The Canadian Society for Syriac Studies

JOURNAL

Volume 7 *2007*

Toronto - Ontario - Canada

The Canadian Society for Syriac Studies

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ISSN 1499-6367

Cover Picture

The Greek Orthodox Monastery of Saydnaya to the north of Damascus, Syria: Entrance and Outer Walls; photo and courtesy Dr. Mat Immerzeel, Leiden University. See also pp. 75ff.

FROM THE EDITOR

It is my pleasure to introduce *JCSSS* 7, which includes various articles presented either at CSSS symposia or as CSSS public lectures.

The first article, "Three Contexts for Reading Manasseh's Prayer in the Didascalia," was originally given by Judith H. Newman, of the University of Toronto, at a special symposium organized by the CSSS on Liturgy on May 17, 2006. Manasseh, the Israelite king whose reputation in the Bible is tarnished, is portrayed in his apocryphal prayer as repenting and even as a model of the penitent sinner. While some believe that the prayer is an expansion of II Chr. 33, Prof. Newman argues that it was composed as part of the *Didascalia*, that it was possibly used in penitential practices, and that it may have been part of the liturgy of the word, addressed to the entire Christian community.

Professor Frederick McLeod, from St. Louis University, draws special attention to Mār Narsai, "the Harp of the Holy Spirit," in a paper he gave at the 2006 CSSS Symposium, filling some gaps in the study of this major Syriac poet and theologian. While Narsai is by all means original in his Syriac poetry and theological expressions, he is at the same time a committed follower of Theodore of Mopsuestia's exegetical and Christological ideas. The author concludes that the rich tradition of the Church of the East "stresses a functional, soteriological Christology that is arguably complementary to Cyril's essentialist approach."

Another paper given at the 2006 CSSS Symposium is entitled "The Last Days of Nestorius in Syriac Sources," written by Professor George Bevan, of Queen's University. The author brings together a variety of Syriac sources, both Nestorian and anti-Chalcedonian, that intriguingly suggest that Nestorius was recalled to the council of Chalcedon but died before he left Egypt. Scholars have typically dismissed these stories as anti-Chalcedonian propaganda. Bevan makes a strong case, however, taking into consideration their remarkable consistency, and points to a significant precedent: in the 4th century no less a figure than Arius himself was summoned by Constantine for questioning, and the latter deemed him orthodox.

At the 5th Syriac Studies Symposium in Toronto last June, Professor Sidney Griffith, of the Catholic University of America, addressed the participants in the first plenary session, with a paper entitled "Syrian Christian Intellectuals in the World of Islam: Faith, the Philosophical Life, and the Quest for an Interreligious *Convivencia* in Abbasid Times." The paper reflected the Symposium's main theme, *Syriac as a Bridge Culture*, for it highlighted several prominent Syriac-speaking Christian intellectuals in

Baghdad who not only exploited Greek philosophy and logic for the elucidation of their own Christian beliefs, but also engaged in philosophical conversations with their Muslim counterparts, which led to a certain degree of peaceful *convivencia* among Christians, Jews, and Muslims.

The last paper, originally a CSSS public lecture given in 2007, is by Dr. Mat Immerzeel, Leiden University, "Monasteries and Churches of the Qalamun (Syria): Art and Pilgrimage in the Middle Ages." The author surveys several monumental monasteries and churches built on the mountains to the north of Damascus, and decorated with magnificent mural paintings, images of which are appended to the article. Here too, some monasteries witnessed a level of inter-religious acceptance among Christians, Jews, and Muslims, who venerated an icon of the Virgin once found in the monastery of Saydnaya, and from which they sought blessing. The fame of this icon spread as far as medieval Europe.

Father Robert Beulay, an authority in Syriac mysticism, particularly John Dalia-tha, died in Normandy on August 7, 2007. Nearly a year ago he accepted the invitation of the CSSS to attend Syriac Studies Symposium V, sending the title and abstract of his proposed paper. He fell gravely ill two months before the symposium, which prevented his travel to Toronto. His loss will be felt in Syriac Studies, since, as the obituary by Dr. Mary Hansbury shows, he was not only original in his research, but also particularly prolific. May he rest in Peace.

At the end of this issue, you will find a report by Dr. George Kiraz on the 5th Syriac Studies Symposium, which took place June 25-27, 2007, in Toronto.

I take this opportunity to thank the authors who contributed to the present issue of the *JCSSS*, enriching it with their research and insights. I am also thankful to the Editorial Committee for their contribution to the production of another excellent issue!

A.H.
November 2007

THREE CONTEXTS FOR READING MANASSEH'S PRAYER IN THE DIDASCALIA

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The Prayer of Manasseh is something of an orphan in relation to the scripture of contemporary religious communities. It is excluded from the Tanakh as a non-Hebrew work, and the text lies outside of the Protestant and Roman Catholic canons. It is regarded as authoritative only in certain Orthodox Churches, but then not in all. Most who encounter the Prayer of Manasseh do so in the context of one of the critical editions of the Bible in the apocrypha or deuterocanonical section, in which the prayer appears by itself or in worship as a canticle. Yet there is no unambiguous evidence for the Jewish liturgical use of the prayer independent of its context, and the two contexts in which we find it, in the early church orders and in a list of Odes appended to the book of Psalms in three manuscripts of the Greek Bible, are suggestive of two different uses. The purpose of this essay is to illuminate the earliest narrative context in which we find the Prayer of Manasseh, the *Didascalia Apostolorum*. I would like to argue on that basis that this pseudepigraphic prayer, whoever composed it and whenever it was composed, was included in the *Didascalia* in response and in reaction to the Jewish-Christian tensions of Syria in the early third century.

The *Didascalia* is a work of twenty-seven chapters in length which is addressed to the entire Christian community including lay women and men. It treats such topics as the duties of the bishop, the nature of penance, liturgical worship, the role of widows and deaconesses in the Church, the resolution of disputes, and the administration of offerings.

The scholarly consensus holds that the *Didascalia* was written in the early third century most likely in North Syria, a region in which Jews and Christians struggled and competed with each other, and is especially directed against those Christians who still observed Jewish law.[1] Unlike the Marcionites, the authors of the *Didascalia* were only selectively anti-nomian. Indeed, they affirmed the law, but on their own terms, because the *Didascalia* distinguishes two parts to the law. The *Didascalia* contains lengthy polemic against those who observe the "second law." While embarking on an analysis of the *Didascalia* in its socio-

historical setting is beyond our scope, it is possible to sketch some of the most salient aspects of the *Didascalia* so as to begin to understand the nature and function of the prayer.

As I will argue, this strain of anti-Jewish polemic seems to be the preeminent factor in the choice and use of Manasseh as an exemplar of a sinner who offers a confessional prayer.[2] The Prayer of Manasseh functions especially to rehabilitate Manasseh as a penitent idolater. In the larger context of tension between Christians, Jews, and those caught betwixt and between, that is, those Jews who desired to join the Christian fold, or even more likely, those Christians whether of Jewish birth or not, who were drawn to the worship and practice of Judaism, the successful penitence of an idolatrous king would have great significance. For the latter group, the assured forgiveness of Manasseh's idolatrous behavior in worshipping other gods would have been a reassurance to them, who were being exhorted to turn from Jewish worship and practices.

I would like to consider then in turn the different contexts in which the Prayer of Manasseh is imbedded: first, within chapters six and seven, which concern practices of penitence in the early Church and in which we find the scriptural recounting of Manasseh's sin and punishment; second, within the larger frame of the composite *Didascalia* itself, which will also take us further abroad to consider the greater Jewish and Christian textual traditions about Manasseh; and finally, the larger rhetorical functioning of the discourse of the *Didascalia* within the warp and woof of early third century north Syria, with its complex interrelationships among Jewish, Christian, and pagan populations.

THE PRAYER IN ITS IMMEDIATE CONTEXT

We may begin with the prayer's immediate context, chapters six and seven of the document. These chapters centrally concern the *Didascalia*'s teaching on repentance and forgiveness which involves a penitential process. While the topic is treated elsewhere in the *Didascalia*, chapters six and seven outline in particular the role of bishops in this regard. Chapter six is titled "Concerning transgressors and those who repent." The bishop is charged at the outset in this way: "Judge therefore O bishop, strictly like God Almighty, but those who repent receive with mercy like God Almighty received. And rebuke and exhort and teach with an oath promising forgiveness to those that have sinned as he [God] said in Ezekiel..." The chapter then contains a quote from what we know in the Masoretic text as Ezek 33:10 ff. that exhorts Israel to repent: "Turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?" There is a long quote from Ezekiel 18:1-32 with its stress on individual punishment meant to challenge the concept of trans-generational punishment. "Son of Man, what do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, 'The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'? As I live, says the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel." The message that the sincerely penitent sinner must be mercifully received is repeated in different ways throughout chapter six. In fact, the emphasis on such necessary reincorporation of penitents suggests that there may have been a practice of exclusion or expulsion of such members from the community.

Chapter six also outlines the process by which the sinner is to be treated and ultimately reincorporated into the community. The bishop should admonish the transgressor, prevent the individual from entering the Church, and allow others to intercede with the bishop on his or her behalf. The bishop is then to talk to the sinner to see if she is sufficiently repentant and worthy to continue the process. Then the offender is charged with fasting as penance, for a period ranging from two to seven weeks. After that affliction, the bishop is to receive the sinner, if sufficiently penitent, back into the Church. It is interesting to note that as one scriptural precedent for the practice of putting someone outside of the church, the *Didascalia* refers to the episode in the book of Numbers, in which Miriam and Aaron have challenged Moses's leadership. Miriam (not Aaron!) is placed outside the camp for seven days. The *Didascalia* states that Miriam's repentance caused her to be brought back within the camp, yet Miriam's "repentance" is a narrative detail absent from the biblical text of Numbers. Here is but one example of the phenomenon that we see throughout the *Didascalia;* there is no sense of a fixed canonical text, no clear distinction made between scripture and tradition, but rather traditions of scripture are garnered in order to make the rhetorical case of the authors/ compilers. *Didascalia* 6 ends with a verse from Isaiah (58: 36) "Loose every bond of sin, and sever all bands of violence and extortion;" which is understood as the responsibility of the bishop toward the people who have sincerely repented.

The same theme continues in *Didascalia* chapter seven in which we find the Prayer of Manasseh, which is also addressed directly to bishops. "Therefore, O bishop, teach and rebuke, and loose by forgiveness. And know your place, that it is that of God Almighty, and that you have received authority to forgive sins." The chapter goes on to consider the great responsibility invested in bishops as a result. The bishop himself should take care not to warrant reproach, even while acknowledging that all are subject to sin.

Like the sixth chapter, chapter seven contains copious use of scripture, especially long passages from Ezekiel. For example, in reference to the bishop's authority, we find interpolated a section from Ezekiel, equivalent to what appears now in the Hebrew Masoretic text (MT) as Ezek 34. The passage concerns the responsibility of shepherds for the flock. The shepherds are references to Israel's kings in the original context, but here are understood as referring to the role of bishops. "For the Lord spoke thus in Ezekiel concerning those bishops who neglect their people: 'And the word of the Lord came to me, saying: Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, and say to them: Thus said the Lord God: Woe unto the shepherds of Israel, who feed themselves, and my sheep the shepherds have not fed." I note the use of Ezekiel here and in chapter six, because we will return below to the significance of the use of Ezekiel in discussion of the "second law."

First let us attend to the inclusion of Manasseh as exemplar in this chapter. The immediate context of the story of Manasseh exhorts the bishops to learn from ancient days "...that from them you may make comparison and learn the care of souls, and the admonition and reproof and intercession of those who repent and have need of intercession."[3]

The tale of Manasseh is then introduced as if taken directly from the text of scripture:

"Hear therefore, O bishops, regarding these things as an example that is fitting and helpful. It is written in the fourth Book of Kingdoms and likewise in the second Book of Chronicles, thus: ..." Yet the tale does not accord with any single tradition, either the Hebrew or Greek of 2 Kgdms 21 or 2 Chr 33, but rather represents a paraphrastic account that draws on traditions found in the targums and shared by Samaritan and Greek sources.[4] Thus, "It is written" may be a technically correct statement on the part of the author, but what is left unsaid is that the traditions about Manasseh were written in many places, and not simply in one book.

It is worth pointing out some interesting differences both between the parallel accounts we know in Hebrew and differences from the biblical account: many of Manasseh's "crimes" mentioned are the same in both MT Kings and Chronicles, such as building shrines and setting up pillars to Baal. Manasseh made his sons pass through the fire, that is death through immolation, presumably as part of the cult of Molech, and he is generally blamed for shedding much innocent blood in Jerusalem. One difference between Kings and Chronicles: whereas 2 Kings 21 narrates that among Manasseh's sins he placed an image of Asherah in the Temple, Chronicles mentions only a *pesel hassemel* (פסל הסמל), a sculpted image that Manasseh had made, rather than specifying that which was no longer likely a threat in post-exilic Judaism, the worship of Asherah. The Greek translation of 2 Chr 33:7 states that Manasseh placed a carved and molten image (ὁ γλυπτὸν καὶ τὸ χωνευτόν εἰκόνα) in the Temple. The *Didascalia* also adopts the more general term for idol rather than specifying the name of an idolatrous god that was worshipped, likely as a means of conveying its contemporaneous relevance for the third-century Syrian audience.

After this account of Manasseh's idolatrous malefactions, the text in the *Didascalia* relates God's condemnation of Manasseh. But whereas the biblical account in Kings and Chronicles has God speaking directly to Manasseh, the *Didascalia* incorporates the targumic tradition that God spoke to Manasseh, not directly, but through the hand of the prophets. Manasseh's lack of remorse calls down divine wrath and punishment, so that Manasseh is carried off by the Assyrians in chains to Babylon. Up to this point, these features of the story correspond more or less to a combined account of Kings/Chronicles. *Didascalia* includes an additional account of Manasseh's treatment in Babylon, how he was fed with a small ration of bread and water mixed with gall to afflict him. It was only after this point of affliction in the story that Manasseh shows contrition, entreats God, and offers his prayer. While the prayer is mentioned in 2 Chronicles, the text of the prayer does not appear. Rather the editors of Chronicles refer their readers to two different sources for this information: "The Annals of the Kings of Israel," and the "records of the seers."

The summary point to be made about this conflation of scriptural sources and traditions in chapter seven of the *Didascalia* is that in its overall shape the story of Manasseh matches in broad terms the actions expected of a bishop in the restoration of a sinner. It includes admonition by God (or as in Chronicles, the prophets) whose role will be played by the bishop; it includes exhortation, banishment from the temple and land, reread as the Church, and affliction by means of fasting, all this before conversion,

repentance, and restoration can occur.

At this point in the narrative of the *Didascalia*, the Prayer of Manasseh is incorporated. The text of the prayer is preceded by a superscription, "Prayer of Manasseh" which interrupts the flow of the narrative. The *Didascalia* reads: "and he prayed before the Lord God and said: Prayer of Manasseh. O Lord God of my fathers, …" The Prayer of Manasseh seems therefore to be an insertion, not an original part of the composition.

Prayer of Manasseh[5]

1:1 O Lord Almighty, God of our ancestors,
of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and of their righteous offspring;
2 you who made heaven and earth with all their order;
3 who shackled the sea by your word of command,
who closed the abyss and sealed it with your terrifying and glorious name;
4 at whom all shudder, and tremble before your power,
5 for the magnificence of your glory cannot be endured,
and the wrath of your threat to sinners is intolerable;
6 yet immeasurable and unfathomable is your promised mercy,
7 for you are the Lord Most High, of great compassion, patient, and merciful, and relenting at human evil.
[a]O Lord, according to your great kindness you have promised repentance and forgiveness to those who have sinned against you, and in the multitude of your mercies you have constituted repentance for sinners, for salvation. [a]
8 Therefore you, O Lord, God of the righteous, have not constituted repentance for the righteous, for Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, who did not sin against you,
but you have constituted repentance for me, who am a sinner.
9 For the sins I have committed are more in number than the sand of the sea;
my transgressions are multiplied, O Lord, they are multiplied!
I am not worthy to look up and see the height of heaven because of the multitude of my iniquities.
10 I am weighted down with many an iron shackle, so that I am rejected because of my sins, and I have no relief;
for I have provoked your wrath and have done what is evil in your sight, setting up desecrations and multiplying abominations.
11 And now I bend the knee of my heart, begging you for your kindness.
12 I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned, and I acknowledge my transgressions.
13 I earnestly beg you, forgive me, O Lord, forgive me!
Do not destroy me with my transgressions!
Do not be angry with me forever or store up evil for me;
Do not condemn me to the depths of the earth.
For you, O Lord, are the God of those who repent,
14 and in me you will manifest your goodness;
for, unworthy as I am, you will save me according to your great mercy,
15 and I will praise you continually all the days of my life.

For all the host of heaven sings your praise and yours is the glory forever. Amen.

The prayer has three main sections:

1-7: an invocation in which God is invoked as the ancestral God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and extolled as the creator of the cosmos (1-4) and as the righteous yet merciful judge of sinners who institutes repentance (5-7).

8-13a: an acknowledgement and confession of sin and petition for forgiveness.

13b-15: a third section in which the petitioner acknowledges the goodness and mercy of God and pledges to praise God forever just as the angels sing God's praise.

Two observations about the prayer are worth comment before continuing with our discussion of its contexts. The first is to note one of the interesting ways in which the prayer breathes interpretive scripturalization. In verse 7, we see a clear reference to the liturgical divine attribute formula of Exod 34:6-7. It begins in Exod 34:6: "The LORD passed before him, and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, patient, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness," and continues in Exod 34:7 to enumerate the divine traits of covenant loyalty and justice over generations. In the formula's reuse in later texts, particularly in penitential contexts, just the first clause or an adaptation of it normally appears.[6] So indeed in the *Didascalia* the form is closer to the modified form found in the post-exilic contexts of Jonah 4:21 and Joel 2:13 in which divine mercy is stressed over the retributive aspect of divine justice. The verb "relent" also recalls God's willingness to change course in Exod 32:14 and not to destroy the people as God had first intended as punishment for their idolatry. Thus the hearkening back to the Mosaic law-giving at Sinai, here after the breach with the golden calf, is a significant dimension of this prayer in relation to the *Didascalia*'s greater rhetoric against observing the "second law."

A second observation concerns the one verse that appears here in the Syriac Prayer of Manasseh, and that is also contained in the Greek version in the fourth century *Apostolic Constitutions* but does not appear in the two earliest Greek Manuscripts of the Odes, Alexandrinus and Turinses:

> 7b O Lord, according to your great kindness you have promised repentance and forgiveness to those who have sinned against you, and in the multitude of your mercies you have constituted repentance for sinners, for salvation.

While we cannot know if this verse appeared in the prayer before its inclusion in the *Didascalia*, it is certainly the case that it accords well with the exhortation to the bishops to bring penitent sheep back into the fold. And so, according to the *Didascalia*, after the prayer is offered, Manasseh is duly heard and absolved by God. Manasseh's rescue and return to the land is decidedly more dramatic than in Chronicles, with flames of fire dissolving the brass case and chains in which he was secured, perhaps borrowed from the account of the three youths in the book of Daniel. The *Didascalia*'s editorial comment after this long scriptural account of Manasseh's reign and repentance brings the point home: "You have heard, beloved children, how Manasseh served idols evilly and bitterly, and slew righteous men; yet when he repented God forgave him, albeit there is no sin worse than idolatry, which is why, there is granted a place for repentance."[7]

THE PRAYER OF MANASSEH IN ITS LARGER CONTEXT

In order to shift from consideration of the prayer in its immediate literary context to its broader context both within the *Didascalia* and the discursive world of Jewish and Christian texts, we might begin by asking the question, why is King Manasseh singled out for use as an exemplar of penitence? Scripture has a perfect penitent it would seem in the person of King David, reflected both in story and in prayer. The superscription of Psalm 51 in the book of Psalms offers King David as a singularly penitent David in the face of his double sin of adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah, a contravention of two of the great ten commandments. Moreover, the narrative recounting both David's episode with Bathsheba and Nathan's subsequent accusation of him in 2 Sam 11-12 would have been ideal texts to draw upon for an ideal penitent. In the Bible, David is depicted as the most pious of kings in the DtrH, who offers more prayers than any other character. Moreover, confronted with his misdoing, David acknowledges his wrongdoing forthrightly, "I have sinned," and accepts his due punishment.

So why Manasseh instead of David? A partial answer was provided above. Manasseh was an idolater and as such could serve as a reassurance to errant Christ-followers who had strayed from the path in observing Jewish practices. To put the case more strongly, Manasseh's rehabilitation along with the penitential practices described served as a kind of counter-discourse to his general reputation in other Jewish tradition of the time.[8]

MANASSEH IN THE PSEUDEPIGRAPHA

Manasseh was not, shall we say, embraced in the bosom of Jewish tradition. Manasseh was vilified in most post-exilic Jewish literature as an idolater who shed innocent blood, a portrait that stands closer to his negative profile in the Deuteronomistic historian's book of 2 Kings than that in 2 Chronicles.[9] While the tale of his repentance is included in a few texts, in most of the accounts, Manasseh was the perpetrator of murder resulting in a prophet's martyrdom. His chief crime according to many of the sources was his murder of Isaiah by sawing him in two. Though not explicit, we see a hint of this in Heb 11: 37, the catalogue of faithful heroes including the prophets, some of whom were "sawn in two." We see the story of Isaiah's murder explicitly in the first verse of the first century CE "Lives of the Prophets," which reads: "Isaiah, from Jerusalem, died under Manasseh by being sawn in two, and was buried underneath the Oak of Rogel, near the place where the path crosses the aqueduct whose water Hezekiah shut off by blocking its sources."[10] So, too in the oldest part of the *Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah*, Isaiah in fact prophesies his own death at Manasseh's hands during the reign of Manasseh's father, King Hezekiah.[11] *Ascen. Isa.* 5: 1-5 recounts in rather more gruesome detail Isaiah's death by woodsaw at the hand of Manasseh, who was said to be inspired by the evil spirit of Beliar rooted in his heart. Both Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds preserve similar depictions of Manasseh. Manasseh's list of sins are expanded in *2 Baruch* which recounts Israel's history in terms of contrasting virtuous and wicked leaders. While *2 Bar.* 64-65 mentions Manasseh's prayer, the passage asserts that God did not listen to his prayer, because Manasseh's fate was already cast. In the rejection of Manasseh's prayer, *2 Baruch* is in accord with the targum to 2 Chronicles 33, in which the angels are said

to have tried to prevent God from hearing Manasseh's prayer, so incensed were they at his behavior. Josephus' *Antiquities* is one of the few Jewish accounts that draws a more sympathetic portrait of Manasseh in drawing from both accounts in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles, but in the main, the consensus verdict in Jewish tradition was that Manasseh was an anti-exemplar, distinctly not worthy of emulation.

THE PRAYER IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DIDASCALIA: THE "SECOND LAW"

With this suggested notion of "counter-discourse" in mind, let us consider now the "Second Law" also called "*Deuterosis"* in the Greek text of the Apostolic Constitutions, referred to in the Syriac of the *Didascalia* by *tenyān nāmōsā*. In considering the idea of the "second law" we must take into account not only its use in the *Didascalia*, but also the resonance of this term in Jewish and Christian discourse generally of this era. Given the name of the fifth book of the Pentateuch, one might expect the "Second Law" to refer to the contents of Deuteronomy in which Moses recounts the Sinai law-giving to the next generation of Israelites on the plains of Moab. This is not so. Within the *Didascalia* itself, the "Second Law" is understood as that part of the law delivered after the idolatrous episode of the worship of the golden calf in Exodus 32. The second chapter of the *Didascalia* includes the following exhortation:

> So the first law is that which the Lord God spoke before the people had made the calf and served idols, which consists of the Ten words and the Judgements. But after they had served idols, he justly laid upon them the bonds, as they were deserving. But do not therefore lay them upon yourself; for our Savior came for no other cause but to fulfil the Law and to set us loose from the bonds of the Second Law.

There is another such clear statement of supercessionism in chapter 26 of the *Didascalia*, a chapter titled, "On the bonds of the Second Law of God," which states even more explicitly that "[Jesus] renewed, fulfilled, and affirmed the Law; but the Second Legislation he did away with and abolished. For indeed it was to this end that he came, that he might affirm the Law and abolish the Second Legislation and fulfill the power of human free will, and show forth the resurrection of the dead."[12] If these descriptions of anti-nomianism are not sufficient to convey the anti-Jewish position of the author, it is also evident in the designation used for Jews. The point to be made is that the term "the Jews" or "Israel" is never used outside of scriptural quotations. Rather, there are singular references to the "former people" as in this verse from the beginning of Chapter 9: "Hear these things then, you laity also, the elect Church of God. For the former people was also called a church, but you are the catholic church, holy and perfect, 'a royal priesthood, a holy assembly, a people for inheritance, the great church, the bride adorned for the Lord God." The chapter continues in that vein, stressing the newly elect status of the church in its replacement of Israel's institutions with its own.

This is not to say that there was a single mind in early Christianity about the role of the law in the life of Judaism and Christianity. The *Didascalia*'s understanding of the law as comprising two separate and distinct parts of the Sinai legislation stands in contrast with other early Christian understand-

ings of the law. In Gal 3:24-25, we see observance of torah as a custodian or helpful discipline until the advent of Christ makes its practice no longer necessary. This perspective is later echoed in the writing of Irenaeus. Or to take another perspective, in the Epistle of Barnabas, the nature of the whole law is asserted to be misunderstood by the Jews. Barnabas makes no division within the narrative frame of scripture itself, but holds only that the true meaning of the law is its spiritual or allegorical sense. The letter of James, dismissed by Martin Luther as that "most strawy epistle," offers yet another view, the most law-affirming of all.

But we are still left wondering how such an understanding of a dual Sinai legislation should develop. A straight narrative reading of Exodus 32 and following does not support such a reading, because in fact, the renewed covenant that God makes with Israel in Exodus 34 on the second set of tablets includes not only the "ten words" or the deacalogue but much more legislation. There is no indication whatsoever that God imposes the renewed covenant with its gift of law as a punishment for idolatry, but rather, God seems to have been softened by the prophetic intercession of Moses in this regard and restores the law tablets as a gift to the people.

The origins and evolution of the *Didascalia*'s construal of the "second law" are not completely clear and a thorough consideration is not possible here, but Pieter van der Horst has drawn attention to a verse in Ezekiel 20 that helps to understand its origins. According to van der Horst, the "second law" is rooted in a reading of the account of the apostasy of the golden calf in Exod 32 coupled with the exilic prophetic text from Ezekiel 20:25: "Moreover I gave them statutes that were not good and ordinances by which they could not live." He does not mention the subsequent verse in Ezekiel, which as we will see, is relevant to our discussion of Manasseh who was said to have sacrificed his sons by immolating them. Ezek 20:26 reads: "I defiled them through their very gifts, in their offering up all their firstborn, in order that I might horrify them, so that they might know that I am the Lord."

The "laws that were not good" were understood to be the "second law", that is, the law given to Moses after his second trip up Mt. Sinai. Van der Horst argues that such an anti-Jewish reading of Ezekiel 20: 25 had already begun in the final decades of the second century in which the stakes were high for claiming the position of the Jews as the covenanted people of God. Irenaeus is the first to draw such an interpretation in his *Adversus Haereses* (4.15.1). Quoting not only Ezek 20:25, but a long passage from Acts 7: 38-43, in which Israel's worship of the golden calf is portrayed as a spiritual return to Egypt, Irenaeus depicts the commandments as an intentional punishment for their sins. While Irenaeus's interpretation may have predated the *Didascalia*, our author pressed the "second law" concept to his full advantage in making his rhetorical case.

We should now return to a point made earlier in the paper, which was to note the extensive use of Ezekiel in chapters six and seven of the *Didascalia*. There is also a quotation of Ezek 20:25 in the twenty-sixth chapter of the *Didascalia* with its condemnation of the second law. In contrast to the Christian deployment of the prophet Ezekiel, Pieter van der Horst has pointed out the significance of the spare use in general of Ezekiel in Jewish texts among the rabbis.[13] Although Ezekiel 1 and 10 were drawn upon

for apocalyptic and esoteric writings, Ezekiel does not figure prominently in rabbinic writings. Van der Horst also suggests the rabbinic dispute over Ezekiel's inclusion in the Bible. What was, if not anathema, then questionable scripture, among the Jewish community, became an important source for the aims of this Christian or Jewish-Christian author of the *Didascalia* in repudiating Judaism. Whether the status of Ezekiel in rabbinic Judaism was actually a result of this Christian polemic, is a question we will leave unanswered for now.

But whereas we have one construal of the "second law" or *Deuterosis*, that obtains in the *Didascalia*, we must consider the resonance of this legal language in the larger Jewish discursive context. Up to this point, we have been using the Greek term "*Deuterosis"* or an English translation "second law." Connolly suggests that the notion of the Greek Deuterosis is derived from the *shanah*, the repetition of the law understood to be part and parcel of the oral tradition of reciting the law in Jewish tradition.[14] The Syriac translator of the original Greek used the term *tenyān nāmōsā*, or "repetition (or double) of the Law," which in fact is the Syriac title of the book of Deuteronomy, taken from the Greek δευτερονομιον. The contrast to "*mishnah"*, that which is repeated orally, the tradition of the rabbis, then, would be "*miqra'"*, that which is read aloud from what is written. If we are to understand the Syriac use of the term *tenyān nāmōsā*, as actually rendering the usual sense of "*mishnah"* in Jewish tradition, then what we see in the *Didascalia* may be a usurpation of that halakhic practice in the Syriac Jewish community.[15]

Just as "Israel" or the Jews as a living community of people is effaced in the *Didascalia*, so too, an important living dimension of the "law" as practiced in the Jewish community is effaced by the author of the *Didascalia*. No mention is made of the development of the legal tradition, the ongoing mishnah authorized by the learned leaders of the Jewish community. It is likely the rabbis as the bearers of the halakhic tradition would possess a similar status and level of authority within their community as the bishops in the Christian community who are addressed in the document. Thus what is left unstated about the "second law" may be as important as understanding what is explicitly said about it in the *Didascalia* in terms of understanding its rhetorical force among culturally literate Jews, Christians, and Jewish-Christians. In its rhetoric, the *Didascalia* thus suggests both that the post-golden calf Sinai legislation is null and void, but also that the oral halakhic tradition of the rabbis which would about this time come to roost in writing in the Mishnah was similarly obsolete.

THE USE OF THE PRAYER OF MANASSEH WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE DIDASCALIA

In establishing contexts for the Prayer of Manasseh, we have now reviewed the role of the Prayer in its more immediate literary context in chapters six and seven of the *Didascalia*, its larger context with the church document as a whole, and the broader literary contextual environment which it inhabited as part of traditional Jewish and Christian scriptural interpretations such as we reviewed in the pseudepigrapha, targums, and New Testament. It remains to make some tentative suggestions about the *Didascalia*'s social context and function in the life of the early Syriac Christian community.

Perhaps because it seems self-evident, little has been said in scholarship about how the *Didascalia* was actually used in antiquity. In his introductory essay on the Prayer of Manasseh, James Charlesworth says only this: "Its appearance in the *Didascalia* (3rd cent. A.D.) and especially in the Apostolic Constitutions (4th cent. A.D.), a manual for instruction in the post-Nicene Church, reveals that the Prayer of Manasseh was from early times used ecclesiastically."[16] Charlesworth's statement is doubtless true, but not helpful in its vague generalization because it isolates the Christian community from its pagan and Jewish surroundings and influences. Questions remain about how exactly the *Didascalia* was read, who heard it, how frequently and how it thus shaped (or did not) those who heard its rhetoric. Without overt description of the *Didascalia*'s use in any of our sources from antiquity, the answers to these questions must remain tentative. In any case, it is possible to proffer one suggestion rooted in the observations by Gerard Rouwhorst about Jewish liturgical traditions in early Syriac Christianity.[17] Although we cannot pinpoint either the geographical provenance of the *Didascalia* or its subsequent circulation after composition, the general consensus would have it in northern Syria, in which region lived a sizable Jewish community, a community moreover that may have been bilingual, using both Greek and Syriac.

Rouwhorst points out two features of Jewish influence on early Syriac Christianity. One is in the architecture of churches in north Syria. In these, he notes the absence of the usual seats for clergy in the apses of the building. Rather, seats for clergy are found in the middle of the nave, which contained a large, walled-in platform, which is referred to as a *bema* in one of Ephrem's works (eighth *memra* on Nicomedia) and corroborated by later sources making the North Syrian churches distinct from the churches of mainland Syria in which the ambo was the central feature of the church. He suggests a relationship between the plan of these North Syrian Churches and that of the synagogues as they existed in Palestine and the Diaspora: "At least from the second-third century C.E. some synagogues were provided with platforms that were intended for the reading and the explanation of the Scriptures, i.e., the Torah and the Prophets, and what is still more striking they were called bemas."[18]

We know from later commentaries on the liturgy that the first part of the Eucharist, that is, the liturgy of the word, the reading, preaching and singing of scripture in psalms, was offered on the *bema*, before the clergy descended to the altar for the liturgy of the sacrament. While the *Didascalia* makes no reference to the actual building in which worship took place, in chapter 10 there is clear reference to two parts of the service, the first referred to as "the word" and the second referred to as "the prayer" in which communion is offered. *Didascalia* chapter 10 makes clear that unrepentant sinners might participate in the first part of the service, the liturgy of the word, but only repentance, confession, and conversion could allow entrance into the Eucharistic assembly.

A second point of significance is the lectionary tradition among Syriac-speaking Christians which from the majority of accounts included two readings from the Old Testament, and two from Christian writings. Drawing from several Syriac sources, the so-called *Doctrine of the Apostles*, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, as well as the *Doctrine of Addai*, we learn of the following four dis-

tinct readings: "the Torah, or (Old Testament), the Prophets, the Gospel, and the Acts of the Apostles." What is intriguing is that specific books are not specified but the authors are presumed, the Torah (presumably issuing from Moses), the Prophets with their unique authority, the Gospels which are each attributed to one of four disciples of Jesus, and the apostolic witnesses.

It seems plausible that the fourth source mentioned, "the Acts of the Apostles," might also include readings from such so-called "pseudo-apostolic" "church teaching documents" as the *Didascalia Apostolorum* or the *Apostolic Tradition* or the *Apostolic Constitutions*. In this way, the Syriac Church would be in continuity with reading the letters of Paul in the Churches, letters that dealt with concrete problems that various congregations were having. If such suppositions are correct, then portions of the *Didascalia*, including polemic against the "second law" and exhortations to penitence akin to that of King Manasseh, would have been heard regularly in the churches in order to safeguard their membership and to build walls between competing Jewish communities in hopes of solidifying a contested Christian identity through counter-discursive texts and practices.

CONCLUSION

Having ventured a bit far afield and on less firm ground in order to contextualize the Prayer of Manasseh within its broadest context, it is necessary to bring together a few threads of the argument in summary. The use of the Prayer of Manasseh in the *Didascalia* sheds light on inter-religious polemic as a counter-discourse that functions in a few ways. First, in its immediate context of chapters six and seven, the Prayer and the story of Manasseh serve as a model for the penitent sinner for even the worst sins imaginable. The *Didascalia* offers Manasseh to the bishops as an example of the efficacy of repentance as part of a penitential process, even to those convicted of the worst sin, idolatry. As part of a tale of "olden days" the Prayer of Manasseh is not overtly liturgical, though the puzzling inclusion of the superscription strongly hints at another life outside the *Didascalia*. As these chapters are addressed to bishops, we might venture to say as well that the prayer was employed in penitential practices at that time within the church, and depending on its first composer, perhaps it was used in Jewish pentitential practice prior to that. Yet the document as a whole, or in chapters, may well have been read regularly as part of the liturgy of the word, the first half of the weekly worship gathering in the churches. Because the *Didascalia* is addressed to the entire Christian community, its exhortatory role would extend not just to the leaders, but to those in the congregation who were tempted to continue their Jewish practice and participation in the Jewish community. The *Didascalia* relies heavily on the positive portrait of Manasseh in Chronicles' counter-discourse as fully redeemed sinner, rather than on the traditional Jewish view of Manasseh as idolatrous prophet-slayer. The practice of penitence, which as rituals normally do, likely preceded its justification through written text, also shaped the way in which the story of Manasseh was appropriated from the various scriptural traditions available to the author of the *Didascalia*. We thus see the fluidity of "biblical canon" still in the third century.

Within the context of the *Didascalia* itself, we hear the Prayer of Manasseh in relation to the condemnation of the so-called "second law" of the Jews. If we can assume that the *Didascalia Apostolorum* was regularly read in churches as part of the liturgy of the word, part of the "Acts of the Apostles," we can also hear the Prayer of Manasseh as part of the larger rhetorical world of Judaism and Christianity in antique Syria, in which leaders of the Church were working hard to retain members in the face of competing temptations for Judaizers attracted to the worship life of synagogues as well as continued participation in other aspects of Jewish community life of northern Syria. The author/compiler of the *Didascalia* would not let such individuals have it both ways. The closeness of the communities of Jews and Christians, their shared use of some texts and traditions, and contested identities, also caused a threat. In the face of such perceived danger to community cohesion, it was "either/or" never "both/and" among some of the leadership. There is no effacing the legacy for Jewish-Christian relations in subsequent centuries of such stark rhetoric and antagonism so clearly inscribed in the third century, but continued critical examination of such sources may help to shape a future of clearer mutual understanding for those standing in such living streams of tradition.

NOTES

[1] This is reflected in the *Didascalia*'s admonitions to believers not to follow the "second law." The *Didascalia* contains a conception of two givings of the law: the first was the Decalogue; the second contained the cultic and ritual legislation that was given as punishment after the incident with the Golden Calf. For a discussion of the "second law," see Pieter van der Horst, "I Gave Them Laws that Were not Good: Ezekiel 20:25 in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity," in *Hellenism, Judaism, Christianity: Essays on their Interaction* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1994), 122-145, esp. 138-40. For the evidence on dating the *Didascalia*, see F.X. Funk, *Die Apostolische Konstitutionen, Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum* (2 vols.; Paterdorn: Schoeningh, 1905) 1:50-54.

[2] The work of Hindy Najman has caused me to reflect in greater depth on the role of exemplars in early Judaism; see her "How Should We Contextualize Pseudepigrapha? Imitation and Emulation in 4 Ezra," in *Flores Florentino: Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino García Martínez* (ed. A. Hilhorst, E. Puech, E. Tigchelaar; JSJSup, Leiden: Brill, forthcoming). From a different perspective, the work of Adolf Lumpe remains a touchstone, "Exemplum" RAC 6.1229-1257 and informed my earlier work on positive and negative exempla found abundantly in early Jewish literature, particularly in prayers; see J.H. Newman, *Praying by the Book: The Scripturalization of Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (SBLEJL 14, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), esp. 159-172. There has been much scholarship in recent years on the role of saints, hagiography, and other ritual practices in forming Christians in late antiquity; an influential work in this regard is Peter Brown's "The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity," in *Saints and Virtues* (ed. J. Hawley; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 1-14; and a more recent study, Georgia Frank, *The Memory of the Eyes: Pilgrims to Living Saints in Christian Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

[3] Translations from the *Didascalia* in the article, except where noted, are adapted from Arthur Vööbus, *The Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac* I (CSCO 401/402; Leuven: Peeters: 1979) with occasional consultation for felicitous style to the edition of R. Hugh Connolly, *Didascalia Apostolorum: the Syriac version translated and accompanied by the Verona Latin fragments* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1929; repr. 1969) on whom Vööbus too was reliant.

[4] Vööbus, Didascalia, 50-51

[5] There are few textual variants among the major Syriac and Greek manuscripts. The most significant occurs in verse 7. The earliest Peshitta manuscript dates from the ninth century and preserves a form only slightly different from the Syriac of the *Didascalia*; for a review of the Syriac manuscripts of Pr Man, see the introduction to the "Prayer of Manasseh" in *The Old Testament in Syriac According to the Peshitta Version Part 4/fasc. 6* (ed. W. Baars and H. Schneider; Leiden: Brill, 1972), ii-vii.

[6] For discussions of the use of this formula within the Bible, see J. Scharbert, "Formgeschichte und Exegese von Ex 34:6-7 und seiner Pallelism," *Biblica* 38 (1957) 130-150; Robert C. Dentan, "The Literary Affinities of Exodus XXXIV 6f." *VT* 13 (1963) 34-51; and Michael Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 335-350. For a discussion of its early interpretation, see James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998), 721-727.

[7] The assertion that idolatry is the worst of sins is not a unanimous perspective in Christianity or Judaism. We might contrast this view with the author of Jubilees, in which it is intermarriage. In Jub. 33:20 such a high degree of value is placed on preservation of the people of Israel as a holy seed that intermarriage is considered the worst pollution, "because Israel is a holy

nation to the Lord his God, and a nation of inheritance, and a nation of priests, and a royal nation and a special possession. And there is nothing which appears which is as defiled as this among the holy people."

[8] I use the idea of counter-discourse as employed by Carol Newsom in her work on the Community Rule (1QS) and the *Hodayot* from Qumran. The term discourse, following Foucault, comprises the intermeshed world of text and social, or in the case of Pr Man, ritual, practices; see her *The Self as Symbolic Space: Constructing Identity and Community at Qumran* (STDJ 52; Leiden: Brill, 2004), esp. 23-76.

[9] See *y. Sanh*. 10 (28c.37); *b.Yebam*. 49b, *Apoc. Ab.* 25, Jos. *Ant*. 10.3.2.

[10] The passage about Isaiah is concerned not so much with Manasseh's treatment of the prophet as with the connection of Isaiah to the miracle of the ever-flowing Siloam spring and Isaiah's role in safeguarding Jerusalem and its water source through prayer during the reign of Hezekiah and the Assyrian onslaught. The almost off-handed mention of Isaiah's death at Manasseh's hands may well suggest its already secure position in Jewish tradition by this point.

[11] By Michael Knibb's assessment, *Ascen. Isa.* 1:1-3:12 and 5:1-16 comprise the oldest parts of the work which are no later than the first century CE but probably earlier; "Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah," *OTP* 2:149-150.

[12] In Connolly's words, "To the author of the *Didascalia,* the *Deuterosis* was something of which the only fulfillment lay in its complete abrogation. He definitely excludes it from fulfillment;" *Didascalia*, lxii.

[13] Van der Horst cites E. Dassmann's work "Hesekiel," *RAC* 14 (1988) 1132-1191, especially 1133-1149. "Laws that were not good," 99.

[14] See the discussion of Connolly, *Didascalia*, lvii-lxix.

[15] In a related vein, Charlotte Fonrobert has referred to the *Didascalia* as a "counter-Mishnah" for the followers of Jesus. She argues the case that the *Didascalia* itself represents "one of the voices of Judaism" at a time when the construction of Christian and Jewish identities were still in flux. She argues cogently that the spectrum of Jews and Christians inhabit the same "discursive space" desiring to claim the authority of the scriptural tradition to support their rival claims to orthopraxis or orthodoxy. Less convincing is her argument that the compilers of the *Didascalia* knew of a compiled *Mishnah* and were consciously writing in order to counter its role in a Jewish community given the considerable differences in genre between the two. Whereas she rightly suggests a degree of fluid community identity, she wrongly assumes a degree of stability and canonicity with scriptural texts than was the case, given our assessment of the non-"biblical" story of Manasseh in chapters six to seven. She does not consider the issue of the *Didascalia*'s composition but analyzes it as a unified composition, nor more significantly from the perspective of understanding the origins of the Prayer of Manasseh, does she address the notion of the independent circulation of parts of the *Didascalia* prior to its redaction; Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert, "The *Didascalia Apostolorium:* A Mishnah for the Disciples of Jesus," *JECS* 9 (2001) 483-509.

[16] "Prayer of Manasseh," *OTP* 2:632.

[17] Gerard Rouwhorst, "Jewish Liturgical Traditions in Early Syriac Christianity," *VC* 51 (1997) 72-93.

[18] *Ibid*., 76.

NARSAI'S DEPENDENCE ON THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA

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Narsai stands out as the preeminent theologian among the fifth-century East Syrian Christians. While acknowledged as an ardent defender of Theodore of Mopsuestia and hailed as both the founder of the School of Nisibis and an unusually skilled poet, almost no attention has been paid—until recently—to his writings and to his person. Fortunately, some 80 of his homilies are extant,[1] but with only a few having been translated into modern languages. These nevertheless provide more than ample grounds for justifying the critical judgement that Narsai is indeed a committed follower of Theodore of Mopsuestia's christological thought and well honored with the title "the Harp of the Spirit."[2] To spell out in some detail how Narsai mirrors Theodore's outlook will now be the object of this paper.

While Theodore and Narsai overlap in their theological positions, they do differ in their purposes, styles and the audiences to and for whom they were writing. Theodore was a biblical theologian who wrote well-reasoned commentaries in Greek that remained faithful to what any given Scripture text actually states. While Narsai followed Theodore's literal, historical and rational method of interpreting Scripture, he wrote in a much wider vein, more interested in the overall spiritual and occasionally polemical themes that a scriptural passage might contain or suggest. In today's context, Theodore would be viewed as a systematic theologian, and Narsai a gifted, poetic popularizer.[3]

Because our time is limited, I intend now to restrict my comments to two areas where both Theodore and Narsai can be clearly shown to be close, if not identical, in their thought, despite their other differences. The first will treat in detail how they understand Adam and Christ's humanity to be God's "image." This will provide insight into how they both interpret scriptural texts and how they understand salvation as a transformation from a state of earthly mortality, to one of immortality as well as how baptism plays a central role in this drama. The second stress will center on the meaning Theodore and Narsai attach to the christological terms that they use to express Christ as being one person (*prosôpon*/*parsôpâ*) with two *hypostaseis*/*qnôme* and two natures (*physeis*/*kyane*). Afterwards we will expand upon this to illustrate how their functional understanding has impacted upon their usual ways of speaking about Christ. In developing these points, we will discover how Theodore and Narsai enrich our under-

standing of what each other holds, especially Theodore's influence upon Narsai's understanding of Christ. But first, they need to be placed in their own historical relationship to one another.

THE HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIP

Theodore lived from ca. 350 to 428, mostly at Antioch, possibly staying at Tarsus with Diodore from ca. 383 to 392[4] and later on until his death at Mopsuestia as its bishop.[5] Narsai's life span may have briefly overlapped with Theodore's—depending on whether Narsai lived 90 or 100 years and whether he was born about 400 or ca. 410 to 420.[6] We know that he was raised in the Persian empire, studied at Edessa (then under Byzantine control) and eventually became the head of the Persian school there for twenty years until he was forced to flee for safety to the Persian empire. With the assistance of Bishop Barsauma, he founded a school at Nisibis that soon became the intellectual and religious center and a source of vocations for the East Syrians in the Persian empire. As regards what most interests us, Narsai lived—at least for some time at Edessa either as a student or the head of its school or both—when Ibas was the bishop there from 436 to 457.[7] The fathers at the Second Council of Ephesus condemned Ibas in 449 for being a staunch defender of Theodore, citing as evidence Ibas' controversial letter to Mari the Persian in which he praises "the blessed Theodore [as] a preacher of the truth and teacher of the faith [as] he not only subdued the heretics by the true faith while alive, but also after his death he left behind in his writings spiritual weapons to the children of the Church…who through zeal for God not only changed his city from error to truth, but also by his teaching instructed churches far distant."[8] Two years later in 451 the fathers at the council of Chalcedon restored Ibas to his see. At his rehabilitation, he insisted that his letter praising Theodore be read to the council as a probative sign that he as well as his letter were orthodox.[9] Ibas is also credited with having played a pivotal role in translating Theodore's works from Greek into Syriac.[10] The point here is that Narsai would have known of Ibas' defense of Theodore during the time he spent at Edessa and doubtless read Theodore's works in Syriac.[11]

This brief historical summary is meant to focus attention on how Narsai doubtless came into contact with Theodore's writings and thought during the formative years of his life. But not only was Narsai acquainted with Theodore's works, he also affirms how firmly committed he was to Theodore's thought and his method of interpretation:

> All who have grown rich from the treasure of his books have been very well rewarded and have acquired an ability to interpret as he has done. I who learned [to do] this in a stammering way have learned from him, and by my involvement with him I have acquired a way to be involved in the study of [scriptural] words. I consider [my] study of him has guided me to [interpret rightly] what has been written (there).[12]

THEODORE'S AND NARSAI'S METHOD OF INTERPRETING SCRIPTURE

Theodore is acknowledged as one of the two outstanding biblical interpreters in patristic times, Origen being the other. He is recog-

nized as the foremost proponent of the Antiochene literal, historical and rational approach to exegesis, while Origen is acclaimed as the leading exponent of a Christian allegorical interpretation. Many factors likely influenced Theodore in arriving at his final hermeneutical stance, specifically his rhetorical education, his training in the Antiochene tradition under Diodore, his own temperament and the evolution within his own thought.[13] He believed that his method was the best way to interpret what God was revealing in a divinely inspired Scripture. He insisted that the only assured way to know God's real intent was to center on what the words explicitly state and mean in the text itself.[14] He, however, was not a fundamentalist. For he admitted that words can have a metaphorical as well as a strictly literal sense. While he was opposed to and rejected an allegorical interpretation, he was open to the presence of a spiritual meaning when it arises out of a true typology. He disapproved of allegory because it employs the use of one's imagination to discover a meaning that may be inspiring but is, in fact, wholly subjective, lacking any rationally acceptable way to prove itself. Who is to say that this possibility rather than innumerable other imaginative ones is what God intends? In other words, Theodore insists on a standard that interpreters can agree upon as not merely explaining a text but justifying it in a way that reasonable people can agree as to what a text is actually asserting in its own context. This is what he means by a literal interpretation.

Besides seeking a meaning that can be explicitly warranted by the wording of a text, Theodore insists that at least its narrative parts must contain historical or factual information. Since God is the ultimate author of the Scriptures, he believes that whatever God reveals there must be true. This became a major concern for Diodore and Theodore when the emperor Julian in the early 360's attacked the Christian Scriptures as being mythic creations whose value lay in their underlying universal philosophical meanings. Julian claimed that the Christian Scriptures ought to be interpreted for their hidden spiritual meanings as the philosophers were doing with Homer. In his *Reply to the Emperor Julian*,[15] Theodore sought to justify the Gospels as having an actual basis in fact. He realized that a faith commitment ought to be based on what has truly happened. A contemporary issue may help to exemplify why Theodore was so adamant on this point. Today many believe that Christ's bodily resurrection was a figment of Peter's imagination. While this happening cannot be proven according to modern scientific historical methods, this does not mean that it did not actually occur. When a believer accepts it as factually true, then one ought to reflect on its implications, as St. Paul has done, to realize its full significance for one's life and one's relationship to God.

While Narsai faithfully adheres to Theodore's literal, historical and rational methods of interpreting the Scriptures, he applies these in a different way because his purpose, medium of expression and audience are not the same as Theodore's. Narsai's metrical homilies are written in verse form with a greater thrust aimed at instructing, exhorting and defending a scriptural message than Theodore's close theological scrutinizing of lines or passages that are difficult to interpret. Because it is a vast undertaking to substantiate how Narsai depends upon Theodore's exegetical method, and since our time is circumscribed, I want chiefly to discuss at

this point two areas of dependence: namely, how Narsai mirrors Theodore's understanding of the ways Adam typifies Christ's humanity as God's true "image", and how the sacrament of baptism typifies the salvation to be attained in an immortal heavenly existence with God.

The most striking and the easiest example to illustrate Narsai's close dependence on Theodore is how Adam's and Christ's humanity are God's "image."[16] When commenting on the Genesis passage where Adam is said to be God's "image," Theodore affirms:

> So also has the Artisan of creation made the whole cosmos, embellishing it with diverse and varied works and at the end established a human being to serve as the image for his household, so that all would render the honor due to God by their care for and veneration toward him.[17]

It is important to note that Theodore considers "image" applicable not to Adam as an individual but to human nature as such whose head is Adam:

> So also when pondering upon God's word, (Moses) interpreted 'He made the human being' in a general sense, namely that it refers in a generical way to man and woman together. For after he said in the narrative account that 'God made a human being in the image of God,' he added 'He made them male and female,' thereby [affirming] that the generic nature is what is designated.[18]

We see the same kind of generic understanding in Narsai where he too applies "image" to the whole human being: "The Creator) depicted the power of His creatorship in him as an image, mute beings [united] to his body and likewise rational beings to his soul."[19] Theodore and Narsai's understanding of "image" differs from that of most non-Antiochene Fathers who understood "image" to be somehow spiritual and located in the human νοῦς. They argue that the human body cannot image the transcendent Creator. Theodore, however, responds:

> It is impossible that an image be made such that it is not seen, since it is evident that images are customarily made among those who make them either for honor or affection, on this account so that they may be a remembrance of those unseen for those who nevertheless can see.[20]

What is interesting for this study is how Theodore and Narsai–and for that matter all the Antiochenes–accept what the Scriptures explicitly state about Adam being made God's image as a human being as such. They reject the view of those who hold "image" to be somehow a spiritual reflection of God as not taking into account what God has explicitly revealed in the text. Yet the Antiochenes differ among themselves. Diodore, John Chrysostom and Theodoret associate the meaning of "image" with the authority that God has bestowed upon humans for rule over the material world.[21] Since Narsai follows Theodore's rather than their thought on this point, it is clear what is his source. While Theodore and Narsai do not deny that God's bestowal of "image" upon Adam entails some authoritative role over material creation, they also teach that being God's "image" means that Adam has a revelatory and a binding role to play in the universe.[22] For Adam reveals God's existence and will to the rest of creation and stands as the visible bond uniting the spiritual powers and the material world together as one, the

spiritual powers to his soul and the material world to his body, thus enabling them to be joined to God through their unity with humans:

> Indeed the one universal bonding was seen to be made for this purpose: because of the kindred relationship that the universe has to the human being, all come together so that by their solicitous care they might render with one consent their worship due to God.[23]

Narsai is even more explicit in that he links the revelatory role of "image" to that of the "bond" of the universe:

> (God's) nature is immeasurably more than created things and does not possess a visible image as mortals have. With the name of image, He has magnified His image so as to bind the universe in order that (all) might acquire love [for God] by knowing Him by knowing His image.

Theodore and Narsai reflect the same functional outlook on "image" that is not only revelatory but mediating. For if all creation is bound together in Adam's human nature, then he serves both as the head of all creation uniting them among themselves and as their mediator with God. Narsai expresses this well when affirming how Adam as well as Christ fulfills this role:

> Through a human being I accomplish My transcendent will, and I make him to be the one mediator between Me and human beings. By his mediation I show my love before all creatures, just as I showed it in the fashioning [of Adam] at the beginning of the ages.[24]

As long as Adam remains faithful to God's will, all of creation experiences peace. When, however, Adam sins, he undermines his dignity and role as God's "image," with grievous repercussions for all. He is the cause of his human nature remaining mortal. This in turn affects his offspring and all the rest of creation. For what he does as head affects the members of his body. When, therefore, the human body separates from its soul at death, it also severs the bond, uniting the spiritual and material worlds with human nature, depriving them thereby of their appointed way to be one with God in peace. This chaotic situation appears to be utterly hopeless to the angelic powers, although God provides throughout the Hebrew Testament hopeful signs that He has chosen from all eternity another to be his true perfect "image."

Theodore sees the restoration of all creation coming through Christ. Likely inspired by Colossians 1:13-20 and Ephesian 2:13-22, Theodore accepts these passages as affirming in a literal, historical way God's own revelation of how salvation is to be attained through Christ as his perfect "image" within creation. These verses proclaim Christ to be His Son and His visible "image" for whom, through whom and in whom all things in heaven and earth are bound and recapitulated as the head of his Body, the Church and the head of all creation. Theodore appears then to have seen how St. Paul's remark in Romans 5:14 that Adam is a type of the one to come can be applied to the Scripture's revelation that both Adam and Christ are God's "images." As a type, Adam must possess similarities to Christ's archetypical and perfect role as God's visible "image." However to grasp Theodore's and Narsai's thought here, we need

to understand the relationship he sees existing between a true type and its archetype.

First, Theodore believed that a true type and its archetype had to be historical; that is, to both be real persons, events, places or situations that are actually existing, have existed or will exist in the future. One of the reasons he rejected allegory is that the archetype would exist only in the imagination of the interpreter. This means that he regarded Adam and Christ to be real as well as the two states of which they are heads. Secondly, there must exist some real similarities between a type and its archetype, with the archetype being the actual fulfillment of the type; in Theodore's words:

> This was the reason why he made a great number of dispositions in the Old covenant that the happenings both provided the people of the time with the greatest benefit and also contained a revelation of the developments that would emerge later, as well as the fact that the excellence of these latter would be seen to surpass the former. In this way the events in the former times were found to be a kind of type of what came later containing some outline of them as well as meeting needs at the time, while suggesting by the events themselves how far they were inferior to the later ones.[25]

Thirdly–and this is critical for understanding the effects of baptism and the eucharist—there exists a dynamic bond existing between and uniting the two in the sense that a type is like a seed being destined to attain its flowering in its archetype. The reason for this certainty is that God is the Lord of history and can bring about its fulfillment in a mysterious but effective way. In this sense, a type can be said to have a spiritual meaning but it is one that is dynamically rooted in a reality that will take place in the future. Finally, Theodore requires a typical/ archetypical relationship to be explicitly acknowledged in the Scriptures. For God's revelation guarantees that a type will achieve its end.

If Colossians is accepted as the source of Theodore's understanding of "image," then it makes eminent sense that Theodore (and later Narsai) attaches the notion of bond to Adam's role as "image." For all his requirements for typology are met. Adam and Christ qua man are both historical figures. So too is Adam's role as "image" similar to Christ's, with Christ's role being the completion of Adam's. Theodore expresses this when he is commenting on how "Christ in the flesh" will recapitulate the universe:

> Therefore in our renovation when the interconnection of all creation is reintegrated, our first fruits is Christ according to the flesh in whom the perfect and, as I have said, the comprehensive re-creation of all creatures will be accomplished....Well, therefore, did he state 'in him are created all beings,' not only because we have all obtained through his deeds the promise of future benefits, but also because the perfect binding together of all beings will be preserved in him because of the divine nature dwelling [within him], so that nothing can cut us off from what is common to us.[26]

In other words, for Theodore and Narsai, "image" needs to be grasped as indicating how Christ's humanity reveals the visible way that all creation can know and be united to God through the mediating role his humanity plays because of its close union with the Word of God.

Narsai likewise clearly affirms, as Theodore does, the type/antitype relationship be-

tween the roles of Adam's and Christ's humanity as God's visible "image":

> He called the First Adam by the name of 'image' in a secondary sense, and the 'image' was, in fact, in the Messiah, the Second Adam. Thus [the words] "Come. Let us make man in our image" were fulfilled in that the Creator took His 'image' and made it a dwelling place for his honor. The promises to Adam came to be, in fact, in the Messiah; the one whom He called His 'image' but who was corrupted has returned and been renewed in the Messiah.[27]

Narsai also affirms that Christ's humanity is the mediating way for other humans and angels in heaven to be joined with each other and to be able to know, worship and be united with God:

> Angels and human beings will be united together by the yoke of his love, and they will celebrate him as the 'image' of the transcendent King....They continually worship in the temple of his body that One who is hidden in him and they offer therein the pure sacrifices of their minds. In the haven of his body come to rest their thought impulses, as they become worn out in search of the incomprehensible hidden One. For this reason, the Fashioner of the universe chose him from the universe, so that by his visible body he might satisfy the need of the universe. A creature needs to search out what is hidden and discover its secret meaning and intent. Because it is impossible that the hidden One's nature appear in an open way, He limited their inquiries to His visible 'image'.[28]

BAPTISM AS A TYPE

Theodore and Narsai also refer to baptism and the eucharist as types and symbols. But because of our time limitation, we will discuss only baptism, though what we say is applicable in general to the eucharist.[29] In his Catechetical Homilies, Theodore is instructing adults who are preparing for baptism, while Narsai is more interested in explaining the underlying meaning of the ritual involved. As Theodore affirms, those seeking to be baptized need instruction if they are to understand what they are doing and entering into: "A revelation and an explanation are required for these, if the one coming forward to receive [baptism] is to know the power of these mysteries."[30] Theodore and Narsai do this by showing how baptism fulfills what a true type requires. First, one's baptism and the heavenly resurrection it symbolizes are actual events in the sense that Christ's humanity now enjoys immortal life with God—a state that the baptized are assured too of achieving if they remain faithful to the new life they received at baptism. There also exists a real similarity between the life attained at baptism and the future immortal life to be acquired in heaven. One's baptismal life shares even now in an inchoative, dynamic way the immortal life promised by the Holy Spirit for a future heavenly life with God, in Theodore's words: "When we also receive 'the first fruits of the Holy Spirit' by sharing in the mysteries, we believe that we already exist in these realities;"[31] and in a more explicit way: "(Believers) regard the first fruits [to be] the small amount of grace [bestowed] in the present life [accepting them] as a confirmation of the things to come."[32] Narsai expresses this too as being a certainty when he writes: "For what we possess in a myste-

rious way by faith in the matter of types and signs is assuring us that we will pass from one [state] to the other."[33]

It is important to realize and stress that both Theodore and Narsai say that the immortal life a baptized person acquires and shares in ought to be considered as really existing on the level of a potentiality that is actively affecting one's life in a radical way here and now: "When one has become baptized and has received the [Spirit's] divine and spiritual grace, he has become totally other in an absolute sense... The one who descends into the water is reformed by the grace of the Holy Spirit and is born again to another superior human nature....You set aside the former mortality and take on a nature that is wholly immortal and incorruptible."[34] Theodore likens this "new superior nature" to the potentiality laying dormant in a new born baby:

> Just as one born of a woman possesses the power to speak, hear, walk and work with his hands but is now completely undeveloped for all (these actions), but afterwards with time he will receive these according to the divine decree. So likewise the one now born at baptism possesses in himself all the power of an immortal and incorruptible nature and possesses all these, although he is not now capable of operating them and making them work and act until the moment that God has determined for us.[35]

Connected with this idea of an inchoative sharing in Christ's immortal life is another result of baptism: to become bonded as a living member of Christ's Body. Theodore relates this to his understanding of typology:

> Since we believe that we have been generated in these matters in a typical way through baptism, Paul states that we have also become a member of Christ's body because of our communion [with him] in his resurrection the type of which we believe is being brought to fulfillment in baptism.[36]

Theodore insists that those baptized are assured that they are no longer under the spell of Adam, the head of mortality, but are now under Christ, who is the head of an immortal life that the members of his Body now share: "Therefore they will no longer be thought of as part of Adam but of Christ; and they will no longer name Adam their head but Christ the one renewing them."[37] Christ not only bestows a new life with the Spirit but also nourishes those who are members of his Body and unites them indirectly to God because of his humanity's mediating direct union with the Word:

> Therefore God the Word was united to His Father according to nature. So too through the union with Him, the assumed man also receives a union with the Father. And we in a similar way with the natural union we have with Christ in the flesh, receive, insofar as it can be done, a spiritual participation with him and become his body, [with] each one of us truly a member. So we hope to rise at the end [of time] as he has, and be regenerated into eternal life. So by going through him to God, we possess necessarily a family relationship with the Father.[38]

THEODORE AND NARSAI'S UNDERSTANDING OF CHRIST'S PERSONAL UNION

Theodore and Narsai are identical in their christological positions. This is especially

evident in the terms they use to describe the union. Theodore sums up his position thus:

> For when we distinguish the natures (*physeis*), we assert that the nature of God the Word is perfect and [His] *prosôpon* is perfect. For it is not [possible] to affirm that there exists a hypostasis without a *prosôpon*. The human *physis* is perfect and likewise [its] *prosôpon*....But when we look to the union, then we say one prosôpon.[39]

Narsai asserts the same position, in a slightly different way: "Our Lord, it is said, possesses two natures (*kyane*) and two hypostases (*qnômê*) in one person (*parsôpâ*) of the Godhead."[40] In fact, Narsai is careful to insist that he does not hold for the existence of two *parsôpe* in the sense of two individuals: "I am not introducing two *parsôpe* like the unjust do. The Word of the Father and the Body[41] which is from us—I know as one."[42] When both Theodore and Narsai's statements are assessed together, their stance on the union is that there are two natures, each with its own hypostasis and *prosôpon* united in one *prosôpon*. But what do they mean by these terms, especially when they state that two *prosôpa* become one *prosôpon*—a statement that is certainly confusing, if not contradictory.

While there was a lack of clarity in the late fourth century as to what is exactly meant by the christological terms, there was a general agreement by the fifth century regarding the terms *ousia* and *physis* for "nature," and hypostasis and *prosôpon* for "person," though, of course, with nuances. After the Council of Nicaea, the Trinity was regarded as having three hypostaseis and *prosôpa* in one *ousia*, with *ousia* being the fundamental substance of a specific reality.[43] The term *physis* signified "nature" but with all the unique properties belonging to it as this concrete nature and not another. *Ousia* and *physis* can be generally differentiated as being the genus and the species. Yet it is not clear how the Fathers distinguished between hypostasis and *prosôpon* in the Trinity other than the terms suggest the difference between the inner and outer aspects of an existing individual. When Cyril chose hypostasis as the term to express the unity in Christ, this appears to have been an innovation. Theodoret chided Cyril: "We are entirely ignorant of the union according to a hypostasis regarding it to be alien and foreign to the divine Scriptures and to the Fathers who have interpreted them."[44] In other words, up to this time, hypostasis was a term used in trinitarian theology, not Christology. It would appear that Cyril saw hypostasis as a term that any and all human beings could relate to as expressing a unity that they knew about from their own experience, specifically that a human being is one and the same despite accidental changes. Such an understanding of a person as a substantial unity Cyril saw would also justify the position of the Nicene Creed when it asserts that the Word was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered and died.

While Cyril saw hypostasis as expressing the substantial unity present in Christ, yet he initially failed to grasp fully that the term connoted the presence of a rational "nature." It is only later that the terms "person" and "nature" were distinguished from one another. Nestorius and the Monophysites, however, both understood Cyril's hypostasis as asserting there was only one nature in Christ, that of the divinity.[45] Eventually the Orthodox agreed to the formula that there was one Person (hypostasis) in

Christ but with two complete natures (*physeis*). As regards the term *prosôpon*, Cyril avoided it as the Antiochenes did hypostasis. Cyril doubtless rejected the term because it connoted the exterior appearance of a person. He also suspected that Nestorius' willingness to affirm the presence of two hypostaseis in Christ meant that Nestorius held for two separate existing individuals who are united under umbrella term *prosôpon* in some sort of a moral union.

Doubtless reflecting Theodore's thought, Nestorius exemplifies his understanding of all the christological terms by appealing to the example of a king who exchanges his regal clothing for that of an ordinary soldier.[46] The king's *ousia* is his generic nature as a human being. *Physis* adds to *ousia* all that is proper to the king as this unique individual. Hypostasis then expands upon this, by denoting that this king is really existing within his own specific nature. The term *prosôpon* primarily connotes the external aspects of a person. Nestorius brings out what is at the heart of *prosôpon*'s meaning when he distinguishes it from *skêsis*. The latter indicates what is the temporary appearance that a person may have at this time. In Nestorius' example, the term signifies how the king appears externally when he puts on an ordinary soldier's attire. *Prosôpon*, however, would denote how the king's actions reflect who he is as this particular king. It connotes how a nature will manifest itself in ways wholly consonant with its nature, so that one can argue from one's exterior deeds and speech to one's inner self. While a person can deceive others as to what is one's true intent, still there does exist an essential relationship between one's outer and inner self. So when Theodore states that each hypostasis and physis has its own *prosôpon*, he simply means that every existing concrete nature can manifest itself externally according to its natural powers.[47] As such, it is a functional term in Theodore and Narsai's Christology.

When, therefore, Theodore and Narsai assert that the *prosôpon* of the Word and that of Christ's humanity comprise one common *prosôpon*, they are simply affirming, as the Synoptics do, that Christ's external, visible acts are visibly revealing how his natures are inwardly acting together as one reality. This means that a *prosopic* union should be regarded as expressing not a person in a metaphysical sense but rather the ways Christ's human and divine wills can operate together as one in such a mysterious way that one can rightly say there is truly one will and one "person."[48] In other words, according to the way that Theodore and Narsai conceive of the unity, the salvific roles that Christ plays throughout his earthly life disclose the mystery of who he is inwardly as a true person. It highlights why a functional, soteriological approach ought to be joined to a metaphysical, Christological one. For both are necessary and essential to understand each other.

To summarize briefly, when Theodore asserts that Christ possesses two hypostaseis, each with its own *prosôpon,* he is not affirming two existing "persons" in Christ, but rather the presence of two existing realities with their own natural properties and abilities to express these in outward ways.[49] To highlight the difference between Theodore and Cyril's approaches, it is helpful to see these in relationship to the various ways that the term "person" is understood in our contemporary culture. Some understand a "person" in a philosophical sense as a complete, incommunicable, individual "substance" with

a rational nature. This metaphysical emphasis is manifested in the abortion controversy today. Those insisting that a "person" is present from the first moment of conception are convinced that the mass of cells formed there with its own DNA and dynamic thrust towards growth fulfills the definition of a "person" in a substantial sense. Many reject this emphasis upon an individual "substance" because it cannot be seen and evaluated in a true scientific way. Others prefer to hold that a "person" becomes known from his or her activity on the presumption that the outer nature of every person can functionally reveal one's inner nature as a person. A person can also be understood to be such in a psychological sense when an individual is conscious in one's ego of being a true unity and the source of one's acts of reasoning and willing to the point of being responsible for what one intends. When understood in this way, the Word as the Person of unity in Christ may be regarded as the One who is the ultimate cause and/or source of Christ's divine and human operations. The central question then becomes whether the "ego" of the unity or the will of each nature is the principle of its own operations.

"Person" can also be taken as it is in the Trinity as a real relationship existing between persons. This accentuates a necessary element often overlooked when speaking of the meaning of the term. "Person" is so stressed as a free, responsible individual that one can overlook that the idea of "person" contains an essential communal dimension and that a "person" becomes a "true person" only in relationships with others. In other words, a "person" is not merely a self-sufficient individual but also one who must relate to others in a family, community, and society. Perhaps one can say that as the Persons of the Trinity are necessarily relating as Persons to each other, the humanity of Christ has been destined to find its fulfillment as a person in the Person of the Word. The last two aspects of "person" are arbitrary moral and legal determinations whereby a corporation is considered to be like a person and can be treated as if it were morally responsible for its actions and can be sued. The other is exemplified today by the Roe v. Wade and Roe v. Bolton Supreme Court decisions that have established as a constitutional fact that a fetus is to be considered a "person" with legal rights only when it is viable outside his or her mother's womb.

Thus when one speaks of the meaning of "person," one may emphasis one dimension or aspect but not necessarily reject another. For Cyril, hypostasis signifies the substantial union of the Word and Jesus in a metaphysical sense. Its value is that it shows that what is said of Jesus can be asserted of the Word; for example that the Word truly suffered and died. But for Theodore and Narsai, such a statement means that the Word has actually suffered in His divine nature. For they believe that the act of suffering belongs to Christ's human nature and not to the Word's hypostasis. Such a rejection is understood by Cyril as a clear denial of the substantial unity of Christ's natures. Theodore and Narsai, on the other hand, were totally convinced that to avoid confusion over the natures, one ought to refer to the unity as "one common *prosôpon*." For this signifies that the subject of unity must always include both natures somehow operating as one. This is why they insist on those titles that express this functional unity (presuming that in some mysterious way the divine and the human wills act as one will).

This is conveyed by such titles as "Christ," the "Lord Jesus Christ," the "assuming One," the "assumed one," and, if Theodore were aware of its use, the "Incarnate Word." But while asserting this, Theodore and Narsai are adamant that human attributes can be applied only to Christ's human nature and not at all to the divine. For Christ's human acts flow from his human nature, not his divine nature. Theodore justifies this by appealing to how the soul and body are different natures[50] but function as one:

> When (Paul) spoke of the two natures as two diverse realities, aptly according to the difference of natures, he posited this "I" [as belonging] to each one of them as one; i.e., he speaks of the two of them as [pertaining] to [his] common person (*prosôpon*). To make known that he is speaking in these instances not of one and the same nature, he showed [this] by distinguishing his words.[51]

He expands upon what he means by the need for distinctions:

> In the same way, even though some natures differ by nature, it [can] happen that they are truly united in another way. Thus they do not lose their distinction as natures [while still] having their own unity, just as the soul is united to its body, [with] one human being resulting from both… A human being *in se* is never affirmed to be in an absolute and proper sense to be one [the soul] or the other [the body], unless perhaps with some addition, such as an 'interior man' and an 'exterior man,' not a human being in an absolute sense but [one who is] interior and exterior. So we also say in the case of Christ our Lord, O amazing one, that the form of the slave exists in the form of God, not that the One assuming is the one assumed. The unity of the assumed one with the assuming One is inseparable, incapable of being sundered in any way.[52]

Narsai expresses the same outlook:

> (The natures) are like the soul and the body which fit together and are called one *parsôpâ*, the soul being the vivifying nature, and the body, the human nature; and the two which are distinct from one another are called one *parsôpâ*. The Word is the nature of the divine essence, and the body the human nature, one being the Creator and the other the creature.[53] They are one by their union… The soul does not suffer in the body when its limbs are scourged, and the Divinity did not suffer in the sufferings of the body in which it dwelt. If it is true that the soul which is something created like the body does not suffer, how then does the divine essence suffer whose nature is exalted above passions? The soul suffers with the body in love and not by nature. And also the sufferings of the body are predicated of the soul in a secondary sense.[54]

Narsai is holding here, as Theodore does, that the soul and the body and the divine and human natures in Christ are each a reality *in se* that can act fully according to its own natures without any diminishment and yet be considered truly one in the overall unity. They also regard a concrete nature to be the source of its own activity—as commonly accepted in regard to the Trinity where the activity of the triune Persons flows from their common nature. How Christ as a unified "person" can act in and through His two natures is the fundamental

mystery in Christology—an issue that the council fathers have not addressed in their definitions.[55]

CONCLUSION

Although limited in scope, the present paper has fleshed out two areas that corroborate Narsai's declared commitment to Theodore's exegetical and theological inspiration.[56] The first reveals how Narsai closely followed Theodore's literal understanding of the functional ways Adam's and Christ's humanity serve as "images of God." Both Theodore and Narsai accepted what the Genesis and Colossians texts actually state about how Adam and Christ in the flesh fulfill the roles of "image." We have argued that they derived their views by regarding Adam's roles as "image" as a type of Christ's humanity, which acts as the true, perfect, visible "image" of the invisible Word. They both apply "image" to Adam's human nature in two ways: first, Adam as the head of mortal existence reveals the existence and will of God and serves as the visible way for other creatures to show their praise and worship of God by caring for human needs, and second, Theodore connects Adam's role as "image" with his nature's role as the bond uniting the spiritual powers to his soul and the material worlds to his body and, in this recapitulating way, enabling all to share in his union with God the Word.[57]

Our second major area for comparison was Theodore and Narsai's understanding of Christology. They reject or at least do not understand Cyril's stress upon the term *hypostasis* as the best way to express the union of Christ's natures. They believe that Cyril is holding for the presence of only one nature in Christ, the divine nature of the Word and that the Word qua God can be said to have really been born of Mary and suffered on the cross. Since Theodore cannot separate hypostasis from a concrete existing nature, he has opted rather for the phrase the "one common *prosôpon*" which should be understood as a soteriological approach to the mystery of who Christ is as a person. It is the way that the Synoptics portray Christ as acting as one in human and divine ways. Theodore and Narsai presume that their functional understanding of "person" accurately reflects the ways Christ's two natures act and are one internally. The consequences of this, of course, reveal themselves in the ways that Cyril and Theodore express how properties can be attributed to Christ. Theodore does allow that the "I" of the common *prosôpon* can speak as one in divine and human ways insofar as it comprises both natures. But when one wants to speak of the natures separately, one must attribute human acts to the humanity and divine to the divine nature. This explains why Theodore wants to qualify Cyril's statement that Mary is the mother of God by asserting that she is the mother of Christ in whom the Word dwells. This, of course, opens Theodore and Narsai to the charge that they have so separated the natures that they have made Word and Jesus to be two completely different individual "persons."

In conclusion, this paper does not want merely to sketch the dependence of Narsai upon Theodore but also to indicate the richness of their theological thought. Too often they are cited for their positions on Christ and solely evaluated in light of Cyril's Twelve Anathemas and his understanding of what the christological terms mean. Much more needs to be said beyond the limited

boundaries of this paper, especially regarding Narsai's role in forming the Church of the East's theological outlook and expressing this metrically in far-ranging spiritual themes. Narsai may not be an original theological thinker but he is certainly a gifted poetic composer who has assimilated Theodore's thought and language and applied them in his writings. He is a valuable source too for understanding the Antiochene tradition as represented in the writings of Diodore, Theodore and Nestorius. Unfortunately other Christian traditions—the Orthodox, the various non-Chalcedonian communities and the Christian West—have failed to fully understand the Church of the East's own rich tradition that stresses a functional, soteriological Christology that is arguably complementary to Cyril's essentialist approach. Such a misunderstanding has resulted in a centuries-long, tragic ecclesial separation and alienation.

NOTES

[1] Alphonse Mingana provides a listing of the homilies attributed to Narsai in his "Introduction," to *Narsai doctoris syri homiliae et carmina*, 2 vols., ed. A. Mingana (Mosul, 1905), 1, 26-31. His two volume work, however, does not include the *memre* that he considers to be doctrinally suspect. For a critical edition and translation of five of these, see Frederick G. McLeod, ed. and trans., *Narsai's Metrical Homilies on the Nativity, Epiphany, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension*, PO XL, 182 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1979). For a discussion of the *memre* manuscript history and a listing of the primary sources about Narsai's life and published studies about him up to 1979, see McLeod, 7-34. William Macomber provides a comprehensive listing of manuscripts containing Narsai's *memre* in his article "The Manuscripts of the Metrical Homilies of Narsai," *OCP* 39 (1973). Ibrahim Ibrahim, in his unpublished dissertation, *La doctrine christologique de Narsai*, Thoma Aquino, Rome, 1974-75, offers brief summaries (97-222) of all the *memre* in Mingana's listing. He also considers 84 and 85 as authentic and strongly argues for Narsai's christological orthodoxy.

[2] A. Scher, ed., *Histoire Nestorienne* (Chronique de Seert, PO VII [Turnhout: Brepols, 1910]), 114.

[3] The different emphases are even evident in Theodore's Catechetical Homilies and Narsai's most doctrinal works, his liturgical homilies. Narsai is more concerned to sum up and elucidate the spiritual meaning contained in the ritual symbolism of baptism, whereas Theodore is more interested in explaining the theological thought contained in the verses of the Nicene Creed, the "Our Father" and the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist.

[4] See the entry on "Theodore of Mopsuestia" in *Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects, and Doctrines*, ed. W. Smith and H. Wace, IV (London: Murray, 1887). The articles is unsigned but appears to have been written by H. B. Swete.

[5] For a recent well-documented summary of Theodore's life and works, see *Teodoro di Mopsuestia: Replica a Giuliano Imperatore*, trans. Augusto Guida (Firenza: Nardini, 1994), 9-30.

[6] Unfortunately scholars have had to draw their biographical data on Narsai mainly from two sixth century contemporaries who have the exact first name but are cited as coming from different cities: Barhadbšabba of Arbaye and Barhadbšabba of Halwan. While these two accounts agree, more or less, on the skeletal outline of Narsai's life, scholars are frequently unable to verify their details and, in fact, when these scholars compare their accounts with one another and with other sources, they find them to be confusing and even contradictory. For an exhaustive (but unpublished) dissertation study of all the sources dealing with Narsai's life, see Ibrahim Ibrahim (1-84). Ibrahim also examines all the internal evidence present in Narsai's metric homilies as well as the opinions of those who have speculated on how to reconcile all the conflicting data about his life. Ibrahim believes that Narsai was born ca. 415 in a village northeast of the present Mosul, went for schooling at Edessa in 422, returned to his uncle's monastery in Kefar-Mari around 441-442, spent another 10 years at Edessa, returning to Kefar-Mari for a year after which he returned to Edessa to become the director of the school in 452. After being expelled sometime after 471, he then helped Bishop Barsauma to establish the School of Nisibis in the Persian empire. He died ca. 502-503.

[7] The fathers at the Second Council of Ephesus (better known as the "Robbers' Council") deposed Ibas in 449. He was restored to office in 451 at the Council of Chalcedon.

[8] For an English translation of the letter, see Robert Doran, trans., *Stewards of the Poor: The Man of God, Rabbula, and Hiba in Fifth-century Edessa*, Cistercian Studies 208 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian, 2006), 171-72.

[9] The Non-Chalcedonians regarded the fact that the fathers at Chalcedon accepted Ibas' let-

ter, when taken together with the language the fathers used to express their formula of faith, as clear proof that the Council was undoubtedly Nestorian. In the sixth century when the emperor Justinian vainly attempted to reconcile the non-Chalcedonians with the Orthodox at the Second Council of Constantinople in 553, he was able to have Theodore and—what he dubbed the "so-called"—letter of Ibas condemned. He claimed that the letter lauding Theodore was not the true letter read at Chalcedon but one that is fraudulent. For a discussion of this letter, see, Alois Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition from the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*, 2 vols. 2nd rev. ed., trans. J. Cawte and P. Allen (Atlanta: John Knox, 1975), 2:414-15.

[10] See the article "Ibas" in the *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, ed. Angelo Di Berardino, trans. Adrian Walford (New York: Oxford, 1992). From a comment that James of Sarug makes about the years he spent as a student at Edessa (see G. Olinder, *Jacobi Sarugensis Epistolae quotquot supersunt*, CSCO 110, 58-60), it appears that Diodore's writings were also translated about the same time.

[11] Narsai makes no mention of Ibas in his extant works, possibly because Ibas assented to the condemnation of Nestorius at Chalcedon.

[12] Narsai also mentions Theodore when he affirms: "Thus does all the Church of the orthodox confess this [view]; so also have the approved doctors of the Church taught: Diodore, Theodore and Mar Nestorius" (Connolly, 14); he also refers to Theodore when speaking about the Eucharist: "The great teacher and interpreter Theodore has handed down the tradition that our Lord spoke thus when he took the bread" (Connolly, 16).

[13] For a treatment of Theodore's method of interpretation, see Frederick McLeod, *The Roles of Christ's Humanity in Salvation: Insights from Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Washington: The Catholic University Press, 2005), 20-57.

[14] For an understanding of Theodore's exegetical thought, see Lucas van Rompay, trans., *Théodore de Mopsueste: Fragments syriaques du Commentaire des Psaumes* (Psaume 118 et Psaumes 138-148), CSCO, Scriptores Syri 190 (Louvain: Peeters, 1982), 1-18, esp. 10-18.

[15] See Augusto Guida, trans., *Teodoro di Mopsuestia: Replica a Guiliano Imperatore* (Florence: Nardino, 1994).

[16] For a treatment of Theodore's understanding of the "image of God," see Frederick McLeod, *The Image of God in the Antiochene Tradition* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 62-70; and *Roles of Christ's Humanity*, 124-43.

[17] Theodore of Mopsuestia, "L'homme créé 'à l'image de Dieu': quelques fragments grecs inédits de Théodore de Mopsueste," ed. and trans. Francoise Petit, *Le Muséon* 100 (1987) 276. The same view is expressed in Theodore, CH 12:8: "Our Lord God made a human being in His image from the earth and honored him in many other ways. He then conferred especially on (Adam) the honor of being His image whereby a human being alone is called God and the Son of God." The same thought is expressed in E. Sachau, ed. and trans., *Theodori Mopsuesteni Fragmenta Syriaca* (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1969), 27 (Latin) / 15 (Syriac); also in H. B. Swete, ed., *Theodori Episcopi Mopsuesteni in Epistolas B. Pauli* Commentarii, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1880, 1882), I, 261-62: "Well does (Paul) add 'invisible'–not that God may also be visible but for the manifestation of His greatness. If, nevertheless, we will see that invisible nature in Christ as though in an image, in that he has been united to God the Word and will judge the whole world when he appears according to his own nature, as is right, coming in the future age from heaven with great glory, he maintains for us the rank of image. It is evident that we all attribute the divine Nature, to which is referred the greatness of whatever is effected, to him as though to some image, although we do not impute authority [to be] the judge to a visible nature. I am amazed, however, at those who have accepted this [as applicable] to the divine nature… For blessed Moses also says of man 'God made him to [His] image;' and likewise blessed Paul, 'man ought not indeed to cover his head, being the image and glory of

God.' For this could never be said of man, if it were proper to the divine nature."

[18] Sachau, 28 a-b/16. This passage indicates that Theodore believed that "image" refers to human beings, not merely to men as males.

[19] Mingana, 2:239. See also 2:251: "(The Creator) fashioned and skillfully made a double vessel: a visible body and a hidden soul—one human being." For a treatment of Narsai's view of "image," see McLeod, *Image of God*, 70-74, and *The Soteriology of Narsai* (Rome: Institutum Orientalium, 1973). This is an offprint of a chapter from my unpublished dissertation that treats of Narsai's view on the "image of God."

[20] Swete, 1:262-63.

[21] Diodore, Chrysostom and Theodoret likely drew their understanding from the Genesis story where God allows Adam to name the animals and perhaps also from Paul's remark in 1 Corinthians 11:7 where the notion of "image' is associated with that of authority.

[22] For a treatment of this view, see McLeod, Image of God, 58-61 and 78-80; and R. A. Norris, Jr., *Manhood and Christ: A Study in the Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 140-48.

[23] Swete, 1:lxxx.

[24] Mingana I, 7.

[25] Robert C. Hill, trans., *Theodore of Mopsuestia: Commentary on the Twelve Prophets* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 186.

[26] Swete, 1:269. Theodore leaves no doubt that the Son as the visible "image" is Christ in his human nature: "For it is evident that these things [God's bestowal of the divine plerôma and universal domination upon Christ qua man] pertain to the human nature which receives domination over everything by [its] union with God the Word;" J.-M. Vosté, ed. and trans., *Theodori Mopsuesteni Commentarius in Evangelium Johannis Apostoli*, CSCO 15-16/Syr. 62-63 (Louvain: Officina orientali, 1940), 83/59.

[27] Mingana II, 190.

[28] McLeod, *Narsai's Metrical Homilies*, 176/77.

[29] Briefly Theodore emphasizes the role of the eucharist as a necessary means to remain faithful to the new state achieved at baptism. For this new inchoative life can be lost as long as a persona is free to turn from God's will during one's earthly life. As an aid to avoid falling in this way, the eucharist nourishes a baptized person's spiritual life within the Body of Christ: "When all of us are nourished by the same body of our Lord, we participate in him by means of this nourishment. All of us become the one Body of Christ and receive thereby a participation in and union with him as our head." Theodore likens this nourishment to what a mother provides for her newborn child: "For every animal born naturally from another animal receives its nourishment from the body of the one giving it birth. So also from the beginning God has ordered this to take place among created beings that every female animal engendering life has within herself the nourishment befitting those she has engendered. It is necessary then that we who have partaken of divine grace in a typical way also receive our nourishment from above" (CH 1:4). While it is difficult to show a direct link between Theodore and Narsai because they are both reflecting Paul's thought, Narsai appears to be closely dependent on Theodore's language. For instance, Theodore asserts: "It is well, then, that when giving the bread, (Jesus) did not say: 'This is a type of my body,' but 'This is my body'; and likewise with the chalice [of wine], [he did] not [say]: 'This is a type of my blood,' but: 'This is my blood.' For after these have received the grace and the coming of the Holy Spirit, he wanted that we too not regard their own nature but take them as being the body and blood of our Lord" (CH 15:10). Narsai writes in a similar vein :"The (Lifegiver) did not express them as a type or a similitude, but as his Body in reality and Blood in truth.... Wherefore the bread is strictly the Body of our Lord, and the wine is His Blood properly and truly" (Connolly, 17). Both Theodore and Narsai are emphatic that the bread and wine are truly transformed by the Spirit into the body and blood of Christ's humanity.

[30] Theodore, CH 12:2. Theodore has an eschatological understanding of salvation but one possessing an incarnational aspect. Wilhelm de Vries, in his "Der Nestorianismus' Theodors von Mopsuestia in seiner Sakramentenlehre," OCP 7 (1941) 91-148, maintains that Theodore considered baptism as simply providing only forgiveness of sins, special graces to live a good life and a mere hope for the attainment of a future life. Ignatius Oñatibia, in his "La vida christiana, tipode las realidad celestes. Un concepto basico de la teologia de Teodore de Mopsuestia," *Scriptorum Victoriense* 1 (1954) 107; and Luise Abramowski in her "Zur Theologia Theodors von Mopsuestia," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschicte* 72 (1961) 263-93 insist that de Vries' view misses the implications present in Theodore's understanding of how a type participates in the reality of its archetype. This can be seen in Theodore's statement that "It is through this mystery which you are about to receive that from now on you will share without doubt in these future goods" (CH 14:2). While Theodore does not hold for a divinization in the sense that one can share directly in the life of God, he does hold that one can share inchoatively in the immortal life one will attain fully in the next life. Oñatibia points out that the sacraments and their heavenly fulfillment are two poles bound to one another as a type to its archetype in a way that reveals the unity of God's plan for salvation. Abramowski observes that if de Vries' interpretation was actually the correct one, Syriac translators would not have used the word "participation" and "sharing" but rather such phrases as "in the name of" and "under the appearance of" to express Theodore's thought here.

[31] Theodore, CH 16:30.

[32] Swete 1:132-33. See also Theodore, CH 12:6: "(The assumed man) mounted to heaven in order that henceforth we might have a surety of a possessed participation because of [our] sharing in [his] nature."

[33] Theodore, CH 14:28. See also CH 12:2: "For every sacrament is an indication in signs and mysteries of invisible and ineffable things." Theodore and Narsai regard salvation history as encompassing two states or ages: the present life of mortality that will continue until the end of this world and the heavenly, immortal and immutable life to which all the faithful will rise. We see this expressed in the excerpts #55-61 presented to the Second Council of Constantinople; to cite but one: "What pleased God was to divide the creation into two states: the one which is present in which he made all things mutable; the other which is future, when he will renew all things and bring them to immutability," *Concilium Universale Constantinopolitanum Sub Iustiniano Habitum,* ed. Johannes Straub, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, tom. 4, vol. 1 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1971), 44-72. see excerpts #55-61. Straub, I: 14, and PG 66:1009.

[34] Theodore, CH 14:9-11.

[35] Ibid., CH 14:10.

[36] Staub, 124. See also Vosté, 80-81/57: "(God) made everyone a sharer in the Spirit whereby we are reborn in a spiritual way. And as we possess a union of nature with him by a similar birth, so we receive by his means a household relationship with God the Word."

[37] Theodore, CH 1:4.

[38] Vosté, 315-16/225-26. I have translated οἰκειότης as "a family relationship" as a better way to express the kind of communion and partnership existing between a baptized person and the Word.

[39] Swete 2:299.

[40] Mingana I:17. The Syriac word *ithay* means existence in se, and *kyana* "nature" as *physis* has been just described. Hypostasis appears to denote an existing inner self: "It is not the hypostasis that carnal eyes have seen, but the sign of its visible image" (Mingana I, 73).

[41] Like Theodore, Narsai refers to Christ's humanity as the "Body." It exemplifies too how the concrete and the abstract can be used interchangeably for one another.

[42] McLeod, *Narsai's Metrical Homilies*, 64/65.

[43] The term *prosôpon* is cited together with hypostasis in the case of the Trinity. In a Synodal Letter that most likely expresses the official Tome of the First Council of Constantinople

(381), the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are said to possess "a single Godhead and power and… three most perfect *hypostaseis* or three perfect *prosôpa*" (Norman Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils 1: Nicaea I to Lateran V* [Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1990], 28). The two terms appear to have the same or very similar meaning, though hypostasis is said to be most perfect, perhaps to indicate that no divine Person is greater than the others as they are all most perfect.

[44] Straub, I: 14.

[45] Narsai expresses Theodore's view that one cannot separate hypostasis (*qnôma*) from nature *physis* (*kyana*) when he states that the Word cannot become flesh in his *qnôma*: "If it is true that His *qnôma* became flesh and did not assume flesh from Mary, how did it help our nature that He became flesh in His own nature?" This is found on p. 5 of the 69th *memra* contained in the Syriac manuscript 5463 of the Britism Museum. Mingana lists it as *Memra* 81 but did not publish it in his two volume work.

[46] Nestorius, *The Bazaar of Heracleides*, ed. and trans. Godfrey L. Driver and Leonard Hodgson (Oxford: Clarendom Press, 1925), 20-23.

[47] See Sachau, 51-52/92-93. Sachau translates the last word of this section as naturae, while the Syriac has *parsôpa*. The sense is that the actions of the two natures are united and expressed as one *parsôpa*: "For there is a unity of all [attributes] when they are asserted about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, but when the natures are examined separately as to what each expresses, [one must note] how this coheres with its nature and how this accords with the rule as to how things are to be said of each of the natures. But when they are joined together in a unity of person (*parsôpa*), both of the natures are said to be [united] in a participatory way in a case where they are in an agreement because of the unity. For in this situation, what is distinct by nature is also affirmed to be clearly existing in a conjoined way [to the other nature] because of the unity of the person (*parsôpa*)."

[48] Theodore expresses this unity of will when he asserts: "When our Savior said to the leper, "I will it: be clean," He showed here that there exists one will and one operation according to one and the same power. This takes place not on the level of nature but on the level where he was honored to be united to God the Word. For in accordance with God's foreknowledge, he was made a man from the seed of David, possessing an affectionate kindred relationship with the Word from [his time of conception in] the womb" (PG 66: 1003).

[49] Those asserting that Theodore's willingness to assert the presence of two *hypostaseis* in Christ means that he is holding for two separate persons must confront the use of the term to express the three Persons in the Trinity, The term indicates that there are existing real substantial relational differences between the Father, Son and Spirit but not that there are three separate Gods. This is evident in the way that Theodore regards the soul to be a hypostasis: "The soul of men, however, is not like this, but it resides in its own hypostasis and is much higher than the body seeing that the body is mortal and acquires its life from the soul and dies and perishes whenever the soul happens to leave it. As regards the [human] soul, when it goes out, it remains and does not perish but lasts forever in its own hypostasis. For it is immortal" (Swete, 2:318). So understood, Christ's human hypostasis ought not to be considered in Theodore's thought a separate individual from the Word, just as the body ought to be viewed as an individual existing apart from its soul. Since each hypostasis has its own *prosôpon*, this explains why Jesus' existing human nature was bodily capable of dying on the cross. But as Theodore continually insists, this nature is so intimately united with the Word's divine nature in a true *prosopic* unity that worship can be shown it, but not to Christ's humanity in se but because his humanity serves as the true "image" of God: "For such was the dignity of the assumed man that God dwelt in him; and believing this, we also adore him. Otherwise who would be so mad that he would adore the man separately?" (Swete, 2:222).

[50] Theodore's opposition to Apollinaris' use of the analogy shows that he is aware of its seri-

ous limitations: to express the true unity in Christ. Three are especially telling: 1) the natures of the soul and the body are incomplete; 2) the soul comes into existence out of necessity, whereas the Word preexists Christ's humanity from all eternity; and 3) the Word has freely entered into His union with the humanity of Jesus.

[51] Staab, 167-68.

[52] Swete 2:318-19.

[53] Theodore and Narsai have no problem in interchanging an abstract term with a concrete one and vice versa, such the divine nature for the Word, and the human nature for "Body."

[54] Mingana II, 229. It is interesting to point out here how Theodore and Narsai follow the Jewish manner of speaking and writing that looks upon the abstract as contained in the concrete and the concrete as revelatory of the abstract. In other words, one recognizes the abstract as being real only when it exists visibly in the concrete. Narsai expresses the soul/body analogy also in *Memra* 81 (see McLeod, *Narsai's Metrical Homilies*, 27 for the Syriac text and an English translation): "When I say that the Word and the Body are two in nature, it is like (saying) that the body and the soul within it are one man. The soul with the body and the body with the soul are distinct but fit together and every one testifies that they are two but called one." For a carefully worded passage where Narsai qualifies his statements about the Word, see Mingana I, 336: "He has revealed before all creatures His divinity thanks to his humanity. He has showed that even if He has suffered qua man, he is the Son of God. The Jews have crucified the Son of God in a corporeal sense. They have not crucified the Word of the Father who is generated from Him."

[55] The Third Council of Constantinople (680-681) does address the issue of whether there are two or only will in the union of Christ's natures. Because so many identified the notion of "nature" with that of "person," the fathers insisted on the presence of two will faculties and operations, in order to safeguard the integrity of Christ's human nature. But wisely the fathers did not enter into the question of how the two function together as one other than the fact that they ultimately do form one will.

[56] The time and space limitations placed upon this paper prevent an elaboration of what Theodore and Narsai mean when they speak of the union as being an "indwelling." For an in-depth study, see McLeod, *Roles of Christ's Humanity*, 176-204. Theodore's choice of the phrase "an indwelling of good pleasure" must be interpreted, in my opinion, in light of Colossians 1 and 2, especially 2:9 where the divine fullness (plerôma) is said to dwell in Christ "in a bodily way." Theodore expresses this when he says: "For the entire grace of the Spirit has been given to me because I am joined to God the Word and have received true Sonship… This cannot happen to you, as you can acquire a small share but not at all equal to mine" (Vosté, 297-98/213). Narsai expresses a similar outlook in *Memra* 4: "God formed him by the Spirit, and the Spirit filled him with the power of His will, so that he might give life from his fullness and vivify all. He made him whole and perfect in body and soul, so that through him He might free the body and the soul from slavery" (McLeod, *Narsai's Metrical Homilies*, 48/49). Norris sums up insightfully the relationship between Theodore's prosopic unity and his stress on an "indwelling of good pleasure" when he affirms: "The union [by indwelling] is logically prior both to the prosopic unity which it effects, and to the sort of cooperation to which, as we have seen, Theodore alludes in other passages" (222). This cooperation occurs in the prosopic union.

[57] The initial peace that all creation enjoyed is presaging the universal peace that Christ is to establish in the future when he will recapitulate all creation within his humanity and unite all to God. Because the fullness of God dwells in Christ in a bodily way (Col. 2:9), he serves as the mediator whose humanity contains and sums up all creation and whose intimate union with the Word enables all creatures to be at one with God. It is easy, therefore, to detect how Theodore, relying on Pauline thought, has found traces of these revelatory, mediating and unify-

ing roles in Adam as a type of Christ's humanity and why he has proposed salvation to be a movement from a state where Adam acts as the head of mortality to one where Christ's humanity is the head of an immortal existence. It is within such a salvational framework that Theodore seeks to explain how baptism and the eucharist typify a real participation in Christ's death and resurrection and provide those who become members of his Body a true initial sharing in the immortal life that Christ's humanity now possesses in heaven. He is now the first fruits that anticipates the future immortality that awaits all who remain vitally united to his Body and through his human nature also to God. Since such a world view is mirrored in Narsai's writings, there exists grounds for asserting that he was indeed close to Theodore's method of interpreting the scriptural passages that treat of the "image" of God, the sacraments and salvation.

THE LAST DAYS OF NESTORIUS IN THE SYRIAC SOURCES

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If the theological debates of the first half of the fifth century haunt the sixth, then the Council of Chalcedon hangs as a sort of specter over the Justinianic Church. Although Chalcedon was ostensibly a legitimately constituted general council, the legitimacy of its doctrinal decisions were questioned and even excoriated by many in the East.[1] The interpretation (*hermenaia*) of the faith imposed on the assembled bishops by the imperial representatives spoke in no uncertain terms of Christ's two natures after the incarnation, and the *Tome* of Leo I (*Ep.* 28) clearly articulated the independent functioning of each nature in the single person of Christ.[2] The principle charge made against Chalcedon by its opponents was that it revived the heresy of Nestorius, which had been decisively condemned, so it was believed, at the Council of Ephesus in 431. Considerable scholarship has been dedicated to disproving the Nestorian underpinnings of Chalcedon, and to proving that the formula "in two natures" was cyrillian.[3] Suffice it to say that these attempts have had to work around the fact that the bishop of Alexandria *never* himself used the formula. In fact, after 433 Cyril tended strongly to the formulations "out of two natures" and "one incarnate nature", precisely to exclude the Antiochene "two natures".[4]

While the doctrine produced at Chalcedon may differ subtly from Nestorius' own teaching—I refer here to the affirmation of the one *prosopon* and one *hypostasis* of Christ—, the core of the council's doctrinal pronouncements fundamentally agreed with the Antiochene tradition. It was within this tradition that the bulk of Nestorius' beliefs lay. Nestorius was in full agreement with Theodore of Mopsuestia on the need for a human and divine nature in Christ in order to avoid the danger of an Apollinarian "mingling" or "mixture" inherent in the "one nature", although some of Nestorius' speculative flights might well not have met with Theodore's approval.[5]

Yet Nestorianism was *never* defined in 431 at First Ephesus in terms of natures; Nestorius was condemned as the "New Judas" with no reference at all to the number of natures of Christ.[6] Nestorius' position was only caricatured for advancing the "two sons" and for rejecting *Theotokos* as a proper appellation for Mary. The reality, as has been shown in various studies, was quite different: Nestorius accepted *Theotokos* with only a few quibbles, and he adamantly denied that his talk of the two natures and two

prosopa of Christ entailed the "two sons", the heresy of Paul of Samosata.[7]

When Cyril, in ignorance of Nestorius' theological pedigree, assented to an Antiochene statement of belief in a letter of 433, *Laetentur Caeli*, the two natures were given the imprimatur of the bishop's prestige and authority, recently won by his defeat of Nestorius.[8] With the "two natures" now cast as superficially cyrillian in the so-called "Symbol of Reunion," it could be used by Flavian of Constantinople in 448 to convict the archimandrite Eutyches for teaching the "one nature" and that Christ took his body from heaven. When Second Ephesus, the so-called *Latrocinium*, convened in the next year to rehabilitate Eutyches, they put aside Cyril's *Laetentur Caeli* and the Antiochene statement in favour of Cyril's post-433 writings. In 450, when the new emperor Marcian and his consort Pulcheria conceived of an eastern council to undo the apparent injustices of Second Ephesus, it was to the affirmation of the "two natures" in 448 that they turned. Fortuitously, pope Leo had written a treatise, his *Tomus ad Flavianum*, that independently and in complete ignorance of eastern developments and Cyril's work, insisted unequivocally on the independent function of two natures in the person of Christ that most would have regarded as very uncyrillian.[9]

It was through this circuitous route that the essence of Nestorius' beliefs, without his name attached to them, came to be affirmed at the Council of Chalcedon under a cyrillian guise. What is often not discussed with respect to Chalcedon is what Nestorius' own views would have been on the decisions of the council. We are most fortunate in possessing a Syriac translation of Nestorius' *apologia pro vita sua*, the *Liber Heraclidis*, discovered near Lake Van in the early 1880s.[10] The work is not, however, without its problems. First, the language of the translation is often unclear and garbled due to an overly literal rendering that frequently omits names in favour of pronouns. Second, there are sections of the text missing and other surviving sections that are clearly dislocated within the manuscript that Paul Bedjan, its editor, worked from. Third and perhaps most worrying is that the unity of the surviving work, and the authenticity of several of its sections, has been called into question, particularly by Luise Abramowski.[11]

Let us begin with what can be gleaned of Nestorius' life after the Council of Ephesus in 431. The emperor Theodosius permitted the deposed bishop to return to his monastery just outside of Antioch as a free man in the fall of 431. But an edict of the emperor Theodosius II formally condemned Nestorius and proscribed his writings several years later.[12] With this imperial order, a formal legal category was created for Nestorians, or rather Simonians (after Simon Magus), to be added to the list of banned heresies that had accumulated since the time of Constantine the Great. By 435 Nestorius and his friend Irenaeus were officially sent into exile and first went to Petra in Arabia.[13] How long the two remained in Petra is unknown, but Irenaeus seems to have escaped from exile and in 446 or thereabouts he reappears in Tyre as its ordained bishop. There was no imperial order to recall Irenaeus and Theodosius deposed him in February of 448, when he learned to his surprise that this determined follower of Nestorius had not only returned but become a bishop.[14] Irenaeus' illegal return was doubtless due to the influence of Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Domnus of Antioch. It is tell-

ing that Irenaeus, a man so closely associated with Nestorius, could still find friends in Syria as late as 447.

But Nestorius did not so easily escape his exile and was moved from Petra to Egypt. Because there is a hiatus of a decade between the years 438/9 and 449 in the narration of the *Liber Heraclidis*, one suspects that he was moved to isolation in Egypt at the former date. Evagrius *scholasticus*, writing at the end of the sixth century, is one of very few ancient authors who can claim to have detailed information about Nestorius in exile. He appears to have consulted at least two book-length works of Nestorius as well as a collection of letters.[15] The excerpts of Nestorius' letter to the controller of the Thebaid in Egypt show that Nestorius had been moved to the Oasis in Western Egypt. Now known as the Kharga Oasis, Nestorius' place of exile lay 100 miles west of the Nile and encompassed an area about 15 miles wide and 100 miles long with a concentration of watered areas. The letters quoted by Evagrius also tell us that Nestorius had been moved around considerably in the Oasis and had been captured by marauding barbarians, who are identified as "Nobades". Nestorius was released by his captors in Panopolis on the Nile, 100 miles to the east. He sought to justify this move to the civil authorities in Egypt so as not to be thought a fugitive from exile. Later, soldiers moved him to Elephantine, 200 miles to the south, but the controller of the Thebaid changed his mind yet again and moved Nestorius back to the outskirts of Panopolis. At a loss to explain just why Nestorius was exiled in 436 and not earlier, Evagrius presents this pitiful petition of Nestorius, complaining of his treatment in Egypt, as conclusive proof of the deposed bishop's arrogance and contempt for imperial authority. But of these events in Egypt, Nestorius gives virtually no hint at all in his *apologia*.

Nestorius picked up his pen to resume the *Liber Heraclidis* as early as the year 449. This last section, the second part of Book II in Paul Bedjan's edition, is appended to the other text of the *Liber* with no evidence that Nestorius went back to revise his earlier writings in light of new developments contained therein. Nestorius says that he was encouraged to begin writing again as he received news of recent events in the East from his friends.[16] Nestorius discusses the trial of Eutyches in the fall of 448 and the subsequent persecution and condemnation of Flavian of Constantinople for his efforts against the "one nature". By his quotations and references, Nestorius demonstrates that he had access to a copy of the *acta* of at least the first session of Second Ephesus in 449 and good information about the Home Synod of Constantinople in 448.

In the fall of Flavian Nestorius saw a distinct parallel for his own plight and yet further evidence of the wickedness of his erstwhile supporter, the emperor Theodosius, towards the orthodox. The section concludes with a prophecy, clearly a *vaticinum ex eventu*, of the misfortunes that he predicts will befall the empire because of its emperor's impiety. Among these he includes the Vandal sack of Rome in 455, the last datable event in all of the *Liber Heraclidis*.[17] Yet there is a mystery here. If Nestorius lived as late as 455 or 456 and had good information of events in the East, why does he include no references whatsoever to the Council of Chalcedon in 451, a massive change in ecclesiastical politics that could not have escaped his notice? The next latest event reported by Nestorius is the death of

Theodosius at the end of July 450.[18] I would strongly suggest that the final prophecy of the *Liber* must be set aside as a later addition by one of Nestorius' supporters. Therefore the *terminus post quem* and *terminus ante quem* for the *Liber* can be set quite precisely by the death of Theodosius and the accession of Marcian respectively in late August. If it took at least two months for news of Theodosius' death, and of Marcian's accession to reach Egypt, Nestorius must have finished what has come down to us in September or October of 450. But just how long after this time did Nestorius live, and what might he have thought of Chalcedon?

Nestorius had seen a copy of Leo's *Tome*, a letter written to Flavian by the pope in the summer of 449, which laid out a strongly dyophysite christological statement. Nestorius heartily approved of the document and saw it as fully in line with his own belief, but despite the requests of his unnamed supporters, he declined to involve himself in the struggle:

> But, because many were blaming me many times for not having written unto Leo, bishop of Rome, to teach him all the things which were committed, such as came to pass, and the change of faith, as if unto a man who is correct in his faith, especially when there had been given unto me, [even] unto me, a part of the letter relating to the judgment concerning Flavian and Eutyches, wherein it was revealed that [he feared] not the friendship of [his] majesty (i.e. Leo did not fear to confront Theodosius), for this reason I wrote not, not because I am a proud man and senseless, but so that I might not hinder from his running him who was running fairly because of the prejudice against my person. But I was content to endure the things whereof they accused me, in order that, while I was accused thereof, they might accept without hindrance the teaching of the Fathers; for I have no word [to say] concerning what was committed against me. And further I wrote not for the purpose that I, to whom for many years there was not one [moment of] repose nor human solace, might not be suspected of surely fleeing from the contest, fearing the labors [thereof]; for sufficient are the wrongs that have come upon the world [and] which are more able than I to make the oppression of the true faith shine forth in the eyes of every man.[19]

From the *Liber Heraclidis* we also learn that Nestorius fully approved of the "Symbol of Reunion" of 433, although he did question the legitimacy of the diplomacy that led to it, especially the assent of many Eastern bishops to his deposition.[20] Thus it must have been clear to Nestorius' supporters in 450 that Marcian and Pulcheria's plan to approve Leo's *Tome* along with a strongly dyophysite statement of faith at a general council the next year was an opportunity for the deposed bishop to prove his orthodoxy before his death. Nestorius implies as much when he talks of his supporters pushing him to re-enter ecclesiastical politics. With the death of Theodosius and the accession of an emperor committed to both Leo's *Tome* and overturning the results of Second Ephesus, his vindication must have seemed close at hand.

If Nestorius agreed with the substance of Chalcedon, can we go further and claim that Nestorius was himself recalled to the council? Nestorius says nothing about such a possibility, and the voluminous *acta* of

Chalcedon also make no reference at all to any summons. Almost without exception all modern scholars have rejected this possibility out of hand. Their argument is a sort of simple syllogism: Chalcedon was orthodox; Nestorius was a heretic; therefore Chalcedon could not have vindicated Nestorius. To countenance the reality of Nestorius' recall is to imagine Chalcedon as something other than it turned to be; to do this we must abandon any sense that the decisions of Chalcedon were part of a natural evolution in orthodoxy and the perfect *via media* between the heretical extremes of Nestorianism and Eutychianism. Chalcedon was rooted in the demands of the moment, and seen in light of these contemporary contingencies, not idealized historical hindsight, the recall of Nestorius indeed makes considerable sense. The evidence for his recall comes mostly from sources hostile to Chalcedon; as such they have been largely dismissed as fanciful and even deviant. Yet taken together they present a consistent and compelling picture of the elderly Nestorius' return from exile.

The accounts of John Rufus' *Plerophories* and Zachariah of Mitylene's *Ecclesiastical History*, written a little over 50 years after Chalcedon, both survive in Syriac and are the earliest sources that speak of Nestorius' recall by Marcian. First Rufus claims that his version of events derived directly from the now lost Ecclesiastical History of Timothy Aelurus, a miaphysite bishop who had been a contemporary of Nestorius during his exile in Egypt:

> At this time, by the permission and will of God, it happened, because of our numerous sins, that our venerable emperor Theodosius died, a year after the Second Council of Ephesus. His successor did not imitate his ardent zeal for the faith; and all the affairs of the Church were troubled and were contrary to the law against heretics (i.e. *CTh*. 16.5.66), which was brought by the venerable and notable Theodosius. From then up to the present those who fear God have been persecuted, and every blasphemous and rash tongue can in complete freedom speak against Christ. For, after Marcian was on the throne, he sent to Egypt a tribune of the guardsmen to recall Nestorius and a certain Dorotheus, who had been a bishop and had gone into exile with Nestorius out of his own volition. And as some people say, Dorotheus was very well known and much beloved by he who was then reigning. When the tribune had been sent, he arrived in the Thebaid—this is as far as most people know, because this fact was not made known publicly—he found Nestorius in the place named after Pan (i.e. Panopolis), a city of the Thebaid, under guard in a fort (*castrum*) and afflicted by a terrible illness. It happened that Nestorius had been captured by barbarians from the Oasis, where he had been exiled by the venerable emperor Theodosius, and that, in the city of Pan, he was sold by them [the barbarians] to the inhabitants. When the *comes* Andrew, who was then in the Thebaid, learned of this, while the emperor Theodosius was still living, he instructed him [Nestorius], after he had bought him back, to remain and to live in the fort and to do nothing and to say nothing rash. As soon as the envoy of the emperor [Marcian] found Nestorius sick in the city of Pan, as has already been said, with Dorotheus, he made known the orders that he had received and, on account

> of the Egyptians, he announced to them by a sign that there was no trap in their recall. But Dorotheus asked the tribune to take into account the weakness of Nestorius, as his condition was deteriorating day by day; for his tongue was rotting and had gone out of his mouth, while the tribune was present there; his speech had become unclear and each day his tongue rotted and thus became more detached, so that he became an object of fright and horror, as the tribune attested afterwards to many. God was the author of that which we have told, for the [tribune] reported that he urged that tried drugs be brought from all the cities that were in the neighbourhood of Panopolis, but they were not able to remedy the illness. For it was God who had struck him down and who made known his terrible death to many through the report [of the tribune] and by means of [the call for] the medicines. After the death of Nestorius, Dorotheus buried him in a certain spot, while the tribune sent by the emperor was with him and, after this man's death, the tribune went back to go to the court.[21]

Zachariah's account survives in epitome and shows signs of compression by omitting some of the details found in Rufus:

> This Marcian favoured the doctrine of Nestorius, and was well disposed towards him; and so he sent John the Tribune, to recall Nestorius from his place of banishment in Oasis; and to recall also Dorotheus, the bishop who was with him. And it happened while he was returning, that he set at naught the holy Virgin, the *Theotokos*, and said, "What is Mary? Why should she indeed be called the *Theotokos*?" And the righteous judgment of God speedily overtook him (as he had been the case formerly with Arius, who blasphemed against the Son of God). Accordingly he fell from his mule, and the tongue of this Nestorius was cut off, and his mouth was eaten by worms, and he died on the roadway. And his companion Dorotheus died also. And the emperor, hearing of it, was greatly grieved; and he was thinking upon what had occurred, and he was in doubt as to what he should do.
>
> However, written directions from Marcian the emperor were delivered by John the Tribune to Dioscorus and Juvenalis, calling upon them to meet in Council, and John also informed them of what had happened to Nestorius and to Dorotheus.
>
> And when the bishops of every place, who were summoned, were preparing to meet at Nicea, Providence did not allow them; for the king issued a new order that the assembly should be convened to Chalcedon, so that Nicea might not be the meeting-place of rebels.
>
> Then the Nestorian party earnestly urged and besought the king that Theodoret should be appointed the president of the Synod, and that, according to his word, every matter should be decided there.[22]

According to both authors, Nestorius was accompanied in Egypt by a fellow exile, Dorotheus of Marcianopolis, who had been among his earliest supporters in Constantinople and exiled among the "14 Irreconcilables" in 434, those bishops who refused to re-enter into communion with John of Antioch once he accepted the deposition of Nestorius.[23] Following the death of Theodosius, according to Rufus and Zachariah, Marcian moved to recall Nestorius. Consis-

tent with the letter of Nestorius quoted in Evagrius, Zachariah states that the envoy of Marcian found Nestorius in a military fort (a *castrum*) in Panopolis. Unfortunately Nestorius, probably in his seventies by then, was gravely ill. The description of his illness in both authors may be a deliberate fiction to prove that he was suffering a God-sent punishment for heretics: his blasphemous tongue was being eaten away by worms. In both Zachariah and Rufus, despite the imperial recall, Nestorius was either too sick to make the trip back or, in the case of Rufus, fell from the back of his mule and died on the side of the road en route. Similar stories are found in two other miaphysite sources from Egypt in Coptic: the famed monk Shenute and a text purporting to be the exiled bishop Dioscorus' eulogy for his fellow Egyptian bishop Macarius.[24] Neither source adds significant or reliable detail.

A letter of the famous miaphysite bishop Philoxenus of Mabbug of the early 6th century adds yet further confirmation of these stories:

> And this[25] came to pass at the end of Nestorius' life, as is said. And everything was written and sent to him while he was in exile: the act [drawn] before Flavian, and also the Letter of Leo. And had the judgment of the Lord not come quickly and taken him away before the council convened, he was summoned to come together with the other bishops. And I say these things not simply from hearsay, but because I learned them in truth from the one who was sent after him.[26]

Philoxenus is clear that he had information about the recall of Nestorius from the unnamed official sent to summon him and that Nestorius had in his possession conciliar *acta* and the *Tomus ad Flavianum*. This last claim is quite remarkable as it shows that either Philoxenus or his informant had access to a copy of the *Liber Heraclidis*. Philoxenus, like the other sources, reiterates that Nestorius died before he could reach the council.

Over a century after Zachariah and Rufus, the Nestorian bishop Barhadbeshebba wrote an ecclesiastical history in which he gave a long biographical treatment of Nestorius. As best as can be determined, Barhadbeshebba did not know of Zacharias' or Rufus' work, and had before him as a guide only Socrates *scholasticus' Ecclesiastical History* and a collection of Nestorius' own writings, which included his lost *Tragoedia*. Like the non-Chalcedonian Miaphysites, Barhadbeshebba also claims that Nestorius was summoned to return by the emperor Marcian, but he differs in saying that he refused to leave his place of exile:

> After the death of Theodosius the Younger, by whose weakness the illustrious one [Nestorius] had been deposed and so many ills have befallen the church, the victorious and faithful Marcian succeeded him and ordered that Nestorius be recalled immediately. His friends and high officials wrote him to let himself return; they sent to him a beast of burden and all that was necessary, and they informed him that the emperor had ordered an oecumenical council to take place. But Nestorius wrote back in response that he refused to return and said: "The solitude, in its desolation, delights me; the desert, with its flowers, pleases me, and interaction with the animals is agreeable to me. But I refused to enter into communion with those wicked men of the

> present time." The emperor ordered that he be conducted by force, but, when they had put him on a litter, he departed to Christ, his beloved, while fatigued and in haste. Cyril and John of Antioch had died before him, because they were involved in the deceits of the Sons of Syria and had boldly committed murder behind the door (2 Kings 3:37). When the patrician returned and recounted to the emperor the predictions and the demonstrations Nestorius had made, the emperor recalled immediately all the bishops who had been driven into exile with Nestorius. Nestorius remained for three years in Constantinople and four years in Antioch, when he had returned from Ephesus, and was in exile in Oasis for 18 years. All the years of his episcopate are 25 years.[27]

Barhadbeshebba's version of the recall is followed by the anonymous Syriac legend of Nestorius, which consequently has little independent value.[28]

Barhadbeshebba's depiction of Nestorius' refusal to leave Egypt and his preference for the solitude of the desert may explain the puzzling final sentence of the concluding prophecy in the *Liber Heraclidis*: "Rejoice for me, O desert, my beloved and my foster-parent and the home of my habitation, and my mother, the land of my exile, who even after my death will guard my body unto the resurrection by the will of God." The final sentence of the prophecy in the *Liber* is eerily similar to the words of Nestorius reported by Barhadbeshebba. If Barhadbeshebba actually had before him a text of Nestorius that spoke of Marcian's offer to return and phrased Nestorius' refusal in just this way, then the redactor of the *Liber* has deliberately suppressed the story of the recall, and indeed any mention of Chalcedon, but has retained Nestorius' poetic words as a sort of seal of authorship on the obviously falsified final prophecy. Why, if the editor of the *Liber Heraclidis* worked after the Council of Chalcedon, was not a mention of the recall inserted into the text of the *Liber* as evidence for his ultimate vindication? One suspects that the eventual condemnation of Nestorius at Chalcedon would have made his recall a sort of pitiful anticlimax to this strident work of self-defense. The redactor's silence about Chalcedon, when he knew full well about it, is made to fit with all the other reports that placed Nestorius' death before Chalcedon,

All of these anti-Chalcedonian sources, both Miaphysite and Nestorian, however consistent they may be, may seem to be only the fabrications of over-active imaginations. For the Miaphysites the story of Nestorius' recall only served to prove what they already believed of the council's dyophysite statements, that it was a "Nestorian council", while for the supporters of Nestorius the stories of his death before the council at once proved that he was fundamentally orthodox, and served to explain why, if that were the case, he was not personally vindicated at Chalcedon. Yet there remains a final source to consider, the pro-Chalcedonian Evagrius who inadvertently provides decisive evidence in support of these stories that would otherwise be dismissed as anti-Chalcedonian propaganda.

When Evagrius wrote in the late sixth century, his main source for the years 450 and 451, apart from the *acta* of Chalcedon, of which he had a full text, was the Ecclesiastical History of Zachariah. Evagrius went out of his way to contest many of Zacha-

riah's statements, and in particular he sought to disprove the story of Nestorius' recall. His argument is less than convincing:

> Zacharias the *rhetor* indeed, through bias (ἐμπαθῶς), says that even Nestorius was summoned from his exile. But the fact that Nestorius was consistently anathematized by the Synod demonstrates that this was not the case. This is also quite clearly revealed by Eustathius, the bishop of Beirut, writing in these words to a bishop John and to another John, an elder, concerning what had been transacted at the Synod: 'Those who sought the remains of Nestorius objected once again and shouted against the Synod, "Why are the saints anathematized?"' The result was that the emperor in anger instructed the guardsmen to drive them away.[29]

The condemnation of Nestorius at Chalcedon, Evagrius thought, contradicted any order to recall him. But there was yet further evidence that Evagrius knew about aside from Zachariah that obviously troubled him. Evagrius adduced a letter of Eustathius of Beirut, who had been among the leaders of Second Ephesus and who complained that he had been forced to subscribe at Chalcedon, that purported to prove that Nestorius could not have been recalled.[30] Eustathius says that some bishops at Chalcedon asked for the return of Nestorius' remains, a request the emperor flatly refused. Since the emperor seems to have been present at the council, the incident must have occurred at the sixth session or later.

Although the *acta* of Chalcedon contain no such demands, we are still not justified in thinking that the apparent candor of the *acta* precludes their historicity. In the investigation held in 449 into the accuracy of the recording of Eutyches' statements, the notary sent to speak with Eutyches, when confronted with the notes from individual bishops that differed from his own transcription, protested that even the best tachygraphists or "speed writers" could not record all the statements made:

> John the notary said: "Your magnificence and the most God-beloved and holy synod know that, when someone is sent to go and convey a message to others, it is impossible to report back the exact words; not even any of the most reputed orators could do this, to convey and transmit to people the exact words of another person… I ask not to be required to repeat the exact words he used, since no one can do this, to transmit someone's words verbatim (αὐτολεξεὶ); but order the reading of what is written in my aide-memoire (ἐν τῶι ὑπομνηστικῶι)."[31]

The best that a scribe could do is take short-hand notes in his notebook and then later reconstruct the full statements according to his memory. The notary Aetius, at the same investigation, also stated that it was not uncommon at councils that when many bishops were shouting out, the statements of only one or two would be taken as the statement of the whole:

> Aetius deacon and notary said: "It often happens at these most holy gatherings that one of the most God-beloved bishops present says something, and what one man says is recorded and counted as if everyone alike had said it. This is what has happened from time immemorial: for instance, one person speaks and we write, 'The holy council said…'"[32]

It is easy to infer from what Aetius says that the statements of a few bishops could

easily be overlooked. This must apply *a fortiori* to Chalcedon, for unlike previous councils secretaries from the imperial consistory, not the secretaries of individual bishops, recorded the meetings.[33] It is quite conceivable that the notaries were instructed to exclude from their record the protestations about Nestorius that could prove embarrassing to the emperor, as Eustathius indicates that they were to Marcian.

A careful reader will realize that the upshot of Evagrius' quotation of Eustathius is not the definitive rebuttal of Zachariah that he had hoped for. Evagrius has *not* shown that Nestorius was not recalled, but only that Nestorius died before Chalcedon, precisely what all the sources, both Miaphysite and Nestorian, agree upon. If this is the best response that Evagrius can come up with, then one should seriously reconsider the stories of Nestorius' recall. To understand Nestorius' recall, though, we have to reconsider the aims of Chalcedon itself. Like modern historians, Evagrius sees Chalcedon only for what it was, a reality that attained even in antiquity the level of historical necessity. Evagrius sought to disparage Nestorius so as to entirely disassociate the work of the Council of Chalcedon from the deposed bishop; it was unthinkable that Nestorius should have been involved in the slightest with a council that produced such a definitive statement of christological orthodoxy. The argument for the recall of Nestorius assumes, by contrast, that Chalcedon was a contingent, not a necessary event and could consequently have turned out otherwise than it did. Once Chalcedon is looked at in this light, the stories in Rufus, Zacharias and Barhadbeshebba assume a new historical reality, for these earlier writers can speak of Nestorius' exile and recall unencumbered by Evagrius' need to justify Chalcedon.

When Marcian came to power in August 450 he had no ties to the family of Theodosius and little to justify his selection beyond the favour shown him by the barbarian generals Aspar and Zeno; indeed he was considered by the western Augustus, Valentinian III, nothing less than a usurper who should be removed at the first opportunity.[34] Marcian took as his consort the 52-year old sister of Theodosius to establish some sort of continuity with the Theodosian line. By so doing he committed himself to acquiescing to the demands of Pulcheria and pope Leo that he reverse the decisions of Second Ephesus. This entailed the rejection of Cyril's post-433 writings that asserted the sufficiency formulae "one incarnate nature" and "out of two natures", the rehabilitation of Antiochene dyophysites like Theodoret of Cyrrhus, and the approval of Leo's *Tome* in the East. If all these conditions were met Leo and Pulcheria would intercede on Marcian's behalf with Valentinian to ensure his recognition in the West.

To produce the desired outcome Marcian conceived of a council to meet at Nicaea in September of 451 under the strict supervision not of bishops, but of imperial officials bound by his orders. But the council had to steer a very difficult, if not impossible course between the Scylla and Charybdis of the balkanized Eastern debate. On the one side were the large number of bishops satisfied with Cyril's "out of two natures" and "one incarnate nature". On the other were those who still tried to uphold the Peace of 433, the substance of which was an Antiochene statement of belief that posited the two natures of Christ after the incarnation. To the former, the latter were Nestori-

ans, and to latter, the former were Eutychians. There was no obvious common ground on which the two sides could meet without accusations of heresy from one or other of the sides.

From the evidence of the *Liber Heraclidis*, Nestorius fully endorsed the *Tome* of Leo and the "two natures" of the Peace of 433. Nestorius' return would crown the accomplishment of the Council and finally put to rest the christological controversy that had begun in 428. It is to be imagined that Nestorius would enter the church and walking in the aisle between the assembled bishops and kneel before Marcian and Pulcheria at the head of the church, where he would ask their forgiveness for disrupting the peace of the church and give his unqualified assent to the *Tome* of Leo, the definition of faith where Christ was "in two natures", Cyril's *Second Letter to Nestorius* and to the title *Theotokos*. Once Nestorius recanted, Theodosius' legislation against the "Simonians" would be abrogated and talk of "two natures" could not be legally condemned as in any way heretical. In this way, the dyophysite position of Chalcedon could not subsequently be discredited by accusations of Nestorianism. Instead, the decrees of Chalcedon would oppose a single heresy, that of Eutyches, which, unlike Nestorianism, had a clearly defined form, thanks to the efforts of Basil of Seleucia and the patrician Florentius at the Home Synod of Constantinople in 448, that is, the rejection of Christ being "in two natures" after the incarnation.[35] By showing that even a confirmed heretic could be drawn back to the true faith, Marcian would illustrate to all that the Council of Chalcedon had a compelling claim to the truth.[36]

There was another likely pressure exerted on Marcian. It is not beyond the realm of possibility that Nestorius' friends, who had been in communication with him, were effectively blackmailing Marcian with Nestorius' endorsement of the *Tome* as early as the fall of 450. If Marcian did not rehabilitate Nestorius at the council they would disclose that exiled bishop's approbation of the *Tome*, a very embarrassing revelation for Marcian and Pulcheria when the political situation demanded they force it upon the unwilling bishops. Who these friends were is not hard to guess at. Ibas of Edessa and Irenaeus of Tyre were surely two. Theodoret of Cyrrhus may also have been involved.[37] Though the extant collections of his letters contain no letters to Nestorius after about 434, there are letter fragments of Theodoret to Nestorius in Syriac that seem to suggest continued contact between the two men.[38]

To many it may seem impossible that a condemned heretic could ever be recalled to a council, but there is in fact a very clear precedent in the fourth century that is often overlooked. Constantine summoned a council to meet in Constantinople during the summer of 336, with the emperor present.[39] When Arius was questioned by Constantine, he found him orthodox and the emperor planned to force Alexander of Constantinople into communication with him. But before Arius could officially be readmitted into communion with the Catholic church, he collapsed and died in the most unpleasant of circumstances—on the toilet from an explosive bout of diarrhea—according to ecclesiastical historian Socrates (*HE* 1.38):

> It was then Saturday, and ... going out of the imperial palace, attended by a crowd of Eusebian partisans like guards, he [Arius] paraded proudly through the midst of the city, attracting the notice of all the people. As he ap-

> proached the place called Constantine's Forum, where the column of porphyry is erected, a terror arising from the remorse of conscience seized Arius, and with the terror a violent relaxation of the bowels: he therefore enquired whether there was a convenient place near, and being directed to the back of Constantine's Forum, he hastened thither. Soon after a faintness came over him, and together with the evacuations his bowels protruded, followed by a copious hemorrhage, and the descent of the smaller intestines: moreover portions of his spleen and liver were brought off in the effusion of blood, so that he almost immediately died. The scene of this catastrophe still is shown at Constantinople, as I have said, behind the shambles in the colonnade: and by persons going by pointing the finger at the place, there is a perpetual remembrance preserved of this extraordinary kind of death.

To his enemies, the Nicene Christians, this was a sign from God and an answer to their prayers, or at the very least proof that an enterprising opponent had managed to poison him before he could taint the church with his communion. Arius' inglorious death meant that not even his close supporters chose to push the issue of his rehabilitation after 336.[40] Yet Constantine is not commonly remembered as sympathetic to Arius; indeed, the devout in succeeding centuries would have recoiled at the thought.

The case of Arius bears a strong similarity to that of Nestorius, a parallel certainly not lost on opponents to Chalcedon like Zachariah in the passage quoted above. The death of the exiled bishop on the road from Egypt, and the stories circulating of his tongue rotting out of his mouth, must have struck many as a sure sign that this outspoken heretic was not destined by God to return. With Nestorius' not physically present to recant, there was no other option than to anathematize Nestorius at Chalcedon. A posthumous rehabilitation would have been a very hard sell, and Nestorius' friends did not push the issue, beyond the shouts recorded by Eustathius, much as Arius' supporters melted away after his death.

When news of his death reached the capital, Marcian must have had to think fast to plan a new course for his council. It may well be that the delayed opening of the council and Marcian's own late arrival have much to do with his uncertainty over how to proceed. That Marcian was commanding an army in the field against the Huns in Thrace seems unlikely, when Attila was focused on the West. The eventual transfer of the council to Chalcedon, much closer to the capital, meant that Marcian could have even closer oversight of its controversial progress.

With Nestorius dead the architects of the council recast their strategy. The *Tome* of Leo and the dyophysite definition of faith would instead become the artificial *via media* between the heresies of Nestorianism and Eutychianism. This presentation of the issues, however, grossly misrepresented the *status quaestionis* in 451. For many in the East, if not the majority, the later work of Cyril enunciated the orthodoxy of the formulas "out of two natures" and "one incarnate nature"; any talk of "two natures" was by definition Nestorian. Thus to distinguish Chalcedon's "two natures" from Nestorianism rang false to such staunchly conservative cyrillians. It was imperative to disassociate the "two natures" of Chalcedon from what Nestorius had earlier taught and, for this reason, all formal references to his re-

call were suppressed. The evidence for this imperial order survived only in gossip circulating among Nestorius' friends and those near Panopolis, where Nestorius died. Only the pressure of the imperial commissioners, and doubtless a combination of threats, bribes and peer pressure not recorded in any formal records, permitted the Chalcedonian statement of belief to meet with approval by the assembled bishops. This was not the council Marcian had hoped for, as the violent and intractable opposition to it subsequently proved. Whether Chalcedon would have been more palatable with Nestorius present is doubtful, but the evidence, much of it preserved only in Syriac, is clear and consistent on the attempt to recall Nestorius. Rather than marginalize such sources as propaganda, it would behoove scholars of the fourth ecumenical council to regard them as preserving events otherwise unrecorded in the official *acta*.

NOTES

[1] For the troubled reception of Chalcedon, see P.T.R. Gray, *The Defense of Chalcedon in the East (451—553)*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979), pp. 17-43.

[2] For the so-called *definitio fidei*, in reality only an interpretation of the faith, see *Actio V* 34 ACO II.1.2, pp. 128-130. For a clear summary of the controversy, see now P.T.R. Gray, "The Legacy of Chalcedon. Christological Problems and their Significance," in M. Maas (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 215-22.

[3] See especially A. de Halleux, "Le Concile de Chalcédoine," *Revue des Sciences Religieuses* 67 (1993) 3-18.

[4] See Cyril's *Second Letter to Succensus* ACO I.1.6, pp. 151-157. While the ἕνωσις φυσίκη of Cyril's *Third Letter to Nestorius* (ACO I.1.1, pp. 33-42, CPG 5317) implies one nature in retrospect, there is no evidence that Cyril himself understood it this way until *after* 433 when Acacius of Melitene and others alerted him to the dangers implicit in the "two natures" of the Antiochenes.

[5] For Nestorius' innovation within the tradition of Theodore, see R.C. Chestnut, "The Two Prosopa in Nestorius' *Bazaar of Heraclidis*," *JTS ns* 29 (1978) 392-409.

[6] *Coll. Vat.* 63 ACO I.1.2, p. 64.

[7] The classic defense of Nestorius is still M. Anastos, "Nestorius was orthodox," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 16 (1962) 119-40. For a sensitive treatment of Nestorius' condemnation and his doctrine, see A. de Halleux, "Nestorius. Histoire et doctrine," *Irenikon* 66 (1993) 38-51, 163-177; and *idem*, "Nestorius. History and Doctrine," in *First Non-official Consultation on Dialogue Within the Syriac Tradition* (Vienna: Pro Oriente, 1994), pp. 200-215.

[8] Cyril to John of Antioch, *Ep.* 39, *Coll. Vat.* 127, ACO I.1.4, pp. 15-20, CPG 5339.

[9] Cyril's *Third Letter to Nestorius* was not even known in the West until the sixth century. See N.M. Haring, "The Character and Range of Influence of St. Cyril of Alexandria on Latin Theology (430-1260)," *Medieval Studies* 12 (1950) 1-19, and E. Schwartz's remarks at ACO I.5(2), p. 236, and *praefatio* ACO I.5 IIII-V.

[10] *Liber Heraclidis* (text): Le Livre d'Heraclide de Damas, P. Bedjan ed., (Paris and Leipzig: O. Harrassowitz, 1910). English translation: G.R. Driver and L. Hodgson, *The bazaar of Heracleides*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925). French translation: F. Nau, *Le livre d'Héraclide de Damas*, (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1910). For the story of this text's discovery, see H. Chadwick, Review of Abramowski 1963, *JTS ns* 16 (1965) 214-216.

[11] L. Abramowski, *Untersuchungen zum Liber Heraclidis des Nestorius*, CSCO 242, Subsidia 22 (Louvain: Secréteriat du Corpus SCO, 1963).

[12] *CTh* 16.5.66.

[13] *Coll. Vat.* 110 ACO I.1.3, p. 67 and *Coll. Cas.* 277+278, ACO I.4, p. 203.

[14] *Coll. Vat.* 138, ACO I.1.4, p. 66.

[15] Evagrius *HE* 1.7. Text: The ecclesiastical history of Evagrius, J. Bidez and L. Parmentier eds., (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1964), pp. 13-16. English translation: M. Whitby, *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), pp. 20-25.

[16] *Liber Heraclidis*, Bedjan, 518-19, Driver and Hodgson, 378, and Nau, 330.

[17] *Liber Heraclidis*, Bedjan, 519, Driver and Hodgson, 379, and Nau, 331.

[18] *Liber Heraclidis*, Bedjan, 506, Driver and Hodgson, 369, and Nau, 322.

[19] *Liber Heraclidis*, Bedjan, 520, Driver and Hodgson, 378-79, Nau, 330-31. There is no internal reason whatsoever to believe this passage an interpolation.

[20] *Liber Heraclidis*, Bedjan 452-3, Driver

and Hodgson, 330-31, Nau, 290-91.

[21] John Rufus, *Plerophories* 36 (PO pp. 83-85). The translation is my own. For discussion of John Rufus and Zachariah (see *infra*) *viz*. Chalcedon, see now M. Whitby, "The Church Historians and Chalcedon," in G. Marasco ed., *Greek and Latin Historiography in Late Antiquity* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2003), pp. 447-93. P. Mouterde, "Le Concile de Chalcédoine d'après les historiens monophysites de langue syriaque," in A. Grillmeier and H. Bacht, *Das Konzil von Chalkedon: Geschichte und Gegenwart,* vol II (Würzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1962, c1954.), pp. 581-602, despite its title, does not deal at all with the stories of Nestorius' recall.

[22] Zachariah of Mitylene, *HE* 3.1, F.J. Hamilton and E.W. Brooks trans., *The Syriac Chronicle Known as That of Zachariah of Mitylene* (London: Metheuen and co., 1899), p. 43.

[23] *Coll. Cas.* 279, ACO I.4, pp. 203-204. Dorotheus had pronounced an infamous anathema on all those who used the title *theotokos*. Coll. Vat. 144, ACO I.1.5, p.11: εἴ τις λέγει θεοτόκον εἶναι τὴν Μαρίαν, οὗτος ἀνάθεμα ἔστω. He was removed by Nestorius' successor, Maximian, shortly after his accession.

[24] Dioscorus, *A panegyric on Macarius, bishop of Tkôw*, D.W. Johnson ed. and trans., CSCO 415, Script. Coptici 41 (Louvain, Sécretariat du Corpus SCO, 1980), pp. 79-8. For the story in Shenute, see J.F. Bethune-Baker, "The Date of the Death of Nestorius: Schenute, Zacharias, Evagrius," *Journal of Theological Studies* ns. 9 (1908) 601-5.

[25] i.e. the dissemination of Leo's *Tome* in the East in 450.

[26] Philoxenus of Mabbug, *Letter to the Monks of Senun*, André de Halleux ed., CSCO 231, (Louvain: Sécretariat du Corpus SCO, 1963), p. 18. I thank Iuliana Viezure for bringing this passage, along with a translation of it, to my attention.

[27] Barhadbeshebba, *HE* 30 (PO 9, 585-586). The translation is my own.

[28] M. Brière, "La Légende Syriaque de Nestorius," *Revue de l'orient chrétien* 15 (1910) 24-25.

[29] Evagrius *HE* 2.2, J. Bidez and L. Parmentier eds., *The ecclesiastical history of Evagrius*, p. 39. English translation: Whitby, *The Ecclesiastical History*, p. 62. For brief discussion of this passage, see P. Allen, *Evagrius Scholasticus, the Church Historian* (Leuven: Spicilegium sacrum lovaniense, 1981), pp. 99-100. Allen, while making the point that Evagrius does not disprove the recall *per se*, errs in identifying Eustathius as a diophysite.

[30] According to Zachariah *HE* 3.1, (trans. Hamilton and Brooks, 47).

[31] *Cognitio de Gestis contra Eutychen* 644 ACO II.1.2 p. 160. Translation: R. Price and M. Gaddis, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, Vol. 1 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), pp. 242-43. For Evagrius and Zachariah, see Pauline Allen, "Zachariah Scholasticus and the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Evagrius Scholasticus," *Journal of Theological Studies* 31 (1980) 471-88.

[32] *Cognitio de Gestis contra Eutychen* 767 ACO II.1.2 p. 170 (trans. Price and Gaddis, vol. I, 257).

[33] For an important study of the identities of the imperial commissioners, see. R. Delmaire, "Les dignitaires laïcs au concile de Chalcédoine: notes sur la hiérarchie et les préséances au milieu du V[e] siècle," *Byzantion* 54 (1984) 141-75.

[34] R.W. Burgess, "The Accession of Marcian in the Light of Chalcedonian Apologetic and Monophysite polemic," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 86/87 (1993/1994) 47–68, and C. Zuckerman, "L'Empire d'Orient et les Huns; notes sur Priscus," *Travaux et Mémoires Byzantines* 12 (1994) 159–182.

[35] See G. Bevan and P.T.R. Gray, "The Trial of Eutyches: A New Interpretation," (forthcoming).

[36] The only modern historian to take seriously this scenario of recall was G.E.M. de Ste. Croix in "The Council of Chalcedon," in *Christian Persecution, Martyrdom, and Orthodoxy*, Michael Whitby and Joseph Streeter eds., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 280-81. Ste. Croix, however, underplayed the role of secular pressures behind the council, and

by extension the recall (272) and instead saw it only as an expression of imperial fiat.

[37] For Theodore's support of Chalcedon after 451, see P.T.R. Gray, "Theodoret on the 'One Hypostasis.' An Antiochene Reading of Chalcedon," *Studia Patristica* 15 (1984) 301-304.

[38] F. Loofs ed., *Nestoriana* (Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1905), nos. 310, 226, 243 and 253. Translated in Driver and Hodgson, *The bazaar of Heracleides*, pp. 382-83.

[39] For the Council of Constantinople and the recall of Arius, see T.D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 137.

[40] T.D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), pp. 241-42.

SYRIAN CHRISTIAN INTELLECTUALS IN THE WORLD OF ISLAM: FAITH, THE PHILOSOPHICAL LIFE, AND THE QUEST FOR AN INTERRELIGIOUS CONVIVENCIA IN ABBASID TIMES

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I

The earliest Christian intellectual on record to enjoy a regular entrée to the highest levels of the Abbasid elite in Baghdad was undoubtedly Patriarch Timothy I (727-823) who for forty-three years (780-743) served as the major hierarch of the so-called 'Nestorian' Church of the East,[1] first in Seleucia-Ctesiphon and then in Baghdad.[2] While the patriarch was no doubt fluent in Arabic, he wrote in Syriac. And among the many works ascribed to him, most of which have not survived to modern times, some fifty-nine letters are still extant, of the approximately two-hundred he is known to have written altogether. While they are addressed to friends, mostly church officials, they are more than personal correspondence, being on the order of public letters, or letter-treatises, perhaps best thought of as essays. They discuss a number of liturgical, canonical and theological topics, and several of them have to do with issues of Muslim/Christian interest, including letters in which Timothy describes in some detail the responses he has given to questions put to him by Muslims or inspired by Muslim concerns.[3] By far the most well-known of these is the patriarch's account of his debate with the caliph al-Mahdī (775-785) on the beliefs and practices of the Christians.[4]

Patriarch Timothy's account of his defense of Christian doctrine and practice in the *majlis* of the caliph al-Mahdī, sometimes listed among his works as Letter LIX, was destined to become one of the classics among the Christian apologies of the early Islamic period. It circulated in its original Syriac in a fuller and in an abbreviated form,[5] and it was soon translated into Arabic,[6] in which language the account of Timothy's day in the caliph's court has enjoyed a long popularity, extending well into modern times. But it is not the only one of the patriarch's letters which takes up what we might call Islamic issues. Several others discuss questions which were obviously posed with Muslim challenges in mind. Several cases in point are: a letter (XXXIV) on the proper understanding of the title 'Servant of God' as an epithet for Christ;[7] a letter in defense of the doctrine of the Trinity (XXXV); and a letter against the opinions of those who demean the majesty of Christ (XXXVI).[8] Another little known letter (XL), which the patriarch addressed to

his former academic colleague Sergius, director of the school of Bashosh and soon to be the bishop of Elam,[9] presents a somewhat detailed account of Patriarch Timothy's colloquy with an interlocutor whom he met one day at the caliph's court; Timothy says the man was a devotee of the philosophy of Aristotle.[10] But the course of the conversation which the patriarch reports, on the ways to know the one God, the three persons of the one God, the doctrine of the Incarnation and the significance of various Christian religious practices, reads much like an account of a conversation with a Muslim *mutakallim*, rather than a philosopher.[11]

The mention of Aristotle and of philosophy calls to mind the fact that Patriarch Timothy was called upon by Muslim patrons to arrange for the production of Arabic translations of Greek logical and scientific texts, often from intermediary translations into Syriac. No less a personage than the caliph himself called upon the patriarch to arrange for a translation of Aristotle's *Topica* into Arabic, and Timothy discussed the undertaking in two very interesting letters which have survived,[12] in which the reader gains a lively sense of the multifaceted processes involved in the enterprise. In this connection, and in connection with the beginnings of Christian involvement in the Abbasid translation project, what John Watt has recently written about Patriarch Timothy's translation is noteworthy. He says: "The earliest unambiguous evidence of interest in Aristotelian philosophy in the upper levels of Abbasid Muslim society is the commission of al-Mahdī to the East Syrian Catholicos Timothy I for a translation of Aristotle's *Topics* from Syriac into Arabic."[13]

This interest on the part of the Abbasid elite in Arabic translations of the logical works of the Greek philosopher Aristotle, and in Greek mathematical, scientific and medical texts by other writers, ushered in a whole new era for Christian intellectual life in Baghdad. And since the Abbasid caliph's capital was located in the historical heartland of the Assyrian Church of the East, it is no surprise that so-called 'Nestorian' Christians, including Patriarch Timothy himself, found their way into Baghdad to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the new intellectual movement. Soon other Christians too, 'Jacobites' and 'Melkites' among them, would appear on the intellectual scene in the Islamic capital. Some were physicians, some were philosophers, and some were logicians, mathematicians, copyists or translators. All of them contributed something to the newly flowering culture of the early days of the first flourishing of Islamic civilization. But in no society-wide enterprise did these 'Nestorian' and other Christians take a more prominent role than they did in the famed translation movement. For, as Dimitri Gutas has rightly noted, the vast majority of the translators of Greek and Syriac texts into Arabic were Christians.[14] As a matter of fact, for some generations previously many Christian scholars had been engaged in a translation movement of their own of texts from Greek into Syriac, and latterly from Greek and Syriac into Arabic.

Interest in Greek learning had been widespread in both the 'Jacobite' and the so-called 'Nestorian', Syriac-speaking communities from the sixth century onward.[15] The story begins back in the days of John Philoponos (ca. 490-ca.570), a 'Jacobite' Christian student of the Neoplatonist Ammonius, son of Hermeias, in Alexandria.[16] Philoponos functioned both as a philosopher and as a defender of Christianity. It was one of

Philoponos' students in Alexandria, Sergius of Resh'ayna (d.536), a fellow 'Jacobite' from the environs of Edessa, who later switched his ecclesial allegiance to the 'Melkites', who became the first-known link between the enthusiasts for Aristotle in Neoplatonist Alexandria and the Syriac-speaking communities in northern Syria.[17] In Syria, the study of the works of "the Philosopher" and of other Greek thinkers always involved translation into Syriac as the first step in the enterprise. From the time of Sergius of Resh'ayna onward, until well into Islamic times, the fortunes of Aristotle and Greek philosophy and science grew steadily in the Syriac-speaking world, initially especially among the 'Jacobites'. One thinks in this connection of scholars such as Severus Sebokht (d.666/7), Athanasius of Balad (d.696), Jacob of Edessa (633-708), George, Bishop of the Arabs (d.724), and Theophilus of Edessa (d.785), to name a few of them.[18]

In the meantime, among the East Syrians and the so-called 'Nestorians', interest in Aristotle and the Greek sciences did not lag far behind that of the 'Jacobites'. Paul the Persian (fl. 531-578), a younger contemporary of Sergius of Resh'ayna who likewise had connections with Alexandria, cultivated a strong interest in Aristotelian thought, and although in the end he became a convert to Zoroastrianism back home in Persia, at the court of Kusrau Anūshirwān (r.531-579), he seems nevertheless to have successfully championed Aristotle and Greek philosophy among the Syriac-speaking, East Syrians in his homeland.[19] Subsequently, it was in the 'Nestorian' school system, in centers such as Nisibis,[20] al-Ḥīra, the monastery of Dayr Qunnā[21] and Jundisābūr[22] that Greek learning flourished. By the mid-eighth century, 'Nestorian' scholars such as the well-known members of the Bukhtīshū family, with their connections with Jundīsābūr, Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq (808-873), who hailed from the 'Nestorian' capital of the Lakhmids, al-Ḥīra, and Abū Bishr Mattā ibn Yūnus (d.940), from the flourishing monastery of Dayr Qunnā, not far from Baghdad, who became "the founder of the Aristotelian school in Baghdad early in the tenth century,"[23] all soon came to be among the dominant Christian scholars in the Graeco-Arabic translation movement in early Abbasid times.

It was within this context of the Graeco-Arabic translation movement of Abbasid times that a number of Christian intellectuals involved in the translation enterprise came to the fore in their several communities with a new approach to the Christian encounter with the Muslims. Unlike their predecessors, who were concerned primarily in the Islamic milieu with composing apologetic texts in Syriac and Arabic in response to Islamic challenges, Christian translators and scholars such as Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq (808-873) in the ninth century, Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī (893-974) in the tenth century, and Elias of Nisibis (d.1046) in the eleventh century, to name only those with some name recognition in the modern west, turned their attention also to philosophical, social and ethical questions. In particular, they sought a theoretical way, in tandem with contemporary Muslim thinkers, to commend a philosophical way of life, the cultivation of virtue and the pursuit of happiness, in a way that would promote a measure of *convivencia* in the inter-religious, Islamo-christian atmosphere in which they lived. They were undoubtedly inspired in this undertaking by the works of early Muslim philosophers such as Ya'qūb ibn Isḥāq al-Kindī (ca.800-867) and Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (ca.870-950). This new line of Chris-

tian thinking sought to promote a reason-based, social ethic for the world in which Christians and Muslims lived, which would be open both to the claims of the Christian and the Islamic scriptures, and which would also foster the acquisition of personal and public virtues on the part of the leaders of society, whose charge it was, they argued, to work for the common good of everyone in the body-politic, especially the scholars, ascetics and religious teachers of both the church and the mosque.[24] In what follows we shall briefly consider the contributions of Ḥunayn, Yaḥyā, and Elias to this new undertaking in the Christian response to the pressures of life in the Islamic world.

II

Unlike Patriarch Timothy, who for all his accomplishments as a Christian apologist was primarily a churchman engaged in ecclesiastical affairs, Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq was a professional scholar who circulated in the highest levels of Baghdad's learned elite. While he remained dedicated, like Patriarch Timothy, to the task of the systematic defense of the veracity of Christian doctrine and practice, and made major contributions to Christian apologetic literature in Arabic as well, Ḥunayn was also engaged wholeheartedly in the scientific, medical, and philosophical interests of the contemporary Muslim intellectuals.[25]

Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq is well known to historians as the founder and central figure in a ninth-century Baghdadī school of translators of Greek medical and scientific texts.[26] In his day, he was also celebrated for the doggedness with which he studied the Greek language and pursued manuscripts from city to city, and perhaps even beyond the borders of the caliphate into the territory of the Romans. As a noted physician, Ḥunayn was a familiar presence in the intellectual circles of the caliph's court from the time of al-Ma'mūn (813-833) to that of al-Muʿtamid (869-892), enjoying a particularly high-profile career during the days of the caliph al-Mutawakkil (847-861), whose sometime personal physician he was. Ḥunayn was one of the first Christians whose stories are widely told in the Arabic annals of Muslim learning in Abbasid times, by both medieval and modern authors.[27] In short, Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq was a public intellectual of record.

Modern scholarship on Ḥunayn and his works has largely focused its attention on his professional activity, his translations of logical, philosophical, medical and scientific texts, and on some of his more colorful personal exploits, the knowledge of some of which is even said to come from his own pen.[28] Relatively little attention has been paid to Ḥunayn's own ideas, either in the realm of philosophy or of theology. And yet there is ample evidence that these were of the greatest importance to him. Like his somewhat older Muslim contemporary, the philosopher al-Kindī (ca.800-ca.867), of whom Gerhard Endress has said that for al-Kindī "philosophy was to vindicate the pursuit of rational activity as an activity in the service of Islam,"[29] so one might say of Ḥunayn that for him the cultivation of science and philosophy was to promote the claims of reason in service of both religion and public life.

Compared to other contemporary Christian intellectuals, Ḥunayn did not write much on religious topics that has survived, but what he did write spoke to the major topics of the day, both Christian and Islamic. It is notable that, unlike other Christian writers of his own time and later, he did

not engage in the church-dividing, inter-confessional, Christian controversies then currently flourishing; he did not, for example and so far as we know, write polemical tracts against the doctrinal views of the 'Melkites' or the 'Jacobites', or in support of the Christological teaching of his own, so-called 'Nestorian' church. Rather, in works which we know for the most part only by title, Ḥunayn addressed himself to issues such as why God created man in a state of need (*muḥtājan*), how one grasps the truths of religion, how to understand God's fore-ordainment of the affairs of the world (*al-qadar*) and the profession of monotheism (*at-tawḥīd*), and what are the criteria according to which the true religion might be discerned. The latter was a particularly important topic for both Muslims and Christians in Ḥunayn's lifetime, as we shall see. In addition, in some sources Ḥunayn is said to have composed a history of the world from Adam to the time of the caliph al-Mutawakkil (d.861), including the kings of Israel, the Roman and Persian kings up to the time of Muḥammad, and the Muslim caliphs up to his own time. Unfortunately, this book has not survived. However, one should not underestimate the apologetic and even the polemic agenda of such books of history in the 'sectarian milieu' of the time, when Muslim authors from Ibn Isḥāq (d. ca. 767) and Ibn Hishām (d.834) to al-Yaʿqūbī (d.897) were presenting Muḥammad and his prophetic claims in terms of just such biblically inspired, historical narratives.[30] Ḥunayn may well have been the first Christian to write such a history from a Christian perspective in Arabic in the Islamic milieu, an enterprise which would not be taken up again by an Arab Christian writer until the time of the 'Melkite', Eutychios of Alexandria / Saʿīd ibn Baṭrīq (877-940).[31] Later still, Elias bar Shināyâ of Nisibis (975-1046), another Christian writer whose works we will discuss below, like Ḥunayn a member of the so-called 'Nestorian' Church of the East, carried on this same tradition of historical writing in Arabic, in his *Chronography* (*Kitāb al-Azminah*).[32]

Luckily, one of Ḥunayn's principal contributions to Christian apologetics in the Islamic milieu, his discussion of the reasons (*al-asbāb*) for which people might consider any given religion to be true or false, has survived in at least two forms, with some variation between them. In one form, the text was preserved by the medieval Coptic scholar, al-Muʿtaman ibn al-ʿAssāl (*fl*. 1230-1260), who included it in his magisterial *Summary of the Principles of Religion*, together with a commentary on it by the twelfth century Coptic writer, Yuḥannā ibn Mīnā, who, according to Ibn al-ʿAssāl, gathered his material "from the books of the scholars (*ulamā'*) of the Christian *sharī'ah*."[33] The other form of the text is included in Ḥunayn's contribution to a Christian apologetic work in Arabic which presents itself as the correspondence between Ḥunayn and a Muslim friend of his at the caliph's court, Abū ʿĪsā ibn al-Munajjim (d.888), who had summoned him and their younger 'Melkite' colleague at the court, Qusṭā ibn Lūqā (d.ca.912), to embrace Islam.[34] It seems to have been the case that contemporary and later Christian apologists, as we shall see below, made use of Ḥunayn's discussion of these matters in their own further and rather original elaborations of the negative criteria, which they claimed are indicative of the true religion. They argued that the true religion is that one of the contemporary options which is not accepted for any one or all of the six or seven, unworthy and

therefore negative reasons for which people might accept a religion.[35]

Finally we must briefly discuss what is perhaps the most significant of Ḥunayn's works from the point of view of highlighting the new element in the intellectual culture of the Christian scholars of Baghdad from the ninth to the eleventh centuries. The work is Ḥunayn's *Ādāb al-falāsifah*, or *Nawādir al-falāsifah*, as it is sometimes called, a composite work, perhaps put together in the abbreviated form in which it has survived by one of Ḥunayn's disciples, the otherwise unknown Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Anṣārī, whose name appears as editor in the two extant manuscripts of the single recension of the text that has survived.[36] Most commentators on this work have characterized it as belonging to a well-known and popular genre of the time, the collection of gnomological, aphoristic sayings attributed to the ancient philosophers and wise men, including Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Alexander the Great, Galen, the Persian Luqmān, and, in Ḥunayn's case, Solomon, son of David.[37] This characterization is certainly true as far as it goes; Ḥunayn's text is one of a number of Greek and Arabic compilations of wisdom sayings attributed to the ancient sages. The individual aphorisms, which in the ensemble have been the focus of most scholarly attention so far, can indeed be traced from one compilation to another and the contents of the several collections can be compared with one another to show a continuing tradition in the collection of gnomological sayings. But each compilation can also be studied in its own right, with attention paid to each compiler's particular interests and concerns. Often the aphorisms are quoted within the context of an overarching narrative framework which expresses the principal concern of the compiler of each individual work. In Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq's *Ādāb al-falāsifah*, the narrative speaks of the founding of philosophy, of its various branches, of the coming to be of 'houses of wisdom' among various peoples at the instigation of kings, not only among the ancient Greeks, but also among Jews, Christians and Muslims, and of the sages who transmitted what Ḥunayn consistently speaks of as 'knowledge' (*'ilm*) or 'wisdom' (*ḥikmah*), and 'disciplinary practice' (*adab*). For him, the pursuit of *'ilm* and *adab* constitutes the philosophical way of life; it will bring happiness and harmony for both individuals and society as a whole.[38]

In the context of the burgeoning Christian intellectual life in Arabic in the ninth century, Ḥunayn's *Ādāb al-falāsifah* gave voice to a new line of thinking which would be developed even further by Christian intellectuals in the next generations, as we shall see. In addition to the customary apologetic concerns, it involves the appropriation of the Late Antique ideal of the philosophical way of life, as commended by the Neoplatonic Aristotelians of Athens and Alexandria in the sixth Christian century, as part and parcel of the Christian intellectual agenda in the caliphate. Now Christian thinkers would be taking part in a conversation with contemporary Muslim intellectuals who were similarly developing an interest not only in the improving literature of the old 'mirror for princes' tradition, but in moral development, the acquisition of virtues, and the beginnings of a political philosophy,[39] which would eventually bear fruit in such works as the philosopher al-Fārābī's *Principles of the Opinions of the Inhabitants of the Virtuous City*,[40] and in the growth in the tenth and eleventh centu-

ries of what modern commentators have called Islamic humanism.[41]

III

A generation after the time of Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq, the Christian logician and translator of the works of Aristotle and his commentators, Abū Bishr Mattā ibn Yūnus (d.940), a 'Nestorian' from the monastery of Dayr Qunnā, became one of al-Fārābī's two Christian teachers of logic and philosophy, the other one being Yuḥannā ibn Ḥaylān (d.910). Abū Bishr was also the teacher of one of al-Fārābī's own star pupils, the 'Jacobite' Christian, Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī (893-974). Modern scholars claim Abū Bishr as the real "founder of the Aristotelian school in Baghdad early in the tenth century."[42] As such he is often remembered as the defender of philosophy and of the universal validity of Aristotelian logic against the counter claims of contemporary Muslim *mutakallimūn* in a debate with their spokesperson, Abū Sa'īd as-Sīrāfī in the *majlis* of the caliph's vizier in the year 937/8.[43] Then in the tenth century, Abū Bishr's student, Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, became for a time Baghdad's most notable Christian intellectual and, like Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq in the previous century, Yaḥyā was one of the major proponents of the philosophical way of life as a guarantor of interreligious harmony and of logic and philosophy as the most important tools for the Christian theologian and apologist in the Islamic milieu.

By the mid-940's Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī had become a major figure in a new generation of intellectuals in Baghdad. While he earned his living as a professional scribe, he was also for a while one of the leading exponents of the 'Peripatetic' school of thought founded by his teacher Abū Bishr in the caliph's capital city. He attracted numerous disciples of his own, both Christian and Muslim, not a few of whom went on to become eminent scholars in their own turn. Because of this obviously successful scholarly career, Yaḥyā and his circle of intellectual associates have come to be seen by later historians as important participants in the cultural revival during the Buyid age that Joel Kraemer has described as the humanistic renaissance of Islam in its fourth century.[44] And it is for this reason that bibliographers both medieval and modern have made every effort to keep track of Yaḥyā's works. In the tenth century his friend, the Muslim bio-bibliographer of culture in the world of Islam, Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq ibn an-Nadīm (d.995) recorded Yaḥyā's works and discussed his many scholarly accomplishments in his famous reference work called simply the *Fihrist*, or 'the catalog'; and in 1977, Gerhard Endress published a very helpful, analytical inventory of all the known works of Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī.[45]

In addition to his work as a translator and as a philosopher and logician, who translated many Greek works of Aristotle and his commentators from Greek and Syriac into Arabic, Yaḥyā also wrote original works in philosophy and theology. Like Ḥunayn, his concerns included issues of public morality, the ethical value of the Christian practice of celibacy, and the larger question of the human pursuit of happiness and the avoidance of sorrow. Of particular interest in this connection are his treatise on the improvement of morals, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, and his colloquy on sexual abstinence and the philosophical life.[46] But of course, in addition to his philosophical work Yaḥyā was also a prolific writer in the more

traditional areas of Christian theology and apologetics.[47] While many of Yaḥyā's theological works have received considerable attention from modern scholars, especially those in which he addressed the traditional topics of Christian theology and apology in the Islamic milieu, this has not been the case with his ethical texts and his ideas about the philosophical way of life. Yet it is in them in particular that we can follow in more detail his engagement with other public intellectuals in Baghdad in his day.

In his *Reformation of Morals*, Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī promoted the cultivation of virtue ethics toward the realization of an ideal which he called simply 'humanity' (*al-insāniyyah*),[48] by which he meant not 'humanism' in the modern sense of the term, but, following his teacher al-Fārābī's understanding of the word, he meant "the quality that human beings have in common, or human nature; ... being truly human, in the sense of realizing the end or perfection of man qua man, often synonymous with the exercise of reason."[49] Yaḥyā in fact viewed the cultivation of the life of reason as the very summit of human perfection. He speaks of mankind's distinguishing virtue and defining form as the rational power or soul,[50] and according to Yaḥyā its perfection consists in the acquisition of what he calls 'true science' (*al-ʾulūm al-ḥaqīqiyyah*)[51] and 'godly wisdom' (*al-ḥikmah al-ilāhiyyah*), or as he sometimes also put it, "the acquisition of science (*al-ʾulūm*) and knowledge (*al-maʿārif*) in act," this being the virtue, he says, which "brings one closest to God."[52] Yaḥyā's clear avowal of his devotion to the life of reason as the highest human good raises the question of his thought on the relative claims of reason and revelation in the exposition of Christian doctrine. This issue was in fact one which posed considerable difficulties for the new Christian intellectuals of Abbasid Baghdad, as well as for those Muslims of the time who were engaged in the serious study of philosophy.

In the *Colloquy on Sexual Abstinence*, Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī entered into a debate with contemporary Muslim scholars about the place of sexual abstinence among the spiritual exercises proper for the philosophical life. In fact, the issue of acceptable sexual behavior and sexual morality more generally was one of the major, divisive issues between Muslims and Christians, albeit that for the most part it figured in the earlier controversial texts only among the polemical barbs which Christian writers aimed at the Muslims[53] and it had no place in the more doctrinal discussions. Yet on the practical level this issue remained a major one, especially sexual abstinence for religious reasons, and the concern of the new Christian intellectuals for cultivating public and private morality offered them the opportunity to discuss this matter in a forthright way and on the basis of a shared interest in philosophy. As we shall see, it was in the generation after Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī that the 'Nestorian' Elias of Nisibis (975-1046) addressed this same issue in some detail in his *Risālah fī faḍīlat al-ʾafāf*.[54]

IV

In his own time, Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī became the central figure of a philosophical circle in Baghdad which included Muslims as well as Christians of all denominations among his colleagues and disciples.[55] Some of them, like the 'Jacobite' ʿĪsā ibn Zurʿa (943-1008), followed closely in Yaḥyā's wake. He became a public, Christian intellectual like his

master, with an interest in science, philosophy and the systematic defense of Christian doctrines against the challenges of Muslims and Jews, as well as being himself an ardent apologist for the orthodoxy of his own church's 'Jacobite' Christology.[56] But one of the most accomplished Christian intellectuals of the eleventh century in the Islamic milieu was undoubtedly the 'Nestorian' Elias Bar Shinaya, the bishop of Nisibis (975-1046).

Although he was one of the most creative and productive of Christian authors in the Arabic language, Elias of Nisibis has not received nearly as much attention from modern scholars as his works deserve. His bibliography includes a world chronicle, as we mentioned above, numerous treatises, letters and commentaries on all the major topics of interest to Christians, and most of them seem to have enjoyed a wide circulation in medieval times. Born in the year 975, Elias was ordained a priest in the year 994. After a number of years of study in the monastic communities of northern Mesopotamia, notably in and around Mosul, he was consecrated bishop of Bayt Nûhadrâ in the year 1002. Then, on December 26, 1008, Elias was nominated the metropolitan of Nisibis for the 'Nestorian' Church of the East, and from this date, until his death on July 18, 1046, Elias was actively engaged in the task of commending Christian doctrine and practice in Arabic, in response to the multiple challenges of Islam.[57]

Undoubtedly, Elias' most notable work in connection with Christian/Muslim controversy is the one entitled *Kitāb al-majālis*. It is a compendium of Christian apologetics, cast in the literary form of seven accounts of as many conversations on Christian doctrines and other matters between Elias and the vizir Abū l-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī al-Maghribī (981-1027), a notable scholar in his own right, who was in the service of the Buwayhid emir of Diyârbakr and Mayyâfâriqîn, Naṣr ad-Dawlah Aḥmad ibn Marwān, when Elias was metropolitan in nearby Nisibis.[58] The sessions are said to have been held in Nisibis in July of the year 1026, with subsequent meetings in December 1026 and June 1027. In the ensemble, this work, which is still not completely published in a modern critical edition, is a masterpiece of popular, Christian controversial literature in Arabic; it seems to have had a wide circulation among Arab Christian readers well into modern times.[59] But for the present purposes, two other works of Elias of Nisibis will claim our attention, the aforementioned *Treatise on the Virtue of Chastity* and his book *On Dispelling Anxiety*. In these texts Elias joins the ranks of the Christian intellectuals in the caliphate who in dialogue with their Muslim contemporaries promoted the exercises of the philosophical way of life as a humane program for interreligious harmony in the body politic.

Elias of Nisibis' *Kitāb daf' al-hamm*, the Book on Dispelling Anxiety, is in the form of an extended essay of twelve chapters, dedicated to the same vizir, Abū l-Qāsim al-Maghribī, with whom Elias had been in conversation in the sessions reported in the *Kitāb al-majālis*. As a matter of fact, Elias mentioned his work on the text of 'Dispelling Anxiety'[60] in his correspondence with the vizir al-Maghribī, a circumstance which has allowed Samir Khalil Samir to conclude that Elias was busy composing the treatise in August of the year 1027, but that when the vizir died in October of that year the text was still unfinished. In Samir's judgment, Elias fin-

ished the work in November or December of 1027.[61]

Immediately upon the modern publication of Elias' treatise on 'Dispelling Anxiety' in 1902, a colorful controversy developed among scholars about its authenticity as a work of Elias of Nisibis; some, led by the formidable Louis Cheikho, were convinced that its true author was Gregory Abū l-Faraj Bar Hebraeus (1226-1286) and that the text attributed to Elias was but the Arabic version of Bar Hebraeus' well-known Syriac work, *The Book of Laughable Stories*.[62] In fact, as Samir Khalil Samir has shown, Cheikho and his associates were misled on this point by a careless copyist's gloss on a list of Bar Hebraeus' works copied in the sixteenth century. Now, due to Samir's detailed studies, the attribution of the *Kitāb daf' al-hamm* to Elias of Nisibis is once again secure.[63]

In the introduction to the *Kitāb daf' al-hamm*, Elias explains that he was inspired to compose this work as a result of his meditations on the themes raised by the Muslim philosopher Yaʿqūb ibn Isḥāq al-Kindī (ca. 800-ca.867) in his widely-read and very influential essay called, *Risālah fī ḥīlah li daf' al-aḥzān*, or 'The Art of Dispelling Sorrows'.[64] As a matter of fact, a number of other Christian thinkers had also read al-Kindī's work before Elias and at least two of them also wrote works of their own in Arabic on the same subject. Their principal purpose was to introduce Christian religious themes into the consideration of the best means of dispelling anxiety.[65] Elias explains that he composed his treatise on the subject at the insistence of the vizir al-Maghribī, who had requested that he address himself to the topic of the rational management of human anxieties. The point to emphasize in the present context is that in his *Kitāb daf' al-hamm*, Elias of Nisibis, at the request of a Muslim notable, wrote in response to a work on the same topic by a Muslim philosopher, and that in his work Elias, like al-Kindī, appeals to reason as the rightful arbiter not only of one's personal behavior but of public morals as well.

Similarly, in his *Treatise on the Virtue of Chastity*, Elias addresses himself to a subject broached originally by a Muslim author, this time the famed essayist, Abū 'Uthmān 'Amr ibn Bahr al-Jāḥiẓ (777-868). In July 1026, at the time of his first session in the *majlis* of the vizir al-Maghribī, Elias addressed the new treatise to his own brother, Abū Saʿīd Manṣūr ibn ʿĪsā, who was a physician in the entourage of the emir Naṣr ad-Dawlah of Diyārbakr.[66] Abū Saʿīd had read a passage in the famous book *Kitāb al-ḥayawān* in which al-Jāḥiz spoke of a well known eunuch, Abū l-Mubārak aṣ-Ṣābī by name, who had boasted that throughout his long life, in spite of his emasculation, he never ceased to be aroused by the longing for women. In his book, al-Jāḥiẓ recalled the story to support his contention that lifelong sexual continence is impossible. Furthermore, he argued that such a practice is against God's will. He said,

> God, who is most compassionate toward His creatures and most just toward His servants, is too exalted to encumber them with foregoing anything He had bestowed on their hearts and confirmed.[67]

Disturbed by this argument, Abū Saʿīd wrote to his brother, the metropolitan of Nisibis, for guidance in regard to al-Jāḥiz' seeming anti-Christian contention and Elias responded with the treatise, 'On the Virtue

of Chastity'. In it he argued systematically, with an appeal to reason and to historical human experience that the virtue of chastity is both possible and even preferable for anyone who would lead a life of reason and the pursuit of wisdom. With this treatise Elias entered a controversy already underway among Muslim philosophers about the requisite degree of the suppression of the natural appetites that could be considered consistent with one's determination to acquire knowledge and to practice virtue, which is to say, to live the philosophical life. For example, one finds this discussion most eloquently put already in Abū Bakr Muḥammad ar-Rāzī's (850-925) *Kitāb as-sīrah al-falsafiyyah*.[68] Here ar-Rāzī defends himself against a charge leveled against him by his adversaries to the effect that his lifestyle was not characterized by a sufficient degree of asceticism and the requisite suppression of the appetitive and irascible desires necessary to qualify him as a true philosopher and disciple of Socrates. Like Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī before him, Elias entered this discussion and argued that the doctrines and practices of Christianity are actually more likely to dispose a person to the life of reason than any other religious allegiance.

V

The new Christian intellectuals of Baghdad in early Abbasid times, who came to prominence in the heyday of the translation movement, made an unprecedented bid to participate in the intellectual life of the larger Islamic society of their day. It was the translation movement itself which provided them with the opportunity. Heretofore, modern scholars have certainly recognized the fact that the opportunity was one which allowed Christians like Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq and his associates to hire out their translation services to Muslim patrons who bought their contributions to Islamic scientific and philosophical interests.[69] But historians have been slower to recognize that these same Christian translators were also building on earlier traditions in their own communities. They used their skills not only to translate, but also to employ philosophical and logical thought in support of their faith commitments and to commend the philosophical life itself as a fruitful development which might provide the social possibility for harmony between Christians and Muslims in the caliphate.

According to Gerhard Endress, "The undisputed master of philosophy for the Christian schools of late Hellenism as well as for the Muslim transmitters of this tradition, was Aristotle: founder of the paradigms of rational discourse, and of a coherent system of the world."[70] This was certainly a point of view shared by a medieval Syriac-speaking chronicler from the 'Jacobite' community about the role of Aristotle among his fellow 'Jacobites' long before Islamic times. At the point in the anonymous Syriac *Chronicon ad Annum Christi 1234 Pertinens* at which the chronicler comes to the discussion of what he calls the 'era of the Greeks', by which he means the time of Alexander the Great (356-323 BC) and his Seleucid successors in the Syriac-speaking frontier lands between the Roman and Persian empires, he has this to say about Aristotle and the importance of his works for the Christians:

> At this time, Aristotle, 'the Philosopher', collected all the scattered kinds of philosophical doctrines and he made of them one great body, thick

> with powerful opinions and doctrines, since he separated the truth from falsehood. Without the reading of the book of logic [*mlîlūthâ*] that he made it is not possible to understand the knowledge of books, the meaning of doctrines, and the sense of the Holy Scriptures, on which depends the hope of the Christians, unless one is a man to whom, because of the excellence of his [religious] practice, the grace of the Holy Spirit is given, the One who makes all wise.[71]

In Abbasid times there were more Christian thinkers interested in the philosophies and sciences of the Greeks than just those Aristotelians among the 'Jacobites and the 'Nestorians' who took their texts and commentaries from the Alexandrian tradition. And there were more Muslims whose philosophical and scientific interests reached well beyond a single-minded devotion to Aristotle. Nevertheless these were the Christian and Muslim philosophers who shaped the intellectual milieu in which Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq and Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī pursued their careers. And just as the Muslims among this generation of philosophers wanted "to vindicate the pursuit of rational activity as an activity in the service of Islam," so did Ḥunayn and Yaḥyā and their Christian associates intend to vindicate with the same philosophy the doctrines and practices of the Christians and the Christology of the 'Nestorians' and the 'Jacobites' respectively.[72]

What one notices as different in the works of Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq, Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, and Elias of Nisibis, by comparison with the works of earlier and contemporary Christian apologists and theologians who wrote in Arabic, is their venture beyond the range of the logical works of Aristotle. The *Organon* and Porphyry's *Eisagoge* had long been used by Christians in the explication of the terms of their various doctrinal formulae and the systematic defense of their several theologies. Ḥunayn, Yaḥyā and the others moved beyond the *Organon* into a larger Aristotelian, philosophical frame of reference which put a premium on the philosophical life itself, on the primacy of reason and the pursuit of happiness not only personally and individually but socially and politically as well. This was a new philosophical horizon for Christians in the east, which under the impetus of the translation movement seems to have opened in the Baghdad intellectual milieu with the importation of Neoplatonic thought into the world of Arabic-speaking Aristotelianism. Perhaps its most eloquent marker is the so-called *Theology of Aristotle*, a paraphrase of portions of Plotinus' *Enneads*, which also included some commentary and a collection of wisdom sayings.[73] Its likely origins in its Arabic dress are probably to be sought in the circle of the Muslim philosopher al-Kindī and his Syrian Christian translators and associates. But the Muslim scholar whose person and works most readily embodied the new intellectual profile was undoubtedly the 'Second Master' (after Aristotle himself), Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (ca.870-950).[74] Among Christian intellectuals, Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī inherited al-Fārābī's mantle.

The Muslim religious establishment came ultimately to distrust the philosophers. In the time frame of our considerations, this distrust was expressed most notably in Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī's (1058-1111) *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*,[75] where his contempt for what he perceived to be the arrogant rationalism of the Muslim philosophers in matters of religious belief and practice is abundantly clear.[76] But among Christians as well, not everyone was

happy with the new direction in Christian intellectual culture which the Baghdad scholars introduced into their world.[77] Evidence for this displeasure is recorded in a work of the late Muʿtazilī scholar, ʻAbd al-Jabbār al-Hamdhānī (d.1025). In the course of his own remarks against the influence of the philosophers, he mentioned Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq and Yaḥyā ibn ʻAdī by name, along with the names of other prominent Christian translators of originally Greek texts into Arabic, whom he accused of helping to subvert the faith of the Muslims by the introduction of the books of Plato, Aristotle and others into Islam. He says these Christian translators were few in number and he says that "they hide under the cover of Christianity, while the Christians themselves do not approve of them."[78] What is more ʻAbd al-Jabbār names a Christian source, the otherwise unknown Yūḥanna al-Qass, a lecturer on Euclid and a student of the *Almagest*, who, according to ʻAbd al-Jabbār, offered this criticism of the Christian translators:

> Those who transmitted these books left out much of their error, and the worst of their coarseness, out of a sense of solidarity with them, and to spare them. They gave them, as it were on loan, Islamic meanings and interpretations which they did not have.[79]

Obviously, Yūḥanna al-Qass did not approve of the solidarity which the Christian philosophers associated with the translation movement felt for Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. How widely this feeling was shared among other Christians of the time is impossible to know at this remove. What we do know is that some modern commentators on the works of the likes of Ḥunayn, Yaḥyā and their colleagues have perceived problems with the relationship between the claims of faith and reason in their thinking. Nevertheless, all are agreed that some prominent Christian intellectuals of Baghdad from the ninth to the eleventh centuries did think for a season that on the basis of reason and the philosophical life, a measure of peaceful *convivencia* between Christians, Muslims and Jews could be attained in the World of Islam they all shared.

NOTES

[1] See Sebastian P. Brock, "The 'Nestorian' Church: A Lamentable Misnomer," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library of the University of Manchester* 78 (1996) 23-35.

[2] See Hans Putman, *L'église et l'islam sous Timothée I (780-823): Étude sur l'église nestorienne au temps des premiers 'Abbāsides, avec nouvelle édition et traduction du dialogue entre Timothée et al-Mahdī* (Beyrouth: Dar el-Machreq Éditeurs, 1975); Harald Suermann, "Timotheos I, +823," in Wassilios Klein (ed.), *Syrische Kirchenväter* (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 2004), pp. 152-167.

[3] See Thomas R. Hurst, "The Syriac Letters of Timothy I (727-823): A Study in Christian Muslim Controversy," (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation; Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 1986 – University Microfilms International, #8613464); Harald Suermann, "Der nestorianische Patriarch Timotheos I. und seine theologischen Briefe im Kontext des Islam," in Martin Tamcke & Andreas Heinz (eds.), *Zu Geschichte, Theologie, Liturgie und Gegenwartslage der syrischen Kirchen* (Studien zur Orientalischen Kirchengeschichte, vol. 9; Münster: Lit Verlag, 2000), pp. 217-230.

[4] See Alphonse Mingana, "Timothy's Apology for Christianity," *Woodbrooke Studies: Christian Documents in Syriac, Arabic and Garshuni; Edited and Translated with a Critical Apparatus* (vol. II; Cambridge: Heffer, 1928), pp. 1-162; *idem*, "The Apology of Timothy the Patriarch before the Caliph al-Mahdī," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library of the University of Manchester* 12 (1928) 137-226.

[5] See Albert van Roey, "Une apologie syriaque attribuée à Elie de Nisibe," *Le Muséon* 59 (1946) 381-397.

[6] See Putman, *L'église et l'islam*.

[7] See Thomas R. Hurst, "The Epistle Treatise: An Apologetic Vehicle: Letter 34 of Timothy I," in H.J.W. Drijvers *et al*. (eds.), *IV Symposium Syriacum 1984: Literary Genres in Syriac Literature* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta, 229; Rome: Pontificium Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1987), pp. 367-382.

[8] For brief descriptions of these letters see Hurst, *The Syriac Letters of Timothy I*, esp. pp. 43-68. See also Sidney H. Griffith, "The Syriac Letters of Patriarch Timothy I and the Birth of Christian *Kalām* in the Muʿtazilite Milieu of Baghdad and Baṣrah in Early Islamic Times," forthcoming in the Gerrit Reinink Jubilee vol. (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta; Leuven: Peeters, 2007).

[9] See Harald Suermann, "Timothy and his Concern for the School of Bašoš," *The Harp* 10 (1997) 51-58.

[10] See Hanna P. J. Cheikho, *Dialectique du langage sur Dieu: Lettre de Timothée I (728-823) à Serge; étude, traduction et édition critique* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1983).

[11] See Sidney H. Griffith, "Patriarch Timothy I and an Aristotelian at the Caliph's Court;" Josef van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra: Eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam* (6 vols.; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1991-1997), vol. III, p. 23.

[12] See Sebastian P. Brock, "Two Letters of the Patriarch Timothy from the Late Eighth Century on Translations from Greek," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 9 (1999) 233-246.

[13] John W. Watt, "Syriac Translators and Greek Philosophy in Early Abbasid Iraq," *The Canadian Society for Syriac Studies Journal* 4 (2004) 15-26, p. 17.

[14] See Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, p. 136.

[15] John Watt, "Grammar, Rhetoric, and the Enkyklios Paideia in Syriac," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 143 (1993) 45-71.

[16] See H.-D. Saffrey, "Le chrétien Jean Philopon et la survivance de l'école d'Alexandrie au VIe siècle," *Revue des Études Grecques* 67 (1954) 396-410.

[17] See Henri Hugonnard-Roche, *La logique d'Aristote du grec au syriaque: Études sur la transmission des textes de l'Organon et leur interprétation philosophique* (Textes et Traditions, no. 9; Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 2004).

[18] See Khalil Georr, *Les catégories d'Aristote dans leurs versions syro-arabes* (Beirut: Institut Français de Damas, 1948), esp. pp. 1-32; Hugonard-Roche, *La logigue d'Aristote*.

[19] See Dimitri Gutas, "Paul the Persian on the Classification of the Parts of Aristotle's Philosophy: A Milestone between Alexandria and Bagdad," *Der Islam* 60 (1983) 231-267; Javier Teixidor, *Aristote en syriaque: Paul le perse, logician du VIe siècle* (Paris: CNRS, 2003).

[20] See G.J. Reinink, "'Edessa Grew Dim and Nisibis Shone Forth': The School of Nisibis at the Transition of the Sixth-Seventh Century," in J.W. Drijvers & A.A. MacDonald (eds.), *Centres of Learning: Learning and Location in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near East* (Studies in Intellectual History, 61; Leiden: Brill, 1995), pp. 77-89; Joel Walker, "The Limits of Late Antiquity: Philosophy between Rome and Iran," *Ancient World* 33 (2002) 45-69; Adam H. Becker, *Fear of God and the Beginning of Wisdom: The School of Nisibis and the Development of Scholastic Culture in Late Antique Mesopotamia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

[21] See Louis Massignon, "La politique islamo-chrétienne des scribes nestoriens de Deir Qunna à la cour de Bagdad au IXe siècle de notre ère," *Vivre et Penser* 2 (1942) 7-14, reprinted in L. Massignon, *Opera Minora* (ed. Y. Moubarac, 3 vols.; Beirut: Dar al-Maaref, 1963), vol. I, pp. 250-257.

[22] See Heinz Herbert Schöffler, *Die Akademie von Gondischapur: Aristoteles auf dem Wege in den Orient* (2nd ed.; Stuttgart: Verlag Freies Geistesleben, 1980).

[23] Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, p. 14.

[24] It is notable that we find scant reference in Christian texts in Syriac and Arabic composed in this period to the works of contemporary Jewish scholars in the same Islamic milieu of Baghdad. For example, in addition to some Arabophone apologetic and polemic writers of the earlier period, Saʿadyah Gaʾōn Yūsuf al-Fayyūmī (882-942), who was a contemporary of noted Christian thinkers such as Abū Bishr Mattā ibn Yūnus (d.940) and Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī (893-974), wrote his famous *Book of Beliefs and Practices* in this period, a book which discussed many of the same topics we find in the works of his Christian coevals, but they make no mention of it. See Samuel Landauer (ed.), *Kitāb al-amānāt wa l'itiqādāt von Sa'adja b. Jūsuf al-Fajjumi* (Leiden: Brill, 1880); Samuel Rosenblatt (trans.), *Saadia Gaon: The Book of Beliefs & Opinions* (Yale Judaica Series; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948).

[25] On Ḥunayn's life and works, see G.C. Anawati, "Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq al-ʿIbādī, Abū Zayd," in Charles Coulton Gillispie (ed.), *Dictionary of Scientific Biography* (vol. 15, supplement, 1: New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1980), pp. 230-234, and Albert Z. Iskandar, "Ḥunayn the Translator," & "Ḥunayn the Physician," in Gillispie, *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, pp. 234-249; Bénédicte Landron, *Chrétiens et musulmans en Irak: Attitudes Nestoriennes vis-à-vis de l'islam* (Études Chrétiennes Arabes; Paris: Cariscript, 1994), pp. 66-71.

[26] See Myriam Salama-Carr, *La traduction à l'époque abbaside: l'école de Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq et son importance pour la tradition* (Paris: Didier, 1990).

[27] A case in point is the recent book published by a Muslim scholar in Saudi Arabia: Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh Dubyān, *Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq: Dirāsah tarīkhiyyah walughawiyyah* (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Malik Fahd al-Wataniyyah, 1993).

[28] For an English translation of portions of Ḥunayn's so-called 'autobiography', see Dwight F. Reynolds *et al*. (eds.), *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 212 pp.

[29] Gerhard Endress, "The Circle of al-Kindī: Early Arabic Translations from the Greek and the Rise of Islamic Philosophy," in Gerhard Endress & Remke Kruk (eds.), *The Ancient Tradition in Christian and Islamic Hellenism: Studies on the Transmission of Greek Philosophy and Sciences* (Leiden: Research School CNWS, School of Asian, African and Amerindian Studies, 1997), p. 50.

[30] Already in the Syriac-speaking tradition, in the context of the doctrinal controversies of the fifth and sixth centuries, historians and chronographers were producing texts in this vein, a development which may well have inspired Muslim authors to buttress their religious claims in the same manner. See, e.g., the studies of Witold Witakowski, *The Syriac Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Maḥrē: A Study in the History of Historiography* (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Semitica Upsaliensia, 9; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1987); Jan J. van Ginkel, *John of Ephesus: A Monophysite Historian in Sixth-Century Byzantium* (Groningen: Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 1995). This tradition continued among Syriac-speaking Christians well into the Middle Ages, with such works as the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian, the *Chronicon ad annum 1234*, and the *Chronicle* of Bar Hebraeus.

[31] See Sidney H. Griffith, "Apologetics and Historiography in the Annals of Eutychios of Alexandria: Christian Self-Definition in the World of Islam," in Rifaat Ebied & Herman Teule (eds.), *Studies on the Christian Arabic Heritage: In Honor of Father Prof. Dr. Samir Khalil Samir* (Eastern Christian Studies, 5; Leuven: Peeters, 2004), pp. 65-89.

[32] See Samir Khalil Samir, "Élie de Nisibe (Iliyyā al-Naṣībī) (975-1046)," Bibliographie du dialogue islamo-chrétien," *Islamochristiana* 3 (1977) 283-284.

[33] Paul Sbath (ed.), *Vingt traités philosophiques et apologétiques d'auteurs arabes chrétiens du IXe au XIVe siècle* (Cairo: H. Friedrich et Co., 1929), p. 186. Ḥunayn's text is republished in a modern, critical edition by Samir Khalil Samir, "Maqālah Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq fī kayfiyyat idrāk ḥaqīqat ad-diyānah," *al-Machriq* 71 (1997) 340-363.

[34] Khalil Samir & Paul Nwyia (ed. & trans.), *Une correspondence islamo-chrétienne entre Ibn al-Munağğim, Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq et Qusṭā ibn Lūqā* (Patrologia Orientalis, tome 40, fasc., 4, no. 185; Turnhout: Brepols, 1981), pp. 686-701.

[35] See Sidney H. Griffith, "Comparative Religion in the Apologetics of the First Christian Arabic Theologians," *Proceedings of the PMR Conference: Annual Publication of the Patristic, Mediaeval and Renaissance Conference*, 4 (1979) 63-87.

[36] See Abdurrahman Badawi (ed.), *Hunain ibn Ishâq: Âdâb al-Falâsifa (Sentences des Philosophes)* (Safat, Koweit: Éditions de l'Institut des Manuscrits Arabes, 1985).

[37] See Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Wisdom Literature in Arabic Translation: A Study of the Graeco-Arabic Gnomologia* (American Oriental Series, vol. 60; New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1975), esp. pp. 38-40.

[38] See Jean Jolivet, "L'idée de la sagesse et sa function dans la philosophie des 4e et 5e siècles," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 1 (1991) 31-65, esp. 45-47.

[39] See Patricia Crone, *God's Rule: Government and Islam; Six Centuries of Medieval Islamic Political Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), pp. 148-196.

[40] Muhsin S. Mahdi, *Alfarabi and the Foundation of Islamic Political Philosophy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001). On the intriguing suggestion that the ninth-century, Christian intellectual Anton of Tagrit could have paved the way for Alfarabi's work, see John W. Watt, "From Themistius to al-Farabi: Platonic Political Philosophy and Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in the East," *Rhetorica* 13 (1995) 17-41.

[41] See Joel L. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam: The Cultural Revival during the Buyid Age* (Leiden: Brill, 1986); Lenn E. Goodman, *Islamic Humanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[42] Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, p. 14. See also G. Endress, "Mattā b. Yūnus (Yūnān) al-Ḳunnā'ī, Abū Bi<u>sh</u>r," in *EI*, new ed., vol. VI, pp. 844-846.

[43] See Gerhard Endress, "Grammatik und Logik: Arabische Philologie und griechischer Philosophie in Widerstreit," in Burkard Mojsisch (ed.), *Sphrachphilosophie in Antike und Mittelalter* (Bochumer Studien zur Philosophie, 3; Amsterdam: Gruner, 1986), pp. 163-299.

[44] See Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam*, pp. 104-139. For a brief survey of the Christian participants in this movement see Khalil Samir, "Rôle des chrétiens dans les renaissances arabes," *Annales de Philosophie de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 6 (1985) 1-31.

[45] See Bayard Dodge (ed. & trans.), *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm: A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture* (2 vols.; New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), vol. II, pp. 631-632 and *sub nominee*; Gerhard Endress, *The Works of Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī: An Analytical Inventory* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1977).

[46] Samir Khalil Samir & Sidney H. Griffith (ed. & trans.), *Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī: The Reformation of Morals* (Eastern Christian Texts, vol. I; Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2002); Vincent Mistrih, "Traité sur la continence de Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī; édition critique," *Collectanea* (no. 16, Études-Documents; Cairo: Studia Orientalia Christiana, 1981); Sidney H. Griffith, "Yaḥyā B. 'Adī's Colloquy on Sexual Abstinence and the Philosophical Life," in James E. Montgomery (ed.), *Arabic Theology, Arabic Philosophy; from the Many to the One: Essays in Celebration of Richard M. Frank* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, 152; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2006), pp. 197-331.

[47] See in particular the numerous studies of Emilio Platti, especially E. Platti, "Yaḥyā b. 'Adī, philosophe et théologien," *MIDEO* 14 (1980), pp. 167-184; *idem*, "Une cosmologie chrétienne," *MIDEO* 15 (1982), pp. 75-118; *idem*, *Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī: théologien chrétien et philosophe arabe; sa théologie de l'incarnation* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, 14; Leuven: Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Departement Orientalistiek, 1983); *idem*, *Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq, Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī: de l'incarnation* (CSCO, vols. 490 & 491; Louvain: Peeters, 1987).

[48] He uses the term in two places in the book, Ibn 'Adī, *The Reformation of Morals*, 2.15 & 5.14, pp. 26 & 106.

[49] Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam*, p. 10, n. 14, defining al-Fārābī's understanding of the term.

[50] Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, following the Neoplatonic tradition he inherited, distinguishes three faculties or powers (*quwā*) in the human soul, which powers he says "are also named souls: the appetitive soul, the irascible soul, and the rational soul." Ibn 'Adī, *The Reformation of Morals*, 2.1, p. 14.

[51] See, e.g., Ibn 'Adī, *Traité sur la continence*, 1.3-4, 65.4, PP. 14 & 37 (Arabic); 65 & 99 (French).

[52] See Ibn 'Adī, *Traité sur la continence*, 33.2-3 & 34.5-7, pp. 25 (Arabic); 81-82 (French).

[53] Christian polemicists often claimed that Muḥammad and Islam encouraged licentious behavior. Typically the topic came up in discussions of the criteria for recognizing the true relition. See, e.g., the listings under this heading in Paul Khoury, *Matériaux pour servir à l'étude de la controverse théologique islamo-chrétienne de langue arabe du VIIIe au XIIe siècle* (4 vols., Religionswissenschaftliche Studien, 11/1-4; Würzburg: Echter Verlag; Altenberge: Telos Verlag), vol. 1, pp. 190-300. See the motif also discussed in Jason Zaborowski, *The Coptic Martyrdom of John of Phanijōit: Assimilation and Conversion to Islam in Thirteenth-Century Egypt* (The History of Christian-Muslim Relations, vol. 3; Leiden: Brill, 2005), esp. pp. 11-31.

[54] The text is edited by George Raḥmah, "Risālah fī faḍīlat al-'afāf li Iīliyyah an-Naṣībīnī," *al-Machriq* 62 (1968) 3-74.

[55] See Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam*, pp. 104-139.

[56] See Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur* (vol. II, Studi e Testi, 133; Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1947), pp. 252-256; Cyrille Haddad, *'Īsā ibn Zur'a: Philosophe arabe et*

apologiste chrétien (Beirut: Dar al-Kalima, 1971); Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam*, pp. 116-123.

[57] On Elias of Nisibis and his works, see G. Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur* (vol. II, Studi e Testi, 133; Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1947), pp. 177-188; Emmanuel-Karim Delly, *La théologie d'Elie bar Šénaya: étude et traduction de ses entretiens* (Studia Urbaniana; Rome: Apud Pontificiam Universitatem Urbanianam de Propaganda Fide, 1957); Bénédicte Landron, *Chrétiens et Musulmans en Irak: Attitudes Nestoriennes vis-à-vis de l'islam*, pp. 112-120. See especially the collected studies of Samir Khalil Samir, *Foi et culture en Irak: Elie de Nisibe et l'Islam* (Variorum Collected Studies Series, 544; Aldershot, Hamps.: Ashgate Publishing, 1996).

[58] See the brief excursus on the vizir and his background in Samir Khalil Samir, "Bibliographie du dialogue islamo-chrétien: Élie de Nisibe (Iliyyā al-Naṣībī) (975-1046)," *Islamochristiana* 3 (1977), p. 259; the article is included in Samir, *Foi et culture en Irak*. See also the excursus on the emir Naṣr ad-Dawlah in Samir Khalil Samir, "Note sur le médecin Zāhid al-'Ulamā', frère d'Elie de Nisibe," *Oriens Christianus* 69 (1985) 168-183, particularly pp. 181-183; reprinted in Samir, *Foi et culture en Irak*, no. V.

[59] For the manuscripts and publishing history of this work, see Samir, *Foi et culture en Irak*, I, pp. 259-267. For its comparison with other works in the same genre see Sidney H. Griffith, "The Monk in the Emir's *Majlis*: Reflections on a Popular Genre of Christian Literary Apologetics in Arabic in the Early Islamic Period," in Hava Lazarus-Yafeh *et al.* (eds.), *The Majlis: Interreligious Encounters in Medieval Islam* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999), pp. 13-65, esp. pp. 48-53.

[60] The full Arabic text is published in Constantin Bacha, *Kitāb daf' al-hamm li Ilīyyā al-Naṣṭūrī muṭrān Naṣībīn* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿah al-Maʿārif, 1902).

[61] See Samir Khalil, "Le 'Dafʿ al-Hamm' d'Elie de Nisibe: Date et circonstances de sa rédaction," *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 18 (1987) 99-119; reprinted in Samir, *Foi et Culture en Irak*, no. IV.

[62] See E.A. Budge, *The Laughable Stories Collected by Mār Gregory John Bar Hebraeus: The Syriac Text Edited with an English Translation* (London: Luzac, 1897).

[63] See Samir Khalil, "Bar Hebraeus, le 'Dafʿ al-Hamm' et les 'Contes Amusants'," *Oriens Christianus* 64 (1980) 136-160; reprinted in Samir, *Foi et culture en Irak*, no. III.

[64] The text is published, with an Italian translation, in H. Ritter & Richard Walzer, "Studi su al-Kindī II: Uno scritto morale inedito di al-Kindī (Temistio *Peri alupias?*)," *Atti della Reale Accademia Nazionale de Lincei* (Memorie della Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Rilologiche, ser. 6, vol. 8; (1938), pp. 5-62; Abdurahman Badawī, *Rasā'il Falsafiyya li al-Kindī wa al-Fārābī wa Ibn Bājja wa Ibn 'Adī* (Beyrouth: Dār al-Andalus, 1973), pp. 6-32. The most recent study, with a translation into French is, Al-Kindī, *Le moyen de chasser les tristesses et autres textes éthiques* (intro. & trans. Soumaya Mestiri & Guillaume Dye, Bibliothèque Maktaba; Paris: Fayard, 2004). An English translation is available by Charles E. Butterworth, "Al-Kindī and the Beginnings of Islamic Political Philosophy," in C.E. Butterworth (ed.), *The Political Aspects of Islamic Philosophy: Essays in Honor of Muhsin S. Mahdi* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 11-60, esp. pp. 32-52.

[65] See Sidney H. Griffith, "The Muslim Philosopher al-Kindī and his Christian Readers: Three Arab Christian Texts on 'The Dissipation of Sorrows'," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 78 (1996) 111-127.

[66] See Samir, "Note sur le médecin Zāhid al-'Ulamā'."

[67] Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-ḥayawān* (vol. I; Cairo: Maktabat Muṣṭfā al-Ḥalabī, 1938), p. 128.

[68] Charles E. Butterworth (trans.), "Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Zakariyyā's *The Book of*

the Philosophic Life," *Interpretation* 20 (1992), pp. 227-257.

[69] See Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, esp. 136-141.

[70] Endress, "The Circle of al-Kindī," in Endress & Kruk, *The Ancient Tradition in Christian and Islamic Hellensim*, p. 52.

[71] I.–B. Chabot (ed.), *Anonymi Auctoris Chronicon ad Annum Christi 1234 Pertinens* (CSCO, vols. 82 & 109); Paris: J. Gabalda, 1920 & Louvain: Imprimerie Orientaliste L. Durbecq, 1952), vol. 81, pp. 104-105 (Syriac), vol. 109, P. 82 (Latin). It is interesting to note the similar line of thinking voiced about the science of logic in Sergius of Resh'ayna's still unpublished introduction to Aristotle's *Categories*: "Without all this neither can the meaning of writings on medicine be grasped, nor can the opinions of the philosophers be known, nor indeed the true sense of the divine scriptures in which the hope of our salvation is revealed—unless a person receive divine power as a result of the exalted nature of his way of life, with the result that he has no need of human training. As far as human power is concerned, however, there can be no other course or path to all the areas of knowledge except by way of training in Logic." Quoted from Becker, *Fear of God and the Beginning of Wisdom*, p. 147, who in turn quoted the passage from Sebastian Brock, *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature* (Moran Etho, 9; Kottayam, Kerala: Saint Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute, 1997), p. 204.

[72] See John W. Watt, "The Strategy of the Baghdad Philosophers: The Aristotelian Tradition as a Common Motif in Christian and Islamic Thought," in J. J. van Ginkel *et al*. (eds.), *Redefining Christian Identity: Cultural Interaction in the Middle East since the Rise of Islam* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, 134; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2005), pp. 151-166.

[73] See F. W. Zimmerman, "The Origins of the So-Called *Theology of Aristotle*," in J. Kraye *et al*. (eds.), *Warburg Institute Surveys and Texts* (XI, Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages; London: Warburg Institute, 1986), pp. 110-240; E.K. Rowson, "The *Theology of Aristotle* and Some Other Pseudo-Aristotelian Texts Reconsidered," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 112 (1992), pp. 478-484; Peter Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus: A Philosophical Study of the Theology of Aristotle* (London: Duckworth, 2002).

[74] See I.R. Netton, *Al-Farabi and His School* (Arabic Thought and Culture Series; London & New York: Routledge, 1992).

[75] See al-Ghazālī, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers: A Parallel English-Arabic Text* (trans. Michael E. Marmura; Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1997).

[76] See Ebrahim Moosa, *Ghazālī and the Poetics of Imagination* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), esp. pp. 172-176, 200-208.

[77] Interestingly, even prior to the rise of Islam, and in the very early Islamic period, there was some tension among the East Syrians between the academic philosophers in the 'Nestorian' school system and the more spiritually inclined scholars of the monastic communities. See Becker, *Fear of God and the Beginning of Wisdom*, pp. 178-194.

[78] 'Abd al-Jabbār ibn Aḥmad al-Hamdhānī, *Tathbīt dalā'il an-nubuwwah* (2 vols., ed. 'Abd al-Karīm 'Uthmān; Beirut: Dār al-'Arabiyyah, 1966), vol. I, p.76; see also pp. 75-76 & 192-193.

[79] 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt dalā'il an-nubuwwah*, vol. I, p. 76.

MONASTERIES AND CHURCHES OF THE QALAMUN (SYRIA): ART AND PILGRIMAGE IN THE MIDDLE AGES[1]

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The mountainous area to the north of Damascus, known as the Qalamun (Djebel Qalamūn), has long been a Christian stronghold in the predominantly Muslim Middle East (fig. 1; all figures are by the author, unless mentioned otherwise).[2] Traditionally, the majority of the Qalamun's Christians were adherents to the Byzantine Orthodox (Melkite) Church, living in places such as Saydnaya, Maᶜarat Saydnaya, Maᶜalula, Yabrud, Qara and Deir Attiya. The Syrian Orthodox Church was well established in Nebk, Qaryatain and Sadad in the eastern part of the Qalamun, owned two monasteries here (Deir Mar Musa and Deir Mar Elian), and had bishoprics in Damascus[3] and Sadad.[4] With the increasing importance of the Greek Catholic Church in Damascus and its surroundings in the eighteenth century, the denomination of several Melkite monasteries and churches changed from Greek Orthodox to Greek Catholic.[5] In the next century the two West Syrian monasteries were transferred to the Syrian Catholic Church.

This study aims at giving the initial impetus to reconstructing the Christian landscape of the Qalamun through the ages. We do, however, have to realise that this intention is ambitious, as it requires a systematic survey of the area and a detailed analysis of the ancient buildings combined with a study of relevant literary sources. With this limitation in mind, our point of departure will be the situation in the decades before and during the Crusader era (1099-1291), focussing in particular on two interrelated subjects that in recent years have raised scholarly interest: the flourishing of church art in the Qalamun, and the impact of pilgrimage, in particular to the Monastery of Our Lady in Saydnaya.

1. HISTORY

The Christians of the Qalamun lived in the shadow of the events that rocked the Levant from time to time, yet they lived close enough to Damascus and the Crusader states to experience the consequences of political and socio-economic changes, with their advantages or disadvantages. From 970 onwards, Damascus fell under the authority of the Fatamids in Cairo. The foundation of the Latin states around 1100 did not really pose

a threat to the Emirate of Damascus. Nur ad-Din succeeded where the Crusaders had failed; he took Damascus in 1158. Saladin's capture of Jerusalem and the rural areas of the Kingdom of Jerusalem in 1187 resulted in a certain détente between the contesting parties. Under the Ayyubids (1174-1249) commerce and cultural life flourished. Damascus was a junction on the trade routes connecting all quarters of the Islamic world and the Crusader states and apparently the indigenous Christians benefited from these favourable conditions as well.

In Damascus too, the Melkites formed the predominant Christian minority. By contrast, for the Syrian Orthodox this city was of minor importance. The Muslim authorities had imposed restrictions on the number of churches within the city walls, reducing it to a maximum of fifteen. This amount the Christians had to share with the Jews, who had one synagogue. According to Ibn ᶜAsakir (shortly before 1169), most of the Damascene churches were either ruined or turned into mosques.[6] Two buildings were still in use: the Melkite Cathedral of al-Mariamiya (St Mary's), which the Spanish Muslim Ibn Jubayr found decorated with 'remarkable pictures that amaze the mind and dazzle the gaze' in 1184,[7] and a Syrian Orthodox church near Bab Tuma. The restrictions did not apply to churches outside the city walls, like those of St Paul and St George. The latter was mentioned as a property of the Monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai in a letter of Pope Honorius III to Abbot Simeon of this convent from 1217.[8]

In the mid-thirteenth century, the political and military balance in Syria changed dramatically due to the Mongol invasions. On 17 February 1260, the Mongol army headed by General Kitbuqa entered Damascus in the presence of its allies, the Armenian king and the Latin Prince of Antioch.[9] Many Mongols were adherents of the East Syrian Church, which helps to explain why the Christians of the cities that they conquered were occasionally spared. Feeling strengthened by this changed state of affairs, Damascene Christians went in public procession through the streets on 31 August. Their joy was premature: three days later the Mamluks defeated the Mongol contingent at Ain Jalud. The Muslims retaliated upon the Christians by demolishing the cathedral and the Syrian Orthodox church.[10] Soon after, the cathedral was rebuilt, but it was destroyed again in 1400. Not a single post-medieval source alludes to adorned churches inside Damascus. If there were any murals left, they must have disappeared during the anti-Christian clashes in the summer of 1860. Many Christians perished when their quarter in between Bab Tuma and Bab Sharqi was sacked and burned down.[11] The houses and churches were reconstructed or replaced in the next years, and this was done so thoroughly that next to nothing of the old architecture survived.

Turning back to the Middle Ages, soon after the defeat of the Mongols, the Mamluks started a series of campaigns against the Crusaders, ending with the fall of Tripoli in 1289 and Acre in 1291. With the favourable attitude of the Damascene Christian population towards the Mongols in mind, the new rulers had good reasons to suspect the indigenous Christians of being the natural allies of their fellow believers from the West and East. The assault of Qara in 1266 illustrates the perceptibly deteriorating situation (see below), and symbolises the end of the flourishing Christian renaissance in West Syria.

2. THE MONASTERY OF SAYDNAYA

The most famous Christian monument of the Qalamun is the Greek Orthodox Monastery of Our Lady in Saydnaya, situated about 30 km to the north of Damascus (figs 1, 2). The main reason for its celebrity was a miraculous icon known as the *Chaghoura*, Syriac for 'The Illustrious', 'Celebrated', or 'Renowned'. The earliest sources on the convent and the cult of the *Chaghoura* are from the final quarter of the twelfth century. From this moment on the information is abundant, since visitors have left us their memories in travel reports, which today are essential for research on the history of the site and the tradition of the icon and its cult.[12] Allegedly, the convent was founded by the Emperor Justinian in A.D. 547. The icon is also said to date from this period, but so far few efforts have been undertaken to substantiate these apocryphal allegations on the basis of literary traditions and the surviving remains of ancient buildings.

2.1. THE CULT OF THE *CHAGHOURA*

The absence of historical sources on the monastery and the icon from before the later twelfth century is all the more remarkable because the earliest writings reveal astonishing details of what appears to be a centuries-old and vibrant tradition of pilgrimage to Saydnaya's convent. The first reference occurs in the account of Burchard of Strassbourg, Emperor Frederick Barbarossa's ambassador at the court of Saladin, who visited Saydnaya around 1175: 'In this church twelve virgin nuns and eight monks devoutly serve God and the Blessed Virgin. In this church I saw a wooden panel measuring one el long and half an el wide, placed behind the altar in an embrasure in the wall of the sanctuary guarded by an iron grille. On this panel a likeness of the Blessed Virgin had once been painted, but now, wondrous to relate, the picture on wood has become incarnate and oil, smelling sweeter than balsam, unceasingly flows from it. By which oil many Christians, Saracens and Jews are often cured of ailments.... To this place on the feast of the Assumption of the glorious Virgin and on that of her Nativity all the Saracens of that province flock to pray together with the Christians, and the Saracens perform their devotions there with great reverence'.[13]

Burchard's account of the inter-religious veneration of the Virgin of Saydnaya during the feasts of the Assumption (15 August) and Nativity (8 September) astonishes, but finds support in 'History of Churches and Monasteries', a fourteenth-century compilation of Arabic texts attributed to the Coptic priest, Abū al-Makārim, and composed of material collected between 1171 and about 1210. The author discusses in detail the icon and its miraculous oil production, and quotes a priest from the monastery: 'On this day gather to this place Christians, Muslims, Nestorians, Melkites, Syrians, and others, approximately four or five thousand people'.[14] Obviously, the incarnation of the icon fascinated believers irrespective of their religion. The persisting attraction that Saydnaya has held for Christians and Muslims until our own times strengthens the credibility of these accounts.

Evidently, these sources bear witness to a tradition of uncertain age, which may at first have been local, but which seems to have expanded to an international level from

the late twelfth century onwards. In 1186, holy oil from Saydnaya was brought to Europe for the first time. In the previous year, an exchange of prisoners of war took place. Among the western prisoners released was the Templar Walter of Marengiers, who, on his way to Jerusalem, had obtained a bottle of oil when passing through Saydnaya. Shortly thereafter, Guido Chat brought a portion of this oil to the Abbey of Altavaux (Haute-Vienne, France), and also revealed all details of the *Chaghoura* and its miraculous workings to the French monks.[15] This was the beginning of the western interest in Saydnaya and the involvement of the Knights Templar in promoting the cult of the *Chaghoura.*[16] By the fourteenth century, the cult was so popular in the West that European travellers continued visiting the place despite the loss of the Crusader states, a tradition that would continue for centuries.

The *Chaghoura* was either held to have been painted by St Luke, or brought by a monk from Jerusalem or Constantinople in the sixth century. In spite of the anecdotal nature of these stories and the obscure history of the cult, the icon itself had already reached a venerable age by the late twelfth century. The arguments for this are testimonies about the eroded appearance of the image reported by Abū al-Makārim and several fourteenth-century westerners. Abū al-Makārim alleges that just a few spots of reddish paint had survived.[17] His words are echoed by Wilhelm von Boldensele, who was in the monastery in 1333: 'Behind the high altar of the church there is on view [set in] the wall a certain panel which is completely black and damp. It is said that the likeness of the glorious Virgin was formerly depicted on it, but on account of its age no trace of a design is visible, except that it seemed to me that in one part of it some vestige of red colouring might be discerned.'[18] Ludolph von Suchem (approx. 1350) also saw the red traces, and left us more details on what had originally been represented: '(…) behind the altar, in a semicircular arch in the wall, there is a figure of the blessed Mary suckling her child, painted from the waist upwards upon a wooden tablet, and fenced with iron bars; but the painting is so black with age and kisses that one can scarce make out that it was a figure, beyond that a little red colour can still be seen in the clothing'.[19]

The suggested depiction of the suckling Virgin should be seen in light of the claim that the healing oil which had made the *Chaghoura* so famous had flowed from her incarnated breasts. This detail was mentioned already in Guy Chat's account and in the inventory of the Abbey of Altavaux, to which he donated a phial of oil.[20] In this matter, Ludolph must have relied on an existing tradition rather than his own observations, since by his own account he did not see more than the same red traces remarked by his predecessors.

The motif of the Virgin suckling the Child is known as Maria *Lactans* or Virgin *Galaktotrophousa*. Westerners such as Ludolph may have been familiar with this variant, since it had become popular in European art from the second half of the thirteenth century onwards.[21] However, the tradition of the suckling Virgin is rooted in the Middle East. A grotto near the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem was believed to be the place where the Virgin fed the Child, and was known as early as the late seventh century.[22] Powdered limestone from this site was said to be dried milk, and found its way to the West in the luggage of returning pil-

grims. The iconography of the suckling Virgin can also be traced back to pre-Islamic times, when it was depicted in Egypt and Palestine.[23] Thirteenth-century representations embellish the Church of Sts Sergius and Bacchus in Qara to the northeast of Saydnaya (fig. 8), and the Cave Chapel of Sayyidat Naya at Kfar Schleiman in Lebanon.[24] Thus on further consideration the interpretation of the *Chaghoura* as a depiction of the Virgin *Galaktotrophousa* may well be less far-fetched than it might appear. Anecdotal stories about the nature of the image may have travelled to the West together with the phials filled with holy oil.

Though the *Chaghoura* is still purported to exist, this claim is nevertheless impossible to verify, since scholars have no access to the icon. It is said to be kept in a metal box inside the Chapel of al-ᶜAdra, an annex at the south side of the apse of the present church. Some believe that the *Chaghoura* was lost centuries ago, a suspicion nourished by the stipulation that only the bishop and the abbess of the monastery are allowed to see it.

2.2. THE CHURCH

None of the medieval sources reveals anything about the presence of wall paintings or other icons inside the church. Naturally, the pilgrims' eyes were mainly focused on the *Chaghoura*, which after all was the reason for their visit. One exception is Niccolò da Poggibonsi, who was on pilgrimage between 1345 and 1350. He furnishes surprisingly accurate details about the churches of the Holy Land and their decoration, and of the church of 'Sardinale' he states that it had three naves with twelve columns. The *Chaghoura* was placed in a window or niche with iron bars, about four feet above floor level, behind the large altar.[25] The same basilical design, with two rows of six columns, was described earlier by Jacopo da Verona (1335).[26]

Two later accounts, however, differ fundamentally from these fourteenth-century observations. The Ukrainian monk, Vasily Grigorovich Barsky, in Saydnaya in 1728, counted four rows of five columns supporting vaults in a church with five naves.[27] Thus the church must have been a basilical construction consisting of a nave with two aisles at each side. One might be inclined to believe that Barsky was referring to an entirely different building than Verona and Poggibonsi, but his words are confirmed by the British traveller, Dean Richard Pococke, who came to Saydnaya in 1737 and also describes the church as being 'ruined and repaired.'[28] Barsky also furnishes interesting details about the eastern part of the church. He noticed a stone altar below a canopy with four marble columns, some large candleholders containing candles, an iconostasis with a veil, and floor mosaics.[29] Since floor mosaics are characteristic of many early Byzantine churches in the Middle East, it may be suggested that the monastery was indeed the Justinian foundation claimed by tradition.

The church was damaged during an earthquake in 1759 and restored three years later. More radical changes occurred after the aforementioned riots against Christians in 1860, which left many churches in Lebanon and Syria ruined. It does not seem very likely, however, that the monastery suffered directly from this event. The Prussian consul, Johann Gottfried Wetzstein, summarizes the destructions that occurred in the Damascus area. Concerning Saydnaya he only re-

ports on the attacks on nearby Maᶜalula and Maᶜarat Saydnaya, forcing its populations to find shelter in the Monastery of Our Lady.[30] Because of its fortress-like construction, the convent appears to have been secure enough to be spared the worst. After the situation had calmed down, many damaged churches were restored or completely rebuilt. Apparently this campaign was considered a good juncture to renovate the monastery and replace the church with a new building. In 1883 Emmanuel-Guillaume Rey wrote that the chapel incorporated into the modern building was the only surviving part of the ancient church. Moreover, the mosaics that Barsky saw were still visible at that time.[31] Actually, the Chapel of al-ᶜAdra measures about 6 m wide and 5 m deep, is semicircular and covered over with a semi-dome, and therefore has all characteristics of the apse of a fairly large basilica. Being the most holy place of the site, it was kept in honour and renovated only superficially.

The chapel is not the only part of the church that was spared. Visitors enter the sanctuary through a small apsed room to its south. As with other sections of the outer wall, architectural elements belonging to earlier building phases are discernable from the outside (figs 2, 3). Renovation work in the room in 1999 revealed a Syriac inscription near the south entrance and a painting fragment on the west wall to its left. Unfortunately, with the incorrect association of Syriac with the Syrian Orthodox Church in mind, the convent's nuns had the inscription removed immediately after its discovery, but the painting remained visible until recently. It was possible to pick out details of an archangel (fig. 4).[32] These traces do not allow a reliable stylistic analysis, but a provisional dating to the late twelfth or thirteenth century is plausible. Modest though this surviving fragment is, its presence supports the hypothesis of an integral decoration programme in the first church similar to those in other monastic churches in the Qalamun (see below).

3. OTHER ADORNED MONUMENTS IN AND NEAR SAYDNAYA

It seems that the restrictions on the amount of churches allowed in Damascus did not apply to places outside Syria's capital. In 1697 Henry Maundrell counted no less than sixteen sanctuaries in Saydnaya, but these buildings were already in a bad state by then.[33] Post-medieval reports allude to paintings in the churches of St John, St Barbara, St Saba, the Prophet Elijah, St Babylas, St Nicholas, the Convent of St Thomas near Saydnaya, and in a ruined sanctuary near the road to Damascus.[34] Although these sanctuaries have been modernized, a survey may well be rewarding. Indeed, poorly preserved fragments can be seen in the Church of Saint John the Baptist and the Greek Catholic Church of St Sophia. In the first building two antique columns were embellished, perhaps in the twelfth or thirteenth century. One recognizes Christ holding an open book with a few Greek letters, and traces of the coat of mail of a standing warrior saint.[35] In the modern Church of St Sophia is a niche that is in fact a doorway to its adjoining medieval predecessor, which has fallen into disrepair and is hermetically sealed. The sidewalls of the doorway reveal fragments of a prophet (Elijah?) and Daniel, who is identified by the Greek inscription Δ[ΑΝΙ]ΗΛ (figs 5, 6). A detailed analysis is hampered because in modern times the decayed scenes have been repainted, but by

their style it can be estimated that they were made in the thirteenth century.

The best-preserved decoration is in the Cave Chapel of the Prophet Elijah (Mar Elias) in Maᶜarat Saydnaya, about 6 km to the southeast of the monastery. This cave was held to be the place where Elijah hid in the desert near Damascus from the troops of his persecutor, Queen Jezebel, and where he anointed Elisha (I Kings 19:15). Hoof prints sculpted in the rock recall Elijah's ascension into heaven on his chariot drawn by fiery horses. Here we find a representation of this biblical event, which has been dated to the eleventh century, and a series of paintings from the late twelfth century or first half of the thirteenth century, thus contemporary to the expansion of the cult of the *Chaghoura*.[36] The lower zone shows a procession of prelates with the Virgin and a deacon surrounding the altar, while the upper zone preserves parts of three anonymous saints and the Virgin of the Deisis. A large niche in the north wall is adorned with several saints, including Demetrius, George and Nicholas, and the Virgin Enthroned with the Child on her lap (fig. 7). The style of these paintings reveals the hand of a Cypriot artist, who apparently could work in the Qalamun without any problems, even though this part of Syria was firmly in Muslim hands.

Like the Monastery of Our Lady, the Chapel of Mar Elias is frequented by adherents of different Churches and Muslims, who come here to venerate the enigmatic wise man al-Khidr, identified with the Prophet Elijah.[37] The age of this interconfessional cult is uncertain. Alfred von Kremer witnessed the celebration of St Elijah's feast on 1 August 1850, and describes the massive arrival of Damascene Christians and Muslims. Some stayed overnight to visit the Monastery of Our Lady, others headed home on their donkeys, after consuming their fill of the excellent wine of the region.[38] Yet in view of the interreligious cult of Saydnaya, the tradition of shared veneration may well have been much older.

The Middle East is blessed with many grottoes claiming to be Elijah's dwelling place, with the Cave of Elijah on Mount Carmel as the best-known instance. All were important pilgrim destinations. In Jewish and Muslim circles in Greater Syria, the cult of Elijah/al-Khidr was very popular, especially in the vicinity of Damascus.[39] The earliest account of his double identity in connection with a sheltering cave here is attributed to Kaᶜb al-Ahbar, a Jew who converted to Islam in 636. At least from the twelfth century onwards, Damascus had a mosque, several oratories and shrines dedicated to al-Khidr. Moreover, the thirteenth-century Muslim theologian al-Harawi writes about a place near Aleppo where many prophets were buried, including al-Khidr. Here votive offerings were made by Muslims, Jews and Christians.[40]

It is doubtful whether Jews participated in the veneration of the *Chaghoura*—as Burchard of Strassbourg suggests—and the Chapel of Mar Elias. They had their own 'Cave of Elijah' in Jubar, less than 2 kilometres from Bab Tuma. It was accessible through the synagogue, the building history of which Jubar's Jews traced back to the prophet himself.[41] The earliest references are to be found in the accounts of Rabbi Pethachia from Regensburg (1178) and Samuel ben Samson (ca 1210). It is significant that Arab-speaking Damascene Jews called their prophet al-Khidr as well.

Concerning medieval Muslim sources

on the Elijah/al-Khidr tradition of the Damascus area, Ibn ᶜAsakir (d. 1176) briefly mentions a cave where the prophet hid in the mountains north of the city.[42] Yet the most intriguing passage can be found in the journal of Ibn Jubayr, who stayed in Damascus in the summer of 1184. He lists a number of holy places near Mount Qasiyūn to the north of Damascus: 'At the edge of this mountain, where the western plain with its gardens comes to an end, is the blessed hill mentioned in the book of God Most High as being the dwelling of the Messiah and his mother (…). It is one of the most remarkable sights of the world for beauty, elegance, height, and perfection of construction, for the embellished plasterwork, and for the glorious site. It is like a towering castle, and one climbs to it by steps. The blessed dwelling is a grotto in its middle, like a small chamber, and beside it is another room said to be the oratory of al-Khidr (…). Men hasten forward to pray at those blessed spots, especially in the blessed dwelling. This has an iron door that closes on it. The mosque encloses the hill, where there are circular paths and a fountain than which no more beautiful can be seen.'[43]

One cannot resist the temptation to relate this admiring description to the Monastery of Our Lady in Saydnaya. An argument for this daring identification is the Chapel of Mar Elias and its inter-religious cult, but there is another potential candidate: the Cave Chapel of St George near the Monastery of St George to the south of the Monastery of Our Lady. St George too is an alter ego of al-Khidr, and this oratory also attracts Christians and Muslims alike seeking for *baraka* ('blessing') up till the present. Be that as it may, even though it is hardly possible to establish which oratory Ibn Jubayr saw, it is reasonable that the al-Khidr cult also flourished in Saydnaya alongside that of the *Chaghoura* for centuries.

3. QARA

In Saydnaya's Melkite hinterland, the urge for renovation has erased almost all murals. Scarce traces testify to the church of the Greek Catholic Monastery of Sts Sergius and Bacchus in Maᶜalula being once decorated.[44] The situation is, however, more favourable in Qara, situated along the ancient road connecting Damascus with Homs. Two embellished Christian buildings testify to this village's thriving Melkite culture in the Middle Ages: the Church of Sts Sergius and Bacchus inside the village, and a few kilometres to the west of the present agglomeration, Deir Mar Yaᶜqub (Monastery of St James the Persian; fig. 1). The most dramatic event in Qara's history occurred in the first years of the Mamluk campaigns against the Crusaders. In September 1266, a Muslim force installed outside the village heard rumours about the inhabitants having sold Muslim slaves to the Crusader contingent of Crac des Chevaliers. When a delegation of monks from Deir Mar Yaᶜqub came to the camp to offer presents and food they were captured. The soldiers did not take half measures: the monastery was destroyed and the monks and a number of villagers were massacred. Others escaped or were led away in slavery, and the early Byzantine Church of St Nicholas was turned into a mosque, which it still is today.[45] Soon a Muslim population filled in the empty village, but in the course of time Christians returned. In 1465 the Russian merchant Basil found Qara populated with Christians again, whereas monks and Qara's metropolitan, Macarius,

were living nearby, presumably in the monastery.[46]

Today Qara still houses Greek Catholics and Greek Orthodox. After the collapse of the Church of St George in the nineteenth century, the only sanctuary with a medieval origin within the city is the Church of Sts Sergius and Bacchus. Its fragmented murals were restored in the 1960s. All that remains is the upper half of five scenes fixed on the north wall.[47] The central image is that of the aforementioned Virgin *Galaktotrophousa* below a decorated arcade, flanked by the equestrian saints Theodore to the left and Sergius to the right (figs 8, 9). To the extreme left remains part of a depiction of a female saint, to the extreme right St John the Baptist. Noteworthy is that the saints' names are written in Greek and vertical *Estrangela* alike. Sts Sergius and Theodore are dressed with a coat of mail (mail hauberk) worn over a long-sleeved tunic, are crowned, and hold a lance and a round shield, which is abundantly beaded and adorned with precious stones. In addition, St Sergius carries a red-crossed white banner, an attribute generally associated with the Crusaders. We will consider this typical element further below.

Although some parts of Deir Mar Yaᶜqub's architecture testify to the antiquity of this monastery, history is silent on this complex until the events of 1266. The age of the dedication to St James the Mutilated remains a question as well; the oldest reference known is to be found in the colophon of an Arabic gospel from 1476/77 written by the Priest Yuwakim from this monastery.[48] Simultaneously, this source confirms Basil's allusion to the return of Christians, but in the next centuries it had its ups and downs. Deir Mar Yaᶜqub was attacked again in the early seventeenth century, and in 1737 Pococke found the convent entirely ruined.[49] With the installation of the Greek Catholic Church in the Qalamun after 1724 it fell under the jurisdiction of the Greek Catholic Patriarchate in Damascus.

In 1970, the prospects of renovation of the then still ruined church were nil. Concerned about the preservation of the visible fragments of murals, the responsible authorities decided upon their detachment. They found new, temporary, homes in the Archaeological Museum of nearby Deir Attyia and the Museum of Antiquities in Damascus. About two decades later, renovation started to make the monastery suitable for the accommodation of a community of nuns. This included the uncovering and restoring of the remaining fragments by the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Damascus and the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums in Damascus. Photographs taken before the detaching of the 'museum fragments' enabled the German scholar Stephan Westphalen to determine their original setting. Recently, these pieces returned to their original home, and, awaiting resettlement, they are exhibited in a room near the church. In anticipation of their future restoration, an additional number of detached and deteriorated fragments are also stored in the monastery.[50]

On a regional level the construction of the church building is unique, inasmuch as it consists of an upper and a lower church sharing the same apse construction. The earliest decoration in the upper apse consists of enthroned apostles with Greek inscriptions, executed in reddish colours on a white background (fig. 10). These figures still have to be studied, but for their simplicity they can be assigned to another artist than the one who decorated the nave of the lower church.

Represented in the southwest corner are scenes from the Life of Christ, including the Baptism, the Cleansing of the Temple and some miracles. On the south side of the triumphal arch is a saint holding a circular object in his right hand. Westphalen's stylistic analysis reveals analogies with Byzantine art from the first half of the eleventh century.[51]

At a certain point both churches were repainted, in all likelihood by the same local workshop or artist that decorated the Church of Sts Sergius and Bacchus. In the apse of the upper church remain fragments of frontally depicted saints, of whom St Nicholas is identified by his name written in Greek and vertical *Estrangela* (fig. 11). The 'museum fragments' originated from the lower apse. There, the upper zone contained a Deisis with two archangels, the twelve apostles and two prophets or kings, the one to the extreme right being Solomon. The lower zone bears the images of Church Fathers, such as Sts Gregory, Athanasius, John of Alexandria, and James. In between them was a Virgin *Blachernitissa* (now in storage). The thematic disposition on the triumphal arch focussed on Old Testament scenes with a Eucharistic connotation. To the right is Moses Receiving the Law, and very likely the Sacrifice of Isaac was represented on its opposite. As in the village church, mounted saints dominated the sidewalls of the nave. Recognizable are traces of a reddish horse heading toward the apse in the centre of the south wall and, further to the west, a fragment of a greyish mail hauberk.

The chronology of the most recent paintings follows from their stylistic and iconographic kinship with murals in Deir Mar Musa (see below) and wall paintings and icons made in the Tripoli area in Lebanon. They would have been painted later than the most recent murals in Deir Mar Musa from 1208/9 (see below) but prior to the dramatic event of 1266.[52]

4. THE SYRIAN ORTHODOX

The eastern part of the Qalamun was populated with Syrian Orthodox Christians, who had two monasteries here: Deir Mar Musa (Monastery of St Moses) near Nebk and Deir Mar Elian (Monastery of St Elian) near Qaryatain. Today both are inhabited by Syrian Catholic communities, whereas the population of the village of Sadad is still Syrian Orthodox. For its paintings, Deir Mar Musa belongs to the most important archaeological sites of the Christian Middle East. So far, no murals have been found in Deir Mar Elian, but judging from the remains near the present complex the site has a long history.[53]

Deir Mar Musa is situated in a remote valley across the mountains to the east of Nebk, and is mentioned as early as the sixth century.[54] Building inscriptions in Arabic commemorate the rebuilding of the church in A.D. 1058/1059, shortly after which the walls were adorned for the first time. The convent led a sorry existence until a Syrian Catholic community under the guidance of Father Paolo dall'Oglio re-occupied the site in the 1980s. Their perseverance revitalized the monastery and turned it into a widely reputed spiritual centre. As the renovation of the buildings that had fallen into disrepair also required the restoration of the medieval paintings inside the church, a conservation campaign was set up by the Istituto del Restauro in Rome and the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums in Damascus, whose due intervention brought the images back to life.[55]

The fortress-like complex is built on a protruding rock overlooking the valley. The choice of this isolated place was not haphazard; here rainwater found its way down to the plain from the mountains and the construction of a well gave the inhabitants access to abundant water. The church is located at the north side of the complex. Its decoration appears as a puzzling patchwork of scenes and inscriptions on successive plaster coverings or directly on older images, and extends over the nave, the apse, and the two aisles. Arabic inscriptions furnish clues to the chronology of three main layers and the names of two artists. The first layer was painted shortly after the renovation of the mid-eleventh century (Layer 1), the second dates from A.D. 1095 (Layer 2), and the third from A.D. 1208/9 (Layer 3).

Part of Layer 1 can still be seen in both aisles and includes Samson Killing the Lion (south aisle; fig. 12), the angel of the Baptism of Christ (north aisle) and colourful ornaments, all painted in reddish and yellowish colours mainly on a white background. Inside the nave, details of this layer are visible on spots where later paintings have flaked off. On the side elevations one distinguishes the Ascension of the Prophet Elijah and fragments of the mounted saints George and Theodore. Traces of half-naked figures on the triumphal arch have been identified as the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste with the bust of the Archangel Michael (fig. 13). In A.D. 1095 an artist called Hunayn (diminutive of John) repainted several earlier New Testament scenes on the extremities of the aisles: the Baptism of Christ, the Presentation in the Temple (fig. 14), and the Three Women at the Empty Grave (Layer 2). The third painting campaign took place in A.D. 1208/9 (Layer 3). In a dated Arabic inscription the artist presented himself as Sarkis (Sergius). He decorated the entire nave and the apse. Noticeable are the Annunciation and Christ between the apostles on the triumphal arch, a Deisis-Vision and the Virgin *Blachernitissa* in between Church Fathers in the apse, and six mounted saints and the four evangelists on the sidewalls. Sarkis' masterpiece is a huge Last Judgement scene according to Byzantine fashion on the west wall. Among the represented riders are Sts George and Theodore as well as Sts Sergius and Bacchus. As in Qara, both hold a crossed banner, which is white with a red cross in the case of St Sergius and red with a white cross in that of St Bacchus (figs 15, 16).

As for this standard, direct Latin influence can be excluded since the Qalamun was never incorporated in any of the Crusader states. Rather, it demonstrates the significant interaction between Qalamun's Christians and their fellow believers within the neighbouring County of Tripoli (Melkites, Maronites, and to a lesser extent Syrian Orthodox). There, mounted banner-carriers are also depicted in churches in Deddé and Eddé al-Batrun, whereas two icons representing St Sergius with the banner in St Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai are attributed to artists working in this Crusader state.[56] Deir Mar Musa's Layer 3 also shares striking formal characteristics with murals in the County of Tripoli and the paintings in Qara. This 'Syrian style' typifies the indigenous art of West Syria, and gives proof to flourishing artistic activities aiming at the embellishment of churches used by local communities. Inspiration for the iconography was found in the persisting oriental tradition, and contemporary Byzantine and Crusader art.

Turning to the inscription languages in Deir Mar Musa, the many contemporary dedicative and commemorative inscriptions are in Arabic, the *lingua franca* of the time. Surprisingly, the names of saints and scenes of Layer 1 are not in Syriac but in Greek, except for the name of the Archangel Michael on the triumphal arch, which is also written in vertical *Estrangela*. Layer 2 contains some Greek abbreviations, but Layer 3 is inscribed in Syriac (vertical *Serto*). The Syrian Orthodox shared this linguistic shift with their neighbouring Melkite fellow believers, even though the inscriptions in Qara are bilingual and the only Syriac inscription of Saydnaya has been erased. As a liturgical language, Syriac certainly gained ground in thirteenth-century West Syria. It is true that from the late twelfth century onwards, paintings in the Melkite churches of the County of Tripoli bore Greek inscriptions, but those in the Church of Sts Sergius and Bacchus near the Monastery of Kaftun, are in both horizontal *Estrangela* and Greek.[57] On the other hand, Syriac predominates in contemporary Maronite churches as well as in the Church of St Theodore in Bahdeidat near Jbeil, which had a Syrian Orthodox priest in 1256.[58]

Two of Sadad's churches, dedicated to St Sergius and the Archangel Gabriel respectively, were adorned in the eighteenth century.[59] In the first church one finds, among others, images of equestrian saints, patriarchs, the Last Judgement, and the Virgin enthroned with the Child, and in the second equestrian saints, the Nativity and the Dormition of the Virgin (fig. 17), all with Syriac inscriptions. Theodore Ouspensky's photographs of the murals inside the Church of St Sergius from 1902 show a situation different from the present one.[60] After his visit all backgrounds were painted in light blue and some scenes were entirely repainted or covered over. Johann Georg Herzog zu Sachsen came to Sadad in 1927, and was much displeased with the results of this intervention.[61] In 2004, this church was being restored, resulting in damage to the bottom zone of the representations. This allowed confirmation of the absence of older decorations underneath. In the Church of the Archangel Gabriel, however, one discerns traces of a blue background and red borderlines on the north wall, which, in view of our experience with other adorned monuments in the area, are probably medieval. Noticeable is the discovery of a small sarcophagus-like reliquary in a niche in the east wall of the Church of St Sergius. This object is made of Proconnesian marble and on stylistic grounds can be dated to the fifth or sixth century (fig. 18). Certainly Sadad is to be a more than interesting field of research on the material history of the Syrian Orthodox Church in the Qalamun.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This brief overview reveals the predominant position of Saydnaya as a reputed centre of inter-religious pilgrimage and therefore the Qalamun's gateway to the outer world. In all probability, this city had more chapels, churches and monasteries than Damascus ever had, and there are enough testimonies to these buildings being decorated to conclude that it was a major centre of art production. In the case of the Chapel of Mar Elias near Maᶜarat Saydnaya, which must have been frequented by Christian and Muslim pilgrims as well, the artist came from Cyprus. One imagines that the presence of such an important centre of pilgrimage had a

impact on the entire region. Its art may have inspired artists in their design of church embellishment in other places.

A striking feature of the paintings from the early thirteenth century in Syrian Orthodox Deir Mar Musa is their kinship with the art of the County of Tripoli and contemporary Byzantine traditions. Obviously, from an artistic point of view the gaze of its monks was turned towards the West rather than the Syrian Orthodox homelands in Tur Abdin and North Mesopotamia. Many of its iconographic subjects can also be found in Qara and the indigenous churches of the Tripoli area irrespective of their denomination, accentuating the uniformity of Christian art in West Syria. In this matter too, Saydnaya may have played a key role in the transition of concepts of embellishment. However, the eleventh-century murals in Deir Mar Musa, Deir May Yaʿqub and the Chapel of Mar Elias prove that the Qalamun had a thriving artistic tradition in the pre-Crusader period already. It was the combination of the old and the new that shaped the thirteenth-century art of the Qalamun. With the Mongol invasions and the Mamluk reactions in the 1260s, the flourishing of church adornment art was halted. Nevertheless, Saydnaya's cultic importance persists up to the present, and therefore is a shining example of continuing religious traditions going beyond political and military realities.

[1] This research has been funded by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) and Leiden University.

[2] For the history of the Qalamun in the Roman and Early Byzantine periods, see: J. Nasrallah, "Le Qalamoun à l'époque romano-byzantin," *Les annales archéologiques de Syrie* 6 (1956) 63-86; for traveller's accounts, see: J. Nasrallah, "Voyageurs et pèlerins au Qalamoun," *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales* 10 (1943-44) 5-38.

[3] L. Pouzet, *Damas au VIIe/XIIIe siècle: vie et structures religieuses d'une métropole islamique* (Beyrouth: Dar El-Mashreq; Recherches T. A 15, 1991), 306-10.

[4] J.-M. Fiey, *Pour un* Oriens Christianus *novus: répertoire des diocèses syriaques orientaux et occidentaux* (Beyrouth: Orient-Institut der deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 1993), 261-62.

[5] A. Schmidt, "Zur Geschichte des Bistums Qara im Qalamun," in *Christliche Wandmalereien in Syrien: Qara und das Kloster Mar Yakub*, ed. A. Schmidt, S. Westphalen (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag; Sprachen und Kulturen des Christlichen Orients 14, 2005), 13-68.

[6] N. Elisséef, *La description de Damas d'Ibn ᶜAsākir (historicien mort à Damas en 571/1176* (Damas: Institut Français de Damas, 1959), 213-25.

[7] R.J.C. Broadhurst, *The travels of Ibn Jubayr: being the chronicle of a mediaeval Spanish Moor concerning his journey to the Egypt of Saladin, .. Arabia, Baghdad .. Jerusalem and .. Sicily* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1952), 296.

[8] D. Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem. A Corpus*, 2 Vol., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993-1998), Vol. 2, 52.

[9] S. Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, Vol. 3 (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 305-314.

[10] Pouzet (1991), 329-31; R. Burns, *Damascus. A History* (London/New York: Routledge, 2005), 197-98.

[11] I. Huhn, *Der Orientalist Johann Gottfried Wetzstein als preußischer Konsul in Damaskus (1849-1861): dargestellt nach seinen hinterlassenen Papieren* (Berlin: Schwarz; Islamkundliche Untersuchungen 136, 1989); L.T. Fawaz, *An Occasion for War: Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860* (London: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1994); Burns (2005), 251-54.

[12] Main publications: G. Raynaud, "Le Miracle de Sardenai" *Romania* 11 (1882), 519-37; P. Peeters, "La légende de Saïdnaya," *Analecta Bollandiana* 25 (1906), 137-57; H. Zayat, *Histoire de Saidnaya* (Harissa, 1923) (in Arabic); P. Devos, "Les premières versions occidentales de la légende de Saïdnaia," *Analecta Bollandiana* 65 (1947) 245-78; D. Baraz, "The Incarnated Icon of Saidnaya goes West," *Le Muséon* 198 (1995) 181-91; B. Hamilton, "Our Lady of Saidnaiya; An Orthodox Shrine Revered by Muslims and Knights Templar at the Time of the Crusades," in *The Holy Land, Holy Lands, and Christian History* ed. R.N. Swanson (Woodbridge/ Rochester, NY: The Boydell Press, 2000), 207-15; M. Immerzeel, "The Monastery of Saydnaya and its Icon," *Eastern Christian Art* 4 (2007), forthcoming.

[13] Translation: Hamilton (2000), 207.

[14] S. Al-Syriany (ed.), *Ta'rīk̲ al-kanā'is wal-adyirah fī al-qarn al-t̲ānī 'ašar al-mīlādi li-'Abī al-Makārim* Vol. 3 (Cairo, 1981), 47-48, fol. 142a-143a; translation: Baraz (1995), 189, and Hamilton (2000), 209, n. 10.

[15] Devos (1947), 272-78; Hamilton (2000), 211.

[16] K. Ciggaar, "Painters, Paintings and Pilgrims in Medieval Jerusalem: Some Witnesses from East and West," *Eastern Christian Art* 2 (2005), 127-38.

[17] Al-Syriany (1981), 48.

[18] Translation: Hamilton (2000), 208.

[19] A. Stewart (transl.), *Ludo van Suchem: Description of the Holy Land, and the way thither* (London: Palestine Pilgrim's Text Society 12, 1895), 132.

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[40] Meri (1999), 255-26.

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[49] Pococke (1745), 139.

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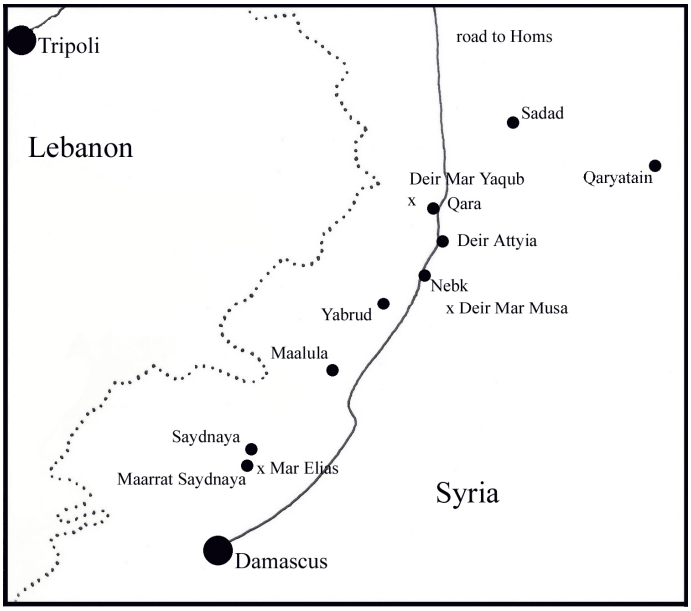


1. Map of the Qalamun

2. Monastery of Saydnaya: entrance and outer walls

3. Monastery of Saydnaya: Outside of the Chapel of al-ᶜAdra and annex room

4. Fragment of an angel; Monastery of Saydnaya

5. Prophet Elijah; Church of St Sophia; Saydnaya

6. Daniel; Church of St Sophia; Saydnaya

7. Virgin with the Child
Chapel of Mar Elias
Ma^{c}arat Saydnaya

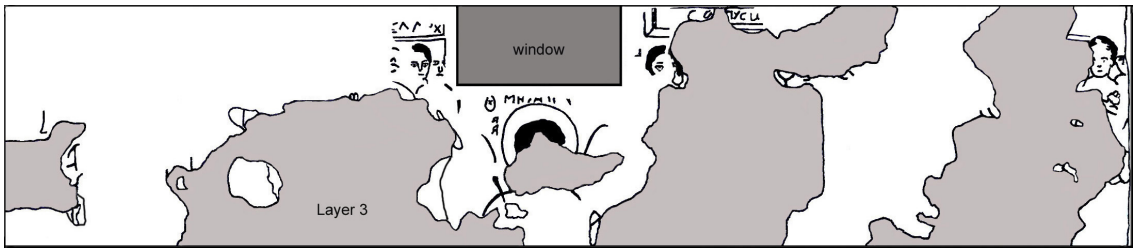
8. Virgin Galaktotrophousa; Church of Sts Sergius and Bacchus, Qara (Bas ter Haar Romeny)

9. St Sergius; Church of Sts Sergius and Bacchus, Qara (Bas ter Haar Romeny)

10. Enthroned apostles; Deir Mar Yaʿqub, Qara

11. St Nicholas; Deir Mar Yaᶜqub, Qara

12. Samson killing the lion; Deir Mar Musa



13. Triumphal arch with the Forty Martyrs; Deir Mar Musa

14. Presentation in the Temple; Deir Mar Musa

15. St Sergius; Deir Mar Musa

16. St Bacchus; Deir Mar Musa

17. Dormition of the Virgin; Church of the Archangel Gabriel, Sadad

18. Lid of a reliquary box; Church of St Sergius, Sadad

OBITUARY

PROFESSOR ROBERT BEULAY, OCD (1927-2007)

Robert Beulay was born in Paris in 1927. His primary studies were philosophy and music, which he felt sustained him in the midst of an atheistic family life and nurtured in him a deep love of the liturgy. He entered the Carmelite order in 1945. Ordained as a priest in 1953, he went to Baghdad in 1956 to join the Carmelite mission founded there in the 17th century. He was a professor of dogmatic theology at the Chaldean Pontifical Seminary. Later, at Babil college, he taught spirituality (both general and oriental), ontology, and the philosophy of nature. In 1997, with the assistance of Nadira Khayyat, he began to teach Syriac theology as well.

Having been initially encouraged by Massignon his teacher, he had hoped to study Islamic mysticism, but his community asked him to study the mystical writings of the Syriac Church. Thus, even before leaving for Baghdad he studied Oriental languages for three years. He graduated from the École Pratique des Hautes Études in 1971, and then presented his doctoral thesis in 1974 at the Sorbonne. Both parts of this thesis have been published: *La Lumière sans forme* in 1987 and *L'Enseignement Spirituel de Jean de Dalyatha* in 1990. These, together with *La Collection des Lettres de Jean de Dalyatha*, form the core of his life's work, which is also reflected in the publication (2007) of his pupil Nadira Khayyat's wonderful edition of the first part of the *Homilies*, with the second part to follow.

At the École Pratique he studied with Antoine Guillaumont, who suggested that he

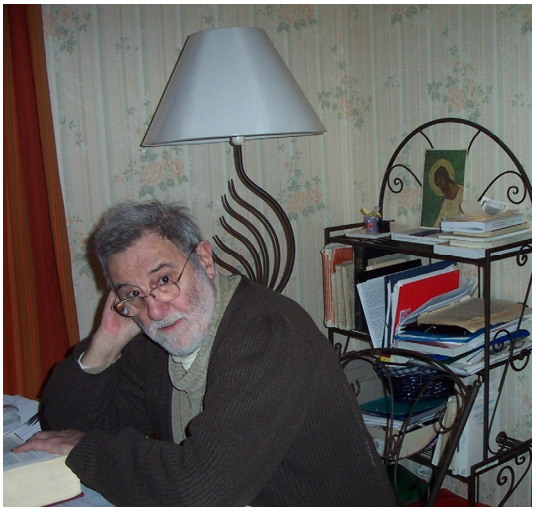


Photo Courtesy Nadira Khayyat

concentrate his research on Isaac the Syrian. But P. Robert found Isaac to be too intellectual. On reading John of Dalyatha, however, he responded immediately, comparing him to Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross whom he knew from his Carmelite back-

ground. Since none of John of Dalyatha had been edited, P. Robert began the difficult task of assembling copies of the manuscripts, including the Arabic versions—all of this in Baghdad, far from the resources that western scholars are used to. The results, according to Guillaumont, brought immediate and enthusiastic approval from his examiners (as noted by A. Guillaumont in the *Avant-Propos* to *L'Enseignement Spirituel*). *Lumière sans forme* gives a well referenced history of Syriac spirituality up to the 8th century. It includes the influence that certain authors may have had on John: Gregory of Nyssa, Evagrius, the Macarian writings, John the Solitary and Pseudo-Dionysius. Also included are discussions of dogmatic influence: Theodore Mopsuestia, Diodore of Tarsus, Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Babai. Finally, eleven authors of the 7th and 8th centuries are examined in greater detail. So it is not only a diachronic study but also a cross-textual one showing for example how Evagrian influence on Isaac the Syrian and on John of Dalyatha may differ. The second part, *L'Enseignement*, is specific to the doctrine of John, incorporating insights from the *Letters*, *Homilies* and *Chapters*, all edited by P. Robert. What comes through in this work is the luminous doctrine of John of Dalyatha, profoundly original, all grounded in experience. Especially in the *Letters* one sees the personal, poetic side of the man but even in the *Homilies* there is never a rigid systematization. Through it all there is an intense, unitive approach so as to make one wonder about monism, yet scholars have ruled this out as they have the charge of Messalianism. On reading the *Letters*, Sebastian Brock commented that he had never before seen God spoken of in human language as in John. In a broad survey of the Church of the East, Christoph Baumer chose John of Dalyatha as the most exemplary spiritual writer of that tradition. He points out how John "distinguished himself radically from the ideas of earlier asceticism, since he believed that the purified body could participate in the mystical refreshment of the soul. 'The individual gains union with himself and with the one who unites him. For the powers and sense of the body shall be united with the abilities of the soul and this with the spirit. But the spirit sees in the soul the glory of God" (Christoph Baumer, *The Church of the East*: An illustrated history of Assyrian Christianity [London: I.B. Tauris, 2006] p.133). Such a holistic and transforming view of Christian life is truly a gift of the Spirit to our times. And for this we owe great gratitude to P. Robert.

But through all this he never lost the connection between Syriac writers and their Church. In addition to his publications and active involvement in seminars and international symposia, he gradually sought to make this rich tradition of the prayer of the heart available to the very people among whom it had developed originally. In fact, John of Dalyatha was born in northwest Iraq and was a monk near the Turkish border. P. Robert began by creating a fraternity for Christian students at the St. Joseph's Center in Baghdad. The Center became a meeting place for university students and graduates from various Christian denominations in a truly ecumenical spirit where all levels of society could be found. And true to one of his early loves, he worked hard at the liturgy to make it spiritually meaningful, which deeply affected his Iraqi students even when they did not always fully understand the significance. When the Baath party took over

in 1968 and suppressed public meetings, he and another Carmelite, Fr. Raymond Charbonnier, with whom he had worked for fifty years, came back to their convent and founded there another fraternity principally for Scripture study. P. Robert left Iraq in 2004, but his students from the diaspora in Canada, the U.S., New Zealand, Europe and most of the Arab countries always kept in contact with him out of gratitude for having illumined their faith. He died on August 9, 2007 in Normandy and was buried in Lisieux.

This beautiful prayer from the *Homilies* of John of Dalyatha serves to sum up the life and labour of our brother Robert:

> O Christ, treasure of all goodly things, grant me perfect repentance and an aching heart that comes out in love to seek you. Without you I am a stranger to everything; grant me, O Good One, your grace. May the Father who begot you, from his bosom where you were concealed from eternity, renew in me the features of your likeness. Though I have forsaken you, do not forsake me; though I have abandoned you and gone away from you, come out to seek me and restore me to the fold. Add me to the dear lambs of your flock, and feed me with them in the pasture of your holy mysteries, whose source is a pure heart wherein is seen the light of your revelations. That is the repose of the labourers who work to that end through sufferings and torments of every kind. Our Saviour, may we all be counted worthy of it through thy gracious loving-kindness.
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> (see Homily 18 "On flight from the world," trans. Brian Colless).

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*I am very grateful for the assistance of Nadira Khayyat in writing this article.

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Compiled by Mary Hansbury

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REPORT ON NORTH AMERICAN SYRIAC STUDIES SYMPOSIUM V

GEORGE KIRAZ
BETH MARDUTHO: THE SYRIAC INSTITUTE

The Fifth North American Syriac Studies Symposium was held at the University of Toronto, Ontario, between June 25th and 27th, 2007. The previous four symposia were held at Brown University, Rhode Island (1991), The Catholic University of America, D.C. (1995), Notre Dame University, Indiana (1999), and Princeton University, New Jersey (2003). Starting with the 1995 Symposium, sessions on Syriac computing were held organized by Beth Mardutho: The Syriac Institute.

Upon arrival in Toronto, attendees were pleasantly surprised to hear that Toronto had a longer history of Syriac studies than what one may have anticipated. The Symposium program began with a brief history, written by the Symposium organizer Amir Harrak, of Syriac studies at the University of Toronto that goes back to 1857. This important brief history was published recently in *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* (vol. 10, no. 2).

The Symposium's theme was "Syriac as a Bridge Culture." Indeed, the symposium itself was a bridge for at least two reasons: this was the first time that the symposium was held outside of the United States, and the presentations at the symposium were very diverse, including sessions and papers on archaeology, neo-Aramaic, and the Assyrian Christians of the Middle East, among other topics. The symposium was attended by over 80 individuals, and drew from local communities whose members often attend and listen to papers. As expected, the number of Canadian scholars was higher than previous symposia, though there were representatives of over 10 countries, giving the North American symposium an international look.

There were 55 papers in total, five of which were plenary talks as follows:

1. Sidney H. Griffith of Catholic University of America, "Syrian Christian Intellectuals in the World of Islam: Faith, the Philosophical Life, and the Quest for Interreligious Convivencia in Abbasid Times."

2. Elisabetta Valgiusti of the Association 'Salva i Monasteri', Rome, "Syriac Christianity in the Iraqi Exodus: A People of Prophets Between Hope and Hopelessness" which included a film presentation.

3. John H. Corbett of University of Toronto-Scarborough, "The Ascetic Life as Holy War: The Biblical Basis of the Book of Steps."

4. Lucas van Rompay of Duke University, "Severus, Patriarch of Antioch (512-

538), in the Greek, Syriac, and Coptic traditions."

5. Craig E. Morrison of the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome, "The Bridge from Judaism: The Jews in Ephrem's Commentary on the Diatessaron."

The plenary papers will be eventually published in the *Journal of the Canadian Society of Syriac Studies*.

The Forum on Syriac Computing, which usually took the form of an entire day in previous symposia, only occupied one session.

At the business meeting it was decided that the 2011 symposium would be held at Duke University. The steering committee of the Symposium—Sidney Griffith, Susan Ashbrook Harvey, Kathleen McVey, and George Kiraz—was augmented to include Amir Harrak, Lucas van Rompay, and a representative of Beth Mardutho's Dorushe Graduate Student Association. The Dorushe group later voted Jeanne-Nicole Saint-Laurent to represent them.

Gorgias Press exhibited at the symposium and co-sponsored with the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies a reception on one evening. His Grace Mar Emmanuel, Bishop of the Assyrian Church of the East in Canada (and a doctoral candidate at the University of Toronto), hosted the symposium banquet at the Church's Sharrukin Hall.

The participants owe a great debt of gratitude to Amir Harrak, Chairman of the Symposium, whose organizational skills played a major role in making this symposium a success.