it was to prove that fundamental doctrines of his Christian Syrian Church were perfectly compatible with reason, defending in this way his orthodox faith from the challenges of Islam. On the other hand, Endress (*Inventory*) has made it very clear how much he was influenced by concepts from Late Antiquity (e.g., Proclus' triad 'Goodness, Power and Knowledge').

It requires further investigation to show how ideas expressed here will be repeated in several of Yaḥyā's later works. This is without any doubt the case for Yaḥyā's ideas on the 'one' by definition, without excluding multiplicity according to constituent attributes, seen from a different aspect. It is also the case for the triad of three attributes, which are repeatedly mentioned at the end of a number of Yaḥyā's philosophical treatises. In later works, however, other models will be used, such as the comparison of the substance of the triune God with the Intellect.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

For details concerning the manuscripts of this work, see the Appendix to the Biography, as well as Samir, *Le traité de l'Unité*, pp. 61-78; Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 71-73; Khalifat, *Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī*, pp. 71-123.

Collection of 12 treatises, no. 1

Collection of epitomes by al-Ṣafī

And also MSS of philosophical treatises preserved in Iran:

MS Tehran, Majlis-i Shūrā-i Millī – Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1376 (17<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Tehran, Kitābhāna-i Markazī-i Dānishgāh – 4901 (17<sup>th</sup> century)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

[S.]K. Samir, *Le traité de l'Unité de Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī* (893-974) (Patri-moine Arabe Chrétien 2), Jounieh, 1980 (edition and presentation in French; includes the appendix)

S. Khalifat, *Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī. The philosophical treatises*, Amman, 1988, pp. 375-476 (edition with an introduction in English; includes the appendix)

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*Mā kataba ilā Abī 'Umar Sa'd ibn [Sa'id] al-Zaynabī fī naqḍ al-ḥujaj allatī anfadhahā ilayhi fī nuṣrat qawl al-qā'ilīn inna l-af'āl khalq li-Allāh wa-iktisāb li-l-'ibād, 'What (Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī) wrote to Abī 'Umar Sa'd ibn [Sa'id] al-Zaynabī about the critique of the arguments he communicated to him, in support of those who assert that actions are God's creation and an acquisition of man'*

DATE Unknown

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

Before defining his own position on *iktisāb* (*kasb*), Yaḥyā makes an extensive presentation of Abū 'Umar Sa'd al-Zaynabī's arguments in defense of the Islamic theory of acquisition. We can summarize them as following: all human actions 'come into being' (*muḥḍath*); everything brought into being is a 'creation' (*khalq*); God alone is Creator, and everything else is created; only God can initiate and bring back into existence, so only God is able to 'bring into existence' (*ījād*) human actions; humans do not create their actions but only acquire them (*muktasib*). Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī's position can be summarized in this sentence: An agent who was himself brought into being can bring into being something such as an action. As human actions are accidents, they are something brought into being and they can be brought into being by something already brought into being, such as humans, who actually 'create' them. It is in this sense that a human person acquires (*muktasib*) the consequences of his own action.

Abū 'Umar Sa'd al-Zaynabī is an unknown Muslim; we have some indications concerning his identity from Ibn al-Nadīm, Ibn Abī Uṣaybī'a and Ibn al-Jawzī, discussed by Khalifat (*Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī*), Endress (*Inventory*), and Platti (*Réflexions*, n. 8).

SIGNIFICANCE

The central theme of this treatise is the relation between divine and human determination of action, a central theme of classical Islamic Ash'arī *kalām*. It is certainly appropriate to consider the position of

a Christian theologian who bears witness to a Muslim's understanding of this matter in the 10<sup>th</sup> century and who then refutes it; this is a position with far-reaching consequences, even for modern Christian-Muslim relations.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

For details concerning the manuscripts of this work, see Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 71-73; Khalifat, *Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī*, pp. 71-123.

MS Tehran, Kitābkhāna-i Markazī-i Dānishgāh – 4901 (17<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Tehran, Majlis-i Shūrā-i Millī – Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1376 (17<sup>th</sup> century)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

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S. Pines and M. Schwarz, 'Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī's Refutation of the doctrine of acquisition (*iktisāb*)', in *Studia orientalia memoriae D.H. Baneth dedicata*, Jerusalem, 1979, 49-94, pp. 62-94 (edition and English trans. from MS Majlis-i Shūrā-i Millī – Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1376, fols 236-54)

#### STUDIES

E. Platti, 'Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī. Réflexions à propos de questions du kalām musulman', in R. Ebied and H. Teule (eds), *Studies on the Christian Arabic heritage*, Louvain, 2004, 177-97

E. Platti, 'Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī and the theory of *iktisāb*', in D. Thomas (ed.), *Christians at the heart of Islamic rule. Church life and scholarship in 'Abbasid Iraq*, Leiden, 2003, 151-57

J. van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hid-schra*, 6 vols, Berlin, 1991-97, iv, pp. 503-6

S. Pines and S. Schwarz, 'Yaḥyā Ibn 'Adī's refutation of the doctrine of acquisition (*iktisāb*)' (note on some treatises of Yaḥyā Ibn 'Adī, with edition and trans.; repr. in S. Stroumsa [ed.], *Studies in the history of Arabic philosophy [The collected works of Shlomo Pines 3]*, Jerusalem, 1996, 110-55

Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 78-81, no. 5.36

- S. Pines, *Some traits of Christian theological writing in relation to Moslem kalam and to Jewish thought* (*Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 5, no. 4), Jerusalem, 1973; (repr. in S. Pines with S. Stroumsa (eds), *Studies in the history of Arabic philosophy* [*The collected works of Shlomo Pines* 3], Jerusalem, 1996, 79-99, with Appendix I, 'An epistle of Yaḥyā Ibn ʿAdī refuting the concept of *iktisāb* and doctrines connected with it', pp. 93-99)

*Mā kataba bihi Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī ibn Ḥamīd ibn Zakariyyā ilā Abī Bakr Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Quraysh fī ithbāt ṭabīʿat al-mumkin wa-naqḍ ḥujaj al-mukhālifīn li-dhālika wa-l-tanbīh ʿalā fasādiḥā*, 'What Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī ibn Ḥamīd ibn Zakariyyā wrote to Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Quraysh in support of the nature of the possible, and in refutation of the arguments of those who deny this which are shown to be untenable'; *Fī ithbāt ṭabīʿat al-mumkin*, 'Establishing the nature of the possible'

DATE Unknown

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

This longer treatise is part of the set of Yaḥyā's philosophical-theological treatises mentioned by Endress in his chapter 'Metaphysics: Questions of *kalām*' (section 5.3), together with the treatises on the Unity of God and on the doctrine of acquisition. In Yaḥyā's work as a whole, it forms part of his more philosophical discussions with Muslims (and Jews), inspired by the late-Hellenistic philosophical tradition, and different from the other, more theological, biblical, or theological-polemical treatises. As is the case for the treatise on

acquisition, the addressee, Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn Quraysh, is a Muslim, whose identity, however, is still unknown.

Endress (*Inventory*, pp. 74-77) and Ehrig-Eggert (*Über den Nachweis*, pp. 288-89) briefly describe the seven chapters of this rather lengthy text, which is extensively analyzed by Ehrig-Eggert in his *Abhandlung*. Two major questions are at the heart of the demonstration: first, the denial by some opponents of the existence of the possible, and their agreement on the necessity of things in the future; the second, linked to the first, and the strongest argument of these adversaries, is that God's foreknowledge makes it impossible that something could come into being in the future that is potentially different from what God knows will come into being. The demonstration of the seventh chapter, as clearly shown by Ehrig-Eggert, is based on an almost *in extenso* Arabic translation of Aristotle's *De Interpretatione* ix, with commentary.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The importance of these philosophical-theological treatises and their difference from the more polemical ones has been underlined by S. Griffith (*The church in the shadow of the mosque*). It is obvious that the constant intellectual interaction on this level between theologians and philosophers from different faiths made possible the more theological and polemical discussions in which they engaged.

The question of divine foreknowledge and human freedom had already been discussed by Abū Qurra in his treatise on freedom (q.v.). Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī himself answered a question on divine providence (*al-'ināya*) put forward by Ibn Abī Sa'īd al-Mawṣilī, a member of the Jewish Banū 'Umrān.

On the topic of the existence of the possible, texts written by Yaḥyā are mentioned by al-Qifṭī, but are not extant (*Ta'riḫ al-ḥukamā'*, pp. 362-63; see Endress, *Inventory*, 5.33, 5.34 and 5.35): *Jawāb al-Dārimī wa-Abī l-Ḥasan al-mutakallim 'an al-ma's'ala fī ibtāl al-mumkin*, 'Reply to al-Dārimī and Abū l-Ḥasan the *mutakallim* [Abū Sa'īd 'Uthmān ibn Sa'īd al-Dārimī, d. 896, and Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, d. 935-36], concerning the question about the abolition of the possible'; *Kitāb al-shubha fī ibtāl al-mumkin*, 'On a sophism (used) for the abolition of the possible'; and *Maqāla fī tabyīn ḍalālat man ya'taqid anna 'ilm al-bāri' bi-l-umūr al-mumkina qabla wujūdihā*, 'Explanation of the error of those who believe that the Creator has the knowledge of things that are possible before they exist'.

See also *Ḥawāshī arba'a*, 'Four marginalia', where the question about God's foreknowledge is also raised.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

For details concerning the manuscripts of this work, see: Ehrig-Eggert, *Nachweis*; Endress, *Inventory*, p. 74

MS Tehran, Kitābkhāna-i Markazī-i Dānishgāh – 4901 (17<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Tehran, Majlis-i Shūrā-i Millī – Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1376 (17<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Tashkent, Akademija Nauk Uzbekskoj SSR – 2385, no. 55, fols 199v-202r (1664)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

J. McGinnis and D.C. Reisman, *Al-Falsafa: classical Arabic philosophy. An anthology of sources*, Indianapolis IN, 2007, pp. 128-39 (a selection from Yaḥyā's 'Establishing the nature of the possible')

C. Ehrig-Eggert, *Die Abhandlung über den Nachweis der Natur des Möglichen von Yaḥyā Ibn 'Adī* (gest. 974 A.D.) (*Veröffentlichungen des Institutes für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften, Reihe A: Texte und Studien* 5), Frankfurt am Main, 1990 (German trans.)

C. Ehrig-Eggert, 'Yaḥyā Ibn 'Adī. Über den Nachweis der Natur des Möglichen. Edition und Einleitung', *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften* 5 (1989) 283-97 (introduction) and 63-97 (edition on the basis of the three MSS listed above)

#### STUDIES

Ehrig-Eggert, *Die Abhandlung*

Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 73-77, no. 5.32

*Ajwiba 'an thalāth masā'il sa'alahu 'anhā ṣaḍīquhu Abū 'Alī Sa'īd ibn Dādīshu' fī dhī l-Qa'da sanat thamānī wa-khamsīn wa-thalāthimi'a*, 'Replies to three questions submitted by his friend Abū 'Alī Sa'īd ibn Dādīshu' in Dhū l-Qa'da 358'

DATE 969 (Dhū l-Qa'da 358 AH)

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic



## DESCRIPTION

This treatise consists of three philosophical-theological questions put forward by a friend of Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, and Yaḥyā's reply. The addressee of this 'reply', Abū 'Alī Sa'īd ibn Dādīshu', was most probably a 'Nestorian' Christian (Samir, *Science divine*).

The first question has been edited by Samir: Does the Creator know particulars (*al-juz' iyyāt*)? Yaḥyā's answer is clearly 'Yes'. His argument is based on God's wisdom, clearly visible in the functionality of the parts of creatures' bodies, as shown by Galen in his book *On the utility of limbs* (*Fī manāfi' al-a'ḍā'*). He goes on to demonstrate the difference between God's knowledge of particulars and His knowledge of universals.

The second question is about how to understand the Union between the Logos and the human (in Christ); and in the third question, Sa'īd ibn Dādīshu' wants to know why there are exactly three hypostases, not more, and not fewer.

In his *mukhtaṣar*, al-Ṣafī ibn al-'Assāl (Platti, *Compilation*, no. 23) mentions other replies given by Yaḥyā to another five questions of his friend Abū 'Alī, on the veneration of the cross, on the meaning of images and icons, and on Christ's redemption.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The three questions are part of the larger philosophical-theological debate in which Muslims, Jews, and Christians of different denominations in the circles around Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, who had a common background in Hellenistic sciences and philosophy, were involved in mutual intellectual interaction on topics such as: providence and God's foreknowledge; the Unity of God and His attributes; the status of human actions and freedom; and God's knowledge of particulars.

## MANUSCRIPTS

For details concerning the manuscripts of this work, see the Appendix to the Biography above, and also Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 120-21. The work is found in:

Collection of 33 treatises, no. 5

Collection of 12 treatises, no. 11

Collections of epitomes by al-Ṣafī, no. 9

For the manuscripts of *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn* (in which an extract is preserved), see A. Wadi, *Studio su al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl*, Cairo, 1997, pp. 189-92.

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

[S.]K. Samir, 'Science divine et théorie de la connaissance chez Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī', *Annales de Philosophie* 7 (1986) 85-115 (edition and French trans. of the first question)

For the extract preserved in *Majmūʿ uṣūl al-dīn*, see al-Muʿtaman ibn al-ʿAssāl, *Summa dei principii della religione*, ed. A. Wadi, trans. B. Pirone, 6 vols (*Studia Orientalia Christiana Monographia* 6a-6b, 7a-7b, 8-9), Cairo, 1998-2002, i, ch. 3, §§ 36-47 (edition of the *mukhtaṣar* of the first question, with Italian trans.)

## STUDIES

Samir, 'Science divine'

Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 119-21, nos 8.71 and 8.63

Platti, 'Compilation', no. 9

Platti, 'Deux manuscrits', no. 5

Périer, *Yaḥyā ben ʿAdī*, pp. 93-94

*Maqāla yatabayyan fihā ghalat Abī Yūsuf Yaʿqūb ibn Ishāq al-Kindī fī l-Radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā*, 'Treatise in which is shown the error of Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb ibn Ishāq al-Kindī in his Refutation of the Christians'; *Radd Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī ʿalā Abī Yūsuf Yaʿqūb ibn Ishāq al-Kindī*, 'Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī's refutation of Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb ibn Ishāq al-Kindī'

DATE October 961

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī's demonstration reproduces the main points of al-Kindī's Refutation of the Trinity, which was probably part of a longer work (see the entry on al-Kindī in *CMR* 1). As al-Kindī is referring to the *Isagoge* of Porphyry and presents a purely logical demonstration, Yaḥyā applies the same categories in his analysis and refutation of al-Kindī's arguments. In this demonstration, written 11 or 12 years after the *Treatise on the Unity (of God)*, Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī argues in the same way as in his earlier work: what is attributed to the

unique substance of God are the attributes of bounty (*jūd*), wisdom (*ḥikma*), and power (*qudra*). They are not particular and accidental, but substantial properties; and while God is one in subject (*wāḥid fi l-mawḏū'*), plurality can be attributed according to definition. The same can be said of a human individual, who is one as a subject, but is living, reasonable, and mortal according to definition.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

This refutation of the famous philosopher Ya'qūb ibn Iṣḥāq al-Kindī (who died about 90 years before this text was written) is one of a set of texts defending Christian dogmas, in which Yaḥyā quotes quite extensively from earlier treatises written by Muslims, including Abū 'Īsā l-Warrāq and Aḥmad al-Miṣrī, as well as al-Kindī. In these three cases, their work survives only in the refutations made by Ibn 'Adī. As in his other work, Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī is keen to construct arguments that are based on philosophical ground common to both Muslims and Christians.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

For details concerning the manuscripts of this work, see the Appendix to the Biography above, and also Endress, *Inventory*, p. 100. The work is found in:

- Collection of 33 treatises, no. 4
- Collection of 12 treatises, no. 12
- Collections of epitomes by al-Ṣafī, no. 19

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

- A. Périer, 'Un traité de Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, défense du dogme de la Trinité contre les objections d'al-Kindī', *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 22 (1920-21) 3-21 (edition and French trans.; revised trans. in A. Périer, *Petites traités apologétiques de Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī*, Paris, 1920, pp. 118-28; text reprinted in *Majallat al-Baṭriarkiyya al-Suryāniyya* 9 [1936] 12-22)

#### STUDIES

- S.E. Gómez and J.C. González López, 'La polémica trinitaria entre Yaḥya ibn 'Adī y al-Kindī', *Anales del Seminario de Historia de la Filosofía* 23 (2006) 75-97
- Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 100-1, no. 8.12
- H.A. Wolfson, 'The philosopher Kindi and Yahya ibn 'Adi on the Trinity', in O. Amine (ed.), *Études philosophiques offertes au Dr Ibrahim Madkour*, Cairo, 1974, 49-64

T.J. de Boer, 'Kindī wider die Trinität', in C. Bezold (ed.), *Orientalische Studien Theodor Nöldeke gewidmet*, 2 vols, Gieszen, 1906, i, 179-81

*Tabyīn ghalat Muḥammad ibn Hārūn al-ma'rūf bi-Abī 'Īsā l-Warrāq 'ammā dhakarahu fī kitābihi fī l-Radd 'alā l-thalāth firaq min al-Naṣārā,*  
 'Demonstration of the error of Muḥammad ibn Hārūn known as Abū 'Īsā l-Warrāq in what he mentioned in his book 'Refutation of the three Christians denominations'

DATE Unknown

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

This is the most extensive of Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī's works. Just as in his refutation of al-Kindī's demonstration against the Trinity, he quotes, probably exhaustively, from Abū 'Īsā l-Warrāq's *Refutation of the three Christian sects* (see D. Thomas, *Anti-Christian polemic in early Islam. Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq's 'Against the Trinity'*, Cambridge, 1992, and *Early Muslim polemic against Christianity. Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq's 'Against the Incarnation'*, Cambridge, 2002), objecting to it paragraph by paragraph. There are two parts of the *Refutation*, one on the Trinity and one on the Incarnation, with a short Introduction (Platti, *La doctrine*). In the part on the Trinity (135 paragraphs), Abū 'Īsā is referred to as *al-khaṣm*, 'the opponent', while in the part on the Incarnation (201 paragraphs), he is called by his name 'Abū 'Īsā', but there is no doubt that the two are identical. As appears clearly from the introduction, the two parts constitute a single polemical refutation of the three most important Christian denominations: the 'Melkites', the 'Nestorians', and the 'Jacobites'. As a Syrian Orthodox Christian, Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī will, of course, defend the doctrine of his own 'Jacobite' Church.

It is clear from the first paragraph that Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī is following the same methodology as in his other works, presenting arguments in a logical demonstration. He is therefore keen to define from

the beginning, in his first paragraph, the terms used: the Cause of everything existent, the Creator, substance, accident, one, hypostasis. Even if Yaḥyā does repeat the triad 'Bounty, Wisdom and Power', and explicitly refers to his *Treatise on the Unity (of God)* in § 70 (ed. Platti), it is clear that another triad is likely to be more suitable to his way of thinking: that of the intellect, the intelligent, and the intelligible (§ 42, with a reference to Aristotle and Alexander of Aphrodisias).

#### SIGNIFICANCE

This important work of Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī is extant only in manuscripts copied in Egypt; it was extensively quoted and summarized by Coptic authors such as Ibn al-Rāhib and the Ibn al-'Assāl brothers, in particular al-Ṣafī and Mu'taman al-Dawla in his *Kitāb majmū' usūl al-dīn*. It is clear, however, that the work's significance has not been limited to the miaphysite churches in Egypt and Syria. There is a very important indirect reference to the work in Ibn Taymiyya's *Al-jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ* (Michel, *A Muslim theologian's response*, p. 271) (q.v.), where Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) quotes Yaḥyā when he compares the substantial attributes of the Trinity with Zayd's properties – 'Zayd, the doctor, the accountant, the writer' – a comparison used over and over again in Yaḥyā's refutation of Abū 'Īsā. It is clear that Ibn Taymiyya's comment on Yaḥyā's position is pointing towards a fundamental difference between Muslim thinkers and Yaḥyā in defining 'substance' and 'substantial attributes', and to a potential weakness in Yaḥyā's position.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

For details concerning the manuscripts of this work, see: Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 99-100; Platti, *Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq*, pp. vii-xiii.

MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 167 (1227)

MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 168 (14<sup>th</sup> century, restored 1586)

MS Vat – Ar. 113 (1229)

MS Vat – Ar. (1312; copy of Paris, BNF – Ar. 167)

MS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate – Theol. 173 (Simaika 218, Graf 506) (1241; copy of Vat – Ar. 113)

MS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate – Theol. 174 (Simaika 481, Graf 559) (18<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate – Theol. 182 (Simaika 533, Graf 643) (1884)

The epitome of al-Ṣafī (see Platti, 'Compilation', nos 1-2):

MS Vat – Ar. 115 (1260)

For the manuscripts of *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn* (in which several extracts are preserved), see A. Wadi, *Studio su al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl*, pp. 189-92.

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

E. Platti, *Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq, Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī. De l'Incarnation*, Louvain, 1987 (CSCO 490-91) (edition and French trans. of the second part of al-Warrāq's Refutation, on the Incarnation, and Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī's answers)

For the several extracts preserved in *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn*, see: al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl, *Summa dei principi della religione*, ed. A. Wadi, trans. B. Pirone, i-ii, chs 17, 18, 19, 27, 30, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44

#### STUDIES

A. Wadi, *Studio su al-Mu'taman Ibn al-'Assāl*, Cairo, 1997, passim

E. Platti, 'La doctrine des chrétiens d'après Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq dans son traité sur la Trinité', *MIDEO* 20 (1991) 7-30 (analysis of the Introduction by Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī to al-Warrāq's 'Refutation of the three Christian denominations', and edition of his Introduction concerning both Trinity and Incarnation)

E. Platti, 'Les objections de Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq concernant l'Incarnation et les réponses de Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī', *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 5-6 (1987-88) 661-66

Platti, *Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī*, pp. 34-53

T.F. Michel, *A Muslim theologian's response to Christianity. Ibn Taymiyya's al-Jawab al-sahih*, Delmar NY, 1984; Ibn Taymiyya, *Al-jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ li-man baddala dīn al-Masīḥ*, Riyadh, 2004, pp. 135-36

Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 99-100, no. 8.11

*Maqālat shaykhinā Abī Zakariyyā Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī ibn Ḥamīd ibn Zakariyyā fī tabyīn ḍalālat al-Nasṭūrī al-mu'jab bi-kalām Abī l-Ḥusayn Aḥmad (ibn) Muḥammad al-ma'rūf bi-Ramaq (?) al-Miṣrī fī nuṣratihī al-Nasṭūriyya wa-munāqaḍātuhu fī raddihī 'alayhim mā ya'taqidūhu min anna l-Masīḥ jawharān*, 'Treatise of our Master Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī ibn Ḥamīd ibn Zakariyyā to demonstrate the error of the Nestorian who is pleased with the remarks made by Abū l-Ḥusayn Aḥmad (ibn) Muḥammad, known as Ramaq (?) al-Miṣrī, defending the Nestorians, and (Yaḥyā's) counter arguments in refutation of their belief that Christ is two substances'

DATE 966

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

This refutation of Abū l-Ḥusayn Aḥmad (ibn) Muḥammad, known as Ramaq (?) al-Miṣrī (q.v.), is part of a larger controversy about the 'Nestorian' view that Christ is two substances. The controversy was initiated by a request made by Abū l-Ḥasan al-Qāsim ibn Ḥabīb, who asked Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī to explain the Christological differences between the Jacobites and the Nestorians, and to refute the arguments of the Nestorians.

The first part of the controversy is the *Epistle* written by Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī at the request of Abū l-Ḥasan: *Risālat Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī ilā Abī l-Qāsim ibn Ḥabīb fī-mā sa'alahū inshā'ahu lahu min al-radd 'alā l-Nasṭūriyya wa-naqḍ ḥujajihim wa-ithbāt mā yukhālifuhum fihī l-Naṣārā l-Ya'qūbiyya*. It contains three sections: an introduction and the creed of the Jacobites concerning the Incarnation, as well as the creed of the Nestorians; eleven questions on the unity or duality of Christ; and a final chapter with testimonies from the New Testament

and the Fathers. The creed of the Jacobites has been included in the famous collection *Kitāb i'tirāf al-ābā'*, *Fides Patrum*.

The second and shortest part of the controversy is a rejoinder by Abū l-Khayr Bishr ibn al-Faḍl al-Ṣayrafi, who was himself a Nestorian (he calls the Nestorians 'his companions', *aṣḥābunā*), refuting Yaḥyā's arguments contained in his *Epistle* and arguing against those who say that Christ is one substance: *Nuskhat mā za'ama Abū l-Khayr Bishr ibn al-Faḍl al-Ṣayrafi annahu kāfin fī naqḍ jamī' mā taḍammanat hādhihi l-Risāla min al-ḥujaj 'alā l-qā'ilīn inna l-Masīḥ jawhar wāḥid*.

The third and longest part is the Muslim Abū l-Ḥusayn's reply to Yaḥyā's *Epistle*, and Yaḥyā's refutation of his arguments, which are quoted *in extenso*.

The fourth part of the controversy contains a rejoinder to Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī's arguments in his *Epistle to Abū l-Qāsim* by the Nestorian Quryāqus ibn Zakariyyā l-Ḥarrānī, together with Yaḥyā's refutation of Quryāqus' critique of Yaḥyā's demonstration of the errors of the Nestorians. Quryāqus' refutation is quoted *in extenso*, and refuted paragraph by paragraph: *Kitāb fihi munāqaḍat Abī Zakariyyā Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī ibn Ḥamīd ibn Zakariyyā l-faylasūf, li-Quryāqus ibn Zakariyyā l-Ḥarrānī fī raddihi 'alayhi mā abānahu min ghalāṭ al-Nasṭuriyya*.

Two additional texts in this controversy against Nestorianism, both written by Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, are added in the manuscripts: 'A treatise in which he shows that Christ is one substance, not two, in refutation of the Nestorians', and 'Two arguments against Nestorianism: The first proving that the substance of Christ is one, the other that the Union is substantial'.

The four parts of the controversy, and the two appendices, have been edited and translated into French. There is also a *mukhtaṣar* or epitome of this controversy, written by the Coptic author, al-Ṣafī ibn al-'Assāl.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

This long controversy contains a variety of subjects discussed by Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī in his shorter treatises, such as the divine attributes of bounty (*jūd*), wisdom (*ḥikma*), and power (*qudra*), but also the comparison of the Incarnation of the divine Logos with a human being as the union of the Logos with the *forma* of the human being, his intellect (see Yaḥyā's *Treatise about the possibility of the Incarnation and the absurdity of holding it impossible*). Al-Miṣrī also refers to the



comparison with the mirror, informed by the form of the image of what is in front of it. As is the case elsewhere in Ibn 'Adī's works, here the definition of substance and accident is at the center of the discussion: is it indeed possible to say that Christ is one substance from two substances? Can God's Wisdom – which is a substance, not an accident, a 'reality' (*ma'nā*) different from the human being – unite with a human being, which is also a substance, not an accident, a 'reality' (*ma'nā*) in itself? It is interesting to note that, in the course of this discussion, al-Miṣrī refers to a number of famous *mutakallimūn*, such as Abū 'Alī l-Jubbā'ī (d. 915) (q.v.), Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam (d. 795), al-Fuwaṭī (d. 842), Abū l-Hudhayl al-'Allāf (d. 840) (q.v.) and other Muslims, *Ahl al-qibla*. Also interesting is al-Miṣrī's quotation of a well-known Nestorian, 'Ammār al-Baṣrī and his *Kitāb al-masā'il wa-l-ajwiba* (q.v.).

#### MANUSCRIPTS

For details concerning the manuscripts of this work, see the Appendix to the Biography above, and also Platti, *La grande polémique*, i, pp. vi-ix; Endress, *Inventory*, p. 113. The work is found in:

Collection of 33 treatises, nos 29-32

Collections of epitomes by al-Ṣafī, nos 44-48

And also:

MS Aleppo – Sbath 1130 (1233; missing from Salem collection) (text of the *Epistle to Abū l-Qāsim*)

MS Vat – Ar. 115 (1260) (al-Ṣafī's epitome)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

E. Platti, *La grande polémique antinestorienne de Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī*, 2 vols in 4 parts (CSCO 427 and 437 [text], 428 and 438 [French trans.]), Louvain, 1981-82 (edition and trans. of the controversy, except for the discussion with Quryāqus, based on MSS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate – Theol. 184 and 183)

E. Platti, *Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, théologien chrétien et philosophe arabe. Sa théologie de l'Incarnation* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 14), Louvain, 1983, pp. 1\*-76\* (text), pp. 135-193 (trans.) (edition and trans. of the discussion with Quryāqus, based on MSS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate – Theol. 184 and 183)

G.S. Khoury, *Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī (+974). An exposition on Christology (Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, bayānuhu wa-ithbātuhu 'alā anna l-Masīḥ jawhar wāḥid)*, Nazareth, 1978 (edition of al-Ṣafī's *mukhtaṣar* of the *Epistle to Abū l-Qāsim*, the refutation of al-Miṣrī, and the two additional arguments)

*Iʿtirāfāt al-Ābāʾ*, ed. Rāhib min Dayr al-Muḥarraḡ, Dayr al-Muḥarraḡ, 2002, p. 392 (text of Yaḥyāʾs *The creed of the Jacobites*; from MSS Dayr al-Muḥarraḡ 11/3, 11/4, 11/5)

## STUDIES

B. Holmberg, *A treatise on the Unity and Trinity of God by Israel of Kashkar (d. 872)*, Lund, 1989 (edition and trans. of a treatise, incorrectly attributed to Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī, from the Collection of 33 treatises)

Platti, *Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī, théologien chrétien et philosophe arabe*

Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 111-14, nos 8.31, 8.31.1, 8.32, 8.33

Platti, 'Compilation', nos 44-48

Platti, 'Deux manuscrits', nos 29-32

*Maqāla mawsūma bi-l-ʿaql wa-l-ʿāqil wa-l-maʿqūl*, 'Epistle characterized by the intellect, the intelligent and the intelligible'; *Maqāla fī ṣiḥḥat iʿtiqād al-Naṣārā fī l-Bārī* 'azza wa-jalla annahu jawhar wāḥid dhū thalāth ṣifāt, 'Epistle on the validity of the belief of the Christians that the Creator is one substance endowed with three attributes'

DATE Unknown

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

In this treatise, two comparisons are presented concerning the triune God. His substance is compared first to two mirrors reflecting each other; they exist in fact in three conditions (*aḥwāl*): the mirror as such (*ʿaynan*), the image reflected in the other mirror, and the image reflected in the first. We can also compare the triune God to the intellect and, according to Yaḥyā, this comparison is more appropriate: we may compare the Father to the intellect, the Son to the intelligent, and the Spirit to the intelligible. The Creator is one substance (*jawhar*); He has three attributes (*ṣifāt*) or properties (*khawāṣṣ*) inseparable from His substance, but different (*mukhālifan*) according to the attributes or the properties. In the same way, the 'reality' (*maʿnā*) of the Intellect is the inseparable cause (*illa*) of the 'reality' of the intelligent (*maʿnā l-ʿāqil*) and the 'reality' of the intelligible (*maʿnā l-maʿqūl*).

Like the other nine treatises edited by Périer, his edition (*Petits traités*, no. 1) is based on the version of this treatise extant in the manuscript collection containing 12 treatises by Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī. There are some important differences from the version extant in the collection of 33 treatises (title, *incipit* and *explicit* and another text introduced by *qāla Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī*).

#### SIGNIFICANCE

This treatise was written in the context of contemporary Muslim-Christian discussions on the status of the divine attributes and Trinity, and Yaḥyā's polemical writings on this subject. Compared with his early treatise on the Unity of God, dictated in Rajab 328 (April-May 940), where Yaḥyā is defining the First Cause by His constituent attributes, His bounty, power, and wisdom, the comparison with the intellect is a major evolution in his presentation of the Trinity. A complete survey of Yaḥyā's theories on God's divine attributes in his philosophical, theological, and polemical treatises may be helpful in forming a clear idea of the chronological evolution of his thinking and his position in the whole of the Arab Christian theologians' vision of the divine attributes (see R. Haddad, *La Trinité divine chez les théologiens arabes (750-1050)*, Paris, 1985).

#### MANUSCRIPTS

For details concerning the manuscripts of this work, see the Appendix to the Biography above, and also Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 101-2. The work is found in:

- Collection of 33 treatises, no. 6
- Collection of 12 treatises, no. 2
- Collections of epitomes by al-Ṣafī, no. 11

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

- Endress, *Inventory*, p. 102 (specifies the Arabic text of the title)
- A. Périer, *Maqālāt li-Yaḥyā b. 'Adī. Petits traités apologétiques de Yaḥyā ben 'Adī*, Paris, 1920, no. 1, pp. 11-23 (text and French trans.; text reprinted in *Al-Ḥikma* 2 (1927-28) 174-79
- L. Cheikho, 'Maqālāt Jaḥyā ibn 'Adī', *Al-Machriq* 5 (1902) 368-72 (edition; repr. in Cheikho, *Maqālāt dīniyya*, 51-55 and in Cheikho, *Vingt traités*, 70-74)

#### STUDIES

- Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 101-2, no. 8.13
- Platti, 'Compilation', no. 11

Platti, 'Deux manuscrits', no. 6  
 Périer, *Yaḥyā ben ʿAdī*, passim

*Maqāla yuthbat fihā waṣf al-ilāh al-wāḥid  
 bi-l-tathlīth wa-tamthīl al-Āb wa-l-Ibn wa-l-  
 Rūḥ al-quḍus bi-l-ʿaql wa-l-ʿāqil wa-l-maʿqūl  
 ḥall shakk fī dhālika*, 'Treatise establishing how  
 to characterize the one God as the Trinity, and  
 how to compare the Father and the Son and  
 the Holy Spirit to the intellect, the intelligent,  
 and the intelligible, Solution concerning some  
 doubts about this [the previous treatise]';  
*Maqāla fī tamthīl al-Naṣārā al-Ibn bi-l-ʿāqil  
 dūna l-maʿqūl wa-l-Rūḥ bi-l-maʿqūl dūna l-ʿāqil  
 wa-ḥall al-shakk fī dhālika*, 'Treatise on how the  
 Christians compare the Son to the intelligent not  
 the intelligible, and the Spirit to the intelligible  
 not the intelligent, and how to resolve any doubt  
 concerning this'

DATE Unknown

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

This short appendix to the previous treatise is an answer to a question put forward anonymously: Why is the Son not comparable to the intelligible (*al-maʿqūl*) and the Holy Spirit to the intelligent (*al-ʿāqil*)? Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī's answer is clarified by A. Périer (*Petits traités*, p. 27): only the Son became human (*huwa al-mutaʿannis*) and not the Spirit; in comparison with the operation of the intellect, it is the intelligent (*al-ʿāqil*) that is united with the object of perception, and not the intelligible (*al-maʿqūl*), which cannot, by itself, become the intelligent.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Although short, this appendix provides a useful clarification of the previous treatise on the comparison of the triune hypostases to the intellect, the intelligent, and the intelligible.

## MANUSCRIPTS

For details concerning the manuscripts of this work, see the Appendix to the Biography above, and also Endress, *Inventory*, p. 102. The work is found in:

- Collection of 33 treatises, no. 7
- Collection of 12 treatises, no. 3
- Collections of epitomes by al-Ṣafī, no. 12

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

- Endress, *Inventory*, p. 102 (specifies the Arabic text of the title)
- A. Périer, *Maqālāt li-Yaḥyā b. 'Adī. Petits traités apologétiques de Yaḥyā ben 'Adī*, Paris, 1920, no. 2, pp. 24-27 (text and French trans.; text repr. in *Al-Hikma* 2 (1927-28) 179)
- L. Cheikho, 'Maqāla Jaḥyā ibn 'Adī', *Al-Machriq* 5 (1902), p. 372 (edition; reprinted in Cheikho, *Maqālāt dīniyya*, p. 55, no. 16, and in Cheikho, *Vingt traités*, p. 74)

## STUDIES

- Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 102-3, no. 8.14
- Platti, 'Compilation', no. 12
- Platti, 'Deux manuscrits', no. 7
- Périer, *Yaḥyā ben 'Adī*, pp. 132-33

*Jawāb 'an masā'il sa'alahā 'anhā sā'il fī l-aqānīm al-thalātha*, 'Reply to questions put forward by someone on the three hypostases'; *Jawāb 'an masā'il fī l-aqānīm al-thalātha*, 'Reply to questions on the three hypostases'

DATE Unknown

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

This treatise consists of two questions put forward by an anonymous person (*al-sā'il*), and the answers given by Yaḥyā. In fact, Ibn 'Adī

quotes not only the two questions but also some longer remarks made by the questioner. This could be a sign that the text quoted was originally part of a longer and coherent polemical text. From the introduction to the second question, it becomes clear that this anonymous person who asked how to understand the Trinity was not a Christian, and was probably a Muslim: he refers to the Christians in general and to their common belief. In the first question, he asks whether there is any difference (*faṣl*) between the hypostases of the Trinity or not. The second question is how to understand the Christians' belief in 'three hypostases and one substance'.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The distinctions made by Yaḥyā in his answer to the two questions also occur in other treatises: the hypostases coincide (*muttafiqa*) under one aspect, and are different (*mukhtalifa*) under another; and it is not true that the difference between them is just accidental ('*araḍī*) and not substantial (*jawharī*). Yaḥyā repeats in other works that the hypostases are substances (*jawāhir*) or (extramental) 'realities' (*ma'ānin*). It is also interesting that he mentions the comparison with the sun, referred to by the opponent. These answers are written in the context of the Muslim-Christian discussions on the status of the divine attributes and Trinity, and Yaḥyā's polemical writings on this subject.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

For details concerning the manuscripts of this work, see the Appendix to the Biography above, and also Endress, *Inventory*, p. 103. The work is found in:

- Collection of 33 treatises, no. 3
- Collection of 12 treatises, no. 4
- Collections of epitomes by al-Ṣafī, no. 18

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

- Endress, *Inventory*, p. 103 (ed. title)
- A. Périer, *Maqālāt li-Yaḥyā b. 'Adī. Petits traités apologétiques de Yaḥyā ben 'Adī*, Paris, 1920, no. 3, pp. 28-43 (text and French trans.; text reprinted in *Al-Ḥikma* 4 [1930] 450-54)

#### STUDIES

- Endress, *Inventory*, p. 103, no. 8.15
- Platti, 'Compilation', no. 18
- Platti, 'Deux manuscrits', no. 3

*Maqāla fī tabyīn al-wajh alladhī 'alayhi yaṣiḥḥ qawl al-Naṣārā fī l-Bāri'*–*jalla ismuhu–innahu jawhar wāḥid wa-thalāth aqānīm*, 'A treatise explaining in which respect it is valid for the Christians to say that the Creator is one substance and three hypostases'; *Maqāla fī tabyīn al-wajh alladhī 'alayhi yaṣiḥḥ al-qawl fī l-Bāri'*–*jalla wa-ta'ālā–innahu jawhar wāḥid dhū thalāth khawāṣṣ tusammihā l-Naṣārā aqānīm*, 'A treatise explaining in which respect it is valid to say of the Creator that He is one substance with three properties, called hypostases by the Christians'

DATE Unknown

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

As in some other treatises, Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī does not mention the names of the anonymous opponents of the doctrine of the Christians (*al-mukhālifīn li-l-Naṣārā*), who are asking several questions concerning the Trinity of hypostases. Yaḥyā's answers attempt to clarify the Christian doctrine: for Christians to profess the Unity of the substance of the Creator, as well as the Trinity of the hypostases, does not imply that the Creator is three substances and three gods. Paternity, filiation, and procession are indeed three substantial differences, and the 'reality' (*ma'nā*) of one hypostasis is different from the 'reality' of the two others; and this does not mean that the Creator is three substances. We can qualify the Creator by these three (extramental) 'realities', and qualify every one of these 'realities' as a 'substance' (*kull wāḥid minhā annahu jawhar*).

SIGNIFICANCE

As in some other treatises, the Trinity of the hypostases is described here as paternity (*ubuwwa*), filiation (*bunuwwa*), and procession (*inbi'āth*). There is no mention of the Trinity of other attributes, such

as the intellect or of 'Goodness, Power, and Knowledge', as we find in other texts.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

For details concerning the MSS of this work, see the Appendix to the Biography above, and also Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 103-4. The work is found in:

- Collection of 33 treatises, no. 8
- Collection of 12 treatises, no. 5
- Collections of epitomes by al-Ṣafī, no. 10

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

- Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 103-4 (titles)
- A. Périer, *Maqālāt li-Yaḥyā b. 'Adī. Petits traités apologétiques de Yaḥyā ben 'Adī*, Paris, 1920, no. 4, pp. 44-62 (edition and French trans.)

#### STUDIES

- Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 103-4, no. 8.16
- Platti, 'Compilation', no. 10
- Platti, 'Deux manuscrits', no. 8

*Mufāwaḍa ma'a Abī Muslim bi-ḥaḍrat al-wazīr Abī l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn al-Jarrāḥ fī l-thālūth*, 'Talk on the Trinity with Abū Muslim in the presence of the vizier Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn al-Jarrāḥ';  
*Jawāb 'an mas'ala jarat bayna yaday 'Alī ibn 'Īsā ibn al-Jarrāḥ fī l-tathlīth wa-l-tawḥīd*, 'Answer to a question raised before 'Alī ibn 'Īsā ibn al-Jarrāḥ concerning Trinity and Unity'

DATE Unknown

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

This is a short answer to a question transmitted to Yaḥyā by one of his friends. The question had come up in a meeting with the famous vizier, Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn 'Īsā ibn al-Jarrāḥ (d. 946 [q.v.]; he was



a student of Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, and had probably died when this text was written, as may be seen from the formulae: *raḍīya Allāh 'anhu wa-arḍāhu wa-akrama ma'ābahu wa-mathwāhu* and *naṣara Allāh wajhahu*; Périer's translation is far from correct.) It was said that he had had a discussion with the well-known Mu'tazilī theologian, Abū Muslim Muḥammad ibn Baḥr al-Iṣbahānī (d. 934, deceased when this text was written: *raḥimahu Allāh*). The vizier had invited a famous Christian secretary (one of the *kuttāb*, but apparently not Yaḥyā himself) to give his opinion concerning important state affairs; but Abū Muslim opposed that suggestion, saying that the secretary was not fit for the job as he could not calculate well: 'For him, indeed, one is three and three is one.'

#### SIGNIFICANCE

This answer is in line with the early treatise on the unity of God, written in 940. The attributes of God mentioned here by Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī are, as there, God's 'Goodness, Power, and Knowledge'. So this could well be another early treatise. The objection made by Abū Muslim ('for him, indeed, one is three and three is one') is, of course, the most common objection made by Muslims to Christian doctrine, and is inspired by the Qur'an (Q 4:171).

#### MANUSCRIPTS

For details concerning the manuscripts of this work, see the Appendix to the Biography above, and also Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 104-5. The work is found in:

- Collection of 33 treatises, no. 2
- Collection of 12 treatises, no. 6
- Collections of epitomes by al-Ṣafī, no. 8

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

- Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 104-5 (specifies the Arabic text of the title)
- A. Périer, *Maqālāt li-Yaḥyā b. 'Adī. Petits traités apologétiques de Yaḥyā ben 'Adī*, Paris, 1920, no. 5, pp. 63-68 (text and French trans.)

#### STUDIES

- Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 104-5, no. 8.17
- Platti, 'Compilation', no. 8
- Platti, 'Deux manuscrits', no. 2

*Maqāla fī wujūb al-ta'annus al-ilāhī al-mukarram*, 'Treatise on the necessity of the divine and revered Incarnation'; *Maqāla fī wujūb al-ta'annus*, 'Treatise on the necessity of the Incarnation'

DATE Unknown

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

This treatise is structured in the form of a dialogue, with Yaḥyā's demonstration, anonymous objections, and Yaḥyā's replies. One of the first conclusions put forward is that the Creator must necessarily be good by His essence (*wujūb jūd al-Bāri' bi-dhātihi*), and also that He can transmit His essence to another. And that is exactly what happened in Christ, by way of in-formation (adopting the *forma* = *taṣawwur*), which is a conjunction of the divine essence with the human intellect (see Ehrig-Eggert, *Abhandlung*, p. 86). No one has ever been as perfectly united to the Creator as Christ was, because no one has known God as well as Christ did.

In this treatise Yaḥyā mentions two of his own writings: his *Maqāla fī l-tawḥīd*, 'Treatise on the Unity (of God)', written in 940; and his *Maqāla fī l-mawjūdāt al-thalātha*, 'Treatise on the three (classes) of being'.

Samir's remark concerning Périer's edition and translation is correct: Périer was limited by the small number of manuscripts he was able to see. In this case, in which Périer read the word *wujūd* rather than *wujūb* in the treatise's title, he certainly missed the point made by Yaḥyā concerning the 'necessity' of the Incarnation as effected by God's essence.

SIGNIFICANCE

This treatise is of great importance for Yaḥyā's philosophical theology and should be studied in connection with the whole of his work: one of God's attributes mentioned in his early treatise on God's Unity, His 'bounty' (*jūd*), is here linked to the triad of the intellect, the intelligent, and the intelligible. On the other hand, more attention should be given to the principle of necessity, expressed in the sentence that the Creator must necessarily be good by His essence (*tabayyana wujūb*

*jūd al-Bāri' bi-dhātihi*), as the starting point of Yaḥyā's demonstration (which is not noticed by Périer in his edition and translation). This principle of necessity is indeed quite common for some *falāsifa*, who argue that God is the one being that is necessarily existent by virtue of himself (*wājib al-wujūd bi-dhātihi*), and that everything about Him is necessary: in this case, His bounty; which means for Yaḥyā that what results from God's bounty also follows from Him by necessity.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

For details concerning the manuscripts of this work, see the Appendix to the Biography above, and also Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 106-7. The work is found in:

Collection of 33 treatises, no. 13

Collection of 12 treatises, no. 7

Collections of epitomes by al-Ṣafī, no. 13

And also:

MS Florence – Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana 299, no. 4

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

[S.]K. Samir, 'Science divine et théorie de la connaissance chez Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī', *Annales de Philosophie*, pp. 102-5 (partial edition and French trans.)

Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 106-7 (specifies the Arabic text of the title)

A. Périer, *Maqālāt li-Yaḥyā b. 'Adī. Petits traités apologétiques de Yaḥyā ben 'Adī*, no. 6, pp. 69-86 (edition and French trans.)

For the *mukhtaṣar* of al-Ṣafī ibn al-'Assāl preserved in *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn*, see: al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl, *Summa dei principi della religione*, ed. A. Wadi, trans. B. Pirone, ch. 23, §§ 8-21 (edition and Italian trans.)

#### STUDIES

E. Platti, 'Intellect et révélation chez Ibn 'Adī. Lecture d'une page d'un petit traité', in [S.]K. Samir (ed.), *Actes du deuxième congrès international d'études arabes chrétiennes (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 226)*, Rome, 1986, 229-34

Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 106-7, no. 8.21

Platti, 'Compilation', no. 13

Platti, 'Deux manuscrits', no. 13

*Ḥall ḥujjat man rāma an yulzim inna ittiḥād al-Kalima bi-l-insān fī ḥāl mawtihi ghayr mumkin*, 'Invalidation of the argument of those trying to prove that the union of the Logos with man is impossible in the state of his death'; *Ḥall ḥujjat man arāda an yulzim ittiḥād al-ilāh al-Kalima bi-l-insān fī ḥāl mawtihi ghayr mumkin*, 'Invalidation of the argument of those trying to prove that the union of God the Logos with a human is impossible in the state of his death'

DATE Unknown

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī's demonstration is based on the principle that something can remain united to a whole, even if some parts of that whole are dissociated from others. It is in the same way that the divine Logos, united with man, remains united with him, even if some parts of this human being are separated. It is a common argument in Yaḥyā's demonstrations to make a clear distinction between what constitutes the particular form of the whole (*ṣūrat al-jumla*) and its parts.

SIGNIFICANCE

The demonstration is clearly intended to invalidate arguments against the Christians, as suggested by G. Endress. These arguments should be examined in relation to Yaḥyā's *Maqāla fī l-kull wa-l-ajzā'* ('Treatise on the whole and the parts') analyzed by Endress (no. 4.11).

MANUSCRIPTS

For details concerning the manuscripts of this work, see the Appendix to the Biography above, and also Endress, *Inventory*, p. 107. The work is found in:

Collection of 33 treatises, no. 19

Collection of 12 treatises, no. 8

Collections of epitomes by al-Ṣafī, no. 17

For the manuscripts of *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn* (in which an extract is preserved), see A. Wadi, *Studio su al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl*, pp. 189-92.

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

Al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl, *Summa dei principi della religione*, ed.

A. Wadi, trans. B. Pirone, ii, ch. 37, §§ 2-15 (from al-Ṣafī's epitome, with Italian trans.)

## STUDIES

Endress, *Inventory*, p. 107, no. 8.22

Platti, 'Compilation', no. 17

Platti, 'Deux manuscrits', no. 19

*Jawāb 'an mas'ala sa'ala 'anhā mukhālifū l-Naṣārā fī naqḍ(ihim) awṣāfahum al-Masīḥ min jihat al-ta'annus*, 'Reply to a question asked by the adversaries of the Christians, criticizing the attributes given by them to Christ with regard to the Incarnation'

DATE Unknown

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

According to the *incipit* of this 'Reply', the question asked by 'adversaries' of the Christians (*mukhālifū l-Naṣārā*) was transmitted to Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī (correcting Périer's ed.: *awṣala ilayya ṣadiqunā... mas'alatan...*) by one of his friends, Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā ibn Yūnis.

Yaḥyā analyzes and answers their question in different parts of his refutation. In the first part, he replies that Aristotle never said that God is not knowing (*ghayr 'ālim*) or not powerful (*ghayr qādir*); in that case, it would indeed be impossible to qualify Him positively by this kind of attribute.

In a second part, the opponents claim that it is unacceptable to qualify the Creator by what Christians are saying: that he was born, was submitted to terrible humiliation and atrocities, and died and was buried. According to Yaḥyā, Christians can qualify Christ by these attributes because Christ is one substance constituted by

two substances (*jawhar mutaḡawwam min jawharayn*), the human and the divine. Christians can attribute humanity to his unique substance, but this does not mean that Christians qualify God by human attributes.

In a third part, the opponents ask how it is imaginable that so many people in the world could ever be allowed to be so perverted as to submit Christ to these atrocities. In his answer, Yaḡyā refers to the opponents' belief that God created the world and sent messengers and prophets to guide people, but also that they were persecuted and humiliated, which God did not prevent. Even if the opponents do not believe in the wisdom and goodness of the Creator, they can be convinced by the messengers of the Gospel that God is doing every good to his servants, protecting them from evil, as Christ himself was doing.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Périer himself acknowledges (*Petits traités*, p. 109) that the manuscript upon which he relies (MS Paris, BNF – ar. 169) is in fact unreliable; and this is obvious from the first line of his edition and translation. This is most unfortunate, indeed, because this short treatise contains interesting elements, especially the reference to Aristotle and the question about what can be attributed to God. There is also a clear statement that only God can be eternal, and that the world is not – a question very much discussed (Proclus, Philoponus among earlier Christians). It is also clear from this text that Yaḡyā ibn 'Adī appears to be first of all a theologian; this is clear from his statement that 'anyway, the Christians did not borrow their religion from the philosophers', and that it would be perfectly correct for the Christians to disagree with them. The questioner (*al-sā'il*) is quite easily identifiable as a Muslim from Yaḡyā's argument that he also believes in God's guidance and His prophets and messengers, and that they were submitted also to atrocities. The relevance of the final question about God's goodness and wisdom is obvious: even when confronted with evil, believers will not deny God's wisdom.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

For details concerning the manuscripts of this work, see the Appendix to the Biography above, and also Endress, *Inventory*, p. 108. The work is found in:

Collection of 33 treatises, no. 20

Collection of 12 treatises, no. 9

Collections of epitomes by al-Ṣafī, no. 16

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

Endress, *Inventory*, p. 108 (specifies the Arabic text of the title)

A. Périer, *Maqālāt li-Yaḥyā b. 'Adī. Petits traités apologétiques de Yaḥyā ben 'Adī*, Paris, 1920, no. 7, pp. 87-109 (text and French trans.)

#### STUDIES

Endress, *Inventory*, p. 108, no. 8.23

Platti, 'Compilation', no. 16

Platti, 'Deux manuscrits', no. 20

E. Behler, *Die Ewigkeit der Welt*, Munich, 1965, pp. 125-28

*Maqāla fī tabyīn fasād al-qawl bi-anna al-Masīḥ wāḥid bi-l-'araḍ*, 'Treatise demonstrating the wrongness of saying that Christ is one by accident'; *Maqāla fī ghalat man yaqūl inna l-Masīḥ wāḥid bi-l-'araḍ*, 'Treatise on the error of those who say that Christ is one by accident'

DATE Unknown

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

This treatise is another reply to opponents (*mukhālifūnā*), who in this case are those who do not agree with the Christians saying that Christ is substantially one. According to their opinion, the two substances of Christ's unique essence are one only because the two substances have a common accident. Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī's reply is aimed at defending the Christian doctrine that Christ is essentially one substance, and also two substances, but from a different point of view.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

As has been noticed in relation to many other treatises, the crucial point in Yaḥyā's demonstration is his definition of 'substance' as an extramental reality *in se*, which does not need to be in a subject in order to exist (*mustaghniin fī wujūdihi 'an shay' yūjad fīhi*) – while

this is exactly the case for an accident. What is really one in essence is necessarily either a substance or an accident, and in this case, Christ is one as substance, not by accident. This treatise has been written in the context of the Muslim-Christian discussions on the status of Christ and Incarnation and Yaḥyā's polemical writings on this subject.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

For details concerning the manuscripts of this work, see Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 108-9.

Collection of 33 treatises, no. 15

Collection of 12 treatises, no. 10

Collections of epitomes by al-Ṣafī, no. 20

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 108-9 (specifies the Arabic text of the title)

A. Périer, *Maqālāt li-Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī. Petits traités apologétiques de Yaḥyā ben ʿAdī*, no. 8, pp. 110-17 (text and French trans.)

#### STUDIES

Platti, *Compilation*, no. 20

Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 108-9, no. 8.24

Platti, *Deux manuscrits*, no. 15

*Maqāla fī imkān al-taʿannus wa-iḥālat imtināʿihi,*  
 ‘Treatise on the possibility of the Incarnation and  
 the absurdity of holding it impossible’

DATE Unknown

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

This short treatise is fully extant only in the manuscripts containing 33 treatises. It has three parts. In the first, Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī argues that it is not impossible that humanity and divinity could unite, as the two are not in opposition or incompatible with each other in the sense that one of them necessarily destroys the other. This is not at all the case, as the Creator is himself the cause of the very existence of everything created. In the second part, it is made clear that God's goodness (*innahu jawād bi-l-aḡḡal*) means that there must necessarily be a conjunction of God with humanity, as this is the best thing



possible (*al-khayr al-mahḍ*). In the third part, Yaḥyā acknowledges his ignorance as to why it took so long before the Incarnation became a reality; in the same way, we do not know why God did not create the world before it actually was created.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

In this treatise Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī confirms the idea of God's bounty (*jūd*) as a necessary cause of the Incarnation (*tabayyana wujūb al-ta'annus ḍarūratan*). This text is clearly linked to the other treatise 'on the necessity of Incarnation'. It also shows Yaḥyā's clear affirmation that the world was created, over against the philosophers' idea of its eternity. On the other hand, and against opponents who affirm that God and humans are incompatible with each other, Yaḥyā clearly confirms their relationship.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

For details concerning the manuscripts of this work, see Endress, *Inventory*, p. 109.

Collection of 33 treatises, no. 12

Collections of epitomes by al-Ṣafī, no. 20

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

E. Platti, 'Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī, philosophe et théologien', *MIDEO* 14 (1980) 167-84 (edition of Yaḥyā's text and French trans.)

For the *mukhtaṣar* by al-Ṣafī in *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn*, see al-Mu'taman ibn al-ʿAssāl, *Summa dei principi della religione*, ed. A. Wadi, trans. B. Pirone, ch. 23, §§ 2-7 (edition and Italian trans.)

#### STUDIES

E. Platti, 'Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī, philosophe et théologien'

Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 109, no. 8.25

Platti, *Compilation*, no. 20

Platti, *Deux manuscrits*, no. 12

*Kalām fī mabādi' al-mawjūdāt wa-marātib quwāhā, wa-l-awṣāf allatī tūṣaf al-dhāt al-ūlā bihā, wa-'alā ayy wajh waṣafathā l-Naṣārā bi-l-tawḥīd wa-l-kathra wa-l-jawhariyya wa-l-uqnūmiyya* (followed by:) *Ḥawāshī arba'a fī waḥdāniyyat Allāh wa-'ilmihī bi-mā yakūn qabla mā yakūn,* 'On the principles of beings and the orders of their potencies, and the qualities with which the First Essence may be qualified, and how Christians qualify [the First Essence] by unity and multiplicity, substantiality and hypostaticity (followed by:) Four marginal notes on the Unity of God and his foreknowledge of what is before it comes into being'; *Īdāḥ fī l-tawḥīd,* 'Clarification concerning the Unity [of God]'

DATE Unknown

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

This brief 'Clarification' has come to us through three channels of transmission, with the following 'titles':

1. Reported by Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī (q.v.): *Kalām fī mabādi' al-mawjūdāt wa-marātib quwāhā, wa-l-awṣāf allatī tūṣaf al-dhāt al-ūlā bihā, wa-'alā ayy wajh waṣafathā l-Naṣārā bi-l-tawḥīd wa-l-kathra wa-l-jawhariyya wa-l-uqnūmiyya, li-Abī Sulaymān Ṭāhir* (ed. Troupeau); 'On the principles of beings and the orders of their potencies, and the qualities with which the First Essence may be qualified, and how Christians qualify [the First Essence] by unity and multiplicity, substantiality and hypostaticity, by Abū Sulaymān Ṭāhir';

2. Reported by Faraj ibn Jirjis ibn Ifrā'im (q.v.): *Īdāḥ fī l-tawḥīd mim mā amla'ahu 'anhu Faraj ibn Jirjis ibn Ifrā'im fī mabādi' al-mawjūdāt wa-marātib quwāhā* (text included in the MSS of the Collection of 33 treatises); 'Clarification [by Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī] concerning the Unity [of God], which Faraj ibn Jirjis ibn Ifr(ā')īm took down from his lecture on the principles of beings and the orders of their potencies';

3. Reported by al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl: *Kalām dhakara l-akh al-tabī' l-fāḍil al-As'ad Abū l-Faraj Hibatāllāh ibn Abī l-Mufaḍḍal (raḥimahumā Allāh ta'ālā) innahu wajadahu fī kitāb li-Abī Sulaymān Ṭāhir ibn al-Manṭiqī [sic] fī mabādi' al-mawjūdāt wa-marātib quwāhā wa-l-awṣāf allatī tūṣaf al-dhāt al-ūlā bihā wa-'alā ayy wajh waṣafathā l-Naṣārā bi-l-tawḥīd wa-l-kathra wa-l-jawhariyya wa-l-uqnūmiyya. Wa-hādhā l-kalām ayḍan amla'ahu Faraj ibn Jirjis ibn Afrām 'an al-Shaykh Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī fī Īdāh at-tawḥīd* (text quoted by al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl in *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn*, ch. 19); 'What our eminent natural brother al-As'ad Abū l-Faraj Hibatāllāh son of Abū l-Mufaḍḍal (may God have mercy on them both) mentioned he had found in a book written by Abū Sulaymān Ṭāhir ibn al-Manṭiqī [sic] on the principles of beings and the orders of their potencies, and the qualities with which the First Essence may be qualified, and how Christians qualify [the First Essence] by unity and multiplicity, substantiality and hypostaticity. This treatise was also taken down from a lecture by Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī on the clarification of the Unity (of God), by Faraj ibn Jirjis ibn Afrām.'

The coherence of the text on God's unity, followed by the four marginal notes, is not clear. According to the three different *incipits*, there is a transcription by Faraj ibn Jirjis ibn Ifrā'im and another written by Abū Sulaymān Ṭāhir ibn Muḥammad ibn Bahrām (al-Sijistānī al-Manṭiqī, d. 983) (q.v.). The treatise has been published twice, once by G. Troupeau (based on MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 173.), who is not sure about the manuscript's attribution of the entire treatise to al-Sijistānī; and once by A. Wadi in the 19<sup>th</sup> chapter of al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl's *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn*.

In the description of the Christians' faith, two triads of three attributes are mentioned: the Essence is one as a subject, but multiple with respect to the attributes of Life (*ḥayāt*), called 'the Father'; Wisdom (*'ilm*), called 'the Son'; and Power (*qudra*), called 'the Spirit'. On the other hand, there are 'the hypostasis of the Father, when the substance is taken as intellect (*'aql*); the hypostasis of the Son, when the substance is taken as intelligent (*'āqil*); and the hypostasis of the Spirit, when the substance is taken as intelligible (*ma'qūl*), a presentation perfectly in accordance with Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī's views.

Troupeau is right when he says that the second part of the 'Clarification' (on the Christians' speech about God) cannot be from al-Sijistānī; it is, however, perfectly in line with what we know from

Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī. The most obvious conclusion is that al-Sijistānī indeed presented the Christians' view on the Unity, but that this view came from his master, Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī; and that Jirjis also received the same 'Clarification' directly from Yaḥyā. We can presume that the whole text of the 'Clarification' given by their master, Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, was transmitted by both Sijistānī and Jirjis.

The four marginal notes that follow this text are most probably a short commentary on the given 'Clarification'. The author, probably Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī himself, first underlines how we qualify the hypostasis and how we qualify humans. In the second note, he repeats how it is indeed correct to qualify the Creator as 'intellect, intelligent, and intelligible'. The third note affirms the foreknowledge of God (*'ālim bi-mā yakūn qabl mā yakūn*), but also that this foreknowledge (*mimmā sabaqa fi 'ilmihī*) does not imply a predetermination to act in any way. (In this connexion it becomes obvious that the information given by al-Qiftī, *Ta'rikh al-ḥukamā'*, is incomplete: 'Explanation of the error of those who believe that the knowledge by the Creator of the possible things before they exist is...' [?]; see Endress, *Inventory*, p. 77.) In the fourth note, three definitions of the 'one' are presented: one by definition, one as subject, and one as predicate.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The Muslim philosopher and logician, al-Sijistānī, was a disciple of Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī; if the treatise was included in a book written by him, it is interesting to see how he describes the way Christians are presenting the Trinity.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

The treatise is found in the Collection of 33 treatises (see Appendix to the Biography), no. 10, and also in:

MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 173 (14<sup>th</sup> century)

and also in the MSS of al-Mu'taman's *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn* (ed. A. Wadi).

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

G. Troupeau, 'Un traité sur les principes des êtres attribué à Abū Sulaymān al-Siġistānī', *Pensamiento* 25 (1969), 259-70 (edition and French trans.)

Al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl, *Summa dei principi della religione*, ed.

A. Wadi, trans. B. Pirone, i, ch. 19, §§ 148-58

The four marginal notes have not yet been published.

## STUDIES

- Endress, *Inventory*, pp. 122-23, no. 8.74; p. 106, no. 8.19.2; and see  
pp. 77-78, no. 5.35  
Platti, 'Deux manuscrits', nos 19 and 10  
Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 247 and 248-49  
Brockelman *GAL* i, p. 236 and *S* i, pp. 377-78

**Emilio Platti**

## *Al-maqāla l-Masīḥiyya*

Unknown author; the text has often been attributed to  
the Fatimid Caliph al-Muʿizz

DATE OF BIRTH Possibly 10<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown  
DATE OF DEATH Possibly 10<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF DEATH Unknown; perhaps Egypt

### BIOGRAPHY

In a 15<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript of Coptic Christian provenance, MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 131, fols 87v-89v, we find a brief and probably fragmentary text with an exceedingly intriguing superscription: *Faṣl min al-Maqāla l-Masīḥiyya, taʿlīf al-imām al-Muʿizz, al-khalīfa bi-Miṣr*, ‘Chapter from “The Christological treatise”, composed by the Imam al-Muʿizz, the caliph in Egypt’. This is a startling attribution of authorship, to none other than the fourth Fatimid caliph, al-Muʿizz li-Dīn Allāh, born in 931 and caliph from 953 until his death in 975. It was under him that the Fatimids conquered Egypt in 969, and he himself moved to their new capital of al-Qāhira (Cairo) in 973. On the surface, then, the ‘Christological treatise’ would have been composed by al-Muʿizz as ‘caliph in Egypt’, between 973 and 975.

The situation is complicated slightly by the chain of transmission found in several witnesses, including an ancient fragment from the Cairo Genizah, according to which the text was transmitted by *al-shaykh* Abū l-Fawāris al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad al-Mahdī, from Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥalabī *al-dāʿī* (*raḍiya llāhu ʿanhu*, ‘may God be pleased with him’), from [*ʿan*] *mawlānā al-imām al-Muʿizz li-Dīn Allāh, amīr al-muʿminīn*, from [*ʿan*] his fathers. Here al-Muʿizz is a transmitter – rather vaguely from ‘his fathers’ – rather than an author.

Another possibility was already noted by Graf in 1936 (‘Der maronitische Nomokanon’, p. 228), but on the basis of a text where the final two instances of *ʿan* noted above were preceded by a *waw*: *wa-ʿan* (Fahed, *Kitāb al-hudā*, p. 235). There it is possible to read the pious blessing on Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad (*raḍiya llāhu ʿanhu*, ‘may God be pleased with him’), as extending to the caliph and his

fathers: ‘may God be pleased with him; and with our lord the Imam, al-Mu‘izz li-Dīn Allāh, Commander of the Faithful; and with his fathers’. Here authorship appears to be attributed to Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥalabī *al-dā‘ī* (that is, the missionary from Aleppo). Support for this possibility is found in a citation of *Al-maqāla l-Masīḥiyya* that Samir discovered in a work by al-Ṣafī ibn al-‘Assāl, where al-Ṣafī identifies the author as *aḥad al-du‘ā li-aḥad al-khulafā’ al-miṣriyyīn al-muslimīn*, ‘one of the missionaries for one of the Muslim Egyptian caliphs’ (Samir, ‘Une citation’, p. 400).

If the original statement of transmission did indeed attribute the text to a rather obscure *dā‘ī* from the time of the Caliph al-Mu‘izz, the slight tweaking of the statement necessary to attribute the text to al-Mu‘izz himself would be entirely understandable: not only was the Caliph al-Mu‘izz a well-known historical figure, but he came to play a major role in the famous story of the moving of the Muqattam mountain, and in some trajectories of the story converted to Christianity! (See den Heijer, ‘Apologetic elements’, p. 198.) Thus a ‘Christological treatise’ attributed to al-Mu‘izz would play very nicely into a popular and developing tradition.

However one decides the question (on the basis of the manuscript attributions) as to whether the caliph or the *dā‘ī* has a better claim to be the author of the text, the question remains: is it really possible that *Al-maqāla l-Masīḥiyya* can be the work of an Ismā‘īlī Muslim (perhaps as commented upon and/or expanded by Christians)? Or is the text as a whole a Christian composition, supplied with a fictitious *isnād* of sorts connecting it with the Fatimids? This question will be brought up again in the description of the text, below.

As for the date of composition, Szilágyi’s important discovery of an 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century fragment of the text in the Cairo Genizah documents indicates that the text may well indeed be from the Fatimid period. The Paris MS mentioned above claims to be a copy of a copy made as early as Jumāda II, AH 308, October-November 920; perhaps the date is better preserved in a parallel Maronite witness, in the so-called *Kitāb al-hudā*: it claims to present material going back to a copy dated Jumāda I, AH 386, May-June 996 (Fahed, *Kitāb al-hudā*, p. 235).

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

*Primary*

For the editions and translations of various parts of the text, including attribution, chains of transmission, and dates of precursor MSS, see below.

*Secondary*

J. den Heijer, 'Apologetic elements in Copto-Arabic historiography. The life of Afrāhām ibn Zur'ah, 62<sup>nd</sup> patriarch of Alexandria', in S.K. Samir and J.S. Nielsen (eds), *Christian Arabic apologetics during the Abbasid period (750-1258)*, Leiden, 1994, 192-202, pp. 195-98 (on the Christian story in which the Caliph al-Mu'izz converts to Christianity)

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Al-maqāla l-Masīhiyya*, 'The Christological treatise'

DATE 10th c.; perhaps 973-75

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

We do not have a single well-defined text called *Al-maqāla l-Masīhiyya*; rather, we have what is described as a *faṣl* (section or chapter) of the work in Paris Ar. 131, and a parallel text, though lengthier and not identical, preserved in the Maronite compilation called *Kitāb al-hudā*. (On this work, see the entry on *Kitāb al-kamāl*.) Study of these texts is at present hampered by the lack of good editions: Massignon's transcription of the text in Paris Ar. 131 (*Recueil*, pp. 215-17) is incomplete, and the edition in Fahed, *Kitāb al-hudā*, pp. 235-43 is full of errors and sometimes incomprehensible. Furthermore, we do not know how Fahed's edition reflects the manuscript tradition. For example, on the basis of Troupeau's study we can deduce that a long passage in Fahed's published text (p. 238, line 2-p. 239, line 16) is not present in one of the important manuscript witnesses of *Kitāb al-hudā*, Paris Syr. 223.

For students limited to published materials, the best approach to the text is through Troupeau's 1979 edition and translation of the superscription and ten paragraphs of the text taken from Paris Ar. 131 (of Coptic provenance) and Paris Syr. 223 (the Maronite *Kitāb al-hudā*). Of these ten paragraphs, five are common to the two MSS.



Nine of the paragraphs come from *Kitāb al-hudā*, and are of great assistance in reading the text in Fahed's edition.

Two subsequent studies indicate that the text as preserved in *Kitāb al-hudā* is key to our knowledge of *Al-maqāla l-Masīhiyya*. One of the citations of the text that Samir discovered in a work of al-Ṣafi ibn al-'Assāl is taken from a part of the passage in *Kitāb al-hudā* not found in Paris Ar. 131 (and not re-edited by Troupeau; Samir, 'Une citation', pp. 403-5), while the *incipit* of the Cairo Genizah fragment identified by Szilágyi ('Christian books', pp. 149\*-150\*) matches that of the *incipit* in *Kitāb al-hudā*, rather than that of Paris Ar. 131. A critical edition of this section of *Kitāb al-hudā*, with a comparison to the text in Paris Ar. 131, is very much needed.

In the meantime, one can focus (with help from Troupeau, Samir, and Szilágyi) on the text found in Fahed, *Kitāb al-hudā*, p. 235-p. 240, line 3 (perhaps setting aside p. 238, line 9-p. 239, line 16, where we find two passages, one on the symbolism of the cross, one on the dominical feasts, that interrupt the flow of the argument; we might also set aside pp. 240-43, five mostly Christological questions and answers). Here we find a treatise about the necessity (and mystery) of God's self-manifestation (*zuhūr*) to his creatures by means of a human being, out of divine kindness and mercy. In the paragraphs edited by Troupeau there is no explicit mention of Christ (apart from one he adds in paragraph 2; Troupeau, 'Traité', p. 16) until paragraph 8 (Troupeau, 'Traité', pp. 19-20).

Is it possible that we have here an Ismā'īli Muslim text that has been exploited in some way by a Christian apologist? The possibility is an intriguing one and is not to be ruled out before a critical edition of the text can be studied. In Troupeau's 6<sup>th</sup> paragraph (Troupeau, 'Traité', p. 19) we read that the one in whom God makes himself manifest can be described as:

'prophet and apostle [*nabī wa-rasūl*] in his outward manifestation [*zāhiruhu*],

ungraspable mystery [*ghayb*] in his interior reality [*bāṭinuhu*].

He is the Holy Spirit, the eternal Divinity,

the place of the attributes by which he has described himself.

He is Hearing, Seeing, Knowing, Wise.'

If written by a Muslim, these are startling claims – presumably for the Prophet Muḥammad in the first instance, perhaps for other prophets and apostles, and then for the Imams. If written by a Christian, we have here a remarkable way of speaking about Christ, one that takes full advantage of qur'anic and esoteric Muslim vocabulary.

Additional Note: The passages in Fahed, *Kitāb al-hudā*, that were 'set aside' in the above paragraphs are not without interest.

1. Fahed, *Kitāb al-hudā*, p. 238, lines 9-12. The four arms of the cross correspond to the four words in the confession *lā ilāha illā llāh*, the four letters in the word *Allāh*, and the four elements.

2. Fahed, *Kitāb al-hudā*, p. 238, line 13-p. 239, line 16. This is specifically Christian material, including an intriguing reference to a bishop Iliyyā of Jerusalem; see Graf, 'Der maronitische Nomokanon', pp. 229-30.

3. Fahed, *Kitāb al-hudā*, pp. 240-43. Responses to five questions (mostly about Christ); see Samir, 'Bibliographie... Addenda', pp. 309-10.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Perhaps we can see in *Al-maqāla l-Masīhiyya* a Christian exploitation of *ghulāt* Shī'i *ḥulūl*-doctrine, regardless of which of two possibilities we consider more likely: (a) an Egyptian Christian apologist claimed for Christ (alone) the rationale and description for the divine manifestation (in the Prophet Muḥammad, his fellow prophets, and his successors, the Imams?) developed by a Fatimid ideologue; or (b) an Egyptian Christian apologist wrote an apology for the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation in a way that sought points of contact with Ismā'īlī discourse.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

For the MSS of the text as transmitted by the Maronites in the so-called *Kitāb al-hudā*, see Samir, 'L'exposé', pp. 261-62, for a list of 12 MSS. Two that are commonly cited in the literature are:

MS Vat – Syr. 133 (1402; karshūnī)

MS Paris, BNF – Syr. 223 (16<sup>th</sup> century; karshūnī)

An independent witness of Coptic provenance is:

MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 131, fols 87v-89v (1440)

In addition, a fragment of the work has been identified in the fragments from the Cairo Genizah:

MS Cambridge, University Library – Taylor-Schechter Collection, Ar. 39.320 (11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century; see Szilágyi, 'Christian books', p. 141\*)

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

- K. Szilágyi, 'Christian books in Jewish libraries. Fragments of Christian Arabic writings from the Cairo Genizah', *Ginzei Qedem. Genizah Research Annual* 2 (2006) 107\*-62\*, pp. 149\*-50\* (edition and trans. of the opening of the work, from a fragment from the Cairo Genizah, MS Cambridge, T-S Ar. 39.320, with a photograph at p. 160\*)
- [S.]K. Samir, 'Une citation du traité christologique attribué au calife al-Mu'izz (m. 975) chez al-Šafi b. al-‘Assāl', *OCP* 50 (1984) 398-406, pp. 401-5 (helpfully re-edits brief texts from Troupeau and Fahed, with French trans.)
- G. Troupeau, 'Un traité christologique attribué au calife fatimide al-Mu'izz', *Annales Islamologiques* 15 (1979) 11-24 (ed. and French trans. of ten fragments of the text, from MS Paris ar. 131 [Coptic witness] and MS Paris Syr. 223 [Maronite recension, from *Kitāb al-hudā*])
- G. Troupeau, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes. Première partie: Manuscrits chrétiens*, 2 vols, Paris, 1972-74, i, 94 (on MS Paris ar. 131, gives the *incipit* and colophon providing the date of the MS from which the text was copied, and the chain of transmission)
- G. Graf, 'Der maronitische Nomokanon "Buch der rechten Leitung"', *OC* 33 [= 3. series, 11] (1936) 212-32, pp. 228, 230 (German trans. of two passages from Fahed)
- P. Fahed, *Kitāb al-Hudā ou Livre de la direction. Code maronite du haut moyen âge. Traduction du syriaque en arabe par l'évêque maronite David lan 1059*, Aleppo, 1935, pp. 235-43 (edition on the basis of MS Vat Syr. 133; but the text of this passage is very corrupt)
- L. Massignon, *Recueil de textes inédits concernant l'histoire de la mystique en pays d'Islam*, Paris, 1929, pp. 215-17 (incomplete edition from MS Paris Ar. 131, fols 87v-89v)

## STUDIES

- Szilágyi, 'Christian books', pp. 135\*, 140\*-141\*, 149\*-150\*
- Samir, 'Une citation'
- [S.]K. Samir, in 'Bibliographie', *Islamochristiana* 5 (1979) 307-10 (on the Maronite Nomokanon, 'Chapitre 16: Apologie de l'Incarnation, d'après le calife al-Mu'izz')
- Troupeau, 'Un traité christologique'

- [S.]K. Samir, 'Nomocanon Maronite', in 'Bibliographie', *Islamochristiana* 2 (1976) 201-42, p. 221
- A. Joubair, *Kitāb al-huda. Essai*, Jounieh, 1974 (not seen)
- Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 94-98 (on the *Kitāb al-hudā*; see p. 97 for the passage under consideration here)
- Graf, 'Der maronitische Nomokanon', pp. 228-31

**Mark N. Swanson**

# Al-Bāqillānī

Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ṭayyib ibn  
Muḥammad ibn al-Bāqillānī

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown, about 941-42  
PLACE OF BIRTH Basra  
DATE OF DEATH 5 June 1013  
PLACE OF DEATH Baghdad

## BIOGRAPHY

Although the date of al-Bāqillānī's birth is not known, from details of his later life it is possible to say that he was probably born just after 940 (Allard, *Le problème des attributs divins*, p. 291). He studied under scholars who had been students of al-Ash'arī (q.v.), and the intellectual promise he showed brought him to the attention of the Būyid amīr 'Aḍud al-Dawla, who attracted him to his court in Shīrāz as tutor to his son. This may have been in about 970.

At some point he moved to Baghdad, possibly when the Būyid court moved in 975, and there his intellectual stature was recognized by his appointment as *qāḍī* in an outlying town. He also taught in the capital – the popularity of his lectures was remembered – and in 981 he was sent by 'Aḍud al-Dawla on an official embassy to Constantinople. He died in Baghdad in 1013.

Al-Bāqillānī is regarded as a leading exponent of Ash'arī theology, and a formative influence on later Ash'arī thought, though he is not associated with any distinctive teachings of his own. The titles of 55 of his works can be listed (Ibīsh, *Political doctrine*, pp. 7-16) and six of these are extant. Among them, the *Ijāz al-Qur'ān*, 'Inimitability of the Qur'ān', and the *Kitāb al-tamhīd*, 'Introduction', are the best known. From the information afforded by their titles, it is possible that two others, the *Kitāb al-ibāna 'an ibtāl madhāhib ahl al-kufr wa-l-ḍalāla*, 'The exposition of the falsifying of the doctrine of the people of unbelief and error', and *Fī l-mu'jizāt*, 'On miracles', may have been directed at Christians, among other non-Muslims.

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## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Kitāb al-tamhīd, Kitāb al-tamhīd fī l-radd ‘alā l-Mulhida wa-l-Mu‘aṭṭila wa-l-Rāfiḍa wa-l-Khawārij wa-l-Mu‘tazila; Kitāb fihī tamhīd al-dalā’il wa-talkhīṣ al-awā’il; Kitāb tamhīd al-awā’il wa-talkhīṣ al-dalā’il, ‘The Introduction’*

DATE Before 975

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

At the beginning of the work al-Bāqillānī indicates that he wrote the *Kitāb al-tamhīd* at the request of an *amīr*, though he does not name him. Abū Faḍl ‘Iyāḍ says that this was ‘Aḍūḍ al-Dawla, and that al-Bāqillānī wrote the work for the *amīr*’s son, who was his tutee (in *Tamhīd*, ed. al-Khuḍayrī and Abū Rīdah, p. 250). This being so, he would almost certainly have written it before 975, while he was at the Buyid court in Shiraz. However, it cannot have been a very early work, since al-Bāqillānī refers to at least six of his other works in it.

The refutation of Christianity in the *Kitāb al-tamhīd* is one of the fullest and most detailed that has survived from the early Islamic period. It occurs together with refutations of dualist and other non-Muslim groups in the long third section of the work, which follows the first section on the sources of knowledge, and the second on the being of God. The whole third section might appear to be the part of the *Tamhīd* in which al-Bāqillānī treats non-Muslim religions, but it is preferable to see it as devoted to beliefs that oppose the Muslim teaching about God and also contradict its teaching about prophets (see Thomas, *Christian doctrines*, pp. 121-26, for a discussion of the structure of the work and the place of this section within it). As such, it functions as providing a set of cautionary illustrations of the consequences of deviating from the teachings laid down in Islam.

The refutation comprises two main parts, arguments against the Trinity and against the Incarnation. Without any introduction or account of Christian doctrines, al-Bāqillānī begins by inquiring about the divine substance, which he compares with substances in the material world, and then moves on to the hypostases, showing that, if they are modeled on the divine attributes of Islamic theology, they cannot

be limited to three. Next, employing arguments from the 9<sup>th</sup>-century scholar Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq (q.v.), he shows that the relationship between the substance and hypostases leads to logical confusion, and here he preserves an intriguing riposte from some Christians who compare the hypostases in their teachings with the divine attributes in his own Ashʿarī teachings.

Moving on to the Incarnation, and still relying largely on al-Warrāq, he challenges a series of metaphorical explanations of the doctrine, and then questions the participation of the Son alone in the act of uniting between the divine and human. To conclude, he rejects a number of arguments for regarding Jesus as divine: Jesus' miracles, which he shows are no different from those of other prophets, here using an old argument and relying particularly on a source known also to al-Māturīdī (q.v.) and al-Ḥasan ibn Ayyūb (q.v.); the actions of the two natures within Jesus; and lastly claims for Jesus' divinity based on verses from the Gospels.

The refutation does not confront the entire range of Christian beliefs, but gives a comprehensive rebuttal of the two central doctrines that challenge the Islamic doctrine of *tawḥīd*. Al-Bāqillānī employs a number of arguments from earlier polemicists in order to show that this alternative perception of God has no rational validity.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

This refutation displays the confidence of a theologian who knows well the position he is attacking and is sure of his own ground. It displays thorough acquaintance with teachings that have been articulated in familiar theological terms and can be assessed according to tried theological principles, indicating that the doctrines of Arabic-speaking Christians had by this time been subsumed fully into the Muslim theological milieu.

The positioning of the refutation in the work as a whole suggests that it served the dual function of demonstrating the weakness of rival teachings through their illogicality, and by the same token the strength of Islamic teachings as the only logical alternative. This points to the fact that Christianity as such no longer presented a real challenge to Islamic theology.

The appearance of arguments known from earlier refutations suggests that a set procedure of anti-Christian polemic in Islam was fast developing by the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century.



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**David Thomas**

## ‘Arīb ibn Sa‘īd

Abū ‘Alī/Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Arīb ibn Sa‘īd al-Kātib al-Qurṭubī

DATE OF BIRTH Late 9th or early 10th century

PLACE OF BIRTH Cordova

DATE OF DEATH 980-81

PLACE OF DEATH Cordova

### BIOGRAPHY

‘Arīb ibn Sa‘īd was a physician, chronicler and poet, who held the position of secretary (*kātib*) and other functions to the caliphs ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III and al-Ḥakam II, and for the chancellor al-Manṣūr ibn Abī ‘Āmir (Almanzor). Very little is known about his life.

As Castilla observes, his short genealogical chain may suggest a recent conversion to Islam, either by some Christian ancestor, most probably his father, or by himself. This impression is supported by ‘Arīb’s knowledge of medicine, a largely Christian preserve, and by the lack of information about his education, companions and students.

The Caliph al-Ḥakam II made him secretary, presumably after he had acted as governor of Osuna for ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, though the exact dates of his appointment as ‘Guardian of the arsenals’ are not known. However, all these appointments indicate the favor he enjoyed with the Cordovan caliphs and their courtiers. This no doubt provoked jealousy among his contemporaries, which ultimately put an end to ‘Arīb’s privileges in the court and maybe also to part of his intellectual prestige, since his contributions to medicine, poetry and history are scarcely mentioned by later scholars.

Apart from the work mentioned below, ‘Arīb wrote a medical treatise entitled *Kitāb khalq al-janīn wa-tadbīr al-ḥabālā wa-l-mawlūdīn* (‘The generation of the fetus and the treatment of pregnant women and newborn babies’), and also the *Kitāb fī tafṣīl al-azmān wa-maṣāliḥ al-abdān* (‘On the distribution of time periods and benefits of bodies’, better known as ‘The calendar of Cordova’), and also some poetry.

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## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Mukhtaṣar Ta’rīkh al-Ṭabarī*, ‘Abridgement of the  
“History” of al-Ṭabarī’

DATE Between about 967 and 976

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The *Mukhtaṣar* includes historical data on al-Andalus, North Africa and the Islamic east. It was presumably written at the request of the Caliph al-Ḥakam II, who was known for his love of books, as a supplement to the information on al-Andalus and North Africa in al-Ṭabarī’s *Ta’rīkh*. Apart from al-Ṭabarī, ‘Arīb ibn Sa‘īd also relied on the works of al-Farghānī to deal with the history of the Islamic east, an assumption that leads Castilla to point to the period between 967 and 976 as the possible date of composition of the *Mukhtaṣar*. According to Castilla, the main sources ‘Arīb ibn Sa‘īd may have relied on for the Andalusī part of his *Mukhtaṣar* were ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Ḥabīb and Aḥmad al-Rāzī

Most of the work’s contents are lost, except for the part covering the period 904-32, and only fragments of this are extant. The rise of Ibn Ḥayyān’s major historical work, *Al-muqtabis*, may have led to ‘Arīb’s chronicle falling into disuse and loss. Apart from the fragments that have survived, excerpts can be found in later historical works such as

the *Muqtabis*, Ibn ‘Idhārī’s *Bayān al-mughrib*, al-Ḥimyarī’s *Rawḍ*, Ibn al-Shabbāṭ’s *Šila* and al-Maqqarī’s *Nafh*.

In the fragments in later historians, which deal mainly with the Muslim conquest of North Africa and al-Andalus, Christians appear as the enemy defeated in battle, subjugated according to the conditions of a treaty, or taken captive (e.g. Ibn ‘Idhārī, *Bayān*, i, p. 14; ii, pp. 4-5). In the parts preserved independently, Christians appear as the enemy to the north against whom military campaigns are organized periodically by the Cordovan rulers (e.g. *La Crónica de ‘Arīb sobre al-Andalus*, ix, p. 112; xi, pp. 130 and following; xiv, pp. 143, 304; xv, pp. 147-48, 149-50; xvi, pp. 151-52; xviii, pp. 156 and following; xix, pp. 167-68; xxi, p. 177; xxii, pp. 179 and following), occasionally as captives (e.g. *Crónica*, vii, p. 105), or when a church is destroyed (*Crónica*, xxii, p. 183).

Christians also appear as potential allies of Muslim rebels against Cordovan authority, as in the account of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III al-Nāṣir’s seizure of Toledo in 932 (see *Crónica*, xxx, p. 225), or in the account of the rebellion of Ibn Ḥafṣūn, who converted from Islam to Christianity (*Crónica*, i, pp. 89 and following; ii, pp. 93 and following; v, pp. 99-100; vi, pp. 101-2; vii, pp. 103 and following; viii, pp. 107-8; ix, p. 111; x, pp. 122 and following; xi, pp. 131-32; xxvii, p. 212). ‘Arīb relates that, after Ibn Hafṣūn’s death in 917, his rebellion was continued by his sons, Ja‘far, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, Sulaymān and Ḥafṣ (*Crónica*, xv, p. 148; xvi, pp. 152-54; xvii, p. 155; xviii, p. 164; xx, pp. 171-72; xxi, pp. 175-77; xxv, pp. 195-97; xxvi, pp. 201-3), and he gives vivid details about the caliph’s efforts to hunt down the rebels and punish them. Ḥafṣ surrendered and converted to Islam, and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān had the bodies of Ibn Hafṣūn and one of his other sons exhumed in order to ascertain whether they had died as Christians (and were therefore buried on their backs), and had them exposed in Cordova together with the remains of Sulaymān ‘as a warning for all who might see them’ (*Crónica*, xxvi, pp. 201-3). The Christian origin and recent conversion to Islam by some of Ibn Hafṣūn’s followers can be inferred from their genealogies – for example, Muḥammad ibn Ardhabulish, who was killed by al-Nāṣir’s governor of Calatrava, and his head sent to Cordova for public display (*Crónica*, x, p. 120).

The deaths of Christian rulers and nobles in northern Spain are registered in the same way as those of Muslims (*Crónica*, ix, p. 112; xxi, p. 178; xxiii, pp. 189-90; xxiv, p. 192). No mention is made of Christians in al-Andalus as being *dhimmīs*.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Much like al-Ṭabarī's original, the *Mukhtaṣar* does not appear to be concerned with Christians as religious communities. Rather, it sees them as opponents whose hostility happens to be characterized in part by their religious affiliation. While it touches on matters such as the political and religious problems of the *muwalladūn*, or even social unrest leading to the exceptional incident of the destruction of a church (*Crónica*, xxii, 183), it does not expand on these or set them in a wider context of ongoing interreligious relations.

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## STUDIES

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**Delfina Serrano Ruano**

# Ibn al-Qūṭiyya

Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn  
Ibrāhīm ibn ʿĪsā ibn Muzāḥim

DATE OF BIRTH After 900  
PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown; possibly Cordova  
DATE OF DEATH 977  
PLACE OF DEATH Cordova

## BIOGRAPHY

As is indicated by his *laqab*, 'son of the Goth', Ibn al-Qūṭiyya came from a noble Visigothic family of Seville. He himself says that he was descended from the Visigothic King Witiza. He was educated in Seville and Cordova by some of the most famous scholars of the period, including Qāsim ibn Aṣḥbagh, and he became known as a philologist, jurist and historian. He held a high position in the court of the Caliph al-Ḥakam II, and was present at the proclamation of the caliph's heir in 976, only one year before his own death.

Although Ibn al-Qūṭiyya is known as a historian, he was above all an outstanding linguist, evidenced by his *Kitāb al-afʿāl* ('Verbal paradigms'), and the general praise of his biographers for his knowledge of Arabic grammar and lexicography. He also composed poetry, and wrote a *Sharḥ Risālat adab al-kātib* ('Explanation of the Epistle on the instruction of the secretary'), possibly a commentary on one of the Letters written in the East on that subject.

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WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Ta'riḫ iftitāḥ al-Andalus*, 'The history of the conquest of al-Andalus'

DATE After 977

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

The *Ta'riḫ iftitāḥ al-Andalus* deals with the history of al-Andalus from the early days of the conquest up to the reign of the Caliph 'Abd al-Raḥmān III. It prefaces this with a description of the Iberian Peninsula before the conquest.

This work is thought to be by a disciple of Ibn al-Qūṭiyya, based on notes that contain his views about relations between the Umayyad rulers and their subjects. The various accounts offer a moralizing vision of history, on the principle that the rule given to the Umayyads by God will be preserved as long as they act justly.

SIGNIFICANCE

One of the most important features of the accounts in the *Ta'riḫ* is the author's interest in the non-Arab population of al-Andalus. He refers in some detail to the Visigothic royal family in the early days of Muslim rule and to rebellions of *muwallads*, and mentions that the Christian Ḥaṣṣ ibn Albar al-Qūṭī (q.v.) was judge over the Christians in Cordova.



Ibn al-Qūṭiyya was evidently proud of being a descendant of the Visigothic King Witiza. Despite this, it must be emphasized that, when he gives information about the Christian world, he makes frequent mistakes.

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#### STUDIES

E. Drayson, 'Ways of seeing. The first medieval Islamic and Christian depictions of Roderick, last Visigothic king of Spain', *Al-Masaq* 18 (2006) 115-28

García Sanjuán and Tawfik, art. 'Ibn al-Qūṭiyya'

M. Fierro, 'La obra histórica de Ibn al-Qūṭiyya'

R. Barkai, *Cristianos y musulmanes en la España medieval (El enemigo en el espejo)*, Madrid, 1984, 1991<sup>2</sup>, p. 62

K. Boiko, *Arabskaia istoričeskaia literatura v Ispanii*, Moscow, 1977, pp. 110-14

Chalmeta, 'Una historia discontinua e intemporal (jabar)'

J. Ribera, *Disertaciones y opúsculos*, 2 vols, Madrid, 1928, i, pp. 435-56

E. García Gómez, 'Abenalcotía y Abenházam', *Revista de Occidente* 16 (1927) 368-78

F. Pons Boigues, *Ensayo bio-bibliográfico sobre los historiadores y geógrafos árabe-españoles*, Madrid, 1898, p. 85

*Ibn ʿIdhārī, Al-bayān al-mughrib*, ed. R. Dozy, Leiden, 2 vols, 1848-52, i, pp. 28-30

**Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala**

## The monk Mīnā

DATE OF BIRTH	First half of 10 <sup>th</sup> century
PLACE OF BIRTH	Unknown; probably lower Egypt
DATE OF DEATH	After 978
PLACE OF DEATH	Unknown; probably lower Egypt

### BIOGRAPHY

Little is known about the Coptic Christian author of *The martyrdom of Jirjis* (named Muzāḥim before his baptism as a Christian) other than the little that can be gathered from the text. According to the copy of the Arabic text in Cairo, Coptic Museum – Hist. 469, the author of the martyrdom was one Mīnā, who assures his hearers that he was an eyewitness and a faithful reporter of events (f. 329v). Earlier in the work, a monk named Mīnā had visited the martyr in prison in the Delta town of Damīra, and anointed him for burial (f. 327v). While there is some disagreement concerning the date of the martyrdom, a marginal note in the Arabic text (f. 328v) agrees with the published Ethiopic version (Raineri, *Gli atti*, pp. 46-49) on the date of AM 694 (= 978).

### MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

*Primary* —

*Secondary*

See below

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Maymar jihād al-qiddīs... Mārī Jirjis Muzāḥim alladhī akmalā shahādatahu al-muqaddasa wa-nāl iklīl al-shahāda fī l-yawm al-tāsi* ‘*ashar min shahr Ba’ūna*, ‘Treatise on the striving of St Jirjis Muzāḥim, who accomplished his holy witness and obtained the crown of martyrdom on 19 Ba’ūna’, ‘The martyrdom of Jirjis (Muzāḥim)’

DATE After 978

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

Muzāḥim ibn Jāmi’ was the son of a Muslim Bedouin father and a Coptic Christian mother; his story is set in towns in the Nile Delta. Fascinated since his childhood with his mother’s religion, as a very young man he decided to convert to Christianity. He married a pious Christian girl named Sayūlā, and – despite some difficulties (including, before his marriage, an attempt at auto-baptism) – he was eventually baptized and received the name Jirjis (George).

Almost immediately upon embracing Christianity, Jirjis was denounced to the local authorities in Damīra and was arrested, interrogated, and beaten; his wife was also maltreated. Constrained to flee from town to town, the pious couple was eventually able to enjoy three years of peace and ascetic devotion (in Ṭandatā = Ṭanṭā according to *The martyrdom*; in Saḡ al-Turāb according to the Synaxarion). At the end of this period, however, Jirjis was again seized and hauled before the authorities in Damīra. He patiently bore maltreatment, beatings, and threats, and rejected blandishments intended to induce him away from his Christian faith. *The martyrdom of Jirjis* is full of heavenly visitations in prison, remarkable recovery from injuries, and speeches in which Jirjis confesses his Christian faith. Eventually he was beheaded, on 19 Ba’ūna (13 June in the Julian calendar), probably in 978. Signs and wonders were attributed to his relics, and churches were built in his honor.

It may be worth emphasizing that the saint's name was Muzāḥim, who after his baptism became Jirjis; I have thus spoken of 'the martyrdom of Jirjis (Muzāḥim)'. The form 'Jirjis al-Muzāḥim' that is often seen in the literature is best avoided.

While the work is extant in Arabic, the possibility of the existence of a Coptic martyrdom is not to be ruled out.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

If Arabic was indeed the original language of *The martyrdom of Jirjis* (as seems probable), and if the 10<sup>th</sup>-century date of composition is to be taken at face value, then we are dealing with a very early Arabic-language composition of the Coptic Orthodox Church, contemporary with the work of Sāwīrus ibn al-Muqaffa' (q.v.). The text bears witness to the place of martyrdom in the self-understanding of Coptic Orthodox Christians, and is an example of a literature that contributes to Coptic Orthodox identity by drawing the sharpest possible lines between Copts and Muslims; for example, Jirjis' tormentors are regularly described as *munāfiqīn* (hypocrites) and *ashrār* (evil). In the Ethiopic recension, at least, the story draws sharp lines as well between the 'orthodox' Copts and the Melkites who 'do not truly believe in baptism' (Raineri, *Gli atti*, pp. 14-15).

#### MANUSCRIPTS

Neither Graf nor Wadi list any manuscripts. Copies surely exist in Egyptian churches and monasteries, including a copy at the martyr's church at Busāṭ al-Naṣārā. One other copy that can be reported is:

MS Cairo, Coptic Museum – Hist. 469 (Simaika 96, Graf 712), fols 319r-329v (early 1360s)

See Raineri, *Gli atti*, p. viii, for the MSS utilized for his edition of the Ethiopic version.

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

O. Raineri, *Gli atti etiopici del martire egiziano Giorgio il Nuovo (†978)* (*Studi e Testi* 392), Vatican City, 1999 (critical edition and Italian trans. of the Ethiopic version of the martyrdom)

The Copto-Arabic and Ethiopic *synaxaria* have an entry for Jirjis on 19 Bā'ūna = 19 Sanē; see, for example,

R. Basset, *Le synaxaire arabe jacobite (redaction copte)*, V. *Les mois de Baounah, Abib, Mesoré et jours complémentaires* (PO 17, fasc. 3), Paris, 1923, pp. 578-80

I. Guidi, *Le synaxaire éthiopien*, I. *Le mois de Sanê* (PO 1, fasc. 5), Paris, 1907, pp. 633-36

J. Forget, *Synaxarium Alexandrinum*, 2 vols (CSCO Ser. iii, 18-19), Beirut, 1905 and 1912, ii, pp. 177-78

## STUDIES

Raineri, *Gli atti etiopici del martire egiziano Giorgio il Nuovo*

A. Wadi, art. 'Ĝirġis (Giorgio) al-Muzāḥim', in J. Nadal Cañellas and S. Virgulin (eds), *Bibliotheca sanctorum orientalium. Enciclopedia dei santi. Le chiese orientali*, Rome, 1998-99, ii, 2-3 (with extensive bibliography)

Emile Maher Ishaq, art. 'Jirjis al-Muzāḥim, Saint', in *CE*

Bīshōy 'Abd al-Masīḥ, *Mār Jirjis al-Muzāḥim al-shahīd*, Cairo, 1982

'A new martyr. St George the Egyptian', *Coptic Church Review* 3 (1982) 75-77 (précis of *The martyrdom of Jirjis*, from the manuscript copy at the martyr's church at Busāṭ al-Naṣārā. An editorial note at p. 50 also refers to the publication of *The martyrdom* in Alexandria in 1969.)

**Mark N. Swanson**

## Nazīf ibn Yumn

DATE OF BIRTH	Unknown; early 10 <sup>th</sup> century
PLACE OF BIRTH	Unknown
DATE OF DEATH	Maybe towards 990
PLACE OF DEATH	Possibly Baghdad

### BIOGRAPHY

Abū ‘Alī Nazīf ibn Yumn is variously identified in the primary sources as *al-mutaṭabbib* (the medical practitioner), *al-qass al-Rūmī* (the Melkite priest), and *al-Baghdādī* (from Baghdad). While there is evidence that he practiced medicine for a time in Shirāz (see Nasrallah, ‘Nazīf’, p. 306), sometime after 870 he made his way to Baghdad, where he became a physician to the great Būyid emir ‘Aḍud al-Dawla (r. 879-83) and was appointed to the staff of the ‘Aḍudī hospital. A translator from Greek to Arabic as well as a physician, Nazīf was an active participant in the remarkable cultural life of Būyid Baghdad (see Kraemer, *Humanism*, esp. pp. 132-34): Ibn al-Nadīm knew him personally (and reported on his discovery of the 10<sup>th</sup> book of Euclid’s *Elements*; *Fihrist*, ed. Flügel, p. 256); Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī called him ‘one of our *shaykhs* in Baghdad’ and reproduced an edifying address from him (*Muqābasāt*, ed. Ḥ. al-Sandūbī, pp. 345-46); later, al-Bīrūnī cited him as an authority in an astronomical matter (*Al-qānūn al-mas‘ūdī*, ii, p. 642). Thirteenth-century biographers (al-Qifṭī, Ibn Abī Uṣaybī‘a, Ibn al-‘Ibrī) relate stories about how Nazīf’s presence was taken by patients as a bad omen, but concede his excellence as a translator.

We know nothing of Nazīf’s activity as a priest. As a theologian, we may note that he recommended to his readers the Christological writings of two theologians profoundly influenced by Aristotle, Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī (q.v.) and John Philoponus (Samir, ‘Un traité’, p. 333, reporting on MS Sbath 1001). The fact that the Melkite priest Nazīf could express admiration for the Jacobite Yaḥyā is a concrete witness to the ecumenicity of his thinking, which is also apparent in his *Maqāla fī l-ittihād* (see below).

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

*Primary*

- Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-fihrist*, ed. G. Flügel, Leipzig, 1871-72, p. 256; *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm. A tenth-century survey of Muslim culture*, 2 vols, trans. B. Dodge, New York, 1970, ii, p. 635 (Ibn al-Nadīm received a report directly from Naẓīf ibn Yumn)
- Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, *Al-muqābasāt*, ed. Ḥ. al-Sandūbī, al-Ṣafā, [Kuwait], 1992, pp. 345-46
- Abū l-Rayḥān Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Birūnī, *Kitāb al-qānūn al-mas'ūdī*, 2 vols, Hyderabad, 1954-56, ii, pp. 642-43
- Al-Qiftī, *Tārīkh al-ḥukamā'*, pp. 337-38
- Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *'Uyūn al-anbā'*, i, p. 238
- Ibn al-'Ibrī [Barhebraeus], *Tārīkh mukhtaṣar al-duwal*, ed. A. Ṣāliḥānī, Beirut, 1890, p. 305
- Shams al-Ri'āsa Abū l-Barakāt ibn Kabar, *Misbāḥ al-zulma fī idāḥ al-khidma*, ed. S.K. Samir, Cairo, 1971, p. 305

*Secondary*

- D. Gutas, *Greek thought, Arabic culture. The Graeco-Arabic translation movement in Baghdad and early 'Abbāsīd society (2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries)*, London, 1998, pp. 151-52
- J.L. Kraemer, *Humanism in the renaissance of Islam. The cultural revival during the Buyid age*, 2<sup>nd</sup> revised ed., Leiden, 1992, pp. 132-34 (and see the index)
- S.K. Samir, 'Un traité du cheikh Abū 'Alī Naẓīf ibn Yumn sur l'accord des chrétiens entre eux malgré leur désaccord dans l'expression', *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 51 (1990) 329-43
- Nasrallah, *HMLEM* iii.1, pp. 151-54 (medicine), 166 (philosophy), 177 (translations), 190 (mathematics), 250 (religious controversy)
- J. Nasrallah, 'Naẓīf ibn Yumn. Médecin, traducteur et théologien melchite du X<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Arabica* 21 (1974) 303-12
- Sezgin, *GAS* v, pp. 313-14
- F.E. Peters, *Aristoteles Arabus. The oriental translations and commentaries on the Aristotelian corpus*, Leiden, 1968, p. 49 (notes Naẓīf's translation of Book A of Aristotle's *Metaphysica*)
- Graf, *GCAL* ii, 4-5, 48-49
- Brockelmann, *GAL S* i, p. 387



## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Maqāla/Risāla fī l-ittihād*, ‘Treatise on the Union  
[of divinity and humanity in Christ]’

DATE After June 979

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

Nazīf ibn Yumn was invited to participate in a *majlis* in the presence of the Melkite patriarch and the emir ‘Aḍud al-Dawla (r. 979-83), where he was asked to explain the Christological doctrines of the major Christian communities. Afterwards he wrote an account of his presentation, which al-Mu’taman ibn al-‘Assāl (who reproduced an extract from it) referred to simply as *Maqāla fī l-ittihād*, a ‘Treatise on the Union [of divinity and humanity in Christ]’. This included a detailed presentation of common Christian belief, followed by a section (*faṣl*) on the beliefs of the three major Christian communities. In this section, Nazīf attempts to interpret the Christological teachings of the ‘Melkites’, ‘Jacobites’, and ‘Nestorians’ (i.e., whether Christ is described as one hypostasis in two natures, one hypostasis and one nature, or two hypostases and two natures) *on the basis of their own presuppositions*. As he does so, he finds no fundamental *doctrinal* difference, but rather differences *in terminology* – which, unfortunately, have been exacerbated by pride and the quest for domination.

The complete title of the work is not entirely certain. Sbath (*Fihris* i, p. 66, no. 533) lists *Risāla fī i’tiqād al-Naṣārā fī māhiyyat al-ittihād*, ‘Treatise on the belief of the Christians with regard to the nature of the Union [of divinity and humanity in Christ]’, while Troupeau (*Catalogue*, i, p. 148) lists *Risālā fī l-ittihad ‘alā mā ta’taqiduhu fraq al-Naṣārā al-thalāth*, ‘Treatise on the Union [of divinity and humanity in Christ], according to what the three denominations of Christians believe’.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Nazīf’s treatise is a fine example of an intriguing current in Christian theology in Arabic, for which we have examples especially from the 10<sup>th</sup> century onwards (and of which ch. 8 of al-Mu’taman’s *Majmū‘ uṣūl al-dīn*, which preserves an extract from Nazīf’s treatise, is a monument): *ecumenical* reflection, in which – often under pressure from Muslim questioners – representatives of the different Christian

confessions found ways of stressing their fundamental unity in belief, despite differences in terminology and tradition. Such texts (of which Samir has published several, e.g. 'Al-mufakkirūn al-aqbāṭ') are of remarkable significance for the history of Christian ecumenical theology, as they anticipate theological insights of the modern ecumenical movement by nearly a millennium.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

In addition to the four MSS listed below (of which three are lost), an epitome of the work is preserved in al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl's *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn*.

MS Aleppo – Sbath 1001 (11<sup>th</sup> century; lost, not in the Salem Collection: F. del Río Sánchez, *Catalogue des manuscrits de la foundation Georges et Mathilde Salem (Alep, Syrie)*, Wiesbaden, 2008, p. 335)

MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 173, fols 92r-99r (14<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Aleppo, Quṣṭanṭīn Khuḍarī Collection (inaccessible MS in private collection, now lost; see Sbath, *Fihris* i, p. 66, no. 533)

MS Sbath (MS not further specified, and presumed lost; see Sbath, *Fihris* i, p. 66, no. 533)

For manuscripts of the *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn*, see A. Wadi, *Studio su al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl (Studia Orientalia Christiana Monographia 5)*, Cairo, 1997, pp. 189-92

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

Al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl, *Summa dei principi della religione*, ed. A. Wadi, trans. B. Pirone, 6 vols (*Studia Orientalia Christiana Monographia* 6a-6b, 7a-7b, 8-9), Cairo, 1998-2002, i, ch. 8, §§ 92-101 (critical edition of the epitome in *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn*, with Italian trans.)

Samir, 'Un traité du cheikh Abū 'Alī Naẓīf ibn Yumn, sur l'accord des chrétiens entre eux malgré leur désaccord dans l'expression', *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 51 (1990) 329-43, pp. 338-43 (edition of the epitome in *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn* on the basis of MSS Paris, BNF – Ar. 200 and 201, with French trans.)

Samīr Khalīl [Samīr], 'Maqālat al-shaykh Naẓīf ibn Yumn al-mutaṭabbib fī ittifaq ra'y al-Naṣārā raghma ikhtilāf 'ibārātihim', *Risālat al-Kanīsa* 9 (1977) 107-12 (edition of the epitome in *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn*, on the basis of MSS Paris, BNF – Ar. 200 and 201)

Nasrallah, 'Naẓīf ibn Yumn', pp. 310-311 (French trans. of the epitome in *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn*, on the basis of MS Beirut, Bibliothèque Orientale – 583, pp. 154-56)

## STUDIES

Nasrallah, *HMLEM* iii.1, p. 250

Samir, 'Un traité'

Samīr Khalīl [Samīr], 'Al-mufakkirūn al-aqbāt wa-l-waḥda al-masiḥiyya', *Ṣadiq al-Kāhin* 27 (1987) 456-95; 28.2 (1988) 39-52 (a selection of 'ecumenical' texts from the Copto-Arabic tradition)

Samīr, 'Maqāla'

Nasrallah, 'Nazīf ibn Yumn', pp. 309-12

G. Troupeau, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes. I. Manuscrits chrétiens*, 2 vols, Paris, 1972-74, i, pp. 147-50

Graf, *GCAL* ii, 48-49

*Risāla fī l-tawḥīd wa-l-tathlīth*, 'Treatise on the  
Unity and Trinity [of God]'

DATE Unknown

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

We know nothing of this work beyond its title.

SIGNIFICANCE

Apparently Naẓīf, like many other philosophically sophisticated Christians of his time, wrote an apology for the Christian doctrine of God.

MANUSCRIPTS

MS Aleppo, Quṣṭanṭīn Khudārī Collection (MS in private collection, now lost; see Sbath, *Fihris* i, p. 66, no. 534)

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

Mark N. Swanson

# Al-Jayhānī

Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Naṣr  
al-Jayhānī

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown, probably early 9th century  
PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown  
DATE OF DEATH After 978  
PLACE OF DEATH Unknown

## BIOGRAPHY

Ibn al-Nadīm (*Fihrist*, p. 153) identifies this author as a secretary and vizier to the ruler of Khurāsān. There were three Sāmānid viziers sur-named al-Jayhānī in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, of whom this might be Abū ʿAbdallāh Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr, who lost office in about 922, or Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Naṣr, probably his grandson, who was dismissed in 978. Ibn al-Nadīm apparently means the former because, as well as naming him Abū ʿAbdallāh Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, elsewhere (p. 171), he mentions that a certain Ibn al-Faqīh al-Hamadhānī made use of his geographical work, the *Kitāb al-masālik wa-l-mamālik*, for his own *Kitāb al-buldān*. In the parts of this work that are extant, Ibn al-Faqīh makes no reference to any event after 902-3, so it would appear that he was writing near this time, and that al-Jayhānī must have completed his work earlier.

However, in another place (p. 401) Ibn al-Nadīm lists an al-Jayhānī among the secret *zindīqs*, ‘free-thinkers’, calling him al-Jayhānī Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad and, significantly, placing him alongside al-Nāshī’ al-Akbar (q.v.). From his name, this al-Jayhānī must be the latter. Furthermore, in his *Kitāb al-milal wa-l-niḥal* (pp. 601-16) al-Shahrastānī quotes a long account of Mazdeism on the authority of an unspecified al-Jayhānī, including a date that points to the later 10<sup>th</sup> century (p. 615), possibly 351 or 381 AH (962 or 991; see Monnot and Gimaret, *Livre des religions*, pp. 77-78). If, as seems likely, this is taken from *Kitāb al-ziyādāt fī Kitāb al-Nāshī’ fī l-maqālāt*, its author was clearly alive at this time.

The contradiction between an al-Jayhānī who was active in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century and one who was active in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century is difficult to resolve. One possibility is that Ibn al-Nadīm was mistaken

in attributing the two works to the same author, though maybe the solution put forward by Pellat is as acceptable as any: that the *Kitāb al-masālik wa-l-mamālik* was started by the grandfather and continued by his descendants. This would result in the grandson, who was the author of the *Kitāb al-ziyādāt*, being regarded as the author of the *Kitāb al-masālik* as well as the grandfather.

The latter Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Jayhānī was vizier to the Sāmānid amīrs Maṣṣūr ibn Nūḥ (r. 961-76) and Nūḥ ibn Maṣṣūr (r. 977-97), who dismissed him in 978. If he was the al-Jayhānī who was remembered by al-Muqaddasī (d. after 990) for his inordinate curiosity about people and places of different regions (*Aḥsan al-taqāsīm*, pp. 3-4), it could easily follow that he would have the interest and knowledge to expand such a work as *Kitāb al-ziyādāt*.

Al-Jayhānī’s best-known work, the *Kitāb al-masālik wa-l-mamālik*, ‘Ways and kingdoms’, a multi-volume account of various countries and regions, was used by al-Mas‘ūdī, Ibn Hawqal and Yāqūt, in addition to Ibn al-Faḥīh.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*

Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fī ma‘rifat al-aqālīm*, ed. M. de Goeje, Leiden, 1906<sup>2</sup>

Al-Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-milal wa-l-niḥal*, ed. M. Faṭḥ Allāh Badrān, 2 vols, Cairo, 1947-55; trans. (French) D. Gimaret and G. Monnot, *Livre des religions et des sectes*, Leuven, 1986

### Secondary

C. Pellat, art. ‘al-Djayhānī’, in *EI2*

H. Massé, art. ‘Ibn al-Faḥīh’, in *EI2*

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Kitāb al-ziyādāt fī Kitāb al-Nāshi’ fī l-maqālāt*,  
‘Additions to al-Nāshi’'s book On the Teachings’

DATE Unknown; before about 980

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The work has not survived, and only its title is mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm. It was almost certainly a supplement to the late 9<sup>th</sup>-century work of al-Nāshī' al-Akbar (d. 906) (q.v.), called by its modern editor *Kitāb al-awsaṭ fī l-maqālāt*, on the various Muslim and non-Muslim beliefs known at the time he wrote. That work itself survives only in quotations by the Coptic scholar al-Ṣafī ibn al-'Assāl, and in this fragmentary form comprises sections on dualists, Zoroastrians, Jews, Christians, Muslim groups and ancient philosophers. It does not appear to have been used widely, but it must have had some circulation because Ibn al-'Assāl knew it through a copy made in 923 by Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī (q.v.), presumably in Baghdad.

It is impossible to say what additions or extensions al-Jayhānī made in his *Ziyādāt*, and one cannot even guess whether he added only facts or arguments or both. Al-Shahrestānī's long quotation in the *Milal* of the section on Mazdeism suggests that it was remarkably detailed (unless, of course, much of this is al-Nāshī's lost original). So it would be fascinating to know how al-Jayhānī expanded the section on Christianity that he found in al-Nāshī's work.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Without knowing how he treated the *Kitāb al-awsaṭ fī l-maqālāt*, it is not possible to comment on the significance of al-Jayhānī's *Ziyādāt* for Muslim attitudes towards Christianity at the time and place he wrote. But it is nevertheless clear that he and his audience regarded the variety of Muslim and non-Muslim beliefs known to them as not only of intellectual interest but also important to learn about.

## MANUSCRIPTS —

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

P. de Menasce, 'Le témoignage de Jayhānī sur le mazdéisme', *Donum natalicium H.S. Nyberg oblatum XXVIII mense dec.*, MCMLIV, Uppsala, 1954, pp. 50-59 (French trans. of al-Shahrestānī's quotation from al-Jayhānī)

## STUDIES —

David Thomas

## Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Baṣrī

Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Baṣrī,  
al-Khāghidhī, al-Ju‘al

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown, probably early 10<sup>th</sup> century (dates  
ranging from 902 to 921 are given)

PLACE OF BIRTH Basra

DATE OF DEATH 19 June, 980

PLACE OF DEATH Baghdad

### BIOGRAPHY

Abū ‘Abdallāh was born in Basra sometime early in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. In his youth he came under the influence of Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā‘ī (d. 934) (q.v.), the leader of the Basra school of the Mu‘tazila, and Abū Hāshim’s pupil Ibn Khallād (q.v.), who was his own teacher in Mu‘tazilī theology. He moved to Baghdad and studied jurisprudence. The Mu‘tazilis there, who were opposed to Abū Hāshim’s teachings, greeted him with hostility and he endured a bruising encounter with their leader ‘Alī ibn ‘Īsā al-Rummānī (q.v.) that was well remembered. But he came to know leading government officials, and remained intimate with senior political figures for the rest of his life.

One important friendship made in his later years was with the Būyid vizier al-Ṣāhib ibn ‘Abbād. It was through this connection that he was able to have his pupil ‘Abd al-Jabbār (q.v.) appointed chief *qāḍī* of Rayy (another of his leading pupils was Abū ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Nu‘mān, al-Shaykh al-Mufīd). In the absence of any of his works, ‘Abd al-Jabbār is one of the chief sources of his teachings.

Abū ‘Abdallāh’s nickname al-Ju‘al, ‘dung-beetle’, also connoting ‘stubbornness’ or ‘persistence’, suggests he was a colorful character. Whatever truth is contained in the stories about his social climbing, religious skepticism and questionable morals that are told by his opponent Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (see Kraemer, *Humanism*, pp. 178-91, and index) may help to cast light on this.

The titles of 20 works by Abū ‘Abdallāh are known. The works on theology included refutations of the philosophical doctrine of the

eternity of the world, a refutation of Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī’s (q.v.) major treatise, *Kitāb al-mūjiz*, and criticisms of ideas expressed by various Mu‘tazilīs. None of the sources suggest that he established distinctive teachings, but he remained a faithful follower of Mu‘tazilī doctrines as propounded by Abū Hāshim.

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- Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, pp. 222, 261
- ‘Abd al-Jabbār, ‘Faḍl al-ī‘tizāl wa-ṭabaqāt al-Mu‘tazila wa-mubāyanatuhum li-sā‘ir al-mukhālifīn’, in *Faḍl al-ī‘tizāl wa-ṭabaqāt al-Mu‘tazila*, ed. F. Sayyid, Tunis, 1974, pp. 325-28
- Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta‘riḫ Baghdād*, viii, pp. 73-74
- Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭabaqāt al-Mu‘tazila*, pp. 105-6

### Secondary

- G.S. Reynolds, *A Muslim theologian in the sectarian milieu. ‘Abd al-Jabbār and the Critique of Christian origins*, Leiden, 2004, pp. 46-48, and see index
- M. Heemskerk, *Suffering in the Mu‘tazilite theology. ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s teaching on pain and divine justice*, Leiden, 2000, pp. 32-35
- J. Kraemer, *Humanism in the renaissance of Islam*, Leiden, 1986, see index
- J.R.T. Peters, *God’s created speech*, Leiden, 1976, see index
- H. Busse, *Chalif und Grosskönig*, Beirut, 1969, pp. 439-41
- Iḥsān ‘Abbās, ‘Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī wa-‘ilm al-kalām’, *Al-Abḥath* 19 (1966) 189-207, pp. 198-200

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

### *Kitāb al-īdāh*, ‘Clarification’

DATE Unknown, before 980

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

### DESCRIPTION

The work has not survived, and almost nothing is known about it.

Abū ‘Abdallāh’s pupil ‘Abd al-Jabbār lists it in his *Tathbīt*, p. 198) among refutations of Christianity, alongside works by al-Jāḥiẓ (q.v.),



al-Iskāfī (q.v.), Ibn al-Ikhshīd (q.v.), Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq (q.v.), Abū 'Alī (q.v.) and Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā'ī (q.v.), and Ibn Khallād (q.v.). He points out that the refutation was contained in the *Īdāh* (*wa-fi l-Īdāh li-Abī 'Abdallāh al-Baṣrī*), indicating that this work was not solely a polemic against Christianity. It can therefore be surmised that the *Īdāh* was a systematic treatise of some kind, possibly an exposition of the five principles of the Mu'tazila, accompanied by examinations and refutations of claims that challenged these, such as the Christian doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation. If so, it would have resembled Ibn al-Ikhshīd's earlier *Kitāb al-ma'ūna fi l-uṣūl* in structure, and anticipated the extensive treatises of al-Bāqillānī (q.v.) and 'Abd al-Jabbār himself.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

As an example of an integrated systematic theology which incorporated refutations (if the surmise above approaches the truth), the *Īdāh* exemplifies the growing trend among Muslim theologians in the 10<sup>th</sup> century to use Christian and other doctrines primarily for the purpose of demonstrating the correctness of Islam by showing how alternative forms of doctrine are logically unviable. In this structure Christianity is no longer the religious teachings of a community of believers, but a series of propositions that can be subjected to scrutiny outside any creedal context.

Made to function within such a structure, Christian doctrines were clearly no longer seen as rivals that might threaten Islamic equivalents but as examples that by their incoherence illustrated the soundness of the Islamic faith.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

**David Thomas**

# John of St Arnoul

DATE OF BIRTH	Unknown; early 10 <sup>th</sup> century
PLACE OF BIRTH	Unknown
DATE OF DEATH	Unknown; most likely 984
PLACE OF DEATH	Metz

## BIOGRAPHY

Little is known of the life of John of St Arnoul, and it was only with the appearance of Mabillon's edition of the *Vita Iohannis* that authorship of the work was ascribed to John. Some evidence concerning the author's identity and life is revealed in the *Vita* itself. Although his birth date and the events of his early life are unknown, John very probably entered the monastery of Gorze, where he met the hero of his work and developed a friendship with him, since he seems to have been an eye witness of many of the events he records in his work. In 960, John probably moved to the abbey of St Arnoul, and in 967 he became abbot there, most likely continuing the introduction of the customs of Gorze. In 978, John began his life of John of Gorze, but preliminary work may have been done shortly after John of Gorze's death in 974. Work on the *Vita* continued until John's death in 984.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

*Historia sancti Arnulfi*, MGH *Scriptores* 24, p. 544

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### Secondary

A. Wagners, 'La vie culturelle à Gorze au X<sup>e</sup> siècle d'après la Vita de Jean de Gorze et la catalogue de la bibliothèque', in M. Parisse and O. Gerhard (eds), *L'abbaye de Gorze au X<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Nancy, 1993, 213-31

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## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Vita Iohannis abbatis Gorziensis*, 'Life of John abbot of Gorze'

DATE 978-84

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Latin

## DESCRIPTION

The subject of the *Vita*, John of Gorze (c. 900-74), was an important monastic reformer and abbot in Lorraine. He was born at Vandières, south of Metz in the Moselle valley, to a wealthy landowner. He was sent to study first at a school in Metz and then at the Benedictine monastery of St Mihiel. In 933, he was appointed with six others to reform the monastery of Gorze. John introduced important reforms at the monastery, which would spread throughout Germany, and laid the foundation for an important monastic reform movement. In 953, he was sent as an ambassador to 'Abd al-Raḥmān III in Cordova and spent three years in Spain before returning to Germany, possibly with an important collection of manuscripts. In 967, John became abbot of Gorze and served in that office until his death in 974.

In the final part of the *Vita* of John (6:115-36), the author describes the abbot's embassy to the Spanish Umayyad caliph in 953. The Emperor Otto I had received an embassy from the caliph, who was impressed by the German ruler's success and sought his friendship. The caliph sent gifts, and also letters, which contained blasphemous passages that enraged Otto. The emperor decided to respond with his own mission to Spain and appointed John of Gorze to lead it. The purpose of both embassies may have been to forge an alliance against a common foe, the pirates of La Garde-Freinet.

John made the journey to Cordova and was welcomed by a period of imprisonment, in response to the delays imposed on the caliph's ambassadors to the emperor. Bearing gifts from the emperor as well as a letter that was offensive to Islam, John received advice on how to approach the caliph from a number of visitors, including Hasdai ibn Shaprut, a Spanish Jew sent by 'Abd al-Raḥmān. Hasdai discussed court etiquette with John and learned of the nature of the mission and the contents of the letter. He informed John that it would be dangerous to approach the caliph with the letter and discussed the harsh punishment in store for John if he delivered it (6:121).

John also had an encounter with a certain Bishop John, possibly of Cordova, who also encouraged John not to deliver the letter (6:122), explaining the precarious status of Christians in al-Andalus. Bishop John noted that, because of their sins, the Christians in Spain were forced to endure the rule of the pagans. They could practice their faith but were forbidden by the Apostle Paul to oppose secular powers. Consequently, the Christians offered their services to the caliph and followed his laws. The bishop also explained that, should the contents of the letter be revealed to the caliph, it would anger him and lead to the death of all the Christians in Spain. The abbot, however, refused to abandon his mission and rejected the bishop's contention that he would be responsible for the deaths of the Spanish Christians. Indeed, John of Gorze believed that he and the other Christians would be welcomed into heaven as martyrs (6:123).

John's mission was ultimately rewarded with a meeting with the caliph. Before his audience, he was able to deliver a letter, most likely revised, which did not provoke the caliph's wrath; instead he gave it to his council to review. The caliph also decided to send another ambassador to the imperial court in Germany and chose Recemund, bishop of Elvira, to fulfil this task. Finally, John met with 'Abd al-Raḥmān after receiving further advice on court ritual and dress, though preferring not to change out of his monk's habit. The caliph welcomed him, expressed admiration for him and offered apologies for the delay. John, who had intended to protest at his treatment, responded with equally warm words. Shortly after the audience, John returned home and reported his experiences to Otto.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The *Vita Iohannis abbatis Gorziensis* reveals an example of benign, in fact, friendly contact between Christians and Muslims in the Middle Ages. Although the diplomatic missions ultimately yielded few positive results, they do reflect efforts at cooperation between followers of the two faiths. The text hints at the respect the Spanish caliph and German emperor had for each other, and possibly their willingness to work together against a common enemy. Despite these positive overtures, the *Vita* also demonstrates the continued lack of understanding between the faiths. Whether intentionally or not, the letters sent by both rulers are said to have included offensive material that can only be understood as remarking erroneously and blasphemously on the other religion. Finally, the *Vita* provides important insights

into relations between Muslims, Christians and Jews in al-Andalus. It shows the subservient status of Christians in Cordova, as well as the willingness of many Christians to cooperate with their Muslim rulers: there is the positive working relationship in the choice of Recemund as 'Abd al-Rahmān's ambassador. The work also reveals cooperation between the Jews of Spain and the Umayyad rulers.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS Paris, BNF – Lat. 13766, fols 49-96 (late 10<sup>th</sup> century)

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A. Angenendt, 'Die Liturgie in der Vita des Johannes von Gorze', in Parisse and Gerhard (eds), *L'abbaye de Gorze au X<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 193-211

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**Michael Frassetto**

# Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī

Abū Sulaymān Muḥammad ibn Ṭāhir ibn  
Bahrām al-Mantiqī al-Sijistānī

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown; about 912  
PLACE OF BIRTH Sijistān  
DATE OF DEATH Uncertain; about 985  
PLACE OF DEATH Baghdad

## BIOGRAPHY

Abū Sulaymān was born in the Persian province of Sijistān sometime in the early 10<sup>th</sup> century. From the little that is known about him, it seems that his first experiences of learning were in the provincial royal court, but as a young man he travelled to Baghdad where he studied under the Christian Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī (q.v.) and, according to some accounts, Abū Bishr Mattā ibn Yūnus. He remained in the capital for the rest of his life, under the patronage of the Būyid Sulṭān ‘Aḍud al-Dawla, until the latter’s death in 983. He practiced as a teacher and participated in intellectual life, and he gradually came to be recognized as a leading philosopher of his day, attracting a number of followers, among them Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī. He was remembered for refusing to debate with the Ash‘arī theologian Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī (q.v.) on the grounds that the Ash‘arīs followed different forms of logic and terminology.

The date of Abū Sulaymān’s death is uncertain. He certainly survived ‘Aḍud al-Dawla, though he had died by the time al-Tawḥīdī wrote his *Muqābasāt*, sometime after 991.

Like his earlier contemporary al-Fārābī (the teacher of Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī) and Ibn Sīnā after him, al-Sijistānī was an exponent of the blend of Neoplatonic and Aristotelian philosophy that was introduced into the Islamic world from the late 8<sup>th</sup> century onwards. As far as can be told, he subscribed to a Neoplatonic scheme in which the One was an unmoved Mover, above all contingency and depiction. The human had the potential to rise beyond the material by associating its intellect with the transcendent Intellect, and its vocation was to withdraw from the passing attractions of the world to seek moral and intellectual improvement.

Only a few of Abū Sulaymān's works are known (see Kraemer, *Philosophy*, pp. 132-35, for a list), and the main source for his thought is his pupil al-Tawhīdī, who records his contributions to discussions within his intellectual circle. The three extant short treatises that are ascribed to him, and his recorded sayings, all reflect the same preoccupation with matters of philosophy, which is also the case with his *Šiwān al-ḥikma*, 'Cabinet of wisdom', a history of the Greek and Islamic philosophers, which only survives in abbreviated forms. This work was probably used by al-Shahrastānī in his *Kitāb al-milal wa-l-nihal*.

### MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

#### *Primary*

See Kraemer, *Philosophy*, pp. 80-131, where the following sources are translated and discussed: Ibn al-Nadīm, Šā'id al-Andalusī, al-Shahrastānī, Muwaffaq al-Dīn ibn al-Maṭrān, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, al-Qiftī, Ibn Abī Uṣaybī'a, al-Ṣafadī, Ḥajjī Khalifa, Yāqūt.

#### *Secondary*

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- J.L. Kraemer, *Philosophy in the renaissance of Islam*, Leiden, 1986, pp. 1-29, and *passim*
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### WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

#### *Kalām fī mabādi' al-mawjūdāt*, 'Discourse on the principles of existents'

DATE Unknown; before about 985

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

This brief treatise is presumably the work to which M. Allard has given the name *Kitāb al-tawhīd wa-l-kathra wa-l-jawhariyya wa-l-uqnūmiyya*,



‘[Divine] unity, plurality, substantiality and hypostaticity’, which is a full description of its contents (‘Les Chrétiens à Bağdād’, *Arabica* 9 (1962) 375-88, p. 385). As G. Troupeau explains in his edition, its author’s name is given in the unique MS as Abū Sulaymān Ṭāhir, and in the copy that is included in the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Coptic scholar al-Mu’taman ibn al-‘Assāl’s (q.v.) *Majmu’ uṣūl al-dīn*, ch. 19, he is named Abū Sulaymān Ṭāhir ibn al-Mantiqī. Together with the characteristic definition of the term *ṭabī’a* that is given both in the text and elsewhere in al-Sijistānī’s recorded sayings (Troupeau, *Traité*, p. 260), this leaves little doubt about overall authorship, though some of the contents raise problems.

The treatise begins with a summary of the cosmological scheme in which the higher powers of Intellect, Soul and Nature emanate from the supreme Essence, which is their origin and First Cause. The attributes by which the Essence is qualified differ in accordance with the ways in which it is seen to be in relation with other existences or understood in itself alone.

The treatise then switches from this Neoplatonic exposition to what ‘other people’ (*min al-nās*), who are evidently Christians, say. According to them, the Essence is one as substrate (*mawḍū’*) and three as attributes (*ṣifāt*), because they qualify it by Life, Knowledge and Power, according to the powers of Intellect, Soul and Nature, and they call these respectively Father, Son and Spirit. The Father is the Essence qualified as Life, which is unique to itself and not united with other beings; the Son is the essence qualified as Knowledge, which is shared by others who have true knowledge of things; the Spirit is the essence qualified as Power, because it is through this that miracles and wonders are made to appear in those who work them. The Life of the Essence is different from the life of other beings.

This exposition, which skilfully and eloquently translates the Neoplatonic model into Trinitarian terms, recalls Christian attempts from the early 9<sup>th</sup> century onwards to explain the Godhead in terms of the Muslim doctrine of divine attributes, according to which the Son and Holy Spirit were routinely portrayed as the Word and Life of the Father. In some versions, the Spirit is portrayed as Power, but what is unusual here is that the Father is portrayed as Life.

Al-Sijistānī then turns to people whom he calls ‘a sect of Christians who discern the truth (*al-muḥaqqiqūn*)’. They say that the Essence is qualified as Intellect, Intellector and Intellected (‘*aql*, ‘*āqila* and

*ma'qūla*), corresponding to Father, Son and Spirit, according to the ways it relates within itself. The Essence is thus one as substance and multiple as hypostases, not both one and many, and it is not absurd to hold this view.

This is the doctrine of al-Sijistānī's teacher, Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, for which he was well known. In contrast with the explanation of the other group, who describe the Essence by the ways it relates to other beings, this presents it according to its own internal relationships.

The treatise can be seen to fall into three parts: a summary of the Neoplatonic definition of the One and its emanations, followed by a definition given by Christians who engaged with the thinking of the *mutakallimūn*, and then Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī's alternative definition. As such, it raises the question of what it was intended to be. Understandably, Troupeau (*Traité*, p. 260), followed by al-Sharfī (*Al-fikr al-Islāmī*), finds it difficult to accept the second and third parts as al-Sijistānī's composition because of the change of conceptual framework (though he might have found this easier if he took into account the fact that, by this time, Muslim theologians would be aware that Arabic-speaking Christians had for many years been employing concepts from the *kalām* to explain the Trinity), while Kraemer attempts to resolve the problem by identifying the latter parts as dictations from Yaḥyā that are transmitted by his Muslim pupil without necessarily showing agreement (*Philosophy*, pp. 134, 305). There are certainly difficulties, but it is not impossible to understand the treatise as a unified explication of forms of Trinitarian teachings based upon philosophical models by a single intentional author, writing in the tradition of works describing the elements of other faiths for a Muslim audience. Its title in the Paris MS supports this, 'Discourse on the principle of existents...and how the Christians characterize it by unity and multiplicity, substantiality and hypostaticity', suggesting a continuity between the philosophical first part and the theological parts that follow. Equally, the transitional sentence that introduces the first Christian definition (*Traité*, p. 269) explicitly indicates equivalence between the terms used in the first and the following parts: 'There are people who characterize it by life, knowledge and power, according to the three faculties (*bi-ḥasab al-quwā al-thalāth*)'. The treatise may thus be seen as an essay in understanding, written by a Muslim who does not necessarily accept the Christian contention that the Trinity is not tritheism, but who seeks to show to others and himself how Christians explain their central doctrine.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The work is an impressively concise demonstration of how Christians defended the Trinity in terms that can be derived from, or at least reconciled with, the philosophical concept of God as the One from whom all existence emanates. It may have been written in order to show that theology and philosophy were part of the same enterprise, though if its author regarded himself as a Muslim, he showed an exemplary degree of insight into Christianity. This may have been possible for a member of an intellectual circle in 10<sup>th</sup> century Baghdad, but it is extremely unusual and difficult to match among either Muslims or Christians of any time.

## MANUSCRIPTS

MS BNF – Ar. 173, fols 99r-101r (14<sup>th</sup> century)

(The text is also found in al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl, *Majmu' uṣūl al-dīn*, ch. 19; for copies of this, Troupeau uses MSS BNF – arabe 103 and arabe 201 [both 13<sup>th</sup> century], and Kraemer in addition uses MS BL – Or. 1644 [18<sup>th</sup> century])

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

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## STUDIES

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Al-Sharfī, *Al-fikr al-Islāmī*, pp. 151-52

**David Thomas**

## Al-‘Āmirī

Abū l-Ḥasan Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-‘Āmirī l-Nisābūrī

DATE OF BIRTH Before 914  
PLACE OF BIRTH Khurāsān  
DATE OF DEATH 992  
PLACE OF DEATH Nishapur

### BIOGRAPHY

Al-‘Āmirī was born in the eastern Islamic world, in Khurāsān, in the early 10<sup>th</sup> century, and lived most of his life there. Of his youth we know only that he studied with the aged Abū Zayd al-Balkhī (d. 934), a polymath and philosopher who had in turn studied with the philosopher al-Kindī (d. c. 870) (q.v.) in Baghdad. This intellectual genealogy is important, as al-‘Āmirī, in his numerous writings, carried on and further developed the eclectic approach to learning, and the active concern to harmonize his philosophy with Islam, that were characteristic of his predecessors, in marked contrast to the more austere (and intercommunal) Baghdad philosophical school represented most famously by al-Fārābī (d. 950).

Probably in the early 960s al-‘Āmirī did venture further west, where for some five years he enjoyed the patronage of the Būyid vizier Ibn al-‘Amīd (d. 970) in Rayy, and became acquainted with the vizier’s librarian, the historian and philosopher Miskawayh (d. 1030). He also visited Baghdad at least twice, but later complained of ill treatment by his colleagues there, who considered him an unsophisticated provincial. By 980 he was back in Khurāsān, and seems to have spent his remaining years in both Bukhara, at the court of the Sāmānids, and Nishapur, dying there in 992.

We have titles for at least 22 works by al-‘Āmirī, but of them only five (or possibly six) are known to be extant. While he did compose some purely philosophical works, including (lost) commentaries on Aristotle’s logic, as well as a reworking of the *Kitāb mahq̄ al-khayr*, itself a reworking of sections of the Neoplatonist Proclus’ *Elements of theology*, his major interest seems to have been in the intersection of Aristotelian-Neoplatonic metaphysics and religion, specifically Islam. His *Al-amad ‘alā l-abad*, for example, attempts to make Aristotelian

psychology palatable to an Islamic audience, arguing that it not only does not conflict with but actually supports Islamic tenets on the human soul and its ultimate fate. His *Taqrīr li-awjuh al-taqdīr* takes a philosophical approach to the theological controversies over determinism and free will. And his *Al-nask al-‘aqlī wa-l-taṣawwuf al-millī*, of which only fragments survive, seems to have been essentially a philosophizing interpretation of Islamic mysticism.

A number of works seem to have been concerned with comparative religion, including his best-known one, *Al-i‘lām bi-manāqib al-Islām*, which argues both for the compatibility of Islamic and secular knowledge and for the superiority of Islam to Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, pagan idolatry, and Greek astral religion (Ṣābianism). While this work focuses especially on comparing the creedal and ritual aspects of the various religions, a lost companion, *Al-ibāna ‘an uṣūl al-diyāna*, seems to have dealt rather with legal and ethical matters. In his *Amad* al-‘Āmirī refers to a third (also lost) work in this genre, *Al-irshād li-taḥqīq al-i‘tiqād*, for a discussion of Magian, Dualist (Manichean), Jewish, and Christian views on the afterlife.

As a comparative religionist (and staunch supporter of Islam), but not a polemicist, al-‘Āmirī does not seem to have made much impact. His views on the relationship of Islam to philosophy were more influential, although he was, relatively speaking, quickly cast into the shade by the premier philosopher of the next generation, Ibn Sīnā.

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## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Al-i‘lām bi-manāqib al-Islām*, ‘Information about the virtues of Islam’

DATE Before 985

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

Running to 136 pages in its printed edition, this work is a programmatic comparison of six religions – Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Greek astral religion (Šābianism), and pagan idol worship – with the intention of demonstrating the superiority of Islam to the others in various areas common to all of them. Individual chapters discuss beliefs, ritual practices, government, societal relations, ethnicity, and scholarship. A series of preliminary chapters offer a classification of the sciences, both religious and secular, and make clear the philosophical nature of the author’s approach (although he does affirm the superiority of the religious to the secular sciences). In an appendix, he defends Islam against four common attacks: its reliance on the sword (*jihād*), its division into mutually hostile sects, its questionable claims for the clarity and miraculous nature of the Qur’an, and its assertion that the advent of Muḥammad was prophesied in the Torah and Gospel (here employing quotations earlier used by ‘Alī al-Ṭabarī).

Of the non-Islamic religions, Christianity receives the most attention, in various contexts. Predictably, the section on beliefs attacks Trinitarianism and the deification of Jesus, while that on ritual practices criticizes the celibacy and excessive asceticism of Christian monks, and attempts to restrict the applicability of ‘turning the other cheek’ to the situation of prophets (including Muḥammad) enduring persecution. In the section asserting the validity of pre-Islamic prophecies of Muḥammad, the author quotes the Gospel of John on the Paraclete (from, he tells us, an Arabic translation from Syriac), and goes on to note that, unlike the Qur’an, the four Gospels limit themselves to the life and sayings of Jesus, while the book of Acts, which he attributes to Simon Peter, is only about Jesus’s disciples, and Paul’s Epistles are full of things that blatantly contradict the Gospels.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The work is notable for its irenic tone. Despite the author's devotion to Islam he is disinclined to engage in polemics. It seems not to have been very influential; only one manuscript of it is known to be extant, and quotations from it in later works are unknown.

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*Al-ibāna ‘an uṣūl al-diyāna*, ‘An elucidation concerning the principles of religion’

DATE Before 985

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic



## DESCRIPTION

The work is not extant. It is mentioned in the author's *I'lām* and his *Amad* (dated 985, which also mentions the *I'lām*). In the *I'lām* (p. 150) he refers to the *Ibāna* for comparisons between Islam and other religions in the areas of human relations and specific prohibitions.

## SIGNIFICANCE

It is impossible to say what this was.

## MANUSCRIPTS —

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

## STUDIES —

*Al-irshād li-taḥqīq al-i'tiqād*, 'Guidance on the verification of belief'

DATE Before 985

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The work is lost, and known only from brief cross-references in al-‘Āmirī's preserved works, which indicate that it dealt with such basic theological topics as the unity and attributes of God, prophethood, rules for Qur'an exegesis, and miracles and magic. It also touched on views of the afterlife in other religions, including Christianity, and contained a description of the religion of Mani as a mixture of Magianism and Christianity.

## SIGNIFICANCE

It is not possible to say what this was.

## MANUSCRIPTS —

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

## STUDIES —

Everett K. Rowson

## Sāwīrus ibn al-Muqaffaʿ

Sāwīrus, bishop of al-Ashmūnayn

DATE OF BIRTH	Uncertain; about 910 or 915
PLACE OF BIRTH	Probably Miṣr (Old Cairo)
DATE OF DEATH	After 987
PLACE OF DEATH	Unknown; possibly al-Ashmūnayn or Miṣr

### BIOGRAPHY

Sāwīrus (or Sawīrus, = Severus), bishop of al-Ashmūnayn, known as Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, was the first major Coptic Orthodox theologian (or at least the first known to us) to write in the Arabic language. Hailing from Miṣr (Old Cairo), he was a government bureaucrat (*kātib*) known as Abū Bishr ibn al-Muqaffaʿ before becoming first a monk and later a bishop.

Four points in Sāwīrus' life are dated. A manuscript notice tells us that he completed a draft of his *Kitāb tafsīr al-amāna* ('Commentary on the Creed') in 950, and that after this draft was lost he rewrote the work, completing the task in 955. According to the *History of the patriarchs*, Bishop Sāwīrus is said to have accompanied Pope Abraʾām ibn Zurʿa, 62<sup>nd</sup> Coptic patriarch (975-78) to a *majlis* of the Fatimid Caliph al-Muʿizz (in Egypt, 973-75), which, if true, could only have taken place in 975. Finally, *Iʿtirāf al-ābāʿ* ('The confession of the Fathers') preserves a letter of the year 987 from Pope Philotheus, 63<sup>rd</sup> Coptic patriarch (979-1003) to his Syrian Orthodox counterpart, which singles out Sāwīrus for mention; possibly he served the patriarch as a theological advisor in its composition.

The *History of the patriarchs* portrays Sāwīrus as an accomplished theologian and author in the Arabic language, as well as a skilled and witty debater capable of defeating Muslim and Jewish opponents, even in the presence of the caliph himself. This portrayal receives added substance from Sāwīrus' own Arabic works, in which we encounter a theologian with a strong background in scripture and the Coptic Orthodox theological tradition; who defended and asserted Coptic Orthodoxy over against the claims of other Christological parties ('Melkites' and 'Nestorians'); who was fluent in Arabic and wrote it

well; who was ready to learn from earlier Christian theologians who had written in Arabic; and who was aware of issues under discussion in the Muslim and Jewish communities of his day, as well as the argumentative methods used by their scholars.

Such was Sāwīrus' reputation as a pioneering Coptic Orthodox writer in Arabic that his name has tended to become attached to Arabic-language works in which he had no role, notably the *History of the patriarchs* (as den Heijer has demonstrated), and probably *Kitāb al-īdāh* ('The elucidation'; q.v.) and *Tartīb al-kahanūt* ('The order of priesthood') as well. However, such deletions from the list of Sāwīrus' works leave plenty for scholars to work with. Already the *History of the patriarchs* (11<sup>th</sup> century) preserves a list of 20 titles attributed to Sāwīrus, while Shams al-Ri'āsa Abū l-Barakāt ibn Kabar (d. 1324) expands this list to 26 in the bibliographical chapter of his *Miṣbāh al-ẓulma*.

While several of Sāwīrus' works will be given separate entries below, they do not exhaust his significance for the history of Christian-Muslim relations. All of his Arabic works are marked, in various degrees, by vocabulary, dialectical methods, and choice of topics that owe much to the Islamic milieu and theological tradition. His *Ṭibb al-ghamm wa-shifā' al-ḥuzn* (rendered 'Affliction's physic and the cure of sorrow' by its editors, Ebied and Young) participates in a philosophical tradition that had already been explored in Arabic by the Muslim philosopher Ya'qūb ibn Isḥāq al-Kindī (q.v.), in his *Risāla fī l-ḥīla li-daf' al-aḥzān* ('The art of dispelling sorrows'; see Griffith, 'The Muslim philosopher al-Kindī'). Works of controversy with other Christian communities, such as Sāwīrus' letter to Abū l-Yumn Quzmān ibn Mīnā, anticipate 'ecumenical' texts in which Christians within the *dār al-Islām*, undoubtedly in response to Muslims' pointed questions about their differences, gained nuance in speaking to and about one another, and strove to present Muslim interlocutors with a theologically united front (see Samir, 'Un traité nouveau', pp. 589-91).

The lists of Sāwīrus' works preserved in the *History of the patriarchs* and in *Miṣbāh al-ẓulma* include a number of unknown or unidentified works, whose significance (or lack thereof) to the history of Christian-Muslim relations cannot always be ascertained from the title. In any event, we must remember that much of Sāwīrus' apologetic energy was taken up by intra-Christian controversy. For example, his book *Al-intiṣār* ('The victory') was probably, judging from allusions to it in the letter to Abū l-Yumn, directed mainly at 'Nestorian' Christians. Sāwīrus was also a bishop, responsible for the Christian growth and

edification of his flock. Thus *Tafsīr al-anājil al-muqaddasa* ('Commentary on the holy Gospels') may have been primarily a work of catechesis; we know that it contained a commentary on the Lord's Prayer. *Al-aḥkām* ('The judgments') may have been a book of moral teaching. Such works have not been chosen for inclusion below; but it goes without saying that intimations of the Islamic context may be found even in the most 'purely' catechetical text. The list of works chosen for individual entries in this volume will undoubtedly need revision as the writings of Sāwīrus become better known.

Of the 12 works by Sāwīrus included below, only four are extant (and, of these, only two fully published). The works are presented in the order in which they appear in the list of Abū l-Barakāt ibn Kabar in his *Miṣbāḥ al-zulma*; the description of each text will begin with its place in that list (e.g., MZ no. 1) followed by its place in the list preserved in the *History of the patriarchs* (e.g., HP no. 1).

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## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

### *Fī l-tawḥīd*, 'On the unicity [of God]'

DATE Unknown; mid or late 10<sup>th</sup> century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

*MZ* no. 1, *HP* no. 1.

This lost work is cited (though whether as a past or a future work is not clear) in the second chapter of *Miṣbāḥ al-ʿaql* (see below), where the reader is referred to it for quotations from Greek sages (Hermes, Plato, Pythagorus, and others) that bear witness to the Trinity. Without a doubt, Sāwīrus' treatment of the Christian doctrine of God engaged the debates of Muslim scholars (including the philosophically inclined) and responded to questions that Muslims (and perhaps Jews as well) regularly posed to Christians.

## SIGNIFICANCE

It is not insignificant that Sāwīrus chooses a key word of Islamic theology, *tawḥīd*, as the title for his treatise. He informs the reader immediately that he intends to engage Islamic challenges to Christian theology directly, in terminology comprehensible to practitioners of the Islamic *kalām*. At the same time, his quotation of ancient Greek philosophers indicates his desire to make an appeal to the philosophically-minded scholars, or *falāsifa*, for whom these were figures of authority.

## MANUSCRIPTS —

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

## STUDIES

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### *Fī l-ittihād*, 'On the Union [of divinity and humanity in Christ]'

DATE Unknown; mid or late 10th century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

*MZ* no. 2, *HP* no. 2.

This work is lost. While the title may refer especially to a topic of Christian intra-confessional disagreement, it is unlikely that Sāwīrus would have ignored Islamic critiques of Christian doctrines about Christ. It is not impossible that this title is a doublet, and that it and *Īdāḥ al-itthād* (see below) refer to one and the same (lost) work.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The proper description of Christ's simultaneous divinity and humanity was clearly an important topic for Sāwīrus, one that appeared in his controversies with representatives of other Christian communities as well as in those with Muslims and Jews.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

*Al-bāhir fī l-radd 'alā l-Yuhūd wa-l-Mu'tazila,*  
 'The dazzling book, in refutation of the Jews and  
 the Mu'tazila'

DATE Unknown; perhaps before Sāwīrus composed *Kitāb miṣbāḥ al-'aql* (see below)

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

MZ no. 3, HP no. 3

In the third chapter of Sāwīrus' *Kitāb miṣbāḥ al-'aql*, there is a reference to a book the author had written in refutation of opponents; a few lines back he had specifically mentioned 'the Jews, Sabellius, and the Mu'tazila' (Samīr, *Miṣbāḥ*, text, p. 30). The reference may be either to the work treated here, *Al-bāhir*, or to the work treated in the next entry, *Al-balīgh*. (It is also possible that both titles refer to one and the same work.) In any event, we see Sāwīrus defending Christian Trinitarian doctrine as a *mutakallim* taking on the Mu'tazila: their reluctance to admit to the entitative reality of attributes such as God's Speech and Life leads, according to Sāwīrus, to the negation of their own confession (that God is 'speaking' and 'living').

## SIGNIFICANCE

The brief glimpse that *Kitāb miṣbāḥ al-'aql* gives us into Sāwīrus' refutations 'of the Jews and the Mu'tazila' reminds us of the sophistication with which he went about his apologetic task. In a manner reminiscent of 'Ammār al-Baṣrī (q.v.), he exploited the Mu'tazilī discourse concerning the ontological status of the *ṣifāt Allāh* in order to make an apology for the Christian Trinity: God as 'Speaking' by his Word, 'Living' by his Spirit.

## MANUSCRIPTS

MS Aleppo, Rūfā'īl Rabbāṭ Collection (inaccessible MS in private collection; see Sbath, *Fihris* i, p. 21, no. 121)

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

## STUDIES

Samīr Khalīl [Samīr], *Sāwīrus ibn al-Muqaffa'* (*al-qarn al-'āshir al-mīlādī*), introduction, pp. 45-46; text, p. 30

*Al-balīgh fī l-radd 'alā l-Yuhūd [wa-l-Mu'tazila],*  
 'The eloquent book, in refutation of the Jews  
 [and the Mu'tazila]'

DATE Unknown; perhaps before Sāwīrus composed *Kitāb miṣbāḥ al-'aql* (see below)

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

MZ no. 4, HP no. 11. See on *Al-bāhir fī l-radd 'alā l-Yuhūd wa-l-Mu'tazila* above.

## SIGNIFICANCE

See on *Al-bāhir fī l-radd 'alā l-Yuhūd wa-l-Mu'tazila* above.

## MANUSCRIPTS —

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

## STUDIES

Samīr Khalīl [Samīr], *Sāwīrus ibn al-Muqaffa'* (*al-qarn al-'āshir al-mīlādī*), introduction, pp. 45-46; text, p. 30

*Naẓm al-jawhar wa-l-durar, fī l-radd 'alā l-qawl*  
*bi-l-qaḍā' wa-l-qadar*, 'The string of jewels and  
 pearls, in refutation of the doctrine of divine  
 determination'

DATE Unknown

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic



## DESCRIPTION

MZ no. 8, HP no. 6.

The work is lost (unless it is to be identified with a work of similar title in MS Beirut, Oriental Library – 589, pp. 1-234; but that work is attributed to al-Shaykh al-Makīn). It appears to have been a defense of human free will and responsibility, over against the deterministic tendencies of some Islamic discourse. (A brief statement of Sāwīrus' view on this matter may be found in *Kitāb miṣbāḥ al-'aql*, ch. 9; see below.)

## SIGNIFICANCE

The title of this work serves as a reminder that the contrast between the Christian patristic understanding of human free will and responsibility on the one hand, and Islamic understandings of God's predetermination on the other, while not a *major* theme of Christian-Muslim controversy, is important and recurs in the literature with some regularity.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES

Graf, *GCAL* ii, p. 316

### *Kitāb al-majālis*, 'Sessions'

DATE Unknown, but after 955 (when Sāwīrus rewrote *Kitāb tafsīr al-amāna*)

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

MZ no. 9, HP no. 7.

In ch. 6 of *Kitāb tafsīr al-amāna* ('Commentary on the Creed'; see Leroy, *Histoire des conciles*, p. 504), rewritten in 955, Sāwīrus mentions the success of one of his arguments (against the charge that Christians had altered the faith of Christ) in a conversation he had with 'a man from among the proficient [Muslim] dialectical theologians' (*rajul min ḥudhdhāq al-mutakallimīn*). He then proceeds to announce that he will report on their conversation in a work to be called *Kitāb al-majālis*. The title suggests that the two men spoke over

several sessions, and one may assume that they covered a wide range of topics common to Christian-Muslim controversy.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The report of a conversation lasting over more than a single session is a literary form that allowed for coverage of a wide range of topics, ordered rather loosely. Well-known examples of the genre include the debate between the Catholicos Timothy I (q.v.) and the Caliph al-Mahdī, and the sessions of Bishop Elias of Nisibis (q.v.) with the vizier Abū Qāsim al-Maghribī. These examples both come from the Church of the East; Sāwirus apparently provided an example from the Coptic Orthodox Church.

## MANUSCRIPTS —

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

## STUDIES

Samīr Khalīl [Samīr], *Sāwirus ibn al-Muqaffa' (al-qarn al-'āshir al-mīlādī)*, introduction, p. 13 and n. 34

*Kitāb tafsīr al-amāna*, 'Commentary on the Creed'; *Kitāb tafsīr al-amāna l-muqaddasa allatī rattabahā l-thalāthamī'a wa-thamāniyata 'ashara usqufan*, 'Commentary on the holy Creed drafted by the 318 bishops [of the Council of Nicaea]'

DATE 955

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

MZ no. 12, HP no. 10.

The work is a presentation of the Council of Nicaea in 10 chapters, where ch. 10 is a phrase-by-phrase exposition of the Nicene Creed. Material of interest to Christian-Muslim relations is concentrated in two chapters. Ch. 6 is a response to the assertion that the 318 bishops of the Council in effect invented and then spread the doctrine of the Trinity, in contradiction to the monotheism (*dīn al-tawḥīd*) of Christ himself (Leroy, *Histoire*, pp. 501-6). In ch. 10, in the course of his commentary on the Creed's phrase 'begotten, not created,' Sāwirus

includes certain Muslim groups among those who, like Arius, claimed that the Word of God was a creature. He names Ibrāhīm al-Nazzām (q.v.) in particular as one who claimed that the Word is a body (*jism*), and the Mu'tazila in general as claiming that the Word is an accident (*'arad*) (Leroy, *Histoire*, pp. 534-46). In each case, Sāwīrus responds using the vocabulary and the argumentative methods of the Islamic tradition (see Davis, *Coptic Christology*, pp. 212-14, 218-19), in the first place to defend the integrity of transmission of the Christian message, and in the second to argue for the eternity of the Word.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Ch. 6 of *Kitāb tafsīr al-amāna* sets out an Islamic suspicion about the development of Christian Trinitarian doctrine with great clarity, and responds in a way that 'veritably brims over with Islamic terms and phrases' (Davis, *Coptic Christology*, p. 212). Ch. 10 is interesting for the way that debate with and among Mu'tazilite theologians could be taken up within the framework of anti-Arian discourse: for Sāwīrus, the debates of the 4<sup>th</sup> century over the ontological status of the divine Word and those of his own day were mutually illuminating.

The scarcity of manuscripts of the work should not lead us to the conclusion that it was simply neglected. Al-Shams ibn Kabar (early 14<sup>th</sup> century) reproduced most of ch. 10, the explanation of the Creed, in his renowned ecclesiastical encyclopedia *Miṣbāḥ al-zulma*; furthermore, the work was among those Copto-Arabic works that traveled up the Nile through their translation into Ethiopic.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS Paris, BN – Ar. 171, fols 14r-84v (1618)

MS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate – Theol. 231 (Simaika 289) (1658)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

L. Leroy (ed.), *Sévère ibn al-Moqaffa', évêque d'Aschmounaïn. Histoire des conciles (second livre) (PO 6, fasc. 4, i)*, Paris, 1911, pp. 465-600 (edition of text from the Paris MS, with French trans.)

See also:

Shams al-Ri'āsa Abū l-Barakāt ibn Kabar, *Miṣbāḥ al-zulma fī iḍāḥ al-khidma*, ed. Samīr Khalīl, Cairo, 1971, pp. 49-58 (a 14<sup>th</sup>-century resumé of Sāwīrus' *Kitāb tafsīr al-amāna*, ch. 10)

- S. Grébaut (ed.), *Sévère ibn al-Moqaffa', évêque d'Aschmounaïn. Histoire des conciles (second livre) (PO 6, fasc. 4, ii), Paris, 1911, pp. 601-39 (edition of the Ethiopic recension of the text, with French trans.)*

## STUDIES

- Davis, *Coptic Christology*, pp. 203-30  
 P. Masri, 'Tafāsīr "Qānūn al-īmān" al-'arabiyya l-qadīma', *Al-Mashriq* 74 (2000) 453-85, pp. 458-63  
 Samīr Khalīl [Samīr], *Sāwīrus ibn al-Muqaffa' (al-qarn al-'āshir al-mīlādī)*, introduction, pp. 44-45  
 Samir, 'Un traité inédit de Sawirus ibn al-Muqaffa'', pp. 164-65  
 Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 308-9

*Kitāb miṣbāḥ al-'aql*, 'The lamp of understanding';  
*Kitāb al-istibṣār*, 'The book of perspicacity'

DATE After 955

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

MZ no. 14, HP no. 14.

Sāwīrus composed *Kitāb miṣbāḥ al-'aql* in response to a request from a Copt who was unable to find a clear summary of Christian teachings with which to respond to opponents (*al-mukhālīfūn li-millatinā*). The work, which only occupies 13-14 leaves in the accessible manuscripts, aims for conciseness; Sāwīrus frequently directs the reader to other books he had written for greater detail. While Muslims are seldom directly mentioned, it is clear from the beginning of the book that they are the 'opponents' that Sāwīrus and his correspondent had in mind. This is apparent, in the first place, from Sāwīrus' vocabulary; students of the work have been struck by the profusion of Islamic terms and phrases (see Ebied and Young, *Lamp*, p. xi; Griffith, 'Kitāb', p. 31; Davis, *Coptic Christology*, pp. 312-13). Particular apologetic motifs quickly make an appearance, e.g. the humanity of Christ as a 'veil' (*ḥijāb*; the word stirs echoes of Q 42:51), or God's sitting upon the Throne (*al-'arsh*, frequently mentioned in the Qur'an) as an anticipation of God's self-localization in the Incarnation.

The Islamic imprint on the work is not limited to vocabulary and particular apologetic ideas, however; 'the faith of the *Qur'an*... even

determines the topics and the order in which they come up for discussion' (Griffith, 'Kitāb', p. 28). The first chapters of the work (after an Introduction) briefly expound, in terms meant to be comprehensible to Muslim intellectuals, the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation (chs 2-5 and 7, according to the numbering in Samīr's edition), while chs 6, 8, and the end of 9 address other points of intersection with fundamental Islamic beliefs: respectively, prophets and apostles; the general resurrection; and human freedom and responsibility. (We may note that in ch. 8 Sāwīrus emphasizes the strictly *spiritual* nature of the joys of the blessed in the hereafter.) Chs 9-13 roughly parallel the 'pillars' of Islamic practice, with brief paragraphs on the confession of God and God's prophets (9), prayer (10), fasting (11), and almsgiving (13); ch. 12 addresses the Christian understanding of days of rest, with a list of the chief dominical feasts and a mention of the commemoration of the martyrs. The remaining chapters address legal matters on which Muslims regularly questioned Christians: prohibited and permitted foods (14), *ḥudūd* punishments (15), and inheritance (16).

#### SIGNIFICANCE

*Kitāb miṣbāḥ al-'aql* is a unique summary of Christian faith set out, one may say, according to a template provided by the faith and practice of Muslims. It appears to be a mature work, in which Sāwīrus can confidently make reference to earlier books. Its value was appreciated by later Copts, as when Bishop Buṭrus of Malīj (13<sup>th</sup> century) quoted from it in his *Kitāb al-burhān* (see Samir, 'Un traité inédit', pp. 173-76, or Samīr, *Sāwīrus*, introduction, pp. 39-42). It is rightly appreciated today, when the existence of two separate editions of the work has made it a convenient point of entry into the study of Sāwīrus' theological and apologetic corpus.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS Wādī al-Naṭrūn, Dayr al-Suryān – Theol. 46 (1280/1)

MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 212, fols 113r-128v (1601)

MS Aleppo, Fondation Georges et Mathilde Salem – Ar. 238 (Sbath 1040), fols 72r-85r (1787/8)

MS Aleppo, Yūḥannā Balīṭ Collection (inaccessible MS in private collection; see Sbath, *Fihris* i, p. 21, no. 119)

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

- S.J. Davis, *Coptic Christology in practice. Incarnation and divine participation in late antique and medieval Egypt*, Oxford, 2008, pp. 292-97 (trans. of Chs 4-7)
- Samīr Khalīl [Samīr], *Sāwīrus ibn al-Muqaffa' (al-qarn al-'āshir al-milādī). Kitāb miṣbāḥ al-'aql (Al-Turāth al-'Arabī al-Masīhī 1)*, Cairo, 1978 (critical edition of the Arabic text on the basis of Paris Ar. 212 and Aleppo, Salem Ar. 238)
- R.Y. Ebied and M.J.L. Young (eds), *The Lamp of the intellect of Severus ibn al-Muqaffa', bishop of al-Ashmūnain*, 2 vols (CSCO 365-366 = Ar. 32-33), Louvain, 1975 (edition from Paris ar. 212, and English trans.)
- [S.]K. Samir, 'Un traité inédit de Sawīrus ibn al-Muqaffa' (10<sup>e</sup> siècle). "Le flambeau de l'intelligence"', *OCP* 41 (1975) 150-210, pp. 201-9 (edition of the Preface from Paris ar. 212, and French trans.)

## STUDIES

- Davis, *Coptic Christology*, pp. 203-30
- S.H. Griffith, 'The *Kitāb miṣbāḥ al-'aql* of Severus ibn al-Muqaffa'. A profile of the Christian creed in Arabic in tenth-century Egypt', *Medieval Encounters* 2 (1996) 15-42 (repr. in S.H. Griffith, *The beginnings of Christian theology in Arabic. Muslim-Christian encounters in the early Islamic period*, Aldershot UK, 2002, no. VIII)
- Samīr, *Kitāb miṣbāḥ al-'aql*, introduction
- Samir, 'Un traité inédit', pp. 150-68
- Graf, *GCAL* ii, p. 316 (no. 12)

## *Īdāḥ al-ittihād*, 'The elucidation of the Union [of humanity and divinity in Christ]'

DATE Unknown, but before Sāwīrus wrote *Kitāb miṣbāḥ al-'aql* or the letter to Abū l-Yumn Quzmān ibn Mīnā

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

MZ no. 20, HP no. 20.

The work is lost, although Sāwīrus cites it in other of his writings. For example, in *Kitāb miṣbāḥ al-'aql*, ch. 5, Sāwīrus recommends *Īdāḥ*

*al-ittiḥād* to the reader who asks questions such as 'Why did [God the Word] become incarnate?' and 'How did the eternal become incarnate in that which is originated?' (Samīr, *Kitāb miṣbāḥ al-ʿaql*, ch. 5, no. 25). We may assume that Sāwīrus' answers to these questions were crafted in such a way as to make sense to an audience informed by the language and concerns of the Islamic theological tradition, in a way similar to what we find in *Kitāb miṣbāḥ al-ʿaql* (see above).

## SIGNIFICANCE

The defense and right understanding of the Coptic Orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation was a matter of exceeding importance for Sāwīrus, as can be seen from the number of works – some preserved and some lost – in which he addressed it.

## MANUSCRIPTS —

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

## STUDIES

Samīr Khalīl [Samīr], *Sāwīrus ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (al-qarn al-ʿāshir al-milādī)*, introduction, pp. 44-45

### *Kitāb al-bayān al-mukhtaṣar fī l-īmān*, 'A brief exposition of the faith'

DATE Unknown; perhaps 940s or 950s

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

MZ no. 24, not in *HP*.

*Kitāb al-bayān al-mukhtaṣar* is a relatively brief work of catechesis and apology that, after an Introduction marked by a sophisticated Arabic style, discusses a variety of matters (see Graf, *GCAL* ii, p. 312, for a list of topics) in a simple fashion often more catechetical in nature than apologetic; this is true of the first and longest chapter, *Fī kayfiyyat al-tajassud* ('How did [God the Word] become incarnate?'). Still, apologetic matters do come to the fore in the three chapters that have been published. Ch. 3 is a standard apology for Christianity as the true religion, similar to those found in the previous century in the works of Theodore Abū Qurra (q.v.), Ḥabīb Abū Rāʿiṭa (q.v.), ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī (q.v.), and Ḥunayn ibn Iṣḥāq (q.v.). Ch. 4 addresses questions that Muslims regularly posed about Christians' confession of Christ's

divinity, given his words and acts of human weakness in the Gospels; for example, we find an explanation of Christ's saying, 'No one is good except God alone' (Mark 10:18, Luke 18:19). (An unpublished appendix to ch. 4 includes a discussion of scriptural anthropomorphisms and the need for non-literal exegesis.) Ch. 5 deals with perceived contradictions in the Gospel accounts, e.g. the differences in the resurrection accounts, or Matthew's and Luke's differing portrayals of the two thieves crucified with Christ. Other chapters also address issues regularly raised by Muslims, e.g. Christian practices as opposed to Old Testament ones (Sunday-observance, baptism, and eucharist, as opposed to Saturday-observance, circumcision, and animal sacrifices; ch. 2); the veneration of icons and the cross (ch. 6), why Christians pray towards the east, without having performed ablutions (ch. 7), or why Christians do not follow the food regulations of the Torah (ch. 10). Ch. 9, on the distinctive practices of the Copts, makes some interesting claims: they practice circumcision because this was agreed upon by 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ and (the Chalcedonian Patriarch Cyril) al-Muqawqaz as a sign of submission and mark of safety during the Arab conquest of Egypt; furthermore, they allow marriage between close relatives (first cousins) because this was preferable to marrying their daughters to the Muslims.

In ch. 4 the author refers to 'our brother, the monk Uṣṭāth' (= Eustathius) and his book (q.v.). In an unpublished thesis, Karam Lamei discovered a long passage in ch. 1 taken directly from *Kitāb Uṣṭāth al-rāhib* (see Swanson, 'Our brother', pp. 133-34, 139-40); indeed, Eustathius' book may even have been the original *Kitāb al-bayān* that provided inspiration and material for Sāwīrus' *Kitāb al-bayān al-mukhtaṣar*. This dependence, as well as the lack of auto-citation, makes one suspect that *Kitāb al-bayān al-mukhtaṣar* is a work of Sāwīrus' youth. There may also be room for questioning Sāwīrus' authorship, but that is a matter best left until we have a good edition of the entire work.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

*Kitāb al-bayān al-mukhtaṣar* addresses a variety of issues that regularly came into Christian-Muslim discussion, and does so in a straightforward and sometimes quite insightful way, e.g. the observations of chs 4 and 5 on scriptural interpretation and how one deals with apparent contradictions in the sacred text. Beyond its content, the work is significant for the history of Christian literature in Egypt: in it we see



an early work of the *Copto-Arabic* tradition that draws on an earlier *Syrian Orthodox* source – as well as an author who was willing to take inspiration and instruction from outside his immediate tradition.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

See Samīr, '*Kitāb al-bayān al-mukhtaṣar fī l-īmān* li-Sāwīrus ibn al-Muqaffa', pp. 161-62, which is the source for the following list of manuscripts:

MS Vat – Ar. 138 (13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Sharfeh, Lebanon, Syrian Catholic Patriarchate – Syr. 9/14 (1590)

MS Rome, Biblioteca Angelica – 9 (17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century; copy of the Vatican MS)

MS Aleppo, Fondation Georges et Mathilde Salem – Ar. 238 (Sbath 1040), pp. 94-143 (1787; chs 1-5 and part of 6)

MS Wādī al-Naṭrūn, Dayr al-Suryān – Theol. 124/2

MS Cairo, Armāniyūs Ḥabashī Collection (inaccessible MS in private collection)

MS Aleppo, Yūhannā Balīṭ Collection (inaccessible MS in private collection; see Sbath, *Fihris* i, p. 20, no. 118)

For five copies of a work entitled *Mukhtaṣar al-bayān fī taḥqīq al-īmān* (which may or may not be the work under examination here), see Sbath, *Fihris* ii-iii, p. 176, no. 2255. The one accessible manuscript in this list would be MS Aleppo, Fondation Georges et Mathilde Salem – Ar. 222 (Sbath 1024), fols 1r- (1796).

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

M.N. Swanson, "Our brother, the monk Eustathius". A ninth-century Syrian Orthodox theologian known to medieval arabophone Copts, *Coptica* 1 (2002) 119-40, pp. 136-40 (translations of brief passages from Chs 1 and 4, as found in the Vatican MS)

Karam Lamei Nasr, *Sāwīrus ibn al-Muqaffa' (al-qarn al-'āshir al-milādī). Kitāb al-bayān al-mukhtaṣar fī l-īmān, al-bāb al-awwal, 'Fī kayfiyyat al-tajassud'*, Cairo, 1995 (BTh thesis, Evangelical Theological Seminary, Cairo; edition of ch. 1 from the Vatican MS)

S.K. Samīr published an edition of the introduction, table of contents, and (most of) chs 3-5 in Egyptian Catholic publications, on the basis of the Vatican MS:

Samīr Khalīl [Samīr], '*Kitāb al-bayān al-mukhtaṣar fī l-īmān* li-Sāwīrus ibn al-Muqaffa', *Risālat al-Kanīsa* 8 (1976) 160-65 (edition of the introduction and table of contents)

- Samīr Khalīl [Samīr], 'Al-bayān 'alā ṣiḥḥat al-Naṣrāniyya, li-Sāwīrus ibn al-Muqaffa', *Risālat al-Kanīsa* 8 (1976) 200-6, 255-60 (edition of ch. 3)
- Samīr Khalīl [Samīr], 'Al-Masiḥ ilāh am insān? li-Sāwīrus ibn al-Muqaffa', *Risālat al-Kanīsa* 8 (1976) 309-16, 371-78 (edition of most of ch. 4)
- Samīr Khalīl [Samīr], 'Hal fī l-Injīl tanāquḍ? li-Sāwīrus ibn al-Muqaffa', *Risālat al-Kanīsa* 8 (1976) 411-17 (edition of the first half of ch. 5)
- Samīr Khalīl [Samīr], 'Ikhtilāf lafẓ al-Anājīl. Dalīl 'alā ṣiḥḥatihā, li-Sāwīrus ibn al-Muqaffa wa-Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, *Ṣadiq al-Kāhin* 24 (1984) 361-77 (edition of ch. 5)

## STUDIES

Swanson, 'Our brother, the monk Eustathius'

Karam Lamei Nasr, 'Sāwīrus ibn al-Muqaffa'

Samīr, '*Kitāb al-bayān al-mukhtaṣar fī l-īmān* li-Sāwīrus ibn al-Muqaffa'

Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 312-13

### *Kitāb al-mithāliyyāt wa-l-rumūz*, 'The book of likenesses and types'

DATE Unknown

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

*MZ* no. 25, not in *HP*.

The title suggests that this lost work may have been a catalogue of Old Testament *testimonia*, that is, passages that were seen to predict or foreshadow the career of Christ, as well as fundamental Christian doctrines and practices.

## SIGNIFICANCE

If the attribution of this work to Sāwīrus is correct, it adds a detail to his intellectual and spiritual profile: among the tools he used was the *testimonia*-catalogue, an ancient apologetic and catechetical genre that, early in the period of Christian-Muslim encounter, had been redeployed by Christian apologists as they crafted arguments for the truth of the Christian religion.

MANUSCRIPTS —  
 EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —  
 STUDIES —

### *Al-durr al-thamīn*, 'The precious pearl'

DATE Unknown; mid or late 10th century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

Not in *MZ* or *HP*.

*Al-durr al-thamīn* is the earliest Arabic-language biblical and patristic *florilegium* (chain of quotations) produced in Egypt. Apart from an opening and closing chapter on the Trinity, its 15 chapters deal with Christological matters and quote extensively from the great Alexandrian church fathers (especially Athanasius and Cyril) as well as the leading theologian of the one-nature Christology, Patriarch Severus of Antioch.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

This work and others like it are important witnesses to one aspect of the enculturation of Christian tradition in the *dār al-Islām*: the tradition is made available to teachers and preachers in a relatively convenient form...*in Arabic*. Sometimes these Arabic translations bear surprising significance for their readers. For example, S. Davis points to Sāwirus' translation of a text of Gregory of Nyssa about the self-emptying of God the Word in the Incarnation: he came to be under human authorities and even paid them tax – translated *jizya*! In this way, the payment of *jizya* (the poll tax levied on *dhimmīs*), frequently a difficult and humiliating aspect of Christian life in the *dār al-Islām*, is interpreted as a participation in the incarnate Christ's humility, which bears within it the hope of future glory (Davis, *Coptic Christology*, pp. 229-30).

#### MANUSCRIPTS

See Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 314-15, and add MS Wādī al-Naṭrūn, Monastery of St Macarius – Theol. 26 (Zanetti 467). This list could undoubtedly be updated and expanded.

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

- P. Maiberger (ed.), *'Das Buch der kostbaren Perle' von Severus ibn al-Muqaffa'*. *Einleitung und arabischer Text (Kapitel 1-5)*, Wiesbaden, 1972 (edition of Chs 1-5; Maiberger completed but did not publish his edition of Chs 6-15)

## STUDIES

- S.J. Davis, *Coptic Christology in practice. Incarnation and divine participation in late antique and medieval Egypt*, Oxford, 2008, pp. 205-9, 221-22, 224-26, 229-31
- Maiberger, *'Das Buch der kostbaren Perle'*, pp. 1-150
- Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 313-15
- G. Graf, 'Zwei dogmatische Florilegien der Kopten. A. Die Kostbare Perle', *OCP* 3 (1937) 49-77

**Mark N. Swanson**

## Al-Ḥasan ibn Ayyūb

DATE OF BIRTH	Unknown
PLACE OF BIRTH	Unknown
DATE OF DEATH	Unknown, before 990
PLACE OF DEATH	Unknown

### BIOGRAPHY

Al-Ḥasan ibn Ayyūb is known for one work alone, and apart from this few further details about him have survived.

Ibn al-Nadīm mentions him in the *Fihrist* (p. 221) among 'the Mu'tazila about whom nothing is known' (*al-Mu'tazila mimman lā yu'rafu min amrihi ghayra dhikrihi*), and says that one of his works was a refutation addressed to his brother 'Alī ibn Ayyūb, which was an exposition of the weakness of Christian teachings and a confirmation of the prophethood of Muḥammad .

Ibn Taymiyya (q.v.), who quotes extensively from the work, restates some of this and adds that al-Ḥasan wrote his refutation as a letter to explain to his brother why he had converted from Christianity to Islam (*Al-jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ*, ii, p. 312), and that al-Ḥasan was one of the great Christian scholars, whose account of Christian beliefs was more accurate than those of others (*Al-jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ*, iii, p. 3).

These brief details serve to indicate that al-Ḥasan was a convert from Christianity to Islam and was associated with the Mu'tazila, and that his work was both an attack on Christianity and a defence of Islam. Since Ibn al-Nadīm admits he knows little about him, and other Christian and Muslim sources are silent, Ibn Taymiyya's much later remarks about his intellectual stature must be taken as supposition.

Al-Ḥasan must have lived before the *Fihrist* was completed in about 990, and Ibn al-Nadīm's mentioning him together with other authors from the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century suggests that he was active at about this time. This date is supported by the fact that some of the arguments al-Ḥasan uses in his refutation are close to arguments used by the 10<sup>th</sup>-century theologians al-Māturīdī (d. 944) (q.v.) and al-Bāqillānī (writing before 975) (q.v.), and may derive from the same source (Thomas, 'Miracles of Jesus', pp. 229-32).

Ibn al-Nadīm clearly thought al-Ḥasan was a Muʿtazilī, and Sepmeijer (pp. 20-21) documents this from some of the terms al-Ḥasan employs, though there is nothing strong enough in what he writes to offer a final proof. The absence of al-Ḥasan's name from *ṭabaqāt* works suggests that he was certainly not prominent among the Muʿtazila.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*

Ibn Taymiyya, *Al-jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ li-man baddala dīn al-Masīḥ*, 4 vols, Cairo, 1905

### Secondary

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F. Sepmeijer, *Een weerlegging van het Christendom uit de 10e eeuw. Der brief van al-Ḥasan b. Ayyūb aan zijn broer 'Alī*, Kampen, 1985 (Diss. Free University of Amsterdam)

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Kitāb ilā akhīhi 'Alī ibn Ayyūb fī l-radd 'alā l-Naṣārā*, 'A work to his brother 'Alī ibn Ayyūb in refutation of the Christians'; *Radd 'alā l-Naṣārā*, 'Refutation of the Christians'; *Risāla ilā akhīhi 'Alī ibn Ayyūb*, 'A letter to his brother 'Alī ibn Ayyūb'

DATE Unknown, before 990

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

### DESCRIPTION

The work has not come down intact. It is quoted in al-Ḥasan's name by Ibn Taymiyya (q.v.) in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, though the latter omits the introductory *khutba* and interposes his own comments and arguments, as well as appearing to excerpt it in order to suit it to his purposes in his own work. In particular, he includes nothing from the arguments in confirmation of the prophethood of Muḥammad that Ibn Nadīm says formed part of the original. Comparison between

these extensive quotations in Ibn Taymiyya and *Al-naṣīḥa l-imāniyya fī faḍīḥat al-milla l-Naṣrāniyya* of Naṣr ibn Yaḥyā (q.v.) shows that this 12<sup>th</sup>-century convert from Christianity also used parts of the *Radd*, which he integrated into his own arguments without mentioning al-Ḥasan.

F. Sepmeijer has produced an edition that combines the quotations from Ibn Taymiyya with what he identifies as continuations in Naṣr ibn Yaḥyā to restore what he regards as the original four-part structure of the *Radd*. Whether he has succeeded in singling out genuine passages from al-Ḥasan must remain an open question until his methods and the works themselves are examined closely, though M. Accad, for one, expresses doubts that he has (pp. 43-44).

According to the quotations in Ibn Taymiyya, the *Radd* was largely concerned to prove that Jesus was not divine. It begins with an exposition and refutation of the various Christologies, and then, employing arguments from the *Radd 'alā l-Naṣārā* of the 9<sup>th</sup>-century convert 'Alī l-Ṭabarī (q.v.), it criticizes the Creed and teachings connected with it. Next, it discusses the evidence for and against Christ's divinity, including his miracles and titles, and shows with the assistance of Gospel quotations that none of this offers a final proof.

From here, the argument moves on to the Trinity, showing in proofs similar to those given by al-Nāshī l-Akbar (q.v.) and Abū 'Alī l-Jubbā'ī (q.v.) that there must be more than three hypostases and that they must be individual divinities. He supports what he says with further biblical verses, and rounds off his argument with a proof that Christ was a creature (again borrowed from 'Alī l-Ṭabarī) and an examination of ambiguous verses in the Gospels and the differences between the Christian sects.

Following Sepmeijer's reconstruction, the *Radd*, according to its introductory statement (*Een weerlegging*, pp. 125 [text], 35 [trans.]), comprised four main parts: the teachings and beliefs of the Christians; contradictions and differences between their teachings; claims based upon the miracles of Jesus; and proofs for the prophethood of Muḥammad from the Torah and Gospel. Whether this and the passages incorporated by Sepmeijer into Ibn Taymiyya's version reflect the original will only be decided after further investigation.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

A significant feature of the *Radd* is its use of parts of 'Alī al-Ṭabarī's earlier refutation and of arguments that appear in other works from the early 10<sup>th</sup> century. This suggests a vibrant tradition of anti-Christian

polemic among Muslims at this time, and a free flow of material and ideas they would find useful against Christians.

The *Radd* attests to the unusually detailed knowledge of both Christianity, which a former Christian might be expected to possess, and Muslim theological arguments, which he had clearly acquired since his conversion. Above all, it eloquently shows how easily a convert could abandon his own beliefs and not only pick up polemical points from his new fellow-believers, but also acquire the Qur'an-based conceptual framework about the nature of Christianity and its relationship with Islam that had been established among Muslims.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

Ibn Taymiyya, *Al-jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ li-man baddala dīn al-Masīḥ*, ed. 'Alī ibn Ḥasan ibn Nāṣir, 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Ibrāhīm al-'Askar and Ḥamdān ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥamdān, 7 vols, Riyāḍ, 1999, iv, pp. 88-145, 158-82

Sepmeijer, *Een weerlegging van het Christendom uit de 10e eeuw*, pp. 124-210 (text reconstructed on the basis of Ibn Taymiyya and Naṣr ibn Yaḥyā), pp. 33-101 (Dutch trans.)

H. Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam*, Paderborn, 1962, pp. 269-71, 283-96, 316-17 (paraphrases in German of selected passages)

Ibn Taymiyya, *Al-jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ li-man baddala dīn al-Masīḥ*, 4 vols, Cairo, 1905, ii, pp. 312-45, 352-63, iii, 2-3

STUDIES

M. Accad, *The Gospels in the Muslim and Christian exegetical discourse from the eighth to the fourteenth century. A thematic and chronological study of Muslim and Christian (Syriac and Arabic) sources of the crucial period in the history of the development of Arab Christianity*, Oxford, 2001 (Diss. University of Oxford)

Sepmeijer, *Een weerlegging van het Christendom uit de 10e eeuw*, pp. 10-20

Al-Sharfi, *Al-fikr al-Islāmī*, pp. 148-49, and see index

I. di Matteo, *La divinità di Cristo e la dottrina della Trinità in Maometto e nei polemisti musulmani*, Rome, 1938, pp. 17-22

E. Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum im Mittelalter*, Breslau 1930, p. 15



# Ibn Bābawayh

Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Ḥusayn ibn  
Bābawayh al-Qummī, Ibn Bābūya, al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown; possibly 923  
PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown, maybe Khurāsān  
DATE OF DEATH 991-92  
PLACE OF DEATH Rayy

## BIOGRAPHY

Although he is regarded as one of the major Shī'ī theologians and *muḥaddiths*, few details about Ibn Bābawayh's life are known. Ibn al-Nadīm says that he was the son of an acknowledged Shī'ī authority, which would explain his own learning and that of his two brothers. In the 960s and 970s he lived in Baghdad and Kufa, and further east in Nisabūr and Ṭūs, where he wrote and taught; he composed his important collection of Shī'ī Hadiths in Balkh in the early 980s. Soon after this he was invited by the Būyid emīr Rukn al-Dawla (d. 976) to Rayy, and he represented the ruler in controversies. But he could not withstand the opposition of Mu'tazilī opponents, and he was forced out of public life by the pro-Mu'tazilī vizier al-Ṣāhib ibn 'Abbād.

This reversal is indicative of the difficulties that Ibn Bābawayh encountered in consequence of the intellectual position he favored, preferring the teachings of the Imāms to *kalām* rationalism. While not avoiding logical proofs (the debate between Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam and the patriarch described below is an example of this), he tended to refer to sayings from the Imāms as final authorities.

Ibn Bābawayh was a prodigious author, though the precise number of works attributed to him varies between just over 40 (al-Ṭūsī) to more than 300 (Dodge). Of these only a few have survived, including works on theology and the Shī'ī Imāms. His most significant work is the collection of Shī'ī Hadiths, *Man lā yahḍuruḥu l-faqīh*, which is recognized as one of the four authoritative Shī'ī collections.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

*Primary*

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*Secondary*

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W. Madelung, 'Imāmism and Mu'tazilite theology', in T. Fahd (ed.), *Le shī'isme imāmīte*, Paris, 1979, 13-30, pp. 17-20

M.J. McDermott, *The theology of al-Shaikh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022)*, Beirut, 1978, pp. 53-56, 315-69 (outlines Ibn Bābawayh's general position on the relationship between theology and tradition, with frequent references to *Kitābal-tawhīd*)

B. Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm*, 2 vols, New York, 1970, p. 487

M.M. Ḥasan al-Kharasān (ed.), *Uyūn akhbār al-Riḍā*, 2 vols in 1, Najaf, 1970, i, pp. 5-24

A.A. Fyzee, *A Shiite creed*, Oxford, 1942, pp. 6-17

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Kitāb al-tawhīd*, [Divine] unity

DATE Unknown; before 991-92

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

Although written in the same general period as the *Kitāb al-tamhīd* of al-Bāqillānī (q.v), Ibn Bābawayh's *Kitāb al-tawhīd* differs entirely. For

while the Sunnī theologian's treatise is a rigorously argued systematic presentation of Ash'arī doctrines, the Shī'ī theologian's treatise relies for answers to questions of faith and doctrine upon the teachings of the Shī'ī Imāms. Two chapters, both purporting to be reports of dialogues, are concerned with relations between Imāms and Christians, and they reveal a great deal about early Muslim knowledge of Christianity and Christian attitudes. (It should be noted that the second also appears in Ibn Bābawayh's earlier composition *Uyūn akhbār al-Riḍā*, ed. Kharasān, i, pp. 126-44, and both chapters are quoted in Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-anwār*, x, ed. J. al-'Alawī and M. al-Akhwandī, Tehran, s.d., pp. 234-39 and 299-307. Textual variants are noted by Thomas, 'Two Muslim-Christian debates'.)

The first of these chapters, entitled 'The refutation of those who say that God is the third of three, and that there is only one God' (ch. 37), reports an encounter that supposedly took place in the Baghdad market of al-Karkh between a patriarch named Bariha and the early Shī'ī thinker Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam (d. 796). The two debate the relationship within the Trinitarian Godhead between the Father and the Son, and Hishām is able to reduce Bariha to embarrassed silence. Cowed and uncertain about his own beliefs, the patriarch later returns to Hishām to ask him about his spiritual and intellectual guide, and Hishām describes to him the character of the Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (d. 765). Bariha recognizes that this is the one he has been looking for, and the two travel to Medina where Bariha becomes a Muslim and a follower of the Imāms. These details would seem to date the debate between about 760, when the capital was being established at Baghdad and Hishām is known to have moved there, and 765, when Ja'far died.

The second, entitled 'The report of the encounter (*majlis*) between al-Riḍā 'Alī ibn Mūsā (peace be upon them both) and the religious leaders and representatives of theological opinion . . . before al-Ma'mūn' (ch. 65), contains a rather longer account of a debate between the eighth Imām and an unnamed Christian patriarch as part of a formal session arranged for the caliph in which the Imām also debates with leaders of the Jews, Sabaeans, Magians, Zoroastrians, Greek philosophers and Muslim theologians. After details of the circumstances in which the debate was held (in the months after March-April 817, when al-Riḍā came to join al-Ma'mūn at Merv), the Imām begins by compelling the patriarch to agree that Muḥammad is foretold in

the Gospel of John, and then proceeds to compare the miracles of Jesus with those of other prophets (including one that Muḥammad performed through ʿAlī) to prove that they are not evidence of his divinity; he then recites a series of verses from the Old and New Testaments, which he interprets as predictions of Muḥammad (including a subtly altered version of Psalm 149:1, 2, 6 and 7, which depicts the coming of the Muslim community; Isaiah 21:7, the rider on the ass and the rider on the camel; and John 20:17, in which Jesus places himself on the same level as the disciples, combined with John 14:26, 15:26 and 16:5-8, the Paraclete verses); and finally he shows that the historical Gospels are no more than approximate reconstructions of the lost original and that they contain questionable claims about Jesus. The patriarch is finally reduced to silence and retires from the debate.

While details contained in both chapters appear to fix the dates of the meetings with some precision, neither as it stands can be accepted as historical. The dramatic elements and artistic shaping of both stories reveal that they have been fashioned to demonstrate the supreme knowledge and virtue of the Imāms who are portrayed in them. But though it is unsafe to date them as they are to the early Abbasid years in which they are set, rather than to Ibn Bābawayh's own time as his own possible composition, it cannot be ruled out that some of the arguments in them date back to the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. Parallels in surviving works from earlier times suggest that both chapters contain amalgams of what had become conventional debating points, while the often confused form in which these appear suggests they were preserved in Muslim literary sources that were no longer connected with active interreligious debate, where their inaccuracies would readily be exposed.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

As in Sunnī systematic theologies from this period, where the primary purpose of refutations of the doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation is to demonstrate that Islamic monotheism is the only correct doctrine, so here the primary purpose of the refutations in these two chapters is to show the intellectual superiority of Shīʿī Islam and the higher knowledge of its Imāms about the true nature of Christianity. The polemical refutation of Christianity is incorporated into the larger apologetic purpose of establishing the soundness of Islamic beliefs.

The confused form of many of the arguments and biblical quotations in these chapters indicates that contact with active debate has

been lost (though disruption in the course of transmission is not to be ruled out), but they nevertheless preserve intriguing insights into the constituents of polemical exchanges from earlier times, and also into the kind of information about Christian scripture and history that was remembered by Muslims.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

A full list of the 11 known manuscripts is given by Sezgin, *GAS* i, p. 549. These date from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

L. Zaynab Morgan and Ali Peiravi (eds), *Source of traditions on Imam Reza. Uyun akhbar al-Reza*, Qom, 2006

M. 'Alī Sultānī, *Al-tawhīd dar bayān-i yagānagī-i khudāvand*, Tehran, 2005 (Persian trans.)

D. Thomas, 'Two Muslim-Christian debates from the early Shī'ite tradition', *JSS* 33 (1988) 53-80, pp. 54-60, 65-75 (trans. of the two debates)

*Al-tawhīd li-l-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq*, Mashhad, 1987-88

'*Uyūn akhbār al-Riḍā li-l-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq*, Mashhad, 1987-88

'*Uyūn akhbār al-Riḍā*, ed. Ḥusayn al-Ālamī, Beirut, 1984

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#### STUDIES

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S. Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew. The problem of symbiosis under early Islam*, Princeton NJ, 1995, pp. 113-16

Thomas, 'Two Muslim-Christian debates'

(*Sharḥ Tawhīd al-Ṣadūq li-l-Qāḍī Sa'īd Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Muḥīd al-Qummī*, ed. Najafqulī Ḥabībī, 2 vols, Tehran, 1994-98, is a commentary on the *Kitāb al-tawhīd* by one of Ibn Babawayh's most famous students. See also Ni'mat Allāh al-Mūsawī al-Jazā'irī [d. 1700], *Nūr al-barāhīn, aw Anīs al-wahīd fī sharḥ al-tawhīd*, ed. M. al-Rajā'ī, 2 vols, Qom, 1996-97)

# Al-Rummānī

Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn ‘Īsā ibn ‘Alī ibn ‘Abdallāh  
al-Rummānī, al-Ikshīdī

DATE OF BIRTH 909

PLACE OF BIRTH Baghdad

DATE OF DEATH 994

PLACE OF DEATH Baghdad

## BIOGRAPHY

Abū l-Ḥasan al-Rummānī moved at the centre of Baghdad intellectual and cultural life in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. He was an expert in jurisprudence, and served as judge in an area of the capital, though he was recognized above all for his knowledge of Arabic language. As a young man, he witnessed the famous debate held in 932 on the merits of logic and grammar between the Christian philosopher Abū Bishr Mattā ibn Yūnus and the philologist Abū Sa‘īd al-Sirāfi, and he went on to compose works on the important grammarians Sibawayh and al-Mubarrad, as well as on the style of the Qur’an as proof of its inimitability.

He was a Mu‘tazilī and a follower of Ibn al-Ikshīd (d. 938) (q.v.), the main opponent of the teachings of Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā‘ī (d. 933) (q.v.). He wrote refutations of Abū Hāshim and his father Abū ‘Alī (d. 915-16) (q.v.), and in 970 he took part in a contentious debate with Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Baṣrī (q.v.), the chief representative of the school of Abū Hāshim. Among his pupils was the commentator on Baghdad life Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 1023), and, according to some accounts (see McDermott, p. 10), it was he who gave the leading Shī‘ī theologian Abū ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn al-Nu‘mān (d. 1022) (q.v.) his title al-Mufīd, ‘the instructive’, after some difficult questions from him as a young man about the Imām ‘Alī (al-Mufīd later wrote a refutation of his views, probably on the Imamate).

The reports about al-Rummānī suggest that he was not averse to adopting unpopular intellectual positions that provoked criticism. But he was clearly a leading intellectual figure whose views carried weight.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

*Primary*

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Al-Qiftī, *Kitāb inbāh al-ruwāt fī anbā' al-nuḥāt*, ed. M. Abū Faḍl Ibrāhīm, 4 vols, Cairo, 1952, ii, pp. 294-96

Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭabaqāt al-Mu'tazila*, p. 110

*Secondary*

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M. Mubārak, *Al-Rummānī al-naḥwī*, Damascus, 1983

M.J. McDermott, *The theology of al-Shaikh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022)*, Beirut, 1978

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Naqḍ al-tathlīth 'alā Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī*, 'Refutation of the Trinity, against Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī'

DATE Unknown, but if after Yaḥyā's death between 974 and 994

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

It is entirely possible that al-Rummānī knew Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī (q.v.) personally. They were both teachers of Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, and they must have encountered each other at the various assemblies they frequented in the capital. But nothing is known about the contents of this work, and it has not survived. It is mentioned by al-Tawḥīdī (*Al-muqābasāt*, ed. M. Tawfiq al-Ḥusayn, Baghdad, 1970, no. 30, p. 150).

Given al-Rummānī's predilection for issues of language, one might surmise that a main element of his argument in this work concerned

an analogical explanation of the Trinity favored by Yaḥyā, in which the Father was *‘aql*, ‘intellect’, the Son *‘āqil*, ‘intellecting’, and the Holy Spirit *ma‘qūl*, ‘intellected’. Al-Rummānī may have taken some pleasure in demonstrating the inappropriateness of this in regard to the Godhead, as he might have in arguing against Abū Hāshim’s theory of divine ‘states’.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The work shows that debate between Muslims and Christians on a theological level was lively in Baghdad circles at this time, and that Muslims found current Christian presentations of their doctrines too important to ignore.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

**David Thomas**



# Al-Zuhayrī

Abū Bakr al-Zuhayrī al-Kātib

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown  
PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown  
DATE OF DEATH Unknown, before 995  
PLACE OF DEATH Unknown

## BIOGRAPHY

This otherwise unknown figure is mentioned by ‘Abd al-Jabbār together with some other authors of *dalā’il al-nubuwwa* works in his *Tathbīt*, which he completed in 995. The fact that he calls al-Zuhayrī a *kātib* (‘secretary’) suggests he was employed in government service.

Another possible reference comes from Ibn al-Nadīm, who mentions in the *Fihrist* that a certain Abū Bakr al-Zuhayrī recited to him some lines of poetry by Ibn Ṭabāṭabā. If this is the same person (though the form al-Zuhri appears in one MS), he must have been active in Baghdad in the mid 10<sup>th</sup> century.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 14

‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt*, p. 352

Secondary —

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

### *Dalā’il al-nubuwwa*, ‘Proofs of prophethood’

DATE Unknown; before 995

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

### DESCRIPTION

The only reference to this work is given by ‘Abd al-Jabbār (*Tathbīt*, pp. 352-53). He names al-Zuhayrī among others who wrote to expound and defend the prophethood of Muḥammad by adducing references from books of the Bible, though he does not give actual titles. He

explains that al-Zuhayrī and the other authors, among them Ibn Qutayba (q.v.), Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā ibn al-Munajjim (q.v.) and al-Wāsiṭī (q.v.), wrote in response to Q 21:105-7, in which a link can be made between earlier revelations, the Qurʾān and Muḥammad.

ʿAbd al-Jabbār briefly paraphrases some of the biblical verses that must have appeared in al-Zuhayrī's and the other works. Among them, the reference to Muḥammad as the 'descendant of Ismāʿīl, son of Hagar and Abraham, who rises up from Fārān' combines a clear allusion to Deuteronomy 33:2-3, a favourite proof verse for Muslim authors (see C. Adang, *Muslim writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible. From Ibn Rabban to Ibn Hazm*, Leiden, 1996, p. 264, and index), with possible use of such works as the mid-9<sup>th</sup>-century ʿAlī al-Ṭabarī's *Kitāb al-dīn wa-l-dawla*, where Ismāʿīl and Hagar feature prominently.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

To be singled out among works written through the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, this must have been a significant example of the 'proofs of prophethood' genre. It underlines how firmly established this kind of work had become by the mid 10<sup>th</sup> century, and also how by this time it could draw upon a tradition of arguments in defence of Muḥammad.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

**David Thomas**

# Landolfus Sagax

DATE OF BIRTH	Unknown
PLACE OF BIRTH	Unknown
DATE OF DEATH	Unknown; late 10 <sup>th</sup> or early 11 <sup>th</sup> century
PLACE OF DEATH	Unknown

## BIOGRAPHY

Landolfus was a Lombard historian who wrote the *Historia Romana* in the last quarter of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Textual evidence suggests that he was a layman in the entourage of a southern Italian prince, perhaps of Benevento or Naples. No other sources of information about him exist.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

*Primary* —

*Secondary*

P. Chiesa, art. 'Landolfus Sagax', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani: LXIII Labroca – Laterza*, ed. M. Caravale, Rome, 2004

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Historia Romana*, 'History of Rome'

DATE Probably last quarter of the 10<sup>th</sup> century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Latin

### DESCRIPTION

The *Historia Romana* is a compilation of materials principally from earlier chroniclers including Eutropius, Paulus Diaconus, Orosius, and Anastasius Bibliothecarius' (q.v.) *Chronographia tripartita*. Landolfus relates the history of Rome from Aeneas to the Emperor Nicephorus II Phocas (r. 963-69). The later chapters of the *Historia* focus on Constantinople, reflecting Landolfus' southern Italian perspective.

From Anastasius, Landolfus reproduces the brief biography of Muḥammad, identifying *Moamed* as a Madianite, descendant of Ishmael via Nizarus, an orphan who became a trader and a camel-driver.

Jews come to him thinking he is a prophet but realize their mistake when they see him eating camel, a forbidden food. Moamed marries a rich widow, *Cadiga*, and is struck with epileptic fits, which he affirms are the consequences of visions of the Archangel Gabriel. He manages to convince those around him that he is a prophet and promises them a paradise of sensual delights if they follow him and fight his enemies.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Landolfus provides a testimony to the diffusion of Anastasius' *Chronographia*. The 35 MSS of Landolfus' text provided medieval readers with a brief polemical biography of Muḥammad.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

The principal MS, Vat – Pal. 909 (10<sup>th</sup> century), from which all the others are derived, may well have been approved by Landulf himself.

Mortensen, 'The diffusion of Roman histories', lists 26 MSS of the text (10<sup>th</sup>-early 16<sup>th</sup> century), and nine of the abbreviated version.

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

*Landolfi Sagacis Historia Romana*, ed. A. Crivellucci, 2 vols (*Fonti per la storia d'Italia* 49-50), Rome, 1912-13 (see preface for a description of the 11 previous editions, 1532-1900) (repr. Turin, 1968)

*La Historia miscella di Landolfo Sagace*, ed. V. Fiorini and G. Rossi, 3 vols in 2, Città di Castello, 1900-19

PL 95, cols 743-1143

#### STUDIES

Chiesa, art. 'Landolfo Sagace'

P. Chiesa, 'Storia romana e libri di storia romana fra IX e XI secolo', in *Roma antico nel medioevo*, Milan, 2001, 231-58, pp. 247-51

L. Mortensen, 'The diffusion of Roman histories in the Middle Ages. A list of Orosius, Eutropius, Paulus Diaconus and Landolfus Sagax manuscripts', *Filologia mediolatina* 6-7b (1999-2000) 165-200

**John Tolan**

# Abbo of Fleury

Abbo of Fleury, Abbo Floriacensis, Abbon de Fleury,  
Abbon de Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire

DATE OF BIRTH After about 934 and before about 954  
PLACE OF BIRTH Orléanais, France  
DATE OF DEATH 13 November 1004  
PLACE OF DEATH La Réole, France

## BIOGRAPHY

Abbo of Fleury was born to free but non-noble parents in the Orléanais, probably in the mid-940s. He is described as a *puer* at the time of his taking the monastic habit under Abbot Wulfaldus of Fleury, 948-63, and he became a priest shortly before 987, so most modern scholars put his birth in the 940s. He entered the monastic school of Fleury as a child and became a monk at Fleury soon thereafter.

He studied grammar, arithmetic and dialectic at Fleury, astronomy in Paris and Reims, music in Orleans, and geometry and rhetoric on his own, thus acquiring background in all seven of the liberal arts. He wrote on *computus* and astronomy, composed a saint's life, wrote acrostic poetry, and touched on several theological topics in his letters. As a student, he heard about various heresies concerning the end of the world and was asked to refute one of these by his abbot (the refutation does not survive). Upon completion of his education, he taught at Fleury until about 985, when he left France to teach at the English monastery of Ramsey.

Abbo returned to Fleury in 987, where he became abbot in late 987 or early 988. As abbot of Fleury, he participated actively in secular and ecclesiastical politics. His activities often put him at odds with the bishop of Orleans and the Capetian kings, most notably in a dispute over monastic tithes (993) and in the deposition (991) and eventual restoration (998) of Archbishop Arnulf of Reims, when he found himself on the opposite side of Gerbert of Aurillac (who succeeded Arnulf as archbishop in 991). His *Apologeticus*, addressed to King Robert the Pious, is an important document in the development of the medieval theory of the three orders of Christian society. He travelled to Rome at least twice, and actively sought patronage and

defended papal prerogatives in France. Learning flourished at Fleury under his abbacy, and he was active in promoting monastic reform in northern France and among Fleury's far-flung priories.

Abbo died on 13 November 1004, while trying to impose monastic discipline on the monks of La Réole, a Gascon priory of Fleury. The Catholic Church recognizes him as a saint and martyr.

### MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

#### Primary

- A. Van der Vyver, *Abbonis Floriacensis opera inedita I. Syllogismorum categoricorum et hypotheticorum enodatio*, Bruges, 1966
- R.B. Thomson, 'Two astronomical tractates of Abbo of Fleury', in J.D. North and J.J. Roche (eds), *The light of nature*, Dordrecht, 1985, 113-33
- Abbo of Fleury, 'Vita s. Edmundi', in M. Winterbottom (ed.), *Three lives of English saints*, Toronto, 1972, 65-87
- A. Guerreau-Jalabert, *Abbo Floriacensis, Quaestiones grammaticales=Abbon de Fleury, Questions grammaticales*, Paris, 1982
- Abbo of Fleury, *Liber apologeticus*, PL 139, cols 461-72
- Abbo of Fleury, *Epistolae*, PL 139, cols 419-61
- G.H. Pertz, 'Annales Floriacenses', *Scriptores rerum Sangallensium. Annales, chronica et historiae aevi Saxonici*, MGH *Scriptores* 2, cols 254-55
- M. Prou and A. Vidier, *Recueil de chartes de l'abbaye de Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire*, Paris, 1900-7
- Aimonius of Fleury, *Vita sancti Abbonis*, ed. R.-H. Bautier and G. Labory, *L'abbaye de Fleury en l'an mil*, Paris, 2004

#### Secondary

- E. Dachowski, *First among abbots. The career of Abbo of Fleury*, Washington DC, 2008
- C. Taylor, 'Reform and the Basque dukes of Gascony. A context for the origins of the Peace of God and the murder of Abbo of Fleury', *Early Medieval Europe* 15 (2007) 35-52
- N. Germann, *De temporum ratione. Quadrivium und Gotteserkenntnis am Beispiel Abbos von Fleury und Hermanns von Reichenau*, Leiden, 2006
- B. Obrist, *Abbon de Fleury. Philosophie, science et comput autour de l'an mil. Actes des journées organisées par le Centre d'Histoire des Sciences et des Philosophies Arabes et Médiévales*, Paris, 2004, 2006<sup>2</sup>
- F. Paxton, 'Abbas and rex. Power and authority in the literature of Fleury, 987-1044', in R.F. Berkhofer III, A. Cooper and A.J. Kosto (eds), *The experience of power in medieval Europe*, Aldershot, 2005, 197-212
- A. Bosc-Lauby and A. Notter (eds), *Lumières de l'an mil en Orléanais. Autour du millénaire d'Abbon de Fleury*, Turnhout, 2004

- P. Riché, *Abbon de Fleury. Un moine savant et combatif (vers 950-1004)*, Turnhout, 2004
- P. Lendinara, 'Abbo of Fleury', in F. Biggs et al. (eds), *Abbo of Fleury, Abbo of Saint-Germain-des-Prés and Acta Sanctorum*, Kalamazoo MI, 2001, 1-15
- T. Haye, 'Mündliche und schriftliche Rede. Ein Beitrag zur rhetorischen Kopetenz des Abbo von Fleury', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 35 (2001) 273-92
- M. Mostert, 'Gerbert d'Aurillac, Abbon de Fleury et la culture de l'an mil. Etude comparative de leurs oeuvres et de leur influence', in *Gerberto d'Aurillac da abate di Bobbio a papa dell'anno 1000*, Bobbio, 2001
- A. Peden, 'Unity, order, and Ottonian kingship in the thought of Abbo of Fleury', in R. Gameson and H. Leyser (eds), *Belief and culture in the Middle Ages*, Oxford, 2001, 158-68
- E. Dachowski, 'The English roots of Abbo of Fleury's political thought', *Revue Bénédictine* 110 (2000) 95-105
- E.-M. Engelen, *Zeit, Zahl und Bild. Studien zur Verbindung von Philosophie und Wissenschaft bei Abbo von Fleury*, Berlin, 1993
- J. Dufour, "'Pio Abbone orbatu sumus". L'annonce du décès d'Abbon, abbé de Fleury (1004)', in C. Bourlet and A. Dufour (eds), *L'écrit dans la société médiévale. Divers aspects de sa pratique du XI<sup>e</sup> au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 1991, 25-38
- M. Mostert, 'The political ideas of Abbo of Fleury', *Francia* 16 (1989) 85-100
- M. Mostert, *The political theology of Abbo of Fleury*, Hilversum, 1987
- A. Davril, 'Le culte de saint Abbon au moyen âge', *Actes du colloque du Millénaire de la fondation du prieuré de La Réole*, Bordeaux, 1980

#### WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Excerptum de gestis Romanorum pontificum, Epitoma de pontificibus Romanis, Epitome de XCI Romanorum pontificum vitis*, 'Excerpts from the deeds of the Roman popes'

DATE Before 1004, perhaps 996

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Latin

#### DESCRIPTION

The *Excerptum de gestis Romanorum pontificum* takes up 13 folios in its earliest manuscript (copied about 50 years after Abbo's death). The work is an abridgment of a much older work, the *Liber pontificalis*, the first part of which was written no later than the 6<sup>th</sup> century; subsequent

chapters were added during the lifetime of the pope in question. The original *Liber pontificalis* exists in many manuscripts, which its 19<sup>th</sup>-century editor, Duchesne, divided into five classes; Abbo appears to have worked from one of the manuscripts in class A, except for the entry on Gregory II, which follows more closely the class B manuscripts. Abbo's abridgment consists of 91 chapters, one on each of the popes from Peter through Gregory II (died 731). Abbo did not complete the work, but stopped mid-way through the life of Gregory II; the manuscript gives no clue as to why the work ended so abruptly. The Leiden manuscript has a gap following the entry for Gregory II, followed by entries in different hands, continuing up through the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century. The Bern manuscript appears to be a copy of the Leiden manuscript, though the two diverge in several places (Gantier, *Labrégé du Liber pontificalis*, pp. 10-18).

Abbo mentions Muslims in four of the biographical entries (Martin I, Adeodatus II, John V, Gregory II) in the context of military events that impinged on the papacy.

The heading of the work names Abbo as the abridger. The Leiden manuscript comes from Abbo's monastery of Fleury, the Bern manuscript comes from the neighboring monastery of Saint-Mesmin of Micy, and both date to the mid-11<sup>th</sup> century. There is no direct evidence of when Abbo composed this abridgment, but it was probably after he began teaching (970s) and before his death (13 November 1004). A likely date is 996, when Abbo was embroiled in questions of papal authority and might be assumed to be looking for material to justify papal prerogatives. A passage in the Leiden manuscript diverges from the *Liber pontificalis* and appears to have been added to justify simony; Gantier suggests that this entry was altered after Abbo's death in order to justify a situation that arose in the 1030s and this is the basis for his dating of the manuscript to 1032-35 (p. 179).

Abbo's other works include his works on *computus*, astronomy, syllogisms and grammar, all of which appear to have been composed for teaching purposes; a life of St Edmund of England; a collection of canons; his *Liber apologeticus* to King Robert II of France; and several lengthy letters. In his letters he relied heavily on the works of Pope Gregory I. (See Mostert, *Political theology of Abbo of Fleury*, for a detailed discussion of his method of compiling information and the political context for his works.)



## SIGNIFICANCE

Abbo was neither the first nor the last to condense the *Liber pontificalis*. He did not significantly alter the tone or content of the *Liber* in his abridgment, but generally worked by removing stock formulas, repetitions and lists of papal endowments; he also streamlined the narrative, though usually keeping the exact words of the original (Gantier, *Labrégé du Liber pontificalis*, pp. 103-28).

Given that only two manuscripts survive, the likelihood is that his abridgment had little immediate influence outside Fleury and Micy. Both surviving manuscripts include reference works (an allegorical guide to Vergil, a chronicle, a list of emperors, and the like), suggesting that Abbo's abridgment formed part of the basic toolkit of Fleurisian authors, many of whose works were more widely circulated.

Abbo's abridgment of the *Liber pontificalis* reflects the relative importance of certain events for Abbo and his contemporaries. Abbo followed his usual methods of abridgment in the entries treating Muslims in the Mediterranean, mainly Sicily and Africa (under Popes Martin I, Adeodatus II, and John V), but provided a much fuller account of Muslim incursions into France (under Pope Gregory II), omitting almost nothing mentioned in the *Liber pontificalis*. The sections of the *Liber pontificalis* abridged by Abbo referred to Muslims both as Saracens (most often) and as Agarenes (Hagarenes), descendants of Hagar (in the life of Gregory II only). Abbo apparently preferred the term Saracen, as he substituted 'Saracens' for all but the first reference to Agarenes.

In the late 10<sup>th</sup> century, the northern French experience of Islam was largely second-hand, but nevertheless important. Abbo's contemporary, Gerbert of Aurillac (q.v.), had studied in Spain, where Muslim intellectual influences remained. Abbo's fellow abbot, Maiolus of Cluny, had been taken prisoner by Muslims as he crossed the Alps on his way back to Cluny from Italy in 972 (R. Bruce, 'An abbot between two cultures. Maiolus of Cluny considers the Muslims of La Garde-Freinet', *Early Medieval Europe* 15 [2007] 426-40, p. 426). Although Abbo certainly was aware of Muslims, here and in his other writings he clearly saw heresy and relations with the Eastern Church as more significant issues for Christians.

## MANUSCRIPTS

MS Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek – VLF [Voss. lat. folio] 96 I,  
fols 1-13 (1032-35)

MS Bern, Burgerbibliothek – 120 I, fols 76-93 (1039-56)

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

- L.-M. Gantier (trans.), *L'abrégé du Liber pontificalis d'Abbon de Fleury (vers 950-1004)*, Brussels, 2004 (trans. and commentary, based on the edition by van Els)
- A. van Els (ed. and trans.), *Abbo van Fleury. Excerptum de gestis romanorum pontificum*, Schijndel, The Netherlands, 2002 (MA Diss. University of Bern)

## STUDIES

- Gantier, *L'abrégé du Liber pontificalis d'Abbon de Fleury*
- Van Els, *Abbo van Fleury*
- A. van der Vyver, 'Les oeuvres inédits d'Abbon de Fleury', *Revue Bénédictine* 47 (1935) 123-69

**Elizabeth Dachowski**

# Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Khwārazmī

Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf  
al-Kātib al-Khwārazmī

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown  
PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown  
DATE OF DEATH Unknown (Ḥajjī Khalīfa gives 387/997); he  
was active in the latter part of the 10th century  
PLACE OF DEATH Unknown

## BIOGRAPHY

Al-Khwārazmī was almost certainly a member of the bureaucracy that served the emirs of the Sāmānid dynasty of Transoxiana and Khurāsān in their capital Bukhārā, since his only known work is dedicated to Abū l-Ḥasan al-ʿUtbī, vizier of Nūḥ II ibn Manṣūr (r. 976-97). He is not to be confused with his more famous namesake, the mathematician Muḥammad ibn Mūsā l-Khwārazmī, who flourished in Baghdad in the early 9<sup>th</sup> century.

Virtually nothing is known of his life, although the knowledge that he displays of the irrigation system of the Merv oasis in northern Khurāsān shows that he was apparently knowledgeable about this area of north-eastern Iran also. His *nisba* or gentilic indicates a connection, perhaps of his family, with Khwārazm, classical Chorasmia, the region of the lower Oxus river.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### *Primary*

Ḥajjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-ẓunūn*, 2 vols and suppl., Istanbul, 1941-47, col. 1756

### *Secondary*

A.L. Sabra, art. 'al-Khwārazmī, Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Kātib', in *EI2*

C.E. Bosworth, 'A pioneer Arabic encyclopaedia of the sciences. Al-Khwārazmī's Keys of the Sciences', *Isis* 54 (1963) 97-111

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Mafātīḥ al-'ulūm*, 'Keys of the sciences'DATE Late 10<sup>th</sup> century, and after 977

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

In this work, which is dedicated to Abū l-Ḥasan al-'Utbī, fixing the date of its composition as some time shortly after 977, al-Khwārazmī aims at compiling a concise dictionary of definitions, a reference work, of the technical terms that a secretary of the chancery or financial departments of the bureaucracy would need, and which a narrow education in language, grammar and rhetoric would not give. His aim is thus different from that of al-Fārābī, who had composed a generation earlier his *Iḥṣā' al-'ulūm*, 'Enumeration of the sciences', on the systematic classification of the sciences. Al-Khwārazmī divides his book into two discourses: the first on the Islamic religious sciences and the Arab sciences connected with them; and the second on the non-Arab sciences, i.e. of the Greeks and other peoples.

In the first discourse, chapter 2 deals with *kalām*, widely defined here as covering the technical terms connected with the various Muslim sects, and also with general religious and philosophical questions, such as the creation of the world, the nature of God's attributes and His predestining power. In section 5 of this chapter he deals with various faiths, including those connected with the Iranian world, such as Manicheism and Zoroastrianism. In section 9 he turns to the Byzantine Christians (*al-Rūm*), and briefly deals with Byzantine military titles, such as *Patricius*, *Comes* and *Domesticus*, and then passes to the religious titles and ranks of the Byzantine Church, noting that the Christians had four patriarchates, Constantinople, Rome, Antioch and Alexandria, without however mentioning Jerusalem. He does not refer here to the theological differences involved, although he seems to have been aware of these in a general sense because earlier, in section 2 of this same chapter, he lists the sects of the Christians as the Melkites, the Nestorians and the Jacobites. Finally, in the same section 9, he notes the ranks and offices of the church, mentioning the (Nestorian) catholicos in Baghdad, the metropolitan or archbishop, whom he places at Merv, and the bishops, priests and deacons.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Can al-Khwārazmī have had much, or any, direct contact with the (mainly Nestorian) Christian communities of Transoxiana? There is no clear evidence for this in the work. While he mentions the Nestorian metropolitan at Merv, an ancient see mentioned in connection with a Church Council of 424 and still in existence in 1070, he does not seem to have been aware of sees in Transoxiana. There was already a bishop at Samarqand, the other great city of the province, in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, and the 10<sup>th</sup>-century geographer Ibn Ḥawqal mentions Christian communities there and at Shāsh (Tashkent). Regarding Bukhārā, the local historian of the city, al-Narshakhī (wrote c. 943-44) mentions a Christian church there at the time of the Arab conquest in the early 8<sup>th</sup> century, converted into a mosque at that time, but nothing of the Christian community there subsequently.

His brief treatment of Christians in what was a handbook that assembled ready items of information for court secretaries, gives some indication of the relative unimportance of Christianity in public life in Transoxiana and Khurāsān towards the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

## MANUSCRIPTS

Listed in Brockelmann, *GAL* i, p. 283, S i, pp. 434-35

See also C.E. Bosworth, 'Some new manuscripts of al-Khwārizmī's *Mafāṭih al-'ulūm*', *JSS* 9 (1964) 341-45

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

C.E. Bosworth, 'Al-Ḥwārazmī on theology and sects. The chapter on kalām in the *Mafāṭih al-'ulūm*', 29 (1977) 82-95 (repr. in Bosworth, *Medieval Arabic culture and administration*, London, 1982, no. VII)

C.E. Bosworth, 'Al-Khwārazmī on the secular and religious titles of the Byzantines and Christians', *Cahiers de Tunisie (Numéro spécial, Mélanges Charles Pellat)* 35 (1987), 29-36 (repr. in Bosworth, *The Arabs, Byzantium and Iran: studies in early Islamic history and culture*, Aldershot, 1996, no. X)

C.E. Bosworth, 'Al-Khwārazmī on various faiths and sects, chiefly Iranian', *Textes et mémoires*, 16. *Iranica varia. Papers in honor of Professor Ehsan Yarshater*, Leiden, 1990, 10-19 (repr. in Bosworth, *The Arabs, Byzantium and Iran*, no. XVIII)

*Liber Mafāṭih al-Olūm explicans vocabula technica scientiarum*, ed. G. van Vloten, Leiden, 1895 (many reprints)

For a full listing of translations of various individual chapters in the first discourse published up to 1978, see Sabra's article in *EI2*, and for translations of the scientific and medical chapters of the second discourse made by E. Wiedemann over a number of years, see Wiedemann, *Aufsätze zur arabischen Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, ed. W. Fischer, 2 vols, Hildesheim, 1970

## STUDIES

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- M.S. Asimov, 'Al-Khwarazmi's historical-cultural synthesis', *Iranian Studies* 21 (1988) 10-13
- C.E. Bosworth, 'Abū 'Abdallāh al-Khwārazmī on the technical terms of the secretary's art. A contribution to the administrative history of mediaeval Islam', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* (1969) 113-164
- Bosworth, 'A pioneer Arabic encyclopaedia of the sciences'
- G. Sarton, *An introduction to the history of science*, 3 vols, Baltimore MD, 1927-48, i, 659-60

**Edmund Bosworth**

# Ibn al-Shammā' Yu'anīs al-Suryānī

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown  
PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown  
DATE OF DEATH End of the 10<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF DEATH Unknown

## BIOGRAPHY

Ibn al-Shammā' Yu'anīs was a Syrian Orthodox bishop, who is known for the part he played in a formal discussion with the Fatimid Caliph al-Mu'izz (r. 972-75), in the presence of the Coptic bishop of al-Ashmunayn, Severus ibn al-Muqaffā' (q.v.).

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

See Sbath, *Fihris*, Supplément, nos 1223, 2512

### Secondary

P. Khoury and R. Caspar, 'Bibliographie, *Islamochristiana* 1 (1975) 152-69, pp. 167-68  
Graf, *GCAL* ii, p. 251

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Al-mujādala allati jarat bayna l-usquf Yu'anīs ibn al-Shammā' al-Suryānī wa-l-malik al-Mu'izz bi-ḥuḍūr Ibn al-Muqaffā', usquf al-Ashmunayn*, 'The debate that took place between Bishop Yu'anīs ibn al-Shammā' al-Suryānī and the 'king' al-Mu'izz with Ibn al-Muqaffā', Bishop of al-Ashmunayn, in attendance'; *Al-mujādala bayna Yu'anīs ibn al-Shammā' wa-l-Mu'izz*, 'The debate between Yu'anīs ibn al-Shammā' and al-Mu'izz'

DATE Late 10<sup>th</sup> century  
ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

We know nothing about the circumstances or course of this debate, or about the subjects covered, except that it would have been held in Cairo during the first years of Fatimid rule. The Caliph al-Mu'izz appears in a number of references in Christian works from this period (see elsewhere in this volume), where he is shown as sympathetic to Christian beliefs (to such an extent that one tradition records him as converting). So, if this debate actually took place (as opposed to being a fiction composed for Christian apologetic purposes), it is not impossible that it was constructive in character, and even instructive for the caliph.

## SIGNIFICANCE

It is not possible to comment on the significance of this work.

## MANUSCRIPTS

Cairo, Jirjis 'Abd al-Masih Collection (inaccessible MS in private collection; see Sbath, *Fihris*, supplément, p. 8, no. 2512 (1223))

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

## STUDIES

Graf, *GCAL* ii, p. 251

**Herman G.B. Teule**



## ‘Abd al-Masīḥ al-Isrā’īlī al-Raqqī

DATE OF BIRTH	Unknown; likely in the first half of the 10 <sup>th</sup> century
PLACE OF BIRTH	Probably in or near al-Raqqā, Syria
DATE OF DEATH	Unknown; likely in the late 10 <sup>th</sup> or early 11 <sup>th</sup> century
PLACE OF DEATH	Unknown; probably in or near Cairo

### BIOGRAPHY

The author’s name indicates that he was a Jew (‘al-Isrā’īlī’) from al-Raqqā in Syria (‘al-Raqqī’), who converted to Christianity and took the name ‘Abd al-Masīḥ, ‘Servant of Christ’. The extended title of his *Kitāb al-istidlāl* indicates that the person instrumental in his conversion was the Christian physician [Abū l-Faṭḥ] Maṣṣūr ibn Sahlān [ibn Muqashshir], who served for many years in the Fatimid court in Cairo and died around 1004, while in the service of the Caliph al-Ḥākim (996-1021). Samir inclines to the opinion that Maṣṣūr (and presumably his convert) were Copts (Samir, ‘Maṣṣūr’, p. 1524), while Nasrallah claims Maṣṣūr and ‘Abd al-Masīḥ for the Melkites (Nasrallah, *HMLEM* iii.1, p. 251).

After ‘Abd al-Masīḥ’s conversion he wrote a number of apologetic/polemical works directed to Jews, of which the work described below, *Kitāb al-istidlāl*, ‘Inductive reasoning’, may be one example. In addition, a manuscript once in Aleppo (see Sbath, *Fihris* i, p. 53) contained copies of treatises entitled *Ithbāt majī’ al-Masīḥ* (‘Establishment of the coming of the Messiah’), *Al-radd ‘alā l-Yahūd* (‘Refutation of the Jews’), and *Intiṣār al-ṣalīb ‘alā l-Yahūdiyya wa-l-wathaniyya* (‘The triumph of the Cross over Judaism and paganism’).

### MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

#### Primary

MS Vat – Ar. 145, f. 114v

Inaccessible MS once in the private collection of Karkūr Ṣā’igh, according to Sbath, *Fihris* i, p. 53 (titles 409-12)

*Secondary*

[S.] K. Samir, art. ‘Abd al-Masīḥ al-Isrā’īlī al-Raqqī’, in *CE*

[S.] K. Samir, art. ‘Maṣūḥ ibn Sahlān ibn Muqashshir’, in *CE*  
Nasrallah, *HMLEM* iii.1, pp. 250-51

Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 319-20

M. Steinschneider, *Polemische und apologetische Literatur in arabischer Sprache, zwischen Muslimen, Christen und Juden*, Leipzig, 1877, pp. 115-16 (no. 91)

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Kitāb al-istidlāl*, ‘Inductive reasoning’

DATE Unknown; probably late 10<sup>th</sup> century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

*Kitāb al-istidlāl* is only known through an epitome (*mukhtaṣar*) preserved in a single Vatican manuscript; S.K. Samir has provided an extensive description of this epitome (Samir, ‘Abd al-Masīḥ’), which is the basis for what follows.

After a philosophical introduction, the book is divided into five parts: 1. proofs of the coming of Christ (i.e., Old Testament *testimonia*); 2. a discussion of what Christians mean when they use the word *jawhar*, ‘substance’, to describe God; 3. a variety of arguments (mostly analogies) for God’s trinity; 4. an apology for the Incarnation; 5. and a response to a dilemma-question concerning Christ’s death.

The work may have been directed primarily to sophisticated Jewish apologists who wrote in Arabic, such as Dāwūd ibn Marwān al-Muqammiṣ (early 9<sup>th</sup> century), Ya’qūb al-Qirqisānī (early 10<sup>th</sup> century), or Sa’adya Ga’ōn (882-942), whose questions to their Christian counterparts included some explicitly addressed by ‘Abd al-Masīḥ: What does it mean to describe God as *jawhar*? Why should the number of hypostases (especially when these are described in terms of attributes) be limited to three? (See S. Rosenkranz, *Die jüdisch-christliche Auseinandersetzung unter islamischer Herrschaft. 7-10. Jahrhundert*, Bonn, 2004, pp. 118-22, 129-46.)

‘Abd al-Masīḥ also appears to be aware of the earlier Christian-Muslim controversy in Arabic. For example, he knows the argument that three is the most perfect number because it is the combination of one and two (i.e., odd and even, as found in Ḥabīb Abū Rā’ita, ‘On

the Trinity’ [q.v.], and those who copied from it). In responding to the question ‘Why only *three* hypostases?’, he addresses a question that naturally occurred to Muslim controversialists when Christians attempted to explain the Trinitarian hypostases by exploiting Muslims’ debates about the ontological status of the the attributes of God. Finally, the fifth part of the book addresses a dilemma question found already in the late 8<sup>th</sup>-century debate of the Catholicos Timothy and the Caliph al-Mahdī (q.v.), and very frequently repeated thereafter by Muslim controversialists: Did Christ die willingly (in which case his crucifiers should be praised!) or not (in which case he cannot be God!). It is not impossible that *Kitāb al-istidlāl* was addressed both to Jewish and to Muslim dialectical theologians.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

*Kitāb al-istidlāl* may illustrate the close connections between Christian-Jewish and Christian-Muslim controversy in the Arabic language – although an edition and careful study of the surviving *mukhtaṣar* are much needed. While the work seems largely to have fallen into oblivion, at least one later Arabic-speaking Christian scholar found it sufficiently important to make an epitome of it. Samir believes that this scholar was none other than al-Ṣafī ibn al-‘Assāl (q.v.) (Samir, ‘‘Abd al-Masīḥ’, p. 6), one of the most significant apologetic theologians of the Copto-Arabic literary renaissance of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. If ‘Abd al-Masīḥ played some role in teaching al-Ṣafī his craft, his significance is far greater than the manuscript tradition would indicate.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS Vat – Ar. 145, fols 114v-122v (13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century; the *mukhtaṣar*)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

#### STUDIES

Samir, ‘‘Abd al-Masīḥ al-Isrā’īlī al-Raqqī’ (detailed description of the contents of the *mukhtaṣar*)

**Mark N. Swanson**

# Būluṣ ibn Rajā'

Al-Wāḍiḥ ibn Rajā'

DATE OF BIRTH	Around the 950s
PLACE OF BIRTH	Probably in the vicinity of Cairo
DATE OF DEATH	End of 10 <sup>th</sup> or beginning of 11 <sup>th</sup> century
PLACE OF DEATH	Sandafā, Egypt

## BIOGRAPHY

In the part of the *History of the patriarchs of Alexandria* written by Mikhā'il al-Damrāwī, bishop of Tinnīs (q.v.), most of the *Life* of the Coptic Patriarch Philotheus, the 63<sup>rd</sup> patriarch (r. 979-1003), is in fact devoted to an account of the conversion and life of one Ibn Rajā', a young Muslim who became a monk, priest, and Christian apologist. Mikhā'il tells his readers that his source for this information was an oral report from Thiyudur (Theodore) ibn Mīnā, a deacon of Manūf and secretary of the Holy Synod, who received it from Ibn Rajā' himself (Atiya et al., *History*, p. 112, lines 9-11, 22-23).

Ibn Rajā' (as he is called through most of the account) was the son of a Muslim court functionary and was himself well-educated in legal and qur'anic studies. His conversion to Christianity, Mikhā'il relates, was the result of several earthly and heavenly interventions: the prophecy of a Muslim convert to Christianity, shortly before his execution for apostasy; three visits from St Macarius the Great in dreams while Ibn Rajā' was on his way to Mecca to perform the *ḥajj*; and finally, a visit from St Mercurius, who rescued Ibn Rajā' when he was lost in the desert and miraculously whisked him away to the Church of St Mercurius in Miṣr (Old Cairo). Ibn Rajā' made an assiduous study of the Christian faith, was baptized, and received the name Būluṣ (Paul). Although he was discovered by his family (who had thought him lost in the desert), he resisted their attempts to persuade him to renounce his newfound faith, and was eventually able to make his way to Scetis and become a monk.

Conflict with his family was soon renewed, Mikhā'il reports, when 'a certain monk without understanding' (Atiya et al., *History*, p. 107, lines 17-18) urged Ibn Rajā' to return to Miṣr and make a public

profession of his new faith. Ibn Rajā's public appearance in the guise of a monk enraged his father, who went to extreme measures to persuade him to recant: having his brother violate his concubine in front of him; drowning his young son by her before him; and finally denouncing him to the caliph (said to be al-Ḥākīm bi-Amr Allāh). The caliph, however, had Ibn Rajā' released. In the years that followed, Mikhā'il reports, 'the saint' Ibn Rajā' built the Church of St Michael at Ra's al-Khalij; studied with Sāwirus ibn al-Muqaffa' (q.v.) and wrote apologetic treatises; was ordained priest at the Monastery of St Macarius; and spent his final two years as steward of the Church of St Theodore in Sandafā, where he died and was buried beneath the church floor.

The saint's name may cause some confusion. One of the few manuscripts containing his works, MS Aleppo, Salem 202 (Sbath 1004), gives his full name as al-Wāḍiḥ Yūsuf ibn al-Rajā'; it is possible that this gives us Ibn Rajā's given name (*ism*): Yūsuf. When he was baptized, he received the name Būluṣ (Paul), after the saint who underwent conversion on the road to Damascus, an appropriate name for the zealous young man who had remarkable experiences on the road to Mecca. As for 'al-Wāḍiḥ' ('That which is clear', 'The illustrious'), Mikhā'il reports that it was a kind of 'nickname' that Ibn Rajā' gave himself after his conversion (Atiya et al., *History*, p. 109, line 13). Mikhā'il al-Damrāwī can refer to his Christian hero as 'Ibn Rajā', 'Būluṣ', 'Būluṣ ibn Rajā' or 'al-Wāḍiḥ ibn Rajā'.

As for the dating of the account, the text preserved in (the published 'Vulgate' recension of) the *History of the patriarchs* presents some difficulties. The beginning of Ibn Rajā's conversion story (that is, his encounter with the Muslim convert to Christianity) is placed in the time of the Fatimid Caliph al-Mu'izz (in Egypt, 973-75). In what seems a matter of months or a very few years later, the convert's father complains about him to the Caliph al-Ḥākīm bi-Amr Allāh (r. 996-1021); it is hard to reconcile these data, unless about 20 years are inserted between the drowning of Ibn Rajā's young son and his father's denunciation of him to the caliph! Perhaps the identification of the latter caliph as al-Ḥākīm is a mistake. Then these dramatic events in Ibn Rajā's life could take place in the 970s, leaving room in the 980s (and perhaps beyond) for his collaboration with Sāwirus ibn al-Muqaffa' (known to be an active senior churchman in 987) and a Christian ministry that would fall during the patriarchate

of Philotheus (979-1003) – where Ibn Rajā's story is placed in the *History of the patriarchs*.

Al-Shams ibn Kabar (*Misbāḥ al-zulma*, ed. Samir, pp. 322-23) claims that Ibn Rajā' composed, in addition to the three works treated below, an autobiography (*siratahu*); but this may well refer to the oral report given to deacon Theodore and written down by Mikhā'il al-Damrāwī.

### MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

#### Primary

A.S. Atiya, Y. 'Abd al-Masīḥ and O.H.E. Khs.-Burmester (eds), *History of the patriarchs of the Egyptian Church, known as the History of the holy Church, by Sawirus ibn al-Muqaffa', bishop of al-Ašmūnīn*, ii, pt. ii, Cairo, 1948, pp. 101-13 (Arabic text), pp. 151-70 (English trans.)

(For information on the MSS of the part of the *History of the patriarchs* that tells the story of al-Wāḍiḥ, see the entry in this volume for Mikhā'il al-Damrāwī.)

Shams al-Ri'āsa Abū l-Barakāt ibn Kabar, *Misbāḥ al-zulma fī iḍāḥ al-khidma*, ed. S.K. Samir, Cairo, 1971, pp. 322-23

#### Secondary

M.N. Swanson, *The Coptic papacy in Islamic Egypt*, Cairo, 2010, p. 52

F. del Río Sánchez, *Catalogue des manuscrits de la foundation Georges et Mathilde Salem (Alep, Syrie)*, Wiesbaden, 2008, p. 111 (description of MS Salem Ar. 202 [Sbath 1004], with the detail that the saint's name was al-Wāḍiḥ Yūsuf ibn al-Rajā')

A. Wadi, art. 'Al-Wāḍiḥ Ibn Rajā'', in J. Nadal Cañellas and S. Virgulin (eds), *Bibliotheca sanctorum orientalium. Enciclopedia dei santi. Le chiese orientali*, Rome, 1998-99 (with extensive bibliography)

V. Frederick, art. 'Wāḍiḥ ibn Rajā', al-', in *CE*

Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 318-19

### WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Kitāb al-Wāḍiḥ*, 'The book of al-Wāḍiḥ / that which is clear'; *Al-i'tirāf*, 'The confession'

DATE Possibly late 10<sup>th</sup> century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

P. Sbath, who once prepared an edition of the work, describes it simply as a 'refutation of Islam' (*Fihris* i, p. 11, no. 44). Mikhā'il al-Damrāwī adds the detail that the author carried out this refutation 'from their Book' (that is, from the Qur'an; Atiya et al., *History*, p. 110, lines 5-6). According to Graf (*GCAL* ii, p. 319), the excerpt in MS Paris, BNF – Syr. 203 is a response to the Qur'anic testimony (Q 3.59) that the proper way of understanding [the ontological status of] 'Īsā (Jesus) is by comparison with Adam.

Both Mikhā'il al-Damrāwī (Atiya et al., *History*, p. 110, lines 5-6) and al-Shams ibn Kabar (*Misbāḥ al-zulma*, ed. Samir, p. 323) report that *Kitāb al-Wāḍiḥ* was also called *Al-i'tirāf*, 'The confession'. Mikhā'il reports that in one of his works Ibn Rajā' gave an account of himself, and also related, from Sāwīrus ibn al-Muqaffā', the story of the conversion and martyrdom of one al-Hāshimī – a story remarkably similar to that of Rawḥ al-Qurashī (q.v.); see Atiya et al., *History*, pp. 110-11. This material would fit well in a book that was al-Wāḍiḥ's personal confession of Christian faith – but we await the publication of an edition of *Kitāb al-Wāḍiḥ* to put an end to speculation about its contents.

## SIGNIFICANCE

It is difficult to assess the significance of the work without better knowledge of its contents. We note, however, the regularity with which converts take up apologetics/polemics; cf. al-Wāḍiḥ's contemporary, 'Abd al-Masiḥ al-Isrā'īlī (q.v.), a convert to Christianity from Judaism.

## MANUSCRIPTS

MS Paris, BNF – Syr. 203, fols 149v-165r (1470; excerpt)

MS Aleppo, Fondation George et Mathilde Salem – Ar. 202 (Sbath 1004), pp. 222-43 (17<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Aleppo, Collection of Yuḥannā Balīṭ (inaccessible MS in private collection; see Sbath, *Fihris* i, p. 11, no. 44)

MS Aleppo?, Collection of Paul Sbath (uncatalogued and whereabouts unknown; see Sbath, *Fihris* i, p. 11, no. 44)

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

P. Sbath prepared an edition and French translation (according to Sbath, *Fihris* i, p. 11, n. 4), but it was never published.

## STUDIES

- A. Wadi, 'Introduzione all letteratura arabo-cristiana dei Copti' [in Arabic], *Studia Orientalia Christiana. Collectanea* 29-30 (1996-1997) 441-92, pp. 480-81  
 Graf, *GCAL* ii, p. 319

*Nawādir al-mufasssirīn wa-taḥrīf al-mukhālifīn*,  
 'The choice passages of the exegetes and the  
 corruption of the opponents'

DATE Possibly late 10<sup>th</sup> century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

P. Sbath (*Fihris* i, p. 11, no. 45) describes this work as a refutation of Islam. In both this work and the previous one, according to Mikhā'īl al-Damrāwī, the author 'defeated [the opponents] from their [own] religion' (Atiya et al., *History*, p. 110, lines 5-7).

## SIGNIFICANCE

This work could be quite interesting if it mines Islamic *tafsīr* works available to al-Wāḍiḥ, as its title suggests. We must hope that a copy can be found.

## MANUSCRIPTS

- MS Aleppo, Collection of the priest Yuḥannā Balīṭ (inaccessible  
 MS in private collection; see Sbath, *Fihris* i, p. 11, no. 45)

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

## STUDIES

- Wadi, 'Introduzione', pp. 480-81  
 Graf, *GCAL* ii, p. 319

*Kitāb al-ibāna fī tanāquḍ al-ḥadīth*, 'Clarification  
 concerning the contradiction of the Hadith';  
 Possible alternative title: *Hatk al-mahjūb*, 'The  
 disclosure of the veiled'

DATE Possibly late 10<sup>th</sup> century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic



## DESCRIPTION

All we know of this work is what can be gathered from its title: that it is an apologetic exploitation of contradictions in the Hadith-corpus. Al-Shams ibn Kabar (*Misbāḥ al-zulma*, ed. Samir, pp. 322-23) does not list the title *Al-ibāna fī tanāquḍ al-ḥadīth*, but gives another one, *Ḥatḥ al-maḥjūb*, 'The disclosure of the veiled'. Wadi ('Introduzione', p. 481) plausibly asserts that the two titles refer to the same work.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Taken together with the previous works, it is possible to see al-Wāḍiḥ's project as one of going deep into the Islamic tradition (Qur'an, *tafsīr*, and Hadith) in search of material that could be used in the defense of his Christian faith.

## MANUSCRIPTS

MS Aleppo, Collection of the priest Yuḥannā Balīṭ (inaccessible  
MS in private collection; see Sbath, *Fihris* i, p. 12, no. 46)

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

## STUDIES

Wadi, 'Introduzione', pp. 480-81  
Graf, *GCAL* ii, p. 319

**Mark N. Swanson**

# Faraj ibn Jirjis Afrām

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown  
PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown  
DATE OF DEATH 10<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF DEATH Unknown

## BIOGRAPHY

Faraj ibn Jirjis was a Syrian Orthodox philosopher, who probably belonged to the circles around Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī (q.v.). The latter composed his *Iḏāḥ fi l-tawḥīd* in reply to a question by Faraj about the principles of existent things and the degrees of their potencies (*mabādi’ al-mawjūdāt wa-marātib quwāhā*).

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

Al-Mu’taman ibn al-‘Assāl, *Summa dei principi della religione*, ed. A. Wadi, trans. B. Pirone, 6 vols, Cairo, 1998-2002 (*Studia Orientalia Christiana Monographiae* 6a-6b, 7a-7b, 8-9), i, ch. 19, § 148 (a German translation of the relevant passage is found in Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 249-50)

### Secondary

S. Khalil, *Le traité de l'unité de Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī (893-974) (Patrimoine arabe chrétien 2)*, Jounieh, 1980, p. 54  
G. Endress, *The works of Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī. An analytical inventory*, Wiesbaden, 1977, pp. 122-23  
Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 247, 249-50, 410

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Mabādi’ al-mawjūdāt wa-marātib quwāhā*, ‘The principles of existent things and the degrees of their potencies’

DATE 10<sup>th</sup> century  
ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

This was a treatise on God's triunity, his characteristics (*awṣāf*) and the way in which Christians speak of plurality, substantiality (*jawhariyya*) and persons (*uqnūmiyya*).

According to the passage in the *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn* mentioned above, Jirjis reworked a treatise with the same title by the Muslim Abū Sulaymān Ṭāhir al-Manṭiqī (who is presumably Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī [q.v.]), using 'thoughts and words' of Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī. Al-As'ad Hibat Allāh ibn al-'Assāl made an excerpt from this, which was incorporated into the *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn* written by his brother.

## SIGNIFICANCE

It is difficult to comment on the work's significance.

## MANUSCRIPTS

Possibly Sbath, *Fihris*, no. 2522 (inaccessible MS in private collection). Sbath attributes a work with a similar title to Abū Sulaymān al-Manṭiqī, whom he calls a member of the 'Jacobite' community.

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

## STUDIES

P. Khoury and R. Caspar, 'Bibliographie,' *Islamochristiana* 1 (1975) 152-69, p. 167  
 Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 249-50  
 Sbath, *Fihris*, Supplément, p. 9, no. 2522

Title unknown; 'a question (how the Cause of causes can dwell in the womb of a woman) and its answer'; 'A question and its answer'

DATE 10<sup>th</sup> century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

This work is evidently concerned with the Incarnation, and revolves around a typical Muslim question about the apparent contradiction of the infinite, limitless Divinity being confined in Mary's womb when she was carrying Jesus.

## SIGNIFICANCE

It is not possible to say what the work's significance was.

MANUSCRIPTS

MS Cairo, Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate – Theol. 83 (Simaika 370,  
Graf 418), fols 111v-113v (1752)

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

**Herman G.B. Teule**

# Nicephorus

Nikēphoros

DATE OF BIRTH	Probably 10 <sup>th</sup> century
PLACE OF BIRTH	Unknown; maybe Constantinople
DATE OF DEATH	Unknown
PLACE OF DEATH	Unknown; maybe Constantinople

## BIOGRAPHY

Nicephorus was a priest in the church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. He is the author of the *Life* of St Andrew the fool, in which he says that he personally met the holy man and his pupil Epiphanius. Although the text suggests that Epiphanius is the patriarch of the same name who lived in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, we know from other passages that the version that has come down to us was finished in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. We do not know of any other works written by Nicephorus.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### *Primary*

- The Life of St Andrew the Fool*, ed. L. Rydén, 2 vols, Uppsala, 1995, ii, lines 87-95, 225-31, 394-421, 4388-400  
'Nicephori Presbyteri Constantinopolitani Vita Sancti Andreae Sali', ed. C. Jannings, in *PG* 111, cols 637, 648, 657-60, 888

### *Secondary*

- C. Ludwig, *Sonderformen byzantinischer Hagiographie und ihr literarisches Vorbild*, Frankfurt am Main, 1997, pp. 274-78  
*The Life of St Andrew the Fool*, ed. Rydén, i, pp. 57-71  
C. Mango, 'The Life of St Andrew the Fool reconsidered', *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Slavi*, 2 (1982) 297-313

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Bios kai politeia tou hosiou patros hēmōn Andreou tou dia Christon Salou*, 'The life and conduct of our holy father Andrew, the fool for the sake of Christ'

DATE 10<sup>th</sup> century  
 ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Greek

#### DESCRIPTION

The *Life of St Andrew* the fool is made up of a considerable number of episodes, more or less interconnected, that differ in respect of form and content. The text comprises 146 pages in the modern edition, and only a few references are relevant in one way or another to Christian-Muslim Relations.

In one episode, the devil is depicted as disguised as an Arab dressed in a black garment or an Arab merchant (*Life*, ll. 799-804 [col. 681BC]). In another episode, young Epiphanius, Andrew's pupil, is attacked by Satan 'in the shape of an old Arab with grey hair and fierce eyes, dressed in a black garment and wearing brick-coloured shoes' (*Life*, ll. 875-78 [col. 688A]). However, the ensuing conversation about this attack between Andrew and Epiphanius only refers to the devil and demons and how to prevent being trapped by them, not to Arabs or Islam.

The third and last reference we find within the apocalypse, Andrew's vision of the end of the world (see Rydén's studies for a detailed analysis of the apocalypse). The text is based on the apocalyptic tradition, but the author allows himself the latitude to combine various elements at his own discretion.

The first apocalyptic emperor is modelled after Constantine the Great and Leo III, who saved Constantinople from the Arab siege in 717-18. This emperor is said to humble the sons of Hagar, because the Lord will be angry with them (ll. 3833-40 [col. 856A]). He will persecute the Jews, and no Ishmaelite will be found within the city of Constantinople (ll. 3851-53 [col. 856B]).

The fifth apocalyptic (good) emperor, according to the text, will come from Arabia, but there is no indication that this bears any meaning for Christian-Muslim relations.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the work for Christian-Muslim relations is limited, because the work stands within the tradition of apocalyptic literature, and there is no clear reference to any contemporary event. In addition, the date of composition of the apocalypse cannot be narrowed down more closely than the period of the 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries, since the author of the *Vita* could have incorporated a text of an earlier date. On the other hand, according to the number of manuscripts,

the text was fairly widespread and it may therefore exemplify general Byzantine attitudes.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

More than 100 manuscripts are extant; see the survey in Rydén, *Life of St Andrew*, i, pp. 72-105, 151-81.

The oldest manuscript is a fragment of about 220 lines, written in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. All other manuscripts date from the 11<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

*The Life of St Andrew the Fool*, ed. Rydén, ii (text, trans. and notes; apocalypse ll. 3805-4127)

'Niceforo prete di Santa Sofia, Vita di Andrea Salos', in P. Cesaretti, *I santi folli di Bizanzio*, Milan, 1990, pp. 97-257 (Italian trans.; apocalypse pp. 236-47)

I. Monachus, *Hosios Andreas ho dia Christon Salos*, Athens, 1988 (modern Greek trans.)

L. Rydén, 'The Andreas Salos apocalypse. Greek text, translation and commentary', in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 28 (1974) 197-261

A.A. Vasiliev, *Anecdota graeco-byzantina*, vol. 1, Moscow, 1893, pp. 50-58 (apocalypse only)

*Nicephori Presbyteri Constantinopolitani Vita Sancti Andreae Sali*, in PG 111, cols 621-888 (with Latin trans.; apocalypse cols 852-73)

#### STUDIES

L. Simeonova, 'Zhitieto na sv. Andrej Yurodivi i mantalitetut na negoviya avtor', in V. Gyuzelev et al. (eds), *Kulturnite tekstove na minaloto. Nositeli, simvoli i idei, II: Tekstovete na kulta i religiyata. Materiali ot Yubileinata mezhdunarodna nauchna konferentsiya v chest na 60-godishninata na prof. d.i.n. Kazimir Popkonstantinov*, Veliko Turnovo, 29-31 oktombri 2003, Sofia, 2005, 109-19

A.M. Moldovan, "'The Life of St Andrew the Fool" in Slavonic literature', *Russian Linguistics* 26 (2002) 127-32

P. Magdalino, "'What we heard in the lives of the saints we have seen with our own eyes". The holy man as literary text in tenth-century Constantinople', in J. Howard-Johnstone and P.A. Hayward (eds), *The cult of saints in late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Essays on the contribution of Peter Brown*, Oxford, 1999, 83-112

C. Ludwig, *Sonderformen byzantinischer Hagiographie und ihr literarisches Vorbild*, Frankfurt am Main, 1997

- The Life of St Andrew the Fool*, Rydén, ii (text, translation and notes)
- A. Kazhdan and N. Patterson-Ševčenko, art. 'Andrew the Fool', in *ODB*
- Mango, 'The Life of St. Andrew the Fool reconsidered'
- L. Rydén, 'The date of the Life of Andreas Salos', *DOP* 32 (1978) 127-55
- Rydén, 'The Andreas Salos apocalypse. Greek text, translation and commentary'
- L. Rydén, 'Zum Aufbau der Andreas-Salos-Apokalypse', *Eranos* 66 (1968) 101-17

**Claudia Ludwig**



## *Kitāb al-burhān fī l-dīn*

### BIOGRAPHY

While *Kitāb al-burhān fī l-dīn*, ‘The book of demonstration on religion’, is the first work in a well-known collection of 33 treatises (mostly) by Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī (q.v.) and is explicitly attributed to this renowned ‘Jacobite’ Christian philosopher-theologian, study of the work shows this attribution to be impossible. At the present stage of research, nothing can be said about the actual author of the work, apart from the fact that he was a Christian.

### MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

*Primary* —

*Secondary* —

### WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Kitāb al-burhān fī l-dīn*, ‘Demonstration on religion’; *Kitāb al-burhān*, ‘Demonstration’

DATE Unknown; possibly 10<sup>th</sup> century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

### DESCRIPTION

The author of *Kitāb al-burhān fī l-dīn*, ‘The book of demonstration on religion’ (the title found in the manuscripts’ table of contents) is unknown. Although the text’s *explicit* is clear (*Kitāb al-burhān li-Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī*), the *incipit* is ambiguous and seems to refer to a translation of a book written by a Father of the Church, rather than an original work to be attributed to Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī: *Nabtadi’ . . . bi-tarjamat kitāb al-ab al-qiddīs al-muqaddim fī ‘ulūm dīn al-Naṣrāniyya, al-musammā Kitāb al-burhān*: ‘We begin translating the book [written] by the holy father, excellent in the sciences of the Christian religion, called *The book of demonstration*’. This book, in seven discourses, cannot be attributed to Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī, as the content is radically different from everything we know from this author. The work may be a composite; Platti has suggested that the fifth discourse (a Christian cosmology) may perhaps have come from a Syriac original (Platti, ‘Cosmologie’,

pp. 76-77), while Swanson has suggested that the sixth discourse (on Christ as the second Adam) is a clumsy miaphysite reworking of an originally Melkite text (Swanson, 'Some considerations', p. 127).

A large part of the fourth discourse consists of a refutation of Islam, based on the scriptures: Muḥammad is not the Paraclete; he received the Qur'an, which is similar to the Torah, though the circumcision of women, practiced in Islam, is not in the Torah; there is a great difference between Christ's dying on the Cross and the *razzia* and martyrdom 'in the path of God' [in Islam]; in Q 19:33 ('the day I die') is a clear reference to Christ's death; Christ has really been crucified; after the Torah, the Gospel announced the Kingdom of God and there is no place for another Law.

The *Book of the demonstration* is only extant in manuscripts of a collection of 33 treatises attributed to Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī; in fact, it opens the collection.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The compilation that is *The book of demonstration* is in need of further study. Only when we can say more about the significance of the compilation as a whole will it be possible to say much about the section devoted to a refutation of Islam.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

*The book of the demonstration* is the first treatise in a collection of 33 treatises attributed to Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī and preserved in the following MSS:

MS Eastern Desert, Egypt, Monastery of St Anthony – Theol. 130 (1570)

MS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate – Theol. 184 (Simaika 400, Graf 641) (1783)

MS Eastern Desert, Egypt, Monastery of St Anthony – Theol. 129 (1788)

MS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate – Theol. 183 (Simaika 526, Graf 642) (1875; copy of St Anthony – Theol. 129)

MS Dayr al-Muḥarraḡ, Egypt – Theol. 37 (1848)

MS Wādī Naṭrūn, Egypt, Monastery of St Bishoi – Theol. 303 (1882) (copy of Coptic Patriarchate – Theol. 184)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

E. Platti, 'Une cosmologie chrétienne', *MIDEO* 15 (1982) 75-118 (introduction and edition of the fifth discourse, on the basis of the Coptic Patriarchate MSS)

- E. Platti, 'Le Christ, deuxième Adam, dans le *Kitāb al-Burhān* attribué à Yahyā ibn 'Adī', in P. Cramer (ed.), *Mélanges Antoine Guillaumont*, Genève, 1988, 263-70 (introduction and partial edition of the sixth discourse, on the basis of the Coptic Patriarchate MSS)

## STUDIES

- M.N. Swanson, 'Some considerations for the dating of *Fī tathlīth Allāh al-waḥīd* (Sinai Ar. 154) and *al-Ġāmi' wuḡūh al-īmān* (London, British Library or. 4950)', *Pd'O* 18 (1993) 115-41, pp. 126-28
- Endress, *Inventory*, p. 105, no. 8.18
- Platti, 'Deux manuscrits', p. 218, no. 1

**Emilio Platti**

# Ibn al-Khammār

Abū l-Khayr al-Ḥasan ibn Suwār ibn Bābā ibn Bahnām,  
Ibn al-Khammār

DATE OF BIRTH November-December 942  
PLACE OF BIRTH Baghdad  
DATE OF DEATH After 1017  
PLACE OF DEATH Ghazna

## BIOGRAPHY

Abū l-Khayr al-Ḥasan ibn Suwār, known as Ibn al-Khammār, was an East Syrian philosopher and medical doctor in Baghdad who, together with the West Syrian Ibn Zur'a (q.v.), belonged to the philosophical circles around Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī (q.v.), whose (critical) pupil he was. According to Ibn al-Nadīm, he was a prolific author and wrote several philosophical and medical books, as well as works on natural science. He was also active as translator from Syriac into Arabic. Al-Tawḥīdī praises the accurateness and elegance of his translations. Ibn al-Nadīm, who seems to have known him personally, characterizes him as one of the best logicians of his time. Ibn Abī Uṣaybī'a mentions him among the surgeons of the prestigious 'Adudī hospital in Baghdād. According to Zāhīr al-Dīn al-Bayhaqī, Ibn al-Khammār spent the last years of his life in Khwārizm and in Ghazna, where he converted to Islam.

As a (Christian) philosopher in Baghdad, Ibn al-Khammār was actively engaged in philosophical and theological discussions with Muslim *mutakallimūn* on the knowledge of God (is it intuitive or by inference?) and the notion of *al-muḥdath* ('what is created'), where he preferred the insights of the *falāsifa* to those of the *mutakallimūn* (see Lewin, 'La notion', and cf. the title of his *Kitāb al-tawfīq*, mentioned below).

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-fihrist*, ed. G. Flügel, Leipzig, 1871 (English trans. B. Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm. A tenth-century survey of Muslim culture*, New York, 1970, pp. 632-33, 590)

- Abū Sulaymān Muḥammad al-Sijistānī, *Muntakhab Ṣiḡwān al-ḥikma*, ed. D.M. Dunlop, The Hague, 1979, pp. 144-45, 156-57
- Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, *Al-imtā' wa-l-mu'ānasa*, ed. Aḥmad Amīn and Aḥmad al-Zayn, Cairo, 1953 (cf. Kraemer, *infra*, 125)
- Ibn Abī Uṣaybī'a, 'Uyūn al-anbā', i, pp. 322-24
- Al-Bayhaqī, Ḥaḥīr al-Dīn, *Tatimmat ṣiḡwān al-ḥikma*, ed. M. Shafī', fasc. 1, Lahore, 1935, pp. 12-14
- Al-Shahrazūrī, Shams al-Dīn, *Nuzhat al-arwāḥ wa-rawḍat al-afrāḥ fī ta'rikh al-ḥukamā' wa-l-falāsifa* (cf. Kraemer, *infra*, 124)

*Secondary*

- I.M. Turkī, *Ibn al-Khammār. Faylasūf min al-qarn al-rābi' al-hijrī*, Alexandria, 2005
- B. Landron, *Chrétiens et musulmans*, pp. 94-95
- J.L. Kraemer, *Humanism in the renaissance of Islam. The cultural revival during the Buyid age*, Leiden, 1986, pp. 123-30 and *passim*
- E. Platti, *Yahyā ibn 'Adī. Théologien chrétien et philosophe arabe*, Louvain, 1983 (*Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 14), pp. 10, 14, 19-26
- H. Wolfson, *The philosophy of the kalām*, Cambridge MA, 1976, pp. 393-94
- P. Khoury and R. Caspar, 'Ibn Suwār dit Ibn al-Ḥammār Abū l-Ḥayr al-Ḥasan b. Suwār b. Bābā b. Bahnām', in 'Bibliographie', *Islamochristiana* 1 (1975) 152-69, p. 169 (no. 12.32)
- M. Ullmann, *Die Medizin im Islam*, Leiden, 1970 (*Handbuch der Orientalistik, Erste Abteilung Der Nahe und der Mittlere Osten. Ergänzungsband* 6.1), pp. 85, 95, 227
- Sezgin, *GAS* iii, pp. 322-23
- R. Walzer, *Greek into Arabic*, Cambridge MA, 1962, pp. 66, 69-77, 81-83
- M. Allard, 'Les chrétiens à Bagdad', *Arabica* 9 (1962) 375-88, pp. 385-86
- B. Lewin, 'L'idéal antique du philosophe dans la tradition arabe. Un traité d'éthique du philosophe Bagdadien Ibn Suwār', *Lychnos. Annual of the Swedish History of Science Society* (1954-55) 267-84
- B. Lewin, 'La notion de *muḥdaṭ* dans le kalām et dans la philosophie. Un petit traité inédit du philosophe chrétien Ibn Suwār', *Orientalia Suecana* 3 (1954) 84-93
- Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 156-57
- M. Meyerhof, *Von Alexandrien nach Bagdad. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des philosophischen und medizinischen Unterrichts bei den Arabern*, Berlin, 1930

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Maqāla fī l-tawḥīd wa-l-tathlīth*, 'Treatise on the Unity and Trinity [of God]'DATE Late 10<sup>th</sup> to early 11<sup>th</sup> century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

No information is available about this work. It is not mentioned in any of the bio-bibliographical sources on Ibn al-Khammār mentioned above.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Since nothing is known about this work, it is not possible to say anything about it except that it could have been a comparison between Muslim and Christian perceptions of God or else a demonstration that Christian Trinitarian teachings did not contradict monotheism.

## MANUSCRIPTS

MS Aleppo, Jirji Sharr Collection (inaccessible MS in private collection, perhaps lost; see Sbath, *Fihris* i, p. 42, no. 298)

EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

*Kitāb al-tawfīq bayna arā' al-falāsifa wa-l-Naṣāra*, *Kitāb al-wifāq bayna ra'y al-falāsifa wa-l-Naṣāra*, 'The concordance of the views of the philosophers and the Christians'

DATE Late 10<sup>th</sup> to early 11<sup>th</sup> century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

Nothing can be said about this text other than what can be gathered from its title: that Ibn al-Khammār intends to show that Christian teaching – or, at least, the teaching of particular Christian teachers – is compatible with the insights of philosophy.

## SIGNIFICANCE

In the absence of any text of the work, it is not possible to say anything about the work's significance.

## MANUSCRIPTS

MS Aleppo, Jirjī Sharr Collection (inaccessible MS in private collection, perhaps lost; see Sbath, *Fihris* i, p. 42, no. 297)

MS Aleppo, Qusṭantīn Khuḍarī Collection (15<sup>th</sup> century; inaccessible MS in private collection, now lost; see Sbath, *Fihris* iii, p. 176, no. 2258)

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

**Herman G.B. Teule**

# Bartholomew the Younger

Bartholomaios hēgoumenos, Bartholomaios ho neos,  
Batholomaeus abbas, Bartholomaeus iunior,  
Bartholomew the abbot

DATE OF BIRTH    Approximately 980  
PLACE OF BIRTH    Calabria; probably Rossano  
DATE OF DEATH    Approximately 1050/55  
PLACE OF DEATH    Grottaferrata

## BIOGRAPHY

Bartholomew the Younger was born about 980 in Calabria, probably at Rossano. According to his *Vita*, at the age of 12 he became a spiritual disciple of Nilus of Rossano (though this could be a hagiographical topos). In about the year 1000, he accompanied his teacher to Montecassino and Serperi near Gaeta in Campania. In 1003/04, Nilus decided to found a monastery at Grottaferrata, and Bartholomew was apparently supervisor of the construction; for this reason he is later referred to as 'founder'. When Nilus died on 26 September 1004, Bartholomew buried his body in the apse of the new monastery church, though the construction of the church was not finished until 1024.

Bartholomew himself became the fourth abbot of the monastery in about 1040/45, though we do not know exactly when he died. According to his *Vita*, his corpse was buried next to the tomb of Nilus. As was often the practice in the Greek Orthodox Church, Bartholomew was canonized in recognition of having founded the monastery and of composing hymns, which were highly esteemed by the Greeks of southern Italy. His relics remained at Grottaferrata until the 13<sup>th</sup> century, when they were lost.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### *Primary*

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G. Giovanelli, *San Bartolomeo Juniore, confondatore di Grottaferrata*, Grottaferrata, 1962 (Italian trans.)

PG 127, cols 475-98



*Secondary*

- F. Burgarella (ed.), *San Nilo di Rossano e l'Abbazia greca di Grottaferrata*, Rome, 2009
- Paroli (ed.), *La Vita di San Bartolomeo di Grottaferrata*, pp. 35-102
- S. Parenti, *Il monastero di Grottaferrata nel Medioevo (1004-1462)*, Rome, 2005, pp. 201-42, 282-89
- Giovanelli, *San Bartolomeo Juniore, confondatore di Grottaferrata*
- H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich*, Munich, 1959, pp. 552, 607-8
- G. Giovanelli, 'Ancora sull'autore della vita di S. Nilo', *Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata* n.s. 5 (1951) 111-21
- G. Giovanelli, 'L'ultimo grande innografo-melode italo-greco, S. Bartolomeo confondatore e IV egumeno di Grottaferrata', *Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata* n.s. 5 (1951) 189-200
- G. Giovanelli, 'Sull'autore della vita di S. Nilo', *Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata* n.s. 3 (1949) 163-73

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Bios kai politeia tou hosiou patros hēmōn Neilou tou Neou*, 'Life and conduct of our holy father Nilus the Younger', 'Life of St Nilus'

DATE After 26 September 1004

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Greek

## DESCRIPTION

According to the *Vita*, Nilus was born into a wealthy family in Rossano, Calabria, in 910. He received a thorough education and so was familiar with poetry and classical literature. He married and had children but, against both secular and canonical law, in about 940 he fled from Rossano and founded a spiritual congregation in central Calabria. He became a hermit, but had to move because of frequent Arab attacks. He returned to Rossano, but increasing Arab attacks after 980 compelled him to move again. He eventually died in 1004 in the newly founded monastery of Sant'Agata in Tusculum. In 1005, his corpse was transferred to the abbey of Grottaferrata (Latium), which became the center of Greek monasticism in Italy.

The Arabs feature twice in the *Vita*. A first wave of Arab attacks is recorded in the decade between 950 and 960, at which time three Byzantine monks were caught by a gang of Arabs and taken into slavery

in Sicily. At that time, Nilus must have been known by the Muslim authorities in Palermo, because after he wrote to the emir the monks were immediately set free. Here Nilus calls the Muslims *Sarakēnoi* as well as *Agarēnoi*, without any apparent difference in meaning.

The *Vita* also mentions a second wave of attacks after 980, as part of a wider military struggle between several groups and nations. The Arab invaders from Libya evidently would not allow Nilus and his followers to remain in Calabria, perhaps because he was known throughout southern Italy.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The *Vita* is of great importance for the history of Greek monasticism in southern Italy and its reorganization after the decline of Byzantine influence. It also reflects a political situation that was unstable, especially after Sicily came under Arab domination. Numerous Arab raids and attacks were conducted thanks to the power vacuum left by the political rivalry between Byzantium and the Lombards. And the situation obviously changed: while, before 960, Nilus could free three fellow monks by simply writing to the emir of Palermo, in the 980s there was no communication between the two sides, and the aged Nilus was forced to leave Calabria and settle far away where this 'diabolical' enemy would never come.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS Grottaferrata – B. β. II [430] (12<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Paris, BNF – Suppl. Gr. 106, fols 1-118v (16<sup>th</sup> century)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

A. Rocchi, *Vita di San Nilo abate, fondatore della Badia di Grottaferrata*, Cosenza, 2004 (Italian trans.)

*Bios kai politeia tou hosiou patros hēmōn Neilou tou Neou*, ed.

G. Giovanelli, Badia di Grottaferrata, 1972

G. Giovanelli, *Vita di S. Nilo, fondatore e patrono di Grottaferrata*, Grottaferrata, 1966 (Italian trans.)

#### STUDIES

F. Burgarella (ed.), *San Nilo di Rossano e l'Abbazia greca di Grottaferrata*, Rome, 2009

F. Burgarella, 'Monaci e santi greci nella Sila greca', in A.M. Adorasio (ed.), *Longobucco dal mito alla storia. Testimonianze e studi in memoria di Mons. Giuseppe De Capua*, San Giovanni in Fiore, 2008, 117-33

- Parenti, *Il monastero di Grottaferrata nel Medioevo (1004-1462)*, pp. 81-163
- G. Passarelli, *Nilus of Rossano. Besieged by the divine*, Fairfax VA, 2001
- E. Follieri, 'Per una nuova edizione della Vita di San Nilo da Rossano', *Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata*, n.s. 51 (1997) 71-92
- F. Mosino, 'La vita niliana e il grecanico dell'Italia meridionale', *Archivio storico per la Calabria e la Lucania* 53 (1986) 5-14
- P. Giannini, 'S. Nilo, fondatore della Badia greca di Grottaferrata e la sua prima comunità ai piedi di Montecassino', in P. Tamburrino (ed.), *S. Benedetto e l'Oriente cristiano. Atti del Simposio tenuto all'abbazia della Novalesa, 19-23 maggio 1980*, Novalesa, 1981, 217-26
- O. Rousseau, 'La visite de Nil de Rossano au Mont-Cassin', in *La Chiesa greca in Italia dell' VIII al XVI secolo*, III, Padua, 1972, 111-37
- E. Eickhoff, *Seekrieg und Seepolitik zwischen Islam und dem Abendland. Das Mittelmeer unter byzantinischer und arabischer Hegemonie (650-1040)*, Berlin, 1966, pp. 300-15, 357-75
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- Giovanelli, 'Sull'autore della vita di S. Nilo'
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**Lars Martin Hoffman**

## Al-Shābushtī

Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Shābushtī  
(or Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn Ishāq)

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown  
PLACE OF BIRTH Probably Iraq  
DATE OF DEATH 999 or 1008  
PLACE OF DEATH Cairo

### BIOGRAPHY

Al-Shābushtī is said to have descended from a Daylamī family in the service of the Būyids. All that is known with certainty of his life before he became the librarian of the Fatimid Caliph al-ʿAzīz (r. 975-96) is that he spent some time in Basra, studying with a scholar of the history of the Prophet's family who was also a keen music-lover (*Al-diyārāt*, p. 269). Given his knowledge of the Iraqi literary scene and Abbasid culture, and his apparently first-hand acquaintance with many of the monasteries he writes of, he probably grew up in Iraq and then, like many Iraqi secretaries of the time, moved to Cairo to further his career.

Al-ʿAzīz had a magnificent library, and the fact that al-Shābushtī was put in charge of it indicates how much his culture and learning were appreciated. As the royal librarian, he will have known ʿĪsā ibn Naṣṭūrus, a Christian *kātib* who was al-ʿAzīz's last vizier. Conceivably, he compiled the *Kitāb al-diyārāt* for this dignitary, but since the book's preface, which would have indicated a dedication or commission, is lost, this can only be speculation.

Seven works by al-Shābushtī are named: his collected poems, a collection of letters, *Al-yusr ba'd al-'usr* ('Ease after distress'), *Kitāb fī l-zuhd wa-l-mawā'iz* ('On asceticism and admonitions'), *Marātib al-fuqahā'* ('The ranks of jurists'), *Al-tawqīf wa-l-takhwīf* ('Restraint and intimidation'), and *Al-diyārāt* ('Monasteries'). This last is the only book to have survived.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

*Primary*

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Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān* iii, pp. 319-20

Al-Ṣafadī, *Al-wāfi bi-l-wafayāt*, Istanbul, 1949, ii, p. 194

*Secondary*

E. Rowson, art. 'al-Shābushtī', in J. Meisami and P. Starkey (eds), *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, London, 1999

C.E. Bosworth, art. 'al-Shābushtī', in *EI2*

Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-ma'rūf bi-l-Shābushtī, *Al-diyārāt*, ed. K. 'Awwād, Baghdad, 1966<sup>2</sup>, pp. 19-30 (editor's introduction)

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Kitāb al-diyārāt*, *Al-diyārāt*, 'The book of monasteries', 'The monasteries'

DATE Unknown, but probably after 975

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The *Diyārāt* as published by Kūrki's 'Awwād runs to 313 pages of printed text (with footnotes), reproducing the Berlin unicum. The beginning of the manuscript is lost; thus the preface explaining the author's reasons and aim in writing the book is lacking. The date of writing is unknown, but since it refers to al-'Azīz as caliph (p. 289), the book was probably written after 975, when he acceded to the caliphate (unless his title is a later scribal addition).

It contains sections on 53 monasteries: 34 in Iraq, four in the Jazīra, six in Syria and Palestine, one in Sinai and eight in Egypt. In the main part, the arrangement is geographical, starting from the monasteries in Baghdad, going north up the Tigris into the Jazīra, coming down through Syria and along the Euphrates to Kūfa and then south of Baghdad, with the Egyptian monasteries at the end. A concluding part is on monasteries where miracles, especially of healing, occur.

In the *Diyārāt*, al-Shābushtī brings together poetry and narratives by earlier Arab Muslim authors; his own contribution is that of the compiler. By the 10<sup>th</sup> century, *adab* compilation had become an art in which material drawn from different sources could acquire enhanced meaning by being placed in a given context.

Each monastery's geographical location, a description of its setting, the reason for its name and often its feast day are given first. Then poetry, anecdotes and sometimes historical reports connected with it are quoted. Much of the poetry describes the beauty of the monasteries' surroundings, pleasant outings to them with friends and meetings with lovers, and enjoyment of the hospitality the monks provide and the wine they produce. But other genres, such as elegies and reflections on the vicissitudes of fate, are also found.

The anecdotes may serve as introductions to the poetry, but they often provide valuable information about Muslim dignitaries who visited monasteries. Not only their contacts with monks and other Christians, but sometimes important moments in their careers unconnected with monasteries are related; the most striking example of this is the lengthy section tracing, in reverse chronological order, the lives of three generations of the Ṭāhirids (pp. 107-48). Since the monasteries go back to pre-Islamic times, a few Christian rulers of al-Ḥira are referred to as well. Many of the anecdotes portraying court life and the secretaries' milieu contain reflections on the use and fleeting nature of power. The role of monasteries as sites of shrines and centers of healing is also illustrated.

Examples of other prose genres, letters and speeches are quoted in connection with some events and personalities.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Al-Shābushtī's *Al-diyārāt* belonged to a small group of compilations by Muslim authors of the 10<sup>th</sup> century which convey the image of monasteries as celebrated by poets and perceived by cultured court circles. The presence of Christians and monasteries is accepted as a fact of life; religious polemic is absent. But the interaction between Muslims and Christians often betrays awareness on both sides that Christians belong to a socially inferior community. The only trace of the religious life lived in monasteries is to be found in a few descriptions (always appreciative) of churches and festival services, while some ascetic poetry propagates an attitude of renouncing the world.

A study of the historical references in *Al-diyārāt* shows that, as portrayed in elite urban culture, the connection of monasteries with Arab rulers, from pre-Islamic Christian founders to Abbasid Muslim occasional patrons, changed and became less direct in the course of time. The standing of monasteries in literature, however, was unaffected by this.

Al-Shābushtī's *Al-diyārāt* continued to be quoted from in geographical works and belles-lettres anthologies for several centuries after its composition.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Ahlwardt 8321 (1234; incomplete)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

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A.-M. Eddé, F. Micheau and C. Picard, *Communautés chrétiennes en pays d'Islam du début du VII<sup>e</sup> siècle au milieu du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris 1997, pp. 203-6 (trans. of section on monasteries in Baghdad)

L. Capezone, *Il libro dei monasteri*, Milan, 1993 (partial trans.)  
*Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-ma'rūf bi-l-Shābushtī, Al-diyārāt*, ed. K. 'Awwād, Baghdad, 1951; 2nd revised edition, Baghdad, 1966; 3rd edition (? reprint), Beirut 1986

*Vom Klosterbuch des Shābushtī*, tr. E. Sachau, Berlin, 1919 (repr. in *Texts and studies on the historical geography and topography of Iraq, collected and reprinted*, ed. F. Sezgin, Frankfurt, 1993; partial trans.)

#### STUDIES

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K. Zakharia, 'Le moine et l'échanson, ou le Kitāb al-Diyārāt d'al-Šābushtī et ses lecteurs', *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 53 (2001-2) 59-73

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Bosworth, art. 'al-Shābushtī'

G. Troupeau, 'Les couvents chrétiens dans la littérature arabe', *La Nouvelle Revue du Caire* 1 (1975) 265-79 (repr. in G. Troupeau, *Études sur le christianisme arabe au moyen âge*, Aldershot UK, 1995, no. XX)

'Awwād (ed.), *Al-diyārāt*, pp. 31-35 (editor's introduction)

D. Sourdel, art. 'Dayr', in *EI*2

Brockelmann, *GAL* S i, p. 411 (*pace* the indices, al-Shābushtī is not mentioned in *GAL* i)

A.S. Atiya, 'Some Egyptian monasteries according to the unpublished MS. of al-Shābushtī's "Kitāb al-Diyārāt"', *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 5 (1939) 1-28

**Hilary Kilpatrick**



# Ibn Zur'a

Abū 'Alī 'Īsā ibn Iṣḥāq ibn Zur'a ibn Marqus ibn Zur'a  
ibn Yūḥannā

DATE OF BIRTH 943  
PLACE OF BIRTH Baghdad  
DATE OF DEATH 1008  
PLACE OF DEATH Baghdad

## BIOGRAPHY

The Jacobite Ibn Zur'a was one of the best-known students of the celebrated Christian Arab writer Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī (q.v.), with whom he studied physics, mathematics, philosophy and literature. He was a merchant who traded with the Byzantines and suffered the jealousy of Syrian merchants, but he was also an expert on philosophy and logic, and a distinguished translator of works on logic and medicine from Syriac into Arabic. Among these should be mentioned his *Kitāb Yahyā l-Naḥwī l-Iskandarānī fī tafsīr Kitāb Jālīnūs fī manfa'at al-a'dā'*, several works of Aristotle such as 'The Book of the animals', and five treatises of Nicholas of Damascus on the 'Philosophy' of Aristotle.

He may also have practiced as a physician, and was regarded as a considerable commentator on difficult passages of the New Testament according to Jacobite doctrine. His commentaries are more theological and philosophical than exegetical.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī, *Siwān al-ḥikma wa-thalāth rasa'il*, ed. 'A.-R. Badawī, Tehran, 1947, pp. 333-35

Ibn al-Nadīm, *Al-fihrist*, ed. Y. 'Alī Ṭawīl, Beirut, 1996, p. 425

Al-Qiftī, *Tārīkh al-ḥukamā'*, pp. 245-46

Ibn Abī Uṣaybī'a, *'Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, ed. N. Riḍā, Beirut, 1965, pp. 318-19

Al-Bayhaqī, *Tatimmat ṣiwān al-ḥikma*, Lahore, 1932, pp. 66-69

Bar Hebraeus, *Tārīkh mukhtaṣar al-duwal*, ed. A. Ṣāliḥānī, Beirut, 1890, p. 315

*Secondary*

- L.E. Goodman, 'The translation of Greek materials into Arabic', in M.J.L. Young et al. (eds), *The Cambridge history of Arabic literature. Religion, learning and science in the 'Abbasid period*, Cambridge, 1990, 477-97, pp. 493-94
- C. Haddad, 'Īsā ibn Zur'ā, philosophe arabe et apologiste chrétien du X<sup>e</sup> siècle, Beirut, 1971
- E.I. Youssif, *La floraison des philosophes syriaques*, Paris, 2003, pp. 215-19
- G. Anawati, *Al-Masīhiyya wa-l-ḥadāra al-'arabiyya*, Cairo, 1992, pp. 331-37
- J.L. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam. The cultural revival during the Buyid age*, Leiden, 1986, pp. 116-23
- M. Ullman, *Die Medizin im Islam*, Leiden, 1970, p. 90
- S. Pines, 'La loi naturelle et la société. La doctrine politico-théologique d'Ibn Zur'ā, philosophe chrétien de Bagdad', in U. Heyd (ed.), *Studies in Islamic history and civilisation*, Jerusalem, 1961, 154-90
- I.A. Barsoum, *The scattered pearls. A history of Syriac literature and sciences*, trans. M. Moosa, Piscataway NJ, 2003, pp. 413-14

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Maqāla 'an al-tāthlīth*, 'Treatise on the Trinity'

DATE 979

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

This brief treatise on the key Christian doctrine of the Trinity was composed by Ibn Zur'ā according to Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī's model of the three Persons as 'intellect'-'intelligent'-'intelligible', *'aql-āqil-ma'qūl*.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The work attests to the continuing debates between Christians and Muslims in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, and to the need for Christians to find means of explaining their doctrine in ways that Muslim interlocutors would find comprehensible and compelling. His use of his master's analogy was one of the first among many that came after among Christian apologists.

## MANUSCRIPTS

MS Aleppo – Sbath 1130, 12 (1231; lost)

MS Vat – Ar. 127, fols 87v-94v (1233)

MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 174, fols 67r-72v (13<sup>th</sup> century)MS Aleppo, Fondation Georges et Mathilde Salem – Ar. 237 (Sbath 1039), 72-78 (13<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate – Theol. 224 (Simaika 363, Graf 644), fols 144r-147v (1744)

MS Cairo, Coptic Museum – Theol. 200 (Simaika 77, Graf 114), fols 57v-61v (1817)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

P. Sbath (ed.), *Vingt traités philosophiques et apologétiques d'auteurs arabes chrétiens du IX<sup>e</sup> au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Cairo, 1929, pp. 68-75

#### STUDIES

F. del Río Sánchez, *Catalogue des manuscrits de la foundation Georges et Mathilde Salem (Alep, Syrie)*, Wiesbaden, 2008, pp. 132-33, 335

Anawati, *Al-Masīḥiyya*, p. 333

Kraemer, *Humanism in the renaissance of Islam*, pp. 118-19

R. Caspar et al., 'Bibliographie', *Islamochristiana* 1 (1975) p. 168

G. Troupeau, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes. Première partie: Manuscrits chrétiens*, Paris, 2 vols, 1972-74, i, p. 150

G. Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 252-53

G. Graf, *Die christlich-arabische Literatur bis zur fränkischen Zeit (ende des 11. Jahrhunderts)*, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1905, p. 52

*Risāla fī ma'ānin sa'alahu 'anhā ba'd ikhwānihi,*  
 'Epistle on the meanings about which one of his  
 brothers asked him'

DATE 989

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

This letter or treatise, which is addressed to a Muslim friend, is concerned with God's essential attributes of knowledge and power, as well as his active attributes (*ṣifāt al-fi'l*) and the transcendent mystery of God.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

As in his other works, Ibn Zur'ā readily resorts to the use of theological and philosophical analogies to explain the Christian concept of the Godhead.

## MANUSCRIPTS

MS Vat – Ar. 127, fols 5r-15r

MS Aleppo, Fondation Georges et Mathilde Salem – Ar. 237 (Sbath 1039), fols 1v-6v (13<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 173, 2, fols 109r-113r (14<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 174, fols 1v-10v (14<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate – Theol. 224 (Simaika 363, Graf 644) fols 102–108) (1744)

MS Aleppo, Fondation Georges et Mathilde Salem – Ar. 238 (Sbath 1040) (1787)

MS Cairo, Coptic Museum – Theol. 200 (Simaika 77, Graf 114), fols 6r–14r (1817)

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

Sbath, *Vingt traités*, pp. 6-19

## STUDIES

Río Sánchez, *Catalogue*, pp. 132-34

Anawati, *Al-Masīhiyya*, p. 333

Caspar et al., 'Bibliographie', p. 168

Troupeau, *Catalogue*, i, pp. 148, 150

Graf, *GCAL* ii, p. 253

Graf, *Die christlich-arabische Literatur*, p. 52

*Radd Abī l-Qāsim 'Abdallāh ibn Aḥmad al-Balkhī  
'alā l-Naṣārā fī kitābihi l-musammā Awā'il  
al-adilla, 'Abū l-Qāsim 'Abdallāh ibn Aḥmad  
al-Balkhī's refutation of the Christians in his  
book entitled "Fundamentals of the proofs"*

DATE 997

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The work replies to selected arguments that appeared in a lost theological compendium of the early 9<sup>th</sup>-century Baghdad Mu'tazilī Abū l-Qāsim al-Balkhī (d. 931) (q.v.). They include attacks on the Trinity, the anthropomorphization of God (*tashbīh*) through comparing him with creatures, and the prophethood of Muḥammad. By the

10<sup>th</sup> century, all these topics had become familiar features of debates between Christians and Muslims.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Ibn Zur'ā employs arguments from his own Baghdad intellectual circle, to which both Muslims and Christians belonged, dismissing al-Balkhī's objections with answers that reflect the philosophical principles that he and his colleagues would accept as norms. The fact that he thought it necessary or appropriate to refute a work that had been written over 60 years earlier, and in a theological mode that he and many contemporary philosophically-inclined intellectuals would not accept as cogent, suggests unease with continuing Muslim pressure and a sense that a proper reply to insistent criticisms was required.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS Vat – Ar. 127, fols 42v-55v

MS Vat – Ar. 135, fols 22r-29v

MS Aleppo, Fondation Georges et Mathilde Salem – Ar. 237 (Sbath 1039), fols 31v-38r (13<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 174, fols 53v-66v (14<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate – Theol. 224 (Simaika 363, Graf 644), fols 136v-144r (1744)

MS Aleppo, Fondation Georges et Mathilde Salem – Ar. 238 (Sbath 1040), (1787)

MS Cairo, Coptic Museum – Theol. 200 (Simaika 77, Graf 114), fols 48r-57r (1817)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

Sbath, *Vingt traités*, pp. 52-68

#### STUDIES

Río Sánchez, *Catalogue*, pp. 132-33

Anawati, *Al-Masīhiyya*, p. 333

Troupeau, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes*, i, p. 150

Graf, *GCAL* ii, 254

Graf, *Die christlich-arabische Literatur*, pp. 52-53

**Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala**

# Abū Ḥakīm (Ḥalīm) Yūsuf al-Buḥayrī

DATE OF BIRTH 10<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF BIRTH Mayyāfāriqīn  
DATE OF DEATH Late 10<sup>th</sup> or early 11<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF DEATH Unknown

## BIOGRAPHY

Abū Ḥakīm belonged to the East Syrian ('Nestorian') community. In 996-97, he entertained a lively correspondence with the West Syrian ('Jacobite') translator, philosopher and theologian Abū 'Alī 'Īsā ibn Iṣḥāq ibn Zur'a (q.v.) on various biblical and internal Christian theological issues.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### *Primary*

The text of Ibn Zur'a's answer (with the name of the addressee and the dates of the correspondence) is preserved in several manuscripts, listed by Graf (GCAL ii, pp. 253-54).

### *Secondary*

B. Landron, *Chrétiens et musulmans*, Paris, 1994, p. 95  
Graf, GCAL ii, pp. 157-58, 253-54

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Radd 'alā kitāb Abī l-Qāsim 'Abdallāh  
ibn Aḥmad al-Bāghī*, 'Refutation of the  
work of Abū l-Qāsim 'Abdallāh  
ibn Aḥmad al-Bāghī' (sic)

DATE 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> century  
ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

### DESCRIPTION

This work ascribed to Abū Ḥakīm is only preserved in the MS referred to in Sbath, *Fihris*, p. 258. It is probable that it is identical with Ibn

Zur'ās refutation of the *Awā'il al-adilla* composed by Abū l-Qāsim 'Abdallah ibn Aḥmad al-Balkhī (q.v.).

## SIGNIFICANCE

It is not possible to specify the significance of the work.

## MANUSCRIPTS

Aleppo, Karkūr Sā'igh Collection (inaccessible MS in private collection; see Sbath, *Fihris* i, p. 36, no. 258)

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

## STUDIES

Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 157-58

Sbath, *Fihris* i, p. 36

**Herman G.B. Teule**

# *Against Muḥammad*

Unknown Author

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown; 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> century

PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown

DATE OF DEATH Unknown; 11<sup>th</sup> century

PLACE OF DEATH Unknown

## BIOGRAPHY

Nothing is known about this author, except that he had wide access to Greek works on Islam and used them judiciously.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### *Primary*

*Kata Mōamed*, PG 104, cols 1447-58

### *Secondary*

A.-T. Khoury, *Les théologiens byzantins et l'islam. Textes et auteurs (VIII<sup>e</sup>-XIII<sup>e</sup> s.)*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Louvain, 1969, pp. 194-99

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

### *Kata Mōamed*, 'Against Muḥammad'

DATE Uncertain; probably 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Greek

## DESCRIPTION

Despite its title, this work is not so much a polemic against the person of the Prophet of Islam as an attempt to give a minimum of knowledge about his life and teachings. In Khoury's view, its core goes back to the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> century; this seems probable from the sources the author uses and from the fact that the work of Ethymius Zigabenus (11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century) was unknown to him. Modifying Khoury's analysis, the treatise consists of five parts and one later addition: After a brief introduction (PG, col. 1448, B) about the names of the Arabs (Saracens, Ismaelites, Hagarenes), Muḥammad's origin and life up to the death of his first wife are related (cols 1448 B-1449 C). A first



passage concerning his teaching follows (to col. 1452 A), in which it is explained that in composing his Qur'an, Muḥammad adapted the teachings of Jews, Arians and Nestorians to the mentality of the nomadic Arabs ('herdsmen free from sorrows', *boskētoi apēmantoi*). Further details about Muḥammad's life appear (cols 1452 A-C), and the remaining pages come back to his teachings (to col. 1457 B), with a final word about his death and the mourning over him.

In these parts, a number of thematic blocks concerning Islamic Christology (col. 1452 D), Muḥammad's legislation about the cult at Mecca (col. 1453 C), the afterlife (col. 1456 C) and eschatology (col. 1457 A) are clearly identifiable. The additional section is taken from the translation by Demetrius Cydones of Riccoldo da Monte Croce's (d. 1320) *Confutatio Alcorani* (q.v.), which was also employed by John VI Cantacuzenus (q.v.) in 1360, in his apology against Islam (see Beck, pp. 732-36) and was partially translated into German by Martin Luther. Finally, a list of the Islamic names for the months of the lunar calendar is given.

*Kata Mōamed* depends almost completely on other works, which have been identified by Khoury. The first four parts (Khoury's first and second parts) are a compilation of the writings of John of Damascus (q.v.), Theophanes (q.v.) and George Hamartolos (q.v.), while the following section is an almost literal rendering of the abjuration formula for Muslims who convert to Christianity (q.v.) (see Khoury, pp. 188-94). There are no clear parallels with Bartholomew of Edessa's work (q.v.). On the contrary, the two authors stand in stark contrast on parallel accounts such as Muḥammad's women and death (*pace* Beck, p. 531; see Khoury, pp. 197, n. 64, 199, n. 72), and even the well-known story about Muḥammad's marriage to Zaynab, his foster son Zayd's wife (col. 1452 A), which would have suited Bartholomew's purposes well, does not appear there.

As is shown by the different renderings of Arabic names, where the text follows its various sources, and the error of making al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn the Prophet's sons rather than grandsons (see Khoury, p. 197, n. 65), the text was apparently composed hastily, so that the author's own expressed attitudes and views are minimal (see Khoury, pp. 196, n. 61, 198, n. 69).

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The work may have served practical purposes as a handbook, which would explain why it was later supplied with an addition. The inclusion

of Demetrius Cydonēs' translation of the Latin author Riccoldo shows that Byzantine authors were fully aware of currents of anti-Islamic arguments.

MANUSCRIPTS

MS Leiden – Codex Scaligeranus graecus 21, fols 14-15 (16<sup>th</sup> century)

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

*Kata Mōamed*, PG 104, cols 1447-58 (text and Latin trans; this edition is very faulty)

STUDIES

Khoury, *Les théologiens byzantins et l'islam*

H. Beck, *Vorsehung und Vorherbestimmung in der theologischen Literatur der Byzantiner*, Rome 1937, p. 48

**Johannes Niehoff-Panagiotidis**

## *Second ritual of abjuration*

Unknown Author

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown; possibly mid or late 10<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown; probably Asia Minor  
DATE OF DEATH Unknown; probably mid-11<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF DEATH Unknown; probably region of Sivas

### BIOGRAPHY

Little is known about the author of this short ritual of abjuration. From the ritual itself it can be inferred that he was active in the region around Sivas in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century, was hostile to Christians who disagreed with his own Chalcedonian faith as well as to Muslims, and had more than a passing knowledge of Islam.

### MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

*Primary*

See below

*Secondary*

See below

### WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

#### *Second ritual of abjuration*

DATE End of 10<sup>th</sup> century- beginning of 11<sup>th</sup> century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Greek

#### DESCRIPTION

A second formula of abjuration for converts from Islam to Christianity is preserved in a single 11<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript. Unlike the older formula (q.v.), it comprises 11 anathemas, of which only the first seven are directed against Muslims, while the rest are anti-monophysite, and specifically anti-Armenian. The first three anathemas are simple repetitions of the first three in the older formula. Anathema 5 refers

to the 114 suras of the Qur'an, and 6 and 7 condemn the rites and practices connected with the pilgrimage to Mecca, mentioning the shrine in words which exactly represent the Arabic, *to masjidion to legomenon charam*, for *al-masjid al-haram*.

This second ritual of abjuration was drafted in the region of Sebaste (Sivas), as is indicated by the mention of Theodotus, metropolitan between the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> and the early 11<sup>th</sup> century, at the time of the Byzantine re-conquest of eastern Asia Minor.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Unlike the more ancient formula, it does not appear that this second formula of abjuration was widely known or used.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS London, Sion College – Gr. 6 (L. 40.2/G6), pp. 265-66 (11<sup>th</sup> century)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

A. Rigo, 'Una formula inedita d'abiura per i Musulmani (fine X – inizi XI secolo)', *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici* n.s. 29 (1992) 163-73, pp. 172-73

#### STUDIES

P. Eleuteri and A. Rigo, *Eretici, dissidenti, Musulmani ed Ebrei a Bisanzio*, Venice, 1993, pp. 24-25, 64

Rigo, 'Una formula inedita d'abiura per i Musulmani (fine X – inizi XI secolo)'

M. Aubineau, 'Un recueil "De haeresibus". Sion College, codex graecus 6', *Revue des Études Grecques* 80 (1967) 425-29

**Antonio Rigo**

# Ibn al-Farađī

Abū l-Walīd ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf ibn  
Naṣr ibn al-Farađī l-Azdī l-Qurṭubī

DATE OF BIRTH December 962  
PLACE OF BIRTH Cordova  
DATE OF DEATH 20 April 1013  
PLACE OF DEATH Cordova

## BIOGRAPHY

Born in Cordova in the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century, Ibn al-Farađī studied religious sciences in his home town and also in Toledo, Ēcija and Sidonia. In 992-93 he travelled to the East, and studied further in Qayrawān, Cairo, Mecca and Medina. After his return to al-Andalus he was made a judge in Valencia.

He was known as a jurist, historian and *muḥaddith*. Among his pupils were three leading scholars, Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, Ibn Ḥayyān (q.v.) and Ibn Ḥazm (q.v.). He was killed in Cordova during the *fitna* on 20 April 1013.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

- Al-Ḥumaydī, *Kitāb jadhwat al-muqtabis fī dhikr wulāt al-Andalus*, ed. I. al-Abyārī, 2 vols, Beirut, 1989, i, pp. 396-99 (538).
- Ibn Bassām, *Al-dhakhīra fī maḥāsin ahl al-Jazīra*, ed. I. ʿAbbās, 8 vols, Beirut, 1978-79, i/2, pp. 614-16
- Ibn Khayr, *Fahrasa*, ed. M.F. Maṣṣūr, Beirut, 1998, pp. 372, 373
- Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Kitāb al-ṣila fī akhbār aʿimmat al-Andalus*, ed. I. al-Abyārī, 2 vols, Beirut, 1989, i, pp. 391-95
- Ibn Farḥūn, *Dībāj al-mudhhab fī maʿrifat aʿyān ʿulamāʾ al-madhhab*, ed. M. al-Aḥmadī, 2 vols, Cairo, s.d., i, p. 452
- Al-Ḍabbī, *Bughyat al-multamis fī taʾriḫ rijāl ahl al-Andalus*, ed. I. al-Abyārī, 2 vols, Cairo, 1989, ii, pp. 433-35 (891).
- Ibn Saʿīd, *Al-muḥḥrib fī ḥulā l-Maḡhrib*, ed. Shawqī Ḍayf, 2 vols, Cairo, 1953-55, i, pp. 103-4
- Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, 23 vols, Beirut, 1983-85, xvii, pp. 177-80
- Al-Maqqarī, *Naḥḥ al-ṭib*, ed. I. ʿAbbās, 8 vols, Beirut, 1968, ii, pp. 129-31

*Secondary*

J.L. Delgado, art. 'Ibn al-Faraḍī', in *Biblioteca de al-Andalus*

A. al-Yazīdī, Abū l-Walīd ibn al-Faraḍī al-Qurṭubī, 2 vols, *Muḥammadiyya*, 1995

Ben Cheneb-[Huici Miranda], art. 'Ibn al-Faraḍī', in *El2*

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Ta'rīkh 'ulamā' al-Andalus*, 'History of the scholars of al-Andalus'

DATE Unknown; before April 1013

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The *Ta'rīkh 'ulamā' al-Andalus* is a biographical dictionary and the best known of Ibn al-Faraḍī's works. The author describes it as 'a compilation of the 'ulamā', the *muḥaddithūn* and the most rigorous scholars of al-Andalus, summarized and arranged in alphabetic order'. It includes biographies of scholars from the time of the Arab conquest of al-Andalus in the 8<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, although most come from the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Ibn al-Faraḍī's sources include biographical dictionaries and chronicles written in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, along with the testimonies of scholars known to him personally. The biographies usually include a description of the intellectual life of the scholar, including his education, teaching, literary production and transmission of other authors' works. Ibn al-Faraḍī gives the exact death date (crucial for a transmitter of Hadiths) and, when possible, the birth date.

The *Ta'rīkh* was continued by Ibn Bashkuwāl (d. 1183) (q.v.) in his biographical dictionary, *Kitāb ṣilat Ta'rīkh 'ulamā' al-Andalus*.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Ibn al-Faraḍī mentions Christians four times, when he says that some individual Muslims died fighting against Christian enemies (ed. al-Abyārī, nos 584, 770, 783, 1498). The last of these is Nu'mān ibn 'Abd Allāh from the Ḥaḍramawt, who came to al-Andalus for the specific purpose of fighting against Christians. After asking permission from the Caliph Sulaymān ibn 'Abd al-Malik (r. 715-19), he and his brother both 'found martyrdom'.

Other biographies also describe people who died in Christian territory, though here Christians are not mentioned explicitly (e.g., nos 618, 1156, 1182). Elsewhere, there is virtually no mention of Christians.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS Tunis, Zaytūna (1199)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

Ed. B.A. Ma'rūf, Tunis, 2008

Ed. R. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Suwayfī, Beirut, 1998

Ed. I. al-Abyārī, Cairo, 1980, 1989<sup>2</sup>

Ed. Cairo, 1966

Ed. Cairo, 1954

*Ibn al-Faraḍī, Ta'rīj 'ulamā' al-Andalus. Historia virorum doctorum Andalusiae*, ed. F. Codera, Madrid, 1891

#### STUDIES

M.L. Ávila, 'Obras biográficas en el Muqtabis de Ibn Ḥayyān', *Al-Qanṭara* 10 (1989) 463-84

L. Molina, 'Familias andalusies. Los datos del *Ta'rīj 'ulamā' al-Andalus* de Ibn al-Faraḍī', in M.L. Ávila (ed.), *Estudios Onomástico-biográficos de al-Andalus*, Granada, ii, 1989, 19-99, iii, 1990, 13-40

L. Molina, 'Lugares de destino de los viajeros andalusies en el *Ta'rīj* de Ibn al-Faraḍī', in M. Marín (ed.), *Estudios Onomástico-biográficos de al-Andalus I*, Madrid, 1988, 585-610

M.L. Ávila and M. Marín, 'Le *Ta'rīj 'ulamā' al-Andalus* d'Ibn al-Faraḍī. Étude et informatisation', *Cahiers d'Onomastique Arabe* (1985-87) 41-60

**Cristina de la Puente**

## *Life of Theodore, bishop of Edessa*

Unknown author

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown

PLACE OF BIRTH According to the *Vita*, the probably fictional author was born in Edessa

DATE OF DEATH Unknown

PLACE OF DEATH Unknown

### BIOGRAPHY

The title of the *Vita* informs us that its author was named Basil, was from Edessa, and was Melkite bishop of Emesa. If this is true, he would have lived in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. He himself states in ch. 2 that he is the son of Theodore's elder sister, and thus his nephew. He says that when Theodore traveled to his see after his election and consecration as bishop of Edessa, he himself accompanied him (ch. 43), and also went with him to Baghdad (ch. 70), where he assisted him in the baptism of the 'Persian king' (ch. 82). None of these assertions can be verified from other sources, and they are most probably fictitious. By appealing to an eye-witness, the anonymous author was rather wanting to make his account more trustworthy. He had most likely never seen the places mentioned in the text with his own eyes, but wrote the *Vita* sometime before 1023 (date of the oldest manuscript) within the boundaries of the Byzantine Empire (Griffith, 'Greek into Arabic').

### MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

#### *Primary*

I. Pomjalovskij, *Žitie iže vo svjatyh otca našego Theodora archiepiskopa Edesskago*, St Petersburg, 1892, 1-119

#### *Secondary*

R.-J. Lilie et al., *Prosopographie der Mittelbyzantinischen Zeit*, vol. 1, Berlin, 1999, p. 313, no. 950

H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich*, Munich, 1959, pp. 558-59



## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Bios kai politeia tou en hagiois patros hēmōn Theodōrou tu dialampsantos en askēsei kata tēn megistēn lauran tou hagiou Saba, epeita gegonotos archiepiskopou poleōs Edesēs, kai axiomnēmoneuta katorthōkotos erga*, ‘Life and conduct of our holy father Theodore, who shone in asceticism in the great Laura of the Holy Sabas, and then became archbishop of the city of Edessa and was the author of deeds worthy of remembrance’

DATE Before 1023

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Greek

## DESCRIPTION

According to the *Vita*, Theodore came from a noble Melkite family in Edessa and was baptized by the bishop of the city when he was two years old. After the death of his parents, when he was 20, he entered the Laura of St Sabas where, thanks to his excellent conduct, the abbot John made him *oikonomos*. After the abbot's death, Theodore retired into a *kellion*, where a young man called Michael, who was related to him, came to be his companion (chs 2-20). This young man suffered martyrdom near the gates of Jerusalem by command of the ‘Persian’ (meaning Arab-Muslim) King Adramelech, because he refused to renounce Christianity (chs 24-36). Michael's martyrdom is related separately in a Georgian version, and originally had nothing to do with Theodore of Edessa; it was introduced by the author (Peeters, ‘Passion’).

Eventually, Theodore was consecrated by the patriarch of Antioch, who had come to Jerusalem with his bishops. After his arrival at Edessa, Theodore dedicated himself to fighting against heresies (chs 41-53). So as to resist the attacks of the Nestorians, the Manicheans and the Jacobites (Syrian Orthodox), he travelled to the so-called city of Babylon (Baghdad), where he healed the king of the Persians, Mauīas, who had fallen ill. This king now ordered the possessions of the church of Edessa to be restored, and the tongues of the Manicheans

to be cut out, the Nestorians and Eutychians driven out of the city, and their meeting places (*synagōgai*) torn down. Thus, with exception of the 'Agarenes', the people of Edessa would be one flock (chs 68-75). Theodore managed to convert King Mauīas to the orthodox faith and baptized him in the River Tigris, giving him the Christian name John (chs 78-83). On the king's behalf, he went to Constantinople to obtain a relic of the true cross. When he had delivered it, in the presence of the king and his *archimagoi* and *archisatrapai*, he defeated the *archisynagōgos* of the Jews in a dispute (ch. 74-91). After Theodore left Baghdad, Mauīas/John confessed his Christian faith in a great assembly before Persians, Ishmaelites, Jews, and Christians, and was consequently put to death.

Three years after the martyrdom of Mauīas/John, Theodore went to Jerusalem, retired to the monastery of St Sabas, and died in his old *kellion*. He was buried next to the grave of the martyr Michael on 19 July in the presence of the patriarch (chs 99-113).

Although the *Vita* depicts the conversion of the Muslim Persian King Mauīas as Theodore's greatest success, and before his baptism Mauīas condemns all heresies, including the 'religion of the godless Mōamed', polemic against Islam plays only a subordinate role in this work. Indeed, Theodore calls Islam 'Muḥammad's religion which confuses the people' (*hē laoplanos thrēskeia tou Mōamed*), and Mōamed himself the precursor of the Antichrist (*prodromos tou Antichristou*) (ch. 80). He regards Islam as made up of the Arian and Manichean heresies (ch. 81), and therefore not deserving detailed examination. Theodore's most important opponents are not the *Sarakēnoi* or *Agarēnoi*, but the Nestorians, Jacobites (Syrian Orthodox) and Manicheans, against whom the great argument about orthodoxy in chs 46-52 is directed. The author knows so little about Islam that at the end of ch. 86 he calls its leading religious dignitaries *archimagoi*, confusing them with the leaders of the old Persian religion.

Before passing on to the inserted martyrdom of Michael in chs 21 and 22, the author explains that the evil and abominable Saracens (*hoi ponēroi kai akarthartoi Sarakēnoi*) were able to conquer Phoinikē and Palestine because this was a divine punishment for the Monothelete heresy and the murder of the emperor's brother Theodosius, the banishing of Pope Martin I (649-53/55) and the mistreatment of Maximus by Constans II (642-68), an explanation that may also be found in the *Chronographia* of Theophanes (ed. C. de Boor, Leipzig, 1883, p. 332) (q.v.). Even so, he says that through numerous miracles God provides

for the church of Jerusalem and the whole Christian people to be treated honorably by the *Agarēnoi*, and that the Persian King Adramelech, who had had Michael beheaded, was in all other ways a very gentle ruler, who wished no harm to the Christians (ch. 23-24).

Although Loparev (1912/1915) and Vasiliev (1944), in particular, have tried to gain an exact chronology of Theodore's life from the *Vita* (in which case he would have lived between 776 or 793 and c. 860), and have attempted to take it as an historically reliable source, the general conclusion is that this work is a hagiographical novel which was written by an author who had never been in the East and knew almost nothing about Islam (Peeters, 'Passion'; Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur*; Griffith, 'Greek into Arabic'). The only historically verifiable persons are the Byzantine Emperor Michael and the Empress Theodora, who are mentioned in relation to Theodore's trip to Constantinople; they would be Michael III (842-67) and his mother Theodōra (regent until 856). But there is no proof of the association of Theodore's consecration with the patriarchal synod in Jerusalem in 836, the sole fact on which Loparev and Vasiliev (followed by Gauer, *Texte zum byzantinischen Bilderstreit*) base the chronology of Theodore's life. In the text, there is neither any hint of a patriarchal synod nor any allusion to the legendary letter said to have been sent to the Emperor Theophilus (829-42) by the synod of 836.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The *Vita* of Theodore of Edessa, as already mentioned, is a hagiographical novel without any significant historical or theological content. It therefore has no relevance for actual Christian-Muslim relations in the Middle East in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, it is of interest for the outlooks and attitudes of the time, because it shows how little a Byzantine author of average education before 1023 knew about the real situation of the patriarchates of the Eastern churches, and about Islam. The *Vita* gained specific significance as it was translated into Arabic in a revised version, which was widely distributed and read in Melkite communities in Syria and Palestine (see below).

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MS Moscow, Library of the Historical Museums – 381, fols 227r-285v  
(1023)

MS Moscow, Library of the Historical Museums – 126, fols 112-181v  
(11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> centuries)

- MS Rome, Biblioteca Angelica – B 1. 8, fols 219-265 (11<sup>th</sup> century)  
 MS Sinai, St Catherine's Monastery – Sinaiticus graecus 544, fols 59-206v (14<sup>th</sup> century)  
 MS Paris, BNF – Gr. 776, fols 25-29 (15<sup>th</sup> century)  
 MS Turin, Biblioteca nazionale universitaria –147, fols 194-284 (16<sup>th</sup> century)  
 MS Paris, BNF – Supp. Gr. 441, fols 1-59 (17<sup>th</sup> century)  
 MS Heybeliada, Istanbul, Deipara monastery – 82, fols 33-94 (not dated)

An overview of the MSS tradition is given by Vasiliev, 'Life of St Theodore', pp. 168-69

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

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#### STUDIES

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 U. Zanetti, art. 'Theodoros, hl., Bf. v. Edessa', in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 9, Freiburg, 2000, cols 1410-11  
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 S.H. Griffith, 'Greek into Arabic. Life and letters in the monasteries of Palestine in the ninth century. The example of the *Summa Theologiae Arabica*', *Byzantion* 56 (1986) 117-38, pp. 131-32  
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 A. Abel, 'La portée apologétique de la "vie" de St Théodore d'Édesse', *Byzantinoslavica* 10 (1949) 229-40  
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 A. Vasiliev, 'The Life of St Theodore of Edessa', *Byzantion* 16 (1942-43) 163-225

- P. Peeters, 'La Passion de S. Michel le Sabaïte', *Analecta Bollandiana* 48 (1930) 65-98
- N. Bonwetsch, 'Die Vita des Theodor, Erzbischofs von Edessa', *Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher* 2 (1921) 285-90
- C. Loparev, 'Vizantijskaja žitija svjatyč VIII-IX vekov', *Vizantijskij Vremennik* 19 (1912/1915) 40-64
- A. Ehrhard, art. 'Theodoros, Bischof von Edessa', in K. Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur von Justinian bis zum Ende des oströmischen Reiches (527-1453)*, Munich, 1897, pp. 152-53, no. 62

**Klaus-Peter Todt**

*Sīrat abīnā l-bārr Thā'udhurus alladhī lama'a  
naskuhu wa-zuhduhu fī Sīq abīnā l-bārr Sābā,*  
'The Life of our righteous father Theodore,  
whose ascetic piety shone in the laura of  
our righteous father Sabas'; *Sīrat al-qiddīs  
Thā'udhurus usqf al-Ruhā,* 'The Life of  
Theodore, bishop of Edessa'

DATE Later than the Greek Life, before 1068

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

See the entry above on *Bios kai politeia tou en hagiois patros hēmōn Theodōrou* for the general outline of the life of Theodore of Edessa. The Arabic *Life* merits a separate entry because it represents not a mere translation, but a reworking of the text done within the *dār al-Islām* for the edification of Arabic-speaking Melkite Christians. If the Greek *Life* may have been produced 'in the émigré monastic milieu in Constantinople...in the tenth century' (Griffith, 'The *Life*', p. 154), the Arabic *Life* was probably produced at the Monastery of Mar Sabas (Griffith, 'The *Life*', p. 155; Swanson, 'Tradition', p. 80).

Several features in the Arabic text reflect the life and concerns of the Melkite churches. Minor details, such as hermits living in cells (in the Arabic *Life*) rather than as stylites (in the Greek *Life*), point to the monastic landscape of Palestine. If the Greek *Life* was especially concerned with the encounter of Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian

Christianity (as in Theodore's inaugural address as bishop in Edessa), for the Arabic *Life* the fundamental dividing line is that between Christian faith and its absence or denial.

The most obvious emendation in the Arabic *Life* is in the names of the caliphs who come into its pages. For the Greek *Life*, the 'king' before whom Theodore's young relative and monastic companion Michael confessed his faith and denounced the Prophet Muḥammad – which resulted in his martyrdom – was 'Adramelech', where 'Abd al-Malik [ibn Marwān (r. 685-705)] is clearly intended; in the Arabic *Life*, this 'king' ('of the Persians') remains nameless. In the Greek *Life*, Bishop Theodore is later instrumental in the conversion of the Caliph 'Mauias' (Mu'āwiya?); in the Arabic *Life*, the caliph who converts to Christianity is none other than the Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mūn (r. 813-33). These changes are not without literary significance. In the first place, the plot of an originally composite text is tightened up, as the reader is allowed to understand that one and the same caliph, al-Ma'mūn, presided over Michael's martyrdom and later came to share both Michael's faith and his fate (Abel, 'La portée apologétique', p. 237; Swanson, 'Tradition', pp. 82-83). In the second place, the relationship between Theodore *of Edessa* and al-Ma'mūn is shaped by, and perhaps shapes in turn, a body of material concerning the relationship between Theodore *Abū Qurra* and the Caliph al-Ma'mūn (see the studies by Abel, Griffith, and Swanson).

Several scholars have suggested that the Arabic *Life*, rather than the Greek, was the original (see, e.g., Nasrallah, *HMLEM* ii.2, p. 161). However, most recent students of the work believe that the Arabic text is a translation and reworking of a Greek original. The evidence for this includes, for example, the Arabic text's reference to the Edessan saints 'Ghūriyā, Ṣāmūnā, and Afifus' (that is, the martyrs Guria, Shmona, and Habib) – where 'Afifus' can be an Arabic transliteration of 'Ḥabīb' only by way of Greek 'Abibos' (Swanson, 'The Christian al-Ma'mūn tradition', p. 77).

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The Arabic 'Life of Theodore' emphasizes for its Melkite Christian readers 'the importance of bold confession of Christian faith, even unto death; the possibility of holiness of life...; the hope that some measure of peace and justice could be enjoyed in this life, if necessary by tactful appeal to the highest Muslim authority; and the continued existence of a Christian world within the *Dār al-Islām*,... a network

centred on Jerusalem and the monasteries about it, but including Antioch, Edessa and even Baghdad...’ (Swanson, ‘The Christian al-Ma’mūn tradition’, p. 79). The work is a curious but by no means unique example of a hagiographical text that encourages its Christian readers by relating the story of a highly placed Muslim official’s conversion to Christianity – in this case, that of the great Abbasid Caliph al-Ma’mūn, who plays a surprisingly large part in early Christian Arabic literature.

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 MS Sinai, Monastery of St Catherine – Ar. 538, fols 120r-160r (first part of MS dated 1211)  
 MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 147, fols 162r-220v (13<sup>th</sup> century)  
 MS Jerusalem, Holy Sepulcher – 146, fols 69-126 (1428)  
 MS Lebanon, Dayr Sayyidat al-Balamand – 158 (formerly 642), 2<sup>nd</sup> treatise in the MS (17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century)  
 MS Lebanon, Dayr Sayyidat al-Balamand – 155 (formerly 669), 2<sup>nd</sup> treatise in the MS (1806)  
 MS in the possession of Y. Meimarīs (see Meimarīs and Selim, ‘An Arabic version’)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

The text is as yet unedited, although ʿTūmā Biṭār, *Al-qiddīsūn al-mansiyyūn*, pp. 449-62, gives a good summary of the Arabic text. In translation, only brief passages have been published:

- S.H. Griffith, ‘The *Life of Theodore of Edessa*. History, hagiography, and religious apologetics in Mar Saba Monastery in early Abbasid times’, in J. Patrich (ed.), *The Sabaite heritage in the Orthodox Church from the fifth century to the present*, Leuven, 2001, 147-69, pp. 163, 165 (English trans. of passages of the text, from MSS Sinai – Ar. 538 and Paris – Ar. 147)  
 A. Vasiliev, ‘The Life of St Theodore of Edessa’, *Byzantion* 16 (1942-3), 165-225, pp. 192-98 (includes an English trans. of the story of al-Ma’mūn’s conversion, from MS Paris – Ar. 147)

#### STUDIES

See the previous entry for a copious bibliography on the Greek *Life* of Theodore of Edessa. In what follows, only studies that concentrate on the Arabic recension of the *Life* are included.

- M.N. Swanson, 'The Christian al-Ma'mūn tradition', in D. Thomas (ed.), *Christians at the heart of Islamic rule. Church life and scholarship in 'Abbasid Iraq*, Leiden, 2003, 63-92, pp. 69-84 (an appendix at pp. 91-92 provides an outline of the *Life*, keyed to the Arabic recension in MS Sinai – Ar. 538 and the published Greek *Life*)
- Griffith, 'The *Life of Theodore of Edessa*'
- Ṭūmā Biṭār, *Al-qiddīsūn al-mansiyyūn fī l-turāth al-Anṭākī*, Beirut, 1995, pp. 449-62 (summary of the text), 468-76 (notes) (based on MS Balamand – 155)
- Nasrallah, *HMLEM* ii.2, pp. 160-62
- Y. Meimaris and A. Selim, 'An Arabic version of the Life of St Theodore of Edessa (al-Raha) the Sabaite', *Graeco-Arabica* 2 (1983) 113-17
- A. Abel, 'La portée apologétique de la "Vie" de St Théodore d'Édesse', *Byzantinoslavica* 10 (1949) 229-40 (a study on the basis of the Arabic text in MS Paris – Ar. 147)
- A. Vasiliev, 'The Life of St Theodore of Edessa', *Byzantion* 16 (1942-3), 165-225, pp. 192-98 (on the 'Arabian version' of the Life)
- Graf, *GCAL* ii, 24-25

**Mark N. Swanson**



## ‘Abd al-Jabbār

Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Abd al-Jabbār ibn Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd  
al-Jabbār ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Khalīl ibn ‘Abdallāh, al-Qāḍī  
l-Hamadhānī l-Asadābādī

DATE OF BIRTH About 937  
PLACE OF BIRTH Asadābād, southwest of Hamadhān  
DATE OF DEATH January-February 1025  
PLACE OF DEATH Rayy

### BIOGRAPHY

‘Abd al-Jabbār, commonly referred to in Islamic sources as Qāḍī l-Quḍāt due to his position as chief justice in Rayy under the Būyid emirs Mu’ayyid al-Dawla (r. 977-84) and Fakhr al-Dawla (r. 984-97), was the leading figure of the Mu‘tazila, and in particular of the Bah-shamiyya, the branch associated with Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā‘ī (d. 933) (q.v.), in his day. As such, he is remembered as a staunch defender of theological rationalism.

This rationalism is most evident in the two fundamental doctrines of the Mu‘tazila: *tawḥīd*, the profession of monotheism, entailing the rejection of anthropomorphic statements about God and of the separate eternal existence of both the divine attributes and the Qur’an; and *‘adl*, divine justice, entailing the conviction that God is just in a manner comprehensible by human reason and therefore that humans must possess free will, since God (according to a rational understanding of justice) could only reward or punish humans for acts that are properly their own. In light of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s prolific writings (an unusually high number of which are extant for this period) on these and other theological topics, most notably *Al-mughnī*, his *magnum opus*, he is rightly recognized as the most important author of a theological school that would effectively disappear from existence in the following centuries.

However, he has yet to be fully recognized for his extraordinary and influential writings about Christianity. ‘Abd al-Jabbār not only develops a systematic theological critique of Christian doctrine (principally in the *Mughnī*), but in his *Tathbīt* he also develops a detailed critique of Christian history, church rituals, and Christian miracle

accounts. He also commented on the fallibility of Christian doctrines in his lost *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa* (‘Commentary on the five principles’), on which see below. Another title, the *Radd ‘alā l-Naṣārā* (‘Refutation of the Christians’), which is mentioned by Ḥājji Khalīfa (*Kashf al-zunūn ‘an asāmī l-kutub wa-l-funūn*, ed. G. Flügel, 7 vols, London, 1842, iii, p. 353; ‘Uthmān, *Qāḍī l-quḍāt*, p. 66, notes that Ibn Taymiyya also mentions it in his *Al-radd ‘alā l-manṭiqiyyīn*), but by no earlier author, is less likely to be a separate work than to be a reference to the attacks on Christianity contained in either the *Mughnī* or the *Tathbīt* (Reynolds, *A Muslim theologian in the sectarian milieu*, p. 60, n. 211).

‘Abd al-Jabbār’s biography is itself worthy of notice. As a judge in the unstable and highly sectarian environment of Būyid Rayy, he became deeply involved in its political intrigues. His origins, however, were humble. Born into a peasant family in the mountain village of Asadābād in western Iran, he spent his early adult years studying first jurisprudence and then theology (*kalām*) in the Iranian cities of Qazwīn, Hamadhān and Iṣfahān. By 948 he was in Basra and soon thereafter in Baghdad, the seat of the caliphate. Already aligned with the Mu‘tazilī school, in Baghdad he studied under its leading figure at the time, Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Baṣrī (d. 980) (q.v.). It was the sponsorship of Abū ‘Abdallāh that, in 977, secured ‘Abd al-Jabbār the position of chief judge in Rayy (today a southern suburb of Tehran) under the powerful and philo-Mu‘tazilī vizier al-Ṣāḥib Ibn ‘Abbād (d. 995).

In Rayy, ‘Abd al-Jabbār secured his reputation among the Mu‘tazila. There he completed the *Mughnī* (a work 20 years in the making), an event commemorated in a proclamation by Ibn ‘Abbād, who describes ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s book as ‘a treasure to the monotheist and a woe to the atheist’ (al-Jishumī, pp. 369-70). And there he gathered a large following of disciples, who travelled from as far afield as Egypt in the west and central Asia in the east to study under him, and among whom were a considerable number of Shī‘a (indeed ‘Abd al-Jabbār gained a reputation for Shī‘ī inclinations). With the death of Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Baṣrī in 980, he became the leading figure of the Mu‘tazila, and as such a champion of rationalist theology in the Islamic world.

‘Abd al-Jabbār’s fortunes, however, would change dramatically with the death of his other mentor, the Vizier Ibn ‘Abbād, five years later. Due, apparently, to a personal rivalry that developed between the vizier and the chief judge (on which see Reynolds, ‘The rise and fall of Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār’), ‘Abd al-Jabbār refused to pronounce the

funeral blessing over Ibn ‘Abbād. The Būyid Emir Fakhr al-Dawla seized this opportunity to punish ‘Abd al-Jabbār for his insolence (although Fakhr al-Dawla himself was an antagonist of Ibn ‘Abbād). He removed ‘Abd al-Jabbār from his post as judge and imprisoned him, extorting an exorbitant ransom (at a time when he desperately needed funds to combat the threat of the Ghaznavid Turks in the east). ‘Abd al-Jabbār never regained his political position, although he seems to have maintained his scholarly reputation and recovered his fortune. He continued to write and to receive disciples until his death at an advanced age in 1025. A large public funeral was held for him in Rayy (eight sharīfs, descendants of the Prophet, are said to have prayed over his body) and ‘Abd al-Jabbār was buried on his own estate.

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- J. Bouman, ‘The doctrine of ‘Abd al-Jabbār on the Qur‘ān as the created word of Allāh’, in H. Obbink (ed.), *Verbum. Essays on some aspects of the religious functions of words*, Utrecht, 1964, pp. 67-86

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Al-mughnī fī abwāb al-tawḥīd wa-l-‘adl*, ‘Summa on the matters of divine unity and divine justice’, ‘Summa’; *Al-mughnī fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ‘Summa on the principles of religion’

DATE 970-90

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

### DESCRIPTION

The *Mughnī*, ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *magnum opus*, is a lengthy apology for Mu‘tazilī theology and polemic against competing systems of religious thought. Composed in 20 parts (*ajzā’*), the *Mughnī* is ostensibly dedicated to two theological categories, namely monotheism (5 parts) and

justice (15 parts). Parts 1-3, 9 (partially), 10 (partially), 18, and 19 are not extant (see below). The categories of monotheism and justice represent the first two of the five cardinal doctrines in Mu‘tazilī tradition (the final three doctrines – which relate to eschatology and law – are subsumed here under the category of justice). ‘Abd al-Jabbār dictated the *Mughnī* over the course of 20 years, beginning in Rāmhurmuz in 970 and finishing in Rayy in 990.

Since ‘Abd al-Jabbār refers regularly in the *Mughnī* to his Mu‘tazilī authorities (and not infrequently to their non-Mu‘tazilī opponents), and since so few treatises from those authorities themselves have survived, the *Mughnī* represents the great sourcebook of early Islamic theology. Accordingly, it has conferred upon ‘Abd al-Jabbār a reputation as ‘the great “compiler”’ (Peters, *God’s created speech*, p. 14). Nevertheless, in the course of the work ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s particular theological synthesis emerges, two elements of which are prominent. First, he insists on the ability of humans, through careful reasoning, to achieve knowledge of God and His attributes. This knowledge can be measured against a certain criterion of truth (namely how things are in reality) and is marked by tranquility of the soul (*sukūn al-nafs*). Second, he describes the fundamental task of humans as the obligation (*taklīf*) to discern and perform good actions, a task aided by divine favor (*lutf*) in various forms.

This rationalist vision informs ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s refutation of Christianity, which appears in part five of the *Mughnī*, the last part of the section on monotheism. That ‘Abd al-Jabbār addresses Christianity here, and not in the section on divine justice, suggests that his concern is not Christian soteriology, prophecy or eschatology, but rather Christian theology. In fact, in the *Mughnī*, ‘Abd al-Jabbār is entirely occupied with the theological aspects of the Trinity and Incarnation.

In all, part five of the *Mughnī* (dedicated as a whole to non-Islamic ‘dualist’ sects) consists of 130 folios in the principal manuscript (§), taking up 259 pages in the printed edition (offering an indication of the length of the *Mughnī* as a whole). ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s refutation of Christianity runs from pp. 80-151 (fols 237r-274r) and is divided between an introduction (pp. 80-85), a refutation of the Trinity (pp. 86-113), and a refutation of the Incarnation (pp. 114-151). In this, ‘Abd al-Jabbār follows the format of Abū ‘Īsā al-Warrāq’s (d. ca. 861) (q.v.) more extensive refutation of Christian theology, although this format might have been established still earlier in works that are no longer extant.

In fact, ‘Abd al-Jabbār never refers to al-Warrāq in this attack in the *Mughnī*, but he does refer consistently to his Mu‘tazilī predecessors Abū ‘Alī (d. 915-16) and (Abū ‘Alī’s son) Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā’ī (d. 933), and to a lesser extent to al-Jāhiz (d. 869). ‘Abd al-Jabbār opens his refutation by deferring to an authority for his description of the Trinity, ‘Our Shaykh Abū ‘Alī – may God have mercy on him – reports that all of the Christian sects, except for a few, maintain that God is the Creator of things, and the Creator is living and speaking’ (*Mughnī*, v, p. 80).

In general, ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s refutation is marked neither by the relentless questions and answers of al-Warrāq, nor by the narratives and anecdotes of the *Tathbīt*, but rather by reports of his authorities’ arguments. He refers regularly to the conclusions and irrefutable proofs of his authorities, in places crediting Abū ‘Alī by name (see Thomas, ‘A Mu‘tazilī response’, pp. 285-310), while elsewhere referring simply to ‘our shaykhs’ (*shuyūkhunā*; e.g. v, pp. 86, 87, 89, 98, *passim*). In arguing that the doctrine of the Trinity amounts to polytheism, for example, he declares, ‘Our shaykhs obliged them to say that each of the hypostases is a god in this way, for if the Son and the Spirit are – like the Father – uncreated, then the very thing which signifies the divinity of the Father also signifies their divinity’ (*Mughnī*, v, p. 87). Thus ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s refutation of Christianity in the *Mughnī*, quite unlike the *Tathbīt*, offers the impression of a scholar intent above all on preserving the teachings of his theological school.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Inasmuch as ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s refutation of Christianity in the *Mughnī* is integrated into his larger work on *kalām*, it is best appreciated as a manifestation of this theological science. Unlike the *Tathbīt*, it is not obviously inspired or affected by ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s personal contacts with Christians (the only Christians he names are the four evangelists and Theodore Abū Qurra, whom he calls Qurra). Rather, the task of the *Mughnī* is rational and theological: to define Christian doctrine as clearly as possible in order to demonstrate either its internal contradictions or its incompatibility with monotheism.

Accordingly, ‘Abd al-Jabbār explains carefully, quoting from Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī, ‘They claim that God and his word and his power are uncreated and that the word is the Son, which they consider Christ who appeared on earth in the flesh’ (*Mughnī*, v, p. 80). ‘Abd al-Jabbār proceeds to deconstruct such statements in order to argue

that, contrary to Christian claims, Christian theology is neither rational nor monotheistic. In the process, he pays close attention to the question of language, commenting, ‘One who translates from one language to another must be knowledgeable of what is valid and invalid for God most high according to the intellect. He must also be knowledgeable of what is metaphorical and what is literal in each language’ (*Mughnī*, v, p. 121).

Meanwhile, ‘Abd al-Jabbār refers to scripture only briefly and generally. On the Bible he comments putatively, ‘As for the ones from whom they have taken the book which they read, John, Matthew, Luke and Mark, when Christ disappeared – and they claim he was killed – none of his companions except these four remained in his religion...but it is known that these four might have altered and substituted things, and might be accused of lies’ (*Mughnī*, v, p. 143). On this topic and others ‘Abd al-Jabbār comments in much greater detail in the *Tathbīt*, but in the *Mughnī* such comments are only tangential. ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s primary concern here is to subject the doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation to the ordeal of Mu‘tazilī rationalism. It is telling in this regard that he repeatedly compares Christians to his Muslim theological opponents, the Kullābiyya, whom he accuses of holding the separate and eternal existence of the divine attributes (see *Mughnī*, v, pp. 88-89, 93, 95, 142).

Thus the very purpose of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s analysis of opposing views in the *Mughnī*, whether such views are Muslim or non-Muslim, is rational deconstruction. The terms of Christian theology are not defined for the sake of appreciation or enlightenment, but only because this definition is a prerequisite of refutation. This method, however, does not redound to any particular animosity on ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s part, or on the part of the Mu‘tazila, but rather to the nature of the *kalām*. Indeed, antagonists of the Mu‘tazila, such as Abū Maṣṣūr Muḥammad al-Māturīdī (d. 944) (q.v.) and ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s Ash‘arī contemporary al-Bāqillānī (d. 1013) (q.v.), exhibit a similarly polemical methodology in their treatment of Christianity. Ultimately, of course, the *mutakallimūn* of all schools would themselves become the object of polemic by those who would accuse them of preferring reason to revelation. Few later refutations of Christianity, in fact, are marked by the pervasive rationalism of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *Mughnī*.

## MANUSCRIPTS

In 1951, a delegation of Egyptian scholars led by Khalīl Yaḥyā Nāmī (see K.Y. Nāmī, *Al-ba‘tha l-miṣriyya li-taṣwīr al-makḥṭūṭāt al-‘arabiyya fī bilād al-Yaman*, Cairo, 1952) photographed a partial manuscript of the *Mughnī* held in a private collection in Yemen. This manuscript is in 16 volumes and contains parts 4-8, parts of 9, 11-14, 16 and 20. It is referred to in most editions as *ṣ*. In volume 5 (which includes the chapters on Christianity), however, it is referred to as *m*.

This Yemeni manuscript was copied in 1210 by the Zaydī Imām Mūḥyī l-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī. Mūḥyī l-Dīn also wrote a refutation to the anti-Zaydī sections of the *Mughnī*, entitled *Al-jawāb al-ḥāsim al-mughnī li-shubah al-Mughnī*, which is appended to the 20<sup>th</sup> part of the Yemen manuscript.

A further manuscript (referred to as *ṭ* in the edition, excepting part 5 where it is referred to as *kh*), containing parts 5, 6, 15, 16 (partially) and 17 (partially) was later found in Cairo: Cairo, Suppl. III, 82, 25501b (5 volumes comprising 195, 214, 217, 141, and 183 folios respectively, 11<sup>th</sup> century).

Additional fragments from parts 9 and 10 of the *Mughnī* are quoted in a Karaite Jewish manuscript: Firkovitch-Collection, St Petersburg (II Firk. Arab. 105, fols 14-92).

For further information on the Yemen and Cairo manuscripts, see Peters, *God’s created speech*, pp. 25-27, and also G. Anawati, R. Caspar, and M. El-Khodeiri, ‘Une somme inédite de théologie mo‘tazilite’. The information in Sezgin, *GAS* i, pp. 624-26, is inaccurate.

For further information on the St Petersburg manuscript, see Schmidtke and Hamdan, ‘Qadi ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Hamadḥānī (d. 415/1025) on the promise and threat’.

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- D. Thomas, ‘A Mu‘tazilī response to Christianity. Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī’s attack on the Trinity and Incarnation’, in R. Ebied and H. Teule (eds), *Studies on the Christian Arabic heritage in honour of Father Prof. Dr Samir Khalil Samir S.I.*, Leuven, 2004, 279-313 (trans. and study of the arguments attributed to Abū ‘Alī)
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- M. El-Khodeiri, ‘Deux nouvelles sections du Moghnī du Qâḏī ‘Abd al-Jabbâr’, *MIDEO* 5 (1958) 417-24
- G. Anawati, R. Caspar and M. El-Khodeiri, ‘Une somme inédite de théologie mo‘tazilite. Le Moghni du Qadi ‘Abd al-Jabbâr’, *MIDEO* 4 (1957) 281-316

## *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*, ‘Commentary on the five principles’

DATE Between 970 and 990

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

### DESCRIPTION

The work, which is lost, has a complicated history. Like a number of Mu‘tazilī authors of his time, ‘Abd al-Jabbār wrote an exposition of the five principles to which members of the school subscribed, the *Kitāb al-uṣūl al-khamsa*, which has survived (Gimaret, pp. 79-96). This contains a single brief reference to the doctrine of the Trinity (p. 84). He himself then wrote the lost *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa* as a commentary on this work, dictating it while he was engaged in composing the *Mughnī*, and this *Sharḥ* was in turn the subject of a commentary by his later contemporary and possibly his student Mānkdim Shashdīw (d. 1034) (q.v.), the *Ta‘līq sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*. Mānkdim’s work used to be regarded as ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s own *Sharḥ*, and was published as such by ‘A-K. ‘Uthmān (*Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*, Cairo, 1965), but it is now established that this longer work is based on ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *Sharḥ* (see Martin, Woodward and Atmaja, pp. 54-56 and notes).

Mānkdim’s *Ta‘līq* contains a short but detailed refutation of the two doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation (‘Uthmān, pp. 291-98). It is virtually certain that this incorporates arguments from ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *Sharḥ*, though it is impossible to identify their extent with any certainty. (It is unlikely that the *Ta‘līq* on ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *Sharḥ* written by a certain Abū Muḥammad Ismā‘il ibn ‘Alī al-Farrazādhi in the 12<sup>th</sup> century will give help here by providing independent attestation to ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s original text, because as Gimaret (pp. 61-63) shows, this is extensively based upon Mānkdim’s *Ta‘līq*). What can be said is that they are consistent in tone with ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s style of arguing, and contain terms (notably Kullābiyya for the Ash‘ariyya, ‘Uthmān, p. 294) that are characteristic of his refutation in the *Mughnī*.

### SIGNIFICANCE

The work shows the continuation of a polemical tradition as an integral part of the exposition of Islamic doctrine in the later 10<sup>th</sup> century.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES

- D. Gimaret, ‘Les uṣūl al-ḥamsa du Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Ġabbār et leurs commentaires’, *Annales Islamologiques* 15 (1979) 47-96
- R.C. Martin, M. Woodward and D. Atmaja, *Defenders of reason in Islam. Mu‘tazilism from medieval school to modern symbol*, Oxford, 1997

David Thomas

*Tathbīt dalā’il al-nubuwwa*, ‘The confirmation of the proofs of prophethood’; *Tathbīt*, ‘The confirmation’

DATE 995

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

The only extant manuscript of the *Tathbīt* comprises 313 folios in two volumes (662 pages in the modern edition). The section concerned with Christianity, known as the ‘Critique of Christian origins’, comprises fols 42-99 (pp. 91-210). ‘Abd al-Jabbār himself identifies the date of its composition as 385 (995). He also refers in the text to the city of Rayy, where he served as a judge, and to his Mu‘tazilī teachers. Furthermore, the style, vocabulary, and ideology of the *Tathbīt* are clearly identifiable with ‘Abd al-Jabbār, even if its content is profoundly original. Finally, the *Tathbīt* is consistently identified as ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s work by later Muslim biographers, including Ibn Kathīr (d. 1373) and Sirāj al-Dīn ‘Umar ibn al-Mulaqqin (d. 1401), both of whom refer to the *Tathbīt* as ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s most remarkable work. Thus its authenticity should be assumed.

The *Tathbīt* belongs to a category of apologetic Muslim literature (sometimes referred to as ‘*dalā’il* works’) dedicated to proving that Muḥammad was a prophet, a literature that presumably developed in response to Jewish and Christian incredulity. Most of these works are devoted to cataloguing the miracles of Muḥammad, with some exceptions such as ‘Alī al-Ṭabarī’s (d. 855) *Kitāb al-dīn wa-l-dawla fī ithbāt nubuwwat al-nabī Muḥammad*, which includes biblical exegesis. Still,

the *Tathbīt* appears exceptional inasmuch as ‘Abd al-Jabbār is primarily concerned here with polemic, using logical and historical arguments to critique the claims of opposing Muslim schools (especially the Ismā‘īlī Shī‘a), various intellectual movements (especially the philosophers and *zanādiqa*/Manicheans) and religions including Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Christianity. For ‘Abd al-Jabbār, proving the prophethood of Muḥammad necessarily involves invalidating competing systems of thought. At the same time he finds a model for his polemic in Muḥammad himself, who anathematized the pagans of Mecca, the Jews of Medina, the Christians of Byzantium and the Zoroastrians of Persia.

The section of the *Tathbīt* known as the ‘Critique of Christian origins’ exhibits the extent of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s research into competing religions. The vast majority of earlier Muslim anti-Christian polemics, including ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s own *Mughnī*, are built around a logical deconstruction of Christian theology. In the *Tathbīt*, however, ‘Abd al-Jabbār himself explains that he does not ‘intend to demonstrate the error of Christianity’, but rather to ‘demonstrate that [the Christians] deviated from the religion of Christ’, and ‘that Muḥammad’s knowledge of this is from God’ (*Critique of Christian origins*, trans. Reynolds, part 3, vv. 720-21).

With this as his goal, ‘Abd al-Jabbār divides his treatment of Christianity in three: Introduction, wherein, by referring to the Nicene Creed, he argues that Qur’anic statements on the Incarnation and the Trinity are correct, despite the evasions of Christian apologists; Christian doctrine, wherein he examines the Bible itself, and Muslim versions of biblical material (presented as part of the canonical Bible), to argue in accordance with Islamic doctrine that Jesus was a Muslim prophet, that he was not crucified, and that he did not die; and Christian practice, wherein he develops an Islamic narrative of Christian history, according to which Paul, Constantine and later church leaders consistently altered the Islamic teaching of Jesus and created Christianity in the process. As he puts it, ‘The Romans did not become Christians and did not acknowledge Christ, but the Christians became Romans’ (trans. Reynolds, part 3, v. 309; cf. v. 375).

‘Abd al-Jabbār insists that Christians themselves are the primary source of his reports on Christianity. He claims to have held discussions with Christian apologists (trans. Reynolds, part 2, v. 22), read Christian books (part 2, v. 496), and heard the statements of Christian leaders (part 3, v. 722). Meanwhile, his remarkable collection of

hyperbolic Christian miracle accounts (part 3, vv. 777-868) reflects his familiarity with Christianity at a popular level. In all of this the *Tathbīt* is quite unlike his systematic, theological refutation of Christianity in the *Mughnī*. Indeed, while ‘Abd al-Jabbār consistently attributes the statements in the *Mughnī* to his Mu‘tazilī predecessors, in the *Tathbīt* he insists that his reports on Christians ‘can hardly be found in any other book’ (part 3, v 722).

On the other hand, in the *Tathbīt* ‘Abd al-Jabbār addresses directly the arguments of Christian Arab apologists, among whom he names explicitly Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq (d. 873) (q.v.), his son Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn (d. 910-11), Ibrāhīm Abū Ishāq Quwayrā (d. late 9<sup>th</sup> century), Qusṭā ibn Lūqā (d. 912-13) (q.v.), Abū Bishr ibn Yūnus (d. 940) and Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī (d. 972) (q.v.), as well as the East Syrian (‘Nestorian’) metropolitan ‘Abd Yashū‘ ibn Bahrīz (d. early 9<sup>th</sup> century). Thus, here he is fully engaged with the Muslim-Christian controversies of the sectarian milieu, even if there is no reason to believe, with S. Pines, that he preserved in this remarkable work the writings of an otherwise unknown Judaeo-Christian group that sought refuge in the East Syrian (‘Nestorian’) Church.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

It is the manner in which ‘Abd al-Jabbār enters into the religious controversy of his day that distinguishes the anti-Christian section of the *Tathbīt*. He responds in particular to three classical Christian apologetic arguments. First, he responds to Christian apologists – in particular East Syrians – who present church teaching on Christ and the Trinity in a manner meant to diffuse Islamic criticisms. He notes how they even use the Qur’an to support their position (‘You will find that if you asked the disputants and debaters among them about their statement on Christ, they would say, “Our statement is that he is the Spirit of God and His Word [Q 4:171], just like the statement of Muslims. We say, ‘God is one’”’; part 1, vv. 17-18) and quotes from the Nicene Creed to deny them this line of argument.

Second, ‘Abd al-Jabbār notes the Christian argument that the Church is the heir to the teaching of Christ himself. In response, focusing on the question of the crucifixion (cf. Q 4:157), he denies the Christians any authority in their reports on Christ (‘Who conceded to you that Christ is your ancestor?’ part 3, v. 489). Only Muslims, who rely on a revelation that is proven reliable by the inimitability of the

Qur’an and the infallibility of Muḥammad – not on the hearsay of spurious traditions – have reliable information on Christ.

Third, ‘Abd al-Jabbār addresses the Christian contention that their religion is proved valid by miracles. This argument, which ‘Abd al-Jabbār names ‘a standard for the elite and the common people among them’ (part 3, v. 371), is built on the contention that only those who have witnessed a miracle would embrace Christianity, a religion that offers no worldly benefits but rather demands austerity (while Islam and its Prophet, it is implied, lured converts by worldly benefits, but produced no miracles). ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s lengthy history of Christianity, which has Paul and Constantine adopt Christianity for personal gain, is meant to show to the contrary that a religion without worldly power is more liable to corruption. To suggest that Christianity is not actually austere, meanwhile, he provides lurid anecdotes of Christian fornication (largely set in Byzantium), describes the more demanding requirements of other religions such as Manicheanism and Hinduism, and argues that Christianity, with its sacrament of confession and doctrine of Christ’s redemptive death, is actually the most permissive of religions.

From this emerges ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s vision of Christianity as a religion subject to the whims of culture and the selfish ambitions of church leaders, who demand their community’s obedience to illogical dogma with fantastic myths, while demanding alms to support their indolent vocations. It is certainly no coincidence that this vision of Christianity appears again in the circle of Ibn Taymiyya and his disciples, who evidently valued the *Tathbīt*. Thereby the influence of the *Critique of Christian origins* is even now indirectly evident, since the circle of Ibn Taymiyya is a dominant presence in present day Islamic critiques of Christianity, from popular monographs to *da’wā* websites. Thus ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s unusual work has hardly lost its relevance.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye – Şehit Ali Paşa collection 1575 (available through Arab League Microfilms, Cairo; see also *Fihris al-makḥṭūṭāt al-muṣawwara*, 3 vols in 2, Cairo, 1954, i, p. 120. This manuscript, a unicum, dates from 1218, just before ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s work became popular in the circle of Ibn Taymiyya in Damascus, with scholars such as Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 1350), Ibn Kathīr (d. 1373), and later Abū Bakr ibn Qāḍī Shuhba (d. 1448). The manuscript is in two volumes, precisely as Ibn Kathīr describes the *Tathbīt*. Thus, it

seems likely that this is the very manuscript read by the Damascene scholars.

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- Pines, *The Jewish Christians of the early centuries* (argument for a Judaeo-Christian sect’s authorship of *The Critique of Christian origins*)
- (The writings of S. Pines cited above are also found in *The collected works of Shlomo Pines. Volume 4: Studies in the history of religion*, Jerusalem, 1996)

### Gabriel Said Reynolds

#### *Al-muḥiṭ bi-l-taklīf*, ‘The comprehensive work on the [divine] imposition’

DATE Between 990 and 1025

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

This work, which postdated the *Mughnī* and was effectively an epitome of it, was framed as a digest of what was enjoined (or ‘imposed’) by God as necessary for a believer to know. It has not survived intact, though parts are accessible in fragmentary form, preserved in Arabic and Hebrew characters (see Schmidtke, pp. 396-406). It forms the basis of Ibn Mattawayh’s *Kitāb al-majmū‘ fī l-muḥiṭ bi-l-taklīf*, ‘The comprehensive, on the all-embracing concerning the imposition’, which is a light paraphrase of it.

The short refutation of Christian doctrines, which is contained in a fragment a mere two folios long in Hebrew characters, centers entirely on the Trinity and Incarnation, and reproduces arguments that are presented at much greater length in the *Mughnī*. ‘Abd al-Jabbār begins by showing that it is illogical to say that God is one and three, no matter how this is explained. And then he counters the claim, known from al-Jāhīz in the 9<sup>th</sup> century and treated more fully in the *Mughnī*, that Jesus might be understood as Son of God by analogy with Abraham as Friend of God.



He argues against the Incarnation in the form of uniting of natures and of wills, commenting that it is irrational to think of the divine nature coming into proximity with the human, and that the congruence of wills in the case of Jesus would have to be extended to other prophets, and would result in the impossibility of the human and divine always agreeing.

All these arguments appear more fully in the *Mughnī*, which effectively provides an explanatory guide to the versions here.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The inclusion of a refutation of Christian doctrines in a work about essential Muslim beliefs shows how fully it had become integrated into Islamic systematic theology by the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

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fols 29v-30v

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

#### STUDIES

- S. Schmidtke, ‘Mu‘tazilī manuscripts in the Abraham Firko-  
vitch Collection, St Petersburg. A descriptive catalogue’, in  
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- H. Ben-Shammai, ‘A note on some Karaite copies of Mu‘tazilite  
writings’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*  
37 (1974) 295-304
- A. Borisov, ‘Mu‘tazilitskiye rukopisi Gosudarstvennoy Publichnoi  
Biblioteki v Leningrade’, *Bibliografiya Vostoka* 8-9 (1935) 69-95

**David Thomas**

## Ibrāhīm ibn Yūḥannā al-Anṭākī

DATE OF BIRTH	Mid-10 <sup>th</sup> century
PLACE OF BIRTH	Possibly Antioch
DATE OF DEATH	About 1025 or shortly thereafter
PLACE OF DEATH	Possibly Antioch

### BIOGRAPHY

Ibrāhīm Ibn Yūḥannā al-Anṭākī was born in the middle of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. He may have been a native of Antioch; he was certainly already present there as a child. He was fluent in both Greek and Arabic. His must have been an influential family, as both he and his father were designated as *protospatharioi* (an imperial title of great dignity). Ibrāhīm is best remembered for his many labors as a translator of Greek patristic works into Arabic. He was also the author of a number of hagiographical works, on saints living in and around Antioch in the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. These works appear not to have survived, with one exception: his account of the life and death of Christopher, the patriarch of Antioch (d. 969). Ibrāhīm must have died around or shortly after 1025 (see below).

### MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

#### *Primary*

The main sources for Ibrāhīm's life are a few items of autobiographical information in his account of the martyrdom of Christopher (on which, see below) and the colophons and titles to his various translations. The latter have been systematically surveyed in J. Grand'Henry, 'La méthode de révision d'une version patristique arabe ancienne chez Ibrāhīm fils de Yūḥannā d'Antioche', in G. Anawati, R. Arnaldez, and M. Bredy (eds), *Annales du département des lettres arabes. In memoriam Prof. Fiey*, 2 vols, Beirut, 1996, i, 161-72.

#### *Secondary*

J. Nasrallah, 'Deux auteurs melchites inconnus du X<sup>e</sup> siècle', *OC* 63 (1979) 75-86, pp. 75-82  
Nasrallah, *HMLEM* iii,1, pp. 289-305  
Graf, *GCAL* ii, p. 45-48

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Qiṣṣa sīrat al-baṭriyark ‘alā Anṭākiyya al-shahīd Kharīṣṭūfūrus wa-shahādatihi bihā, allafahā Ibrāhīm ibn Yuhannā [sc. Yūḥannā] al-ibrūṭusbāthār al-Malakī bihā yūnāniyyan thumma naqalahā ayḍan ‘arabiyyan, ‘An account of the life of the patriarch of Antioch, the martyr Christopher, and his martyrdom in it [Antioch], which Ibrāhīm ibn Yūḥannā, the Melkite protospatharios, wrote in it [Antioch] in Greek [and] then also translated into Arabic’ (title in the Sinai MS; Zayat’s edition bears no title)*

DATE About 1025 or shortly thereafter

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

Ibrāhīm begins his *Life* of Christopher with a brief account of his hero’s birth and upbringing in Baghdad, and then of his relocation to Aleppo. It was there that Christopher entered into the service of the Ḥamdānid ruler Sayf al-Dawla (r. 945-67), who employed him as secretary to one of his emirs. The author then recounts how Christopher sought from Agapios, the Patriarch of Antioch, ordination as catholicos of the eastern portions of the patriarchate – a request that led to much contention. Following the death of Agapios, Christopher received the patriarchal see, amidst controversy and only with the support of Sayf al-Dawla. The author then surveys Christopher’s religious zeal, his learning, his ecclesiastical administration, and his winning of tax concessions from Muslim officials. The narrative continues with an account of the disturbances in Antioch in the 960s: first, because of Byzantine advances towards Antioch; second, because of a revolt against Sayf al-Dawla. In the course of this revolt, Christopher showed himself faithful to his patron and was exiled from the city. He took refuge at the monastery of St Symeon the Elder. Eventually, Antioch was retaken and Christopher restored. Shortly thereafter, he was murdered by Sayf al-Dawla’s opponents (22 May 967). The text

closes with an account of the chastisement visited on Christopher's murderers, a brief series of encomia, and a valuable list of the saint's disciples and the offices to which they were appointed. Toward the close of the text, the author includes an account of the interment of the saint's remains: first in the monastery of Arshāyā, near Antioch; later in the Cathedral Church of Antioch; and finally in the House of St Peter itself. As this last translation took place under the Patriarch Nicholas II (1025-30), the *Life* must have been composed around this date, or shortly after: it will be noted that the author would already have been some 75 years old by 1025. Perhaps the aged Ibrāhīm wrote his account for the celebration that would surely have attended the final translation of Christopher's remains.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The *Life of Christopher* is the only surviving biographical account of a Melkite patriarch from the medieval period. Its value is further enhanced by its author's personal familiarity with his subject's life and intimate acquaintance with the events leading up to his death. The text provides a vivid account of the last years of Ḥamdānid rule in northern Syria, the final days of Sayf al-Dawla, and the political and religious life of Antioch, both before and immediately after the Byzantine reconquest. It may be noted that Christopher was killed not because he had supported his co-religionists of Byzantium, but because of his fidelity to his long-time patron, Sayf al-Dawla.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS Sinai – Ar. 405, fols 111v-131r (1335)

MS Zayat – the basis for Zayat's edition of 1952. Upon Zayat's death (Nice, 1 Feb 1954), many of his books and MSS were bequeathed to the Bibliothèque Orientale (Beirut). It is unknown whether the present MS was included in his bequest. Cf. Nasrallah, *HMLEM* iv.1, pp. 222-23

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

J. Nasrallah, 'Deux auteurs melchites inconnus', pp. 79-80 (important re-edition of the text's closing paragraph from Sinai Ar. 405, with a comparison to the corresponding text of Zayat's edition)

- H. Zayat, 'Vie du patriarche melkite d'Antioche Christophore (d. 967) par le protospathaire Ibrahim b. Yuhanna. Document inédit du X<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 2 (1952) 11-38, 333-66 (ed. with French trans. from a MS in Zayat's personal possession; as noted by the editor, pp. 13, 15, this MS was descended from a copy that was very old, but was lacking diacritical points, was poorly written, damaged, and missing a number of passages)

## STUDIES

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- S. Moiseeva, "'Zhitie Antiokhiiskogo patriarkha Khristofora" i Vizantiiskaia agiografia' [The Life of the Patriarch Christopher and Byzantine Hagiography], *Vestnik PSTGU. Series III. Philology* 3.2 (2006) 169-180
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- K.-P. Todt, 'Antioch and Edessa in the so-called Treaty of Deabolis (September 1108)', *Aram* 11-12 (1999-2000) 485-501, pp. 497-98
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- H. Kennedy, 'Antioch. From Byzantium to Islam and back again', in J. Rich (ed.), *The city in late Antiquity*, London, 1992, 181-98, pp. 183, 188-91
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- H. Kennedy, 'The Melkite Church from the Islamic conquest to the crusades. Continuity and adaptation in the Byzantine legacy', in *Major papers. The 17th International Byzantine Congress*, New Rochelle NY, 1986, 325-43, pp. 335-36
- W. Saunders, 'Qal'at Sem'an. A frontier fort of the tenth and eleventh centuries', in S. Mitchell (ed.), *Armies and frontiers in Roman and Byzantine Anatolia*, Oxford, 1983, 291-303, pp. 291-95
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- J.-M. Fiey, "'Rūm" à l'est de l'Euphrate', *Le Muséon* 90 (1977) 365-420, pp. 368-72, 393-95
- J. Nasrallah, 'Église melchite en Iraq, en Perse et dans l'Asie centrale (1)', *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 25 (1975) 135-73, pp. 153-55
- J. Nasrallah, 'À propos des trouvailles épigraphiques à Saint-Siméon-l'Alépin', *Syria* 48 (1971) 165-78, pp. 167-70
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- J.-M. Saugey, *Premières recherches sur l'origine et les caractéristiques des synaxaires melkites (XI<sup>e</sup>-XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, Brussels, 1969, pp. 380-83
- J. Jarry, 'Trouvailles épigraphiques à Saint-Syméon', *Syria* 43 (1966) 105-15, pp. 107-8 (an inscription with mention of Christopher, perhaps dating from the time of his exile)
- R. Jenkins and C. Mango, 'A synodicon of Antioch and Lacedaemonia', *DOP* 15 (1961) 225-42, pp. 233-34
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- N. Edelby, 'Note sur le catholicos de Romagyris', *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 2 (1952) 39-46

- J. Kratchkovsky and A. Vasiliev, *Histoire de Yahya-Ibn-Sa'ïd d'Antioche*, continuateur de Sa'ïd-Ibn-Bitriq, Part I, 2 vols (*PO* 18.5, 23.3), Paris, 1924 and 1936, i, pp. 807-10 (pagination of the *PO* volume = pp. [109]-[112] for Part I of the *Histoire*)

**John C. Lamoreaux**

# Sulaymān al-Ghazzī

Sulaymān ibn Ḥasan [or ibn Baṣīlā] al-Ghazzī

DATE OF BIRTH	Unknown; probably about 940
PLACE OF BIRTH	Unknown; possibly Gaza or elsewhere in Palestine
DATE OF DEATH	Unknown; after 1027
PLACE OF DEATH	Palestine; possibly Gaza

## BIOGRAPHY

Sulaymān al-Ghazzī, a Melkite bishop in Palestine during the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, is the first Arab poet whose *dīwān* deals exclusively with Christian concerns. There are no sources for his biography apart from what can be gleaned from the contents of the *Dīwān* and his prose writings. However, given the remarkably personal nature of much of his poetry, a reasonable outline of his life can be pieced together. It seems that Sulaymān's mother left his father, named either Ḥasan or Baṣīlā (it is entirely possible that his father used both names; the oldest manuscripts of his works refer to him as 'Sulaymān ibn Baṣīlā'), when Sulaymān was a young boy. At an early age, he joined a monastery but left it soon after taking his vows. He married, had a son, and was able to amass a considerable fortune. Late in life, after the deaths of his son (at the age of 20), his only grandson, and finally his wife, in addition to the loss of his wealth, he once again became a monk. On account of his considerable erudition, he was made bishop of a see in Palestine, possibly of Gaza, sometime around his eightieth year. While early scholars such as Cheikho claimed that Sulaymān was a martyr and even a convert from Islam, these opinions are not supported by any available evidence. Likewise, the attempt by Dick ('Samonas') to identify Sulaymān with Samonas, a purported 11<sup>th</sup>-century bishop of Gaza, has been plausibly discredited by Edelby (*Sulaymān*, i, *Muqaddima*, pp. 31-36).

Sulaymān's period of literary activity coincided with the persecution of Christians under the Fatimid Caliph al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh (d. 1021), which is a theme frequently encountered in his poetry. He died sometime after 1027, as is evidenced by his use of the *Majālis* of Iliyā of Nisibis (q.v.) in his prose works.



## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

*Primary*

N. Edelby, *Sulaymān al-Ghazzī. Shā'ir wa-kātib Masīhī Malakī min al-qarnayn al-'āshir wa-l-ḥādī 'ashar li-l-milād*. vol. 2: *Al-dīwān al-shī'rī (Patrimoine Arabe Chrétien 8)*, Jounieh, 1985

*Secondary*

N. Edelby, *Sulaymān al-Ghazzī. Shā'ir wa-kātib Masīhī Malakī min al-qarnayn al-'āshir wa-l-ḥādī 'ashar li-l-milād*. vol. 1: *Muqaddima 'amma li-mu'allafātihi al-shī'riyya wa-l-nathriyya (Patrimoine Arabe Chrétien 7)*, Jounieh, 1984

N. Edelby, 'Sulaymān ibn Ḥasan al-Ghazzī, shā'ir 'arabī Masīhī majhūl min al-qarn al-ḥādī 'ashar li-l-milād', *Al-Masarra* 67 (1981) 305-13, 396-408, 526-43

I. Dick, 'Samonas de Gaza ou Sulāiman al-Ġazzi', *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 30 (1980) 175-78

Nasrallah, *HMLEM* iii.2, pp. 118-30

J. Nasrallah, 'Sulāimān al-Ġazzi évêque melchite de Gaza (XI<sup>e</sup> siècle)', *OC* 62 (1978) 144-57

Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 84-86

L. Cheikho, 'Sulaymān al-Ghazzī', *Al-Mashriq* 25 (1927) 42-51, 97-107, 159

L. Cheikho, *Shu'arā' al-Naṣrāniyya ba'd al-Islām*, Beirut, 1924, pp. 400-24

I. Ma'lūf, 'Al-Muṭṭrān Sulaymān al-Ghazzī', *Al-Ni'ma* 1 (1910) 619-27, 658-67

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Dīwān*, 'Poems'

DATE Last third of the 10<sup>th</sup> to first third of the 11<sup>th</sup> century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The *Dīwān* of Sulaymān al-Ghazzī consists of 97 *qaṣīdas* amounting to over 3,000 lines and treating a wide variety of religious themes. It uses all the major classical meters but ignores classical rules of genre, and often breaks meter and uses colloquialisms. Individual *qaṣīdas* are loosely structured and rapidly move between biblical, theological, ascetical, and personal themes. In defending Melkite orthodoxy, he strikes a strongly triumphalistic tone in the face of persecution, taking pride in the conversion of far-off tribes such as the Russians and Pechenegs, while also recognizing the humble position of Palestinian Christians and lamenting the sins of his youth and his own personal

tragedies. He frequently criticizes the Christological errors of other Christian groups and of ancient heresiarchs, but only makes oblique references to Islamic doctrine, never mentioning Muslims by name. He is more directly engaged with Islamic material when he describes events from the Bible, especially those involving Moses and Mary, where he is quick to use images that recall qur'anic descriptions of the same events.

Sulaymān's particular concern for the Christian sacred geography of Palestine at a time when several of the most important churches in the region were destroyed is also notable. He specifically mentions the church on Mount Zion and the Church of the Resurrection as being in ruins. Other references to persecutions endured by Palestinian Christians during this period include mention of the humiliation brought by having to wear distinctive clothing and the burden of enduring unjust rulers.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The *Dīwān* is the earliest known collection of Arabic poetry dealing with Christian religious themes. It provides a window on the life of Melkite Christians in Palestine during al-Ḥākim's persecution, by means of a unique and highly personal poetic voice.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

Over 40 manuscripts are extant, the earliest (MS Beirut, Bibliothèque Orientale – 289) from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. They are catalogued in Edelby, *Sulaymān al-Ghazzī*. Vol. 1: *Muqaddima*, pp. 175-89.

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

Edelby, *Sulaymān al-Ghazzī*. vol. 2: *Al-dīwān al-shi'ri*

Cheikho, *Shu'arā' al-Naṣrāniyya ba'd al-Islām*, pp. 400-24

#### STUDIES

Edelby, *Sulaymān al-Ghazzī*

E. Khalifé-Hachem, 'Notice sur un manuscrit du poète arabe chrétien Sulaimān Ibn Ḥasan al-Ġazzī', *Melto* 2 (1966) 189-98

## Prose theological treatises

DATE First third of the 11<sup>th</sup> century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

There are six extant short prose treatises by Sulaymān al-Ghazzī:

1. *Radd ‘alā al-mukhālifin al-Amāna l-mustaqīma l-urthūdhuksiyya* (‘Refutation of those who oppose the correct Orthodox faith’; Edelby, *Sulaymān*, iii, pp. 40-73)
2. *Fī ma’nā i’tiqād al-Našāra l-urthūdhuksiyya fī waḥdāniyyat al-Khāliq* (‘On the meaning of the Orthodox Christians’ belief in the Unity of the Creator’; Edelby, *Sulaymān*, iii, pp. 85-97)
3. *Fī l-ṣalīb* (‘On the cross’; Edelby, *Sulaymān*, iii, pp. 102-14)
4. *Fī anna l-insān huwa l-‘ālam al-aṣghar* (‘On that the human being is the microcosm’; Edelby, *Sulaymān*, iii, pp. 120-41)
5. *Fī faḍl al-jadīda ‘alā l-‘atiqa* (‘On the superiority of the New [Testament] over the Old’; Edelby, *Sulaymān*, iii, pp. 148-60)
6. *Fī ma’nā imān al-Našāra l-urthūdhuksiyya bi-ilāh wāḥid* (‘On the meaning of the Orthodox Christians’ faith in one God’; Edelby, *Sulaymān*, iii, pp. 166-77)

As these six are almost always found together in the manuscript tradition and in secondary scholarship, they will be treated together below.

These works are primarily apologetic and concerned with the defense of Melkite orthodoxy against ancient and contemporary Christological heresies. Although Sulaymān never mentions Islam by name, much of the apologetic content clearly has an eye towards Islam, especially in his defenses of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the cross. In his treatises ‘That the human being is the microcosm’ and ‘On the cross’, however, he displays a more speculative side. This is perhaps indicative of other, more unexpected, points of contact with Islamic thought, exemplified by the parallels to certain ideas of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’ (q.v.) identified by Den Heijer and La Spisa (‘La migration du savoir’).

In the ‘Refutation of those who oppose the correct Orthodox faith’, Sulaymān refutes in chronological order the heretics condemned by the first six Ecumenical Councils recognized by the Melkites. When he reaches the fifth and sixth councils, however, problems arise. He describes the Fifth Ecumenical Council as condemning Origen and Mārūn, presumably the founder of the Maronite sect. While it is true that the bishops meeting for the Fifth Ecumenical Council (the Second Council of Constantinople) condemned Origen and Origenism, the connection between Mārūn and Origenism is unclear. Moreover, Sulaymān ascribes to them the beliefs that, if one believes in a single

God, one does not need to believe in three hypostases, and that baptism is a custom and not necessary. This bears no relation to either Origenism or Maronite belief, but is rather a clear reaction to beliefs held by Christians wishing to compromise with Islam. In describing the sixth council, Sulaymān states that it took place in Cappadocia and condemned Macarius and Phocas. While the Sixth Ecumenical Council (the Third Council of Constantinople) did indeed condemn Patriarch Macarius of Antioch for monothelitism, there is no known connection between the Emperor Phocas (d. 610) and any heresy (unlike his successor Heraclius, d. 641, who was an avid promoter of monothelism). In any case, Sulaymān does not accuse them of monothelitism, but rather of the belief that Christ's crucifixion and suffering were purely imaginary. Here it would seem he is again using a purportedly ancient heresy as a stand-in for Islam.

Sulaymān's 'On the meaning of the Orthodox Christians' belief in the Unity of the Creator' is divided into two parts. The first part, on God's unity, is adapted from a treatise by Iliyā of Nisibis (d. 1046) on the same topic. The second part, on rational grounds for the Trinity, is adapted from the first *majlis* which that same author held in the presence of the vizier Ibn 'Alī al-Maghribī in 1027.

The treatise 'On the Cross' is written explicitly as advice on how to answer when someone, presumably a Muslim, asks: 'Do you love what Christ loved, or do you love what he hated? If you answer, "We love what he loved", the Holy Gospel betrays your lie when it says, "Father, if you desire to take this cup from me, do it"' (Edelby, *Sulaymān*, iii, p. 102). Sulaymān answers this question by stating that in his human nature Christ did not wish to die, while in his divine nature he desired to die for the salvation of humankind. He then goes on to list prophecies of the cross in the Old Testament, miracles worked by the cross, and signs of the cross in nature, such as the four cardinal directions. This is followed by an illustration of a cross formed by the juxtaposition of the two triads 'living (*ḥayy*), intellect (*'aql*), and breathing (*mutanaffis*)' and 'substance (*jawhar*), intellect (*'aql*), and mass (*jirm*)'.

In 'On that the human being is the microcosm', Sulaymān begins with these same triads to explain how the human being is a microcosm reflecting all aspects of the created world. He then transitions into a list of scriptural citations from the Old and New Testaments to prove that Jesus is both the Messiah and God, and that he is thus the bond linking the entire created universe to God.

'On the superiority of the New [Testament] over the Old', as its name implies, is a defense of the New Testament as a more universal and spiritual and thus superior text in comparison with the Old Testament, whose value lies in its anticipation of Christ and the Church.

'On the meaning of the Orthodox Christians' faith in One God' is adapted from a treatise by Theodore Abū Qurra (q.v.) on the same theme.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

In contrast to the striking originality of his poetry, Sulaymān's prose works are for the most part in keeping with or even just slightly adapted from works by earlier and contemporary apologists. Of interest, however, is his indirect way of criticizing Islamic doctrines, as well as his more speculative cosmological ideas.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

There are 12 known extant manuscripts, the oldest being MS Sinai – Ar. 11, dated 1116. The manuscripts are catalogued and described in P. la Spisa, 'I trattati teologici di Sulaymān al-Ġazzī. Per una nuova edizione critica', *Pd'O* 30 (2005) 341-62, pp. 357-59

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

- P. la Spisa, *Sulaymān ibn Ḥasan al-Ghazzī* (X-XI sec.). *I trattati teologici in prosa. Introduzione, traduzione, note, e indice*, forthcoming in the series *Patrimonio Culturale Arabo Cristiano*
- N. Edelby, *Sulaymān al-Ghazzī. Shā'ir wa-kātib Masiḥī Malakī min al-qarnayn al-āshir wa-l-ḥādī 'ashar li-l-milād*. vol. 3: *Al-maqālāt al-lāhūtiyya l-nathriyya* (*Patrimoine Arabe Chrétien* 9), Jounieh, 1986

#### STUDIES

- J. den Heijer and P. la Spisa, 'La migration du savoir entre les communautés. Le cas de la littérature arabe chrétienne', forthcoming in *Res Antiquae* 7 (2010)
- P. la Spisa, 'Fonti indirette e nuove fonti manuscritte nell'opera teologica di Sulaymān al-Ġazzī', in D. Righi (ed.), *La letteratura arabo-cristiana e le scienze nel periodo abbaside (750-1240 d.C.). Atti del 2° convegno di studi arabo-cristiani, Roma, 9-10 marzo 2007*, Rome, 2009, 299-315
- P. la Spisa, 'Un trattato sul microcosmo di Sulaymān Ibn Ḥasan al-Ġazzī', in N. Edelby and P. Masri (eds), *Mélanges en mémoire de Mgr Néophitos Edelby (1920-1995)*, Beirut, 2005, 237-82

- P. la Spisa, 'I trattati teologici di Sulaymān al-Ġazzī. Per una nuova edizione critica', *Pd'O* 30 (2005) 341-62
- P. la Spisa, 'Una citazione di Giovanni Damasceno in Sulaymān ibn Ḥasan al-Ġazzī', *Pd'O* 27 (2002) 85-104
- H. Suermann, 'Sulaymān al-Ġazzī, évêque melchite de Gaza (XI<sup>e</sup> siècle): Sur les Maronites', *Pd'O* 21 (1996) 189-98
- Edelby, *Sulaymān al-Ghazzī*. vol. 1: *Muqaddima*, pp. 167-71

**Samuel Noble**

# John Siceliotes

Iōannēs Philosophos Sikeliōtēs

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown; mid-10<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown  
DATE OF DEATH Unknown; mid-11<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF DEATH Unknown

## BIOGRAPHY

John Siceliotes was a contemporary of John Geometres, and delivered a speech in the presence of the Emperor Basil II (r. 976-1025), so he must have lived in the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> to the first half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. He is not to be identified with John Doxopatres (or Doxapatres), as has been shown by Rabe. Named Siceliotes, he probably came from Sicily, but lived in Constantinople. He worked as an orator and, among other things, delivered speeches before famous personalities, as when Basil II visited the Picridion Monastery. On another occasion he gave a speech 'Against the Saracens' in the presence of a dignitary.

Lauxtermann says that he was a friend of the Emperor Basil II and a court orator, though no proof is offered for this, and it seems questionable, considering Siceliotes' complaint of poverty in one of his works (Walz, *Rhetores Graeci*, vi, p. 448).

Siceliotes is primarily known for his *scholia* on Hermogenes. He also wrote commentaries on the works of Aelios Aristeides; see Lenz, pp. 97-99.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### *Primary*

'Exēgēsis eis tas ideas tou Hermogenous apo phōnēs Iōannou Philosophou tou Sikeliōtou', in C. Walz (ed.), *Rhetores Graeci ex codicibus Florentinis, Mediolanensibus, Monacensibus, Neapolitanis, Parisiensibus, Romanis, Venetis, Taurinensibus et Vindobonensibus*, 6 vols, Stuttgart, 1832-36, vi (repr. Osnabrück, 1968, vi, 56-504)  
*Opusculum* no. 47, in P. Gautier (ed.), *Michaelis Pselli Theologica*, 2 vols, Leipzig, 1989-2002

*Secondary*

- M. Lauxtermann, 'Byzantine poetry and the paradox of Basil II's reign', in P. Magdalino (ed.), *Byzantium in the year 1000*, Leiden, 2003, 199-216, pp. 209, 214, n. 48
- A. Kazhdan, art. 'John Sikeliotēs', in *ODB*
- H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, vol. 1, Munich, 1978, pp. 83-84, 145-46
- F.W. Lenz, *Aristeidesstudien*, Berlin, 1964, pp. 97-99, 113-117
- H. Rabe, 'Aus Rhetoren-Handschriften. 3. Die Quellen des Doxapatres in den Homilien zu Aphthonios', *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 62 (1907) 559-86, p. 581, n.1
- K. Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur von Justinian bis zum Ende des oströmischen Reiches (527-1453)*, 2 vols, Munich, 1897<sup>2</sup> (repr. Munich, 1959), i, pp. 461-63

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Ho kata tōn Sarakēnōn logos*, 'Speech against the Saracens'

DATE Unknown; late 10<sup>th</sup> or early 11<sup>th</sup> century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Greek

## DESCRIPTION

We know of Sikeliotēs' speech against the Saracens only from one of his other works, his *scholia* to the *Peri ideōn* ('On the ideas') of Hermogenes (Walz, *Rhetores Graeci*, vi, p. 447), where he says he delivered this speech in the presence of some dignitary (probably a member of the Senate). He emphasizes that it was a speech that arose from the occasion, neither invented (*proskeptamenos*) nor practiced (*promeletēsas*) beforehand. So it is not, as Krumbacher says (Krumbacher, *Geschichte*, i, p. 462), a school speech. Whether Sikeliotēs put the speech into writing afterwards cannot be said, but it is no longer extant.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Sikeliotēs' speech against the Saracens shows that, by the 11<sup>th</sup> century, arguments against Islam had obviously developed into everyday *topoi*, which would be quoted in impromptu speeches such as this. Sikeliotēs mentions the speech directly after reporting that he delivered a 'speech about the horse' (*ton peri tou hippon logon*) on a very similar occasion, thus attaching equivalent value to the two topics. It would



have been interesting to know which *topoi* against the Muslims an orator would have used in a speech of this kind.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

**Miriam Salzmann**

## *Kitāb al-majdal*

DATE OF BIRTH	Possibly mid-10 <sup>th</sup> century
PLACE OF BIRTH	Possibly in or near Ṭīrhān (Iraq)
DATE OF DEATH	Possibly early 11 <sup>th</sup> century
PLACE OF DEATH	Possibly in or near Ṭīrhān (Iraq)

### BIOGRAPHY

In the bibliographical chapter of his ecclesiastical encyclopedia *Miṣbāḥ al-ẓulma*, the Coptic priest and theologian Shams al-Ri'āsa Abū l-Barakāt ibn Kabar (d. 1324) devotes a lengthy entry to a work entitled *Kitāb al-majdal li-l-istibṣār wa-l-jadal*, which he attributes to an author of the Church of the East named 'Amr ibn Mattā al-Ṭīrhānī (that is, from the town of Ṭīrhān in Iraq). As al-Shams' detailed description makes clear, we are here dealing with a well-known work: *Kitāb al-majdal* ('The tower'), a massive theological and ecclesiastical compendium in seven major sections, written in rhymed Arabic prose. There seems to be no immediately compelling reason to deny the attribution to 'Amr ibn Mattā; Holmberg has discovered the same attribution in several important manuscripts of the work (Holmberg, 'A reconsideration'; see the results summarized on p. 271 [or below under 'Manuscripts']). It is possible, of course, that the attribution to 'Amr is an addition to an originally anonymous work – but one might then expect to find a name that people would recognize.

In fact, nothing more is known about the author of *Kitāb al-majdal* other than what can be deduced from the text itself. In his introduction, he tells his readers of his wandering from the faith followed by his repentance, his devotion to study, and his decision to compile a book in 30 sections (*faṣl*) and seven chapters (*abwāb*). (See Kūrkiš Iṣḥāq Buṭrus, 'Al-majdal. Al-muqaddima', pp. 126-29.) The discovery in his text of quotations from late-10<sup>th</sup>-century writings of authors who are referred to as contemporaries, coupled with the author's use of the round number 1,000 to express the number of years since the initial spread of Christianity and since the dispersion of the Jews, suggest that the text dates from the early 11<sup>th</sup> century (see Landron, *Chrétiens et musulmans*, pp. 101-2; Holmberg, 'A reconsideration',

pp. 262-64). The author's mastery of the Arabic language is evident; he writes with both theological acuity and a style that creates delight.

The straightforward presentation of the foregoing paragraphs is only possible as a result of some struggle. Considerable confusion between different books (a seven-chapter book and a five-chapter one) and possible authors ('Amr ibn Mattā, Marī ibn Sulaymān, and Ṣalībā ibn Yūḥannā) quickly developed in the secondary literature on *Kitāb al-majdal* and was then 'enshrined' by Graf in *GCAL*. According to the 'Grafian' consensus, the seven-chapter *Kitāb al-majdal* was written in the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century by Mārī ibn Sulaymān; a five-chapter work of the same title was written two centuries later by 'Amr ibn Mattā; and this latter work was plagiarized by one Ṣalībā ibn Yūḥannā, who antedated it to 1332 and renamed it *Aṣfār al-asrār*, 'The books of secrets'. However, this consensus eventually began to unravel. Samir came to the defense of the unfortunately maligned Ṣalībā and his important work in the *Islamochristiana* 'Bibliographie' and elsewhere, while Landron and Holmberg carefully sorted through the *Kitāb al-majdal* dossier and suggested a new reading of the data along the lines accepted here (see Landron, *Chrétiens et musulmans*; Holmberg, 'A reconsideration'; or Holmberg, 'Language and thought'). It may be worth mentioning that, on the account accepted here, Marī ibn Sulaymān is possibly only a continuator of the patriarchal history found in the fifth chapter of the seven-chapter *Kitāb al-majdal*. As for Ṣalībā ibn Yūḥannā, he is the author of the five-chapter *Aṣfār al-asrār*, written in 1332.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

Shams al-Ri'āsa Abū l-Barakāt ibn Kabar, *Misbāḥ al-zulma fī idāḥ al-khidma*, ed. S.K. Samir, Cairo, 1971, pp. 298-300

### Secondary

B. Holmberg, 'Language and thought in *Kitāb al-majdal*, bāb 2, faṣl 1, *al-Dhurwa*', in D. Thomas (ed.), *Christians at the heart of Islamic rule. Church life and scholarship in 'Abbasid Iraq*, Leiden, 2003, 159-75, pp. 159-64

B. Landron, *Chrétiens et musulmans*, pp. 97-108

B. Holmberg, 'A reconsideration of the *Kitāb al-mağdal*', *Pd'O* 18 (1993) 255-73

J. Habbi, 'La somme théologique "al-Mağdal"', *Pd'O* 16 (1990-1991) 163-76

- [S.]K. Samir, 'Le "Daf' al-hamm" d'Élie de Nisibe. Date et circonstances de sa rédaction', *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 18 (1987) 99-119, pp. 101-3 (Şalibā provides a witness to the work; in n. 4, Samir details his disagreements with Graf)
- Kürkīs Ishāq Buṭrus, 'Al-majdal. Al-muqaddima', *Bayn al-Nahrayn* 12, no. 47 (1984) 123-31, p. 129
- Kürkīs Ishāq Buṭrus, 'Kitāb al-majdal li-Mārī ibn Sulaymān', *Bayn al-Nahrayn* 7, nos 25-26 (1979) 51-60, 193-208
- [S.]K. Samir, 'Élie de Nisibe', in 'Bibliographie', *Islamochristiana* 3 (1977) 257-86 (no. 22.4), p. 274 (Şalibā preserves ch. 1 of Iliyā's *Kitāb al-burhān 'alā ṣaḥīḥ al-imān*)
- [S.]K. Samir, 'Makkīhā b. Sulaymān', in 'Bibliographie', *Islamochristiana* 2 (1976) 221-23 (no. 22.13), p. 222 (Şalibā preserves Makkīkhā's 'Letter to a believer of Ispahan')
- Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 200-2, 216-18 (very influential, synthesizes the references below, but is in need of correction)
- G. Westphal, *Untersuchungen über die Quellen und die Glaubwürdigkeit der Patriarchenchroniken des Mārī ibn Sulaimān*, 'Amr ibn Matai und Şaliba ibn Joḥannān, Kirchhain, N.-L., 1901, pp. 1-21 (makes Şalibā ibn Yūḥannā a plagiarist of Mārī ibn Sulaymān)
- Assemani, *BO* iii.1, pp. 554-55, 580, 586-89 (made 'Amr ibn Mattā a 14<sup>th</sup>-century author of the five-chapter work, and attributed the seven-chapter work to Mārī ibn Sulaymān)

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Kitāb al-majdal li-l-istibṣār wa-l-jadal*, 'The tower, for reflection and discussion'; *Kitāb al-majdal*, 'The tower'

DATE Early 11<sup>th</sup> century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

### DESCRIPTION

*Kitāb al-majdal* is a veritable theological encyclopedia. As Holmberg points out ('Language and thought', p. 160), the complete manuscript Paris Ar. 190 occupies more than 1,000 pages. Perhaps it is the very size of the work that has intimidated scholars and prevented the production of an edition.

The title is very deliberately chosen. The author fully exploits the metaphor of a tower (or castle), naming the work's seven chapters

(*abwāb*, major sections, covering a wide range of topics) after features of architecture or landscaping:

1. *Al-bayān*, 'The exposition', 1 section (*faṣl*): the existence of God
2. *Al-bunyān*, 'The edifice', 3 sections (called *Al-dhurwā*, 'The summit'; *Al-asās*, 'The foundation'; and *Al-tashyīd*, 'The construction'): unity of God, life of Christ, Trinity and Incarnation
3. *Al-arkān*, 'The supports', 4 sections: Baptism, Eucharist, Gospel, cross
4. *Al-maṣābīḥ*, 'The lamps', 7 sections: Christian virtues and practices
5. *Al-ʿamad*, 'The buttresses', 7 sections: from the Creation through the history of the Church (especially the Church of the East)
6. *Al-jadāwil*, 'The watercourses', 4 sections: cultic matters, including prayer towards the East, Sunday observance
7. *Al-ḥadāʾiq*, 'The gardens', 4 sections: Christian freedom from the Old Testament law.

The extended title, *Kitāb al-majdal li-l-istibṣār wa-l-jadal*, 'The tower, for reflection and discussion', points to another significant feature of the work: both the metaphor of a (defensive) tower and the notion of *jadal*, 'discussion' or 'argument', indicate the *apologetic* utility that the work is intended to have. One (unpublished) example of Muslim-directed apologetic in the work is a passage on the crucifixion of Christ: the *Kitāb al-majdal* directly takes on the Qur'anic expression *shubbiha lahum*, 'it [Christ's crucifixion] was made to appear so to them' (Q 4:157) by setting up a four-fold dilemma and asking: *Who* made it so appear? God? Christ? The devil? The Jewish leaders? Each possibility is weighed and found wanting. (And all in rhymed prose! For this passage, see Paris Ar. 190, pp. 295-99; or Vat Ar. 108, fols 121r-122v.)

The language of the text has considerable power; see Holmberg, 'Language and thought', pp. 164-75. In its rhyme and even in its choice of theological vocabulary, we can see the influence of the Qur'an and the Islamic tradition. However, the author is no mere imitator, but creates a work that has an aesthetic all of its own. We look forward to the publication of the work, perhaps small piece by small piece, so that it can be better known and studied.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

*Kitāb al-majdal* is a huge and highly creative work. When published and studied, it will undoubtedly give a richer picture of the apologetic

enterprise of the Church of the East at the beginning of the second Christian millennium. For now, we can simply note that it served as a source for *other* works of apology, such as the anonymous 12<sup>th</sup>-century 'Nestorian' Commentary on the Creed (q.v.).

#### MANUSCRIPTS

The following list is constructed from Holmberg, 'A reconsideration', pp. 269-73. See Graf, *GICAL* ii, p. 202 for a handful of other (inaccessible) manuscripts.

- MS Vat – Ar. 109 (1213; chs 5-7 [incomplete at beginning]; anonymous)
- MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 199 (1274?; excerpt from ch. 2)
- MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 190 (13<sup>th</sup> century; entire work; attributed by a second hand to 'Amr ibn Mattā)
- MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 191 (14<sup>th</sup> century; chs 1-4, beginning of 5; attributed to 'Amr ibn Mattā)
- MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 192 (14<sup>th</sup> century; chs 5-7; attributed to 'Amr ibn Mattā)
- MS Cambridge, University Library – Add. 3163 [=3293] (14<sup>th</sup> century; chs. 5-7 [incomplete at beginning])
- MS Vat – Ar. 108 (1401; chs. 1-4, beginning of 5; attributed to 'Amr ibn Mattā)
- MS Vat – Ar. 122 (16<sup>th</sup> century; chs. 5-7 [incomplete at beginning])
- MS Vat – Ar. 99 (1591; part of ch. 2; attributed to 'Amr ibn Mattā)
- MS Vat – Ar. 126 (1687; excerpt from ch. 4)
- MS Vat – Ar. 636 (17<sup>th</sup> century)
- MS London, BL – Or. 4240 (Suppl. Ar. 25) (17<sup>th</sup> century; chs 1-4 [incomplete at beginning])
- MS Vat – Ar. 688 (18<sup>th</sup> century; excerpt from ch. 5)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

- Kürkīs Ishāq Buṭrus, 'Kitāb al-majdal 2', *Bayn al-Nahrayn* 13, no. 48 (1985) 220-33 (text from the first chapter, from MS Paris Ar. 190)
- Kürkīs Ishāq Buṭrus, 'Al-majdal. Al-muqaddima', *Bayn al-Nahrayn* 12, no. 47 (1984) 123-31 (text of the author's introduction, from MS Paris Ar. 190)
- H. Gismondi, *Maris Amri et Slibae. De patriarchis Nestorianorum commentaria*, Pars prior, 2 vols, *Maris textus arabicus* and *Maris versio latina*, Rome, 1899 (edition and Latin trans. of ch. 5, section 5, from Vat Ar. 109)

## STUDIES

- Holmberg, 'Language and thought'  
Landron, *Chrétiens et musulmans*, pp. 97-108  
Holmberg, 'A reconsideration'  
Habbi, 'La somme théologique "al-Mağdal"'  
Kürkīs Iṣḥāq Buṭrus, 'Kitāb al-majdal'  
Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 200-2, 216-18  
Westphal, *Untersuchungen*

**Mark N. Swanson**

# Ibn Mattawayh

Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad  
ibn Mattawayh

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown  
PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown  
DATE OF DEATH Unknown, possibly mid 11<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF DEATH Rayy

## BIOGRAPHY

Little is known about Ibn Mattawayh's life, except that he was a student of 'Abd al-Jabbār (d. 1025) (q.v.) in Rayy, and disseminated his master's teachings. His position towards the end in lists of 'Abd al-Jabbār's students suggests he was one of the youngest, but there does not appear to be ancient support for the date of his death, given as 1075 by Houben in his edition of the *Majmū'*, and as 1076 by 'Uthmān (on these, see Heemskerck, p. 65, nn. 215 and 216). As Madelung points out, there is no evidence in his works that he lived into the latter half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

A few works credited to Ibn Mattawayh are known. Among them, his *Kitāb al-tadhkira*, 'The reminder', is concerned with the constituents of physical matter as part of the finer points of theology, and his lost *Kitāb al-kifāya*, 'Sufficiency', advocated the superiority of 'Alī over other caliphs, and his sinlessness. Despite this interest in Shī'ī concerns, there is no evidence that Ibn Mattawayh belonged to the Shī'a.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

Al-Ḥākim al-Jishumī, *Sharḥ al-'uyūn*, in F. Sayyid (ed.), *Faḍl al-i'tizāl wa-ṭabaqāt al-Mu'tazila*, Tunis, 1974, p. 389

Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭabaqāt al-Mu'tazila*, p. 119

### Secondary

S. Schmidtke, *An anonymous commentary on Kitāb al-Tadhkira by Ibn Mattawayh. Facsimile edition of Mahdavi codex 514 (6th/12th Century)*, Tehran, 2006



- M. Heemskerk, *Suffering in the Mu'tazilite theology. 'Abd al-Jabbār's teaching on pain and divine justice*, Leiden, 2000, pp. 62-67
- W. Madelung, art. 'Ibn Mattawayh', in *EI2*
- 'A.-K. 'Uthmān, *Qāḍī l-quḍāt 'Abd al-Jabbār ibn Aḥmad al-Hamadhānī*, Beirut, 1967, p. 51

#### WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Kitāb al-majmū' fī l-muḥīṭ bi-l-taklīf*, 'The all-embracing work, on the comprehensive work concerning the [divine] imposition'

DATE Unknown, possibly early 11<sup>th</sup> century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

The *Majmū'* is a commentary on 'Abd al-Jabbār's *Al-muḥīṭ bi-l-taklīf*, which probably dates from after 990, since it is not mentioned in the list of completed works in the *Mughnī*, which was finished in that year. This suggests that Ibn Mattawayh's commentary is likely to have been written sometime in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century. Like the *Mughnī*, the *Muḥīṭ* is a systematic presentation of doctrine essentially structured on the five Mu'tazilī principles, and Ibn Mattawayh's *Majmū'* follows the same structure.

The *Majmū'* comprises four main parts. The first of these contains discussions about the principle of *tawḥīd*, consisting of four sections on what should necessarily be believed about God, and a fifth concluding section on what should not be believed about him. This fifth section comprises refutations of Zoroastrianism, dualism and Christianity (Houben, pp. 222-24), just like Book 5 of 'Abd al-Jabbār's *Mughnī*, which in the same way concludes the much longer presentation of the first Mu'tazilī principle in that work.

The brief refutation in the *Majmū'* begins with arguments against the Trinity: according to the Christian explanation, the Godhead must be a multiplicity; fatherhood and sonship cannot apply to the eternal God; and the imputation of a special position to Jesus would entail the same for other prophets (pp. 222-23). The last argument refers to a comparison made by Christians between Abraham as 'friend of God', *khalīl Allāh*, and Jesus as 'son of God' in an adoptive sense. This was first discussed by al-Jāḥiẓ in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, who mentions his teacher

al-Nazzām's comments on it, and it became a significant element of later anti-Christian works, being taken up by Abū 'Alī l-Jubbā'ī (q.v.), al-Māturīdī (q.v.) and 'Abd al-Jabbār (q.v.).

The refutation continues with arguments against the Incarnation: Christians introduced this when they saw the human Jesus performing miracles and explained it in terms of physical uniting or uniting of wills, but in either form it does not stand up to scrutiny according to *kalām* logic (pp. 223-24). Like 'Abd al-Jabbār in the *Muḥīṭ*, Ibn Mattawayh repeatedly refers to proofs made earlier in the *Majmū'* to show how particular Christian claims cannot be rationally sustained.

Comparison of this section of the *Majmū'* with its equivalent in the *Muḥīṭ* shows that while Ibn Mattawayh presents the same topics as 'Abd al-Jabbār and many of the same arguments, he tends to give expanded versions which explain and somewhat simplify the concise language of the original.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The arguments against Christianity in the *Majmū'* are an eloquent testimony to the triumph and maturity of Islamic theology in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Drawing on a tradition of arguments more than a century old at least, it succinctly disproves the two main Christian doctrines and demonstrates the complete absence of rationality in their inception and presentation. It testifies to the absence of any serious challenge from Christians in the minds of Muslim theologians at this time, and a certainty about the soundness of their own systematic thinking.

The positioning of arguments against Christian doctrines in juxtaposition to the presentation of the Muslim doctrine of God, by this time a traditional element of theological treatises, indicates that a main (maybe the main) function it served was to adumbrate the correctness of the Muslim doctrine by illustrating the incoherence of alternative forms.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

See Houben, pp. 8-11 (describing four MSS in which the part containing the refutation of Christianity is preserved).

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

J.J. Houben (ed.), *Kitāb al-majmū' fī l-muḥīṭ bi-l-taklīf*, Beirut, 1965

'U.S. 'Azmi (ed.), *Al-muḥīṭ bi-l-taklīf*, Cairo, 1965

## STUDIES

- J. Houben and D. Gimaret (eds), *Kitāb al-majmūʿ fi l-muḥīṭ bi-l-taklīf*, Beirut, 1981, pp. 19-32 (mainly relating this work to ʿAbd al-Jabbār's *Muḥīṭ*)
- M. Schwarz, 'The affirmation of empty space by an eleventh-century Muʿtazilite', *Isis* 64 (1973) 384-85

**David Thomas**

# al-Dāwudī

Abū Ja'far Aḥmad ibn Naṣr al-Dāwudī al-Asadī

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown; mid-10<sup>th</sup> century

PLACE OF BIRTH Ifrīqiya

DATE OF DEATH 1011-12

PLACE OF DEATH Tilimsān

## BIOGRAPHY

Al-Dāwudī was a Mālikī jurist born in the north of Ifrīqiya. He travelled to Tripoli in Libya, where he started to write his commentary on Mālik's *Al-muwaṭṭa'*, and later moved to Tilimsān, where he was the *faqīh* of the city. (Qaddūrī, pp. 169-70, shows that his *shuhra* is not al-Rawādī, but al-Dāwudī. The mistaken reading is given by Steinschneider and Brockelmann, and copied by Epalza and Devillard. *Pace* Steinschneider, Epalza and Devillard, he was not from Cordova, and never lived there. Ziriklī gives the correct *shuhra*, but the rest of the name and date of his death are wrong.)

Al-Dāwudī wrote works on language, religious themes and legal matters, among them *Al-nāmī fī sharḥ al-Muwaṭṭa'*, *Al-wā'ī fī l-fiqh*, *Al-naṣiḥa fī sharḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Al-īdāḥ fī l-radd 'alā l-Qadariyya*, though the most famous and influential is *Kitāb al-amwāl*.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, *Tartīb al-madārik*, ed. M. ibn Tāwit al-Tanjī et al., 8 vols, Rabat, 1966-83, vii, 102-4

Ibn Farḥūn, *Kitāb al-dībāj al-mudhhab fī ma'rifat a'yān 'ulamā' al-madhhab*, 2 vols, Cairo, 1976, i, p. 35

### Secondary

S. Qaddūrī, 'Riḥlāt Aḥmad ibn 'Amr al-Anṣārī l-Qurṭubī (t. 656 H.) fī l-Maghrib wa-l-Mashriq wa-mu'allafātihi l-'ilmiyya', *Majallat Maktabat al-Malik Fahd al-Waṭaniyya* 11 (2005) 169-170

Khayr al-Dīn Ziriklī, *Al-a'lām*, 8 vols, Beirut, 1979, i, p. 264

M. de Epalza, 'Notes pour une histoire des polémiques anti-chrétiennes dans l'Occident musulman', *Arabica* 18 (1971) 99-106, p. 104

- P. Devillard, *Thèse sur al-Qurtubī*, 3 vols (unnumbered), Aix-en-Provence, 1969 (Diss. University of Aix-en-Provence), i, pp. 19-20
- ʿU.R. Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam al-muʿallifin*, 10 vols, Damascus, 1957-, i, p. 319 (no. 2339)
- Brockelmann, *GAL S* i, p. 737
- M. ibn M. al-Makhlūf, *Shajarat al-nūr al-zākiyya fī ṭabaqāt al-Mālikiyya*, Cairo, 1930-33, no. 153
- M. Steinschneider, *Polemische und apologetische Literatur in arabischer Sprache*, Leipzig, 1877, p. 27
- M. Casiri, *Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana Escorialensis*, Madrid, 1767-70, i, p. 471

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

### *Kitāb al-amwāl*, 'Property'

DATE Early 11<sup>th</sup> century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

As is suggested by its title, this work is concerned with legal questions, including the system of poll tax, which is dealt with from a Mālikī point of view.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The work specifies the rights and duties of Christians and Jews, who as 'protected people' are given the freedom to follow their own beliefs and rituals, though not allowed full political rights and sovereign status. It also refers polemically to their religious teachings, using general basic theological concepts, with particular regard to Christian beliefs on Christological themes.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS Madrid, El Escorial – 1160 (1278; Ziriklī gives the mistaken number 1165)

MS Rabat, al-Khizāna al-ʿĀmma – 98 qāf (undated)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

*Kitāb al-amwāl*, ed. R. Muḥammad Sālim, Rabat, 1988 (using both MSS)

*Kitāb al-amwāl*, ed. and trans. Abu'l Muhsin Muhammad Sharfuddin, Islamabad, 1995 (repr. New Delhi, 1999)

*Kitāb al-amwāl*, ed. R.M.S. Shahādah, Beirut, 2008

## STUDIES

- Qaddūrī, 'Riḥlāt Aḥmad b. 'Amr al-Anṣārī al-Qurṭubī (t. 656 H.)  
fi l-Maghrib wa-l-Mashriq'
- Epalza, 'Notes pour une histoire des polémiques anti-chrétiennes  
dans l'Occident musulman'

**Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala**

## *Khabar al-Yahūd wa-l-Naṣārā*

### BIOGRAPHY

The author of this account about a meeting between the Fatimid Caliph al-Ḥākim and a deputation of Christians and Jews was evidently a Druze. The account itself identifies him as Ḥamza ibn ‘Alī ibn Aḥmad, the upholder of al-Ḥākim’s divinity and founder of the Druze sect, who died sometime after al-Ḥākim’s disappearance in 1021.

The 18<sup>th</sup>-century Orientalist J.M. Venture de Paradis (translated by Ruffin, *Appendix*, pp. 110-11) relates how he obtained a MS found in a Druze village, which contained, among other things, an account of a dialogue between al-Ḥākim and the leaders of the Jews and Christians, together with eight letters by al-Ḥākim’s lieutenant Hamza ibn ‘Alī ibn Aḥmad, the last of which is entitled ‘The report of the Jews and Christians’. This at least raises the possibility that the work was written by this supporter of al-Ḥākim, though without further investigation the matter is far from being settled (Ivanow, *Ismaili literature*, p. 114, no. 549, offers no view about the author).

### MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

*Primary* —

*Secondary*

W. Ivanow, *Ismaili literature. A bibliographical survey*, Tehran, 1963<sup>2</sup>

P.J. Ruffin, *Appendix to the memoirs of Baron de Tott*, London, 1786

### WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Khabar al-Yahūd wa-l-Naṣārā*, ‘The report of the Jews and Christians’

DATE Unknown; possibly early to mid-11th century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

### DESCRIPTION

The report relates how a deputation of Jews and Christians in Cairo, headed by their religious leaders, approach the Caliph al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh (r. 996-1021) during one of his habitual nocturnal walks in

the cemetery of Qarāfa near his palace. They complain to him about the persecutions they are suffering and particularly the harsh ways in which their religious books are treated, and they remind him that this is contrary to both the Qur'an and the practice of the Prophet and his immediate successors. The caliph promises to give them an answer to these complaints on the next night. When he meets them, he points out to them that the guarantee from the Prophet to his Jewish and Christian neighbors was only to last for 400 years, until the coming of the Paraclete the Christians hoped for. If he did not appear, they would be expected to convert to Islam. This period has now expired, and the awaited Paraclete has not come, so they should not be surprised at the persecutions they suffer.

De Sacy, *Exposé de la religion des Druzes*, 2 vols, Paris, 1838, i, pp. cclxxiii and cclxxvi, dates the meeting to between 400 and 404 AH (1010 and 1013), because of the references in the account to the year 400 after Muḥammad, and because in the latter year al-Ḥākim allowed Christians and Jews who did not wish to convert or to submit to his regulations to emigrate.

In the Uppsala MS (Törnberg, *Codices*, p. 315; Zetterstéen, *Handschriften*, p. 74), the title appears in an expanded form as *Khabar al-Yahūd wa-l-Naṣārā wa-su'ālihim li-mawlānā al-Imām al-Ḥākim bi-amr Allāh, amīr al-mu'minīn*, 'The report of the Jews and Christians and their complaint to our master the Imām al-Ḥākim bi-amr Allāh, commander of the faithful'.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The report bears signs of being Druze propaganda intended to defend al-Ḥākim's anti-*dhimmī* measures, many of which were remembered as eccentric and extreme, and to promote his esteem. It reflects what is known about the difficulties of the Jews and Christians under the caliph's rule, and also gives some insight into the use by Muslims of Christian scriptural traditions (the Jews would hardly have looked for the coming of the Paraclete) for their own purposes.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

The following is a list of the known MSS:

MS Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Or. Oct. 3953, fols 10r-18v (no date)

MS Paris, BNF – 1408, fols 10-18v (no date; G. Vajda, *Index général des manuscrits arabes musulmans de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris*, Paris, 1953, p. 386; de Sacy, *Exposé de la religion des*



Druzes i, p. ccclxvi, lists among the contents of the MS from the Bibliothèque Royale de Paris, which he numbers as 1580 [116 fols] *Khabar al-Yahūd wa-l-Naṣārā*)

MS Dublin, Chester Beatty Library – 3675, fols 10r-17 (17<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Uppsala, Universitetsbibliotek – 501, fols 10v-19r (no date, but ‘*facile antiquissimus*’; C. Tornberg, *Codices arabici, persici et turcici*, Uppsala, 1849, p. 315; K.V. Zetterstéen, *Die arabischen, persischen und türkischen Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek zu Uppsala*, Uppsala, 1930, p. 74)

(A MS is also listed in C. Nallino, *I manoscritti arabi, persiani, siriaci e turchi*, Turin, 1900, p. 23 [2])

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

J. van Ess, *Chiliasmische Erwartungen und die Versuchung der Göttlichkeit*, Heidelberg, 1977, p. 44 (outline summary)

Ruffin, *Appendix*, pp. 121-40 (trans. of the French account by J.M. Venture de Paradis)

#### STUDIES

De Sacy, *Exposé de la religion des Druzes*, i, pp. ccclxxiii-vii

**David Thomas**

## *Life of St Nikon*

Unknown author

DATE OF BIRTH Later 10<sup>th</sup> or early 11<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown  
DATE OF DEATH Second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF DEATH Unknown; probably Sparta

### BIOGRAPHY

The author of this *Vita* was a monk in the monastery founded by Nikon in Sparta. He wrote shortly after Nikon's death around the year 1000. As its editor, D.F. Sullivan, has plausibly suggested, the author became abbot of the monastery towards the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The dates given in the manuscripts for the time of writing the *Vita*—eleventh indiction, a.m. 6650 (MS Barberini), eleventh indiction, a.m. 6500 (MS Koutloumousiou), the years 1142 and 992 respectively—must obviously be wrong.

### MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

#### *Primary*

*Vita Niconis* (BHG 1366 and 1367): *Bios kai politeia kai merikē thaumatōn diēgēsis tou hagiou kai thaumatourgou Nikōnos myroblytou tou Metanoēite*, ed. D.F. Sullivan, *The life of Saint Nikon*, Brookline MA, 1987 (see the comments of J.O. Rosenqvist, in *LEIMŌN. Studies presented to Lennart Rydén on his sixty-fifth birthday*, ed. J.O. Rosenqvist, Uppsala, 1996, 93–111)

*Vita Niconis A* (BHG 1366), ed. O. Lampsides, *Ho ek Pontou hosios Nikōn*, Athens, 1982 (= *Archeion Pontou*, Supplement 13), 161–240

*Vita Niconis B* (BHG 1367), ed. Lampsides, *Ho ek Pontou hosios Nikōn*, 14–158

#### *Secondary*

Sullivan, *The life of Saint Nikon*, pp. 1–23

Art., 'Nikon ho Metanoēite', in *ODB*

D. Sullivan, 'The versions of the *Vita Niconis*', *DOP* 32 (1978) 157–73

N. Drandakes, 'Eikōnographia tu Hosiu Nikōnos', *Peloponnesiaka* 5 (1962) 306–19

M. Kremp, *Arabisches Kreta. Das Emirats der Andalusier (827–961)*, Frankfurt, 1995, pp. 201–4

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Bios kai politeia kai merikē thaumatōn diēgēsis tou hagiou kai thaumatourgou Nikōnos myroblytou tou Metanoeite*, ‘Life, conduct and particular account of the wonders of the wonder-working, myrrh-forthgiving holy Nicon Metanoeite’; *Vita Niconis*, ‘Life of St Nicon’

DATE Uncertain; probably mid-11<sup>th</sup> century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Greek

## DESCRIPTION

The *Vita* narrates the biography of Nicon from his birth. He was the son of wealthy parents. He ran away from home and ended up at the monastery of Chrysē Petra. There he became a monk, between 945 and 950. Between 962 and 967 he left the monastery and began to travel, first stopping at Crete. The island had only recently been retaken by Nicephorus Phocas after a century of Arab rule (he must therefore have arrived shortly after 961), so he preached to the Muslim population there and ordered the affairs of the church. Between about 965 and 970 he was in Greece, where he preached and healed the sick. When he was in Amyklai or Amyklion, staying not far from Sparta, envoys of the Spartans came to him and asked for his protection against the plague, which had already claimed many victims in the city. Nicon went with the envoys to Sparta, and on his arrival the plague vanished from the city.

In accordance with his wishes, the Jews were driven from the city. This caused conflict with some of the citizens, who regarded this as an unholy act, and he met opposition when he wanted to build a Martyr-Kyriakē-Church there, though he finally succeeded.

Sometime after 997 Nicon wrote his will, in which he set down his life story and the history of the foundation of his monastic community, and also regulations for the administration of his foundations. His influence spread throughout the Peloponnese, as far as Kalamata and Corinth.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The work affords insight into competing missionary efforts by Muslims and Christians in disputed areas on the borders between Byzantine and Islamic territory, where rule changed frequently.

## MANUSCRIPTS

MS Vat – Barberini Gr. 58, formerly VI, 22 (15<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Mount Athos, Koutloumousiou monastery – 210, fols 106r–181v (1630)

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

Sullivan, *The Life of Saint Nikon* (edition and trans.)

## STUDIES

Art., 'Nikon ho Metanoeite', in *ODB*

Art. in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, 10 vols, Munich, 1977-99, vi, 1189-90

J. Gouillard, 'Christianisme byzantin et slave', *Annuaire de l'Ecole pratique des hautes-études* 85 (1978) 365-70

Sullivan, *The versions of the Vita Niconis*, 157-73

Sullivan, *The Life of Saint Nikon*, pp. 1-23, 273-304, 305-7

C. Stavrakos, 'Die Vita des hl. Nikon Metanoeite als Quelle zur Prosopographie der Peloponnes im späten 10. Jahrhundert', *Südost-Forschungen* 58 (1999) 1-7

**Thomas Pratsch**

# Al-Musabbiḥī

‘Izz al-Mulk Abū ‘Abdallāh (or ‘Ubayd Allāh)  
Muḥammad ibn Abī l-Qāsim ‘Ubayd Allāh Ismā‘īl ibn  
‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Ḥarrānī al-Musabbiḥī al-Kātib

DATE OF BIRTH 977  
PLACE OF BIRTH Fustāt  
DATE OF DEATH April-May 1030  
PLACE OF DEATH Fustāt

## BIOGRAPHY

Al-Musabbiḥī is mainly known as a historian of Fatimid Egypt, thanks to the surviving section of his *Akḥbār Miṣr* (‘Accounts of Egypt’). He saw military service under the Fatimid dynasty, and rose to the position of governor, for which he received the title *amīr*. Although he was probably a Sunnī (though Daftary, p. 23, suggests he may have been an Ismā‘īlī), he was particularly close to the Caliph al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh (r. 996-1021), who became notorious for his anti-Christian measures.

Al-Musabbiḥī wrote substantial works on a wide range of topics, but none is extant except one section of his 40-volume history of Egypt, covering part of the year 414 and most of 415 (1023-25). This is a meticulously exact account of day-to-day life, which includes details about ceremonies at court, the state administration, economic and political matters, and the lives and deaths of notable citizens.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### *Primary*

- Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a’yān*, ed. M.M. ‘Abd al-Ḥamid, 6 vols, Cairo, 1948-49, iv, pp. 377-80  
Ibn Sa‘īd al-Andalusī, *Al-mughrib fī ḥulā l-maghrib*, vol 1, *Min al-qism al-khāṣṣ bi-Miṣr*, ed. Z.M. Ḥasan, Cairo, 1953, pp. 264-67  
Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akḥbār man dhahab*, 8 vols, Cairo, 1350-51 [1931-32], iii, pp. 217-18

*Secondary*

F. Daftary, *Ismaili literature*, London, 2004

T. Bianquis, art. 'al-Musabbiḥī', in *Elz*

A.F. Sayyid and T. Bianquis (eds), *Tome quarantième de la Chronique d'Égypte de Musabbiḥī (le prince al-Muhkhtār 'Izz al-Mulk Muḥammad ibn 'Ubayd Allāh ibn Aḥmad)*, 366-420/977-1029, 2 vols, Cairo, 1978

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Kitāb darak al-bughyā fī waṣf al-adyān wa-l-  
'ibadāt*, 'The attainment of desire in description  
of the religions and religious observances'

DATE Unknown; before 1030

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The work is lost. It is mentioned by Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, iv, p. 378, who says that it comprised a substantial 3,500 pages. Its title indicates that it aimed to provide exhaustive accounts of the religions known to its author, and so it must have included the major Christian sects known in the Islamic world – the Melkites, Jacobites and Nestorians – as well as the more local Copts. It would have given descriptions of their principle beliefs and also their forms of worship and religious practices.

## SIGNIFICANCE

If the surviving part of al-Musabbiḥī's history of Egypt may be taken as a guide, this history of religions is likely to have contained detailed accounts of the beliefs and practices of the Christian sects it covered. It may have been a largely descriptive work, like a number of others from earlier times, revealing a cultured curiosity about the range of religious traditions known at the time it was written, which stemmed from secure confidence in the truthfulness of Islam.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

**David Thomas**

# Ademar of Chabannes

DATE OF BIRTH 989  
PLACE OF BIRTH Limousin, Aquitaine  
DATE OF DEATH 1034  
PLACE OF DEATH Jerusalem

## BIOGRAPHY

Ademar was born in 989 to a well-connected family of the lesser nobility of the Limousin in Aquitaine. As a boy, he was professed a monk at the monastery of St Cybard in Angoulême, where he began his education and first revealed his talents in the arts of the scriptorium. He continued his education at St Martial of Limoges, studying under the tutelage of his uncle Roger and, in the year 1010, experienced a vision of Christ in the night sky and witnessed numerous other prodigies.

Returning to St Cybard, Ademar continued his career in the scriptorium and sought advancement in the monastery's ranks. He was responsible for copying many important texts for the library, including the *Liber pontificalis* and works on history, liturgy and grammar. He also illustrated various manuscripts and composed poetry and music; his illustrations reveal important changes in the transition to the Romanesque, and his musical compositions demonstrate similar advances in the history of music. In the 1020s he wrote a series of historical works, including his *Chronicon*, which includes references to Muslim raids on Italy and Francia in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, commentary on his native Aquitaine, and a detailed discussion of the destruction of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem by the Fatimid Caliph al-Ḥākim. His successes in the scriptorium, however, were not matched by equal success in climbing the monastic hierarchy. He was passed over for promotion to the office of abbot in 1027, a fateful event that would lead Ademar to his greatest triumph and greatest defeat.

Following his failure to become abbot, Ademar returned to St Martial of Limoges, where he took up the cause of the apostolicity of St Martial. His training served him well as he prepared a complete new liturgy to celebrate Martial's apostolicity, but on the day the mass was to be performed for the first time, 3 August 1029, Ademar was

humiliated in public debate by an Italian monk, Benedict of Chiusa. Returning in disgrace to St Cybard, Ademar spent the next three years compiling a series of forgeries intended to demonstrate his victory in the debate and the apostolicity of Martial. His collection of forgeries included a letter from the pope, a circular letter describing the debate with Benedict, the account of the Council of Limoges (1031), and a number of sermons that were purportedly given at church councils – the sermons also contain references to heretics, Jews and Saracens. In 1033, he deposited these manuscripts in the library at St Martial and departed on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, from which he did not return.

### MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

#### *Primary*

- Commentario abbatum lemovicensium basilica S. Marcialis apostolic*, in H. Duplès-Agier (ed.), *Chroniques de Saint-Martial de Limoges*, Paris, 1874, pp. 3-4
- Ademar of Chabannes, *Chronicon*, ed. P. Bourgain, R. Landes, and G. Pon (*Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis*), Turnhout, 1999, p. 165
- Ademar of Chabannes, *Epistola de apostolatu sancti Marcialis*, in *PL* 141, cols 89-112
- Benard Itier, *Chronique*, ed. J-L. Lemaître, Paris, 1998, p. 13

#### *Secondary*

- J. Grier, *The musical world of a medieval monk. Adémar de Chabannes in eleventh-century Aquitaine*, Cambridge, 2006
- M. Frassetto, 'Pagans, heretics, Saracens, and Jews in the sermons of Ademar of Chabannes', in M. Frassetto (ed.), *Heresy and the persecuting society in the Middle Ages. Essays on the work of R.I. Moore*, Leiden, 2006, 73-91
- M. Frassetto, 'The writings of Ademar of Chabannes, the Peace of 994, and the "Terrors of the Year 1000"', *Journal of Medieval History* 27 (2001) 241-55
- M. Frassetto, 'The image of the Saracen as heretic in the sermons of Ademar of Chabannes', in D. Blanks and M. Frassetto (eds), *Western views of Islam in medieval and early modern Europe. Perception of other*, New York, 1999, 83-96
- D.F. Callahan, 'Jerusalem in the monastic imaginations of the early eleventh century', *Haskins Society Journal* 6 (1995) 119-27
- R. Landes, *Relics, apocalypse, and the deceits of history. Ademar of Chabannes, 989-1034*, Boston MA, 1995



- J. Duquet, 'L'ascendance d'Adémar de Chabannes', *Bulletins et Mémoires de la Société Archéologique et Historique de la Charente* 1 (1992) 13-5
- R. Landes, 'A libellus from St Martial of Limoges written at the time of Ademar of Chabannes', *Scriptorium* 37 (1983) 178-209
- R. Wolf, 'How the news was brought from Byzantium to Angoulême. Or the pursuit of a hare in an oxcart', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 4 (1979) 162-209
- D.F. Callahan, 'The sermons of Adémar of Chabannes and the cult of St Martial of Limoges', *Revue Bénédictine* 86 (1976) 251-95

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

### *Chronicon*, *Chronique*, 'Chronicle'

DATE 1025-28. Ademar originally completed the work in 1026, and revised it over the following years and made a final version in 1028.

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Latin

#### DESCRIPTION

The work is a history of the Frankish kingdoms and especially Aquitaine from the Merovingian age to the early 11<sup>th</sup> century. Its focus is on the deeds of Frankish kings, nobles, bishops and other clergy, and at various points throughout the work references are made to contacts between Christians and Muslims. Ademar's history includes accounts of the battle of Poitiers in 732 between Charles Martel and Muslims from Spain (1:52, pp. 63-64) and other Muslim raids into Frankish territory in 737 (1:54, pp. 65-66). Charlemagne's meeting with Spanish Muslim princes and invasion of Spain in 778 are also described (2:5, pp. 83-84), as is the arrival of monks of the Mount of Olives who bore gifts from the 'king of Persia' (2:19, p. 103). There are accounts of raids by 'Moors' and 'Saracens' on the Balearic Islands (2:15, p. 97) and Italy (2:24, p. 109), and conflicts between Franks and 'Moors' in Corsica and Sardinia (2:18, p. 102 and 2:19, p. 103), and the *Chronicon* also includes an entry on Louis the Pious' efforts to secure the Spanish March, and the battle between him and Spanish Muslims in 827 (3:12, p. 129).

In Book 3, which contains original material focusing on Ademar's own time, there is further discussion of conflict between Christians and Muslims. In 1010, after winning numerous victories over 'Moors' and 'Saracens', the count Ermengaud was defeated and killed

by an army of 'Moors', whose king made off with much treasure (3:38, p. 159). In 1018, according to the *Chronicon*, 'Moors' from Cordova sailed toward Narbonne and laid siege to the city. The people of Narbonne prepared for their own death, but they defeated the besiegers, capturing or killing all the 'Hagarenes'. The bodies of 20 'Moors' were sent to St Martial of Limoges as a gift. (3:52, p. 171).

The work also includes two passages that bear on the Spanish Reconquista. Ademar tells the story of Roger I of Tosny, who married the daughter of Ermesende of Barcelona, killing innumerable Muslims, and capturing many Muslim towns. Roger is also alleged to have cut the bodies of his Muslim captives in half and to have served part of them to the other prisoners (3:55, p. 174). The struggles of Sancius (Sancho III?), king of Navarre, and Adefonsus (Alfonso), king of Galicia, against the Muslims in Spain are noted in the final chapter of the work (3:70, p. 189).

The most important passage of the work, however, concerns the destruction of the Holy Sepulcher by the Fatimid Caliph al-Ḥākīm in 1009, 1010 according to Ademar (3:37. pp 166-67). In an account similar to that of Rodulfus Glaber (q.v.), Ademar describes a conspiracy involving Jews of Francia and Muslims in Egypt. According to Ademar, the Jews warned al-Ḥākīm that Christian armies were preparing to attack the Saracens, and in response the caliph ordered the persecution of Christians and destruction of the Holy Sepulcher and other shrines and monasteries. The entry concludes with the reconstruction of the holy places, famines in the region, and the demise of al-Ḥākīm.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Ademar's *Chronicon* provides important insights into Christian attitudes toward Islam in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century. It records clashes between Muslims from Spain and Africa and Christians in southern France and Spain in Ademar's day and in earlier periods. He refers to Muslims in derogatory terms and identifies al-Ḥākīm as an antichrist figure. Although no direct connection can be drawn between the attitudes of Ademar's day and the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, Ademar's aggressive attitude towards Islam and increasingly hostile depiction of Muslims foreshadows similar attitudes held at the time of the First Crusade. His identification of a broad conspiracy involving Jews and Muslims also prefigures similar theories in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

## MANUSCRIPTS

- MS Paris, BNF – Lat. 6190, fols 53-57  
 MS Paris, BNF – Lat. 5943 (an autograph manuscript with illustrations by Ademar)  
 MS Paris, BNF – Lat. 5927 (second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century; the oldest complete version of the history)  
 MS St Petersburg, National Library of Russia – Lat. F. v. IV 13  
 MS Paris, BNF – Lat. 5926  
 MS Montpellier, Bibliothèque Universitaire de Médecine 94 – Cat. gén. t. I, p. 294, fols 1-49v  
 MS Paris, BNF – Lat. 6041B  
 MS Montpellier, Bibliothèque Universitaire de Médecine 377 – Cat. gén. t. I, 436, fols 1-60  
 MS Vat – Regin. Lat. 905  
 MS Vat – Vat. Lat. 1795, fols 9-47v  
 MS Montpellier, Bibliothèque Universitaire de Médecine 27 (13<sup>th</sup> century) – Cat. gén. t. I, 294, fol. 1-49v  
 MS Paris, BNF – Lat. 9767

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

- Ademar of Chabannes, *Chronicon*, ed. Bourgain, Landes and Pon E. Pognon, *L'an mille*, Paris, 1947 (French trans.)  
 J. Lair, *Etudes critiques sur divers textes des X<sup>e</sup>-XI<sup>e</sup> siècles, II. Historia d'Adémar de Chabannes*, Paris, 1901, pp. 104-245 (partial edition containing 3:16-70)  
*La chronique*, ed. J. Chavanon, Paris, 1897  
*PL* 141, cols 19-89 (partial edition)  
*MGH Scriptores* 4, 106-48 (partial edition)

## STUDIES

- D.F. Callahan, 'Al-Hakim, Charlemagne, and the destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem in the writings of Ademar of Chabannes', in M. Gabriele and J. Stuckey (eds), *The legend of Charlemagne in the Middle Ages. Power, faith, and crusade*, New York, 2008, 41-58  
 M. Frassetto, 'Heretics and Jews in the early eleventh century. The writings of Rodulfus Glaber and Ademar of Chabannes', in M. Frassetto (ed.), *Christian attitudes toward the Jews in the Middle Ages*, New York, 2007, 43-59  
 M. Angold, 'Knowledge of Byzantine history in the West. The Norman historians (eleventh and twelfth centuries)', in J. Gillingham (ed.), *Anglo-Norman Studies, XXV. Proceedings of the Battle Conference, 2002*, Woodbridge UK, 2003, 19-33

- D.M. Dumville, 'Images of the Viking in eleventh-century Latin literature', in M.W. Herren, C.J. McDonough and R.G. Arthur (eds), *Latin culture in the eleventh century. Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Medieval Latin Studies, Cambridge, September 9-12, 1998*, 2 vols, Turnhout, 2002, i, 250-63
- M. Frassetto, 'Heretics and Jews in the writings of Ademar of Chabannes and the origins of medieval anti-Semitism', *Church History* 71 (2002) 1-15
- M. Frassetto, 'The image of the Saracen as heretic'
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- D.F. Callahan, 'Ademar of Chabannes. Millennial fears and the development of Western anti-Judaism', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 46 (1995) 19-35
- T. Head and R. Landes (eds), *The peace of God. Religious response to social turmoil in France around the year 1000*, Ithaca NY, 1992
- J. Gillingham, 'Ademar of Chabannes and the history of Aquitaine in the reign of Charles the Bald', in M. Gibson and J. Nelson (eds), *Charles the Bald. Court and kingdom*, Oxford, 1981, 3-14
- S. Nichols, *Romanesque signs, early medieval narrative, and iconography*, New Haven CT, 1983
- P. Gatti, 'Intorno al *Chronicon* di Ademaro de Chabannes. L'edizione Duchesne del *Chronicon*', *Studi Medievali* 3rd series 21 (1980) 247-56
- A. Debord, 'Castrum et Castellum chez Adémar de Chabannes', *Archéologie Médiévale* 9 (1979) 97-113
- D.F. Callahan, 'Adémar de Chabannes et la Paix de Dieu', *Annales du Midi. Revue Archéologique, Historique et Philologique de la France Méridionale* 89 (1977) 21-43
- B.S. Bachrach, 'Early medieval fortification in the "West" of France. A revised technical vocabulary', *Technology and Culture* 16 (1975) 531-69
- L. Halphen, 'Remarque sur la Chronique d'Adémar de Chabannes', *Revue Historique* 98 (1908) 294-308
- L. Halphen, 'Une rédaction ignore de la chronique d'Adémar de Chabannes', *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartres* 66 (1905) 655-60

## Sermons

DATE 1029-32

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Latin

### DESCRIPTION

Although only a minor concern of the sermons, reference to Muslims appears at several key points and plays an important part in Ademar's effort to identify and characterize the enemies of the faith. In several passages in his sermon *De Eucharistia* (MS 1664, fols 70v-78v), Ademar joins Muslims, or Saracens as he terms them, with Jews, pagans, heretics, antichrists and devils (MS 1664, fols 83, 84r, and 97r). His most extended and virulent critique of Muslims and Islam appears in his *Sermo ad sinodum de catholica fide* (fols 83r-96r), where he addresses the Trinitarian and Christological errors of Islam and identifies it with two of the greatest heresies in church history, Arianism and Sabellianism. Ademar's assessment of Islamic belief concerning the nature of the Godhead is somewhat confused, but in some places displays a correct understanding of that belief. He claims that Saracens proclaim belief in the one God – an assertion that is not incorrect – but that their belief is flawed because they deny the Trinity (MS 1664, fol. 84r). The Saracens, he continues, contend that the Christians believe in three gods because Christians honor the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Saracens, Ademar says, provoke the wrath of God because of their blasphemous rejection of the Trinity. In later passages of the sermon, he repeats his understanding that Saracens believe in 'God immortal' (MS 1664, fol. 91r). At the same time, he notes that Saracens deny the Incarnation and that some Saracens accept the Trinity; it is possible, however, that the trinity meant here is the trinity of Apollyon, Mahound, and Tervagent (MS 1664, fol. 91r; on the meaning of the Trinity, see Callahan, 'Ademar of Chabannes, millennial fears', p. 28). His discussion of Saracen theological errors is included in extended discussions of the errors of Sabellian and Arian heretics, suggesting that the Saracens are like them, and he asserts that those who reject the teachings of the Council of Nicea accept these heresies, including the 'Saracen heresy' (MS 1664, fol. 85r).

Ademar's attention to the Saracens extends beyond discussion of their doctrinal errors and includes highly polemical depictions of Muslim belief and practice. In his sermon on the Catholic faith, he

describes a sacrificial offering made by the Saracens that was devoured and desecrated by black dogs (MS 1664, fol. 91r). He also says that the Saracens do not believe in the true God and therefore do not exchange the kiss of peace; they do, however, invert the Christian rite and indulge in a ritual anal kiss (MS 1664, fol. 91r). The ritual kiss, for Ademar, reflects on the general wickedness of the Saracens and is associated with other perversions. In one of his few correct observations about Muslims, he notes that Saracen men may have several wives, which Ademar contends reflects their corruption of proper marital practices and reveals their lascivious nature. Quoting St Paul, Ademar declares that 'burning with concupiscence and without modesty, men lie with men, women with women...and people copulate with animals' when describing Saracen sexual relations (MS 1664, fol. 91r). In his sermons, Ademar depicts Muslims as enemies of the Christian faith who deny God and are morally corrupt and sexually perverse.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Ademar's sermons include a small number of references to Muslims, which depict them in a very negative light. His discussion of Muslims is part of a wider attempt to identify, define, and denigrate heretics, Jews, and all enemies of the faith. His comments on Muslims are part of an endeavor by many Christian writers, beginning in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, to define the other and, even when he seems to have an accurate understanding of a belief, he casts it in the worst light. Muslims are the enemy and are grouped with antichrists and Jews, and clearly seem to be hostile to Christians. As in his history, Ademar associates Jews and Muslims, alleging that they share errors of belief and that both have a lustful nature. Anticipating Peter the Venerable (q.v.) and Robert of Ketton (q.v.), he identifies Muslims with the great heretics of church history, notably Sabellians and Arians. Ademar's negative depiction of Muslims foreshadows similar stereotypical images of Muslims that would emerge at the time of the First Crusade and throughout the rest of the Middle Ages.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS Berlin, Deutsche Staatsbibliothek – Lat. Phillipps, 1664, fols 58-170 (1032-33)

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

- P. Bonnassie and R. Landes, 'Une nouvelle hérésie est née dans le monde', in M. Zimmerman (ed.), *Les sociétés méridionales autour de l'an mil*, Paris, 1992, 435-59 (commentary and partial edition)
- Capitulare secundum Theodulfi* in *PL* 105, cols 207-24 (The sermon claims to be based on a capitulary issued by Theodulf of Orleans, but is a forgery by Ademar.)

## STUDIES

- D. Callahan, 'Ademar of Chabannes, Charlemagne, and the pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1033', in D. Blanks, M. Frassetto, and A. Livingstone (eds), *Medieval monks and their world. Ideas and realities. Studies in honor of Richard Sullivan*, Leiden, 2006, 71-80
- Frassetto, 'Heretics and Jews'
- Frassetto, 'Pagans, heretics, Saracens, and Jews in the sermons of Ademar of Chabannes'
- D. Callahan, 'The Tau cross in the writings of Ademar of Chabannes', in M. Frassetto (ed.), *The Year 1000. Religious and social response to the turning of the first millennium*, New York, 2002, 63-71
- Frassetto, 'The image of the Saracen as heretic'
- D. Callahan, 'Ademar of Chabannes, millennial fears, and the development of Western anti-Judaism', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 46 (1995) 19-35
- H. Schneider, 'Ademar von Chabannes und Pseudoisidor. Der 'Mythomane' unde der Erzfälscher', in *Fälschungen in Mittelalter. International Kongress der MGH, München, 16-19 September, 1986*, 6 vols, Hannover, 1988, iii, 129-50
- Callahan, 'The sermons of Ademar of Chabannes and the cult of St Martial of Limoges'
- L. Delisle, 'Notice sur les manuscrits originaux d'Adémar de Chabannes', *Notices et Extraits de la Bibliothèque Nationale* 35 (1895) 241-335

**Michael Frassetto**

## Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd al-Anṭākī

DATE OF BIRTH	About 980
PLACE OF BIRTH	Unknown; possibly Alexandria
DATE OF DEATH	After 1033
PLACE OF DEATH	Unknown; probably in or near Antioch

### BIOGRAPHY

Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd al-Anṭākī was a Melkite Christian historian known to posterity because of the work usually called *Kitāb al-dhayl* or simply *Dhayl*, ‘Sequel’ – that is, to the well-known *Annals* of Saʿīd ibn Baṭriq (q.v.). One puzzle for Yaḥyā’s biographers is the question: Is he, or is he not, to be identified with the Melkite physician and apologist known as Abū l-Faraj Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd ibn Yaḥyā (q.v.)? Many biographers (e.g. Graf, Canard) have accepted the identification, which leads to an expansion in Yaḥyā’s lifespan and authorial activity beyond 1063. However, others (Nasrallah; Micheau and Troupeau; Samir in his preface to Pirone, *Yaḥyā al-Anṭākī*) believe that the two are to be distinguished – which is the position taken here (and in the companion article in this volume on Abū l-Faraj).

We know surprisingly little about this author. Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa merely tells us that his name was Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd *ibn Yaḥyā*, that he was a relative of Saʿīd ibn Baṭriq (an assertion for which there seems to be no other evidence), and that he wrote a continuation of Saʿīd’s work of history, which he called *Kitāb tārikh al-dhayl*. Yaḥyā’s own prologue tells us more. Having observed that Saʿīd ibn Baṭriq (q.v.) ended his History in the fifth year of the Abbasid Caliph al-Rāḍī bi-llāh (that is, in AH 326/7 = 938/9), Yaḥyā resolved to continue the work where his predecessor left off, carefully following his predecessor’s model. He was, apparently, an extremely conscientious worker. Having completed his first ‘draft’ around 1006/7, he discovered new sources and completely reworked what he had already written. Again in AH 405 (1014/5), having moved from Alexandria to Antioch, he found yet other sources and again revised his text. He continued his work through the year AH 425 (1033/4). Some later, Muslim chroniclers claimed that his chronicle extended through the year AH 458 (1065/6); see, for example, al-ʿAzīmī, *Tārikh Ḥalab*, ed. Ibrāhīm Zaʿrūr, p. 346. But this may be evidence of the work of a continuator.



One may speculate that Yaḥyā left Egypt in 1015 as a result of the persecution of the Fatimid Caliph al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh (whose reign he so thoroughly documents; note that a decree of 1013 gave *dhimmīs* the opportunity to leave the country with their possessions). Yaḥyā was already an experienced historian at this point, suggesting that he cannot have been born much later than 980 or so. One may also guess that Yaḥyā died shortly after his chronicle breaks off in 1034.

What is not simply speculation is that over the course of his writing career Yaḥyā had access to and made use of a variety of sources, both Islamic and Byzantine (Kratchkovsky, Micheau, and Troupeau, *Histoire*, p. 375, with reference to Forsyth, 'The Byzantine-Arab chronicle'). He utilized his sources carefully, and crafted a work that has been of great use to historians both medieval and modern.

#### MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

##### *Primary*

For the manuscripts of the *Dhayl*, see below.

Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-'Azīmī al-Ḥalabī, *Tārīkh Ḥalab*, ed. I. Za'rūr, Damascus, 1984, p. 346

Kamāl al-Dīn ibn al-'Adīm, *Zubdat al-ḥalab min tārikh Ḥalab*, 3 vols, ed. Sāmī al-Dahhān, Damascus, 1951-68, i, pp. 106-250 (where the author makes extensive use of Yaḥyā's chronicle)

Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, 'Uyūn al-anbā' ii, 87

##### *Secondary*

S.K. Samir, art. 'Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd ibn Yaḥyā al-Anṭākī', in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1993-2001<sup>3</sup>

B. Pirone (trans.), *Yaḥyā al-Anṭākī. Cronache dell'Egitto fatimide e dell'impero bizantino (937-1033)* (*Patrimonio Culturale Arabo Cristiano* 3), Milan, 1998, pp. 9-11 (preface by S.K. Samir), pp. 13-22 (translator's introduction)

I. Kratchkovsky (ed.), F. Micheau and G. Troupeau (trans), *Histoire de Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd d'Antioche* [iii] (*PO* 47.4 = no. 212), Turnhout, 1997, pp. 373-76 (from the 'Introduction' of Micheau and Troupeau)

Nasrallah, *HMLEM* iii.1, pp. 167-72

M. Canard, art. 'al-Anṭākī' [*sic*], in *EL*2

M. Canard, *Extraits des sources arabes*, part 2 of A.A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, ii, *La dynastie macédonienne* (867-959), Brussels, 1950, pp. 80-91

Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 49-51

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Dhayl*, 'Sequel'; *Kitāb al-dhayl*, 'The book of the sequel'; the 'History' or 'Chronicle' of Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd al-Anṭākī

DATE Approximately 1006-34

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The *Dhayl* or 'Sequel' of Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd ibn Yaḥyā al-Anṭākī is a chronology of the years 938-1034 which carefully follows the model of its predecessor, the *Annals* of Saʿīd ibn Baṭrīq. It is arranged by ruler, specifically, the Abbasid and Fatimid caliphs. It skillfully utilizes a wide range of sources, both Muslim and Byzantine (which have been carefully analyzed in Forsyth, 'The Byzantine-Arab chronicle'), and frequently preserves material not known elsewhere.

The period chronicled by Yaḥyā was an eventful one, marked by the expansion of Byzantine power in the north and the rise of the Fatimids in the south, and both medieval and modern historians have found Yaḥyā's book an invaluable resource for understanding it. Kamāl al-Dīn ibn al-ʿAdīm (d. 1262), the historian of Aleppo, made extensive use of the *Dhayl* in his chronicle of the Ḥamdānid rulers (*Zubdat al-ḥalab min tāriḫ Ḥalab*, ed. Sāmī al-Dahhān, i, pp. 106-250). For the period that it chronicles, M. Canard considers the *Dhayl* 'one of the most important contributions for the internal as well as the external history of Byzantium' (Canard, 'Les sources arabes', p. 284). And all who have studied the career of the strange Fatimid Caliph al-Ḥākīm bi-Amr Allāh (r. 996-1021) have found the *Dhayl* to be an important source (Ayman Fuʿād Sayyid, 'Lumières nouvelles', pp. 8-9); this may be illustrated from a recent publication: P.E. Walker, *Caliph of Cairo. Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, 996-1021*, Cairo, 2009 (see the index, p. 325, under 'Yahya of Antioch').

## SIGNIFICANCE

Historians from the medieval period to the present day have found in Yaḥyā's chronicle a wealth of information about Egypt, Syria, and Byzantium during the eventful century (938-1034) that he covers. Of special significance to the history of Christian-Muslim relations is his witness to the reign of the Fatimid Caliph al-Ḥākīm bi-Amr Allāh, the great exception to the general notion that Christians fared well under Fatimid rule.

## MANUSCRIPTS

For a description of the MSS, see Kratchkovsky, Micheau, and Troupeau, *Histoire*, pp. 376-77. The seven known MSS (two of which are lost) are:

- MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 288, fols 212v-218v (14<sup>th</sup> century; extract for the years AH 349-400)
- MS St Petersburg, Public Library (not further specified; 15<sup>th</sup> century MS from Sinai; the account continues to AH 417)
- MS Zayyat Collection (17<sup>th</sup> century from a 13<sup>th</sup>-century copy; the account continues to AH 425; now lost)
- MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 291, fols 82v-137v (17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century, account continues to AH 417)
- MS Beirut, Bibliothèque Orientale – 2 (c. 1850; account continues to AH 417)
- MS St Petersburg, Asiatic Museum (not further specified; 1852; similar to the previous MS)
- MS Jerusalem, Convent of St Anne – Ar. 63 (recent copy of a 13<sup>th</sup> century copy; now lost)

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

For a description of editions and translations, see Kratchkovsky, Micheau, and Troupeau, *Histoire*, pp. 377-79.

- B. Pirone (trans.), *Yaḥyā al-Anṭākī. Cronache dell'Egitto fatimide e dell'impero bizantino (937-1033)* (*Patrimonio Culturale Arabo Cristiano* 3), Milan, 1998 (annotated Italian trans.)
- I. Kratchkovsky (ed.), F. Micheau and G. Troupeau (trans), *Histoire de Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd d'Antioche* [iii] (*PO* 47.4 = no. 212), Turnhout, 1997, pp. 369-559 (= pp. [1]-[191]) (this continues and completes the critical edition, with French trans., of Kratchkovsky and Vasiliev)
- 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmuri (ed.), *Tārīkh al-Anṭākī, al-ma'rūf bi-ṣilat Tārīkh Ūtikhā, ta'līf Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd ibn Yaḥyā al-Anṭākī*, Tripoli (Lebanon), 1990 (based on the previous editions, with notes from other medieval historians)
- M. Canard, *Extraits des sources arabes*, part 2 of A.A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les arabes*, ii, *La dynastie macédonienne (867-959)*, Brussels, 1950, pp. 91-98 (includes French translations of a number of extracts)
- I. Kratchkovsky and A. Vasiliev (eds), *Histoire de Yahya-ibn-Sa'īd d'Antioche, continueur de Sa'īd-ibn-Bitriq*, i (*PO* 18.5), Paris, 1924, pp. 699-833 (= pp. [1]-[135]); ii (*PO* 23.3), Paris, 1932, pp. 345-520 (= pp. [137]-[312])

- L. Cheikho, B. Carra de Vaux, and H. Zayyat (eds), *Eutychiei patriarchae Alexandrini Annales*, ii (CSCO 51 = ar. 7), Louvain, 1909, pp. 89-273 (edition by Carra de Vaux and Zayyat after the conclusion of Cheikho's edition of Sa'īd ibn Baṭrīq)
- V. Rosen, *Imperator Vasilij Bolgarobojca*, St Petersburg, 1883 (includes 17 extracts – Arabic text and Russian trans. – from the section of the *Kitāb al-dhayl* concerning the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Basil II [r. 976-1025])

## STUDIES

- Pirone, *Yaḥyā al-Anṭākī*
- Kratchkovsky, Micheau, and Troupeau, *Histoire*
- M. Breydy, *Études sur Sa'īd ibn Baṭrīq et ses sources* (CSCO 450, subs. 69), Louvain, 1983, pp. 98-102
- Nasrallah, *HMLEM* iii.1, pp. 167-72
- J.A. Forsyth, *The Byzantine-Arab chronicle (938-1034) of Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd al-Anṭākī*, Ann Arbor MI, 1977 (Diss. University of Michigan)
- Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid, 'Lumières nouvelles sur quelques sources de l'histoire fatimide en Égypte', *Annales Islamologiques* 13 (1977) 1-41, pp. 8-9
- Sezgin, *GAS* i, p. 338
- M. Canard, 'Les sources arabes de l'histoire byzantine aux confins des X<sup>e</sup> et XI<sup>e</sup> siècles', *Revue des Études Byzantines* 19 (1961) 284-314
- Canard, *Extraits*, pp. 80-98
- Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 49-51 (see the bibliography on p. 50 for older studies and partial editions, going back to A. von Kremer in 1852)

Mark N. Swanson

## Mānkḏīm Shashḏīw

Abū l-Ḥusayn Aḥmad ibn Abī Hāshim al-Ḥusaynī  
l-Qazwīnī, Mānkḏīm (also vocalized as Mānkadīm,  
Mānkedīm and Mānakdīm) Shashḏīw

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown; latter part of 10<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF BIRTH Qazwīn, possibly Lanjā  
DATE OF DEATH 1034  
PLACE OF DEATH Rayy

### BIOGRAPHY

Born in the area of Qazwīn (he is called al-Qazwīnī in some biographical sources), Mānkḏīm Shashḏīw traced his lineage back to the Imām Ḥusayn. He was a follower in Lanjā of the Qāsimī Zaydī Imām Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Mu'ayyad bi-llāh (d. 1020), who was a pupil of 'Abd al-Jabbār. When the Imām died, he performed the funeral prayer over him and claimed to be his successor as leader of the Zaydīs of Qazwīn, under the title al-Mustaẓhir bi-llāh. But this came to nothing, and it may be for this reason that he withdrew to Rayy, where he died.

Mānkḏīm (which, as Monnot, *Penseurs*, p. 273, says, is an Arabized form of the Persian Māng-dīm and means 'moon-faced', signifying his good looks), was in Rayy at the time of 'Abd al-Jabbār's death in 1025, and attended his funeral. But he is not mentioned among 'Abd al-Jabbār's students, and it is unclear whether he studied directly under him. He must anyway have learnt most of what he knew about Mu'tazilī *kalām* from his teacher al-Mu'ayyad bi-llāh.

Nothing is known of any works by Mānkḏīm Shashḏīw apart from the *Ta'liq Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*.

### MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

#### *Primary*

For sources, see Gimaret, 'Les *uṣūl al-ḥamsa* du Qāḏī 'Abd al-Ġabbār', p. 57, n. 2.

*Secondary*

- M. Heemskerck, *Suffering in the Mu'tazilite theology. 'Abd al-Jabbār's teaching on pain and divine justice*, Leiden, 2000, pp. 60-62
- D. Gimaret, 'Les *uṣūl al-ḥamsa* du Qāḍī 'Abd al-Ġabbār et leurs commentaires', *Annales Islamologiques* 15 (1979) 47-96, pp. 57-60
- G. Monnot, *Penseurs musulmans et religions iraniennes. 'Abd al-Jabbār et ses devanciers*, Paris, 1974
- W. Madelung, *Der Imam al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm und die Glaubenslehre der Zaiditen*, Berlin, 1965, pp. 181-83

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Ta'liq Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*, 'Comments on the Commentary on the five principles'

DATE Unknown; between about 990 and 1034

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The *Ta'liq Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa* is a commentary on 'Abd al-Jabbār's (q.v.) lost *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa* (q.v.), which the latter dictated between 970 and 990 as a commentary on his own extant *Kitāb al-uṣūl al-khamsa*. Comparison between the *Ta'liq* and 'Abd al-Jabbār's original work shows extensive additions and amplifications – 'Abd al-Jabbār's bare reference in a single sentence to the doctrine of the Trinity becomes eight pages of arguments against the Trinity and Incarnation in the published text of the *Ta'liq* – though it is impossible to say how much of this is Mānkḍīm's own and how much is taken from 'Abd al-Jabbār's *Sharḥ*. It used to be thought that the *Ta'liq* was 'Abd al-Jabbār's *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa* itself, and it was published as such by 'A.K. 'Uthmān in 1965.

The work comprises five main parts, each dedicated to one of the five Mu'tazilī principles, together with an epistemological introduction. The refutation of Christian doctrines comes at the end of the first part on *tawḥīd*, in a concluding set of arguments against claims that there are divine beings in addition to the one God. In this position, it serves to strengthen the preceding demonstration of God's strict unity by exemplifying the irrationality of alternatives.

The refutation ('Uthmān, pp. 291-98) is divided into arguments against the Trinity, comprising examinations of the substance and hypostases, the Incarnation, and the claim that Jesus' miracles prove

his divinity. They are familiar from *kalām* treatises of this period, and many can be considered as summaries of points made in works such as Abd al-Jabbār's *Mughnī*.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

This refutation serves to illustrate the assumption made by most Muslim polemicists in this period (in this they were encouraged by Arabic-speaking Christian theologians) that Christian doctrines could be treated as a form of Muslim theology and subjected to the logic employed there. The reduction of Christian beliefs to the salient points that conflicted with Muslim beliefs shows that the purpose of arguing against them was predominantly to demonstrate that, to the extent they could be shown to be logically incoherent, they underlined the strength and correctness of Islamic beliefs.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

Gimaret, 'Les *uṣūl al-ḥamsa* du Qāḍī 'Abd al-Ġabbār', pp. 48-49, lists 17 MSS. Where they are dated, they range from the late 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

'A.-K. 'Uthmān, *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*, 2 vols, Cairo, 1965

#### STUDIES

Heemskerk, *Suffering in the Mu'tazilite theology*, pp. 2-11, and *passim*

Gimaret, 'Les *uṣūl al-Ḥamsa* du Qāḍī 'Abd al-Ġabbār'

**David Thomas**

# Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown; presumably mid or late  
10<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF BIRTH Unknown  
DATE OF DEATH September 1038  
PLACE OF DEATH Unknown

## BIOGRAPHY

Abū l-Ḥusayn was an East Syrian ('Nestorian') philosopher and physician, and a disciple of Abū l-Faraj ibn al-Ṭayyib (q.v.). He wrote an apologetic work in which he refuted some *mashāyikh* and Mu'tazila (see below).

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

Al-Qiftī, *Ta'rikh al-ḥukamā'*, p. 403

### Secondary

R. le Coz, *Les médecins nestoriens au moyen âge*, Paris, 2004, p. 23

B. Landron, *Chrétiens et musulmans*, p. 111

Graf, *GCAL* ii, p. 177

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

Title unknown; citations in Ibn al-Rāhib's *Kitāb al-burhān*

DATE Early 11<sup>th</sup> century; before 1038

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

### DESCRIPTION

Abū l-Ḥusayn wrote a theological work of which only two extracts have survived as quotations in the *Kitāb al-burhān*, a theological-philosophical *summa* composed by the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Coptic author al-Nushū' Abū Shākir ibn al-Rāhib (q.v.). The title of the work is not given.



In ch. 30 of this work, on God's foreknowledge, Abū l-Ḥusayn establishes five arguments against Mu'tazilī and other conceptions on this issue. Then in ch. 33, he discusses the divine attributes of knowledge, power and life, presumably with reference to their traditional identification among Arab Christians with the divine hypostases.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Nothing can be said about the work's significance, apart from the fact that it appears to have been a contribution to the ongoing debate between Muslim and Christian theological exponents about matters of common concern on which they held differing views.

## MANUSCRIPTS —

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

## STUDIES

Graf, *GCAL* ii, p. 177

A. Mai, *Codices Arabici vel a Christianis scripti vel ad religionem Christianam spectantes* (*Scriptorum veterum nova collectio* 4), Rome, 1831, p. 213

**Herman G.B. Teule**

# Ibn al-Ṭayyib

Abū l-Faraj ‘Abdallāh ibn al-Ṭayyib

DATE OF BIRTH	Unknown; probably last quarter of 10 <sup>th</sup> century
PLACE OF BIRTH	Unknown; probably Baghdad
DATE OF DEATH	Probably October 1043
PLACE OF DEATH	Unknown; probably Baghdad

## BIOGRAPHY

Ibn al-Ṭayyib was one of the greatest polymaths of his era. He was a prolific philosopher and an important theologian, and he remains the foremost biblical exegete in Arabic. All of this was achieved whilst he was practicing and teaching medicine and serving as a priest and administrator for the Church of the East. Since the entries on him in the medieval biographical dictionaries lack substantial information on his life, material needs to be gleaned from elsewhere (e.g., the entries on his pupil Ibn Buṭlān and others in the same works, and ecclesiastical histories).

There is some occasional confusion over his name, emanating from the conflation in some later manuscripts of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's own name and that of a contemporary scribe (possibly his secretary), ‘Abdallāh ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī ‘Īsā al-Shammās al-‘Ibādī (see MS Paris, BNF – ar. 85, and then MS London, BL – or. 3201 for the later conflation). Also, in the medieval literature the *nisba* ‘al-‘Irāqī’, found in some modern works, is not commonly applied to him, if at all. Although other sources are uncertain of the date of his death, Bar Hebraeus states that he died at the end of Tishrīn I, 1355 in the Greek (i.e. Seleucid) calendar, which is October 1043 (*Chronicon*, p. 226, and *Chronography*, p. 203; on the issues concerning Ibn al-Ṭayyib's name and death, see Faultless, ‘The two recensions’, pp. 177-78).

Ibn al-Ṭayyib worked in Baghdad, where he practiced and taught medicine at the ‘Aḍudī hospital. (The main source on his medical activities is Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a.) He studied medicine and also probably philosophy under Abū l-Khayr ibn Suwār ibn al-Khammār. (The major primary sources do not seem to mention Abū ‘Alī ‘Īsā ibn Zur‘a

[q.v.] as one of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's teachers, although Ibn Zur'ā is sometimes referred to in this capacity in various secondary sources.) Ibn al-Ṭayyib is sometimes said to constitute the final important link in the chain of Christian Aristotelian philosophers working in Baghdad (including Ḥunayn ibn Iṣḥāq [q.v.], Iṣḥāq ibn Ḥunayn [q.v.], Mattā ibn Yūnus, and Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī [q.v.]). There is an intimation that Ibn al-Ṭayyib may have suffered some kind of nervous breakdown as the result of excessive intellectual work (al-Qiftī, *Ta'riḫ al-ḥukamā'*, p. 223), news of which reached Ibn Sīnā (Gutas, *Avicenna*, p. 68), who was acquainted with his philosophy, as were Ibn Rushd (Ferrari, *Der Kategorienkommentar*, pp. 23-27) and Maimonides (Steinschneider, *Die hebraeischen Uebersetzungen*, p. 42, n. 293).

In the ecclesiastical sphere, Ibn al-Ṭayyib became secretary to the Catholicos Yūḥannā VII Ibn Nāzūk (1012-20 or 1013-22) (Ṣalībā ibn Yūḥannā, *Maris Amri*, p. 96), and led the synod that elected Elias I (of Tīrhān, 1028-49) as Catholicos (GCAL ii, p. 160). He remained, presumably, as secretary to Elias I, since he was responsible for the official approval of Elias of Nisibis' apologetic work, *The Sessions* (q.v.) in 1027/28 (Hoenerbach and Spies, *Ibn al-Ṭayyib*, 162, pp. v-vi). Bar Hebraeus in just one of his works (*Chronicon Syriacum*, p. 226; *Chronography*, p. 203) seems to be the only source to state that Ibn al-Ṭayyib was a monk, but this was probably not the case (at least not for long) since his activities as a practicing physician would have precluded this. According to Ṣalībā ibn Yūḥannā, Ibn al-Ṭayyib was buried in the church (not the cemetery) of Durtā (*Maris Amri*, p. 99).

Ibn al-Ṭayyib wrote commentaries on many, if not most, of the works of Aristotle, Galen and Hippocrates available to him (see Ferrari, *Der Kategorienkommentar*, pp. 34-42). Of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's prolific output in the religious sphere, the exegetical writings dominate in terms of length, but they have remained largely unedited and therefore little studied. The commentary on Genesis (part of *Firdaws al-Naṣrāniyya*, a complete commentary on the Bible) is his only lengthy exegetical text that has been published in a critical edition. There are major commentaries on the Psalms and the Gospels, and Ibn al-Ṭayyib began one on the Epistles (now lost) and later included all three, apparently in abbreviated form, in *Firdaws al-Naṣrāniyya*.

Ibn al-Ṭayyib's stated aim in the introduction to the *Commentary on the Gospels* and studies of the commentaries on Genesis and the Prologue to John's Gospel suggest that we must see the exegetical works as being primarily motivated by the wish to preserve the Syriac

heritage in Arabic. Thus Ibn al-Ṭayyib presents a coherent assemblage of pertinent excerpts translated from existing Syriac commentaries rather than providing many novel interpretations of his own, although no doubt these are not wholly absent. However, his sources are by no means slavishly copied and the effort and skill required to produce the work should not be underestimated.

In his exegetical works, Ibn al-Ṭayyib was heavily reliant on Ishoʿdad of Merv (maybe especially so in Genesis). Moshe bar Kepha is also an important source. Although ancient authorities, such as Theodore of Mopsuestia and John Chrysostom, are named and quoted or paraphrased in the *Commentary on the Gospels*, this material is probably mediated through earlier compilations. The exegetical style is distinctly that of the Antiochene school: literal, moral and historical. The exegetical coverage of the biblical text is not at all uniform in length: important phrases are sometimes dwelt on, whilst elsewhere whole chapters are treated in a few sentences. There is a substantial introduction to the *Commentary on the Gospels*, including a well argued plea for rational exegesis and a coruscating attack on his clerical contemporaries. The equally lengthy introduction to the *Commentary on the Psalms* is not readily available and, unfortunately, the beginning of the introduction to *Firdaws al-Naṣrāniyya* is lost, but what remains also contains interesting material.

We know of more than a dozen theological treatises by Ibn al-Ṭayyib, varying in length from multi-part works to brief expositions. Of the work he seemed to regard as his *Summa theologica*, the *Maqāla fī l-uṣūl al-dīniyya* ('Treatise on religious principles'), only the title and the subjects covered are known. This is the only major theological polythematic opus with a known title of which we are aware (although it is not extant). The existence of both an unnamed polythematic work (in 14 chapters) and a major Christological treatise (*Kitāb al-ittihād*) is implied in the great theological compendium by al-Muʿtaman ibn al-ʿAssāl, *Majmūʿ uṣūl al-dīn*, although the unnamed work may itself be the *Maqāla fī l-uṣūl al-dīniyya*. Samir makes the interesting observation that all Ibn al-Ṭayyib's treatises, whether they be exegetical, legal, theological, medical, or philosophical, have the same form of introduction, in accordance with what Samir calls the seven categories of the Greeks: Who is the author? To whom is it addressed? What is its subject? etc. (Samir Khalil, 'La littérature', p. 24).

The present writer has not come upon any explicit mention of Islam or Muslims in Ibn al-Ṭayyib's works (although he does mention Judaism by name). This in itself is remarkable for an intellectual living in Baghdad who must have thought daily about the position of Christians within the Islamic world. What might account for this striking absence is not clear, although with the Būyid empire in terminal decline, these were uncertain times and there is evidence that Jews and Christians sometimes became scapegoats. One thing that is notable in Ibn al-Ṭayyib's theological writings, however, is the recurring emphasis on the unity of God within the Trinity. This surely results, at least in part, from the constant need of Christians to defend themselves from the common Muslim accusation that Christians were tritheists (although for an Aristotelian like Ibn al-Ṭayyib, the problem of understanding the Trinity no doubt also had intrinsic intellectual interest). Another theme that appears more than once in his treatises is the affirmation that the attributes of the Trinity are essential. This might suggest that Ibn al-Ṭayyib wants to distinguish these three attributes as defined by Christians from the more numerous attributes as described by Muslims, which he seems to imply are more contingent (although, as elsewhere, Islam is never mentioned by name). In addition, despite the fact that all of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's treatises are addressed to a Christian audience, other themes arise, such as the superiority and finality of the law of Christ, and the truth of the Gospels, which also suggest a faith under question from outside.

All but four of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's extant religious works are treated in entries below.

Of these four, by far the most important and substantial is Ibn al-Ṭayyib's great compilation of canon law, *Fiqh al-Naṣrāniyya* ('The canon law of Christianity', ed. and trans. Hoenerbach and Spies); also in the realm of canon law there is a short 'Response to an enquiry about the ending of marriages and divorce' (in MS Vat Ar. 157, fols 91r-92v). We also find a brief plea for a rational approach to Christianity, entitled *Qawl fī l-'ilm wa-l-mu'jiza* ('Treatise on science and miracle', ed. Sbath, *Vingt traités*, pp. 179-80, and trans. Troupeau, 'Traité sur la science'); and a 'Refutation of those who say that Mary is the mother of God' (in MS Vat Ar. 115, fols 269v-270r). In addition to these four compositions, Ibn al-Ṭayyib was probably responsible for the translation of the Syriac Diatessaron into Arabic (ed. Marmardji, *Diatessaron de Tatién*, and see Jooose, 'An introduction', and *The Sermon on the mount*).

Ibn al-Ṭayyib's theological writings were admired by later scholars, even scholars outside his own Christological tradition. In his extensive theological compilation *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn* ('Summa of the principles of religion'), al-Mu'taman Ibn al-'Assāl (d. after 1265) allots a surprisingly large amount of space to theologians from denominations other than his own miaphysite Coptic Church. Ibn al-Ṭayyib is, in fact, the author from the Church of the East most often quoted in al-Mu'taman's great compilation; no fewer than ten extracts from Ibn al-Ṭayyib's works are found (see Wadi, *Studio*, p. 187). Six of these come from otherwise lost works, so the *Majmū'* is a very important addition to our knowledge of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's theological writings. All of these extracts will be mentioned in the entries below, but it may be useful to list them, with reference to the paragraph numbers in Wadi's edition (*Summa dei principi della religione*):

1. Chapter 6, §§ 21-24: on law (*sharī'a*); possibly an extract from *Maqāla fī l-uṣūl al-dīniyya*, now lost;
2. Chapter 8, §§ 126-255: the eleventh and fourteenth chapters from *Kitāb al-ittiḥād* (otherwise unknown): Ibn al-Ṭayyib's Chapter 11 (§§ 126-78) reveals the Christological theories on the Union (of divinity and humanity in Christ, i.e. the Incarnation) of various theologians: 20 from the Church of the East, nine Melkite, and ten Miaphysite; while Chapter 14 (§§ 179-255) contains 30 refutations of the miaphysites and others from an Eastern ('Nestorian') perspective;
- 3-4. Chapters 11, §§ 92-101 and 19, §§ 28-51: two extracts from 'a work in fourteen chapters', otherwise unknown;
5. Chapter 16, §§ 25-27: extract from *Al-kalām fī l-ittiḥād*;
6. Chapter 27, §§ 12-13: on the Union; probably an extract from *Al-kalām fī l-ittiḥād*;
7. Chapter 49, §§ 47-51: probably an extract from the introduction to the *Commentary on the Psalms*;
8. Chapter 54, §§ 2-55: chapters 3-6 of *Maqāla fī l-tawba*;
9. Chapter 63, §§ 14-21: extract from *Maqāla fī l-qiyāma*, otherwise lost;
10. Chapter 68, §§ 11-15: on the rewards in the afterlife; quite possibly an extract from *Maqāla fī l-uṣūl al-dīniyya*, now lost.

Despite the fact that most of his extant theological (although not exegetical) writings have been edited and translated, it is still difficult to give a balanced judgement on Ibn al-Ṭayyib's place in the history

of Arabic theology. A rounded assessment of his achievements overall remains impossible until a greater portion of his output has been studied in the context of its sources.

### MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

#### Primary

- ‘Alī ibn Zayd al-Bayhaqī, *Tatimmat šiwān al-ḥikma*, ed. M. Shafī‘, Lahore, 1935, pp. 27-32
- Al-Qiftī, *Ta’riḫ al-ḥukamā’*, p. 223 (and pp. 314-15 on Ibn Buṭlān)
- Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a, *‘Uyūn al-anbā’*, pp. 323-25 (and pp. 325, 327 on Ibn Buṭlān)
- J. Schacht and M. Meyerhof, *The medico-philosophical controversy between Ibn Buṭlān of Baghdad and Ibn Riḍwān of Cairo*, Cairo, 1937, pp. 14, 39, 43, 58-59, 63, 68, 84, 87-88, 108-9 (includes some relevant sections translated from al-Qiftī and Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a)
- Al-Mu’taman ibn al-‘Assāl, *Summa dei principi della religione*, ed. A. Wadi, trans. B. Pirone, 6 vols (*Studia Orientalia Christiana Monographia* 6a-6b, 7a-7b, 8-9), Cairo, 1998-2002 (edition of *Majmū’ uṣūl al-dīn*, with Italian trans.)
- Bar Hebraeus, *Bar Hebraeus Chronicon Syriacum*, ed. P. Bedjan, Paris, 1890, pp. 226-27; *Chronography of Bar Hebraeus*, trans. E.A.W. Budge, London, 1932, p. 203
- Gregorius ibn Hārūn (Bar Hebraeus), *Ta’riḫ mukhtaṣar al-duwal*, ed. A. Šālhānī, Beirut, 1890, p. 330; repr. Beirut, 1958, p. 190 (section on Ibn al-Ṭayyib copied from al-Qiftī)
- Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon ecclesiasticum*, ed. J.B. Abbeloos and T.J. Lamy, 3 vols, Paris, 1877, iii, cols 283-84
- Šalībā ibn Yūḥannā [attrib. ‘Amr ibn Mattā], *Maris Amri et Slibae. De patriarchis Nestorianorum*, ed. H. Gismondi, *pars altera, Amri et Slibae textus*, Rome, 1896, pp. 96 and 98-99 (This is the 14<sup>th</sup> century, ‘five chapter’ *Kitāb al-majdal*. For the confusion over the authorship of this work, see B. Holmberg, ‘Language and thought in *Kitāb al-majdal, bāb 2, faṣl 1, al-Dhurwa*’, in D. Thomas (ed.), *Christians at the heart of Islamic rule*, Leiden, 2003, 159-75, pp. 161-64; and B. Holmberg, ‘A reconsideration of the *Kitāb al-magdal*, Pd’O 18 (1993) 255-73.)

#### Secondary

- C. Ferrari, *Der Kategorienkommentar von Abū l-Farağ ‘Abdallāh ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib*, Leiden, 2006, pp. 17-42
- S.K. Samir, ‘La place d’Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib dans la pensée arabe’, *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 58 (2006) 177-93

- S.K. Samir, 'Rôle des chrétiens dans la *nahḍa* abbasside en Irak et en Syrie (750-1050)', *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 58 (2005) 541-72, pp. 563-65
- J. Faultless, 'The two recensions of the Prologue to John in Ibn al-Ṭayyib's *Commentary on the Gospels*', in D. Thomas (ed.), *Christians at the heart of Islamic rule*, Leiden, 2003, 177-98, pp. 177-78
- J. Faultless, *The Prologue to John in Ibn al-Ṭayyib's Commentary on the Gospels*, Oxford, 2001/2002 (Diss. University of Oxford), pp. 6-27
- Samir Khalil [Samir], 'La littérature arabe médiévale des chrétiens', in M. Abumalham (ed.), *Literatura árabe-cristiana*, Madrid, 2001, 21-49, pp. 23-24
- N.P.G. Jooose, 'An Introduction to the Arabic Diatessaron', *Oriens Christianus* 83 (1999) 72-129
- N.P.G. Jooose, *The sermon on the mount in the Arabic Diatessaron*, Amsterdam, 1997
- A. Wadi, *Studio su al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl*, Cairo and Jerusalem, 1997 (*Studia Orientalia Christiana Monographia* 5) (study of *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn*)
- B. Landron, *Chrétiens et musulmans*, pp. 108-12
- A. Chahwan, art. 'Abū l-Faraj, 'Abdallāh ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib', in *Encyclopédie maronite*, Kaslik, 1992
- G. Troupeau, 'Le rôle des syriaques dans la transmission et l'exploitation du patrimoine philosophique et scientifique grec', *Arabica* 38 (1991) 1-10, pp. 8-10
- Wadi Abullif, 'Les sources du *Mağmū' uṣūl al-dīn* d'al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl', *Pd'O* 16 (1990-91), 227-38
- M. Tilly, art. 'Ibn at-Tajjib', in *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, Hamm, 1990-
- S.K. Samir, 'Christian Arabic literature in the 'Abbasid period', in M.J.L. Young, J.D. Latham and R.B. Serjeant (eds), *Religion, learning and science in the 'Abbasid period*, Cambridge, 1990, 446-60, pp. 447-51
- D. Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian tradition*, Leiden, 1988, pp. 60, 64-65, 67-69, 98, 185, 223, 227
- R. Haddad, *La Trinité divine chez les théologiens arabes (750-1050)*, Paris, 1985, pp. 72-73 (and see index)
- G. Endress, *The works of Yahyā Ibn 'Adī*, Wiesbaden, 1977, p. 113 (brief description of the MS that includes Ibn al-Ṭayyib's 'Refutation of those who say that Mary is the mother of God')
- H. Kaufhold, *Die Rechtssammlung des Gabriel von Basra und ihr Verhältnis zu den anderen juristischen Sammelwerken der Nestorianer*, Berlin, 1976



- [S.] Khalil Samir, ‘Abdallāh b. aṭ-Ṭayyib, Abū l-Faraġ’ in ‘Bibliographie’, *Islamochristiana* 2 (1976) 201-42, pp. 203-8 (no. 22.3); ‘Addenda et corrigenda’, *Islamochristiana* 5 (1979) 300-6
- G. Troupeau, ‘Traité sur la science et le miracle et fragments du Traité sur les fondements de la religion de ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Ṭayyib’, in *Mélanges offerts à Edmond René Labande*, Poitiers, 675-79 (repr. in G. Troupeau, *Études sur le christianisme arabe*, Aldershot UK, 1995, essay X)
- Samir Khalil [Samir], ‘Difā‘ ‘an al-‘ilm, li-Abī l-Faraj b. al-Ṭayyib’, *Risālat al-Kanīsa* 4 (1972) pp. 255-59, 305-9, 368-72
- J. Vernet, art. ‘Ibn al-Ṭayyib’, in *EL* 2
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- Ibn al-Ṭayyib, *Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib Fiqh an-naṣrāniya*, ed. and trans. W. Hoenerbach and O. Spies, 4 vols (CSCO 161-62 [text], 167-68 [trans.]), Louvain, 1956-57
- Graf, *GCAL* ii, 160-77
- A.-S. Marmardji (ed. and trans.), *Diatessaron de Tatien*, Beirut, 1935
- P. Sbath (ed.), *Vingt traités philosophiques et apologétiques d’auteurs arabes chrétiens*, Cairo, 1929, pp. 179-80
- M. Steinschneider, *Die hebraeischen Uebersetzungen des Mittelalters*, Berlin, 1893, p. 42

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

### Title unknown, ‘Commentary on the Psalms’

DATE Unknown, but before the composition of *Firdaws al-Naṣrāniyya*

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

Thus far, only two portions of Ibn al-Ṭayyib’s *Commentary on the Psalms* have been critically edited, and these in unpublished dissertations. Graf’s description of the work, however, is fairly detailed. He states that the Psalms themselves were translated from the Syriac and gives the impression that the exegetical style is similar to that of the other exegetical works. Historical commentary, for example, might be employed regarding the life of the Psalmist or the situation of the Israelites. Like Theodore of Mopsuestia, Ibn al-Ṭayyib rarely provides an allegorical or, more specifically, a Messianic interpretation.

The substantial introduction (5 folios long in MS BL – Ar. 793) has not been edited, but Graf, who describes its contents in detail,

suggests that the subjects of its twelve sections are wide ranging: 1. The division of the Psalms into five (corresponding to the five senses), three (corresponding to thought, word and deed), or as divided by David. 2. The 'single' and 'double' types of recitation. 3. The purpose of chanting. 4. That the Apostles introduced praying through the Psalms. 5. How God favored David with the Psalms. 6. A refutation of those who say David is not a prophet. 7. Why the Psalms are not ordered by subject or history. 8. The explicit or implicit presentation in each Psalm of its original purpose. 9. The use of prophecies and the mission of the prophets. 10. The construction of the style of the Psalms. 11. Allegorical exegesis and the use of anthropomorphisms. 12. An explanation of various proper names and signs in the Syriac Psalms.

In chapter 49, §§ 47-51 of *Majmū' usūl al-dīn* (ed. Wadi; see below), al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl quotes an extract from the introduction concerning the purpose of chanting, which is to affect both reason and emotion.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Samir suggests, on the basis of Graf's description, that sections 6, 9, and 11 of the introduction to the commentary may possibly relate to Islam. Samir, however, saw no direct references to Islam in the commentary to Psalms 43-52/42-51 and 58/57 (which are the only sections he had studied at the time), but observed that in 19:8/18:8 Ibn al-Ṭayyib addresses the theme of the Law of the Lord being perfect. He contrasts three types of law (*nāmūs*): natural (*ṭabī'i*), biblical (*kitābī*) and surpassing (*ifḍālī*). Samir notes that this is one of the classic themes of medieval Christian apologetic, namely that the Law of the Lord is perfect ('Bibliographie', pp. 203-4). This theme appears elsewhere with the implication that Islam (never named) does not and indeed cannot supersede Christianity.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS London, BL – Ar. 793, fols 1r-208r (1188) (incomplete, with introduction)

MS London, BL – Ar. Christ. 10 (13<sup>th</sup> century) (Psalms 1:4-81:56/80:56)

MS Vat – Ar. 35 (13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century, not 11<sup>th</sup> as Graf says; see Samir, 'Bibliographie', p. 204) (Psalms 33-60/32-59)

MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 41, 1 (15<sup>th</sup> century) (first part of introduction)

MS Leningrad, Gregor IV collection – 12 (16<sup>th</sup> century) (Psalms 1-81/80, introduction)

For other later manuscripts, see Graf, *GCAL* ii, 166.

For a list of manuscripts of the *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn*, which preserves an extract from the 'Commentary on the Psalms' in chapter 49, see Wadi, *Studio su al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl*, pp. 189-92, with a list of previous editions of the work at pp. 193-97.

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

Al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl, *Summa dei principi della religione*, ch. 49, §§ 47-51 (edition of al-Mu'taman's epitome of the text, with Italian trans.)

A. Chahwan, *Le commentaire de Psaumes 33-60 d'Ibn at-Tayib. Reflet de l'exégèse syriaque orientale*, Rome, 1997 (Diss. Pontifical Gregorian University) (edition, trans. and study; it is unclear whether numbering is Heb. or Gk.)

B. Ebermann, *Aus dem Psalmenkommentar des Abū l-Farağ 'Abdallāh ibn at-Ṭayyib (ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Exegese)*, Rome, c. 1964 (Diss. Pontifical Biblical Institute) (edition, trans. and study of commentary on Psalms 43-52/42-51)

R. Köbert, 'Ibn at-Tayyib's Erklärung von Psalm 44', *Biblica* 43 (1962) 338-48 (trans. of Psalm 44/43)

Ibn al-Ṭayyib, *Al-rawd al-naḍīr fī tafsīr al-mazāmīr*, ed. Y. Manqariyūs and H. Jirjis, Cairo, 1902 (edition of introduction and commentary on Psalms 1-28/27)

#### STUDIES

Samir, 'Bibliographie', *Islamochristiana* 2 (1976) pp. 203-4  
Graf, *GCAL* ii, 164-66

## Title unknown, 'Commentary on the Gospels'

DATE 1018

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

In the author's introduction to the *Commentary on the Gospels* (the work does not seem to have a fixed Arabic appellation), he states that he is producing this work in order to preserve the Syriac heritage at a time when a knowledge of the language is dying out in Iraq (ed. Manqariyūs, p. 36; and see, e.g., MS BL – Or. 3201 no. 15, f. 9r). It is,

then, largely but not exclusively a work of compilation. Chrysostom, Ephrem, and Theodore of Mopsuestia are amongst the ancient authors cited by Ibn al-Ṭayyib, but are unlikely to have been direct sources for the work. Išoʿdad of Merv and a compilatory source shared with Moshe bar Kepha have been identified as likely direct sources, but there are doubtless at least one or two others (see Faultless, 'The two recensions' p. 181, summarizing the longer analysis in Faultless, *The Prologue*, pp. 104-46).

Ibn al-Ṭayyib provides a lengthy introduction to this work (12 out of the 360 or so folios for the complete commentary in MS BL – Or. 3201, for example), in which he argues for a rational approach to the interpretation of the Bible. As in the introduction to *Firdaws al-Naṣrāniyya*, he launches a bitter attack on those he sees as his decadent contemporaries in the church.

At least a portion of the *Commentary* exists in two recensions, the original Eastern ('Nestorian') text and a miaphysite revision (see Faultless, 'The two recensions'). The revisor makes small but crucial changes to the commentary on the Prologue to John in order to bring it into line with miaphysite Christology. It has yet to be discovered how far, if at all, the revision extends beyond this most christologically significant section of the Gospels. It is just possible that the revision was carried out by someone in the circle of the 'Assāl brothers: they were familiar with a number of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's works (see Samir, 'La place', p. 189); the revision is marked by theological sophistication; and the Cairene Copt, Shams al-Ri'āsa Abū l-Barakāt ibn Kabar was aware of its existence in around 1300 (he does say that a 'Jacobite' executed it, but this does not exclude the Coptic 'Assāl brothers).

The *Commentary* survives in whole or in part in numerous manuscripts. Since the fact of the existence of the two recensions was not widely known, the catalogues rarely give information on this matter. Macomber has briefly discussed the recensions and provides information on the four Mardin-Diarbekir and other important manuscripts ('Newly discovered fragments', pp. 444-45). Few of the manuscripts listed below have been studied in detail.

Of the whole work, only the first portion of the introduction has been published (in two parts) in a critical edition. The edition of the complete text published in Cairo, which is not critical, should be treated with considerable caution since, as Macomber points out, 'the editor has introduced numerous and extensive modifications of his own, even replacing the commentary on John with another

(without any indication of the fact in his preface)' ('Newly discovered', p. 445).

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The work is undoubtedly the most influential Gospel commentary in Arabic. It was widely disseminated among Arabic-speaking Christians (by no means only within the Church of the East) and beyond, notably in the Ethiopian church. Samir has noted that a passage such as that explaining why the hypostasis of the Son was called 'Word' provides arguments with which Christians can defend their faith (Samir, 'Bibliographie', p. 204). This brief extract is quoted by Troupeau ('Le Traité sur la Trinité', pp. 120-21), and emphasizes that the use of 'the Word' does not imply any inferiority of the Son to the Father. The Father and Son only differ in their properties, not in substance or existence.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

There is no single recent source with good information on the manuscripts. Graf, *GCAL* ii, 167-69 remains the fullest source. There is some useful information on manuscripts in Samir, 'Nécessité de la science', pp. 243-44; [Samir] Khalil-Kussaim, 'Nécessité de l'exégèse', pp. 244-46; and Macomber, 'Newly discovered', pp. 444-46.

MS Cairo, Coptic Museum – Theol. 214 (Simaika 44, Graf 128) (1232), fols 3r-391v (Mark, Luke and John)

MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 86 (1248) (miaphysite recension; Mark, 3v-44r; Luke, 45v-167v; John, 168v-303r)

MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 85 (13<sup>th</sup> century) (important witness to the original Eastern, 'Nestorian' recension; Luke, 2v-79v; John, first folio missing, 80r-164v)

MS Mardin, Chaldean cathedral – Mardin-Diarbekir 22.4 (13<sup>th</sup> century) (original recension; beginning and end missing, otherwise complete)

MS Mardin, Chaldean cathedral – Mardin-Diarbekir 22.3 (13<sup>th</sup> century) (original recension; Luke)

MS Mardin, Chaldean cathedral – Mardin-Diarbekir 22.5 (13<sup>th</sup> century) (original recension; Matthew)

MS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate – Graf 602 (early 14<sup>th</sup> century) (introduction and Matthew; 555 fols, lacks first 9 fols)

MS Wādī al-Naṣrūn, Monastery of St Macarius – Comm. 5 (Zanetti 300) (14<sup>th</sup> century?) (Matthew)

- MS Berlin, Königliche Bibliothek – Ar. 10178 (15<sup>th</sup> century) (Matthew, incomplete)
- MS Diarbekir – Chaldean Patriarchate 130 (1554)
- MS Mardin, Chaldean cathedral – Mardin-Diarbekir 22.6 (16<sup>th</sup> century) (original recension; complete)
- MS Vat – Borgia Ar. 231 (16<sup>th</sup> century, Karshuni) (miaphysite recension; introduction, 2r-15r; Matthew, 15v-242r)
- MS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate – Theol. 39 (Simaika 232, Graf 603) (16<sup>th</sup> century)
- MS Leiden, University Library – Or. 2375 (17<sup>th</sup> century) (introduction)
- MS Cairo, Coptic Museum – Theol. 195 (Simaika 56, Graf 110) (17<sup>th</sup> century), fols 1r-15 r (introduction)
- MS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate – Theol. 53 (Simaika 408, Graf 600) (1787), fols 1r-10v and 11v-169v (introduction and Matthew)
- MS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate – Theol. 50 (Simaika 409, Graf 601) (1787) (Mark, Luke and John)
- MS Leiden, University Library – Or. 454 (18<sup>th</sup> century?) (introduction and Matthew 1-9:34 and 27:54-28:16)
- MS London, BL – Or. 3201 (1805) (miaphysite recension; introduction, 1r-12r; Matthew, 19r-188r; Mark 188v-215r; Luke, 215v-296v; John, 297r-371r; note on authorship, 371v-372r)
- MS Sharfeh – Syrian Catholic Patriarchate – Syriac 9/18 (19<sup>th</sup> century, Karshuni)
- MS Aleppo, Quṣṭanṭīn Khuḍarī Collection (inaccessible MS in private collection; see Sbath, *Fihris* i, p. 24, no. 145)
- MS Qūṣiyya, Dayr al-Muḥarraḡ (Manḡariyyūs, *Tafsīr al-Mishriqī*, p. 3)

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

- J. Faultless, *The Prologue to John in Ibn al-Ṭayyib's Commentary on the Gospels*, Oxford, 2001/2002 (Diss. University of Oxford) (edition, trans. and study of the commentary on John 1:1-18)
- Samir Khalil-Kussaim, 'Nécessité de la science, texte de 'Abdallāh ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib', *Pd'O* 3 (1972) 241-59; and Samir K. [Samir], 'Nécessité de l'exégèse scientifique, texte de 'Abdallāh Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib', *Pd'O* 5 (1974) 243-79 (edition and trans. of the first part of the introduction to the *Commentary*, published in two parts)

- G. Troupeau, 'Le Traité sur la Trinité et l'Unité de 'Abd Allāh Ibn al-Ṭayyib', *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 25 (1972-73) 105-23, pp. 120-21 (repr. in G. Troupeau, *Études sur le christianisme arabe*, Aldershot UK, 1995, essay IX) (includes edition and trans. of short extract on 'why the hypostasis of the Son is called Word' from the commentary on John 1; analysed in R. Haddad, *La Trinité divine chez les théologiens arabes*, p. 210)
- Samīr Khalīl [Samīr], 'Difā' 'an al-'ilm, li-Abī l-Faraj ibn al-Ṭayyib', *Risālat al-Kanīsa* 4 (1972) 255-60, 305-10, 368-74, 415-21 (edition of the first part of the introduction to the *Commentary*)
- Ibn al-Ṭayyib, *Tafsīr al-Mashriqī*, ed. Y. Manqariyūs, 2 vols, Cairo, 1908-1910 (and frequently reprinted; unreliable edition of complete text, see above)

## STUDIES

- K.E. Bailey, *Jesus through Middle Eastern eyes. Cultural studies in the Gospels*, Downers Grove IL, 2008 (includes various references to Ibn al-Ṭayyib)
- J. Faultless, 'The two recensions of the Prologue to John in Ibn al-Ṭayyib's *Commentary on the Gospels*', in D. Thomas (ed.), *Christians at the heart of Islamic rule*, Leiden, 2003, 177-98
- F. Sepmeijer, 'Ibn al-Ṭayyib's commentary on Matthew 1-9:32-34', *Pd'O* 25 (2000) 557-64
- J.D. Hofstra, *Isho'dad von Merw 'en het Woord is vlees geworden'*, Kampen, 1993, pp. 189-96
- R.W. Cowley, *Ethiopian biblical interpretation. A study in exegetical tradition and hermeneutics*, Cambridge, 1988, pp. 7, 43-44, 60-61, 377-78
- Samir, 'Bibliographie', *Islamochristiana* 2 (1976) p. 204
- G. Troupeau, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes (Bibliothèque nationale), première partie – manuscrits chrétiens*, 2 vols, Paris, 1972-74 (on MSS Ar. 85 and 86)
- W.F. Macomber, 'Newly discovered fragments of the Gospel commentaries of Theodore of Mopsuestia', *Le Muséon* 81 (1968) 441-47, pp. 444-46
- Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 166-69 (no. 3)
- Shams al-Ri'āsa Abū l-Barakāt ibn Kabar, *Miṣbāḥ al-zulma fī idāḥ al-khidma*, ed. Samīr Khalīl, Cairo, 1971, pp. 304-5

## *Firdaws al-Naṣrāniyya*, ‘The paradise of Christianity’

DATE After 1018

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

### DESCRIPTION

*Firdaws al-Naṣrāniyya* is a complete commentary on the Bible. The beginning of the introduction to the work is lost, but in the section that survives Ibn al-Ṭayyib launches a stinging attack on his ecclesiastical contemporaries. In this same section, he implies that his sources are not Arabic, and they are therefore presumably Syriac. Indeed, Sanders has noted Syriacisms in the language of the commentary (*Commentaire*, text vol., pp. ii-iii). Ibn al-Ṭayyib also states that the work includes abbreviated versions of his earlier independent commentaries on the Psalms, the Gospels (completed in 1018, so this work must be later), and the first few Epistles (now lost), although the extent and manner of the abbreviation has yet to be examined. Ibn al-Ṭayyib goes on to list the book's contents, informing us that the commentary on the Old Testament is followed by 17 sections of analyses of various biblical as well as wider theological issues and problems. Also provided is a brief history of the biblical text and its translations (Sanders, *Commentaire*, text vol., pp. 1-5; trans. pp. 1-4). Although Ibn al-Ṭayyib states that the work includes abbreviated versions of his New Testament commentaries, there is no section listed in the contents that appears to be devoted exclusively to the New Testament.

Sanders' study shows that Ibn al-Ṭayyib was heavily reliant on Isho'dad of Merv (at least in Genesis; see *Commentaire*, trans. vol., p. ii) and that the coverage of the Pentateuch is rather more detailed than later sections of the Old Testament (apart from the Psalms). Graf notes that Ibn al-Ṭayyib never once mentions a source in this work, but that the *Questions* of Theodoret of Cyrus seems to have had an influence on the form of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's commentary (*GCAL* ii, 163).

Apart from the beginning of the introduction, which is lost, the complete work is to be found divided between the 199 folios of MS Vat – Ar. 37 (also in Diyarbakir ar. 128), containing the commentary on the Old Testament, and the 352 folios of MS Vat – Ar. 36, containing the remaining material. Sanders has noted that although MS Naples – Ar. 60 is later than MS Vat – Ar. 37, it contains Syriacisms



which have been ironed out in the tradition of the earlier manuscript. However, errors common to both manuscripts suggest that they ultimately derive from the same source (see Sanders, *Commentaire*, text vol., p. iii). Sanders rediscovered MS Diyarbakir – Ar. 128 in Mardin after it was thought to have been lost (see Sanders, ‘Le manuscrit’). The whereabouts of MS Diyarbakir – Ar. 129 (only the New Testament commentary, according to Graf) are unknown. Exactly how the contents of this manuscript relate to the sections described in the introduction to the complete work is unclear. Various extracts from the complete work have been transmitted by a number of authors (see GCAL ii, 163-64).

Since only the commentary on Genesis (including the important introduction) has so far been published, much remains to be discovered of this remarkable solo achievement.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Since little is known in detail about this, the only complete commentary on the Bible in Arabic prior to modern times, its significance for Christian-Muslim relations is currently impossible to assess. However, it does include abbreviated versions of the separate Psalm and Gospel commentaries described above.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

- MS Vat – Ar. 37 (1291; the Old Testament)
- MS Vat – Ar. 36 (13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century; the New Testament and all miscellaneous material)
- MS Mardin, Chaldean Church – Diyarbakir Ar. 128 (1332; the Old Testament)
- MS Diyarbakir (whereabouts unknown) – Ar. 129 (14<sup>th</sup> century; the New Testament)
- MS Naples, Bibliotheca Nazionale – Ar. 60 (14<sup>th</sup> century; incomplete)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

- L. Bottini, ‘Il Giubileo in due autori arabo-cristiani’, in M. Zappella (ed.), *Le origini degli anni giubilari*, Casale Monferrato, 1998, 221-39, pp. 227-30 (includes trans. of commentary on Leviticus 25)
- J.C.J. Sanders, ‘Le ms. ar. 128 Diarbékir retrouvé’, *Le Muséon* 88 (1975) 31-57 (supplies improved readings for his edition of 1967)
- Ibn al-Ṭayyib, *Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib, Commentaire sur la Genèse*, ed. and trans. J.C.J. Sanders, 2 vols (CSCO 274-275 = ar. 24-25), Louvain, 1967

## STUDIES

- P. Féghali, 'Ibn al-Ṭayyib et son commentaire sur la Genèse', *Pd'O* 16 (1990-91) 149-62
- R.W. Cowley, *Ethiopian biblical interpretation. A study in exegetical tradition and hermeneutics*, Cambridge, 1988, pp. 7, 114-15, 119, 377-78
- Samir, 'Bibliographie', *Islamochristiana* 2 (1976) p. 203
- J.C.J. Sanders, *Inleiding op het Genesiskommentaar van de Nestorian Ibn al-Ṭayyib*, Leiden, 1963
- Graf, *GCAL* ii, 162-64
- Assemani, *BO* iii, pt. i, p. 546

*Maqāla fī l-uṣūl al-dīniyya*, 'Treatise on the foundations of the religion'; *Al-uṣūl al-dīniyya al-rabbāniyya*, 'The foundations of the religion of our Lord'

DATE Before 1018

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

This work is no longer extant, but in the introduction to his *Commentary on the Gospels* (see above), Ibn al-Ṭayyib lists the subjects of the work as follows (e.g. MS London, BL or. 3201 no. 15, 9v; the edition of Manqariyūs, p. 37 is unreliable here): proofs of the non-eternity of the world, the unity of God, the Trinity and the Union; that the Law of Jesus abrogates all the other Laws and cannot itself be abrogated; proofs of the truth of the coming of Christ and of the Gospels; proofs that the pleasures of the righteous after resurrection are not eating and drinking but union with God, and that the punishment for the ignorant (*juhāl*) is estrangement from God.

It is possible that parts of this work have been preserved in al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl's compilation *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn*. In chapter 6, §§ 21-24 (of Wadi's ed.), we find an extract of a text by Ibn al-Ṭayyib contrasting two types of law (*sharī'a*): that of 'adl (justice) and that of *faḍl* (grace or bounteousness). Moses brought the first law, our Lord the second, which is superior and includes and abrogates the first. Later, in chapter 68, §§ 11-15 of *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn*, al-Mu'taman

quotes or epitomizes a text by Ibn al-Ṭayyib on the rewards in the afterlife. The topics of these two extracts correlate with two of the topics treated in the *Maqāla fī l-uṣūl al-dīniyya*, according to the description in the *Commentary in the Gospels* summarized above.

Troupeau ('Traité sur la science', p. 676) attributes extracts from the 'work in fourteen chapters' (see below) to the *Maqāla fī l-uṣūl al-dīniyya*, but without strong evidence. Haddad does the same (*La Trinité divine*, pp. 150, 176, 195), whilst additionally attributing an extract from *Kitāb al-ittihād* to the *Maqāla fī l-uṣūl al-dīniyya* (p. 157), presumably not recognizing the former as an independent work.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Ibn al-Ṭayyib himself thought highly enough of the *Maqāla fī l-uṣūl al-dīniyya* that he refers to it in at least four of his other works. It would seem to be his *Summa theologica*. A number of the subjects listed suggest that the work is directed in part to Christians needing to defend their faith in the Islamic environment. For example, there is a section on the unity of God and another on the perfection and finality of the Law of Christ. Sections apparently proving the veracity of the Gospels and Christ's coming would only need to exist in an environment in which these familiar Christian ideas were regularly called into question. The exposition of the nature of the joys of the afterlife is also a common motif in Christian-Muslim controversy.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

No manuscripts of the work as an independent entity are known. For the manuscripts of *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn*, see A. Wadi, *Studio su al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl*, Cairo, 1997, pp. 189-92.

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

Al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl, *Summa dei principi della religione*, ed. A. Wadi, trans. B. Pirone, 6 vols, Cairo, 1998-2002, chs 6, §§ 21-24 and 68, §§ 11-15 (edition of al-Mu'taman's extracts, perhaps from *Maqāla fī l-uṣūl al-dīniyya*, with Italian trans.)

#### STUDIES

Haddad, *La Trinité divine chez les théologiens arabes* (NB Haddad's attribution, on pp. 150, 176, 195, of the two extracts from the 'work in fourteen chapters' and, on p. 157, of an extract from *Kitāb al-ittihād* to the *Maqāla fī l-uṣūl al-dīniyya* is probably mistaken)

Samir, 'Bibliographie', *Islamochristiana* 2 (1976) p. 204

G. Troupeau, 'Traité sur la science et le miracle et fragments du Traité sur le fondements de la religion de 'Abd Allāh Ibn al-Ṭayyib', 675-79, pp. 677-79 (French trans.; NB Troupeau's attribution of the two extracts from the 'work in fourteen chapters' to the *Maqāla fī l-uṣūl al-dīniyya* is probably mistaken) Graf, *GCAL* ii, p. 170 (no. 5)

### Title unknown, 'Work in fourteen chapters'

DATE Unknown; before October 1043

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

Two separate extracts from a work in fourteen chapters by Ibn al-Ṭayyib appear in chapters 11 and 19 of *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn* by al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl, though he was not aware of its title. The extract in chapter 11 (just over two pages in the edition) explains and clarifies various key terms and concepts regarding the Trinity, and then goes on to discuss the Union (*ittihād*) of God and humanity in Christ, whilst that in chapter 19 (seven pages long) consists of ten arguments as to why the attributes (*ṣifāt*) of the Creator are three in number (see Samir, 'Addenda', pp. 304-5 for a detailed analysis of the content of the extracts).

Troupeau (*Traité sur la science*, p. 676) and Haddad (*La Trinité divine*, pp. 150, 176, 195) equate this treatise with the lost *Maqāla fī l-uṣūl al-dīniyya* (see above), but apparently without concrete evidence. The contents of the two chapters from the 'work in fourteen chapters' could certainly fit under the very general headings of the Trinity and the Union from Ibn al-Ṭayyib's list of the contents of *Maqāla fī l-uṣūl al-dīniyya*, but there is no mention of the attributes, which is the specific subject of the long second extract from the 'work in fourteen chapters'. Graf assumes (again, seemingly without strong evidence; see *GCAL* ii, pp. 172-73) that these two passages are extracts from a work entitled *Kitāb al-ittihād* (see below), although he refers to it by a different title.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Whilst defining key Trinitarian terms, Ibn al-Ṭayyib asserts God's unity, a common theme in his works. His arguments that there are

three and only three attributes in God seem, at least in part, an attempt to distinguish the Christian concept of the three essential attributes of the Trinity from the more apparently contingent ones of Muslim theology.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS Vat – Ar. 103, fols 139v-140v and 205v-207r (13<sup>th</sup> century, Egypt)

MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 201, fols 162r-163v and 232r-233v (13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century, Egypt)

MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 200, fols 95v-96v and 137v-138v (16<sup>th</sup> century, Egypt)

and other manuscripts of the *Majmūʿ uṣūl al-dīn*. For a comprehensive list, see A. Wadi, *Studio su al-Muʿtaman ibn al-ʿAssāl*, Cairo, 1997, which includes a list of manuscripts (pp. 189-92) and previous editions (pp. 193-97).

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

Al-Muʿtaman ibn al-ʿAssāl, *Summa dei principi della religione*, ed. A. Wadi, trans. B. Pirone, 6 vols, Cairo, 1998-2002, ch. 11, §§ 92-101 and ch. 19, §§ 28-51 (edition of al-Muʿtaman's extracts from the text, with Italian trans.)

Samir Khalil [Samir], 'Şafaḥāt min maqāla mafqūda li-Ibn al-Ṭayyib fī *Majmūʿ uṣūl al-dīn* li-Ibn al-ʿAssāl', *Bayn al-Nahrayn* 5 (1977) 247-62 (edition of both extracts)

G. Troupeau, 'Traité sur la science et le miracle et fragments du Traité sur les fondements de la religion de ʿAbd Allāh Ibn al-Ṭayyib', 675-79, pp. 677-79 (repr. in Troupeau, *Études*, essay X) (French translation of both extracts, although Troupeau attributes them to the *Maqāla fī l-uṣūl al-dīniyya*)

#### STUDIES

Haddad, *La Trinité divine chez les théologiens arabes*, pp. 150, 176, 195 (although Haddad attributes these extracts to the *Maqāla fī l-uṣūl al-dīniyya*)

Samir, 'Addenda et corrigenda', *Islamochristiana* 5 (1979) pp. 303-5  
 Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 172-73 (no. 10) (where Graf probably mistakenly identifies the passages as extracts from *Kitāb al-ittiḥād*, although he refers to it by a different title)

*Kitāb al-ittiḥād*, 'Treatise on the union'

DATE Unknown; before October 1043

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

In the eighth chapter of his compilation *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn*, al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl includes the eleventh and fourteenth chapters of a treatise by Ibn al-Ṭayyib entitled *Kitāb al-ittiḥād*, otherwise lost. These extracts fill around 30 pages in the edition.

Ibn al-Ṭayyib's chapter 11 (chap. 8, §§ 126-78 in *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. Wadi) reveals the Christological theories on the Union (of divinity and humanity in Christ, i.e. the Incarnation) of various theologians: 20 from the Church of the East, nine Melkite, and ten Miaphysite. Chapter 14 (ch. 8, §§ 179-255) contains 30 refutations of the Miaphysites and others from an Eastern ('Nestorian') perspective.

The *Kitāb al-kamāl*, attributed to the Metropolitan Dāwud includes a slightly modified version of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's chapter 11 (see Samir, 'Addenda', p. 302). Samir explains that the title mistakenly assigned by Graf (*Tā' dīd arā' al-nās fī l-ittiḥād wa-ḥujajihim*; GCAL ii, pp. 172-73, no. 10) is in fact the title of the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of the work and that the correct title of the work as a whole is to be found in the *Kitāb al-kamāl* ('Addenda', p. 301).

Graf equates this work with the 'work in fourteen chapters' (see above), extracts of which are also preserved in the *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn*. This seems unlikely, since al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl himself does not assign the extracts from *Kitāb al-ittiḥād* to the 'work in fourteen chapters'. Moreover, the two chapters explicitly said to come from the 'work in fourteen chapters' concern God's essence and attributes as well as the Union. Although *Kitāb al-ittiḥād* may have included discussions of the divine essence and attributes, it is unlikely to have done so since the title and existing extracts suggest that it is a treatise specifically on intra-Christian disputes over the Union. Troupeau ('Traité sur la science', p. 676) and Samir ('Addenda', pp. 301-2) both discuss the problem of Graf's attribution. Haddad (*La Trinité divine*, p. 157), on the other hand, attributes this extract to the *Maqāla fī l-uṣūl al-dīniyya* (see above).

Samir ('Addenda', p. 303) compares this work with the similarly titled *Al-kalām fī l-ittiḥād* (see below).

## SIGNIFICANCE

The title of the work and the existing chapters suggest that this is a work written purely for a Christian audience since it seems to deal with denominational Christological disputes. However, we only possess short extracts from what apparently was a major work. At present, we can only speculate on how this major treatment of Christological doctrine had been shaped by Christian-Muslim controversy.

## MANUSCRIPTS

For a list of manuscripts of the *Majmūʿ uṣūl al-dīn*, see A. Wadi, *Studio su al-Muʿtaman ibn al-ʿAssāl*, Cairo, 1997, pp. 189-92, with a list of previous editions of the work at pp. 193-97.

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

Al-Muʿtaman ibn al-ʿAssāl, *Summa dei principi della religione*, ed. A. Wadi, trans. B. Pirone, 6 vols, Cairo, 1998-2002, ch. 8, §§ 126-255 (edition of al-Muʿtaman's epitome of the text, with Italian trans.)

## STUDIES

Haddad, *La Trinité divine chez les théologiens arabes*, p. 157 (but Haddad, probably mistakenly, attributes this extract to the *Maqāla fī l-uṣūl al-dīniyya*)  
 Samir, 'Bibliographie', *Islamochristiana* 2 (1976) pp. 207-8; 'Addenda et corrigenda', *Islamochristiana* 5 (1979) pp. 300-3  
 Graf, *GICAL* ii, pp. 172-73 (no. 10)

*Al-kalām fī l-ittiḥād*, 'Discourse on the Union'

DATE Unknown; before October 1043

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The original text consisted of at least four sections, but only two and a half have been preserved, making up three pages in the printed edition. In the introductory section, Ibn al-Ṭayyib discusses the various types of 'one' – he distinguishes 12 sorts (cf. Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī, who notes six in *Maqāla fī l-tawḥīd ʿalā madhhab al-Naṣārā*; see Samir, 'Bibliographie', p. 207). In chapter 16, §§ 25-27 of *Majmūʿ uṣūl al-dīn* (ed. Wadi), al-Muʿtaman quotes the passage in which Ibn al-Ṭayyib enumerates the 12 types of 'one'; pp. 144-45 and 148 in Troupeau's edition of the original.

Ibn al-Ṭayyib then goes on to furnish proof of the necessity of the Union (of divinity and humanity in Christ). There follows a comparison of the doctrines of the Union of the eternal and the created in the Jacobite, Melkite and 'Nestorian' churches (although the series of justifications for the last of these, the author's own church, is incomplete, as only the first survives).

The fourth part of the treatise, which is only known for certain through being announced earlier in the text, explains why the Union involved only the hypostasis of the eternal Son and not the other two. However, the identical extracts at the end of chapter 3 of the second part of *Al-tabṣira al-mukhtaṣara* (MS Vat Ar. 103, fol. 241r) and in chapter 27, §§12-13 of al-Mu'taman's *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn* are on this very subject, and Samir is convinced that they come from this lost fourth part (see 'Addenda', pp. 300-1, where Samir also suggests that Ibn al-Ṭayyib's argument is based on that of Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī). Samir ('Addenda', p. 303) compares this work with the similarly titled, *Kitāb al-ittihād* (see above).

Graf considered the work to be a continuation of the *Maqāla fī l-tathlīth wa-l-tawḥīd* (see below), but Samir argues that it should be considered a separate work.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The work appears to have been produced for a Christian audience, since it deals with denominational Christological disputes. However, it includes a treatment of themes of importance in Christian-Muslim discussion, e.g., the necessity of the Incarnation, and the way in which God is 'one'.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

Two manuscripts of the text are known, both of them incomplete:

MS Vat – Ar. 145, fols 67v-71v (13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century; Egypt, according to Samir, 'Bibliographie')

MS Oxford, Bodleian Library – Huntington 240, fols 104r-105r (16<sup>th</sup> century; Egypt)

The only accessible manuscript of *Al-tabṣira al-mukhtaṣara* is MS Vat Ar. 103, fol. 241r (13<sup>th</sup> century; Egypt)

For a list of manuscripts of the *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn*, see A. Wadi, *Studio su al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl*, pp. 189-92, with a list of previous editions of the work at pp. 193-97.



## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

- Al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl, *Summa dei principi della religione*, ed. A. Wadi, trans. B. Pirone, ch. 16, §§ 25-27, and possibly ch. 27, §§ 12-13 (edition of al-Mu'taman's extracts from the text, with Italian trans.)
- K. Samir, *Le traité de l'unité de Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī* (893-974), Jounieh, 1980, pp. 144-47 (edition and study of the extract in al-Mu'taman's *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn* on the types of 'one', and comparison with Yaḥyā's *Maqāla fī l-tawḥīd*)
- G. Troupeau, 'Le traité sur l'Union de 'Abd Allāh Ibn al-Ṭayyib', *Pd'O* 8 (1977-78) 141-50 (repr. in Troupeau, *Études*, essay VII) (edition and trans.)

## STUDIES

- Haddad, *La Trinité divine chez les théologiens arabes*, p. 203
- Samir, 'Bibliographie', *Islamochristiana* 2 (1976) p. 207; 'Addenda et corrigenda', *Islamochristiana* 5 (1979) pp. 300-1
- A.F.L. Beeston, 'An important Christian Arabic manuscript in Oxford', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 19 (1953) 197-205, p. 201
- Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 171-72 (where the work is considered a continuation of *Maqāla fī l-tathlīth wa-l-tawḥīd*)

*Maqāla fī l-tathlīth*, 'Treatise on the Trinity'

DATE Unknown; before October 1043

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

This is a substantial treatise (eight pages in Troupeau's edition) divided into an introduction, seven chapters, and a conclusion on the following subjects (see Samir, 'Bibliographie', pp. 205-6 and Troupeau, 'Le traité sur l'Unité', pp. 72-73): 1. Christianity is different from other religions because it appeals both to the learned (through reason) and to the uneducated (through miracles), whereas Judaism and other religions (including Islam, he must mean) are addressed to the uneducated, who do not require justifications; 2. God is both one and multiple; 3. God is knowledge ('ilm), knowing ('ālim), and known (ma'lūm) (thereby modifying the triad of Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, reason ['aql], reasoner ['āqil], and reasoned [ma'qūl]); see Haddad, *La Trinité*, pp. 222, 228-29);

4. God is Father, Son, and Spirit; the author defines the key terms, substance (*jawhar*), properties (*khawāṣṣ*), and hypostasis (*uqnūm*), and states that argument over the terms *ilm*, *ālim*, and *ma'lūm* is sheer sophistry; 5. An example: Socrates is one whilst being white, warm and knowing; 6. Why are the attributes limited to three?; 7. Points of view of other believers, and objections to them.

Samir notes that Troupeau's title ('Le traité sur l'Unité et la Trinité') is misleading as there is no mention of the Unity ('Bibliographie', p. 205).

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The opening chapter of this treatise is a rare occasion when Ibn al-Ṭayyib overtly asserts the superiority of Christianity over other religions. Although Islam, unlike Judaism, is not explicitly mentioned, it is surely implied in the phrase 'other religions'. Further on in the treatise, Ibn al-Ṭayyib emphasizes the unity of God, which perhaps indicates the influence of an Islamic milieu.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

Only one manuscript is known:

MS Oxford, Bodleian Library – Huntington 240, fols 95v-99r (16<sup>th</sup> century, Egypt)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

Samir Khalil [Samir], 'Maqāla fī l-tathlith, li-Abī l-Faraj 'Abdallāh ibn al-Ṭayyib al-muttawaffā sanat 1043 m.', *Bayn al-Nahrayn* 4 (1976) 347-82 (edition)

G. Troupeau, 'Le traité sur l'Unité et la Trinité de 'Abd Allāh Ibn al-Ṭayyib', *Pd'O* 2 (1971-72) 71-89 (repr. in Troupeau, *Études*, essay VI) (edition and trans.)

#### STUDIES

Haddad, *La Trinité divine chez les théologiens arabes*, pp. 154, 163, 180-84, 189, 195, 221-22, 228-29, 240

Samir, 'Bibliographie', *Islamochristiana* 2 (1976) pp. 205-6

Beeston, 'An important Christian Arabic manuscript in Oxford', p. 200

(not mentioned in Graf, *GCAL*)

## *Maqāla fī l-tathlīth wa-l-tawḥīd*, ‘Treatise on the Trinity and the Unity’

DATE After 1018

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

### DESCRIPTION

The subject matter of this substantial treatise (seven pages in Troupeau’s edition) can be divided into ten sections (see Troupeau, ‘Le traité sur la Trinité’, pp. 105-6): 1. God is one in His essence and multiple in His hypostases. 2. One can argue that the attributes are three by textual argument. 3. Or one can do so by rational argument. 4. One could object that there are more than three attributes and therefore more than three hypostases. 5. One could also object that the attributes other than those pertaining to the Essence suggest the existence of another substance. 6. One could object that it is possible to attain knowledge of the attributes of the Essence by means of what exists. 7. The understanding of the attributes by the men of the church is correct, unlike that of philosophers. 8. The men of the church are correct in their understanding that, although the Father is a cause and the Son and Spirit are both caused, the Essence is still one. 9. The attributes of the Essence do not entail a composite entity, and therefore a being who is responsible for its composition. 10. One could object that the attributes of the Essence are accidents.

This work seems to expound themes in the *Maqāla fī l-tathlīth* (see above) in a more developed form and so was probably composed later. It specifically mentions the commentary on John’s Gospel and so presumably post-dates the *Commentary on the Gospels* (1018).

The tenor of this treatise, like that of the similar *Maqāla fī l-tathlīth*, suggests a Muslim milieu in its emphasis on God’s unity and the specific Christian understanding of the three essential divine attributes. Moreover, Ibn al-Ṭayyib contrasts the correct understanding of the men of the church with that of philosophers – where we are presumably to understand *Muslim* ‘philosophers’.

Graf considered *Al-kalām fī l-ittiḥād* to be a continuation of this work, but Samir (‘Bibliographie’, p. 207) argues that they should be considered as separate works.

### SIGNIFICANCE

This work sets the Christian understanding of the three divine attributes in opposition to the Islamic conception of the divine attributes

(though without mentioning Islam by name), and affirms the Christian doctrine of there being only three.

## MANUSCRIPTS

Only two manuscripts are known:

MS Vat – Ar. 145, fols 50v-67r

MS Oxford, Bodleian Library – Huntington 240, fols 99v-103v (16<sup>th</sup> century, Egypt)

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

G. Troupeau, 'Le traité sur la Trinité et l'Unité de 'Abd Allāh Ibn al-Ṭayyib', *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 25 (1972) 105-23 (repr. in Troupeau, *Études*, essay IX) (edition and trans.)

## STUDIES

Haddad, *La Trinité divine chez les théologiens arabes*, pp. 99-100, 102-03, 154-56, 163, 189, 195, 209-10, 221, 240

Samir, 'Bibliographie', *Islamochristiana* 2 (1976) p. 206

Beeston, 'An important Christian Arabic manuscript in Oxford', p. 201

Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 170-71, line 31 (no. 6)

### *Kitāb fī l-tawḥīd*, 'Treatise on the Unity [of God]'

DATE Unknown; before October 1043

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

This work may have served as an apology for the Christian doctrine of God.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Only one manuscript is known, now inaccessible. However, the existence of this title once again confirms Ibn al-Ṭayyib's strong interest in the doctrine of God and his desire to affirm the specifically Christian conception of God.

## MANUSCRIPTS

MS Aleppo, Jibrā'īl Asyūn Collection (inaccessible MS in private collection; see Sbath, *Fihris* i, p. 24, no. 150)

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS —

## STUDIES

Samir, 'Bibliographie', *Islamochristiana* 2 (1976) pp. 204-5

Graf, *GCAL* ii, p. 172, line 8 (although Samir, 'Bibliographie' suggests that Graf mistakenly identified this work with the *Maqāla fī l-tathlīth* [see above])

*Maqāla mukhtaṣara fī l-aqānīm wa-l-jawhar, wa-anna l-fi'l li-l-jawhar*, 'Brief treatise on the hypostases and substance, and the fact that action pertains to the substance'

DATE Unknown; before October 1043

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

This brief work (two printed pages) comprises an introduction and two parts. In the first part, Ibn al-Ṭayyib argues that action (*al-fi'l*) pertains to the divine substance (*al-jawhar*), not to the attributes (*ṣifāt*), so the substance is one. The second part argues that there is no hierarchy among the hypostases.

SIGNIFICANCE

This is another treatise in which Ibn al-Ṭayyib emphasizes the unity of the Trinitarian God.

MANUSCRIPTS

Only one manuscript is known:

MS Vat – Ar. 145, fols 70v-73v (original numbering, Graf and Troupeau) / 72v-75r (printed numbering, Samir)

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

Samir Khalil [Samir], 'Maqāla fī l-aqānīm wa-l-jawhar li-Abī l-Faraj 'Abdallāh ibn al-Ṭayyib', *Ṣadiq al-Kāhin* 14 (1974) 133-43

G. Troupeau, 'Le traité sur les hypostases et la substance de 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Ṭayyib', in J.M. Barral (ed.), *Orientalia hispanica, sive studia F.M. Pareja octogenario dicata. Vol. 1. Arabica-Islamica. Pars Prior xi*, Leiden, 1974, 640-44 (repr. in Troupeau, *Études, essay VIII*) (edition and trans.)

STUDIES

Haddad, *La Trinité divine chez les théologiens arabes*, pp. 240, 243-45

Samir, 'Bibliographie', *Islamochristiana* 2 (1976) pp. 206-7  
 Graf, *GICAL* ii, p. 172 (no. 7)

### *Maqāla fī l-tawba*, 'Treatise on repentance'

DATE Unknown; before October 1043

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

This was a work in 14 chapters, although only 13 have been preserved. Chapters three to seven are missing in the principal manuscript, which consists of nine folios. However, chapters three to six are preserved in chapter 54, §§ 2-55 of *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn* by al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl (ed. Wadi), so only chapter seven is still lost.

The contents of these chapters are as follows:

1. On the basis of reward and punishment for Christians.
2. On the reason why God grants the opportunity for repentance to humans throughout their lives.
3. On the definition of repentance and how it is oriented to the future, unlike the act of asking for forgiveness, and that repentance only applies to those with the capacity to do wrong.
4. On the conditions necessary for repentance.
5. On what distinguishes true from false repentance.
6. On the difference between asking for forgiveness and repentance.
7. [Lost].
8. On the sins people like to commit, and avoidance of them.
9. On whether a person forced to commit sins is nevertheless to be considered culpable.
10. On the situation of the non-believer, one who has renounced his faith and then returns to it, and one who compels people to renounce their faith.
11. On the repentance of a killer, and reparation for the victim.
12. On blood money paid, according to Christian custom, to the family of someone killed.
13. On the reason why the ancient Law required retaliation, with a killing for a killing.
14. On the reason why, despite the appearance of remorse from Judas Iscariot, his repentance was not accepted.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Samir notes that chapter 10 probably concerns Islam. It discusses the punishment for someone who returns to his faith, or who lures people to renounce their faith. It was apparently a common situation for Christians to convert quickly to Islam and then demand pardon from the Church when they returned (see Samir, 'Bibliographie', p. 208).

## MANUSCRIPTS

Only one manuscript is known for chapters 1-2 and 8-14:

MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 173, fols 147r-156r (14<sup>th</sup> century, Egypt)

For chapters 3-6, see *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn*, ch. 54. For a list of manuscripts of the *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn*, see Wadi, *Studio su al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl*, pp. 189-92, with a list of previous editions of the work at pp. 193-97.

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

Al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl, *Summa dei principi della religione*, ed. A. Wadi, trans. B. Pirone, 6 vols, Cairo, 1998-2002, ch. 54, §§ 2-55 (edition of al-Mu'taman's epitome of the text, with Italian trans.)

S. Khalil-Samir, 'Le repentir et la pénitence chez Abdallah Ibn al-Tayyib', in *Péché et réconciliation hier et aujourd'hui. Patrimoine Syriaque. Actes du colloque IV*, Antelias, 1997, 176-205 (edition of chapters 3-6)

J. Iṣḥāq, *Bayn al-Nahrayn* 7 (1979) 41-63 (ed. of the 13 preserved chapters; no account is taken of the lost seventh chapter in the numbering of the chapters)

Hannā Allāh Askārūs and Na'ūm Binyamīn, *Silk al-fuṣūl fī mukhtaṣar al-uṣūl*, Cairo, 1900, pp. 138-44 (for chapters 3-6 of the *Maqāla fī l-tawba*)

## STUDIES

Samir, 'Bibliographie', *Islamochristiana* 2 (1976) p. 208

Graf, *GCAL* ii, p. 173 (no. 11)

### *Maqāla fī l-qiyāma*, 'Treatise on resurrection'

DATE Unknown; before October 1043

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

This treatise is only known through an extract or epitome found in Chapter 63 of al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl's *Majmū' uṣūl al-dīn*. That extract outlines three main issues concerning resurrection: its necessity, its definition, and its delights. See Samir, 'Addenda', pp. 305-6, for a detailed analysis of the content of the extract, where he notes amongst other things that al-Mu'taman disagrees with Ibn al-Ṭayyib's thoughts on the delights of resurrection, considering them to be those of a philosopher rather than an orthodox Christian.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The nature of the delights of the afterlife is a regular topic of Christian-Muslim controversy, and Ibn al-Ṭayyib may have treated the issue at some length – even if little of his treatment has been preserved.

## MANUSCRIPTS

No manuscripts of the work as an independent entity are known. For the manuscripts of *Majmūʿ uṣūl al-dīn*, see A. Wadi, *Studio su al-Muʿtaman ibn al-ʿAssāl*, Cairo, 1997, pp. 189-92.

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

Al-Muʿtaman ibn al-ʿAssāl, *Summa dei principi della religione*, ed. A. Wadi, trans. B. Pirone, 6 vols, Cairo, 1998-2002, ch. 63, §§ 14-21 (edition of al-Muʿtaman's extract from the text, with Italian trans.)

## STUDIES

[S.] Khalil Samir, 'Addenda et corrigenda', *Islamochristiana* 5 (1979) pp. 305-6

**Julian Faultless**



# Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī

Abū l-Ḥusayn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ṭayyib ibn  
al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown; late 10<sup>th</sup> century  
PLACE OF BIRTH Basra  
DATE OF DEATH 28 October 1044  
PLACE OF DEATH Baghdad

## BIOGRAPHY

Born in Basra, Abū l-Ḥusayn is known to have studied medicine and philosophy in Baghdad with the Christians Abū l-Faraj ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Ṭayyib (d. 1043) and Abū ʿAlī ibn al-Samḥ (d. 1027). From the latter he took down Aristotle's *Physica* in 1004, which means he must have been studying with him earlier than this, pointing to a date of birth sometime before 980. He went on to study theology and legal thinking in Rayy with the Muʿtazilī ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 1025) (q.v.), though he later disagreed with his teacher's views and with the Bahshamī school to which ʿAbd al-Jabbār belonged. He returned to Baghdad sometime before 1025, where he practiced medicine and may have worked as a judge. He also devoted himself to publishing his own distinctive formulations of Muʿtazilī theology, which led to him being regarded as the founder of the last innovative movement within the school.

None of Abū l-Ḥusayn's works survives intact. In addition to legal and medical works, his main theological work was the unfinished *Kitāb taṣaffuḥ al-adilla* ('Examination of the proofs'), a compendium of *kalām* topics. He also wrote an exposition of Muʿtazilī teachings, *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamṣa* ('Explanation of the five principles'), and two refutations of Shīʿī teachings. In these works, particularly the *Taṣaffuḥ al-adilla*, while remaining true to Muʿtazilī principles in general, he questioned some of the bases on which they were constructed and some of the details they were agreed to entail. One of his main contentions was that the accidents (*aʿrāḍ*), which endowed contingent bodies with their characteristics, were not distinct from bodies but were attributes or modes particular to them. This was seen as a

rejection of the Mu‘tazilī proof for the existence of God, which was founded on the premise that accidents and bodies were distinct from one another and created by God in particular configurations at different moments of time; Abū l-Ḥusayn worked out his own alternative proof for the existence of God.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Primary

- Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta‘riḫ Baghdād*, iii, p. 100  
 Al-Ḥākim al-Jishumī, *Sharḥ al-‘uyūn*, in F. Sayyid (ed.), *Faḍā’il al-‘itizāl*, Tunis, 1974, p. 387  
 Al-Qiftī, *Ta‘riḫ al-ḥukamā’*, pp. 293-94  
 Ibn Abī Uṣaybī‘a, *‘Uyūn al-anbā’*, i, p. 240  
 Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, iv, pp. 271-72  
 Al-Ījī, *Al-mawāqif*, ed. T. Soerensen, Leipzig, 1848, pp. 106-12  
 Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭabaqāt al-Mu‘tazila*, pp. 118-19

### Secondary

- S. Schmidtke, ‘MS. Mahdawi 514. An anonymous commentary on Ibn Mat-tawayh’s *Kitāb al-tadhkirā*’, in W. Raven and A. Akasoy (eds), *Islamic thought in the Middle Ages. Studies in text, transmission and translation*, Leiden, 2008, 139-62, p. 142  
 W. Madelung and S. Schmidtke, ‘Yūsuf al-Baṣrī’s first refutation (*naqḍ*) of Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī’s theology’, in C. Adang, S. Schmidtke and D. Sklare (eds), *A common rationality. Mu‘tazilism in Islam and Judaism*, Würzburg, 2007, pp. 229-96  
 W. Madelung, art. ‘Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī’, in *EI3*  
 W. Madelung, ‘Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī’s proof for the existence of God’, in J. Montgomery (ed.), *Arabic theology, Arabic philosophy. From the many to the one*, Leuven, 2006, pp. 273-80  
 W. Madelung and S. Schmidtke, *Rational theology in interfaith communication. Abu l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī’s Mu‘tazilī theology among the Karaites in the Fāṭimid age*, Leiden, 2006  
 Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī, Taṣaffuḥ al-adilla. *The extant parts introduced and edited by Wilferd Madelung and Sabine Schmidtke*, Wiesbaden, 2006  
 M. McDermott, ‘Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī on God’s volition’, in F. Daftary and J. Meri (eds), *Culture and memory in medieval Islam. Essays in honour of Wilferd Madelung*, London, 2003, 86-93  
 M. Heemskerck, *Suffering in the Mu‘tazilite theology*, Leiden, 2000, pp. 57-59  
 Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Kitāb al-mu‘tamad fi uṣūl al-dīn, the extant parts edited by Martin McDermott and Wilferd Madelung*, London, 1991

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Kitāb ghurar al-adilla, Ghurar al-adilla, 'The finest of proofs'*

DATE Between 1025 and 1044

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The work is no longer extant, though some idea of its contents can be gained from other works. It was written in response to criticisms leveled at the *Taşaffuḥ al-adilla*, so it would have been written in Baghdad after this major work, and probably sometime towards the end of Abū l-Ḥusayn's life, in the 1030s or early 1040s.

Whether the *Ghurar al-adilla* was structured like the *Taşaffuḥ al-adilla* is impossible to say. Some of its contents can be identified from quotations and summaries in later authors, chiefly Maḥmūd ibn Muḥammad al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazmī (d. 1141), Maḥmūd ibn 'Alī ibn Ḥasan al-Ḥimmaṣī al-Rāzī (d. 1204), and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1209), who appears to have studied with al-Ḥimmaṣī for some time (on the use made of Abū l-Ḥusayn's works by these authors, see Schmidtke, 'Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī on the Torah', pp. 560-64). References to Abū l-Ḥusayn's work by these authors show that he had a lively interest in debates with Jews and probably Christians over their criticisms of claims about the supremacy of Islam and the prophetic status of Muḥammad, and that he drew upon at least one important earlier Muslim contribution to these debates.

According to the evidence in al-Ḥimmaṣī's *Al-munqidh min al-taqlīd*, written in 1185, about a century and half after the *Ghurar al-adilla* was published, in one part of the *Ghurar al-adilla* Abū l-Ḥusayn adduced a series of proof texts from the Hebrew Bible to show that the coming of Muḥammad and Islam were predicted there. All of these are taken from the *Kitāb al-dīn wa-l-dawla* of the 9<sup>th</sup> century convert from Christianity 'Alī ibn Rabban al-Ṭabarī (q.v.), whom al-Ḥimmaṣī, following Abū l-Ḥusayn, explicitly acknowledges. There are 16 texts in all, making only a fraction of the total in the *Dīn wa-l-dawla*, and in places Abū l-Ḥusayn also added his own arguments to 'Alī l-Ṭabarī's interpretations. So, assuming that Abū l-Ḥusayn made the selection himself (see Adang, 'Biblical testimonies', p. 299), he was evidently not following the earlier apologist uncritically.

It also appears that the *Ghurar al-adilla* contained arguments about the abrogation of the Torah by the Qur'an, based upon refutations of an array of Jewish positions on the claim and proofs from the Torah itself. As the later summaries of these show, Abū l-Ḥusayn possessed an unusual degree of knowledge about the differences between Jewish groups on the question of abrogation, and was able to support his contention that the Torah contained examples of internal abrogation with accurate quotations from the text (see Schmidtke, 'Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Başrī on the Torah,' pp. 565-72).

Clearly Abū l-Ḥusayn focused a part or parts of his *Ghurar al-adilla* on the Hebrew Bible and Jewish rejections of Islam. And he made use of the work of a Christian convert to Islam in order to support his arguments. But it is unclear whether the work also contained arguments that were explicitly directed at Christians. It seems unlikely that it refuted the Gospels or took verses from them to prove its point about Muḥammad, since in the 14<sup>th</sup> century al-Taftazānī (*Sharḥ al-maqāṣid fī 'ilm al-kalām*, 5 vols, ed. Ş.M. Sharaf, Beirut, 1989, v, p. 43) remembers the work expressly for its use of verses from the Torah. But it seems strange that if Abū l-Ḥusayn knew 'Alī l-Ṭabarī's *Dīn wa-dawla* he would not have used the parts concerned with interpretations of Gospel texts (particularly the Paraclete verses from the Gospel of John), or in a work that presented proofs for the supremacy of Islam have paid no attention at all to Christian arguments against the veracity of Muḥammad and Islam, or to key Christian doctrines. This question must remain open until any new evidence should surface. Given the freshness of the known arguments in the *Ghurar al-adilla*, and its author's extensive expertise in matters Jewish, it would be exciting to see what points he may have raised against Christianity.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

As a response to criticisms of an earlier work that predominantly comprised systematic theology, the work presumably consisted mainly of theological proofs of the correctness of Abū l-Ḥusayn's own elaborations of Mu'tazilī teachings. The incorporation into such a work of arguments based on the Bible to prove the authenticity of Islam is both unusual and innovative, and shows an integration of what had earlier tended to be two different streams of discourse within Mu'tazilī apologies and refutations. (Some idea of the structure of the work, or at least of the structure of the earlier *Taşaffuḥ al-adilla*,

can be gleaned from Ibn al-Malāḥimī's extant *Kitāb al-fā'iḳ fī uṣūl al-dīn*, which is an abridgement of this author's lost exposition of Abū l-Ḥusayn's theology. Here, sections on the Qur'an and prophethood, as well as other matters, are interspersed among sections on the five Mu'tazilī principles; see *Kitāb al-fā'iḳ fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. W. Madelung and M. McDermott, Tehran, 2007, p. ii). The appearance of arguments in favor of Islam and Muḥammad attests to the continuing need for apologetics of this kind, and of ongoing disagreements about fundamental matters of faith.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES

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**David Thomas**

# Grigor Magistros

Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni, Grigor Magistros Pahlavuni

DATE OF BIRTH Approximately 990

PLACE OF BIRTH Bjni, valley of the Hrazdan river, province  
of Nig, region of Ayrarat, Bagratid Kingdom of Armenia

DATE OF DEATH 1058/1059

PLACE OF DEATH Tarōn

## BIOGRAPHY

Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni was born c. 990 on the family estate of Bjni near Ani, the capital of the Bagratid Armenian kingdom, and died in Tarōn, west of Lake Van, c. 1058. He was an erudite layman and is primarily known for his unique corpus of 88 letters, which follow patterns of Byzantine epistolography and are written in a highly complex, Hellenizing Armenian, and for his *Magnalia Dei*, also known as *Ār Manučē* or *Hazartolean*, the first biblical epic written in Armenian.

The Pahlawuni family, which held large estates in various provinces such as Nig, Kotayk' and Gełark'unik', was presumably descended from the illustrious Kamsarakan house, and through them traced its lineage to Grigor the Illuminator, who had brought about the conversion of Armenia to Christianity as the state religion early in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. It also claimed a connection with the royal Arsacid house. Vasak Pahlawuni, Grigor's father, was lord of Bjni and *sparapet*, commander in chief, of the Armenian Bagratid kingdom until his death in battle in 1021. Holding important military and political functions in the kingdom, Grigor sided with the party led by his uncle, *sparapet* Vahram Pahlawuni, which supported young Gagik II's (r. 1042-45) successful candidacy for the throne, against the pro-Byzantine party led by Grigor's son-in-law, Vest Sargis Haykazn. Subsequently, Grigor fell out with Gagik, who was invited to Constantinople and forced to hand over his kingdom in exchange for lands in Cappadocia. Grigor also went to Constantinople, where he too ceded his possessions to Byzantium. The Emperor Constantine IX Monomachus gave him the title *Magistros* and made him *dux* of the province of Mesopotamia.

In 1048 he joined a military campaign against the Seljuks and then settled in Tarōn, where he fought the T'ondrakite sect and dedicated himself to writing. He may have spent his final days in a monastery.

Like other members of the Pahlawuni family, Grigor was a patron of church architecture, contributing to building activity at Hawuc' Tař and Keč'aris monasteries, and later at Surb Karapet in Mush. Grigor's son Vasak was duke of Antioch in Byzantine service, in which role he was killed in 1077. Vahram, Grigor's elder son became catholicos in 1065 under the name of Grigor II *Vkayasēr*, Martyrophilos, the first in a line of Pahlawuni catholicos whose terms in office span the period between the abolition of the Armenian Bagratid kingdom and the rise of the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia in 1199.

Grigor received his education in Ani. He was well versed in theology, philosophy, the natural sciences, mathematics and medicine, as well as in Greek literature and mythology. His interests included Arabic, Persian and Syriac literature, as well as the remnants of Armenian epics and mythology. He founded his own peripatetic school, which went with him when he moved to Tarōn. It was based on the seven liberal arts, using Anania Shirakac'i's *K'nnikon* (c. 665) as one of its sources. It comprised the *trivium* including grammar, logic and rhetoric, and the *quadrivium* of mathematics, consisting of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music. Mathematics was considered by Grigor as a means to advance from the physical to the metaphysical and formed, together with the study of the scriptures, an essential part of the curriculum.

Grigor's letters were written to a variety of addressees: King Gagik II, Catholicos Petros Getadarj, Archbishop Yovhannēs of Siwnik, a Syrian Catholicos, and various other clerical dignitaries and laypeople. Some of the letters are in verse, three of these to his pupils, and two to his son Vahram, the later Catholicos Grigor II *Vkayasēr*. Two of the letters are answers to questions by an Amir Ibrahim, a Muslim with an Armenian mother, on faith and on philosophy. The letters, at times highly alliterative, show the full range of Grigor's erudition and rhetorical prowess, with often convoluted similes, and employing a highly complicated style.

The *Magnalia Dei*, written in four days, is an epitome of the Bible in 1,000 verses, addressed to a Muslim, Abū Nařr al-Manāzī, who considered the Qur'an inimitable and of superior inspiration since it is versified. Magistros showed that the Bible can also be presented

in verse and thus be proved to possess the level of inspiration his interlocutor accorded to the Qur'an. His attempt at this, employing mono-rhyme in imitation of the Arabic *qāfiya*, gave rise to a new genre in Armenian literature.

Following several others, Grigor wrote a *Commentary* on the *Grammar* of Dyonisius Thrax, which was a central tool of linguistic instruction in Armenia. He is also credited with at least a partial translation of Euclid's *Geometry*, and with translations of Plato's *Timaeus* and *Phaedo*.

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#### WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Ař Ibrahim amirayin vasn hawatoc' Grigoroy ordoy Vasakay asac'eal, Patasxani Ibrahimi amirayi, zor xndreac' mi vasn imastasirut'ean ew mi vasn hawatoy*, 'Letters to Amir Ibrahim'

DATE Unknown; possibly 1045

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Armenian

#### DESCRIPTION

Among Grigor's correspondence are two letters (ed. Kostaneanc', nos 70 and 71) in answer to queries by an otherwise unknown Amir Ibrahim, who is Armenian on his mother's side, and born of a Muslim father. In the first letter, Grigor answers Ibrahim's questions on Christianity, and in the second he expounds on philosophy.

Letter 70 is excessively long according to the rules of rhetoric, but necessarily so, Grigor explains. He mentions the common ancestry of the Abrahamic religions, with two of which Ibrahim is connected by blood. He is pleased with Ibrahim's request and addresses the 12 problems Ibrahim perceives in Christianity from a Muslim standpoint, and

he promises Christian guidance on them. These are: 1. Manifestations of Jesus' divinity in his life on earth, and the part played by providence in the Incarnation. 2. If Jesus is God, how could he, in weakness, ask the Father to let the cup pass him by? 3. How could Jesus say that he who betrays him commits a great sin; that it is not for Jesus to decide who to place on the right or left of the Father, but for the Father who sent him; and that the Father is greater than he? 4. Concerning the passions of the body and the Father receiving Jesus' spirit. 5. On Mt Sinai, did Moses speak with God himself or with an angel? 6. Who were the angels who appeared before Abraham, warned Lot and destroyed Sodom? 7. Did Adam eat the fruit from the forbidden tree against God's will if God saw fit that he would do so? 8. How can good and evil both be from God, if one says that evil is from Satan and good from God? 9. Does God have an image or form, or not? 10. Do the pagan philosophers say that God is one or a Trinity? 11. If Jesus is God, why does Paul call him 'our intercessor'? 12. Did the 24 prophets describe things in the same way as Muḥammad?

Grigor subsumes the first four questions together under question nine, and denies that God has image or form. The answers Grigor provides are based on the biblical text and on theology. Answering the question on Adam's eating the fruit, he rejects many 'apocryphal' (*anvaverakan*) stories, of the Greeks, Ethiopians, Persians and others, adducing Plato's *Timaeus* on Adam's (humankind's) creation, and mentioning mythological Zoroastrian views. The discussion of the non-Christian philosophers' views on the one God and the Trinity sees Grigor engage in numerological and geometrical approaches, recalling Philo among others, and providing an opportunity for him to mention the partial illumination of the pagans – partial only, because one needs the eyes of the soul, illuminated by faith, the key to true understanding; God is beyond human perception. The proper understanding of the prophets is one of gradual revelation that was not given to the Jews and was fulfilled in Christ; Muḥammad's teaching concerning them cannot be accepted. Grigor rejects the charge that the disciples changed Christ's teaching, pointing to Christ's words about false teachers who would come and change his words. Both Jews and Christians were witnesses of Christ, Grigor argues, but the followers of Muḥammad were not; he likewise rejects the Islamic denial of Christ's crucifixion, because this was prophesied in the Old Testament, like God's Incarnation in Christ. He stresses the reality of hell and rejects the Islamic view of paradise with its portrayal of huris

and rivers of wine; one does not marry in heaven. He then invites Ibrahim to reject Muḥammad and to embrace Christ, referring to the grace of God that has been bestowed on Ibrahim.

Filling 30 pages in Kostaneanc's edition, this is the longest letter in the collection of 88. The second letter addressed to Ibrahim concerns philosophy and covers less than eight pages. Grigor's letters that address matters of faith, including Letter 70, are among Grigor's more readily understandable epistles, while those devoted to philosophical matters are far more complicated. Letter 71 is no exception, and Grigor's Hellenizing style is fully employed, together with complex imagery, to present a view of philosophy as comparable to a precious stone, or to a heady drink poured out as at a feast for the readers, who soon totter under its influence as if at sea, in need of a captain. Grigor is pleasantly surprised that Ibrahim wants to engage in philosophy, because next to faith, wisdom is of prime importance in life.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The first of the two letters in particular is an eloquent witness to 11<sup>th</sup>-century polemical epistolography, inviting a Muslim (though born of mixed parentage) to renounce Islam and embrace Christianity. Both the problems put forward and the way in which they are resolved provide insight into what were seen as essential matters of faith and the differences between Christianity and Islam, and how these could be fruitfully addressed.

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Among further manuscripts containing the two letters to Amir Ibrahim are: Matenadaran, Yerevan, M6009 (1685), M1797 (17<sup>th</sup> century); Armenian Patriarchate of St James, Jerusalem, J447 (1789), J940 (17<sup>th</sup> century), J1523 (1812), J1607 (1812), J3333 (containing only Letter

No. 70); Mekhitarist Brotherhood, Venice, V888 (16<sup>th</sup> century), V1335 (1762), V1336 (1778), V1337 (18<sup>th</sup> century).

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H. Dashean, *Mayr C'uc'ak Hayerēn je'agrac'*, vol. I B, Vienna, 1895, pp. 149-50, 154-55

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*Ar Manuč'ē*, 'To Manuche'; *Hazartōlean*

*Magnalia Dei*, 'The mighty acts of God'\*

DATE 1045

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Armenian

## DESCRIPTION

*Magnalia Dei* occupies between slightly fewer than 20 and just over 40 folios in the manuscripts listed by Terian. Its authenticity has never been doubted.

Conceived to demonstrate that the Bible is as inspired a work as the Qur'an, if not more so, the *Magnalia Dei* functioned as an apology for the Christian faith, and as an instrument to prevent Armenian Christians converting to Islam. If considered in this way, the entire work is of primary importance. For the particular circumstances of its composition, directly relevant to Christian-Muslim relations, pride of

place has to be given to the *Preface*, which in Terian's edition is three pages long (manuscript pp. 32-34).

The encounter in Constantinople between Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni and 'Abū Nasr al-Manāzī, a vizier and emissary of the Abbasid caliphate, a theologian and poet, who frequently visited Constantinople in quest of Greek scientific manuscripts (d. 1045)' (Terian, manuscript p. 15), centered on al-Manāzī's claim about the inimitability of the Qur'an, which he says was the result of Muḥammad's divine inspiration during the period of its poetic composition – in comparison the Bible is only a compilation of a number of works, and predominantly in prose.

In reply, Magistros promises he will prove the elevated inspiration of the Bible by giving a summary of its contents in poetic form within four days. In imitation of the Arabic *qāfiya*, Grigor chooses a fixed length of line, with seven syllables in the first hemistich, and eight in the second, divided by a caesura. He uses mono-rhyme in *-in*, in imitation of the *-n* ending of many qur'anic verses. Furthermore, in the opening part (ll. 1-45) Magistros lists a variety of characteristics of God (by negation), possibly rivaling the Islamic invocation of the 99 names of God. Grigor gives credit to the Holy Spirit for the successful completion of his task, and al-Manāzī acknowledges that the God of the Christians is great.

Biblical epics in verse were first created in late antiquity to provide counterparts to the genre in Latin and Greek literature. After the coming of Islam, the contrasting purpose shifted to Christian-Muslim controversies, and rhyme was introduced to balance this feature of Arabic poetry. While several aspects of the epic imitate qur'anic and Arabic poetic form, others betray classical (the opening invocation of the Muses, transposed to the Holy Spirit), as well as Semitic influence (syntactic and semantic parallelism, as seen in the Psalms), and that of Syriac monody with its strict regulation of syllable count. Finally, the Armenian hymnodic tradition contained many examples of narrative structures.

\* Information on this work is based on the study, currently in press, by Abraham Terian, *Magnalia Dei. Biblical History in Epic Verse by Grigor Magistros. (The First Literary Epic in Medieval Armenian) Critical Text with Introduction, Translation and Commentary*. I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Terian for allowing me to use his work.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The *Magnalia Dei* provided a model for biblical and elegiac epic poetry – often bewailing the fall of cities or regions to Islam – that was followed into the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Its main significance lies in this provision to Armenian literature of a poetic model that became the standard for the twofold genre of biblical epic and the longer lament for some six centuries, inspiring among others the two epics of Magistros' great-grandson, Nersēs Shnorhali (Catholicos 1166-73), *Yisus Ordi* ('Jesus the Son') and *Ołb Edesioy* ('Elegy on the fall of Edessa').

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A list of MSS is given in S. Mxit'aryan, *Grigor Magistrosi kyank'ë ev getarvestakan žaràngut'yunë*, Yerevan, 2001, pp. 41-44, 48-51.

See also A. Terian, *Magnalia Dei. Biblical history in epic verse by Grigor Magistros. (The first literary epic in medieval Armenian). Critical text with introduction, translation and commentary*, in press (manuscript pp. 23-28).

Terian's critical edition is based on the collation of six relevant manuscripts: Armenian Patriarchate of St James, Jerusalem, no. 3333 (J3333, 17<sup>th</sup> century), Matenadaran (Mesrop Maštoc' Institute of Ancient Manuscripts), Yerevan (M98, dated 1696-98), M2079 (c. 1622), M3172 (1695), M6045 (17<sup>th</sup> century), M6734 (1570). Others sampled from the Matenadaran include M1638, M3068, M4232, M6988, and M7257. Three others held in the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem include J940, J1345, and J3397. These two collections together contain about half of all Armenian manuscripts of the work known to exist today. From a fourteenth, defective manuscript, kept in the Mekhitarist Brotherhood Library in Venice, on which the 1868 edition is based, only the *Preface* was collated, in order to demonstrate the manuscript's inferiority. Terian rightly points out that the abbreviated title *A' Manuč'ë* (*For Manuč'ë*) stems from a copyist's error in this *Preface*, being a mistaken reading for Manazi, the name of the Arab scholar, al-Manāzī.

The *Magnalia Dei* is also found in several other MSS: V888 (16<sup>th</sup> century), from the Mekhitarist Brotherhood at San Lazzaro, Venice, which contains the *Preface* and correctly mentions Magistros' interlocutor as Manazi; V1250 (1620-24), which repeats the erroneous form Manuč'ë; V1258 (1688); and V1335 (1762).

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‘Ař Manuč’ē, in *Talasac’ut’iwnk’ Grigori Magistrosi Pahlawunwoy*, pp. 1-79

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Thomson, ‘Muhammad and the origin of Islam in Armenian literary tradition’, p. 841

M. Abelyan, ‘Grigor Magistros Pahlavuni’, *Erker* iv, 46-48

**Theo Maarten van Lint**



## ‘Afif ibn al-Makīn ibn Mu’ammal

DATE OF BIRTH	Unknown; maybe late 10 <sup>th</sup> to early 11 <sup>th</sup> century
PLACE OF BIRTH	Unknown
DATE OF DEATH	Unknown; maybe second half of 11 <sup>th</sup> century
PLACE OF DEATH	Unknown

### BIOGRAPHY

Nothing is known about the author of a ‘concise treatise inclusive of the Christian denominations’ in 15 chapters, apart from what can be gathered from the text itself. That he was remembered as a scholar and person of considerable standing in his community may be seen from the way the text identifies him: ‘*al-shaykh al-ra’īs al-fāḍil al-faylasūf wa-l-‘ālim... ‘Afif ibn al-shaykh al-Makīn ibn Mu’ammal*’. That he was a Melkite Christian is clear from the text. Nasrallah suggests that his concern with the ‘heresy’ of the Maronites indicates that he was from the patriarchate of Antioch (*HMLEM* iii.1, p. 252), but Samir does not believe that the possibility that he was from the patriarchate of Alexandria can be thus excluded (‘Afif’, in *Encyclopédie Maronite* i, p. 28).

There is considerable uncertainty as to when ‘Afif lived. In ch. 1, the author alludes to ‘the metropolitan of Nisibis’ (without further specification) who had written (inadequately, in ‘Afif’s opinion) about the divine attributes; Baṭārikh remarks that ‘Afif’s rather vague phrasing gives the impression of being an allusion to a contemporary (Baṭārikh, ‘Risāla lāhūtiyya’, p. 912). Now, this ‘metropolitan of Nisibis’ is probably the well known Elias (bar Shīnāyā) of Nisibis (975-1046, [q.v.]), upon whose work the author appears to draw later on in the text (in ch. 13, on the superiority of Christ to the prophets; cf. Elias’ *Kitāb al-majālis*, second session; see Samir, ‘‘Afif’, *Islamochristiana* 2 (1976), p. 236). If this chain of reasoning is correct, then ‘Afif probably lived in the 11<sup>th</sup> century; indeed, he may have composed his ‘Concise treatise’ between the composition of the *Kitāb al-majālis* in c. 1026 and Elias’ death in 1046. If, on the other hand, ‘Afif was simply vague in his reference to Elias, his possible dates range from the 11<sup>th</sup> century through 1591, the date of the oldest manuscript.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

*Primary*

See below for the bibliography for the author’s one surviving text.

*Secondary*

S.K. Samir, art. ‘Afif b. al-Makīn b. Mu’ammal’, in *Encyclopédie Maronite*, ed. L. Hage, Kaslik, 1992-

Nasrallah, *HMLEM* iii.1, pp. 251-53 (where rather than ‘ibn Mu’ammal’ we find ‘ibn al-Mu’ammal’)

[S.]K. Samir, ‘Afif b. al-Makīn b. Mu’ammal’, in ‘Bibliographie’, *Islamochristiana* 2 (1976) 201-42, pp. 236-37; ‘Addenda et corrigenda’, *Islamochristiana* 5 (1979) 310-11

Graf, *GCAL* ii, 78-79

Īliyās Baṭārikh, ‘Risāla lāhūtiyya ‘alā madhāhib al-Naṣārā li-l-shaykh ‘Afif ibn Mu’ammal’, *Al-Mashriq* 20 (1922) 911-29, pp. 911-12

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

Title unknown. ‘Afif refers to it as *Risāla mukhtaṣara mushtamila ‘alā madhāhib al-Naṣārā*, ‘A concise treatise inclusive of the Christian denominations; *Al-fuṣūl al-khamsata ‘ashara*, ‘The fifteen chapters’

DATE 11<sup>th</sup> century? (possibly between 1026 and 1046)

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The title of the work is uncertain, which has led to a number of variations as found in the secondary literature: [*Al-*]risāla [(*al-*)mukhtaṣara] ‘alā/fī madhāhib/madhhab al-Naṣārā. The work is indeed a fairly ‘concise treatise’, occupying 17 pages in the journal *Al-Mashriq* when it was first published. Furthermore, it is subdivided into an introduction and 15 chapters (*fuṣūl*).

The central chapters of the work are dedicated to a rather detailed presentation of Melkite Christology, followed by shorter presentations of the teachings of the ‘Nestorians’ and the ‘Jacobites’ (chs 3-5). These are followed by very brief statements about the Christological beliefs of the Maronites, Armenians, and a number of individuals: Arius,

Macedonius, ‘Ughāliyūs’ (a docetist, perhaps Julian of Halicarnassus or Gaianus?), Peter (probably ‘the Fuller’), and Paul (probably of Samosata) (chs 6-12).

This brief heresiography is bracketed by presentations of common Christian doctrine. Chs 1-2 give an explanation of God’s triunity: God is one *jawhar* (‘substance’), self-subsistent (*qā’im bi-nafsihi*), living (*ḥayy*), and speaking (*nāṭiq*) – corresponding to the Christian terminology ‘Father’, ‘Holy Spirit’, and ‘Son’. At the end of the work, chs 13-15 deal respectively with Christ’s divinity, crucifixion, and resurrection-ascension. The chapter on Christ’s divinity argues mostly from his miracles (the nature and range of which prove his superiority to the prophets), and mingles biblical and Qur’anic material: not only was Christ ‘Word of God’ and born of a Virgin, he spoke from the cradle (Q 19:27-34) and performed miracles by saying ‘Be!’ – and it was (*kun fa-yakūn*; cf. Q 3:47, 19:35). The chapters on Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection stress the validity of the evidence for them: reports of the crucifixion were transmitted in unbroken succession (*nuqila bi-tawātur* – technical terms from Islamic Hadith criticism), while the resurrection and ascension took place openly (*iyānan*) and require no rational proof.

At the very beginning of the treatise, the author states his conviction that the doctrine of the Trinity was supported by reason and scripture, *al-‘aql wa-l-naql*. True to this conviction, he provides lists of New Testament witnesses and Old Testament *testimonia* in chs 1 (on the Trinity), 13 (on Christ’s divinity), 14 (on the crucifixion), and 15 (on the resurrection and ascension).

#### SIGNIFICANCE

‘Afif’s ‘Concise treatise’ is interesting as a witness to the continuing use of a variety of apologetic ideas that had been developed earlier in Christian-Muslim controversy, including the use of biblical *testimonia* along with a few carefully selected allusions to the Qur’an (cf. the 8<sup>th</sup>-century Melkite work *Fī tathlīth Allāh al-wāḥid*, [q.v.]), or the explanation of the Trinity as God who is self-sufficient, living, and speaking (cf. the explanation of the Trinity in the 9<sup>th</sup>-century *Kitāb al-masā’il wa-l-ajwiba* of ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī, [q.v.]).

## MANUSCRIPTS

For the manuscripts of the work, see Nasrallah, *HMLEM* iii.1, pp. 252-53. The oldest known witness to the text is MS Vat Ar. 99 (1591)

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

S.K. Samir, art. “Afif b. al-Makīn b. Mu’ammal”, in *Encyclopédie Maronite*, ed. L. Hage, Kaslik, 1992- (French trans. of chapter 6, on the Maronites)

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## STUDIES

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[S.]K. Samir, “Afif b. al-Makīn b. Mu’ammal”, in ‘Bibliographie’, *Islamochristiana* 2 (1976) 236-37; 5 (1979) 310-11

Graf, *GCAL* ii, 78-79

*Risāla fī l-tathlīth wa-l-ittihād*, ‘Treatise on the Trinity [of God] and the Union [of divinity and humanity in Christ]’

DATE Possibly 11<sup>th</sup> century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The title of this currently inaccessible treatise suggests a work of apologetic theology defending the core Christian doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation.

## SIGNIFICANCE

This work may be added to a long list of works with similar titles, which together bear witness to the energy Christians invested in explaining fundamental Christian doctrines in the Arabic language and within the Islamic milieu.

## MANUSCRIPTS

MS Aleppo, Rizq Allāh Bāsīl Collection

MS Cairo, ‘Abd al-Masīḥ Ṣalīb Collection

(both are inaccessible MSS in private collections; see Sbath, *Fihris*

i, p. 54, no. 417)

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

**Mark N. Swanson**

# Rodulfus Glaber

Ralph Glaber, Raoul Glaber

DATE OF BIRTH About 980  
PLACE OF BIRTH Burgundy  
DATE OF DEATH About 1046  
PLACE OF DEATH Auxerre

## BIOGRAPHY

Little is known of the life of Rodulfus Glaber beyond what he reveals in his own writings. He was born into a family that may have been of the high nobility in Burgundy in about 980 and spent much of his life moving from one monastery to another. These movements may have been due to his willful and quarrelsome nature; Glaber notes that his 'character was more intractable and [his] behavior more intolerable than words can tell' and he frequently vexed his colleagues and oppressed his juniors (5:1.3). He was most likely professed a monk at St-Germain d'Auxerre in the 990s and remained there until about 1010, when his bad temperament led to his expulsion. While at St-Germain, he most likely visited other monasteries, including Moutiers St-Jean and St-Léger de Champceaux (he experienced the first of three visions of the devil here), and by 1024, but perhaps as early as 1016, moved on to St-Bénigne in Dijon, where he had his second vision of the devil and met the reformer St William of Volpiano. He visited Italy with William, and it was William who ordered Glaber to write his *Historiarum*. William was also the subject of a saint's life that Glaber wrote in the early 1030s.

After arguing with William, Glaber entered the monastery of Cluny and dedicated his history to Odilo, the abbot of that community. He remained at Cluny from about 1030 to 1034 or 1035 and then entered the monastery at Bèze. After a short stay at Bèze, Glaber returned to his original community of St-Germain d'Auxerre and, while at one of St-Germain's dependencies, he was visited by the devil a third time. Glaber completed his *Historiarum* at St-Germain and ended his days in the community in about 1046. Although criticized by modern scholars for its poor organization, inaccuracies, and focus on the

miraculous and superstitious, the *Historiarum* provides important details on the religious beliefs and mentality of the early 11<sup>th</sup> century.

### MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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### WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

#### *Historiarum libri quinque, Quinque libri historiarum*, 'History in five books'

DATE Before 1030 to about 1046

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Latin

#### DESCRIPTION

Glaber's *Historiarum* is a work that was written over a period of many years and, as a result, it reflects the different approaches of its author. Most of the work, originally configured as a history in three books, was written before about 1030. Parts of Book Three and all of Four were written from 1036 to 1041, and Book Five was written during the last year of Glaber's life. Initiated by the command of his patron, William of Volpiano, and dedicated to Odilo, abbot of Cluny, the

*Historiarum* began as a chronicle of events around the time of the millennium but was broadened to include events from the late 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries up to about 1040. Its main characters are the secular and religious leaders of France and, to a lesser extent, other parts of Europe. Although the scope of the work was broadened, its structure was shaped by the millennium of the Incarnation and Passion of Christ, and the *Historiarum* reflects the eschatological concerns of the time.

Although focusing primarily on events in France, Glaber was not unaware of Christian contacts with the Muslim world. Indeed, his contacts with Spanish Cluniacs may well have inspired interest in Islam, and in his history he makes repeated reference to the rival religion. Book One of the *Historiarum* contains a number of important references to Islam, including several mentions of conflict between Christians and Muslims. Glaber describes raids by Saracens from Africa during the reign of the Emperor Otto I; these Saracens seized strongholds in the Alps and laid waste the surrounding regions (1:4.8). Later in Book One, Glaber addresses the attacks of pagans such as the Normans and Saracens. He notes that in the year 900, Algalif, king of the Saracens (it is not entirely clear who is meant by this name), left Spain to attack Italy and then returned to Africa (as John France notes in his edition of the *Historiarum*, Glaber seems to use Spain and Africa interchangeably, perhaps as designations for where Muslims reside), but continued to make raids against Italy until the time of Muḥammad ibn Abī 'Āmir al-Manṣūr (1:5.18).

Book One also contains a narration of one of the most famous early contacts between Latin Christians and Muslims, the capture of Maiolus, abbot of Cluny, by Saracen pirates of La Garde-Freinet (1:4.9). The abbot was ransomed by the Saracens, and in a letter requesting payment of the ransom he described them as the 'sons of Belial'. Other descriptions in the passage, however, provide a less critical view of Muslims. While praising Maiolus for his piety, Glaber notes that one of the Saracens recognized the abbot's sanctity and baked bread for him. Another Saracen accidentally stepped on the abbot's Bible and was sternly reprimanded by other Saracens. The Saracens, Glaber observed, hold the Hebrew prophets in respect and believe that what the prophets foretold was fulfilled in the person of Muḥammad.

Glaber makes further reference to Muslims in other parts of his work. In Book Two he discusses the struggles between Christians and the Muslim leader al-Manṣūr. Coming from Africa, al-Manṣūr seized



nearly all of Spain to southern France and killed many Christians, before a Christian army that included many monks defeated him and forced his retreat to Africa (2:9.18). Following his discussion of the mass pilgrimages to Jerusalem in the year 1033, which, he explains, some saw as a sign of the advent of the Antichrist, Glaber describes renewed attacks by Saracens from Africa (4:7.22). The fighting was particularly savage, and the Saracens flayed many captives alive. The Muslims were led by Mujaih al-Amiri of Denia and were defeated by Christian armies, which again included monks. The Christians won because of their devotion to God and their vow to devote the spoils to St Peter the Apostle at Cluny.

Glaber's final two references to Muslims involve events that occurred in the Holy Land. In the year 1033, the ceremony of the New Fire on Holy Saturday was mocked and disrupted by a Saracen, but he was seized by a demon and died in agony (4:6.19). The Saracens were terrified, according to Glaber, and the Christians rejoiced as the miracle of the New Fire continued as it did every year at that time. Glaber also reports on the destruction of the Holy Sepulcher by the Fatimid caliph of Egypt al-Ḥākīm in the year 1009 (3:7.24-25). In a passage that is intensely apocalyptic, Glaber describes the destruction of the Holy Sepulcher and other important churches and shrines by al-Ḥākīm, whom he calls the 'prince of Babylon'. Al-Ḥākīm's attacks were inspired by a letter sent by the Jews of Orleans warning the emir that the Christians would soon occupy his realm. In response to al-Ḥākīm's persecution and the discovery of the conspiracy, Christians throughout the world massacred Jews. The Holy Sepulcher was rebuilt soon after by al-Ḥākīm's mother Maria, who, according to Glaber, was a Christian.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Although Glaber's *Historiarum* was not widely copied and thus not widely read in the Middle Ages, it does provide important information about attitudes toward Muslims and Islam at the turn of the millennium. Glaber reveals an interest in the rival faith that would grow in the generations to come, and he sought to develop some understanding of Islam. His work reveals the awareness among some Latin Christians that Muslims honored the Bible and its prophets and that they claimed their own prophet in Muḥammad. Glaber also reflects the continuing struggle between Christian and Muslim forces in

Spain, Italy and southern France, and praises Christian warriors for fighting Muslims. Despite revealing some understanding of Muslims and Islam, Glaber also casts them in a negative light, especially in the events involving Al-Hakim. He identifies a conspiracy against Christendom involving Muslims and Jews and maintains that Muslims are the enemies of the faith.

MANUSCRIPTS

- MS Paris, BNF – Lat. 10912, fols 1-55 (11<sup>th</sup> century; part written by a scribe under Glaber's supervision and part written by Glaber himself)
- MS Paris, BNF – Lat. 6190, fols 1v-52 (12<sup>th</sup> century; last two folios in a 16<sup>th</sup>-century hand)
- MS Vat – Reginensis lat. 618, fols 1-93 (15<sup>th</sup> century)
- MS Paris, BNF – Lat. 13834, fols 1-29 (late 16<sup>th</sup> century, a much abbreviated version that omits details on saints and miracles as well as the chapter on divine quaternities)

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**Michael Frassetto**

# Elias of Nisibis

Iliyyā ibn Shīnā, Bar Shīnāyā

DATE OF BIRTH 11 February 975  
PLACE OF BIRTH Al-Sinn, Shennā (Syriac)  
DATE OF DEATH 18 July 1046  
PLACE OF DEATH Mayyāfāriqīn

## BIOGRAPHY

The Nestorian Elias of Nisibis is undoubtedly the most significant eastern Christian writer of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. His reputation spread throughout the Islamic world for his expertise in medicine, mathematics, philosophy and philology, for his deep knowledge of Christian and Muslim theology, and for his participation in a series of sessions (*majālis*) with the Muslim vizier Abū l-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī al-Maghribī (d. 1027) about Christian teachings and other topics.

Elias was ordained priest in 994, in February 1002 he was consecrated bishop of Bayt Nūhadrā by the Patriarch John V Ibn ‘Īsā, and on 26 December 1008 he was made metropolitan of Nisibis. One of the key points in his life was 15-29 July 1026, when he took part in the ‘Seven Sessions’ with the vizier Abū l-Qāsim al-Maghribī.

Elias was a prolific author. An impression of the range of his writings can be obtained from Samir, *Foi et culture* and ‘Bibliographie’.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### *Primary*

*Maris Amri et Slibae. De patriarchis Nestorianorum commentaria, pars altera, Amri et Slibae textus*, ed. H. Gismondi, Rome, 1896 (Arabic text of Ṣalībā ibn Yūḥannā, *Asfār al-asrār*), p. 99

*Maris Amri et Slibae. De patriarchis Nestorianorum commentaria, pars altera, Amri et Slibae versio latina*, trans. H. Gismondi, Rome, 1897 (Latin trans. of Ṣalībā ibn Yūḥannā, *Asfār al-asrār*), p. 57

*Eliae Metropolitae Nisibeni opus chronologicum*, ed. and (Latin) trans. E. Brooks and J.B. Chabot, 2 vols (CSCO 62), Louvain, 1909-10 (Iliyyā ibn Shīnā, *Kitāb al-azmina*), ii, pp. 228-29

L.J. Delaporte, *La chronographie d’Élie bar-Šinaya, Métropolitain de Nisibe*, Paris, 1910 (French trans. of *Kitāb al-azmina*)

*Secondary*

- S.K. Samir, *Foi et culture en Irak au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Elie de Nisibe et l'Islam*, Aldershot UK, 1996
- S.H. Griffith, 'The Muslim philosopher al-Kindī and his Christian readers', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 78 (1996) 111-27
- S.K. Samir, 'Date de la mort d'Elie de Nisibe', *OC* 72 (1988) 124-32 (repr. in Samir, *Foi et culture*, no. II)
- S.K. Samir, 'Bibliographie', *Islamochristiana* 3 (1977) 257-86 (repr. in S.K. Samir, *Foi et culture en Irak au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Elie de Nisibe et l'islam*, Aldershot UK, 1996, no. I)
- Y. Ḥabbī, *Ta'riḫ Ḥliyyā bar Ṣīnāyā*, Baghdad, 1975, pp. 4-8, 207
- S. Khalīl, 'Ḥayāt Ḥliyyā al-Naṣībīnī (975-1046 AD.)', *Risālat al-Kanīsa* 6 (1974) 11-14, p. 17
- S. Khalīl, 'Ḥliyyā al-Naṣībīnī (975-1046 AD) wa-l-wazīr Abū l-Qāsim', *Risālat al-Kanīsa* 6 (1974) 51-54, p. 57
- E.-K. Delly, art. 'Élie Bar Sénaya', in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, Paris, 1937-75
- E.-K. Delly, *La théologie d'Élie bar-Sénaya. Étude et traduction de ses entretiens*, Rome, 1957, pp. 14-15
- Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 177-89, 478
- A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, Bonn, 1922 (repr. Berlin, 1968), pp. 287-88
- A. van Roey, art. 'Élie de Nisibe', in *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, Paris, 1912-
- F. Nau, art. 'Élie Bar-Ṣīnaya', in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, iv/2, Paris, 1911, 2330-2331
- Assemani, *BO* ii, p. 447A

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Maktbānutā d-zabnē, Kitāb al-azmina,*  
'Chronography'

DATE 1019

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

Elias' *Chronography* consists of the chronicle itself followed by chronological tables and a treatise on computation. It is bilingual, the right-hand or first column in Syriac, the left-hand in Arabic. Both columns give brief descriptions of historical events in chronological order.

Elias is one of the few Christian historiographers to mention his sources. Among the Christian authors he used appear Jacob of Edessa (q.v.) and Dionysius of Tell-Maḥrē (q.v.), as well as unidentified

figures from the West and East Syrian patriarchal lists and several others. His Muslim sources include the mathematician Muḥammad ibn Mūsā al-Khwarizmī, the historian Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭabarī (q.v.), Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-Ṣūlī and Thābit ibn Sinān. In addition, he refers to several anonymous sources (lists of kings, chronological tables), the original languages of which (Syriac or Arabic) are not clear.

The relationship between the Syriac and Arabic versions of the work has still to be studied in greater detail, especially for the quotations from the various Arabic sources. The fact that the Syriac column comes first and is written in a single hand (possibly written by the author himself), whereas the Arabic text was written by different scribes, suggests that it is the primary text.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Elias' work is the first Syriac chronicle to make systematic use of an important number of Arabic-Muslim works, and to mention the names of their authors. In addition, it makes reference to some lost Syriac or possibly Arabic sources. Since Elias' descriptions are very brief, the chronicle gives no new or original information, but it is important for the study of the reception of Muslim historiographical material among Christian intellectuals.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS London, BL – Add. 7197 (lacks title page and with lacunae for the years 785-878 – 4 missing folios; and 971-994 – 1 missing folio)

MS Berlin, Königliche Bibliothek – 102 (contains a brief excerpt)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

L.-J. Delaporte, *La chronographie d'Elie Bar-Šinaya, métrop. de Nisibe*, Paris, 1910 (complete French trans.)

*Eliae Metropolitani Nisibeni. Opus chronologicum*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. (Latin) E.W. Brooks; vol. 2, ed. and trans. (Latin) I.-B. Chabot (CSCO 62-63), Rome, 1909-10 (the edition does not give the complete Arabic text; vol. 1, trans., pp. vi-vii, lists the previous partial editions and translations)

#### STUDIES

A. Borrut, 'La circulation de l'information historique entre les sources arabo-musulmanes et syriaques. Elie de Nisibe et ses sources', in M. Debié, *L'historiographie syriaque*, Paris, 2009, 137-59



- W. Witakowski, 'Elias Barshnenaya's Chronicle', in W. van Bekkum, J. Drijvers and A. Klugkist (eds), *Syriac polemics. Studies in honour of Gerrit Jan Reinink*, Leuven, 2007, 219-37
- K. Pinngéra, 'Nestorianische Weltchronistik. Johannes bar Penkaye und Elias von Nisibis', in M. Wallraf (ed.), *Julius Africanus und die christliche Weltchronistik*, Berlin, 2006, 263-83
- D. Weltecke, *Die 'Beschreibung der Zeiten' von Mōr Michael dem Grossen (1126-1199). Eine Studie zu ihrem historischen und historiographiegeschichtlichen Kontext*, Louvain, 2003, pp. 190-94
- R. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it*, Princeton NJ, 1997, pp. 421-22
- Samir, 'Bibliographie', pp. 283-84
- E. Sachau, *Die Handschriftenverzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek 23. Verzeichnis der syrischen Handschriften*, vol. 1, Berlin, 1899, pp. 359-60

### *Kitāb al-majālis*, 'The sessions'

DATE Possibly 1026

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

#### DESCRIPTION

This work contains accounts of the seven debates that took place in seven sessions (*majālis*) between Elias and Abū l-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī l-Maghribī, the vizier of the Marwānid ruler Naṣr al-Dawla ibn Aḥmad in Mayyāfāriqīn. Since the latter died in 1027, the meetings must have taken place before this. The topics covered are as follows:

1st session: God's Unity (*tawḥīd*), and Trinity, including the divine substance and hypostases (introduction and five chapters).

2nd session: the Incarnation (five chapters).

3rd session: Christian monotheism according to the Qur'an (introduction and four chapters).

4th session: Proof of Christianity through reason and miracles (introduction and two chapters).

5th session: Elias' profession of monotheistic belief.

6th session: Language, calligraphy (*al-khaṭṭ al-'arabī*) and theology (*'ilm al-kalām*) (introduction and four chapters).

7th session: Miscellaneous topics, including Christian attitudes towards astrology, Muslims and the soul (*nafs*), and the circumstances in which the seven sessions took place.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The 'Seven sessions' represent a vivid example of the topics that were debated between Christians and Muslims in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. It shows how issues that were identified in the first centuries of Islam continued to be discussed as key matters of difference between the two sides.

## MANUSCRIPTS

- MS Vat – Ar. 143, fols 1v-126v (12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century)  
 MS Aleppo, Sbath – 1130 items 3, 4 and 6 (1231) (presently lost, see below Río Sánchez, *Catalogue*, p. 335)  
 MS Vat – Ar. 645, fols 9v-58v (1242)  
 MS Vat – Ar. 180, fols 70r-130v (13<sup>th</sup> century)  
 MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 206, fols 92r-164v (1371-72)  
 MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 82, fols 138r-159r (14<sup>th</sup> century)  
 MS Vat – Ar. 144, fols 1r-24v (14<sup>th</sup> century)  
 MS Vat – Ar. 155, fols 110r-151v (14<sup>th</sup> century)  
 MS Vat – Ar. 225, fols 7r-78v (1554, *karshūnī*)  
 MS Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Syr. 115 (16<sup>th</sup> century, *karshūnī*)  
 MS Vat – Barberini Or., fols 103r-193r (possibly 17<sup>th</sup> century)  
 MS Vat – Ar. 100, fols 11v-53r (1712; copy of Vat Ar. 645)  
 MS Vat – Borgia Ar. 21 (1714; copy of Vat Ar. 645)  
 MS Aleppo, Fondation Georges et Mathilde Salem – Ar. 318 (Sbath 1131), fols 4r-30v (1737)  
 MS Beirut, Bibliothèque Orientale – 676, pp. 1-71 (18<sup>th</sup> century)  
 MS Poitiers, Bibliothèque de la ville – 2,242 (possibly 18<sup>th</sup> century)  
 MS Beirut, Bibliothèque Orientale – 564 (1826)  
 MS Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Ar. 10188 (c. 1850)  
 MS Aleppo, Fondation Georges et Mathilde Salem – Ar. 274 (Sbath 1080), fols 44v-88r  
 MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 5141, fols 86v-108v (1887)  
 MS Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Syr. 114 (19<sup>th</sup> century, *karshūnī*; copy of Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Syr. 115)  
 MS London, BL – Or. 4431 (*karshūnī*)  
 MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana – Or. 299 (formerly 63), fols 149v-150r

MS Aleppo, Fondation Georges et Mathilde Salem – Ar. 318 (Sbath 1131), fols 4v-30r

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

- S. Khalil, 'Entretien d'Élie de Nisibe avec le vizir al-Maghribī sur l'Unité et la Trinité', *Islamochristiana* 5 (1979) 31-117 (pub. as *Entretien d'Élie de Nisibe avec le vizir al-Maghribī sur l'Unité et la Trinité*, Rome, 1979)
- F. Furayjāt, 'Mawqif al-Masīhiyyīn min al-Muslimīn', *Al-Wahda* 14 (1975) 22-26
- S. Khalil, *Iliyyā al-Naṣībī. Kitāb al-majālis. Al-majlis al-sādis, fī l-naḥw wa-l-luḡa wa-l-khaṭṭ wa-l-kalām*, Cairo, 1975
- S. Khalil, 'Abū l-Qāsim al-wazīr yaṭlubu du'ā' min ajlihi wa-Īliyyā al-muṭrān yaruddu 'alayhi', *Risālat al-Kanīsa* 6 (1974) 91-95
- Delly, *La théologie d'Élie bar-Šénaya*, pp. 65-78 (French trans. of 1<sup>st</sup> session), 79-88 (French trans. of 2<sup>nd</sup> session)
- L. Cheikho, *Trois traités anciens de polémique et de théologie chrétiennes*, Beirut, 1923, pp. 26-73
- L. Cheikho, 'Majālis Īliyyā muṭrān Naṣībīn', *Al-Mashriq* 20 (1922) 35-44 (1<sup>st</sup> session); 112-17 (2<sup>nd</sup> session, chs 1-2); 117-22 (3<sup>rd</sup> session); 267-70 (4<sup>th</sup> session); 270-72 (5<sup>th</sup> session); 366-77 (6<sup>th</sup> session); 425-34 (7<sup>th</sup> session)

STUDIES

- F. del Río Sánchez, *Catalogue des manuscrits de la fondation Georges et Mathilde Salem (Alep, Syrie)*, Wiesbaden, 2008, pp. 153, 178, 335
- S. Khalil, 'Un traité nouveau d'Élie de Nisibe sur le sens des mots *kiyān* et *ilāh*', *Pd'O* 14 (1987) 109-53
- Samir, 'Bibliographie', 259-67, pp. 259-61 (thorough description of the content of each session)
- S. Khalil, 'La réfutation de l'astrologie par Élie de Nisibe', *OCP* 43 (1977) 408-40
- S. Khalil, 'Deux cultures qui s'affrontent. Une controverse sur l'*i'rāb* au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle entre Élie de Nisibe et le vizir Abū l-Qāsim', *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 48-49 (1975-76) 619-49
- S. Khalil, 'L'exposé sur la Trinité du *Kitāb al-Kamāl*. Édition critique', *Pd'O* 6-7 (1974-75) 257-80
- Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 178-80

*Risāla ilā l-wazīr al-kāmil Abī l-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Ālī*, ‘Letter to the vizier, the most excellent Abū l-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Ālī’

DATE 1027

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

Only three letters of the more extensive correspondence between Elias and Abū l-Qāsim ‘Alī l-Maghribī have survived: one addressed to Elias by the vizier; a long reply from Elias containing a summary of the ‘Sessions’ that had taken place the previous year (1026); and finally the vizier’s answer in which he applauds the fine style of Elias’ reply.

SIGNIFICANCE

The texts of these three letters, together with the ‘Sessions’, represent the main source for documenting the apparently cordial personal relations between these two debating partners.

MANUSCRIPTS

MS Aleppo, Sbath – 1130 (1231; lost, see Río Sánchez, *Catalogue*, 335)

MS Aleppo, Fondation Georges et Mathilde Salem – Ar. 318 (Sbath 1131), fols 31a-71r (1737)

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS—

STUDIES

Río Sánchez, *Catalogue*, pp. 178, 335

S. Khalil, ‘Le “Daf‘ al-hamm” d’Élie de Nisibe. Date et circonstances de sa rédaction’, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 18 (1987) 104-8

Samir, ‘Bibliographie’, p. 268

Graf, *GICAL* ii, pp. 180-82

P. Sbath, *Bibliothèque de manuscrits Paul Sbath*, 3 vols, Cairo, 1934, iii, pp. 10-19

*Risāla fī waḥdāniyyat al-Khāliq wa-tathlīth aqānīmihi*, ‘Epistle on the oneness of the Creator and threeness of his hypostases’

DATE Between 13 September and 12 October 1029

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

This work, which Elias composed in Mosul in response to a request from a judge, has an introduction and two chapters.

In the introduction Elias establishes God's oneness as substance (*kiyān wāhid*) and threeness as hypostases (*thalāthat aqānīm*). In the first chapter he goes on to justify the three hypostases by arguing that God subsists in himself (*qā'im bi-nafsihi*), and is wise (*ḥakīm*) and living (*ḥayy*), while in the second chapter he explains the meaning of God as substance, in response to objections from Muslims.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Elias meets Muslim objections head on by arguing that God is one, while maintaining his Trinitarian reality.

## MANUSCRIPTS

MS Oxford, Bodleian Library – Huntington 240, fols 196r-199v (1549-50)

MS Aleppo, Fondation Georges et Mathilde Salem – Ar. 222 (Sbath 1024), fols 108r-126r (1796)

MS Aleppo, collection of Yūḥannā Balīṭ (inaccessible MS in private collection; see Sbath, *Fihris* i, p. 34, n. 241)

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

Delly, *La théologie d'Élie bar-Šénaya*, pp. 88-93

Cheikho, *Seize traités théologiques d'auteurs arabes chrétiens*, Beirut, 1906, pp. 104-9 (repr. of Ma'lūf's edition)

L. Ma'lūf, 'Risāla fī waḥdāniyyat al-Khāliq wa-tathlīth aqānīmihi', *Al-Mashriq* 6 (1903) 111-16

G. Gabrieli, 'Una nuova "risāla" o "epistola" sulla Unità e Trinità di Dio', *Bessarione* 7 (1903) 272-75

## STUDIES

Samir, 'Bibliographie', pp. 268-70

Graf, *GCAL* ii, p. 182

### *Risāla fī l-Khāliq*, 'Treatise on the Creator'

DATE Before 1046

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

This tract focuses on God as a substance (*jawhar*) who subsists in himself (*qā'im bi-nafsihi*). In response to the Muslim accusation that Christians are 'associators' (*mushrikūn*), Elias explains that the meaning of the statement that God is three hypostases (*thalāthat aqānīm*) is that He is subsistent in himself, living by Life and articulating by a Word (*nāṭiq bi-nuṭq*).

The three hypostases are not simply divine accidents, but three actualities, Essence, Life and Word.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Elias shows considerable confidence in asserting that God is one, while at the same time he defends the reality of the three hypostases as real entities in the Godhead, thus maintaining the reality of Christian doctrine while addressing Muslim accusations directly.

## MANUSCRIPTS

Mosul, Library of the Dominican Fathers

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

P. Hiyāsint, 'Risāla fī l-Khāliq li-Īliyyā muṭrān Naṣībīn', *Al-Najm* 7 (1935) 333-40

## STUDIES

Graf, *GICAL* ii, 182

Samir, 'Bibliographie', pp. 270-71

*Risāla fī ḥudūth al-‘ālam wa-waḥdāniyyat al-Khāliq wa-tathlīth al-aqānīm*, 'Epistle on the temporality of the world, and the oneness of the Creator and threeness of the hypostases'

DATE Before 1046

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

The epistle is divided into three parts: on the existence of God (this is the longest), God's oneness, and God's Trinitarian nature.

God's existence is explained on the basis of indications of his activities in the natural order, and signs of his wisdom evident in various human circumstances.

God's oneness is explained by analogy with the human intellect (*al-'aql*), by his power in the world, and by reference to Him as the efficient cause of all that occurs.

The Trinitarian nature of God is explained through the formula that God is a unique existence and three hypostases (*kiyān wāḥid thalāthat aqānīm*), and confirmed by reference to the fact that all Christians agree on it.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The work brings together a number of arguments that are found in earlier and later apologetical works.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

MS Aleppo, Maronite Bishopric – 258, fols 64r-86r (1630)

MS Aleppo, Fondation Georges et Mathilde Salem – Ar. 222 (Sbath 1024), fols 108v-126v (1796)

MS Aleppo, collection of the heirs of Thomas Ayyūb (inaccessible MS in private collection; see Sbath, *Fihris* i, p. 34, n. 240)

MS Cairo, collection of Armāniyūs Ḥabashī, (see Sbath, *Fihris* iii, 79; according to Samir, 'Bibliographie', this MS is now maybe in Dayr al-Suryān)

MS Cairo, collection of Yūḥannā Ūstah (see Sbath, *Fihris* iii, 80; according to Samir, 'Bibliographie', this MS is now maybe in the parish of St Fatima of the Chaldeens, in Heliopolis)

MS London, BL – Or. 2317, fols 39v-83r (1706)

MS Vat – Syr. 204, fols 1v-24v (1590; *karshūnī*)

MS Aleppo, Sbath – 1536, pp. 1-20/21 (1271-72; lost – see Samir, 'Bibliographie', p. 271)

#### EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

P. Sbath, *Vingt traités philosophiques et apologétiques d'auteurs arabes chrétiens du IX<sup>e</sup> au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Cairo, 1929, pp. 75-103

#### STUDIES

G. Margoliouth, *Descriptive list of Syriac and Karshuni Mss. in the British Museum acquired since 1873*, London, 1899 (repr. Piscataway NJ, 2002), pp. 9-10

G. Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 182-83

Samir, 'Bibliographie', pp. 271-72

*Maqāla fī ma'nā kalimatān kiyān wa-ilāh,*  
 'Treatise on the meaning of the two terms *kiyān*  
 and *ilāh*'

DATE Before 1046

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

This tract focuses on two theological and linguistic items. The first is the triune and single nature of God in relation to the term *kiyān*, 'being' or 'existence', with an appendix on the meaning of the term *jawhar*. The second is the meaning of the term *ilāh*, which Elias argues has only one significance in Muslim usage, but for Jews and Christians has multiple significances, since the terms *ilāh* and *Allāh* are used for beings other than God, e.g. Moses in Exodus 4:6.

SIGNIFICANCE

The comparative linguistic method used by Elias to determine the meaning of the terms *kiyān* and *ilāh* marks a new departure in comparison between Muslim and Christian references to God. This enables him to establish a solid theological basis for the doctrine of the Trinity, as well as for the attribution of the term 'God' to Christ.

MANUSCRIPTS

MS Aleppo, Maronite Bishopric – 258, fols 86v-90r (possibly 17<sup>th</sup> century)

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

S. Khalil, 'Un traité nouveau d'Élie de Nisibe sur le sens des mots *kiyān* et *ilāh*', *Pd'O* 14 (1987) 109-53

STUDIES

Samir, 'Bibliographie', pp. 272-74

*Kitāb al-burhān 'alā ṣaḥīḥ al-īmān,* 'The  
 demonstration of the correctness of the faith'

DATE Before 1046

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic



## DESCRIPTION

This theological treaty is divided into four parts, subdivided into ten chapters. Part 1 is addressed to non-Christians, of which the first chapter addresses Muslims (fols 131r-134r), and the second chapter addresses mainly Jews, but is also concerned with Muslims.

## SIGNIFICANCE

In ch. 1 of part 1 Elias demonstrates that Christians believe in one God by citing New Testament passages, and also by showing that the three persons can be understood as, respectively, the essence of God and the attributes of wisdom and life (*dhāt, hikma, ḥayāt*). In this, he refers to what by his time had become a recognized method of explaining the Trinity in terms of Muslim teachings about the attributes of God.

## MANUSCRIPTS

MS Vat – Ar. 180, fols 131r-220r (13<sup>th</sup> century; missing the first folio)

MS Aleppo, Jirjī Sharr Collection (inaccessible MS in private collection; see Sbath, *Fihris* i, p. 34, no. 235)

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

L. Horst, *Des Metropolitens Elias von Nisibis Buch vom Beweis der Wahrheit des Glaubens*, Colmar, 1886 (German trans.)

The Arabic text remains unedited.

## STUDIES

Samir, 'Bibliographie', pp. 274-75

Graf, *GCAL* ii, 183-84

*Maqāla fī na'īm al-ākħira*, 'Treatise on the bliss of the afterlife'

DATE Before 1046

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

This work, which comprises an introduction, three answers to two objections, and a conclusion, emphasizes that, according to Christian teachings, there are no physical or sensual pleasures in the afterlife.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Elias' arguments show how Christians felt compelled to respond to Muslim views about the nature of existence in the afterlife, and also how they looked down on these views.

## MANUSCRIPTS

MS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate – Theology 83 (Simaika 370, Graf 418), fols 176v-179v (1572)

MS Oxford, Bodleian Library – Huntungton 240, fols 199v-200v (16<sup>th</sup> century)

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

S. Khalil, 'Maqāla li-Īliyyā muṭrān Naṣībīn fī na'īm al-ākhirā', *Bayn al-Nahrayn* 5 (1977) 91-112, 138-39

## STUDIES

Khalil, 'Maqāla li-Īliyyā muṭrān Naṣībīn', pp. 91-112

Samir, 'Bibliographie', pp. 275-76

Graf, *GCAL* ii, p. 184

### *Risāla fī faḍīlat al-‘afāf*, 'Epistle on the merit of chastity'

DATE Before 1046

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

This treatise is a rejoinder to the 9<sup>th</sup>-century Mu'tazilī al-Jāhiz's (d. 869) (q.v.) endorsement of the pleasures of the flesh. It is divided into two parts, the first containing an exposition of the Muslim's nine arguments in favor of fleshly pleasures, and the second refutations of these, together with examples of chaste men that support Elias' arguments.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Elias shows that al-Jāhiz's arguments defy both reason ('*aql*') and revelation (*shar'*). The fact that he takes on a Muslim long dead, and uses arguments that both Muslims and fellow Christians would appreciate, suggests that he was well integrated into Muslim intellectual circles.

## MANUSCRIPTS

MS Aleppo, Sbath – 1130, 2 (1231; presently lost, see Rio Sanchez, *Catalogue*, p. 335)

MS Vat – Ar. 115, fols 179r-190r (1260; excerpt)

MS Aleppo, Maronite Bishopric – fols 1r-51r (1314)

MS Vat – Ar. 144, fols 25r-30v (14<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Vat – Ar. 181, fols 72v-95v (1584)

MS Vat – Sbath 184, pp. 325-413 (1628)

MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 285, fols 1r-31v (1655)

MS Vat – Ar. 126, fols 286r-312r (1687)

MS Aleppo, Sbath – 1324, 21 (1773; presently lost, see Rio Sanchez, *Catalogue*, p. 336)

MS Lücke – fols 31r-55r

MS Princeton, University Library – Garrett Ar. 1993, 3 (18<sup>th</sup> century)

MS Beirut, Bibliothèque Orientale – 566 (modern)

## EDITIONS &amp; TRANSLATIONS

G. Raḥma, 'Risāla fī faḍīlat al-'afāf li-Īliyyā al-Naṣībīnī, *Al-Mashriq* 62 (1968) 3-74, pp. 14-74

## STUDIES

Samir, 'Bibliographie', pp. 278-79

Raḥma, 'Risāla fī faḍīlat al-'afāf', pp. 3-13

Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 184-85

## *Tafsīr al-amāna al-kabīr*, 'Commentary on the Creed'

DATE Before 1046

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

## DESCRIPTION

This work is divided into 19 parts (*fuṣūṣ*) corresponding to the elements into which Elias divides the Creed. Each is given in Syriac, together with what is an Arabic paraphrase (*tafsīr*) followed by a commentary (*ta'wīl*).

## SIGNIFICANCE

It is clear that Elias writes about the Trinity and Incarnation with the views of Muslims, as well as Jacobites and Melkites, in mind.

## MANUSCRIPTS

- MS Vat – Ar. 143, fols 127r-148v (12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century; missing some folios)  
 MS Beirut, Bibliothèque orientale – 562, pp. 2-24 (1563)  
 MS Vat – Neofiti 52, fols 71v-83v (1676, Eastern *karshūnī*)  
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 MS Mardīn, Chaldean Archbishopric – 94 (modern; *karshūnī*)

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 L. Cheikho, ‘Īliyyā al-Naṣībīnī wa-kitāb daf al-hamm’, *Al-Mashriq* 5 (1902) 337-43, p. 341  
 Assemani, *BO* iii, pp. 271-72

**Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala**

## *The Apocalypse of Samuel*

Unknown author

DATE OF BIRTH	Unknown; perhaps middle to late 10 <sup>th</sup> century
PLACE OF BIRTH	Unknown; perhaps in the region of the Fayyūm
DATE OF DEATH	Unknown; perhaps early to mid-10 <sup>th</sup> century
PLACE OF DEATH	Unknown; but probably at the Monastery of Qalamūn

### **BIOGRAPHY**

Nothing is known about the Coptic Christian author of this pseudonymous apocalyptic text beyond what can be gathered from the text itself.

### **MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

*Primary* —

*Secondary* —

## WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

*Maqāla li-abīnā l-qiddīs anbā Ṣamuʿīl raʿīs dayr al-Qalamūn... qāla fihā aqwāl yasīra ʿalā l-umūr allatī yakūnu fī arḍ Miṣr fī mulk al-Hajara l-Aʿrāb*, ‘A discourse by our holy father Abba Samuel, abbot of the Monastery of al-Qalamūn... in which he said a few things about what will take place in the land of Egypt during the rule of the Arab Hagarenes’ (in MS Vat – Ar. 158); ‘The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Samuel of Qalamūn’; ‘The Apocalypse of Samuel of Qalamūn’; ‘The Apocalypse of Samuel’; ‘ApocSam’; ‘Sam’; ‘ASQ’

DATE Unknown; probably 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century, possibly early to mid-11<sup>th</sup> century

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Coptic

## DESCRIPTION

The *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Samuel* is most certainly the best known Copto-Arabic apocalyptic text both among scholars and present-day Coptic believers, especially because of the passages it contains that describe the loss of the Coptic language. Despite its modern title, it is perhaps best described as an apocalyptic sermon, which may be divided into two parts: a prophetic homily in which paraenetic sections and series of *vaticinia ex eventu* alternate, and a second part consisting of eschatological prophecies. The sermon was purportedly addressed by a 7<sup>th</sup>-century Coptic saint, Samuel of the Monastery of Qalamūn in the Fayyūm region, to an assembly of his fellow monks, joined by one Bishop Gregory of al-Qays, and then written down by Samuel’s disciple Apollo. These monks, in response to the arrival of the Arab ‘Hagarenes’ (*hajara*, alternative reading *hijra*, ‘Hijra’; var. ‘*arab*, ‘Arabs’ and *ḥunafā*, ‘pagans’) had asked Samuel ‘whether their rule over the land of Egypt would last a long time or not’. The whole sermon is, in fact, an exposition of Samuel’s answer, which, however, does not keep to the monks’ question but is concerned above all with

combating the assimilation of Coptic practice to that of the Arab Muslims.

Samuel begins his speech with a brief historical exposé on the persecution of the Egyptian miaphysites by the Chalcedonians, focusing on Patriarchs Dioscorus I (r. 444-51) and Benjamin I (r. 626-65), and explaining that it is was at the requests of 'His chosen ones' that God had sent the Arabs. The latter, who are desirous of 'gold (*dhahab*)' rather than doctrine (*madhhab*), are at first few in number and treat the Christians generously and kindly, but inevitably – and this is where Samuel's 'prophesying' starts – they will mix with many other nations, seize many lands, and become numerous and powerful. In reaction, the Christians will become envious and start to imitate them, while at the same time becoming lax in their religious duties. What follows is a catalogue of the wrongdoings of the Egyptian Christians (both clergy and laymen), which are repeatedly held to be violations of the teachings of their spiritual fathers. One complaint is that they will call their children by the names of the Hagarenes and forget the names of 'the angels, the prophets, the apostles, and the martyrs'.

Most attention, however, is given to another mark of assimilation, i.e., the Christians' abandonment of Coptic, the language of their 'ancestors' and their holy language, 'in which the Holy Spirit has spoken many times through the mouth of our spiritual fathers,' and as such the vehicle of the very traditions that the Copts seem to be abandoning. Samuel is especially angry with the monks and clergy who do not fulfill their duty as educators of their people and are therefore one of the main causes for the Christians going astray. Thus, it is repeated over and over again that 'even the priests and the monks will dare to speak – they too – in Arabic and take pride in it, and that inside the sanctuary.' Samuel foretells how many religious books in Coptic will fall into disuse, because the clergy are no longer interested in using them in church as they favor Arabic books; even if they do recite from the Coptic books, many people will not understand because they do not know the language. Thus, the text adds, the people 'will not be exhorted.' (Passages such as these might reflect a situation in which Arabic was already being used in the liturgy, but in which there were still few religious books actually available in Arabic translation.) This is only one of many ways in which the clergy will leave the people without guidance, and 'even if one of the priests takes the trouble to say a word of instruction, he will say it listlessly and without fire against the people'.

This long complaint is then followed by a series of prophecies *ex eventu* on the oppression of the Arabs, which is interpreted as God's punishment of the Christians (the priests and monks in particular, it seems) because they deviated from the church canons and the precepts of the fathers. As in many other apocalyptic texts, rather than expressing historical interest, these descriptions serve to persuade the text's audience to mend their ways. Arab-Muslim rule is described in stereotypical fashion as evil and bound to end, but serving to separate the sheep from the goats. There is almost nothing original in these *vaticinia ex eventu*, because much of the content is borrowed from the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Athanasius* and the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, both dating from the Umayyad period (see *CMR* 1, pp. 163-71 and pp. 274-77 respectively). Among the very few exceptions are the references to the demolition of churches and their transformation into mosques, which, together with Samuel's lament on the demise of Coptic, may therefore have special historical relevance.

The first homiletic part of Samuel's speech continues with direct exhortations to 'his beloved children', the monks, to lead a virtuous life and abide by the monastic rules (mentioning Anthony, Macarius, Pachomius, and Shenute), and closes with a brief section on apostasy that may be considered the culmination of the development described earlier. It mentions that many Christians renounce their faith, and briefly lists the causes for this. One of these is oppression, but at least as much importance is given to other factors previously described by Samuel, such as the lack of Christian instruction and guidance, and the attractiveness of the Muslims' lifestyle; most of all, however, Christians lapse in imitation of those who had previously renounced Christ. Interestingly, a connection between Arabization and Islamization is only hinted at.

The second, eschatological part of the sermon seems to begin where Bishop Gregorius asks Samuel how long all these troubles will endure, and the latter responds that if the Christians do not repent, they will remain 'until the completion of the last reign of the Hagarenes' (var. 'until the completion of time'). The last king will bear the name of a prophet (*ism nabī*), which has the numerical value of 666 (the number of the beast, cf. Rev. 13:18), and he will have an Ishmaelite father and a Frankish (var. 'Roman') mother. He will oppress everyone, but then God will finally remember his people and send the king of the Romans (*al-Rūm*; var. 'of the Greeks', *al-Yūnāniyyīn*), who together with 'the king of the Ethiopians' will defeat 'the Sons



of Ishmael'. The king of the Romans will then come to Egypt, burn the city of Babylon (Cairo), and enslave and harrass the Muslims; the remainder will flee to the 'wastelands of their fathers'. Next, the king of the Ethiopians will marry the daughter of the king of the Romans, and there will be 40 years of peace and bliss. A final series of prophecies briefly describes: the three signs of the Antichrist; the five-month terror of Gog and Magog; the one-and-a-half-year reign of the king of the Romans in Jerusalem; God's abolition of the kingship; and the rule of the 'False Christ', to whom ten Roman kings are allied. The *Apocalypse* ends with a brief narrative conclusion in which Apollo explains what he wrote down and what he omitted, and with a final exhortation to repent.

The *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Samuel* has long been dated to a relatively early period, i.e., the 8<sup>th</sup> (Nau, Graf, Helderman) or the 9<sup>th</sup> (Martinez, Décobert, Abuliff) century, but recent studies tend to position the text in the 10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. The first of these studies (Iskander) connected the work to the time of the Caliph al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh (r. 996-1021), and while one may have reservations about the evidence given (Van Lent, 'Nineteen Muslim kings', pp. 663-67), the date itself seems a good possibility. One of the arguments in support of it is that the *Apocalypse* seems to reflect a transitional period in the Arabization process (Coptic still alive, but Arabic becoming more current, even in the liturgies, if still with a limited availability of Christian writings in Arabic translation), which, *as far as the Fayyūm is concerned*, may well be imagined in the first half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century (see Swanson, 'Recent developments', p. 246), considering also the evidence of the papyri for that region.

In any event, the matter is still very unsure, and various other attractive interpretations exist, proposing very different dates but sharing a refusal to take the text's descriptions of the language situation at face value. According to one theory (Papaconstantinou), the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Samuel* shows a tendency toward amplification and, accordingly, its composition should be placed slightly earlier, in the last quarter of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, in a context of rivalry over the question of assimilation between 'the patriarchate in its traditional Alexandrian and Coptic-speaking version' and 'the rising, Arabic-speaking see of Miṣr' – although this requires interpreting the *Apocalypse* in a geographical and social context well beyond that of the Fayyūm. Another well-informed and provocative argument (Zaborowski, 'From Coptic to Arabic') invites the reader to consider the text 'as a prophecy *ex*

*eventu* simply reflecting on the more long-term past of a community already mostly arabized, written in Arabic perhaps as late as the 14<sup>th</sup> century and serving the purpose of promoting a revival of Coptic literature as well as providing 'needed Arabic hagiographical literature that explains what went wrong at an earlier period'. The date proposed seems rather late, especially since reference is made to Samuel's prophecies in the various versions of the *Copto-Arabic Synaxary* and in the *History of the churches and monasteries of Egypt*, which come earlier, but the real problem is in the hypothesis that the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Samuel* was composed in Arabic.

Indeed, it is generally assumed that the *Apocalypse* was written by a conservative monk from the Monastery of Qalamūn and that he did this in the Coptic language. While the first assumption appears rather safe (although perhaps the exact location of the monastery at the time of writing should be re-considered; see, e.g., Rāghib, 'Archives'), the second is in fact problematic, if only because the work is only known in Arabic. However, recent analysis of the textual witnesses to the *Apocalypse* has revealed the existence of two different Arabic versions that show every sign of representing two different translations from Coptic (for this and other linguistic arguments, see Van Lent, *Coptic apocalyptic writings*). At the same time, most of the arguments for an Arabic original provided in one of the above-mentioned studies (Zaborowski, 'From Coptic to Arabic') do seem valid as clues for explaining why the work was *translated* from Coptic into Arabic and has remained popular even into modern times.

The *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Samuel* draws heavily on a variety of sources. Many motifs (both in the *vaticinia ex eventu* on Arab Muslim rule and in the part dealing with the Copts' sinful behavior) were borrowed from the above-mentioned *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Athanasius*, which probably also stood as a model for the general structure and argument of the work. Another influential text was the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, which provided tyranny motifs for the *ex-eventu* prophecies and is the original source for the legend of the Last Roman Emperor (see Martinez, 'The king of Rūm'). The anonymous author may have borrowed directly from these two texts, but certain similarities to another apocalyptic text, the common version of the *Letter of Pistentius* (q.v.), suggest that he (also) used an intermediary text, which at the same time influenced the *Letter*. This common *Vorlage* may have been composed as early as the 8<sup>th</sup> century (Van Lent, *Coptic apocalyptic writings*).

In addition, the passage on the last king of the Hagarenes has a remarkable parallel in the *Fourteenth vision of Daniel* (q.v.) (see its description of the 19<sup>th</sup> king), and many of its elements may ultimately stem from the *Proto-fourteenth vision* (see *CMR* 1, pp. 309-13; for the argument, see Van Lent, 'Nineteen Muslim kings', pp. 663-67). Finally, pseudo-Samuel was very familiar with the contents of the *Life of Samuel* (see *CMR* 1, pp. 664-68), and it has been convincingly argued in a recent article that the two are complementary texts originating from the same monastic tradition (Zaborowski, 'Egyptian Christians').

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Samuel* is of great importance as one of the very few literary sources that directly deal with the language shift from Coptic to Arabic. It gives a good idea of how this phenomenon may have taken place in a provincial context, but, evidently and above all, it bears detailed testimony to the *reaction*, in certain conservative monastic circles in the Fayyūm, to this process of Arabization as well as to other forms of assimilation – even if its descriptions are perhaps not to be taken at face value. Of particular interest is the text's presentation of Coptic as a holy language and as the only authentic medium of Coptic Christianity, which, according to a recent keen observer, seems to be influenced, quite ironically, by the very similar Islamic view regarding Arabic (Richter, 'Greek, Coptic, and "the language of the Hijra"', p. 427).

The *Apocalypse of Samuel* is a good and ample example of the recycling of apocalyptic themes and literary motifs in order to respond to new realities. It is particularly important for our understanding of the development of the legend of the Last Roman Emperor in Egypt, as of all the different versions found in Egyptian Christian apocalyptic texts this one is closest to that of the Syrian *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, which is the ultimate source of the legend.

The *Apocalypse* seems to have been both popular and influential. There are strong indications that it was translated from Coptic into Arabic more than once, and the number of extant textual witnesses is considerable compared with other apocalyptic texts from Egypt. Moreover, large parts of it seem to be copied literally by the 14<sup>th</sup>-century author of the *Prophecies and exhortations of Shenute*, while it may perhaps have also been a direct source for the common version of the *Letter of Pisentius* and for the *Prophecy of Daniel to Athanasius* (q.v.).

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 MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 131, fols 72v-87r (1440)  
 MS Birmingham, University Library – Mingana Syr. 232, fols 83r-109v (1550; beginning missing)  
 MS Monastery of St Macarius – Hag. 74 (Zanetti 487), fols 1r-2r (16<sup>th</sup> century)  
 MS Paris, BNF – Ar. 150, fols 20r-30r (1606)  
 MS Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate – Theol. 129 (Simaika 293, Graf 412), fols 112r-126v (1679)  
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