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# From Kavād to al-Ghazālī

## Religion, Law and Political Thought in the Near East, c.600–c.1100

ASHGATE
VARIORUM

shared, enjoyment of the here and now (in the right measure) being part of the struggle against evil. Zarādushtism could be characterized as Gnostic thought in a life-affirming spirit, and this is so odd a phenomenon that some scholars have trouble accepting it.[83] But whatever else may be said about Zarādushtism, run-of-the mill it was not. The key to its oddity seems to lie in the fact that it was a Zoroastrian answer to Gnosticism.

## POSTSCRIPT

p. 447:
For Xanthus of Lydia, see now A. de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi: Zoroastrianism in Greek and Latin Literature*, Leiden 1997, 424.

p. 455:
For some remarkable parallels to the Zarādushtī view of property, see N. Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, London 1970, pp. 182f: "They believe that all things are common, whence they conclude that theft is lawful to them", the Bishop of Strasbourg reported of the adepts of the Free Spirit in 1317; cheating, theft, and robbery with violence were all justified, an adept by the name of John of Brünn confirmed. The Spiritual Libertines described by Calvin also held that nobody should possess anything of his own and that each should take whatever he could lay hands on. "Give, give, give, give up your houses, horses, goods, lands, give up, account nothing your own, have all things in common.....", as the seventeenth-century Ranter Abiezer Coppe exclaimed.

p. 461:
For the Carpocratians, see the helpful discussion in D. Dawson, *Cities of the Gods: Communist Utopias in Greek Thought*, Oxford 1992, pp. 264–7, with full references.

See also the postscript to the previous article.

[83] *Cf.* above, note 40. That it is the presence of Gnostic ideas in Khurramism which causes some to present them as ascetics is particularly clear in Duchesne-Guillemin.

# III

## ISLAM, JUDEO-CHRISTIANITY AND BYZANTINE ICONOCLASM

The argument of this paper* is that Byzantine Iconoclasm was a response to the rise of Islam. This is an old-fashioned point of view. First advanced by the Byzantines themselves, the theory of Saracen influence was accepted by older scholarship on the subject, and long remained academically respectable. In the last generation, however, it has fallen out of favour. Contemporary literature on the subject, though far from agreed in other respects, is virtually unanimous that, whatever may have been the causes of Iconoclasm, Islam was *not* among them. That the military success of the Arabs impressed the Byzantines is not denied; if anything, it is emphasized. But the assumption that the Byzantines paid attention to what the successful Arabs believed is now deemed unproven, unnecessary or even incredible.

Yet the case for Islam seems so effortless that the determination to exclude it must strike the outsider as an almost wilful exercise of professional scepticism. *A priori*, the theory that Iconoclasm was a Byzantine response to Islam is certainly not implausible, and no serious objection has so far been advanced against it. It can, of course, be argued that, inasmuch as hostility to images is endemic in Christianity, what looks like a pattern of Christian-Muslim interaction is to be dismissed as pure coincidence. But it is considerably simpler to assume that it was the role of Islam to make epidemic what had hitherto been merely endemic – particularly as the search for alternative causes has only led to an alarming accumulation of unsatisfactory theories.[1] All in all, it is hard to avoid the suspicion that if the Byzantines had not themselves been so sure that Iconoclasts and Saracens were somehow related, modern scholars would have been as happy to expend their energies in championing the case for Islam as they currently are to debunk it. But the Byzantines may after all have been right. It is at least worth examining more closely the evidence for the impact of Islam before we persevere in trying to explain it away.

That the evidence for the role of Islam in the genesis of Iconoclasm can, in fact, be refined and extended will be shown in due course. It is, however, helpful to approach the evidence via a more general question: what kind of impact could

* The present paper owes its genesis to the arrival of Dr. Judith Herrin at the Warburg Institute in October 1976. It was written at her instigation for her seminar on Iconoclasm, inspired by her persistent scepticism and greatly improved by the availability of her learning. She is not, of course, to be held responsible for the views set forth here. I am also much indebted to Michael Cook for a variety of services ranging from suggestive ideas to drastic repunctuation.

[1] Cf. P. Brown, "A Dark-Age Crisis: Aspects of the Iconoclastic Controversy," *English Historical Review* 88 (1973), p. 3.

Islam be *expected* to have on Byzantium? We may begin to answer this question by spelling out the implications of a single but basic point. The distinctive feature of the Muslim threat to Byzantium was that it was at once conceptual and political: the Christian faith and the Christian polity were under simultaneous attack.

Now the Byzantines were certainly used to attacks on their faith, not just by heretics within Christianity, but also by the Jews outside it; and the Jews were unquestionably a conceptual menace. Unlike mere heretics or pagans, they rejected Christianity in the name of the monotheist tradition which Jews and Christians share; in other words, they denied Christianity in the name of Christian values. But politically, of course, the Jews were powerless. "For 600 years your temple has lain ruined and burnt," "God has dispersed you over the earth," "God is angry with you," and words to similar effect are staple arguments in anti-Jewish polemic.[2] *Vis-à-vis* the Jews, the Christian possession of power thus provided some assurance that Christianity was God's own religion.

Equally, the Byzantines were very used to attacks on their polity, not just by rebels within Byzantium, but also by the barbarians outside it; and some of these were certainly a political menace. But conceptually the barbarians were insignificant. The Franks might try to emulate Byzantine civilisation and the Avars to destroy it, but either way they merely confirmed the Byzantines in their values. Barbarian success at most demonstrated that the Byzantines had fallen short of their own values: military defeat, like drought and plague and other misfortunes, was a rod with which God punished his believers for their sins.[3] But *vis-à-vis* the barbarians, the Christian possession of truth demonstrated that Byzantium was God's own empire.

What the Byzantines had never experienced before was a monotheist attack on *both* their truth and their power.[4] The Arabs were, so to speak, Jews who had come back with an army, or conversely, barbarians returning with a prophet: they were not just God's rod, but also claimed to be his mouthpiece, and their tremendous success lent some credence to their claim.[5] So far from buttressing Byzantine

[2] See, for example, G. Bardy (ed. and tr.), *Les Trophées de Damas* in *Patrologia Orientalis*, XV, Paris 1903–, p. 230. Anti-Jewish writings are commonly dated by the number of years God has been angry with the Jews.

[3] This belief was not, of course, specific to the 7th century: compare the pagan and Christian reactions to the various barbarian invasions in W.E. Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Decline of Rome*, Princeton 1968; and the European reaction to the advance of the Turks in J.W. Bohnstedt, "The Infidel Scourge of God," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* NS 58 (1968), pp. 25ff.

[4] Zoroastrian Persia, though in some sense monotheist, was too alien to hit where it hurt most.

[5] For Muslim arguments from political success to religious truth see Łevond, *Histoire des guerres des Arabes en Arménie* (tr. G.V. Chahnazarian), Paris 1856, p. 97; D. Sourdel (ed. and tr.), "Un pamphlet musulman anonyme d'époque ʿabbāside contre les Chrétiens," *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* 34 (1966), p. 33 = 26 (where references are given in this form, the first figure refers to the text and the second to the translation); cf. also *ibid.*, pp. 10f. Similar arguments recur in later texts (E. Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum im Mittelalter*, Breslau 1930,





values, the Arabs undermined them.[6] This time it was not just the traditional Christian sins, but also the traditional Christian values which had to be reviewed.

Just how it felt can be seen in the former Byzantine province of Syria. Syria had a local elite of so-called Melkite Christians, that is Christians who, unlike the dissident Monophysites, adhered to the official definition of orthodoxy, wrote in Greek, ran the provincial bureaucracy and identified closely with the fortunes of the empire. Upon the Arab conquest, this elite was politically and religiously disestablished all but overnight, and – reduced to rubbing shoulders with the Jews and the Monophysites in the ghetto – they soon lost their unthinking confidence in Melkite truth. Already at the time of the conquest in 634, the Jews had snidely observed that the Roman empire was suffering diminution,[7] and some thirty years later – when it was clear that the diminution was going to be permanent – Melkites were asking the inevitable question: how do we know that Christianity is really superior to other faiths?[8] That they did not know is clear from the sudden spate of Melkite polemics against Jews[9] and also against Monophysites,[10] and from

p. 53) and among the Turks (S. Vryonis, *The Decline of Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century*, Berkeley 1971, p. 435). Compare also the Spanish argument, that the pagan gods had failed to help the Indians, while the true God had allowed the Spanish to conquer Mexico (R. Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*, Berkeley 1966, p. 87). And note how the Byzantines have to remind themselves that the victories of the Muslims were *not* a proof of the truth of their religion (A.-T. Khoury, *Les Théologiens Byzantins et l'Islam*, Louvain-Paris 1969, p. 166; similarly their descendants, in Vryonis, *loc. cit.*, and the contemporary Armenians, in Łevond, *loc. cit.*).

[6] The demoralizing effect of the Arab conquests is well brought out by C. Mango, "Historical Introduction," in A. Bryer & J. Herrin (eds.), *Iconoclasm*, Birmingham 1977, pp. 2ff.

[7] A.L. Williams, *Adversus Judaeos. A Bird's-eye View of Christian Apologiae until the Renaissance*, Cambridge 1935, p. 135 (= *Doctrina Iacobi*). Note the Christian's confidence that the empire will rise again.

[8] Pseudo-Athanasius, *Quaestiones ad Antiochum Ducem, MPG* XXVIII, col. 624 (question xliii). The date of the tract is provided by the answer: no Christian emperor has ever been killed by barbarians nor could they destroy his image with the cross on the coinage. This answer can only have been given between Muʿawiya's unsuccessful attempt to strike coins without crosses and ʿAbd al-Malik's monetary reform (cf. P. Crone & M. Cook, *Hagarism, The Making of the Islamic World*, Cambridge 1977, p. 11; no other barbarians made such attempts). Williams dates it to the 6th century on the grounds that it has no reference to the image controversy and that it was used by 7th (or 8th) century writers such as the author of the dialogue of Papiscus and Philo (Williams, *op. cit.*, pp. 160, 171; cf. below, n. 12), but neither consideration excludes the date proposed here. Despite its Egyptian attribution, it was almost certainly written in Syria: quite apart from the fact that the Egyptians hardly wrote anything in Greek after the Arab conquest, the original is likely to have been in Syriac (cf. below, n. 41).

[9] Williams, *Adversus Judaeos*, pp. 151–80. Add now A.P. Hayman (ed. and tr.), *The Disputation of Sergius the Stylite against a Jew* (CSCO, Scriptores Syri, vols. 152f.), Louvain 1973, which may well have been Melkite (see the editorial introduction, p. *2). That disestablishment at the hands of the Arabs (and also the Persians) adversely affected the polemical balance between Christians and Jews, was also seen by P.J. Alexander, *The Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople*, Oxford 1958, p. 31.

[10] Bardy, *Trophées*, p. 177; K. Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur*², Munich 1897, pp. 64ff; A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, Bonn 1922, pp. 269,

the simultaneous conversions to Monophysitism[11] and, though the evidence here is tenuous, probably also to Islam.[12]

For the Melkites across the border in Byzantium, it was not just an elite but an empire which was threatened with reduction to a ghetto. There were all the signs in the late seventh century that Byzantium was going to go the way of Iran. Syria, Egypt and Mesopotamia had fallen, the conquest of North Africa had begun, the Arab army was annually flooding Anatolia, while at the same time the Arab navy was engaged in a systematic conquest of the Greek islands en route to Constantinople; and in 716 or 717, both army and navy swooped down on Constantinople itself. As it happened, Byzantium survived by the skin of its teeth, but it was anything but clear how long the respite was going to last. "Over Constantinople God has not *yet* given them any power," as a Nestorian chronicler put it.[13] Leo III (717-41) certainly had grounds for thinking that Christianity had gone astray and, unlike the Melkites of Syria, he was still in a position to set about reforming it.

What, then, had gone wrong with Christianity? It is worth going back here to another simple point. Christianity may be defined as the outcome of a syncretic bargain between Jewish missionaries and gentile proselytes. In the course of the bargaining, the missionaries had jettisoned the substance of their Judaic faith. Their converts did not in fact become Jews, or rather they did so only in a spiritual sense:

336 f. Note the use of the popular dialogue form rather than the learned treatise by one of these authors, and the wanderings among the masses of another.

[11] A. Mingana (ed. and tr.), *Sources syriaques*, Leipzig [1907], p. *147 = *176; cf. Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 269, for the lost apology of one of these converts.

[12] The late 7th century Syrian apocalypse of pseudo-Methodius complains of conversions (E. Sackur, *Sibyllinische Texte und Forschungen*, Halle 1898, p. 86), but it is not clear whether the apocalypse originated in a Melkite or sectarian environment, though the very fact that it passed into Greek (and Latin) would indicate the former. A Greek anti-Jewish tract also concedes that some Christians have denied their faith, though more Jews are said to have done so without suffering persecution (A.C. McGiffert (ed.), *Dialogue Between a Christian and a Jew Entitled Antibolē Papiskou kai Philōnos Ioudaiōn pros monakhos tina*, Marburg 1889, §13, p. 75). The oldest preserved version of this tract was written shortly before the Arab conquest (we are told that the Christians have been preserved for 600 years, that Christianity is triumphant even in Britain, that the Jewish sanctuaries have become Christian and that the coinage displays the cross, *ibid.*, §9; cf. also the editorial introduction, pp. 42ff). But it contains two or three interpolated passages in defence of image worship (§1, 13, 15f), which must have been added about 670 or 740, since we are now told that the Jews have been deprived of their sanctuary for 600 or 670 years (§16, pp. 78f; on these interpolations see also McGiffert's introduction, p. 38, and Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 172); and it is in one of these interpolations that the reference to apostasy occurs. As far as the Jews are concerned, however, the reference is almost certainly to the biblical past. The case of the Christians is not clear, but the very fact that the interpolator should take up the subject suggests that it was of topical interest, particularly as he doubtless worked in a Muslim province (two MSS hold that the dispute took place in the presence of both Jews and Arabs; the *Trophies* and *Quaestiones* are the two main sources; the later recension was certainly done in the east; cf. Williams, *op. cit.*, pp. 170f, 175). If so, the province must have been Syria (cf. n. 8).

[13] I. Guidi et al. (ed. and tr.), *Chronica Minora* (= CSCO, Scriptores Syri, 3rd series, vol. IV), Louvain 1903–07, p. 38 = 31.





they were circumcised of the heart, not of the flesh, and they adhered to the inner, not the literal sense of Mosaic law. But in return, the proselytes accepted the Judaic shell. If they did not become Jews, they still ceased to know themselves as Hellenes, and if they did not live by the law, they still retained the Old Testament as part of their scriptures. Mainstream Christianity is not Jewish Christianity, but equally it is not Marcionism; or, to put it in the words of the Iconoclast Council of 754, Christianity strikes a middle course between paganism and Judaism.[14] What this means is that the nature of Christianity is somewhat ill-defined. Christians can both Hellenize and Judaize: as they can have a renaissance so they can have a reformation. And what they do in practice depends largely on the location of the magnetic field at any given time.

Now what the rise of Islam represented was precisely a shift of the magnetic field. Islam is no middle course between a monotheist faith and a pagan culture. If Christianity is Judaism gone soft, Islam by contrast is Judaism restated as an Arab faith: like Judaism, it is strictly monotheist where Christianity is trinitarian, it is shaped as an all-embracing holy law where Christianity is antinomian, and it finds its social embodiment in a learned laity where Christianity has priests. Hence, what in the eyes of the Byzantines was a time-hallowed alliance between a pagan tradition and a Jewish God, in those of the Muslims was simply a pagan corruption of the true monotheism, a failure on the part of the Byzantines to take their monotheism seriously; and everything indicated that God himself saw it the Muslim way. On the Byzantine side, then, one would expect a cultural shift: if before they had been Hellenizing, now they were likely to start Judaizing: and in fact that is precisely what happened.

From the reign of Leo III onwards, there was a spectacular attack on images, saints, relics, intercessors and what other channels of grace had appeared beside the ecclesiastical sacraments, followed by a no less spectacular onslaught on monks, the social incarnation of the saints; and at the same time a biblical orientation came to the fore in law and learning as such.[15] In religious terms, the Iconoclast movement was a monotheist reformation: the Byzantines now took their Judaic God seriously. And in political terms its analogue was greater integration. As the focus of religious loyalties shifted from parochial saints to the supreme God, so that of political loyalties shifted from provincial cities to the imperial metropolis,[16] and the two

[14] M.V. Anastos, "The Argument for Iconoclasm as presented by the Iconoclastic Council of 754," in K. Weitzmann (ed.), *Late Classical and Mediaeval Studies in Honor of A.M. Frend, Jr.*, Princeton 1955, p. 181.

[15] For a good account, see E. Martin, *A History of the Iconoclastic Controversy*, London [1930]. Note the Calvinist dislike of grace in the *horoi* of 754 and 815: the saints are for imitation rather than adoration and the true image is the virtuous Christian and the eucharist – a terrible blasphemy to Theodore the Studite (M.V. Anastos, "The Ethical Theory of Images as formulated by the Iconoclasts in 754 and 815," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 8 [1954], pp. 153, 159). Compare the rejection of intercession implied in Leo's statement, that God judges every man according to his deeds (below, n. 64).

[16] Brown, "A Dark-Age crisis".

converge in Leo's forced conversion of the Jews: the Jews became "new citizens"[17] and the Byzantines were henceforth "Verus Israel," one nation unto God.[18]

There is thus no doubt that with Iconoclasm Byzantine Christianity became a religion more *like* Islam; and few Byzantines had much doubt that the movement was actually *triggered* by Islam.[19] But is there any specific evidence of interaction?

It can certainly be argued that there is, and that in the three key domains of images, law and the milieu which sparked off the reformation. We may begin with the images.

The Byzantine reformation was, above all, an iconoclast one because on the Christian side images had long been a sore point. The scriptural prohibition of images comes in the one bit of the law that Christians usually considered themselves bound by, the Decalogue, and early Christian writers had certainly taken it seriously.[20] It is true that the brunt of the Patristic attack on art was directed against idols rather than religiously neutral or Christian art, and that in practice Christian artists were less inhibited than one would have assumed from the literary evidence;[21] but in principle figurative art of any kind was something which Christians would do best to dispense with. If it was not condemned outright, it was denigrated as distracting make-believe; it was to be kept out of the churches or, when it could not be kept out, to be tolerated there as visual aids for the illiterate; later it was even encouraged as such,[22] but the perfect, as they hastened to assure themselves, derived no pleasure from it.[23] Christian art, in short, was granted recognition by a series of concessions.[24] Now had the spokesmen of Christianity been

[17] Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* IV (ed. and tr. J.-B. Chabot), Paris 1899–1910, p. 457 = vol. II, pp. 489f.

[18] Cf. Brown, "A Dark-Age Crisis", p. 24. Brown's characterization of the Iconoclast controversy as a debate on the position of the holy in Byzantine society is very apt (*ibid.*, p. 5).

[19] Note that Theophanes attributes to Arab influence Leo's hostility not only to images, but also to saints and relics (Theophanes, *Chronographia* I [ed. C. de Boor], Leipzig 1883–85, p. 406, A.M. 6218).

[20] H. Koch, *Die altchristliche Bilderfrage nach den literarischen Quellen*, Göttingen 1917, especially p. 86; E. Bevan, *Holy Images*, London 1940, pp. 84ff; cf. also N.H. Baynes, "Idolatry and the Early Church," in his *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays*, London 1955. The early Christians might well have argued that the prohibition was not to be taken literally, as the later Christians were to do (cf. John of Damascus, *Oratio III* in *MPG* XCIV cols. 1325f.), and if they took so long to reach this conclusion, it was doubtless because there were too many pagan idols around to make it safe; compare the hardening of Jewish attitudes to images when Christian idols in their turn became commonplace (below, n. 30).

[21] That much one may grant Sister C. Murray, "Art and the Early Church," *Journal of Theological Studies* NS 28 (1977); but her argument that all attacks on art referred to idolatrous representations, or did not mean what they said, or else were fabricated, is clearly partisan (for the traditional Catholic and Protestant views on the subject, see Bevan, *op. cit.*, pp. 95ff.).

[22] For these positions, see *ibid.*, pp. 85–9, 106–16, 125–7; Baynes, "Idolatry," p. 136.

[23] P.J. Alexander, "Hypatius of Ephesus. A Note on Image Worship in the Sixth Century," *Harvard Theological Review* 44 (1952), pp. 178ff.

[24] In Islam, by contrast, such concessions to practice were staunchly refused.





asked to concede no more than that, the outbreak of Iconoclasm would hardly have been so easy to provoke. But by the seventh century it had long been painfully obvious to everyone that representations of holy persons had actually come to be worshipped.[25] That the Christians should thus have relapsed into idolatry is not, of course, entirely accidental. Where the holy law of Judaism or Islam is a concrete feature of everyday reality, divine grace by contrast is a more elusive entity which may have been incarnate in the past and which continues to generate miracles on Sundays, but which stands in need of additional modes of manifestation on Monday mornings: the point about images, saints and relics is precisely that they make the holy and the humdrum meet.[26] But for those who think, it was evidently not a comforting thought that the Christians were engaged in a daily violation of God's will, and bad conscience was never far below the surface.[27] It is just possible that the classical justification of image worship had begun to be elaborated before the Arabs arrived on the scene, though a case can equally be made for placing its beginning after their arrival;[28] and whatever the date of the treatises in question, they only had the classical theory in its embryonic form: long after the Arab conquests, invocations of scriptual precedents for images, appeals to their educational value and *denials* that they were more than reminders of past grace,

[25] Cf. E. Kitzinger, "The Cult of Images in the Age before Iconoclasm," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 8 (1954), pp. 88ff.

[26] That comes across very well in Michael II's description of popular habits, in his letter to Louis the Pious (Martin, *Iconoclastic Controversy*, p. 30). As far as women were concerned, icons were simply a fancy version of cuddly animals – as Theodora so neatly illustrated when she was caught kissing an icon and pretended it was a doll (*ibid.*, p. 210); the role of women in both iconodule riots and iconodule restorations has often been noted.

[27] Kitzinger, *op. cit.*, p. 113; cf. also Baynes' observation that the anti-Jewish writings were meant to reassure the Christians rather than to persuade the Jews ("The Icons before Iconoclasm," in his *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays*, p. 236).

[28] As applied to statues of the emperor, the theory that the honour paid to an image is referred to the prototype had become sufficiently familiar for Basil of Caesarea and Athanasius of Alexandria to invoke it in illustration of the relationship between the Father and the Son in the fourth century (Basil, *Liber de Spiritu Sancto*, *MPG* XXXII, col. 149; Athanasius, *Oratio III contra Arianos*, *ibid.*, XXVI, col. 332); but as an apology for worship or representations of divinities, it was still considered a pagan argument by John Philoponus in the mid-6th century (Alexander, *The Patriarch Nicephorus*, p. 35), and is first met as a Christian argument in the works of Leontius of Neapolis and John of Thessalonica in the early 7th (*ibid.*, p. 33). Now, unlike the Arab conquests, the Persian wars can hardly explain this sudden need to justify the cult of icons: the rapprochement between the Persians and the Jews was very shortlived and, moreover, it was not conceptual. Since Leontius died after 650, he may well have written after the Arab conquests (L. Rydén, *Das Leben des heiligen Symeons von Leontios von Neapolis*, Uppsala 1963, p. 17); and so also may John of Thessalonica. It is true that the person of that name who wrote the discourses on the Life of St. Demetrius was archbishop between 610 and 649 (and that in the earlier rather than the later part of this period); but the grounds for identifying him with the author of the treatise on images are extremely weak (M. Jugie, "La vie et les oeuvres de Jean de Thessalonique," *Echos d'Orient* 21 [1922]). The John of Thessalonica who participated in the Council of 680f. seems at least as plausible a candidate (*ibid.*, p. 293).

remained the primary method of Christian defence.[29] At the time of the conquest, then, the Christian nerve-end was still completely exposed. All that was required for the *mise-en-scène* of Iconoclasm was someone to come and punch it.

The Arabs were eminently qualified for this role in that from the start they took the Mosaic prohibition seriously.[30] The prohibition is found, not in the Koran which merely condemns idols in general, but in *ḥadīth*, the sayings attributed to the Prophet which make up the oral law of the Muslims.[31] In this literature, which was recorded in the eighth and ninth centuries, representations of animate beings are condemned partly on the old Judaic ground that they are idolatrous,[32] and partly

[29] So even to Leontius himself (cf. Baynes, "Icons before Iconoclasm," pp. 230ff.). The defence, as Kitzinger notes, lagged behind the attack ("Cult of Images," p. 87).

[30] It is important for the Muslim attitude to images that Islam hived off from Judaism after the permissive attitudes of the Hellenistic Jews had been eroded by the rise of the Christian God. This hardening of Jewish views is not well attested in Jewish literature, but there is ample attestation outside it. On the archaeological side, we have the deliberate destruction of figurative images in the synagogues of Dura-Europos and Palestine (C.H. Kraeling, *The Synagogue [The Excavations at Dura Europos, Final Report* VIII, pt. 1], New Haven 1956, p. 338; E.L. Sukenik, *Ancient Synagogues in Palestine and Greece*, London 1934, pp. 62, 65; J.-B. Frey, "La Question des images chez les Juifs à la lumière des récentes découvertes," *Biblica* 15 [1934], p. 298). On the literary side, there is Christian attestation of Jewish (and Samaritan) destruction of Christian images, in the Life of St. Symeon the Younger, the letter of St. Symeon to Justin II, the *Relatio* of Arculf, and Gregory of Tours; and endless accusations of idolatry are levelled at the Christians in anti-Jewish writings (Kitzinger, "Cult of Images," pp. 129f, 130n.). Note also Germanus' statement in 724, that the Jews have *long* accused the Christians of idolatry (*Epistola ad Thomam episcopum Claudiopoleos, MPG* XCVIII, col. 168), and Agobard's observation a century later in the West that the Jews consider the Christians idolatrous and believe miracles to be the work of devils, not of saints (*Epistola de judaicis superstitionibus, MPL* CIV, col. 88).

[31] Christian style arguments for a general relaxation of the prohibition (as opposed to specific dispensations) were not unknown to the Muslims; cf. the stray invocation of the Koranic references to Solomon's statues and Jesus' clay birds; but they are adduced only to be rejected. Christians and Muslims alike held that images had been prohibited because idolatry had once been prevalent, in the days of Moses according to the former, those of Jesus according to the latter. But where the Christians inferred that images were now permitted, the Muslims concluded that the prohibition must still be observed (B. Farès, "Philosophie et jurisprudence illustré par les Arabes: la querelle des images en Islam," in *Mélanges Massignon* II, Damascus 1956f., pp. 100ff.).

[32] R. Paret, "Textbelege zum islamischen Bilderverbot," in *Das Werk des Künstlers, Studien zur Ikonographie und Formgeschichte H. Schrade dargebracht*, Stuttgart 1960. Note the straight carry-over from rabbinical to Islamic rules of desecration by mutilation or disrespect. An image on a Jewish cup is desecrated by water running over it, one on a Muslim chafing-dish by being burnt; the Jews may have animate representations on mosaic floors, and the Muslims may have them on carpets and cushions; and what has been covered by dirt is inoffensive to both (E.E. Urbach, "The Rabbinical Laws of Idolatry in the Second and Third Centuries in the Light of Archaeological and Historical Facts," *Israel Exploration Journal* 9 (1959), pp. 233, 237n.; J. Neusner, *Talmudic Judaism in Sasanian Babylonia*, Leiden 1976, p. 88n.; T.W. Arnold, *Painting in Islam*, Oxford 1928, pp. 7ff; Paret, "Textbelege," pp. 40 ff, 45 ff; *idem.*, "Das Islamische Bilderverbot und die Schia," *Festschrift W. Caskel*, Leiden 1968, pp. 226, 228f; ʿAbd al-Razzāq b. Hammām al-Ṣanʿānī, *al Muṣannaf* (ed. H.-R. al-Aʿẓamī), Beirut 1970–, X (p. 399,







on the newer ground, which is of more uncertain origin, that they involve a presumptuous attempt to imitate the creative power of God.[33] This second reason is first attested in the ninth century and may not be much earlier,[34] but the fear of idolatry finds eloquent expression in Umayyad and early ʿAbbāsid art. Animate beings are represented wherever they could not be interpreted as idolatrous as, for example, in the secular and usually very private context of royal palaces, though even here the art is basically aniconic.[35] But they are meticulously avoided wherever the suspicion of idolatry might arise, as in most public places and above all in religious contexts.[36] This is not to say that there were no flagrant exceptions.[37] But

No. 19489). There were, of course, rigorists in both camps who would have none of such concessions, but note that the Jews made figurative mosaic floors as late as the 6th century, long after the reaction against statues and paintings had set in (Sukenik, *Ancient Synagogues*, p. 65).

[33] Paret, "Textbelege," pp. 43ff; compare Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* VI, 16, 144, where even inanimate representations are condemned on this score. That Clement is here adducing the standard Muslim objection to images was noted by Bevan, who also found a remarkable Talmudic parallel: Joshua b. Levi (ca. AD 250) contrasted the painter's inability to put souls into his pictures with God's power to animate what he shapes, concluding that there is no sculptor like our God (*Berakhoth*, f. 10a; Bevan, *Holy Images*, pp. 83, 87). The point of the comparison, however, is God's grandeur rather than the iniquity of painters, and though the dictum recurs elsewhere, it never seems to be used for a sweeping condemnation of art (cf. Urbach, "The Rabbinical Laws of Idolatry," p. 237; compare the absence of such condemnations in Koran 59:24, where God is also a *muṣawwir*). Clement, moreover, makes a special concession in favour of representations on signet rings, as do also the Muslims (*Paedagogus* III, 12, 1: cf. below, n. 36). It is true that here he is concerned with the frivolity of art rather than the prerogatives of God, and his genuine writings are not known to have enjoyed much circulation in the Christian Middle East; but there seems to be no trace in Islam of the complex rabbinic rulings regarding signet rings (cf. *Avodah Zarah*, f. 43b). On balance, then, the evidence would suggest a Clementine rather than a rabbinic ancestry for this argument.

[34] It was known to Abū Qurra (d. ca. 820) and ʿAbd al-Razzāq (d. 827), and Becker's conjecture that it was of fairly recent origin is to some extent borne out by the fact that it appears only in the *ḥadīth*s attributed to the Prophet: the (presumably earlier) Companion *ḥadīth*s give no reasons for their hostility to images (Becker, *Islamstudien*, Leipzig 1924–32, I, p. 447; ʿAbd al-Razzāq b. Hammām, *Muṣannaf* X, pp. 396ff, Nos. 19483ff.).

[35] O. Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art*, New Haven–London 1973, pp. 91ff; R. Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, Cleveland 1962, pp. 29–44; cf. Arnold, *Painting in Islam*, pp. 19f.

[36] O. Grabar, "Islam and Iconoclasm," in Bryer & Herrin, *Iconoclasm*, p. 47; *idem, Formation of Islamic Art*, p. 93 (note the elegant example of Mshatta, where the mosque wall is the only one to have no animate decorations). Grabar's own theory (stated, *inter alia*, in Bryer & Herrin, *loc. cit.*, and in his notes appended to M.G.S. Hodgson, "Islam and Image," *History of Religions* 3 [1963f.]) that the Arabs rejected images because they could not create a meaningful iconography without becoming like the Christians thus holds good for secular art alone; and even here it is hardly the *only* explanation. There is indeed a striking example of an unsuccessful search for an Islamic iconography in ʿAbd al-Malik's coinage (O. Grabar, "Islamic Art and Byzantium," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 18 [1964], p. 80), but then ʿAbd al-Malik was a Muslim high-priest and the Muslim rabbis had no doubt that iconic coins might invalidate prayer (Paret, "Das Islamische Bilderverbot und die Schia," pp. 225 ff.; compare *Avodah Zarah*, f. 50a = *Pesaḥim*, f. 104a; given that the concern with iconic coins became largely obsolete with ʿAbd al-Malik's monetary reform, these traditions would appear to be a noteworthy example of

it is certainly hard to deny that, their black stone apart, the Muslims were almost completely free of pagan sins. Hence they could assault the Christians with impunity.

And so indeed they did. Behaviourally, Arab hostility to pictures and other idolatrous objects such as the cross finds expression in the sporadic removal or destruction of both from the time of the early conquests onwards.[38] Legally, the hostility is endorsed in the demand that crosses be kept out of public sight,[39] and in the permission to break both images and crosses provided that compensation is paid for the raw materials.[40] And polemically, the Arabs can be seen to take up the old arguments of the Jews against the Christians from the mid-Umayyad period onwards.[41] The Jews had, of course, long been in the habit of reminding the

Shī'ite archaism). The Companion *hadīths* in ʿAbd al-Razzāq are hostile to representations of animate beings regardless of context, and even inanimate ones come under attack when they are sculptural (*Muṣannaf* X, pp. 398 ff., Nos. 19487–9, 19493f.). Scholarly endorsement of animate representations is in fact extremely rare, though there is a notable example in the case of signet rings (Ibn Saʿd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt* [ed. E. Sachau] Leiden 1905–40, IV, pp. 96, 146, 210; VII, pt. 1, pp. 5, 11, 71).

[37] According to Aslam b. Sahl al-Razzāz al-Wāsitī, *Taʾrīkh Wāsiṭ* (ed. G. ʿAwwād), Baghdad 1967, p. 76, the newly built *mosque* of Wāsiṭ was graced with a Venus whose breasts served as water spouts. Whether Ḥajjāj had argued, in the style of R. Gamaliel, that there is a difference between making a mosque for Aphrodite and making an Aphrodite as an adornment for the mosque, is not recorded (cf. Mishnah, *Avodah Zarah*, 3:4).

[38] One of the Saracens living in the Church of St. Theodore, shortly after the conquest of Syria, shot an arrow at the image of the saint which immediately began to bleed (F. Nau [tr.], *Les Récits inédits du moine Anastase* [ = Extrait de la Revue de l'Institut Catholique de Paris], Paris, 1902, p. 54; the story is repeated by John of Damascus, *Oratio III*, col. 1393). Aṣbagh b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz spat at an image of the virgin in Egypt, promising to uproot the Christians from the land (Severus b. al-Muqaffaʿ, *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria* [ed. and tr. B. Evetts], in *Patrologia Orientalis* V, p. 52). The Council of Nicaea knew of a Saracen who knocked out the eye of an image, whereupon his own eyes immediately fell out (Martin, *Iconoclastic Controversy*, p. 29). Crosses were removed in various places soon after the conquest of Syria (Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* IV, pp. 421f = II, pp. 431f; *Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* [ed. J.-B. Chabot and tr. J.-B. Chabot & A. Abouna] [ = CSCO, Scriptores Syri, vols. 36–7, 56, 154], Louvain 1920–74, vol. I, pp. 262f. = 205). In Egypt they were destroyed in the 680's (E. Amelineau [ed. and tr.], *Histoire du Patriarche Copte Isaac* [ = Publications de l'École des Lettres d'Alger], Paris 1890, p. 43; Severus, *Patriarchs of Alexandria*, p. 25). Maslama promised to break the cross over Leo III's head in 717 and, after the battle of Bagrevan in 772, the Arabs removed the sacred objects and relics from the church and broke the glorious cross of Christ (Łevond, *Histoire* pp. 104, 147).

[39] A.S. Tritton, *The Caliphs and their non-Muslim Subjects*, London 1930, pp. 6f., 9ff., 13f., 102.

[40] Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfiʿī, *Kitāb al-Umm*, Bulaq 1321–25, IV, pp. 131f., with other casuistic details.

[41] "Dispute that took place between an Arab and a monk of the convent of Bēth Ḥālē," Codex Diyarbekir 95, ff. 5a–6a (for the date of this work see Crone & Cook, *Hagarism*, p. 163, n. 23; the Arab enquires about the Christian worship of the Abgar image, crosses and bones of saints, and refers to the fact that the Israelites received a "sentence of capital punishment" everytime they worshipped things made with human hands; the monk adduces the brazen serpent, the ark of the covenant and other biblical examples [though not the cherubim] and is





Christians of their sore spot,[42] but it was only with Arab backing that the Jewish arguments could really hurt. And hurt they clearly did. On the Syrian side, just about *all* the anti-Jewish tracts suddenly deal with images and related objects;[43] and on the Byzantine side there is a case for dating the two major pre-Iconoclast treatises in favour of images to the years following the Arab conquests.[44]

We thus have a situation in which something was very likely to happen on the Christian side. Now in 721 there was a rather unusual outbreak of official iconoclasm among the Arabs, when Yazīd II (720-24) began a systematic destruction of Christian images and crosses, not just in public places, but also in churches and private homes;[45] and it was then that something did happen among the Christians. In 724 there was an outbreak of popular iconoclasm in Anatolia and by 726 it had reached Constantinople.[46] This extraordinary chronological sequence is not likely

familir with Basil's idea that "we revere the picture of the king for the sake of the king"); Sourdel, "Un pamphlet anonyme," pp. 29 = 17f.; A. Jeffery (tr.), "Ghevond's Text of the Correspondence between ʿUmar II and Leo III," *Harvard Theological Review* 37 (1944), p. 278; ʿAbd al-Jabbār b. Aḥmad al-Ḥamadhānī, *Tathbīt dalāʾil al-nubuwwa* I (ed. ʿA. ʿUthmān), Beirut [1966], p. 167 = S.M. Stern, "ʿAbd al-Jabbār's Account of how Christ's Religion was Falsified by the Adoption of Roman Customs" *Journal of Theological Studies* NS 29(1968), p. 147; cf. Becker, *Islamstudien* I, p. 448. For later attacks on the cult of images, crosses, graves and the Virgin, see Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum im Mittelalter*, pp. 138ff; Vryonis, *The Decline of Hellenism*, p. 434; and note the reappearance in the former work of the old Jewish question why the Christians do not worship asses (Fritsch, *op. cit.*, p. 139, compare Bardy, *Trophées de Damas*, p. 248). In the *Quaestiones*, the Christian has heard this question from Jews and pagans (*Hellēnoi*); and since he had hardly been exposed to genuine pagans, we probably have here a translation of the Syriac *ḥanpē*, a common term for Muslims (*Quaestiones*, cols. 621f, question xl).

[42] Cf. above, n. 30.

[43] Thus, the *Doctrina Iacobi* and the *Quaestiones* (cf. Baynes, "The Icons before Iconoclasm", p. 237), the *Trophées de Damas*, the Dialogue of Papiscus and Philo (assuming that it is indeed Syrian), Jerome of Jerusalem, Stephen of Bostra and some Athanasian *spuria* (Williams, *Adversus Judaeos*, pp. 159ff.). Similarly, the *Disputation of Sergius the Stylite*, which goes to town about crosses, images and bones of saints alike (pp. 22ff. = 24ff.).

[44] Cf. above, n. 28.

[45] A.A. Vasiliev, "The Iconoclastic Edict of the Caliph Yazid II, A.D. 721," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 9 (1955). The historicity of the decree is not in doubt. It is attested in Greek, Syriac, Egyptian and Armenian sources, and of these both the Syriac and the Egyptian traditions are clearly local (cf. the Syrian recollection that it was Maslama who was responsible for the enforcement of the decree, and Kindī's detail on the statue in the bath of Zabbān b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz); there is excellent archaeological evidence of deliberate excision of animate figures from Christian pictures in Syria and Egypt; and the insistence of the Syriac and Greek traditions that Jews were called in to do the job certainly lends credibility to the accounts (compare the use of Jews to remove crosses from churches in Jerusalem as recorded by Michael the Syrian and the chronicle of 1234 (for the references, see n. 38), and to demolish the Church of St. John for the construction of the Great Mosque of Damascus as attested in the Islamic tradition (Tritton, *The Caliphs and their non-Muslim Subjects*, p. 95).

[46] G. Ostrogorsky, "Les débuts de la querelle des images," *Mélanges C. Diehl* I, Paris 1930. Theophanes' suggestion that Leo began to display his hostility to images already in 724f. is not so unlikely: the volcanic eruption in 726 was simply the sign that spurred him into action (cf.

to be coincidental, and two further points reinforce the suspicion that what we see is a pattern. First, when Constantine of Nacoleia, the Phrygian bishop involved in the iconoclast outbreak of 724, argued that pictures were idolatrous and against the law, Germanus, the Patriarch, sent him a letter telling him not to worry: their attacks on the Christians notwithstanding, the Jews are also idolatrous, and so for that matter are the Saracens who worship the black stone.[47] The contemporary Germanus, in other words, had no doubts that the raw nerve of the Phrygians had been hit by Jewish and Arab polemics. Secondly, in Armenia there was a suggestive revival of iconoclasm after the arrival of the Arabs,[48] while in the West there was an isolated outburst of iconoclasm at the hands of a bishop who came from Spain, combined his attack on images with an onslaught on intercession and saints and was, moreover, an Adoptianist, that is, an adherent of a Spanish heresy which had certainly been launched in response to Islam.[49] The Arabs, in other words, appear to have hit raw nerves wherever they went.[50] In sum, we have a general expectation that Islam might provoke iconoclasm, a perfect chronological sequence, explicit contemporary testimonia and striking parallels – a cluster of evidence which is all the more impressive for coming from a period for which most of the source material has been lost.[51] To dismiss all this as accidental would require a scepticism verging on the fideist.

*ibid.*, pp. 240f.). But whether an edict was actually issued before 730 scarcely matters in this context.

[47] Germanus, *Epistola*, col. 168.

[48] S. Der Nersessian, "Une apologie des images du septième siècle," *Byzantion* 17 (1944–45), p. 71.

[49] Martin, *Iconoclastic Controversy*, pp. 262 ff. Note that Claudius of Turin also asked the Christians why they did not worship asses (*ibid.*, p. 266).

[50] They would appear to have hit even the Jews; cf. Qūmisī's rejection of incense, lamps and prostrations before the scrolls of the law in the synagogues (J. Mann, "A Tract by an early Karaite Settler in Jerusalem," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 12 [1922], p. 277 = 266; cf. N. Wieder, *The Judean Scrolls and Karaism*, London 1962, p. 267); the Gaonic embarrassment about mosaic floors in synagogues (Neusner, *Talmudic Judaism*, p.88n.; cf. n. 32); and the sarcastic references of a 10th-century Rabbanite to Christian icons and paintings (J. Mann, "An Early Theologico-Polemical Work," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 12–13 [1937–38], p. 417). Christian iconoclasm on the other side of the border by contrast failed to inhibit Jewish speculations about the images on Solomon's throne (E. Ville-Patlagean, "Une image de Solomon en basileus byzantin," *Revue des Etudes Juives* 121 [1962], pp. 26ff.). And conversely Muslim iconoclasm failed to infect the Christians within the Arab dominions, presumably because unlike the Christians outside and the Jews within, they had to hang on to what they had.

[51] Note also the effect of Christian counter-accusations on the Arabs. Germanus having identified the black stone as idolatrous, ʿUmar had qualms about kissing it (Vasiliev, "The Iconoclastic Edict of the Caliph Yazid II," p. 27; the black stone is similarly presented as the Muslim equivalent of the cross in K. Vollers (tr.), "Das Religionsgespräch von Jerusalem (um 800 D) aus dem Arabischen übersetzt," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 29 [1908], pp. 215f., and in Jeffery, "Ghevond's Text," pp. 322f.). Abū Qurra's charge, that God tells the angels to kneel for Adam in the Koran, is dealt with by Ibn Ḥazm, who presumably found his arguments in earlier sources (Becker, *Islamstudien* I, p. 449).







A similar case can be made for law. That the Christians have no law was a favourite Muslim accusation which is attested already in 644[52] and which likewise gave backing to Jewish arguments.[53] The Christian reaction can be followed in Iraq. Already in 676 a preamble to the acts of a Nestorian synod displayed an unusual interest in Christian jurisprudence,[54] and after the transfer of the Muslim capital to Iraq in 750, the Nestorians busied themselves refurbishing the theoretical foundations of Christian law on the one hand[55] and compiling books of substantive law on the other;[56] and the man who perhaps began this activity explicitly referred to the Jewish and Arab polemics which had set him going.[57] Now if one turns from ʿAbbāsid Iraq to Umayyad Syria, one finds that the Arabs had precisely the same effect on the Christians across the border in Byzantium, where Leo III compiled his Eclogue.

The Eclogue is an unusual document. For one thing, Byzantine emperors did not often compile legal codes: after Justinian only Leo III and Basil I (867-86) did so, and Basil explicitly stated that he did so in order to blot out Leo's compilation.[58] For another, both Justinian and Basil were interested in Roman law, whereas Leo's concern was Christian: where Basil improved his selection of Roman

[52] F. Nau (ed. and tr.), "Un colloque du Patriarche Jean avec l'émir des Agaréens," *Journal Asiatique* (11ème série) 5 (1915), p. 251 = 261 (where the accusation still takes the form of a question: are the Christian laws in the Gospel or not?).

[53] They seem in fact to have done more than that. The standard Jewish question before the rise of Islam is why the Christians have abrogated the law of Moses, not why they have no proper replacement; but by the late 8th century it is the second question that both Jews and Muslims ask (for the reference see below, n. 57).

[54] J.-B. Chabot (ed. and tr.), *Synodicon Orientale ou Recueil de synodes nestoriens* (= *Notices et extraits des manuscripts de la Bibliothèque Nationale* XXXVII), Paris 1902, pp. 215f = 480f. Contrast the absence of such preoccupations in the earlier preambles.

[55] Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, p. 180, n. 18. Compare the preamble to the Syro-Roman lawbook, which would appear to be the Jacobite answer to the same accusations (K.G. Bruns & F. Sachau [eds. and trs.], *Syrisch-römisches Rechtsbuch*, Leipzig 1880, preambles to Fr., P., Ar., Arm.; A. Vööbus [ed. and tr.], *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition* II [CSCO, Scriptores Syri, vols. CLXI-CXLIIII], Louvain 1975–76, pp. 100 f = 106ff; cf. also E. Sachau [ed. and tr.], *Syrische Rechtsbücher*, Berlin 1907–14, I, pp. 46f = 47f., for its Nestorian version). The preamble is missing from the 6th century manuscript of the lawbook, and there is no evidence of interest in Christian jurisprudence in pre-Islamic Syria: even John Bar Qursos, who does broach the subject, is interested in obedience rather than principles (Vööbus, *op. cit.* I, pp. 145f. = 142f.). A pre-Islamic date thus seems implausible. But conversely, of course, it may be very late, for it is first attested in an 11th century manuscript (Bruns & Sachau, *op. cit.*, p. 159), and as late as the 13th century Christians felt impelled to justify their antinomianism (M. Steinschneider, *Polemische und apologetische Literatur in arabischer Sprache zwischen Muslimen, Christen und Juden*, Leipzig 1877, p. 33).

[56] It is worth noting that the first codifier of Christian law in Armenia is John of Ojun (ca. 720).

[57] Sachau, *Syrische Rechtsbücher* III, p. 20 = 21 (Īshōʿbokht).

[58] I. Zepos & P. Zepos, *Ius Graeco-Romanorum* II, Athens 1961, pp. 116, 237; cf. E.H. Freshfield, "The Official Manuals of Roman Law of the Eighth and Ninth Centuries," *The Cambridge Law Journal* 4 (1930), pp. 44f.

laws in the direction of greater *utility*,[59] Leo by contrast improved his in the direction of greater *philanthropy*, a term which, however it is to be understood, was certainly loaded with Christian connotations.[60] But it is above all Leo's Old Testament orientation which is unusual.[61] It is apparent in the selection of scriptural quotations, in the literal application of the Mosaic principle of retribution,[62] in the selection of Mosaic laws appended to the Eclogue by either Leo himself or one of his Iconoclast successors,[63] and, most strikingly, in the presentation of the Eclogue as scriptural law in Leo's preamble.[64] This orientation is very much in line with the general Iconoclast attachment to the Old Testament;[65] and it is of course manifest Judaizing.[66]

[59] Zepos & Zepos, *Ius Graeco-Romanorum* II, p. 116 = Freshfield, "Official Manuals," p. 43.

[60] Zepos & Zepos, *op. cit.*, p. 11 = E.H. Freshfield (tr.), *A Manual of Roman Law, the Ecloga*, Cambridge 1926, p. 66; cf. T.E. Gregory, "The Ekloga of Leo III and the Concept of Philanthropia," *Byzantina* 7 (1975).

[61] S. Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm during the Reign of Leo III* (= CSCO, Subsidia, vol. 41), Louvain 1973, pp. 56f.

[62] Gregory, "The Ekloga of Leo III," p. 277.

[63] The appendices to the Eclogue, which consist partly of imperial legislation and partly of Mosaic law, were not found in the manuscripts used by Zachariae von Lingenthal, whose edition is reproduced in Zepos & Zepos, but in a 16th century manuscript which was edited by A.G. Montferratus, *Ecloga Leonis et Constantini*, Athens 1889 (this is the edition used by Freshfield for his translation of the Eclogue), and in a Norman manuscript of imperial codes dating from the 12th century (E.H. Freshfield [tr.], *A Manual of Later Roman Law*, Cambridge 1927, p. 6). There is no doubt that the appendices were added officially. Now, the Norman manuscript includes the *Procheiron Nomos* and a novel of Basil, but no later legislation, presumably because the Arabs completed their conquest of Sicily in 878 (*ibid.*, p. 2), so the appendices must have been added before then; and since no Iconodule ruler (least of all Basil) would wish to augment, as opposed to supersede, the Eclogue, the only question is which Iconoclast emperor did it, a point of subsidiary interest in this context. The concern with sorcerers, magicians, Manicheans and heretics in the appendices might indicate a time when Paulicians and Athinganoi were very much in the open, i.e. the second Iconoclast period, and if that is correct, Michael II is an obvious candidate for the authorship.

[64] Leo's preamble may be paraphrased as follows: God gave man a law so that he might be saved; His word endures for ever and He will judge man according to his deeds; *therefore* I, who have been bidden to feed my flock, will break the bonds of wickedness by drawing up a selection of Roman laws in an intelligible language. Leo's Roman laws are thus part of God's enduring words. Contrast the wholly pragmatic attitude of Basil: the law is in a frightful mess which is tiresome to students (Zepos & Zepos, *op. cit.*, p. 115 = Freshfield, 'Official Manuals,' p. 43).

[65] Cf. Theodore the Studite's mockery of the Iconoclasts for their Old Testament obsession (Martin, *Iconoclastic Controversy*, p. 192).

[66] That the Iconoclasts were Judaizers was not lost on contemporaries (cf. Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm*, p. 60). But note that in the domain of political authority the Iconoclasts opted, not for a Solomonic restoration in the style of the contemporary Franks, but for a Byzantine caliphate: Leo III's assertion that he was both high-priest and emperor, Leo V's order that the bishops must regard him as the highest ecclesiastical authority, Leo III's and Constantine V's appeal to the laity over the heads of the clergy, and Constantine V's uncanonical election of a Patriarch all recall the Islamic imāmate, not the Jewish monarchy (Ostrogorsky, "Débuts,"





In view of the Nestorian parallel, this unusual code can plausibly be seen as a response to Islam, and again there are two subsidiary points to reinforce the plausibility. First, it is notable that the Byzantines should opt for scriptural law where the Nestorians, by contrast, chose to buttress their law with the concept of a Christian oral tradition.[67] To put it rather summarily, these diverse reactions correspond very neatly with the two major stages in the evolution of Muslim jurisprudence.[68] Second, it is notable that Leo should open his preamble by proclaiming that man has been endowed with free will.[69] On the one hand, free will was not a conventional *topos* of legal preambles;[70] and on the other, it had just become a major issue in Islam[71] so that already John of Damascus thought of determinism as a key Saracen tenet.[72] To someone coming from an Islamic background Leo's statement sounds extremely aggressive, and it is hard to believe that it was not meant as such, particularly as he goes on to state his confidence that, by "breaking the bonds of wickedness" with his law, he may be victorious over his enemies.[73] For Leo, who had risen to the throne shortly before, or during the siege of Constantinople, the Arabs were *the* enemies. The Eclogue was thus conceived as an instrument of Christian warfare against the Arabs, a rectification of the faith so that God might rejoin the Byzantines; and this is perhaps the neatest evidence that Byzantine Judaizing was a response to the moral and military incursions of the Arabs into the Byzantine world.

Now the Arab-Byzantine interaction might well have taken place directly; there was no lack of direct confrontation, be it military, political, polemical or cultural at the highest level,[74] and the diplomatic warfare that was waged on contemporary coinage was certainly part of such a direct dialogue.[75] There is, nonetheless, a case to be made for an intermediary milieu.

p. 250; Martin, *Iconoclastic Controversy*, pp. 52, 179; Alexander, *The Patriarch Nicephorus*, pp. 9, 11; contrast W. Ullmann, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship*, London 1969).

[67] Crone & Cook, *Hagarism*, p. 181, n. 18.

[68] *Ibid.*, pp. 29f., 38.

[69] Zepos & Zepos, *Ius Graeco-Romanorum* II, p. 12 = Freshfield, *The Ecloga*, p. 66.

[70] It is absent from Justinian's Codex, Basil's *Procheiron Nomos* and the Syrian codes.

[71] J. Van Ess, *Zwischen Ḥadīṯ und Theologie*, Berlin–New York 1975, p. 181. Given Van Ess's dating of the controversy, it is not surprising that the *topos* is still absent from the Nestorian preamble of 676.

[72] John of Damascus, *Disputatio Saraceni et Christiani* in *MPG* CVI, cols. 1336ff. (reprinted with an English translation in D.J. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, Leiden 1972, pp. 142ff.); for the authorship of this work see Khoury, *Théologiens byzantins et l'Islam*, pp. 68–71.

[73] Zepos & Zepos, *op. cit.*, p. 13 = Freshfield, *The Ecloga*, p. 67.

[74] Cf. H.A.R. Gibb, "Arab–Byzantine Relations under the Umayyad Caliphate," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 12 (1958).

[75] Though needless to say, there are those who believe it a mere coincidence that Justinian II (685–95, 705–11) called himself *servus Christi* and put images of Christ on his coins, while ʿAbd al-Malik (685–705) was experimenting with his *miḥrāb* and *ʿanaza* coins.

The milieu in question is one of Judaizers who had, so to speak, gone over the edge to become Judeo-Christians. There was nothing new about the existence of such groups, and Judaizers who had to a greater or lesser extent gone over the edge are attested, *inter alia,* in fifth-century Phrygia[76] and in Syria from the fourth to the thirteenth century, the Syrians in particular being recidivists.[77] But once again Islam made a difference. For one thing, it was always in the Muslim interest to play minorities against the mainstream traditions;[78] and for another, Muslims and Judeo-Christians were natural allies in that both claimed to be representatives of true Christianity. Islam made Judeo-Christianity a polemically viable position, and accordingly the Judeo-Christians came out of hiding and began to recruit. On the Byzantine side there is some weak evidence of baptized Jews being known as Montanists, presumably in Phrygia;[79] and it is also in Phrygia, more precisely in Amorium, that we find the Athinganoi who combined Christianity with Mosaic law and Gnostic beliefs;[80] they appear, in fact, to have been Samaritan Gnostics, a point which will be taken up later. On the Arab side there is a tenth century attestation of Christians, apparently in the Jazīra, who rejected the divinity of Jesus, accepting him only as a good man and more specifically as a good Jew[81] – a point which distinguishes them from the many other Christians in Iraq, Egypt, Armenia and Spain who, on exposure to the Muslims, denied that Jesus was other

[76] A. Sharf, *Byzantine Jewry from Justianian to the First Crusade*, London 1971, p. 73; cf. also p. 34 for Judaizers in 5th-century North Africa.

[77] For the evidence, see S. Kazan, "Isaac of Antioch's Homily against the Jews," *Oriens Christianus* 97, 99 (1963, 1965), to which Hayman, *The Disputation of Sergius the Stylite*, pp. 73f. = 72f. should now be added. Cf. also B. Blumenkranz, *Juifs et chrétiens dans le monde occidental*, Paris 1960, pp. 55ff., for medieval Europe. Most of this Judaizing appears to have been behavioural rather than doctrinal, a point which distinguishes it from that which was to appear in the Islamic world.

[78] For a striking illustration from the time of Maʾmūn, see Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* IV, p. 517 = III, p. 56; cf. also C. Cahen, "Points de vue sur la révolution ʿabbâside," *Revue Historique* 230 (1963), p. 299.

[79] Leo the Grammarian has it that the Jews baptized by Leo were known as Montanists, and an abjuration formula mentions that the Montanists stand outside the synagogue for unspecified reasons (A. Sharf, "The Jews, the Montanists and the Emperor Leo III," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 59 (1966), p. 40; Sharf's suggestion that the Montanists, who preferred death to baptism by Leo, were also such Jews is, however, not convincing).

[80] Timothy of Constantinople, *De Receptione Haereticorum, MPG* LXXXVI [1], col. 33, translated by G. Bardy, "Melchisédek dans la tradition patristique," *Revue Biblique* 36 [1927], p. 37; anonymous, *Peri Melkhisedekitōn kai Theodotianōn kai Athinganōn*, ed., with a Norwegian translation, by C.P. Caspari, "Kirkehistoriske Rejsefrugter," *Theologisk Tidsskrift for den Evangelisk-Lutherske Kirke i Norge* NS 8 (1882), partially translated into French by Bardy, *op. cit.*, p. 38; Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia*, (ed. and tr. I. Bekker), Bonn 1837, pp. 42f.; cf. J. Starr, "An Eastern Christian Sect: the Athinganoi," *Harvard Theological Review* 29 (1936).

[81] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt*, p. 199 = S.M. Stern, "Quotations from Apocryphal Gospels in ʿAbd al-Jabbār," *Journal of Theological Studies* NS 18 (1967), p. 51.





than a man or at the most a spiritual or adopted son of God.[82] Conversely, there were also Jews, primarily Karaites, who accepted Jesus as a good and learned man of their own.[83] And there is other evidence of Jewish-Christian contamination.[84]

What did these sects have to say for themselves? On the Byzantine side the evidence is limited. The Athinganoi, we are told, accepted Christ as a mere man, replaced circumcision by baptism or had neither one nor the other, observed the Sabbath, at least when with Jews, and also Levitical purity and Mosaic law in general; they had Jewish preceptors; they held that Melchizedek was a "great power" or God himself, basing themselves on Hebrews 7; they invoked the demons Arkhe, Sekhan and Sarou and practised divination and magic.[85] More interesting evidence, however, is available on the Arab side of the frontier. In a number of Muslim and Jewish sources there is a very odd account of how Christianity was corrupted by the introduction of Roman customs. The longest version is that preserved by ʿAbd al-Jabbār, a Muslim who wrote in 995,[86] but there is also a fairly substantial one in Qirqisānī, a tenth century Karaite who excerpted it from a book by Dāwūd b. Marwān al-Muqammiṣ, a ninth century Jew who had converted to Christianity and studied Christian doctrine in Nisibis before he proceeded to write anti-Christian books;[87] and of shorter versions there are a great many.[88] The full argument runs that Jesus did not claim divinity, that he did not abrogate the law of Moses, that it was Paul (and/or Peter) who jettisoned the law in an attempt

[82] H.A. Wolfson, "An Unknown Splinter Group of Nestorians," in his *The Philosophy of Kalam*, Cambridge (Mass.) 1976, pp.337–49 (Iraq); Saadia Gaon, *Kitāb al-amānāt waʾl-iʿtiqādāt* (ed. S. Landauer), Leiden 1880, pp. 90f = *idem., The Book of Beliefs and Opinions* (tr. S. Rosenblatt), New Haven 1948, p. 109 (presumably Iraq or Egypt); W. Madelung, *Der Imam al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm und die Glaubenslehre der Zaiditen*, Berlin 1965, p. 89 (Egypt); on Spanish Adoptianism see E. Amann, "L'Adoptianisme espagnol du VIII$^{e}$ siècle," *Revue des Sciences Religieuses* 16 (1936).

[83] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *op. cit.*, p. 142; Qirqisānī, *Kitāb al-anwār waʾl-marāqib* (ed. L. Nemoy), New York 1949, pp. 42f.

[84] Cf. the 8th century Serenus/Severus who converted to Judaism and proclaimed the coming of the Messiah in Mesopotamia (J. Starr, "Le mouvement messianique au début du viii$^{e}$ siècle," *Revue des Etudes Juives,* NS 2 [1937]), Abū ʿIsā's acceptance of Jesus as a prophet along with Muḥammad, and the prohibition of divorce by the same heretic (Qirqisānī, *op. cit.*, pp. 51f.).

[85] For the references see above, n. 80.

[86] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt*, pp. 91ff.; partial translation by Stern, "Apocryphal Gospels" and "ʿAbd al-Jabbār's Account."

[87] Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, pp. 44f. = L. Nemoy (tr.), "al-Qirqisānī's Account of the Jewish Sects and Christianity," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 7 (1930), pp. 366ff. For a bibliography on Muqammiṣ, see G. Vajda, "La finalité de la création de l'homme selon un théologien juif du IXe siècle," *Oriens* 15 (1962), p. 61n. He does not appear to be the author of the account preserved in ʿAbd al-Jabbār; there are no verbal correspondences and Peter who, together with Paul, makes up Christian pseudo-laws in Muqammiṣ' account, scarcely figures in ʿAbd al-Jabbār's.

[88] For these see Stern, "ʿAbd al-Jabbār's Account," pp. 176ff., to which the anonymous treatise published by Pines (below, n. 158), a passage in Ibn Ḥazm (discussed in the same publication), and another in Shahrastānī (below, n. 167) should be added.

to win over the gentiles, and that the adoption of Christianity by Constantine completed the process of paganization. In short, what the Iconoclast Council defined as a middle course between Judaism and paganism is here taken up for a close and hostile analysis. The Judeo-Christian character of this analysis is unmistakable.[89] It is not, however, very likely that we have here a document going back to the Judeo-Christians of the fourth century, as was suggested by Pines.[90] But equally, it is most unlikely that it was invented by Muslims or Christian converts to Islam, as Stern maintained.[91] If, on the one hand, we have new Judeo-Christian sects and, on the other hand, new Judeo-Christian accounts, it seems natural to put the two together.

The demonstration that they should indeed be put together is a rather lengthy one and has for that reason been relegated to a special section at the end of this paper. Suffice it here to say that if the argument set out there is accepted, there are three conclusions to be drawn. First, there were Judeo-Christian sects in Mesopotamia and Phrygia who broadcast far and wide that Christianity was a corruption of Christ's religion. Second, the Muslims were aware of these sects by the eighth century, and indeed almost certainly before. And third, the Muslims could use their arguments. So could the Jews. That, of course, is precisely why the arguments survived in Muslim and Jewish sources.

We thus have a situation in which Byzantine Christianity is under triple attack: the Arabs on the Byzantine frontier are backing up the Jews inside the Byzantine state and the Judeo-Christians inside the Byzantine church. Now it is these Judeo-Christians who were so eminently well placed to spark off iconoclasm on *both* sides of the frontier.

If we start on the Arab side, what we are told is this. A Jew promised Yazīd II thirty or forty years of rule if he would smash up Christian and other images in his dominions;[92] Yazīd's successor killed the Jew, but the Phrygian bishops had got

[89] Fritsch noticed it already for the versions preserved in thirteenth century sources (*Islam und Christentum im Mittelalter*, p. 50; cf. Stern, *op. cit.*, p. 182).

[90] S. Pines, *The Jewish Christians of the Early Centuries according to a New Source* (Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Proceedings II, 13), Jerusalem 1966. For a discussion of this theory (which was by no means as unlikely as Stern would have it), see the section on the Judeo-Christians below.

[91] Stern, "ʿAbd al-Jabbār's Account," pp. 184f. For one thing, Pines is certainly right that the original must have been in Syriac (*The Jewish Christians*, pp. 8f.); for another, it was not in the Muslim interest to argue that the Christians ought to be Jews (cf. the neat contrast between Jāḥiẓ's and ʿAbd al-Jabbār's handling of the same arguments in S. Pines, " 'Israel, My Firstborn' and the Sonship of Jesus," in *Studies in Mysticism and Religion presented to G.G. Scholem*, Jerusalem 1967, pp. 179f.). But it is, above all, the fact that the author purports to give the inside story which is such striking evidence that he was himself a Judeo-Christian.

[92] Thirty years, according to John of Jerusalem's report at the Council of Nicaea in 787 (tr. L.W. Barnard, *The Graeco-Roman and Oriental Background of the Iconoclastic Controversy*, Leiden 1974, pp. 15ff.); forty years, according to Theophanes (*Chronographia* I, pp. 401f., A.M. 6215) and Ṭabarī, who omits the condition that Yazīd should destroy images (*Taʾrīkh al-rusul waʾl-mulūk* (ed. M. De Goeje et al.), Leiden 1897–1901, ser. ii, pp. 1463f.).





the idea;[93] or according to another version, we do not know what happened to the Jew, but Leo got the idea from a Byzantine Christian who had converted to Islam in captivity and subsequently escaped.[94] This convert, Bēser, i.e. Bishr, is also known to the Islamic tradition,[95] and there is some ground for identifying him with the Jew. The Jew was known as Tesserakontapēchys, "forty cubits", which is not a name, but a nickname and clearly a reference to the forty years which, according to Ṭabarī, he had promised Yazīd by misreading forty "reeds" as forty years instead of forty weeks.[96] Bishr, the convert, is known to have been a patrician.[97] Now in a late Arabic source we meet a man by the name of "son of forty cubits" who was a patrician in the entourage of Leo III.[98] Presumably, then, the Jew and the convert were identical.

What happened to Bishr? If we go by Theophanes he was killed, not on the death of Yazīd II, but in the course of Artavasdus' revolt on the death of Leo III.[99] According to Michael the Syrian, however, he escaped to the Arabs, pretended to be Tiberius and offered them his help.[100] He was, we are told, a former Muslim and now once more a Melkite Christian; yet he was also something of a Jew, for he had the Jews come and sing their incantations for him, and deep down he was a pagan, for he had the head of the Harranian community predict the outcome of his venture. If we put the various testimonia together, what they suggest is, first, that the man was historical and, second, that he was very hard to classify.

The interesting point about his unclassifiability is that it fits precisely with that of the Judeo-Christians in general and the Athinganoi in particular. The pagans of Ḥarrān and the Judeo-Christians appear as common victims of Roman Christi-

[93] Thus John of Jerusalem.

[94] Thus Theophanes (who, together with John of Jerusalem, lies behind all subsequent Greek accounts; for these, see Vasiliev, "The Iconoclastic Edict of the Caliph Yazid II," pp. 31ff.).

[95] Steinschneider, *Polemische und apologetische Literatur*, p. 44.

[96] Ṭabarī, *loc. cit.*

[97] Theophanes, *Chronographia* I, p. 414, A.M. 6233.

[98] M.J. De Goeje (ed.), *Fragmenta Historicorum Arabicorum* I, Leiden 1869, pp. 30f. (= *Kitāb al-ʿuyūn waʾl-ḥadāʾiq*); the passage has been translated by E.W. Brooks, "The Campaign of 716–718 from Arabic Sources," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 108 (1899), pp. 26f. Cf. also J. Starr, "An Iconodulic Legend and its Historical Basis," *Speculum* 8 (1933).

[99] Theophanes, *loc. cit.*; there is thus agreement that he was finished on the death of his protector, if not on the protector's identity.

[100] Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* IV, pp. 462f. = II, pp. 503f. (also in the *Chronicon ad 1234* I, pp. 311f. = 242f., without the details of Bishr's religion). Michael does not explain why Bishr suddenly turned up in Mesopotamia, and moreover he places his appearance in 1048 A.S. = 736f A.D., that is, before Leo's death and Artavasdus' revolt. Ps.-Dionysius, however, also places Artavasdus' revolt before Leo's death, specifically in 1045 A.S. = 733f. A.D. (J.-B. Chabot (tr.), *Chronique de Denys de Tell-Maḥré*, Paris 1895, pp. 24f.), and it is presumably because of this tradition that Bishr's return is placed too early.

anity in ʿAbd al-Jabbār,[101] and of the Athinganoi we are explicitly told that they combined their Mosaicism with Gnostic beliefs;[102] moreover, they were famed for their predictive skills.[103] That Bishr was a Phrygian is possible;[104] that he was a friend of Leo III, a former *strategos* of the Anatolikon theme based in Amorium, is certain; and if, moreover, he was a Jew, a Christian and a pagan involved above all in the business of prediction, it is impossible not to recognize in him an Athinganos abroad.

If on the Arab side of the frontier we see the Arabs welcome an Athinganos abroad, on the Byzantine side we can see them back up the Athinganoi at home. The evidence here comes in the Definition of the Iconoclast Council of 754. This Council took up a moderate position between two extremes. On the one hand, it said, we will not tolerate images, but, on the other hand, we will not reject the cult of saints, nor will we deny the resurrection.[105] Now what, one might say, does Iconoclasm have to do with resurrection? Evidently something, for doubts over the resurrection crop up again in the second Iconoclast period among the followers of Leo V (813–20) and Michael II (820–29);[106] and with Michael there is no longer any doubt where it comes from, for Michael was an Athinganos or at least acquainted with Athinganic beliefs.[107]

[101] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt*, p. 163 = Stern, "ʿAbd al-Jabbār's Account," p. 145; cf. p. 176. The integration of the Judeo-Christian and Ḥarrānī accounts *might* of course be the work of ʿAbd al-Jabbār himself, but it is hard to see what motive he could have.

[102] The author of the *Peri Melkhisedekitōn* even thought that the Athinganoi were largely drawn from pagans (Caspari, "Kirkehistoriske Rejsefrugter," p. 308 = 313).

[103] Caspari, "Kirkehistoriske Rejsefrugter," pp. 308, 312 = 313, 316; cf. Starr, "An Eastern Christian Sect," p. 103; it was an Athinganos who predicted the accession of Michael II (*ibid.*, p. 95).

[104] According to Michael the Syrian, Bishr was from Pergamon, and according to Theophanes the fortune-telling Jew was from Laodicea in Phoenicia. Since the location of Laodicea may well be Theophanes' own gloss to his (presumably Syriac) source, it is worth considering that he may have come from the Phrygian, not the Phoenician, Laodicea.

[105] Anastos, "The Argument for Iconoclasm," p. 186.

[106] Nicephorus, *Antirrhetici* (*MPG* C), col. 489; Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia*, pp. 48f. On the face of it Nicephorus' passage suggests that the offenders were merely having a good time in defiance of the clergy, but there is more to it than that. Leo V's adherents were coarse soldiers who, out of their boundless admiration for Constantine V, did everything Constantine had done, but did it entirely without his theological finesse. Thus the banquets in which monks were forced to drink wine and eat meat were crude imitations of Constantine's dealings with monks (Martin, *Iconoclastic Controversy*, pp. 60, 170; cf. also Alexander, *The Patriarch Nicephorus*, pp. 115–25). Equally, Leo, like Constantine, disbelieved in saints (Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 180). Presumably, Leo and his cronies were also imitating Constantine when they displayed their conspicuous insouciance about the fate of their souls, and it is certainly not implausible that it was Constantine whom the Council of 754 had in mind, not just when it condemned disbelief in saints, but also when it anathematized doubts over the resurrection.

[107] Genesius only knows that he was from Amorium, a city teeming with Athinganoi, and that one of them predicted his accession (*Historia de rebus Constantinopolitanibus* [*MPG*, CIX] col. 1028), but Theophanes Continuatus is explicit that he was brought up within this sect (*Chronographia*, pp. 42f.), and his testimony is corroborated by Michael the Syrian, whose





The Athinganoi were Samaritan Gnostics. The Samaritan component is attested partly in their name, "touch-me-not", a reference to the Samaritan obsession with ritual purity with which the Koran is also familiar,[108] and partly in the Mosaic fundamentalism of Michael II who, like the Samaritans, accepted only the Pentateuch as scripture.[109] Now Pentateuchism was once associated with denial of the resurrection, and had continued to be so either in Samaritanism at large or else in Samaritan heresy;[110] it was, moreover, clearly on Pentateuchal grounds, not for Gnostic motives, that Michael II would have none of the resurrection.[111]

The Arab backing consists in the fact that the Arabs had themselves been Mosaic fundamentalists at one stage. That the Arabs once accepted the Pentateuch as their one and only scripture is admittedly not a traditional scholarly view, but it is attested in a dispute dating from 644.[112] And it was surely because

statement that Michael II's grandfather was a Jewish convert to Christianity derived from the lost early 9th century chronicle of Dionysius of Tell-Maḥré (*Chronique* IV, p. 521 = III, p. 72; the source is explicitly named on p. 520 = 70). Moreover, Theophanes' continuator proceeds to give an account of Michael II's beliefs which is far too coherent to be the product of scurrilous fantasy (pp. 48f.). Nor can it be dismissed as merely an elaboration of the equation "Athinganos = Samaritan" (as does J. Gouillard, "L'hérésie dans l'empire byzantin des origines au xiie siècle," *Travaux et Mémoires* 1 [1965], p. 311). For one thing, this equation is quite unknown to the early sources on the Athinganoi; Germanus does compare their fear of pollution to that of the Samaritans (*De haeresibus et synodis* [*MPG* XCVIII], col. 85), but that is hardly to equate the two, and Theophanes' continuator explicitly describes Athinganism as a new faith (*Chronographia*, p. 42). For another, such an elaboration would merely have reproduced the Patristic stereotypes on the Samaritans; but just as the continuator's account is not incoherent, so also it is not stereotyped.

[108] 20:97; note also the Hagarene belief attested in Greek sources that the Samaritans will go to heaven where they will be busy keeping Paradise clean (Khoury, *Les Théologiens Byzantins et l'Islam*, pp. 184, 198). This obsession with ritual purity was not peculiar to the Dositheans; Epiphanius notes it for all the Samaritans, and the 6th century Samaritan who burnt straw over the footsteps of the pilgrim from Piacenza and made him throw his coins into water to avoid his polluting touch, was hardly a heretic (Sharf, *Byzantine Jewry*, pp. 30, 44). For the very similar behaviour of the Athinganoi, see Timothy of Constantinople, *De Receptione*, col. 33 = Bardy, "Melchisedek," p. 37.

[109] Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia*, pp. 48f. (he abused the Prophets, and denied the existence of the Devil on the ground that Moses does not mention him).

[110] That it was the Samaritans at large and not the Dositheans who continued to deny the resurrection has recently been argued by S.J. Isser, *The Dositheans*, Leiden 1976.

[111] It is mentioned in the same breath as his denial of the Devil. Note that he also found fault with the Christian computation of Easter and toyed with the idea of fasting on the Sabbath, a most unorthodox idea from the Jewish point of view.

[112] Crone & Cook, *Hagarism*, pp. 14f. Mosaic fundamentalism (presumably combined with at least partial acceptance of the New Testament; cf. their use of Hebrews 7) is not attested for the Athinganoi before Michael II, so the possibility cannot be excluded that they picked it up from the Arabs. But it is not very likely, for Pentateuchism was not just a Samaritan, but also a traditional Judeo-Christian position: it is attested for Epiphanius' Ebionite Elkesaites whose combination of Judeo-Christianity and Gnosticism so recalls that of the Athinganoi (A.F.J Klijn & G.J. Reinink, *Patristic Evidence for Jewish-Christian Sects*, Leiden 1973, p. 186). At all events, the general point made here remains unaffected. The Arabs may have suggested this

the Arabs took up this scriptural position that the old question of the resurrection was suddenly revived. Thus Ḥevond has ʿUmar II (717–20) deny the resurrection on Pentateuchal grounds, while Leo III refers to a Muslim sect which similarly denied it and which is perhaps also referred to in the Koran;[113] and doubts over the resurrection are also indicated among the Zaydīs.[114] It was thus against the background of Muslim interest in the question that the doubts of the Athinganoi could reach Constantinople.

If we put the evidence on the two sides together, the situation is this. On the Arab side, there is an inveterate hostility to Christian pictures, but the Arabs cannot usually be bothered to go and smash them up. On the Greek side, there is an endemic bad conscience about such pictures, but the Greeks do not usually have the nerve to smash them up. Now if a Phrygian Athinganos should start tinkering with these highly charged wires, the outcome would be precisely what actually occurred; a short anti-Christian blast among the Arabs, and an enormous explosion burning up the accumulated qualms of the Greeks. It is not that all Iconoclasts were Athinganoi; but it is precisely because they detonated the explosion that some of their shrapnel was likely to fall in the capital.

It is worth concluding this argument with a brief discussion of the very different outcomes of hostility to images in Byzantium and Islam. Evidently, Byzantine Iconoclasm was a failure and, insofar as this is a fact about Byzantine history, it is not a very interesting one. Unlike the European Reformation, that of the Byzantines was a conspiracy between a ruling elite and a religious minority which, in the absence of long-term social or political upheavals, could not possibly issue in a religious revolution. No wonder then that in the last resort the Byzantines opted for John of Damascus' justification of image worship and sealed the question once and for all by making the cult of images part of their faith.[115] Already by the second Iconoclast period, everyone was sick and tired of the whole question,[116] and it was resumed largely because it was held to bring military success.[117] The

scriptural position to the Athinganoi or they may have reinforced it, but either way their effect was to boost the polemical position of the heretics.

[113] Crone & Cook, *op. cit.*, p. 165, n. 49. Note also the query "whence do we know for certain that the soul does not die with the body? for there are some who hold this view" (*Quaestiones*, col. 608, question xvii).

[114] Nawbakhtī, *Kitāb firaq al-Shīʿa* (ed. H. Ritter), Istanbul 1931, p. 37.

[115] Note how veneration of images and saints is included in the formula for conversion from Islam (Khoury, *Théologiens Byzantins et l'Islam*, pp. 193f).

[116] Cf. Michael II's attempt to bury the issue by prohibiting all discussion of images, be it for or against (Martin, *Iconoclastic Controversy*, p. 201).

[117] The Iconoclast Leo V argued that he had to satisfy public opinion, that image worship was being held responsible for pagan military success, that Leo and Constantine had found the observance of orthodoxy the best safeguard of public security, and that only the Iconoclast emperors had succeeded in founding a dynasty and dying full of honour (Martin, *ibid.*, pp. 162, 165, 168, 172; compare the very similar evaluation of the Iconoclast emperors by J. Herrin in Bryer and Herrin, *Iconoclasm*, pp. 15ff.). It was soldiers who broke into Nicephorus' house, soldiers who stoned the Chalce image, soldiers who constituted the following of Leo V who was





success failed to materialise, and when the Arabs finally took Amorium in 838, it was the Iconoclasts, not the icons, that got the blame.[118]

As a fact about Christian history, however, the failure is an illuminating one. The pagan component of Christianity is intrinsic in respect of both faith and culture. In respect of the faith it has generated the trinity, and there is thus a limit to the extent to which Christians can afford to be monotheists. Constantine V (741–75) might well reject the saints, but he could not very well reject Christ, the intercessor par excellence; so it is hardly surprising that he was haunted by worries about Christology. The Christians across the border also worried. "If, on the one hand, we worship one God," as a puzzled Syrian in a seventh century treatise put it, "it is plain that, being monarchianists, we are practising Judaism; but if, on the other hand, we worship three gods, it is clear that we are practising paganism."[119] Constantine is accused now of having played up the divinity of Christ[120] and now of having played it down,[121] and he is likely enough to have tried both expedients; it was precisely because the Iconoclasts wished to be monotheists that they had to choose, as Theodore the Studite so rightly saw, between the error of Mani, who held that Jesus was wholly divine, and that of Paul of Samosata, who considered him wholly human.[122] Within the middle course which constituted orthodox Christianity, their problem was not amenable to solution.

In respect of culture, the pagan component of Christianity was to leave room for secularism. Because Christianity is only a faith, the culture must of necessity come from elsewhere. This extraneous culture can be sanctified by a profusion of saints – what Peter Brown calls a haemorrhage of the divine,[123] or it can be desanctified in the name of the one God; but just as it cannot become intrinsically holy, so also, having no Christian alternative, it cannot be totally

himself a soldier (Martin, *op. cit.*, pp. 166, 168, 170, cf. above, n. 106), and it was also soldiers who rushed to Constantine's grave in the face of the Bulgarian threat in 813, telling him to get up and save his city (Theophanes, *Chronographia* I, p. 504, A.M. 6305).

[118] Khoury, *Théologiens Byzantins et l'Islam*, pp. 169ff.

[119] *Quaestiones*, col. 597, question i (*Ioudaizomen . . . Hellēnizomen*). The answer characteristically is to stop thinking.

[120] G. Ostrogorsky, *Studien zur Geschichte der byzantinischen Bilderstreites*, Breslau 1929, pp. 24ff. For a different view see S. Brock in Bryer and Herrin, *Iconoclasm*, pp. 53ff. Michael the Syrian's belief that Constantine V was "orthodox" (viz. a Monophysite) is however unlikely to derive entirely from his personal misinterpretation of John of Damascus' condemnation, for when he later describes Leo IV as "orthodox," he states that he has this information from a Melkite writer (*Chronique* IV, pp. 473, 479 = II, p. 521; III, p. 2). But Brock is evidently right that Monophysitism has nothing to do with the *outbreak* of Iconoclasm.

[121] He asked the Patriarch if one could call Mary the mother of Christ (rather than the mother of God), which the Patriarch thought Nestorian, and on another occasion he denied that Christ was more than a mere man (Theophanes, *Chronographia*, I, pp. 415, 435, A.M. 6233, 6255; George the Monk, *Chronographia* II (ed. C. de Boor), Leipzig 1904, p. 756). Just how much of this is true is of course hard to tell, but that he worried is equally hard to deny.

[122] Theodore the Studite, *Quaestiones Iconomachis Propositae*, (*MPG* XCIX), cols. 480f.

[123] Brown, "A Dark-Age crisis," p. 8.

rejected. Christian fundamentalism thus has no foundations,[124] and it is precisely this point which the Iconoclasts illustrate by their setting out as Judaizers and their ending up as Hellenizers.

In the domain of art, both the Muslims and the Iconoclasts were up against an unholy alliance between monotheism and a pagan craft – unholy in that God did not want pictures and the pagans did not want God. But whereas in Islam the dissolution of this alliance eventually led to the virtual occlusion of the pagan craft,[125] in Byzantium the outcome was rather an artistic reorientation. Leo III, it is true, would have nothing but the cross – at the same time aniconic and anti-Islamic. But Constantine V proceeded to fill the churches and palaces with secular pictures, possibly, though this is largely guesswork, in the illusionist style which ultimately went back to the Hellenistic world;[126] and Theophilus (829–42) was bent on wholesale imitation of the courtly art of Baghdad.[127] Neither, in other words, suppressed the pagan craft: they could only render it religiously inert.

Similarly, in the domain of learning the Iconoclasts were up against an unholy alliance between scripture and philosophy. What, in the words of ʿAbd al-Jabbār, did Aristotle know of God?[128] But again, where in Islam the dissolution of this alliance eventually led to the virtual occlusion of philosophy,[129] in Byzantium the outcome was rather a cultural reorientation. Leo once more set out as a fundamentalist: he is credited with an attack on higher learning, presumably secular.[130] Michael the Amorian is similarly described as hostile to Hellenic learning;[131] and at the same time there appears to have been a significant shift from

[124] Cf. Crone & Cook, *Hagarism*, pp. 139ff.

[125] The long history of this process is certainly an interesting one, but its protracted nature does not invalidate the point. The misfortune of the Muslim rabbis was that ʿAbbāsid priestliness having worn off, the east fell to Zaydīs and the west to Ismāʿīlīs (for the slightly more favourable attitude to images among Shīʿites see Paret, "Das Islamische Bilderverbot und die Schia"; note the typical instance of priestly discretion by Muʿizz on p. 230). The Seljuqs did indeed restore Sunnism, but what with Turkish ethnicity, Persian culture, political dissolution and Christian secretaries, pictures inevitably came back; witness the neo-Hellenistic coinage of the Artuqids, the Christian scribe of the Arabic Dioscorides, and the general renaissance of Byzantine art in Islamic books. But the thirteenth century was a turning point, for if the Mongol conquest provided the background for the flowering of Persian miniatures, in the west the *ʿulamāʾ* came back for ever.

[126] Cf. R. Cormack, "The Arts during the Age of Iconoclasm" in Bryer & Herrin, *Iconoclasm*, pp. 38, 42f.

[127] C. Diehl, *Manuel d'art byzantin* I, Paris 1925, pp. 369f., 377f. Compare the large-scale adoption of Islamic law by the Syriac-speaking Christians (H. Kaufhold, *Syrische Texte zum islamischen Recht*, Munich 1971, pp. 32ff.).

[128] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt*, p. 193 = Stern, "ʿAbd al-Jabbār's Account," p. 150.

[129] This also took some time, but again the moral is clear.

[130] Theophanes, *Chronographia* I, p. 405, A.M. 6218; P. Lemerle, *Le premier humanisme byzantin*, Paris 1971, pp. 94ff.

[131] Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia*, p. 49. The fact that Michael II himself had no education does not of course mean that he could have no views on the matter.





Greek to biblical reading matter in primary education.[132] But it is no accident that the fundamentalism failed to last. In Christianity even Iconoclasts must have a philosophy. To take an obvious example, in the legal culture of Islam, hostility to images will generate the question "when precisely are images permitted?"; but in the philosophical culture of Christianity the corresponding question will inevitably be "what precisely is the nature of an image?"[133] And just as the Iconoclasts needed a theory of art to justify their Iconoclasm, so they needed theories of nature to support their fundamentalism. Now though the evidence is depressingly scarce, they seem to have solved this problem by recourse to a pre-Mosaic philosophy which, like that invoked by the Protestants in the West, was formally monotheist and substantively Hermetic. That much is implied by the character of the book which Leo VI (775–80) sent to Mahdī (775–85),[134] the number speculation and antiquarian bent of Leo the Mathematician[135] and the magic skills of John the Grammarian.[136] And it is in line with this that there are suggestions of Origenist as against Aristotelian lines of thought in the Iconoclast view of pictures,[137] and of Alexandrian science in their view of the universe.[138] The outcome of Iconoclasm was thus not the rejection of the pagan tradition, but rather the sponsorship of a different branch of it. And it is certainly to some extent thanks to the confrontation between these two traditions that what has here been dubbed the Byzantine Reformation issued in what others have called the Byzantine Renaissance.

## THE JUDEO-CHRISTIANS

We may now turn to a more detailed examination of the Judeo-Christian sects and the writings which have been attributed to them in the above. The first point to be

[132] A. Moffatt, "Schooling in the Iconoclast Centuries," in Bryer & Herrin, *Iconoclasm*, p. 90. Compare the role of scripture in Jewish and Muslim education.

[133] Compare the articles of Paret with for example L. Barnard, "The Theology of Images," in Bryer & Herrin, *ibid.*; note how the appeal to the immense antiquity of image worship never sparked off any jurisprudential discussion of the authority of practice in Christianity.

[134] Mahdī was much given to magic, divination and sorcery, so Leo sent him a book entitled *Iannes and Iambres*, which contained all the magic of the Egyptians and all they did when they met Moses (Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* IV, p. 478 = III, p. 1). For this book see E. Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, Edinburgh 1896, div. II, vol. III, pp. 149ff.; L.I. Iselin, "Zwei Bemerkungen zu Schürer's Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi," *Zeitschrift für Wissenschaftliche Theologie* 37 (1894).

[135] Lemerle, *Humanisme*, p. 157.

[136] *Ibid.*, p. 145.

[137] G. Florovsky, "Origen, Eusebius and the Iconoclastic Controversy," *Church History* 19 (1950); P.J. Alexander, "The Iconoclastic Council of St. Sophia (815) and its Definition (*Horos*)," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 7 (1953), pp. 48f, 50f.; Lemerle, *Humanisme*, p. 146.

[138] Leo the Mathematician had Ptolemy's Almagest copied and studied, thereby displaying the first Byzantine interest in astronomy since the days of Stephen of Alexandria and virtually the last until those of the Palaeologi (D. Pingree, "Gregory of Chioniades and Palaeologan Astronomy," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 18 (1964), p. 135; cf. Diehl, *Manuel*, p. 376; the interest survived long enough for the Byzantines to translate Abū Maʿshar in the tenth century, cf. D. Pingree (ed.), *Albumasaris de revolutione nativitatum*, Leipzig 1968 (I owe this reference to Dr. F. Zimmermann).

made concerns the Athinganoi. J. Starr, the one person to have worked on them in the past, tried to explain away their Judaizing so as to make them a purely Gnostic sect along Paulician lines.[139] This is certainly arbitrary. But it is worth adding some evidence from the Syrian side in corroboration of the Byzantine sources.

In the catalogue of heresies compiled by Mārūthā (d. before 420), there is a description of heretics known as Sabbatians. Their heresy consisted in belief that the Gospel did not abrogate the Old Testament, that the Mosaic law was still valid, that circumcision should be retained, and that the eucharist should be taken on the Sabbath; it was, according to Mārūthā, these heretics Paul had in mind when he spoke of circumcision.[140] This is plainly a description of Judeo-Christians, not of the Novatian schismatics similarly known as Sabbatians who cannot even have been misrepresented here: we may take it that in the fifth century Middle East there were Judeo-Christians of that name. Now three centuries later we learn from Jacob of Edessa (d. ca. 715) that two kinds of heretics were known as Sabbatians, the first being the Novatian schismatics and the second a sect which, like Mārūthā's, is said to date from the time of the Apostles.[141] The natural assumption that he is referring to Mārūthā's sect is reinforced by his observation that they derived their name from their observance of both Sabbath and Sunday,[142] which is not, of course, true of the Novatian offshoot, and by his view that literalist exegesis is a "Jewish and Sabbatian" feature.[143] The importance of this lies in the fact that, according to Jacob, the Sabbatians are *still* observing both Sabbath and Sunday in Galatia and *Phrygia*.[144] That this is a reference to the Athinganoi is hardly in doubt. It is true that he goes on to say that the Novatian offshoot (also?) survives in Galatia, but that is likely to have been correct,[145] and unless he is simply muddle-

[139] Starr, "An Eastern Christian Sect."

[140] A. Harnack (tr.), "Der Ketzer-Katalog des Bischofs Maruta von Maiperkat," in O.V. Gebhardt & A. Harnack (eds.), *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, NF IV, Leipzig 1899, p. 7. The Syriac term is *Shabbetāyē*.

[141] W. Wright (ed.), "The Epistles of Mār Jacob, Bishop of Edessa," *Journal of Sacred Literature* (4th series), 10 (1867), p. 26 of the text = F. Nau (tr.), "traduction des lettres XII et XIII de Jacques d'Edesse," *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 10 (1905), p. 278. The Syriac terms are *Sambaṭyānū* and *(bēth) Shabbetāyē*, the first clearly Greek, the second Syriac, but treated as interchangeable.

[142] Mārūthā does not say so, and Jacob clearly did not owe his knowledge of the sect to him.

[143] R. Schröter (ed. and tr.), "Erster Brief Jakob's von Edessa an Johannes den Styliten," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 24 (1870), p. 271 = 275. The term for "in the Sabbatian fashion" is *sabbetānāīth* (sic).

[144] Wright, *loc. cit.* = Nau, *loc. cit.*

[145] The far older sect of the Quartodecimans (Tetraditai) has a continuous history in Asia Minor until the 9th century. Like the Novatian offshoot they held Jewish views regarding the date of Easter, and by the time of Theodoret they had also come to agree with the Novatians on the inefficacy of penance. In short, they had fused with the Sabbatians (C. Mango, *The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople*, Cambridge [Mass.] 1958, pp. 279ff.). Timothy of Constantinople could thus identify the Quartodecimans with the Sabbatians (*ibid.*, p. 281n.); and it is very likely the same sect that Jacob had in mind.





headed (which he was not usually), it hardly invalidates his previous statement. Moreover, the Sabbatian name reappears on the Byzantine side. Thus the Athinganic obsession with ritual purity is presented by one source as a Sabbatian feature, while Michael II, who is usually known as an Athinganos, appears as a Sabbatian in another.[146] It was thus not only to the Byzantines, but also to the Syrian Christians, that the Athinganoi were known to be Judeo-Christians. Obviously, Starr is right that they were in some way related to the Paulicians with whom they are often enumerated in the Byzantine chronicles, for just as the Judaizing Athinganoi subscribed to a number of Gnostic ideas, so the Gnosticizing Paulicians, or rather some of them, had Adoptianist beliefs.[147] But Judaism and Gnosticism, though in theory antithetical, have in practice coexisted more than once.

That brings us to the writings preserved in ʿAbd al-Jabbār and elsewhere. That these were Judeo-Christian in character has already been seen. What remains to be done here is to find a context for the authors. The first point to be noted is that they must have lived in a milieu equally open to Christian and Jewish literature, for not only were they wholly at home in Christian history and scripture, as only Christians could be,[148] they were also acquainted with such Jewish lore as the *Toledoth Yeshu*, which was not normally accessible to Christians;[149] and what is more, their own writings can be shown to have passed back into Jewish literature in the form of the additions to the *Toledoth*.

There are two completely different kinds of material in the *Toledoth* as it exists today. The first is a straightforward anti-Christian life of Jesus to the effect that Jesus was a bastard conceived in ritual impurity who became a magician by getting hold of the secret letters of God's name,[150] and who was crucified after

[146] Caspari, "Kirkehistoriske Rejsefrugter," p. 309 = 314; Nicetas of Paphlagonia, *Vita Ignatii* (*MPG* CV), col. 493. It is of course possible that it was Michael II's views on the date of Easter that resulted in his identification as a Sabbatian (of the Novatian type), but it is hard to see how the concern with ritual purity could come to be classified as such. It is far more likely that "Sabbatian" in this context meant "Judeo-Christian", and if the anonymous author in Caspari nonetheless glosses it as Novatian, it is because the Byzantine tradition knew of no Judeo-Christian sect of that name.

[147] For the evidence see N. Garsoian, *The Paulician Heresy*, Paris–The Hague 1971, where the general conclusion is, however, quite unacceptable.

[148] The rabbis had only the haziest notions of the period to which Jesus belonged, and neither Paul nor Pilate figures in the Talmud (for a possible, but not exactly transparent reference to the former, see R. Travers Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, Edinburgh 1903, pp. 97ff.).

[149] For this work see S. Krauss (ed. and tr.), *Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen*, Berlin 1902. It is doubtless because Helen appears as the queen of Israel in the *Toledoth* that she has become the wife of Pilate (Baylāṭus) in ʿAbd al-Jabbār (Krauss, *op. cit.*, pp. 53f. and *passim*; ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt*, p. 159 = Stern, "ʿAbd al-Jabbār's Account," p. 140). Perhaps it was also from the *Toledoth* that ʿAbd al-Jabbār's Christians got the idea that Jesus was crucified in a vegetable garden (Krauss, *op. cit.*, p. 59; ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *op. cit.*, p. 139 = Stern, "Apocryphal Gospels," p. 44). Note also that ʿAbd al-Jabbār's *Hīrīdh.s* for Herod is more easily explained if the text misread by his source was in Aramaic rather than in Syriac (ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *op. cit.* = Stern, "Apocryphal Gospels," p. 42n.).

[150] In an earlier version apparently by learning magic in Egypt.

having lost his spells in an air-battle with Judas. This story dates from the early centuries of Christianity. It was known to Celsus[151] and Tertullian,[152] and almost all of it is attested in the Talmud.[153] The second consists of stories of Paul, Peter and Nestorius, all presented as Jewish heroes or Judaizers: Paul (or Peter) was a crypto-Jew who completed the split between Judaism and Christianity by making up pseudo-laws so that the Jews might be rid of the Christian trouble-makers; Peter continued to send synagogal poetry to the Jews after his apparent conversion; Nestorius undid some of Paul's work, though he also prohibited polygamy and divorce, a pseudo-law attributed to Paul in ʿAbd al-Jabbār. These stories have no intrinsic connection with the biography of Jesus, they were not known to Celsus, Tertullian or even Agobard, who knew the rest of the *Toledoth*,[154] and they are not found in all the MSS of the *Toledoth;* all originated in a Syriac-speaking environment, none are earlier than the fifth century,[155] and the hostile reference to the rise of the Ishmaelites in the story of Paul leaves no doubt that this story at least was composed after the Arab conquest.[156] How then do we account for the addition of these stories to the *Toledoth?* That they are closely related to narratives of Muqammiṣ and ʿAbd al-Jabbār is evident. There is however no question of the additions to the *Toledoth* being the source of the Arabic accounts,[156a] for where the Arabic accounts have historical focus and details, the *Toledoth* by contrast envelops the events in a characteristic rabbinical haze. Nor are the stories in the *Toledoth* directly derived from the Arabic accounts: what we have are clearly Jewish and Muslim adaptations of the same Judeo-Christian polemic against Christianity.[156b] The Judeo-Christians possessed a knowledge of Christianity which the

[151] N.R.M. De Lange, *Origen and the Jews*, Cambridge 1976, pp. 66, 69.

[152] Krauss, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

[153] Travers Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, pp. 33, 48ff., 54f., 62, 75f., 79f., 90f.; H. Strack, *Jesus, die Häretiker und die Christen*, Leipzig 1910.

[154] Agobard, *Epistola*, cols. 77–100.

[155] The story of Paul gives the names of the Christian festivals in Syriac (Krauss, *op. cit.*, pp. 60f.; cf. Stern, "ʿAbd al-Jabbār's Account", p. 179n.); Peter (Simon Kefah) is confused with Simeon Stylites, the 5th century Syrian saint, Nestorius with Bar Ṣauma, the 5th century Nestorian churchman (S. Gero, "The Nestorius Legend in the *Toledoth Yeshu*", *Oriens Christianus* 59 (1975).

[156] Krauss, *loc. cit.*; there are no references to Islam in the other stories, and Gero may be right in dating the fixation of the Nestorius legend to the second half of the 6th or the beginning of the 7th century (*op. cit.*, p. 120). The reference to the Sāsānid empire, however, in no way implies that it was still in existence when the story was composed, only that it existed at the time of Nestorius, and the legend is so incoherent that its various stages and dates can hardly be sorted out (Nestorius is a Judaizer, yet he prohibits polygamy and divorce; women like his pseudo-laws, yet he is killed by women).

[156a] As suggested by Stern, "ʿAbd al-Jabbār's Account," pp. 179f. But Stern's view was clearly dictated by his extraordinary reluctance to concede that the Arabic accounts are Judeo-Christian in character.

[156b] Pines' view that the stories in the *Toledoth* were composed as an answer to the Judeo-Christian argument seems a little excessive: Jews and Jewish Christians alike were concerned to refute the Christians, not each other (cf. Pines, *The Jewish Christians*, p. 42).





Jews themselves had not enjoyed for centuries, while at the same time they were sufficiently close to the Jews for knowledge to be exchanged between them. Hence on the one hand the echos of the *Toledoth* in ʿAbd al-Jabbār's biography of Jesus, and on the other hand the addition of an 'Acts of the Apostles' to the biography of Jesus in the *Toledoth.*

Now of such circles through which Jewish and Christian literature could freely pass there were two kinds. The first is that of the philo-Christian Karaites mentioned by both Qirqisānī and ʿAbd al-Jabbār,[157] and these Karaites form by far the most plausible milieu in which to locate Muqammiṣ and others like him.[158] It is true that Muqammiṣ is never identified as a Karaite, philo-Christian or otherwise, by either Qirqisānī or any other author, but he is known to have written a commentary on Genesis using Syriac rather than rabbinical methods of exegesis, a work of which the Karaite Qirqisānī speaks with approval;[159] he seems to have held that retribution (and thus resurrection) was purely spiritual, a view of some currency in Karaite circles;[160] and his disparaging use of the term *abbā*, a rabbinic honorific, would also indicate Karaite rather than Rabbinic persuasions.[161] More-

[157] Cf. above, n. 83. Although ʿAbd al-Jabbār does not specify that his Jews were Karaites, he is clearly describing the same sect as Qirqisānī: both accepted Jesus as a pious and learned man who had got the leadership of the Jews, aroused the envy of other Jews (Rabbanites according to Qirqisānī) and been killed by them (as they tried to kill ʿAnan according to Qirqisānī). The similarity was also noted by Pines (*The Jewish Christians*, p. 47). Compare Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-milal wa'l-niḥal* (ed. W. Cureton), London 1846, pp. 167f., where *all* Karaites entertain such ideas (Jesus was learned in the Old Testament, he did not claim to be a prophet or God, though according to these Karaites he was a messiah; he did not abrogate the old law, the Gospel is not revelation and the Jews were wrong to kill him). There were still Karaites in the sixteenth century who thought along the same lines (Krauss, *Das Leben Jesu*, pp. 200f.).

[158] *Pace* Pines, who conjectures that it was during his Christian period that Muqammiṣ was in contact with Judeo-Christians (S. Pines, "Jewish-Christian Materials in an Arabic Jewish Treatise," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 35 [1967], p. 212n.; I am indebted to Professor Pines for sending me an offprint of this article).

[159] G. Vajda, "Du prologue de Qirqisānī à son commentaire sur la Génèse," in M. Black & G. Fohrer (eds.), *In Memoriam Paul Kahle*, Berlin 1968, p. 24.

[160] G. Vajda, "A propos de la perpetuité de la rétribution d'outre-tombe en théologie musulmane," *Studia Islamica* 11 (1959), pp. 37f. The statement in favour of purely spiritual retribution on p. 37 seems so emphatic that the conclusion of p. 38 must be Yehuda b. Barzillai's. Compare Mann, "A Tract by an early Karaite Settler," p. 259; Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, pp. 54, 62; G. Vajda, *Deux Commentaires Karaïtes sur l'Ecclesiaste*, Leiden 1971, p. 111n.

[161] Muqammiṣ calls Paul Abba Shaul, as does the *Toledoth* (Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, p. 44 = 367; A. Jellinek [ed.], *Beth ha-Midrash*, Leipzig 1855, pt. VI, pp. xi, 156), but in the *Toledoth* the title is reverential (presumably the rabbis identified him with the 2nd century *tanna* of that name). The force of Muqammiṣ' usage by contrast is to equate Paul's pseudo-laws with the oral law of the Rabbanites: *both* have corrupted the true religion in their different ways. It is thus not surprising that it is in Karaite circles that "Abba Shaul" lived on as an abusive (R. Poznansky, "Meswi al-Okbari, chef d'une secte juive du ix$^{e}$ siècle," *Revue des Etudes Juives* 34 [1897], p. 182; Krauss, *Das Leben Jesu*, p. 200; D.S. Margoliouth [ed. and tr.], *A Commentary on the Book of Daniel by Jepheth ibn Ali the Karaite*, Oxford 1889, p. 119 = 62).

over, there is an anonymous author who combined the usual Judeo-Christian argument that Jesus was a Jew with an unusual insistence on the contention that Jesus endorsed retaliation.[162] Inasmuch as Rabbanite law circumvented the Mosaic principle of retaliation, while Karaite law accepted it, this particular author would also indicate that it was in Karaite circles that Judeo-Christian views were current.[163] Finally, ʿAbd al-Jabbār actually quotes the philo-Christian Karaites in the course of his discussion of Christianity, and what they say is that Jesus was a good and learned Jew who disclaimed messianic status, and that all the stories of his miracles were made up by the Christians, in particular by Paul, a *well-known* liar.[164] This is, of course, very much in line with the general argument of both Muqammiṣ and ʿAbd al-Jabbār:[165] what they offer is precisely accounts of *how* Paul made them up. We are thus unlikely to be far wrong in tracing both Muqammiṣ and other authors to such philo-Christian Karaite circles.

The philo-Christian Karaites were, however, not the only locus of such authors. The second milieu of relevance is that of the Christians mentioned by ʿAbd al-Jabbār, who held that "their lord was a Jew, his father a Jew, his mother a Jewess, and his mother the wife of his father."[166] It was Christians of this kind who

Note also that ʿAbd al-Jabbār's Karaites speak disparagingly of an Abba Marqos, a monk whom the Christians credit with various miracles (*Tathbīt*, pp. 142, 202f., 207; it might of course be Coptic, but that does not seem very likely).

[162] Pines, "Judaeo-Christian Materials," pp. 192f. This treatise, which survives in a pre-13th century, but otherwise undatable Christian refutation, is very close to ʿAbd al-Jabbār's account, and Pines suggests that the two used a common source (*ibid.*, p. 210). It differs from ʿAbd al-Jabbār's account, not only in its insistence on the righteousness of retribution, but also by the argument that although Jesus was a good Jew whose ways the Christians have abandoned, he was an incomparably lesser prophet than Moses. That the author is more likely to have been a Jew than a Jewish Christian is a plausible inference (*ibid.*, pp. 204f.); but the comparison of Jesus and Moses as well as the rest of the argument reveals an interest in and knowledge of Christian scripture which was not common in ordinary Jewish circles.

[163] That the author cannot have been a Rabbanite Jew was also noted by Pines ("Judaeo-Christian Materials," p. 193).

[164] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt*, pp. 142f. Syntactically, the passage goes wrong towards the end, where the literal meaning is that the Christians have made up these miracles on behalf of (*li*) Jesus, Paul, George and Abba Marqos. On the face of it all four are thus whitewashed, but the idea is clearly that only Jesus is innocent, for Paul is said to be *maʿrūf al-ḥāl waʾl-ḥiyal waʾl-kidhb waʾl-suqūṭ*, viz. he invented it; and the silly stories told by the Christians of St. George and Mark the monk, *ibid.*, pp. 202f., 205ff., discredit both the narrators and the subjects (note the *yā rabban* on pp. 202f., a Syriacism emended to *ya rabbānī* in the text).

[165] But note that both Shahrastānī's and Pines' Karaites accepted Jesus as a saviour, the latter with the qualification that he was sent only to the Jews (above, n. 157; Pines, "Judeo-Christian Materials," pp. 200f.); the latter also accepted Jesus' miracles, but insisted that like other prophets he had to implore God to work them (*ibid.*, p. 198).

[166] Cf. above, n. 81. Stern's translation of *rabb* as God seems unwarranted; the Christians in question may well have been Adoptianists (and if the Gospel citations come from them they almost certainly were), but they may also have denied Jesus' divinity altogether. It is also something of an understatement that this passage denies the virgin birth; there could hardly be a more emphatic way of saying that Jesus was a Jew and his followers Jewish Christians.





were the source of Shahrastānī's short notice of how Paul ousted Peter from the leadership of the Christians and perverted Christianity by introducing philosophy and his own opinions.[167] And it must similarly have been from such Christians that ʿAbd al-Jabbār got his apocryphal Gospel citations.[168] But whereas Shahrastānī's Christians clearly held views precisely opposite to those of the Armeno-Mesopotamian Gnostics who "execrated Peter and loved Paul",[169] those of ʿAbd al-Jabbār were both Judaizers and Gnosticizers: Jesus is presented as a mere man and moreover an observant Jew,[170] but the long account of the passion is docetic.[171] And this doctrinal combination shows that we have now arrived at circles closely related to the Athinganoi of the Byzantine sources.[172]

The exact relationship between the Jewish Christians and the Christian Jews is a hazy one:[173] we doubtless have to envisage a plurality of loosely related sects on both sides.[174] But it is manifest that for all their diversity these sects were part and parcel of the same phenomenon.

Geographically, these sects can be located in the first instance in Mesopotamia. In ʿAbd al-Jabbār, the faithful flee to Mosul and Mesopotamia,[175] while in

[167] Shahrastānī, *Milal*, pp. 172f.; compare the relationship between Peter and Paul (Simon Magus) in the Pseudo-Clementines. Shahrastānī's tradition is independent of Muqammiṣ and ʿAbd al-Jabbār alike, the former being hostile to Peter and the latter having little to say about him, and it came from Christians who accepted both the crucifixion and the resurrection without recourse to doceticism.

[168] Most, though not all of these are discussed in Stern, "Apocryphal Gospels" and Pines, *The Jewish Christians*, pp. 51ff.

[169] Gregory Magistros, in F.G. Conybeare (tr.), *The Key of Truth*, Oxford 1898, p. 148.

[170] Stern, *op. cit.*, p. 51; Pines, *op. cit.*, pp. 63f.; add ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt*, p. 144, where John 4:9f. is twisted so as to make Jesus avow his Jewishness.

[171] This is surely the case not just of the passages in Pines, *op. cit.*, p. 58, but also of the long account in ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *op. cit.*, pp. 137ff. = Stern, *op. cit.*, pp. 42ff. Here the Romans and the Jews alike admit that they do not know Jesus, the person taken is scared out of his wits, he is a great disappointment to Pilate who had expected a man of wisdom, and he is laboriously left unnamed: Judas has clearly tricked the Romans into taking the wrong man. Note also the passage in which Jesus (here somewhat inconsistently hanging from the cross) disavows his mother and brothers very much as he did in the Elkesaite Gospel as quoted by Epiphanius (ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *op. cit.*, p. 201 = Stern, *op. cit.*, p. 52 and Pines, *op. cit.*, p. 61; Klijn and Reinink, *Patristic Evidence*, p. 181), presumably to make the point that he had become wholly divine on his baptism.

[172] No Athinganic views of the passion have been recorded, but compare the revaluation of Judas by Michael II the Athinganos (Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia*, p. 49). Doceticism was commonplace among the Paulicians.

[173] But the Gnostic beliefs of the Christian Judaizers have no Judaic counterpart: despite ʿAnan's alleged belief in metempsychosis and Nihāwandī's demiurge, Gnosticism does not appear to have infected Karaite Christology.

[174] Note how ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt*, p. 194, twists Matthew 25:32ff. so as to have Jesus bless the Christian *ṭawāʾif* against the Christian majority who use his name, but do not bear witness to him in truth.

[175] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt*, p. 153 = Stern, "ʿAbd al-Jabbār's Account," p. 135 (*Jazīrat al-ʿarab* obviously *is* a translation of *Bēth ʿArbāyē*). Cf. also below, n. 199.

an earlier version they flee to the north where they are received by the Jews.[176] Mosul did indeed have a Jewish population, but a more famous Jewish centre in Mesopotamia was Nisibis; and it was precisely in Nisibis that Muqammiṣ picked up his story. They can, however, also be located further afield. In Ibn Isḥāq's biography of the Prophet, there is a description of a pre-Islamic search for the true monotheism. A convert to Christianity by the name of Salmān is told by his dying mentor that "men have died and either altered or abandoned most of the true religion, except for a man in Mosul, so join yourself unto him."[177] Salmān accordingly goes off to Mosul, where the story is repeated, the mentor dies and Salmān goes on to find the last surviving representative of true Christianity who, this time, is found in Nisibis. And here, too, the same thing happens whereupon Salmān sets off to find the last true Christian in Amorium.[178] Salmān, in other words, retraces the steps of the Judeo-Christians to end up among the Athinganoi in Phrygia.[179]

Chronologically, these sects are best attested in the tenth century, to which both ʿAbd al-Jabbār and Qirqisānī belong, and there is no doubt that many of the Christians who denied the divinity of Christ were heretics of recent growth.[180] But the phenomenon itself is considerably older. Muqammiṣ flourished in the later ninth century, Christians who argue for a purely spiritual interpretation of Jesus' sonship are mentioned in Muslim sources in the mid-ninth century,[181] and the Athinganoi are first mentioned by Byzantine chroniclers under the year 811.[182] The direct evidence in fact takes us to the beginning of the eighth century; for the Athinganoi were known to Byzantine theologians by about 730 at latest;[183] Ibn

[176] Stern, *op. cit.*, p. 180 (citing Qarāfī).

[177] H.F. Wüstenfeld (ed.), *Das Leben Muhammed's nach Muhammed Ibn Ishâk, bearbeitet von ʿAbd al-Malik Ibn Hischâm*, Göttingen 1858–60, I, pp. 136ff.= A. Guillaume (tr.), *The Life of Muhammad*, Oxford 1955, pp. 95ff.

[178] From here, of course, he goes to Mecca.

[179] A marginal note in the *Sīra* explicitly identifies Salmān as a descendant of the fugitives from Paul (Wüstenfeld, *op. cit.* II, p. 45, cf. Stern, "ʿAbd al-Jabbār's Account," pp. 180f.). His Persian descent does not, of course, go very well with this story, but then it is likely to be a secondary feature, for his Semitic name is perfectly at home in Phrygia (A. Reinach, "Noé Sangariou, étude sur le déluge en Phrygie et le syncrétisme Judéo-Phrygien," *Revue des Etudes Juives* 65 [1913], pp. 216, 221), and his Iranian name, insofar as it is known at all, has no colour in the Islamic tradition.

[180] Saadia says so explicitly of the sect he knew (for the reference see n. 82). But then there is no evidence to show that his heretics (or any of the others in n. 82) were concerned to stress that the human Christ had been a Jew.

[181] Pines, " 'Israel, My Firstborn'," p. 182. The Copt who declared belief in the divinity of Christ to be polytheism also lived towards the middle of the ninth century (Madelung, *Qāsim*, p. 89).

[182] Theophanes, *Chronographia* I, p. 488, A.M. 6303; cf. Starr, "An Eastern Christian Sect," pp. 93ff.

[183] Germanus, who knew both the Athinganoi and the Samaritans as "touch-me-nots", died in 735. Timothy of Constantinople's section on the Athinganoi probably dates from the same century. Timothy himself is assumed to have lived before 622, but Starr has a point in thinking the relevant section an interpolation. It seems, however, to have formed part of the treatise by the time of Theodore the Studite, who died in 826 (Gouillard, "L'hérésie," pp. 304n., 307n.),





Isḥāq, who sent Salmān to Amorium, died in 767;[184] another account of Paul's corruption of Christianity is attributed to Kalbī, who died in 763;[185] and Jacob of Edessa died about 715. Jacob, moreover, knew not just of Sabbath-observers in Phrygia, but also of writings by a Judaizing Gnostic which had fallen into the hands of the faithful at home.[186] But if we want to go beyond this date, the evidence becomes circumstantial. Evidence there nonetheless is. First, the Judeo-Christian argument was put to polemical use by both Muslims[187] and Jews;[188] and that at least the Jews, but probably also the Muslims, must have made use of it already in the second half of the seventh century is clear from the Christian treatises against the Jews, in which the authors display a painful awareness of the fact that Christian customs fail to conform entirely with those of Christ. "If, as you say, your Christ has come . . . and was one of ours, why aren't you circumcised? . . . why do you pray east if not to adore the sun?", asks the Jew in a tract composed in 681.[189] "If Christ was circumcised, why aren't we? . . . why do we Christians pray towards east and the Jews towards south?" echoes the bewildered Christian.[190] Second, it is worth noting that the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, a Christian story of the resurrection, got into the Koran via people who wrote in Aramaic and had

and it was certainly known to the author of the treatise on the Melchisedekites and the abjuration formula which it contains, doubtless dating from the ninth century in which attempts were made to eradicate the heresy. Note that according to this formula the heresy had been around for a long time: the convert has to anathemize the teachers of the Athinganoi who have appeared "generation upon generation until now" (Caspari, "Kirkehistoriske Rejsefrugter," pp. 311 = 316).

[184] Or slightly earlier (cf. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*$^2$, *s.v.*).

[185] Cf. Stern, "ʿAbd al-Jabbār's Account", pp. 177f.

[186] One of his letters answers the queries of John, a stylite in the vicinity of Aleppo, who had got hold of some homilies attributed to Jacob of Sarug and wanted further information. As Jacob said, they contained many un-Christian notions and could not possibly have been written by the man celebrated by the Syrians as the "flute of the Holy Spirit". They appear to have been primarily cosmological, describing the genesis of various powers, but the author also boasted of following Moses' word and explained everything literally in the Jewish and Sabbatian fashion (Schröter, "Erster Brief Jacobs"). Jacob did not suggest that the author might be a Sabbatian: he thought him a minor rhetor. In other words, he did not know of sects that might be producing this kind of literature at home.

[187] In the accounts of Kalbī and Qarāfī Jewish Christianity *is* Islam (Stern, "ʿAbd al-Jabbār's Account," pp. 178, 180). In that of Ibn Isḥāq Amorium, which is nowhere on the religious map of classical Islam, lies on the road to Mecca. By the end of the eighth century the Muslims were asking the Christians why they were not circumcized and why they prayed east (*ibid.*, pp. 155n., 157n.). And the spiritual interpretation of Jesus' sonship became a standard topic of Muslim polemics (Pines, " 'Israel, My Firstborn' ", p. 183).

[188] Cf. the spiritual interpretation of Jesus' sonship in the anti-Christian work of a tenth-century Jew (Mann, "An Early Theologico-Polemical Work," p. 417).

[189] Bardy, *Trophées de Damas*, pp. 250, 254.

[190] *Quaestiones*, cols. 617, 620, questions xxxvii f. (this treatise is likely to be the earlier; cf. n. 8). Jacob of Edessa was also confronted with the question of prayer direction: it was in answer to it that he wrote his exposition of how the Jews and the Hagarenes do not in fact pray towards the south (Crone & Cook, *Hagarism*, p. 173, n. 30).

rules of kosher food:[191] one tradition duly locates the cave in the vicinity of Amorium.[192] Equally, the Sāmirī, the Samaritan magician who cries "touch me not" in the Koran, was perhaps not an ordinary Samaritan so much as an Athinganos.[193] There was at all events no lack of contacts between the Arabs and Amorium from as early as 644 onwards,[194] and there are oddities to suggest that Amorium was more than just another Anatolian city to the Arabs at the time.[195] All in all, the evidence certainly suggests that Judeo-Christian ideas had reached the Arab world already before the end of the seventh century.

As far as the role of the Judeo-Christians in the outbreak of the Iconoclast movement is concerned, it is of no importance whether the Judeo-Christian sects were any older. By way of concluding, however, we may briefly look at Pines' suggestion that these sectarians not only subscribed to the same doctrines as, but also preserved the very tradition of the Jewish Christians of the early Christian centuries. *A priori,* it is by no means impossible. Jewish Christians could not, of course, survive in Palestine, nor do we hear of them there; but in the mountains and across the Roman border in Persia, where the Christian church lacked the coercive apparatus of the state, Judeo-Christians could certainly have found a refuge: that is precisely what the Gnostics did. Amorium, however, was not located in inaccessible mountains and it was very close to Constantinople, a point which explains how Samaritans could get there,[196] but which virtually rules out heretical survival there. If the Jewish Christians did survive, they are more likely to have done so elsewhere. That brings us to Mārūthā's Sabbatians. Now Mārūthā gives no indication of where they flourished, and he himself was a much travelled man;[197] but he was bishop of Mayferqat on the border of Persia, Armenia and Byzantium, and since Jacob of Edessa states that there had been a church of Sabbath-observing Sabbatians in Edessa in the past,[198] they are likely to have been a Mesopotamian

[191] C.C. Torrey, *The Jewish Foundations of Islam*, New York 1933, pp. 46f., 120f.; cf. also P.M. Huber, *Die Wanderlegende von den Siebenschläfern*, Leipzig 1910, p. 336.

[192] Huber, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

[193] Note that just as the Amorian Salmān acquired a Persian genealogy, so did the Koranic Sāmirī (Ibn Ḥanbal, *Kitāb al-ʿilal* I [ed. T. Koçyiğit & I. Cerrahoğlu], Ankara 1963, vol. I, p. 291, no. 1885).

[194] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², *s.v.* "ʿAmmūriya"; cf. W.E. Kaegi, "The First Arab Expedition against Amorium," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 3 (1977).

[195] For one thing, the Arabs write Amorium with an *ʿayn*, though there was none in the Syriac transcription (or Greek original, of course); from what Semitic population did they get this spelling of the name? For another, the "ancient historical books" of the Arabs prophesied that their kingdom would fall if they ever conquered the city, whence the reluctance of many Arabs to participate in Muʿtaṣim's campaign in 838 (*Chronicon ad 1234* II, p. 34 = 24; Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, IV, p. 538 = III, p. 100); from what predictive specialists did they get this idea?

[196] For Samaritans in Constantinople in the days of Justinian see Sharf, *Byzantine Jewry*, p. 30. Note that confusion of *aleph* and *ʿayn* is commonplace in Samaritan Aramaic.

[197] Cf. Baumstark, *Geschichte*, pp. 53f.

[198] Wright, "Two Epistles," p. 26 of the text = Nau, "Traduction," p. 278.





phenomenon. In the Mayferqat area they might well have survived together with their Gnostic enemies; the Armeno-Mesopotamian border certainly plays a notable part in the history of the Judeo-Christians and Paulicians in whom the two heresies have been mixed up, and the faint suggestions of Judeo-Christians in north-western Persia would also support the hypothesis that it was in this border area that they had entrenched themselves.[199] But two problems remain. First, even if we assume that Mārūthā's heretics survived in northern Mesopotamia, it is, *pace* Jacob of Edessa, still not obvious that it is they who reappear in Amorium.[200] It *might* be, for the Sabbatian label reappeared on the Byzantine side where it was not understood,[201] and the Paulicians likewise got there. But the Paulicians were militant adventurers, and they only got there late, whereas the Judeo-Christians are not known to have roamed, and the Amorium of which Salmān went in search was presumably there before the Arabs made their impact felt. Secondly, even if we assume that all the Judeo-Christians of the seventh century and beyond are ultimately related to Mārūthā's heretics, it is, *pace* both Mārūthā and Jacob of Edessa, still not obvious that these heretics in their turn have anything to do with the Jewish Christians of Palestine referred to in the New Testament and Patristic literature. That Jesus was a Jew and Paul ceased to be one can be read in the Christian scripture, and Jewish Christianity can, to that extent, appear wherever Christianity exists, particularly where it coexists with Judaism. The original Jewish Christians were Jewish converts to Christianity, as was also at least one of the Athinganoi in Amorium,[202] where a large Jewish (and presumably also

[199] The Judeo-Christian argument that Jesus did not abrogate the law of Moses unexpectedly turns up among the Gnostic Ismaʿīlīs, where it was clearly extraneous (H. Halm, *Kosmologie und Heilslehre der frühen Ismāʿīlīya*, Wiesbaden 1978, p. 121; that Jesus abrogated the law of his predecessor like other *nāṭiq*s was a key Ismāʿīlī doctrine). And the Ismāʿīlī who picked up this piece of Judeo-Christianity was Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. ca. 934), a native and *dāʿī* of Rayy. It seems most likely that he picked it up locally. Inasmuch as ʿAbd al-Jabbār was a native of Asadābādh and *qāḍī* of Rayy, one wonders if he did the same, but that seems unlikely. That his account comes from a Nestorian *milieu* on the Persian side of the old imperial frontier is clear, indirectly from the inclusion of a story about Nestorius in the *Toledoth*, directly from the comparison of Constantine and Ardashīr in the Judeo-Christian account (*Tathbīt*, pp. 163f = Stern, "ʿAbd al-Jabbār's Account," p. 145), the comparison of conversion to Christianity and Zoroastrianism (below, n. 205), and the stories of Christian miracle-makers involving the *maṭrān* of Khurāsān, the *jithlīq* of Iraq, St. George, the martyr of Mosul (cf. Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, ser. I, pp. 795ff.), and the unknown Abba Marqos (*Tathbīt*, pp. 202ff.). It could be argued that neither the discussion of conversion nor the stories of the miracle-makers are part of the Judeo-Christian account, but the fact that St. George and Abba Marqos who figure in both, are also denounced as miracle-makers by the philo-Christian Karaites would suggest that they were (above, n. 164). Even so, however, there is nothing to suggest that this milieu was located as far east as Rayy: Nestorian Mesopotamia would seem a more likely location, especially as the Christian terminology is given in Syriac (*Tathbīt*, pp. 206f.).

[200] Jacob's statement that Sabbatians *survive* in Phrygia and Galatia is not necessarily to be taken literally, of course. Christian churchmen would see contemporary Athinganoi as Sabbatians just as Greek *littérateurs* would see contemporary Turks as Scythians.

[201] Cf. above, n. 146.

[202] Viz. Michael II's grandfather (above, n. 107).

Samaritan) population lived in symbiosis with the Christians. It is precisely to the interaction of Jews and Christians that Theophanes' continuator attributes the genesis of the Athinganic faith;[203] and Mārūthā's heretics may well have come into existence in the same way.

The case for the survival of the Judeo-Christian tradition thus rests entirely on the Judeo-Christian writings, in particular the account preserved by ʿAbd al-Jabbār. Now ʿAbd al-Jabbār's account models Constantine's persecution of Judeo-Christians and pagans on Justinian[204] and has references to the conversion of the Khazars.[205] As we have it, the account is therefore not particularly old.[206] But if that proves that it must have come from live Judeo-Christians, it does not in itself disprove that these Judeo-Christians had a venerable tradition to pass on. Of such a tradition, however, there is hardly a trace. On the one hand, the account contains little information that could not be gathered from the New Testament and current history books;[207] and, on the other hand, the apocryphal Gospel citations fail to correspond with those recorded in Patristic literature. Admittedly, one

[203] Theophanes Cont., *Chronographia*, p. 42.

[204] Cf. the closure of the Athenian academy reported for Constantine in ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt*, pp. 161f. = Stern, "ʿAbd al-Jabbār's Account," p. 143.

[205] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt*, p. 186. To what extent this was part of the Judeo-Christian account is not entirely clear. It comes in the course of a long argument against the Christian claim to have spread the faith without the use of force, the first objection being that the claim is untrue, and the second that even if it were true, other religions have spread in the same way (*ibid.*, pp. 173, 182ff). On the one hand it could be argued that a Muslim would be more concerned than a Jewish Christian to dispose of this claim and that it was ʿAbd al-Jabbār himself who supplied the evidence. But on the other hand the insistence that the many may go wrong against the few (p. 173), the account of Zoroastrian attitudes to conversion and of Persian grandeur (p. 185), the sympathetic attitude towards the Khazar converts, and the role of Paul, St. George and Abba Marqos in the discussion (p. 182; cf. above, n. 199), would all suggest that the entire discussion goes back to a Judeo-Christian and was simply adapted by ʿAbd al-Jabbār. Pines suggested that the reference to the Khazars was added by a Judeo-Christian to an earlier account (*The Jewish Christians*, p. 49). This is possible. That the Judeo-Christian account has no references to the rise of Islam is perhaps not decisive, but the account of Persian grandeur and above all that of Zoroastrian attitudes to conversion certainly does seem to take the existence of the Sāsānid empire for granted. The identification of late Byzantine and early Christian figures in ʿAbd al-Jabbār and the *Toledoth* (Justinian/Constantine, Simeon Stylites/Peter, Bar Ṣauma/Nestorius/Paul) would also suggest that, whatever the date of the writings as we have them, it was in the century before the Arab conquest that the sect's account of Christian history was shaped.

[206] According to Pines, *The Jewish Christians*, p. 35n., the account also speaks of the Nicaean council as having taken place some 500 years after Christ. But the published work gives the date as about 300 years after Christ (ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt*, p. 93 [corresponding to f. 43b according to the editor, but 43a according to Pines]).

[207] The one exception is the detailed knowledge of the origins of Christmas (Stern, "ʿAbd al-Jabbār's Account," p. 158). But it is hard to imagine that this is what Judeo-Christians eking out a tenuous existence in the backlands would choose to remember.





citation has a parallel in the Gospel of Thomas,[208] while another corresponds closely in idea, though not quite in words, to a passage in the Gospel of the Elkesaites.[209] But both passages are Gnostic and, insofar as there was any continuity, it is thus likely to have been on the Gnostic rather than the Judeo-Christian side.[210] The Judeo-Christians of the Muslim world did indeed use very much the same passages of the Gospels, apocryphal or otherwise, in demonstration of very much the same points as the Judeo-Christians of the first Christian centuries; but given that they knew what they wanted to demonstrate, there was only a limited number of passages that could be so employed. And though Symmachus' Ebionite commentary on Matthew appears to have been available in Syriac as late as the fourteenth century,[211] they hardly knew of it: they invoke no authorities, presumably because they had none.

The link between the Jewish Christians of Epiphanius and those of ʿAbd al-Jabbār thus remains tenuous. That ʿAbd al-Jabbār's heretics existed before Islam seems clear. That they were genetically related to a fifth century sect entrenched in the mountains of northern Mesopotamia is possible. But that this sect in its turn preserved the tradition of the heretics of Palestine can only be said to be unlikely in the present state of the evidence.[212] That is not, of course, particularly remarkable. What is very remarkable indeed is the fact that Jewish Christianity, which was nothing if not an obsolete heresy in the eyes of the victorious gentiles who had long ceased to be greatly bothered by it, could suddenly reemerge as an attractive version of the Christian faith. And that is perhaps the neatest testimony we possess of the extent to which the rise of Islam changed the plausibility structures of the world on which it made its impact felt.

[208] G. Quispel, *Gnostic Studies*, Istanbul 1974–5, II, p. 150.

[209] Cf. above, n. 165.

[210] Note that Gnosticizing Gospel citations also circulated among the Ismāʿīlīs (Halm, *op. cit.*, p. 113).

[211] H.J. Schoeps, *Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums*, Tübingen 1949, p. 34 (also noted by Pines).

[212] If it was in the century preceding the Arab conquest that the sect's account of Christian history was shaped (cf. n. 205), the possibility is of course virtually ruled out.

POSTSCRIPT

Though I decided to leave this article as it stood, as explained in the preface, I must correct my youthful misperception, noticed in the course of indexing, that there were Zaydīs who had doubts about the resurrection (p. 80): the passage in question is about *raj'a* (on which, see *EI*², s.v.)

For an up-to-date survey of the field of Byzantine Iconoclasm, the best place to start is probably J. Haldon and L. Brubaker, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (c. 680–850): the Sources, an Annotated Survey*, Aldershot 2001.

For the most recent statement on Jewish Christianity, see A. H. Becker and A. Y. Reed (eds), *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, Tübingen 2003, especially the article by J. G. Gager, 'Did Jewish Christians See the Rise of Islam?'

p. 90, note 183:
Germanus, 'De Haeresibus et synodis', *MPG* 98, col. 85.





# JĀHILĪ AND JEWISH LAW: THE *QASĀMA**

How much, and in what way, did the customary law of the pre-Islamic Arabs contribute to Islamic law? The consensus would appear to be that it contributed decisively for the simple reason that it continued to be practised. The legislation of the Koran, so the argument runs, was both intended and understood as a supplement to, rather than a substitute for, the ancestral law of the Arabs; and since moreover this legislation raised more questions than it answered, it had itself to be interpreted in the light of customary law.[1] Evidently, political and social change, Umayyad regulations, foreign influence, local conditions and the like all served to modify and amplify traditional law and customs,[2] and such modifications are particularly noticeable in Ḥanafī law, which reflects the metropolitan society of late Umayyad Kufa.[3] But even so, Arab law, and above all the customary law of the Ḥijāz, may still be said to be the single most important source of the substantive law of the Sharī'a.[4] Its influence is manifest in all the schools, but especially in that of the Mālikīs which,

* This paper has been improved in various ways by the comments and criticisms of M.A. Cook, C. Rabin, H. Ben Shammai and other members of the conference, and last but not least, of F.H. Stewart, whose capacity to pick holes in arguments is quite unprecedented in my experience. I am also indebted to A. Mas'ūd, without whose interest in bedouin society it would never have occurred to me to look at the *qasāma*.

1 N.J. Coulson, *A History of Islamic Law*, Edinburgh 1964, pp. 15, 19f, 22; J. Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law*, Oxford 1964, p. 15.

2 Coulson, *History*, pp. 21ff; Schacht, *Introduction*, pp. 15, 19ff.

3 R. Brunschvig, 'Considérations sociologiques sur le droit musulman ancien', *Studia Islamica* 1955 (reprinted in his *Etudes d'Islamologie*, Paris 1976, vol. ii); Coulson, *History*, pp. 47ff.

4 G. Bergsträsser, 'Anfänge und Charakter des juristischen Denkens im Islam', *Der Islam* 1925, p. 80; C.A. Nallino, 'Considerazioni sui rapporti fra diritto romano e diritto musulmano' in his *Raccolta di scritti editi e inediti*, vol. iv, Rome 1942, especially pp. 88ff; S.G. Vesey-Fitzgerald, 'Nature and Sources of the Sharī'a' in M. Khadduri and H.J. Liebesny (eds.), *Law in the Middle East*, vol. ii, Washington 1955, pp. 91f. Despite his interest in foreign borrowings, Schacht subscribed to the same view as far as the core of Islamic law was concerned: 'the first important ingredient that went into the making of the subject matter of Mohammedan religious law was the law of family and inheritance, and to a certain extent the procedure, of the pre-Islamic Arabs' (J. Schacht, 'The Law' in G.E. von Grunebaum (ed.), *Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilization*, Chicago 1955, p. 66; cf. p. 67 on penal law). Similarly M. Hamidullah, 'La Genèse du droit de la preuve en Islam', *Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin* 1963 (=*La Preuve*, vol. iii), p. 199.