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*The Jewish Christians  
of the Early Centuries of Christianity  
According to a New Source*

by

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I

THE SUBJECT of this lecture is an Arabic manuscript text which is not what it purports to be. Ostensibly, it is a chapter of Moslem anti-Christian polemics which forms a part of a lengthy work first described by Ritter. This work is entitled *Tathbīt Dalā'il Nubuwwat Sayyidinā Muḥammad*, 'The Establishment of Proofs for the Prophethood of Our Master Mohammed' and was written by the well-known tenth century Mu'tazilite author 'Abd al-Jabbār.<sup>1</sup> However, in reality, this Moslem theologian adapted for his own purposes—inserting numerous interpolations—writings reflecting the views and traditions of a Jewish Christian community, of which more hereafter. As far as I know this text has never been studied. In the investigation undertaken by me I am indebted to my colleague D. Flusser for various fruitful suggestions.

My attention was first drawn to the Istanbul manuscript containing this work by Dr. S. M. Stern, who having read Ritter's notice, had a brief look at it, and gained the impression that it might be a mine of abundant information, concerning early Islamic sects. During a short stay in Istanbul, I too was struck by the value of this manuscript as a source for Islamic religious history and had it photographed; we both decided to

1 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Hamadāni, who after having lived in Baghdad, became chief Qadi of Rayy, died in 1024/5. A short notice on the MS is given by H. RITTER in *Der Islam*, 1929, p. 42. The MS is No. 1575 in the Shehīd 'Alī Pasha collection in Istanbul. According to folio 80a, the work on the chapter on the Christians appears to have been written approximately (*nahwa*) in the year 385 h., i.e., in the year 995/6 of the Christian era. The date 400 h., i.e., 1009/10 of the Christian era, is given elsewhere, fol. 182b (cf. S. PINES, 'A Moslem Text Concerning the Conversion of the Khazars to Judaism', *Journal of Jewish Studies*, XIII [1962], p. 45, n. 2). — Cf. also S. M. STERN, 'New Information about the Authors of the "Epistles of the Sincere Brethren"', *Islamic Studies*, III (1964), pp. 406–407.

work on it. Stern chose to study the latter portion of the MS which deals in a very hostile spirit with the Isma'īlī sect, a subject on which he is writing a comprehensive work. It was my task to explore the first half, which contained numerous references to other heretics and freethinkers of early Islam. When first taking cognizance of 'Abd al-Jabbār's treatise, I looked cursorily through the chapter (extending over nearly 60 folios) on Christianity, and found the subject-matter and the approach most peculiar; they bore little similarity to the ordinary Moslem anti-Christian polemics. Tentatively, I set down this difference to the historical situation and 'Abd al-Jabbār's reaction to it. Living as he did at the time of the great Byzantine victories over Islam, he entertained a very strong animosity against the powerful Christian Empire and expressed the gloomiest forebodings as to the future of orthodox Islam, hardpressed as it was not only by the Byzantines but also by the heretical Fatimids of Egypt, who, as 'Abd al-Jabbār proves to his own satisfaction, acted in collusion with the Byzantines.<sup>2</sup> As I found out later, this explanation is only valid to a very limited extent. 'Abd al-Jabbār's personal attitude to Christianity comes through in his sometimes quite sizable additions to the writings which as we shall see he adapted; but these interpolations constitute only a relatively small portion of the chapter under discussion. It may, however, be argued that his hostility and his apprehensions made him particularly prone to use the anti-Christian materials which—as may be supposed—were offered to him.

In spite of the historical explanation, I still had the uneasy feeling that the anti-Christian chapter represented an enigma of some kind and was in consequence finally impelled to read the whole text through. In the beginning this was a very mystifying experience. The whole thing only fell into focus when I grasped that, as far as its greater portion was concerned, these were not, and could not by any means be, texts of Moslem origin. When this became clear, a new hypothesis was required. A study of the texts showed that only one supposition as to their provenance was consonant with the facts. They could only derive from a Jewish Christian community and were rather maladroitly and carelessly adapted by 'Abd al-Jabbār for his own purposes. His additions and interpolations sometimes consist of a single explanatory sentence or part of a sentence; sometimes they extend over several folios. In most cases, though obviously not in all, there are indications which provide sufficient ground for differentiating these additions from the Judaeo-Christian texts in which they were interpolated. Before the evidence for these conclusions is outlined, it may be convenient to give a brief classification according to the

2 See S. PINES, *op. cit.* (above, n. 1), p. 45, n. 3.

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subject-matter of the various (four or five) categories of texts which, apart from 'Abd al-Jabbār's additions, are found in the chapter. Admittedly, these different types of texts sometimes run into one another. They are:

1. An attack on the Christians for having abandoned the commandments of the Mosaic Law and having adopted different laws and customs.

2. Polemics against the dogmas, or, more precisely, the Christology of the three dominant Christian sects,<sup>3</sup> i.e., the Jacobites, the Nestorians and the Orthodox, sometimes called *Rūm*,<sup>4</sup> i.e., the Romans or the Byzantines.

3. An outline of the early history of Christianity, or at least of certain notable events which are part of this history.

4. Malicious stories about the habits of monks and priests and Christian laymen. While some of these stories may have been contributed by 'Abd al-Jabbār, a certain number of others obviously antedate him or are based on an intimate knowledge of Christian usages and habits which probably few Moslems, if any, possessed.

A fifth category could be provided by the numerous and sometimes extensive quotations from the four canonical and other unknown apocryphal Gospels.

Some of these quotations appear to be of considerable importance for the philological study of New Testament literature and may be ranged among the most important components of these texts. However, in this part of the present paper, these quotations will be referred to only in connection with categories 1 and 2; they are used in the texts in order to drive home some polemical points.

Throughout the texts belonging to categories one, two and three there is a monotonously recurring *leit-motiv*. The Christians (*al-naṣārā*), i.e., the adherents of the three above-mentioned sects, are in disaccord with the religion of Christ (*al-masīḥ*), the contention being that they abandoned it (in the first place, as the historical texts make it clear, at the instigation of Saint Paul whose person and activities are stigmatized and held up for derision) in order to adopt, because of lust for worldly dominion, the ways and customs of the *Rūm*, an appellation which in this context designates the Pagan Romans and Greeks.<sup>5</sup>

3 In the texts, polemics belonging to this category precede, or are supposed to precede, the polemics belonging to category 1, which, with a view to the convenience of exposition, have been put first here.

4 This appellation is sometimes applied to the Orthodox also in other more authentically Moslem texts.

5 In other contexts this appellation is sometimes applied to the orthodox Christians in the chapter under discussion. See above.

Thus (fol. 69a–b), in opposition to Christ, the Christians against whom our texts are directed, have repudiated the commandments concerning ritual purity. They also turn to the east when praying, whereas Christ turned in the direction of Jerusalem,<sup>6</sup> which, according to our text, was situated to the west.

Even these Christians believe that (as opposed to them) Christ was circumcised and considered circumcision as obligatory. He never ate pork and regarded the eating of it as accursed. The Christians are blamed for permitting—on the strength of a vision of Saint Peter recounted in the Acts—the eating of meat forbidden by the Torah and consequently also by Christ (92a–92b; see below). The latter also forbade (69b) to accept sacrifices offered (or the meat of animals slaughtered) by persons who did not belong to the People of the Book (i.e., by non-Jews)<sup>7</sup> and prohibited marriage with them. As regards marriage, inheritance, legal punishments (this enumeration evidently is not meant to be exhaustive), he followed the way of the prophets who preceded him, whereas, according to the Christians, a man who—according to clear evidence—fornicates, who practises homosexuality, who slanders, or who gets drunk, does not meet with any punishment either in this world or in the other.

Having stated that the Christians do not forbid praying when one is in a state of ritual uncleanness and even consider that such prayers are the best, because they are quite different from those of the Jews and of the Moslems, the author of the text continues:

(69b) 'All this is opposed to Christ's prayer. He used<sup>8</sup> in his prayer utterances (*kalām*) and words (*qawl*) of God (found) in the Torah and in David's Psalms and used in their prayers before him and in his time by the prophets of the children of Israel. These Christian sects<sup>9</sup> (on the other hand) utter in their prayers words sung (*lahḥana*) for them by those whom they consider as saints. And they utter them according to a mode (*majrā*) of lamentation (*nawḥ*) or of song (*aghānī*). And they say: this is the liturgy (*quddās*) of such and such (a person), naming those who composed it.'

6 This is equated with his turning to the west. This is in keeping with what is known, or what may be conjectured, regarding the habitat of the Jewish Christian sect in question.

7 It is pretty certain that this Islamic term was introduced by 'Abd al-Jabbār or by his assistants in order to make the text more palatable for Moslems. There is little doubt that the original text did not use such a paraphrase in referring to non-Jews.

8 The verb is *aqarra* which means: 'to acknowledge', 'to profess'.

9 The Orthodox, the Jacobites and the Nestorians.

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Christ also observed the Jewish days of fast<sup>10</sup> and not the fifty days' fast and other Christian fast-days. Neither did he establish Sunday as a day of rest,<sup>11</sup> or abolish for even an hour the observance of Saturday. The Gospel stories recounting apparent infractions of the Sabbath (such as Matthew xii : 1-5, 9-13 ; Luke xiii : 10-16) are quoted in order to show that Christ wished to justify himself from the legal point of view in doing his work of healing on Saturday or in condoning the action of his disciples, who rubbed on a Saturday—being hungry—the grains out of ears of corn (see below). This latter action is explained as being due to their having been compelled by necessity<sup>12</sup> and is evidently held to have been justified on this account. Further on (fol. 93b) in the same context the rule is laid down that work—according to the legal definition of this term—is only permissible on Sabbath in order to save life; it is forbidden if it is needed to save property. The term used in order to designate in this connection the saving of life, is *al-najāt bi'l-nafs*, which means in an approximately literal translation 'the saving of soul'. It seems evident that this is an accurate rendering<sup>13</sup> of the Hebrew term *piqquah nefesh* used in the Talmud in the formulation of the rule, figuring as we have just seen in our texts, according to which the need to save life supersedes the laws of Sabbath.

In an attempt to sum up the mission of Jesus, our texts state: (70a) 'Christ came in order to vivify and establish the Torah.' Hereupon a saying of Jesus is cited which is very similar to, but not quite identical with, Matthew v:17-19:

'He said: I come to you. For this reason I shall act in accordance with the Torah and the precepts of the prophets who were before me. I did not come to diminish, but, on the contrary, to complete (or fulfil: *mutammiman*). In truth, as far as God is concerned, it is more easy for the heaven to fall upon the earth than to take away anything from the Law of Moses. Whoever diminishes anything in it shall be called diminished.'

The text adds that Jesus and his disciples acted in this manner until he departed from this world.

This passage clearly has a bearing on Christology (a subject which will

10 The text uses the singular.

11 Further details as to the introduction of this Christian custom as well as of the celebration of the Nativity of Christ are given in the historical texts occurring in this chapter and will be referred to below.

12 The term used is *hāl al-iḏtirār*, i.e., 'state of compulsion'.

13 From the point of the Arabic language the rendering appears to be rather maladroit.

now briefly engage our attention) as conceived in these texts. For it seems to imply that Jesus' rank was that of a prophet. Another passage (fol. 52a)<sup>14</sup> clearly states that Jesus himself laid claim to this rank only. This is, of course, *inter alia*, the Islamic view, but it is maintained with a wealth of reference—indicative of great familiarity with Christian literature—to sayings of Jesus, proving his desire to maintain, wholly intact, the unity of God (considered as affected by the doctrine of Jesus' Sonship) and manifesting his humility, his consciousness of his own weakness, his submission to God, his refusal to do or order anything unless he was authorized by divine command and his anguish at the thought of resurrection and divine judgment. Many of these sayings are drawn from the canonical Gospels. I shall mention one which, as quoted, does not appear to derive from this source, but which seems to stand in an anti-thetical relation to John v:22. This saying, whose exact text is not quite certain, as one word may have to be emended but whose meaning is not in doubt, may be rendered: (52b) 'I shall not judge men,<sup>15</sup> nor call them to account for their actions. He who has sent me will settle(?)<sup>16</sup> this with them.'

As against this, John v:22 reads: 'For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son.'

With regard to certain sayings of Jesus found in the Gospels these texts state (or clearly imply) that they are falsely ascribed to him. Such sayings are:<sup>17</sup>

(54b) 'The Son of man is master of the Sabbath' (Matthew xii : 8; Mark ii : 28; Luke vi : 5).

(53a) 'Go upon the earth and baptize the slaves (of God) in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost' (Matthew xxviii : 19).

(53a, 54b) 'I was before Abraham' (John viii : 58).

(54b) 'I am in my Father and my Father is in me' (John xvii : 21).

On the other hand, these texts quote (with the rider that the fact is a matter for astonishment) the following saying of Christ:

14 'He (Jesus) stated (*dhakara*) that he was an envoy (*rasūl*) of God (sent) to those created by Him (*ilā khalqihī*), and that God had sent him, as He had sent the prophets prior to him.'

15 The Arabic expression used is '*ibād*, literally 'slaves' or 'servants' (of God).

16 The word is not quite certain.

17 The translation given here corresponds to the Arabic text.

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(92a) 'You will come to me on the day of resurrection, and the inhabitants of the earth shall be led (?) towards me.<sup>18</sup> And they will stand on my right (hand) and on my left. And I shall say to those who are on my left (hand): "I was hungry, and you did not give me to eat; I was naked, and you did not clothe me; I was ill, and you did not feed (or nurse) me; I was imprisoned, and you did not visit me." And they will answer, saying to me: "Our master: When were you ill, or naked, or hungry or imprisoned? Did we not prophesy in your name, treat the sick in your name, and make the infirm stand up in your name? We give to eat to the hungry, and clothe the naked in your name. And we eat and drink in your name." (Then) I shall say to them: "You mentioned my name, but you did not bear true witness with regard to me. Remove yourself far from me, you that are wretched through sin."<sup>19</sup> Then I shall say to those who are on my right (hand): "Come here, O righteous ones, towards the pity of God and towards eternal life. No one (will) be there, who had given to eat, had clothed and treated the sick, had eaten or had drunk in the name of Christ."'

The saying ends at this point and the author of these texts adds the remark that Christ will deal in this way with 'these Christian sects', the reference again being to the Jacobites, the Nestorians and the Orthodox. The saying attributed to Christ is pretty certainly a deformation of Matthew xxv: 31-46, and illustrates one of the methods used in the *milieu* from which our texts derive in making the Christian writings serve their own sectarian purposes. This does not of course mean that all the quotations made by them which deviate from the canonical texts are of a secondary nature. There is no reason to preclude the possibility that sometimes they may have drawn upon a genuine early tradition, not preserved in the main currents of the Christian Church (see below).

In attempting to disprove the doctrine that Jesus was the son of God and to show that he was the son of a man, our texts make much of the fact that in the stories of his birth and of his childhood figuring in the Gospel of Saint Matthew <sup>20</sup> and in non-canonical Gospels which seem to have been likewise used, Joseph the Carpenter is regarded as his father. One of the Christians is said to refer in a translation of 'this gospel' (apparently that of Saint Matthew is meant) to 'the birth of Jesus son

18 Or: 'shall prostrate themselves before me'. The reading of one Arabic word is doubtful.

19 Or: 'prompt to sin'.

20 The quotations from Matthew on this subject occurring in our manuscript differ slightly from the New Testament text.



of Joseph the Carpenter' (94b). This is probably a variant of Matthew i : 1: 'The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.' It may be mentioned in this connection that Jesus and his parents are said to have stayed in Egypt for twelve years (*loc. cit.*).

Jesus' fear of death is also referred to as an argument in favour of the opinion that conceives him as a man and not as a God. The prayer which he pronounced when death was imminent is quoted in this context. The passage corresponds to Matthew xxvi : 39, to Mark xiv : 36 and especially to Luke xxii : 42. The description of the external manifestation of Jesus' anguish given in our texts (53a) differ in some particulars from Luke xxii : 44: 'And he ejected as it were clots of blood from his mouth in his anguish in the face of death, and he sweated and was perturbed.' In connection with the fact that Jesus sometimes refers to God as his Father, our texts refer (55b-56a), *inter alia*, to an explanation based on an alleged particularity of the Hebrew language 'which (was) the language of Christ'. According to this explanation, which is backed up by a reference to Old Testament passages, the word 'son' may be applied in Hebrew to an obedient, devoted and righteous servant and the word 'father' to a ruling master.

It is part of the ideology of our text to lay stress upon the importance of the Hebrew language; we shall perceive this more clearly when dealing with their historical portions. At this point the problem of the origin of these texts can be usefully discussed, at least in certain aspects.

There is one point which is quite clear as far as their provenance is concerned. The texts consist of two sometimes—but by no means always—closely interwoven<sup>21</sup> parts, one of which was written by a Moslem author, presumably by 'Abd al-Jabbār, while the other was not.

For one thing, this second part, which comprises the greater portion of the texts, was obviously—and this applies not only to the quotations from the Old or New Testament—not written originally in Arabic, but translated, in many cases rather unskilfully, in all probability from the Syriac. This accounts for the occasional odd constructions and turns of phrase.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, 'Abd al-Jabbār or his assistants tacitly admit the fact

21 See above, p. 2.

22 In the expression *sa'ala li-Maryam* (94b), the use of the preposition *li* is modelled upon the Syriac. This expression occurs in an account of the childhood of Jesus which differs from those of the Gospels. For instance, Jesus, his mother and Joseph are said to have stayed in Egypt for twelve years.—The use without any particular reason of the preposition *hādḥā* after a proper name, which is frequent in these texts (cf., for instance [76a], *Qusṭanṭīnūs hādḥā*, 'this Constantine' [in a historical text]) may also be due to the influence of Syriac. *Mutatis mutandis*, it is reminiscent of the use of the pronoun *haw* in the latter language (cf., for instance, R. DUVAL, *Traité de grammaire syriaque*, Paris 1881, § 301, p. 289). In

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that these texts were not originally intended for Moslem readers, by adding explanations<sup>23</sup> of names and terms regarded as not being familiar to the ordinary Moslem public. It is thus made clear that *Ūr.sh.lim* (as Jerusalem is sometimes called by the Christians) is identical with *Bayt al-Maqdis* (93b), and *Ishū'* with 'Isā, the latter being the current Moslem form of the name Jesus.<sup>24</sup> The arguments based on the contents of these texts are even more cogent.

other cases, too, *hādhā* is sometimes used in a manner unusual in Arabic; occasionally its function appears to approximate to that of an article. This phenomenon is presumably likewise due to the translator's attempt to give an accurate rendering of the Syriac original.—The constructions *dhāka allādhi* (see, for instance, 46b, in a text which is intended to expound the Conceptions of the dominant Christian theology) and *mā allādhi* also occur. Except, as far as the second construction is concerned, in an interrogative sentence, they are quite unusual in Arabic, which generally uses *allādhi* ('who', 'which') by itself, and are obviously due to Syriac influence; cf., *mā d*. In many cases the occurrence of the preposition *ma'a* does not conform to Arabic usage. This is probably due to the fact that this preposition was used to render the Syriac *lewāt*, which has a much greater variety of significations. However, this point requires careful investigation. These and other linguistic peculiarities of the texts do not only show that the latter are translations, but they also seem to indicate that the work was not done by professional translators, who generally exhibit a greater degree of linguistic competence.

- 23 Admittedly such explanations are seldom encountered in these texts, but the fact that they occur does constitute a proof of the non-Moslem provenance of one portion.
- 24 The form *Ishū'* used in the text is explained (46b) as being the Syriac (form) of 'Isā. This gloss was obviously made either by the translator or by 'Abd al-Jabbār and his assistants, if any. The form *Yashū'* also occurs (93b).—The following observation may be added. It seems evident that the quotations in the Jewish Christian treatise postulated by us, which do not correspond to the current Arabic or Syriac text of the New Testament, must have formed from the beginning an integral part of this treatise, and were not inserted at some later period. Deviations from the normal Arabic usage occur both in these quotations and in other parts of the treatise. It is most unlikely that the works from which the quotations in question may be supposed to have been taken were extant in an Arabic translation (and not only in Syriac). Some uncanonical quotations have already been discussed in this connection. However, the implications of the facts seem perhaps even clearer in the following instance. In fol. 70a–b, Paul is said to have made in *Sliḥin* (i.e., the *Apostolicon* or, in other words, his collected Epistles) the following statement, which appears to be a variation upon I Corinthians ix : 20–21: 'With the Jew I was a Jew, with the Roman a Roman, and with the *Armā'i* an *Armā'i*. The word *Armā'i*, which does not exist in Arabic, is explained both in the text and in a marginal note as applying to 'those who worship stars and idols'. It is clearly identical with the Syriac *Armāyā* (or *Arāmāyā*), which originally signified Aramaean, but came to mean at a later period Pagan. The fact that this uncanonical quotation includes the Syriac word in question can be easily accounted for on the assumption that the original language of the whole text was Syriac. Any other explanation would be complicated and improbable.

As has been stated, the contention that the Christians have abandoned the religion of Christ<sup>25</sup> forms a main theme of the texts. This betrayal is said to consist, *inter alia*, in the giving-up of the observance of the commandments. It is true that a warrant may be found in one verse of the Koran (v : 50) for the notion that Christ did not abrogate the Law of Moses. However, it is, to my mind, quite inconceivable that a Moslem author, who certainly regarded the Mosaic Law as having been abrogated by Mohammed, should constantly attack the Christians for not obeying Old Testament commandments which he believed to have been rescinded by divine decree. Some of the Mosaic commandments whose abandonment by the Christians is deplored in these texts have, it is true, close parallels in Islam (this applies to circumcision, to the laws concerning ritual purity and to the prohibition to eat pork). Others, however (for instance, the commandments dealing with the Sabbath and the prescription concerning the direction to which one should turn when praying), are not similar to the relevant Islamic laws. In supposing that a Moslem theologian could, of his own accord, have levelled bitter reproaches against the Christians for having abandoned the latter commandments and replaced them by different ones, or could have used in all seriousness Jewish interpretations of the law known to us from the Talmud<sup>26</sup> in order to prove that Jesus did not profane the Sabbath, or again could have had the idea of citing, as is done by the authors of the texts, a not very conclusive passage of the Gospels<sup>27</sup> in order to prove that when praying Jesus turned to Jerusalem,<sup>28</sup> one would take up a wholly untenable position. Nor would a Moslem theologian find it necessary in the course of polemics directed against the doctrine of the divinity of Christ to insert an impressive description of the agony of Jesus at the approach of the crucifixion. As we shall see in speaking of the account of the passion of Jesus figuring in these texts, one of 'Abd al-Jabbar's principal self-imposed tasks in his argument against the Christians consists in trying to find in the rather intractable texts which he is obliged to use, but which only serve his purpose up to a point, some confirmation for the view of the Koran according to which Jesus was not

25 The Arabic word rendered by 'Christ' is *al-masih*. Quite probably, the corresponding Syriac word meaning Messiah occurred in the original texts. However, there exists the possibility that the frequent use in our texts of the word *al-masih* is due to the translator, this being the usual Arabic name for Jesus. See also below.

26 *TB. Shabbath* 132a.

27 John iv : 19-21.

28 The fact that at the beginning of his cases Mohammed likewise ordered his followers to turn to Jerusalem when praying is irrelevant in this connection, as in virtue of a later commandment of Mohammed, Mecca had become the *qibla* of the Moslems.

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crucified. To sum up, the portion of the texts which is under discussion was adapted by 'Abd al-Jabbār or by assistants of his, who sometimes—by means of the addition of a few words or a few phrases and sometimes by interpolating whole pages at a stretch—gave it a superficially Islamic character, but it was not originally composed by a Moslem.<sup>29</sup>

This negative conclusion may already at this stage be supplemented by a positive identification of the religious *milieu* from which the greater part of our texts derives.

The investigation that is required may take as its starting point one outstanding characteristic of the authors of the non-Islamic portion of the texts; they combine belief in Christ (though not in his divinity) with insistence on the observance of the Mosaic law. Now this characteristic, which may be used to define them, is used by Epiphanius as a definition of the sect which he calls *Nazōraioi* (Ναζωραῖοι), and, which in his perhaps somewhat arbitrary terminology, is one of the two main Jewish Christian sects, the other being the Ebionites (Ἐβιωναῖοι). He said of the *Nazōraioi*, whom for the sake of convenience we shall call Nazarenes, that because of being bound by the law, by the commandments concerning circumcision, the Sabbath and all the other commandments, they disagree with the Christians, and because of their belief in Christ they differ from the Jews (EPIPHANIUS, *Panarion*, I, 29, 7).

However, this global characteristic is not the only point of similarity between the original authors of our texts and the Jewish Christians of the early centuries. The resemblance extends into details.

Thus, Irenaeus states that the Jewish Christians (called by him Ebionites<sup>30</sup>) worshipped Jerusalem, the evidence being that, like the authors of our texts,<sup>31</sup> they faced it when praying (IRENAEUS, *Adversus Haereses*, I, 26 [MIGNE, *Patrologia Graeca*, VII, Col. 687]).

Again, like the authors of our texts, Epiphanius' Ebionites (and indubitably not only they; the argument must have been employed by all the Jewish Christian sects) made use of the fact that Jesus was circumcised in order to prove that circumcision was obligatory (*Panarion*, I, 30, 26). They, too, abominated Saint Paul, recounted disparaging stories about

29 The familiar knowledge of a great number of Christian sources displayed in the texts need not perhaps necessarily, taken by itself, disprove the hypothesis that their author was a Moslem, but tends to render it very unlikely.

30 Epiphanius' differentiation between the *Nazōraioi* and the Ebionites has no exact counterpart in the texts of other early Christian authors, who often use the name Ebionites in a broader sense than Epiphanius.

31 Cf. H. J. SCHOEPS, *Theologie und Geschichte des Judentums*, Tübingen 1949, pp. 277 and 364; E. PETERSON, *Frühkirche, Judentum und Gnosis*, Rome-Freiburg-Vienna 1959, p. 29. The followers of Elkasai, who were likewise a Jewish Christian sect, also turned to Jerusalem when praying.

him (*Panarion*, I, 30, 25)<sup>32</sup> and imputed to him unworthy motives. A point of similarity between Epiphanius' Nazarenes and the authors of our texts is the high esteem in which both the former and the latter held the Hebrew language. The Nazarenes are, according to Epiphanius, 'carefully exercised' in this language, in which they read both the Old Testament and the Gospel of Saint Matthew (*Panarion*, I, 29, 7 and 9), while a notable passage, translated further on, which occurs in the historical portion of our texts, eulogizes the Hebrew language.

Both Epiphanius' Nazarenes and the Ebionites of Origen, Hippolytus and other authors (these two denominations appear to designate one and the same sect) consider, like the original authors of our texts, that Jesus was man and not God, though the latter appear to have believed, as Epiphanius' Nazarenes too may have done (*Panarion*, I, 29, 7), that there was something supernatural about his birth. Like Hippolytus' Ebionites (see *Elenchus* [edited by P. WENDLAND], Leipzig 1916, VII, 34, p. 221), the original authors of our texts considered that Jesus 'completed' or 'fulfilled' (*mutammiman* [70a]) the Law.<sup>33</sup>

The doctrines of Epiphanius' Ebionites are held to approximate to those of the Jewish Christian portions of the *Pseudo-Clementines*. Thus, they are said to believe in one true prophet appearing in various shapes and forms throughout history, to delete texts occurring in the Old Testament as being false, to reject bloody sacrifices and to consider that their abolition and the prohibition of the eating of meat were part of Jesus' mission. None of these teachings, which deviate from those of the less speculatively inclined Jewish Christians who seem to have been, in the main, content to practise traditional Jewish piety, are professed by the original authors of our texts. As has already been noted, they considered that Jesus approved of the observance of the Jewish sacrifices.<sup>34</sup> In a passage concerning Mani (which is translated below, see Excursus I) they mention that this heresiarch quoted passages from the Gospels which prohibit sacrifices and the eating of meat; but they clearly considered that these passages were not authentic.

Another point may be mentioned in this context. The arguments based on an exegesis of the Gospels which are used in our texts in order to re-

32 However, the account of Saint Paul's origin and conversion to Christianity which Epiphanius ascribes to them is different from that found in our text (cf. below). At least two different, but equally derogatory, versions of Saint Paul's biography seem to have been current among his Jewish Christian opponents.

33 This is, of course, also stated in the Gospels. But the dominant Christian Churches did not regard these words as applying to the literal observances of the commandments.

34 According to our texts (69b) Jesus forbade sacrifices which were not offered (or animals which were not slaughtered) by the People of the Book.

fute the doctrine of the divinity of Christ are largely identical with the parallel arguments with which, according to Epiphanius (who quotes them in order to controvert them), the Arians polemize against this doctrine (*Panarion*, II, 69).

These sectarians and the Jewish Christians of our texts tend to use the same verses of the Gospels in order to show that Jesus made clear his own inferiority to God and his submission to Him.<sup>35</sup> In addition, the Arians—like the Jewish Christians—quote in order to strengthen this argument, passages which refer to Jesus' anguish, regarded as a proof of his humanity. Thus they cite<sup>36</sup> Luke xxii : 44, which in our texts is paralleled, as we have seen, by a passage depicting Jesus' agony in a somewhat different but not less forcible manner.

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that there must have been some connection between the Arian and the Jewish Christian polemics against the dogma of the divinity of Christ. In itself this conclusion is quite likely, as a certain doctrinal similarity between the Jewish Christians and the Arians (who did not observe the Mosaic law) has been often recognized. We may add that in the historical portions of our Jewish Christian texts Arius appears to be regarded with sympathy.

These historical texts give, from the Jewish-Christian point of view, an outline of the events and tendencies which brought about (1) the flight of the original Christian community from Jerusalem (or from Palestine) and (2) the abandonment and betrayal of what is regarded as true Chris-

35 Though the quotations differ in some measure, because Arius, as quoted by Epiphanius, always uses the New Testament text, whereas the Jewish Christians under discussion occasionally do not do so. Both our text and Arius (*Panarion*, II, 69, 19, 1) quote in support of their conception of Jesus' view of himself the saying found in Mark x : 18 and in Luke xviii : 19. According to Epiphanius (69, 19, 3), Arius also cites in this context Matthew xx : 20–23, setting forth the request of the mother of the sons of Zebedee and Jesus' answer. On the other hand, our text quotes in this connection the following passage:

(52b) 'A man said to him: "Master, my brother (wishes) to share (with me) my father's blessing." (Jesus) said to him: "Who set me over you (in order to determine your) share?"' (*wa-qāla lahu rajulun: murā, akhī yuqāsīmuni barakāt abī, fa-qāla: wa-man ja'alani 'alaykum qāsīman.*)

The word *murā* (the vowel is indicated in the MS) appears to be a transcription of the Aramaic *mārā* ('master', 'sir'). The choice of the vowel may indicate that in the Aramaic dialect used by the translator, the word (in accordance with the usage in one branch of Syriac) was pronounced *moro*.

In Mark x : 35–40. the sons of Zebedee do not present their request to Jesus through the intermediary of their mother—they do it directly. The passage quoted in our text seems to be a variation on this story of the rivalry of the two brothers. The fact that it is used by the Jewish Christians in a context similar to that in which Arius quotes the story of the sons of Zebedee confirms this view.

36 See EPIPHANIUS, *Panarion*, II, 69, 19, 4.

tianity and its replacement by Greek notions and ways. It is the relation of a historic failure; victory rests with the agents of corruption.<sup>37</sup> While some of the doctrinal positions set forth in the Jewish Christian polemical texts which we have studied were referred to in various sources, the interpretation of history propounded in the texts which will now engage our attention was virtually unknown.<sup>38</sup>

The historical texts may be divided into the following sections:

1. A text containing (a) a relation of the fortunes of the first Christian Community of Jerusalem from the death of Jesus till the flight of its members with a short reference to their tribulations in exile and (b) an account of the origin of the four canonical Gospels and of the successful efforts made to put an end to the use of the original Hebrew Gospels.
2. A short passage stating the reasons for the decadence of Christianity and giving a version of the first Christian attempts at converting the Gentiles in Antioch, which is probably based on the account figuring in the Acts of the Apostles.
3. A hostile biography of Saint Paul, partly also based on the Acts.
4. The second part of section 3 is joined or jumbled in a curious way with the beginning of section 4, which gives an account of Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine, of this emperor himself and of the Council of Nicaea and also refers to Constantine's successors. This section also contains a passage on Mani.

The first section is here translated in full:

(71a) 'After him,<sup>39</sup> his disciples (*aṣḥāb*) were with the Jews and the Children of Israel in the latter's synagogues and observed the prayers and the feasts of (the Jews) in the same place as the latter. (However) there was a disagreement between them and the Jews with regard to Christ.

The Romans (*al-Rūm*)<sup>40</sup> reigned over them. The Christians (used to) complain to the Romans about the Jews, showed them their own weakness<sup>41</sup> and appealed to their pity. And the Romans did pity

37 In an obvious interpolation (69b), 'Abd al-Jabbār draws a parallel between the decadence of Christianity described in these texts and the decadence of Islam.

38 Though, as has already been mentioned, Epiphanius refers to the Ebionites' hostility to Saint Paul, which is also expressed in the *Pseudo-Clementines*.

39 I.e., after the death of Christ. This passage follows upon an interpolation by 'Abd al-Jabbār, who applies the notion of the gradual corruption of religion, encountered by him in the Jewish Christian texts which he uses, to Islam, which was in his opinion in a parlous state, beset as it was by heresies.

40 As already stated, this term may designate both the Romans and the Byzantine Greeks.

41 I.e., that of the Christians.

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them. This (used) to happen frequently. And the Romans said to the Christians: "Between us and the Jews there is a pact which (obliges us) not to change their religious laws (*adyān*). But if you would abandon their laws and separate yourselves from them, praying as we do (while facing) the East, eating (the things) we eat, and regarding as permissible that which we consider as such, we should help you and make you powerful,<sup>42</sup> and the Jews would find no way (to harm you). On the contrary, you would be more powerful<sup>43</sup> than they."

The Christians answered:<sup>44</sup> "We will do this." (And the Romans) said: "Go, fetch your companions, and bring your Book (*kitāb*)." (The Christians) went to their companions, informed them of (what had taken place) between them and the Romans and said to them: "Bring the Gospel (*al-injīl*), and stand up so that we should go to them." But these (companions) said to them: "You have done ill. We are not permitted (to let) the Romans pollute the Gospel. (71b) In giving a favourable answer to the Romans, you have accordingly departed from the religion. We are (therefore) no longer permitted to associate with you; on the contrary, we are obliged to declare that there is nothing in common between us and you;" and they prevented their (taking possession of) the Gospel or gaining access to it. In consequence a violent quarrel (broke out) between (the two groups). Those (mentioned in the first place) went back to the Romans and said to them: "Help us against these companions of ours before (helping us) against the Jews, and take away from them on our behalf our Book (*kitāb*)." Thereupon (the companions of whom they had spoken) fled the country. And the Romans wrote concerning them to their governors in the districts of Mosul and in the *Jazīrat al-'Arab*.<sup>45</sup> Accordingly, a search was made for them; some (*qawm*) were caught and burned, others (*qawm*) were killed.

(As for) those who had given a favourable answer to the Romans they came together and took counsel as to how to replace the Gospel, seeing that it was lost to them. (Thus) the opinion that a Gospel should be composed (*yunshi'u*) was established among them. They said: "the *Torah* (consists) only of (narratives concerning) the births of the prophets and of the histories (*tawārikh*) of their lives. We are going to construct (*nabnī*) a Gospel according to this (pattern).

42 'Azzaznākum, or: 'should honour you'.

43 A'azzu, or: 'more honoured'.

44 Literally: 'said'.

45 In the context this geographical term might—exceptionally—designate the Jazīra region in North-Eastern Syria, rather than the Arabian Peninsula.



Everyone among us is going to call to mind that which he remembers of the words (*alfāz*) of the Gospel and of (the things) about which the Christians talked among themselves (when speaking) of Christ.” Accordingly, some people (*qawm*<sup>46</sup>) wrote a Gospel. After (them) came others (*qawm*) (who) wrote (another) Gospel. (In this manner) a certain number of Gospels were written. (However) a great part<sup>47</sup> of what was (contained) in the original was missing<sup>48</sup> in them. There were among them (men), one after another, who knew many things that were contained in the true Gospel (*al-injīl al-ṣaḥīḥ*), but with a view to establishing their dominion (*ri’āsa*), they refrained from communicating them. In all this there was no mention of the cross or of the crucifix.<sup>49</sup> According to them there were eighty Gospels. However, their (number) constantly diminished and became less, until (only) four Gospels were left which are due to four individuals (*nafar*). Every one of them composed<sup>50</sup> in his time a Gospel. Then another came after him, saw that (the Gospel composed by his predecessor) was imperfect,<sup>51</sup> and composed another which according to him was more correct (*aṣaḥḥ*), nearer to correction (*al-ṣiḥḥa*) than the Gospel of the others.<sup>52</sup>

Then there is not among these a Gospel (written) in the language of Christ, which was spoken by him and his companions (*aṣḥāb*), namely the Hebrew (*al-‘ibraniyya*) language, which is that of Abraham (*Ibrāhīm*), the Friend (*khalīl*) of God and of the other prophets, (the language) which was spoken by them and in which the Books of God were revealed to them<sup>53</sup> and to the other Children of Israel, and in which God addressed them.

(For) they<sup>54</sup> have abandoned (*taraka*) (this language). Learned men (*al-‘ulamā*) said to them: “Community of Christians, give up the Hebrew language, which is the language of Christ and the prophets

46 *Qawm* may signify ‘a group of people’.

47 Or: ‘the greater part’ (*al-kathīr*).

48 Literally: ‘had fallen’ (*saqaṭa*).

49 A slightly different reading of one word would alter the sense as follows: ‘no mention of the crucifix or of the crucifixion.’ The text permits also the rendering: ‘no mention of crucifixion or of crucifixion’. The statement may refer to the fact (noted, for instance, by M. SULZBERGER, ‘Le Symbole de la croix et les monogrammes de Jésus chez les premiers chrétiens’, *Byzantion*, II [1922], p. 341) that no religious or symbolic signification attaches to the cross in the Gospels. The Jewish Christians were opposed to the worship of the cross (see below).

50 ‘*Amala*; literally: ‘made’.

51 *Muqaṣṣir*; the word means ‘insufficient’, ‘incomplete’, ‘defective’.

52 Or: ‘the Gospel of the other (man)’.

53 Literally: ‘descended upon them’ (*nazalat ‘alā hā’ulā’i*).

54 Apparently the Christians in general, rather than the authors of the Gospels.

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(who were) before him, peace be upon them, (72a) and (adopt<sup>55</sup>) other languages.” Thus there is no Christian who (in observing) a religious obligation recites these Gospels in the Hebrew language: he does not do so out of ruse (using) a stratagem, in order to avoid (public) shame.<sup>56</sup>

Therefore people<sup>57</sup> said to them:<sup>58</sup> The giving-up (the language: *al-'udūl 'anhā*) occurred because your first masters (*aṣḥābukum al-awwalūn*) aimed at deception in their writings (*maqālāt*) using such stratagems as quotations from counterfeit authorities<sup>59</sup> in the lies which they composed, and concealing these stratagems. They did this because they sought to obtain domination (*ri'āsa*). For at that time the Hebrews (*al-'ibraniyya*) were people of the Book and men of knowledge.<sup>60</sup> Accordingly, these individuals (*naḥar*) altered (*ghayyara*) the language or rather gave it up altogether, in order that the men of knowledge should not grasp quickly their teaching<sup>61</sup> and their objectives. (For if they had done so these individuals) would have been disgraced before having been (able) to consolidate their teaching and their (objectives<sup>62</sup>) would not have been fulfilled. Accordingly, they gave up (Hebrew and took up) numerous other languages which had not been spoken by Christ and his companions. (Those who speak these languages) are not people of the Book and have no knowledge concerning God's books and commandments. Such were the Romans (*al-Rūm*), the Syrians, the Persians, the Armenians and other foreigners.<sup>63</sup> This was done by means of deception and ruse by this small group of people who (wanted) to hide their infamy and to reach the goal of their wishes in their aspiration for dominion (which was to be won) through (the instrumentality of) religion.

55 A word may be missing in the manuscript.

56 This last sentence reads in the Arabic text: *hattā mā min naṣrānī yatlu hādhihi al-anājil fi farḥ min furūḍihi bi-lughati'l-'ibrānī ḥilatan wa-makidatan firāran min al-faḍīha*. From the syntactic point of view the insertion of *illā* before *ḥilatan* would improve the construction of the sentence, which in that case could be rendered as follows:

‘There is no Christian who (in observing) a religious obligation recites these Evangels in the Hebrew language unless it be (by using some) ruse and stratagem in order to avoid (public) shame.’

57 Apparently the spokesmen of the Jewish Christians.

58 Evidently the Christians in general are meant.

59 ‘Quotations from counterfeit authorities’ is in this context a possible translation of the word: *tadlis*, which may also mean: ‘swindling’.

60 *Ahl al-'ilm*; literally: ‘people of knowledge’.

61 *Madhhab*; the word may apply both to theological doctrine and to religious rites.

62 This word has been added, as apparently a word is missing in the manuscript.

63 *A'ajim*; the term is often applied to people who do not speak Arabic.

If this were not so they would have used the language of Abraham, of his children and of Christ, through whom the edifice had been constructed and to whom the books had been revealed.<sup>64</sup> In establishing a proof (meant) for the Children of Israel and the unbelievers among the Jews (*al-yahūd*) it would have been better that a call be made to them in their own tongue (*lisān*) and a discussion engaged with them in their language (*lugha*), which they would not have been able to refuse. Know this; it is a great principle.

Know—may God have mercy upon you—that these three sects<sup>65</sup> do not believe that God revealed to Christ in one way or another a Gospel or a book. Rather, according to them, Christ created the prophets, revealed to them the books and sent to them angels. However, they have with them Gospels composed by four individuals, each one of whom wrote a Gospel. After (one of them) came (another<sup>66</sup>) who was not satisfied with (his predecessor's) Gospel and held that his own Gospel was better. (These Gospels) agree in certain places and disagree (72b) in others; in some of them (there are passages) which are not (found) in the other. There are tales concerning people—men and women—from among the Jews, the Romans, and other (nations, who) said this and did that. There are many absurdities, (many) false and stupid things and many obvious lies and manifest contradictions. It was this which people have thoroughly studied and set apart. However, a person who reads it becomes aware of this<sup>67</sup> if he examines it carefully. Something—but little—of the sayings, the precepts of Christ and information<sup>68</sup> concerning him is also to be found there.

As for the four Gospels: one of them was composed by John (*Yūḥannā*) and another by Matthew. Then, after these two came Mark (*M.r.q.s.*) who was not satisfied with their two Gospels. Then, after these came Luke (*Lūqā*), who was not satisfied with these Evangels and composed (still) another one. Each one of them was of the opinion (*wakāna 'inda kull wāḥid min hā'ulā'*) that the man<sup>69</sup> who had composed a Gospel before him, had given a correct account of (certain) things and had distorted (*akhalla*) others, and that another (Gospel) would be more deserving of recognition and more correct. For if

64 Literally: 'upon whom the books had descended'.

65 The Jacobites, the Nestorians and the Orthodox.

66 A word may be missing in the manuscript.

67 Presumably the various shortcomings of the Gospels referred to above are meant.

68 *Akhhār* (in the plural); the word may also apply to the history, or story, of Jesus.

69 *Sāhib*; a word which means, *inter alia*, 'companion'.

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his predecessor<sup>70</sup> had succeeded in giving a correct account, there would have been no need for him to compose another, different from that of his predecessor.

None of these four Gospels is a commentary upon another (Gospel); (it is not a case of) someone who coming after (someone else) comments upon his predecessor's book, giving first an account of what the latter had said, and then (proposing) a commentary. Know this: (he who composed a Gospel) did this, because another man had fallen short of success (*qaṣṣara*) (at his task).

These (Christian) sects are of the opinion that these four (Evangelists) were companions and disciples of Christ. But they do not know, having no information (on the subject), who they were. On this (point) they can (merely) make a claim. For Luke mentions in his Gospel that he had never seen Christ. Addressing (the man) for whom he composed his Gospel—he is the last of the four (Evangelists)—he says: "I knew your desire of good, of knowledge and of instruction (*al-adab*), and I composed this Gospel because I knew this and because I was close to those who had served and seen the Word (*al-kalima*)."<sup>71</sup> Thus he says clearly in the first place that he did not see the Word—they signify by this word Christ; thereupon he claims to have seen (people) who had seen Christ. But his having seen them is a (mere) assertion (on his part). If he had been someone deserving of trust, he would not have—in view of the (kind of) information (which was at his disposal)—composed anything at all. In spite of this he mentions that his Gospel is preferable to those<sup>72</sup> of the others.

(73a) If the Christians would consider these things, they would know that the Gospels which are with them are of no profit to them, and that the knowledge claimed (on their behalf) by their masters and the authors (of these Gospels) is not (found) in them, and that on this (point) things are just as we have said—it is a well-known (fact) which is referred to here (namely the fact that they have abandoned the religion of Christ and turned towards) the religious doctrines<sup>73</sup> of the Romans, prizing and (seeking to obtain) in haste the profits which could be derived from their domination and their riches.'

The first part of this text appears to outline the early history of the Jewish Christian community, whose writings were adapted by 'Abd al-

70 *Sāhib*; see above, n. 69.

71 This quotation differs to some extent from Luke i : 1-4.

72 In the singular in Arabic.

73 *Madhāhib*; the word also applies to religious rites.

Jabbār; to be precise, its history as it was remembered in the tradition of the sect.

At the first blush, two interconnected points in this tradition seem to be particularly revealing with regard to the origin of this community; one of them is the supreme importance attached to the Hebrew language, in which God spoke to Abraham, to Jesus and to the other prophets. The original Gospel, which seems to have been no longer extant at the time of the writing of the text (though the story told in the latter would have been consistent with its having been brought into the lands of exile by the members of the community who left Palestine), is evidently regarded as having been written in Hebrew.<sup>74</sup> Hebrew versions of 'these Gospels', an expression which probably refers to the four canonical Gospels, or to some of them,<sup>75</sup> are, as it seems, also mentioned. These versions appear to have been still extant, though perhaps rare. The fact that Christians (perhaps in this context the Jewish Christians are meant) no longer recite them, or, according to another interpretation of the text, recite them only clandestinely—being afraid of the propaganda of the Christian leaders who denounced the use of Hebrew—is deeply deplored.

This preoccupation with the Hebrew language bears out statements of Epiphanius referred to above concerning the Nazarenes, but it also has another significance. It seems to indicate that the people who were thus preoccupied thought of themselves as lineal descendants of a community in which Hebrew was the written (and perhaps also, at least in part, the spoken) language. In other words, these Jewish Christians were not such *Judaizantes* as arose throughout the history of Christianity—and still do arise among Gentile Christian populations—but preserved an apparently uninterrupted tradition which bore witness to their descent from the primitive (wholly Jewish) Christian community of Jerusalem.

Pride in Jewish origin is even more in evidence if one considers the second point to which I alluded above.

Writing, as they certainly did, at a time when Christianity, the 'Romanized' Christianity which they bitterly opposed, was triumphant in a great part of what used to be called the habitable earth, they still regretted—they were no doubt the only people in the world to do so—that, in consequence, as they thought, of the abandonment by the Christians of the Hebrew language and the adoption of other languages, the opportunity to convert to Christianity the unbelievers among the Jews was renounced, being exchanged for the prospect (which was substantiated) of bringing about the conversion of many other nations. In their view, this was a

74 I.e., not in Arabic.

75 Versions which, as we know from the patristic literature, did exist.

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deliberate policy on the part of the Christian leaders, who did not want to have their doctrines demolished by the scholars grounded in the scriptures who were numerous among the Jews. In point of fact, however, the loss which Christianity suffered through its failure to convert the Jews outweighed, as they thought, by far the gain due to the conversion of people ignorant of the divine scriptures and commandments, such as the Romans, the Persians and the Syrians. This position is exactly opposed not only to Saint Paul's practice, but also to the theological doctrine set forth by him in the Epistle to the Romans: the conversion of the Gentiles and the refusal of the Jews constitute for him a new scheme of redemption in which the final salvation and reinstatement of Israel is relegated to the domain of eschatology.

To put the matter more simply: the Jewish Christian authors of the text which has just been translated had not yet, at the time of writing, several centuries after history had decided, quite reconciled themselves to the historical trend which had led to the split and to a deep antagonism between Christianity and Judaism, whereas this separation was as a rule welcomed both by the dominant Christian Churches and by the Jews; further on we shall refer to a Jewish work in which this sentiment is clearly indicated.

Clearly, these historical regrets and this Jewish religious and national pride have nothing to do with 'Abd al-Jabbār. Apart from certain Islamic terms such as 'People of the Book', which may have been introduced either by 'Abd al-Jabbār himself or by the translators of the presumably Syriac original, the text which has just been quoted appears to be of purely Jewish Christian origin; as has already been stated, it seems to relate to some of the traditions of the sect. These traditions bear in part on the history of Christianity in the first century (and perhaps in the first half of the second century) and do not—as far as the text under discussion is concerned<sup>76</sup>—appear to derive from a tradition which gives the point of view of the dominant Churches. In other words, there is a fair chance that this text—which may have been written down in the fifth century or later (see below)—represents an independent, otherwise quite unknown tradition concerning some events which occurred in the earliest Christian community; this tradition, however distorted it may have been in the course of transmission, could yet conceivably go back in parts to the first period of Christianity.

The story which relates the flight of the original Christian community from Palestine has an evident counterpart in the departure of that

76 As shall be explained below, certain texts of the sect appear to be distortions and sometimes parodies of the Acts of the Apostles.

community from Jerusalem to Pella accounted in Eusebius<sup>77</sup> and in Epiphanius.<sup>78</sup> Some modern scholars tend to think that such an exodus had not taken place, one of the reasons given being that, according to Eusebius' *History*, it was occasioned by an oracle, and according to Epiphanius (the only other source known up to now), by an order of Christ: this motivation did not find credence.<sup>79</sup>

The story told in our text bears traces of theological embroidery; the motif of the original Gospel which must not be sullied by contact with non-Jews is reminiscent of certain notions found in the *Pseudo-Clementines*.<sup>80</sup> It is also suspect on another count: it is clearly influenced to some extent by the constant tendency of the Jewish Christians to impute to the Christians who had sold out to 'the Romans' the responsibility for everything that, from their point of view, went wrong in the history of Christianity. The essentials of the story which remains, if we make allowance for all this, may be summed up as follows: the uneasy coexistence, characterized by mutual hostility, of the Jewish Christians and the Jews in Palestine could not survive an appeal for help against the Jews made to the Romans by some of the Christians, the community being apparently split into two groups. This appeal boomeranged, and the Jewish Christian community, or a part of it, had to leave Palestine. It may be noted that a Christian appeal to the Romans in Palestine and its upshot are recorded in Acts xxii-xxvi; it was made by Saint Paul. It is, moreover, an interesting point that Eusebius seems to say or to imply<sup>81</sup> that this appeal was the indirect cause of the action resulting in the murder committed by the Jews, of James, the brother of Jesus, who was the head of the Christian community of Jerusalem.<sup>82</sup> The hypothesis can

77 EUSEBIUS, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, III, 5, 4.

78 *Panarion*, 29, 7; 30, 2; *De Ponderibus*, 15. Cf. SCHOEPS, *op. cit.* (above, n. 31), p. 265. Strecker believes that the story found in Epiphanius is dependent, as far as the essential points are concerned, on Eusebius, but holds that an allusion to the exodus to Pella exists in the *Pseudo-Clementines*; see G. STRECKER, *Das Judenchristentum in den Pseudoklementinen*, Berlin 1958, pp. 229 f.

79 Other reasons for disbelief in the story of the exodus to Pella are given by STRECKER, *ibid.*, pp. 230 f.

80 Cf. SCHOEPS, *op. cit.* (above, n. 31), pp. 120 f.

81 *Historia Ecclesiastica*, II, 23, 4: 'When Paul appealed to Caesar and was sent to Rome by Festus, the Jews were disappointed of the hope in which they had devised their plot against him and turned their attention to James the Lord's brother, who had been elected by the apostles to the episcopal throne at Jerusalem. This is the crime they committed against him' (translated by G. A. WILLIAMSON). It may be a significant point that our texts do not manifest any regard for James the Just, mentioned only in quotations from Gospels, one of which is from an unknown Gospel (see below).

82 James, who is very much in evidence in the *Pseudo-Clementines*, and is regarded

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at least be envisaged that the attempts of some members of the Christian community in question to obtain help from the Romans, or arrive at an understanding with them, may on the whole have worsened the position of this community, and finally rendered it untenable, making flight necessary. Our text seems to indicate that, as a result, Jewish Christian communities were formed in the Mosul district and in the Jazīra (or in Arabia). The following points stand out in the passage concerning the Gospels. As was already noted above, the original Gospel was regarded as having been written in Hebrew. The Jewish Christians apparently also had canonical Gospels written in Hebrew, but at the time of the writing of the text their recitation in this language was no longer customary. The canonical and the other Gospels, which were written after the original Gospel was lost, were, according to our text, composed with the idea of giving an account of the birth and life of Jesus; they were modelled in this upon the narratives concerning the lives of prophets found in the Old Testament. It seems to be presupposed that the original Gospel did not conform to this literary genre; in other words, it did not contain an account of the birth and life of Jesus.

In view of the fact that these Jewish Christian texts represent an independent tradition, this is an important inference, for it may give an answer to a much-debated problem of interpretation. Papias quoted by Eusebius states:<sup>83</sup> 'Matthew compiled the sayings in the Hebrew language, and everyone translated them as well as he could.' (ματθαῖος μὲν οὖν ἔβραϊδι διαλέκτῳ τὰ λόγια διετάξατο, ἡρμήνευσεν δ' αὐτὰ, ὡς ἦν δυνατὸς ἕκαστος).

The problem which has been referred to is concerned with the meaning of the term *λόγια*. Some scholars believe that, in this context, it may signify inspired texts of all kinds, narratives as well as sayings, whereas others hold that it means 'sayings' only.<sup>84</sup> The fact that the Jewish Christian texts, which obviously do not derive in any way from Papias, imply that the 'true' Hebrew Gospel did not contain an account of the birth

in various other sources as the head of the Jewish Christians, is not mentioned in our texts as a religious leader.

83 EUSEBIUS, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, III, 39, 16. Williamson's translation has been used in a modified form.

84 The most recent contribution to this debate has been made by R. GRYSON in: 'A Propos du témoignage de Papias sur Matthieu—Le Sens du mot *logia* chez les pères du second siècle', *Analecta Lovaniensia*, Ser. IV, Fasc. 27 (1965). Gryson, who gives a history of the discussion, shows that the Christian authors of the second century used the word *logia* in the sense of inspired writings in general, but he admits that this evidence is not conclusive with regard to the point at issue, i.e., the meaning which Papias gave the word *logia*.



and life of Jesus, appears to weigh the scales decisively in favour of the second opinion; accordingly, the term *logia*, as used by Papias, has a restricted sense; it means 'sayings' and nothing else.

Saint John and Saint Matthew are stated to have been the earliest canonical Gospels. They were followed by Saint Mark and Saint Luke (in this order). This contradicts the ecclesiastic tradition which regards Saint John as having been written after the three other Gospels.

The antedating of Saint John and Saint Matthew may of course have been originally due to the fact that these two Gospels (and not the others) bear the names of two apostles, and were thought to have been composed by them. But our text makes it clear that it does not sanction this view, though it perhaps does not explicitly oppose it; elsewhere in these texts it is made clear that the Gospels contain no first-hand evidence concerning Jesus. It is probable that the fact that Saint Matthew and Saint John are coupled together in our text as the earliest canonical Gospels may be due to the circumstance that at an early period in some Christian communities a New Testament canon seems to have been accepted in which Saint John followed immediately upon Saint Matthew. As P. Corsen has shown,<sup>85</sup> this is clearly indicated in the Latin 'Prologue' to Saint John, which antedates Saint Jerome.

As already mentioned, the canonical Gospels seem to have been used by the Jewish Christians, and the author does not disapprove of this practice, or only insofar as the non-Hebrew versions were preferred to the Hebrew ones. However, he also dwells on the grave shortcomings of these Gospels. In his opinion, they contained false statements and contradiction, but also a little true information concerning Jesus' life and teachings.<sup>86</sup> This ambivalent attitude is perhaps characteristic for the Jewish Christians, many of whom may have ostensibly belonged to a recognized Christian Church.

85 See P. CORSEN, *Monarchianische Prologe zu den vier Evangelien—Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Kanons (Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, xv)*, Leipzig 1896, pp. 7, 17 ff.; cf. p. 113, the quotation from EUSEBIUS, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, III, 24, 5, 6.

86 There is a curious analogy, which is probably not entirely due to chance, between the attitude adopted towards the canonical Gospels by the Jewish Christians on one hand, and by Marcion, who with respect to doctrine was their bitterest antagonist, on the other. Marcion did not believe that the immediate disciples of Jesus had written anything. In other words, he denied that the Gospel of Saint Matthew and that of Saint John were written by the apostles bearing these names. Moreover, according to him all the four Gospels were falsified by the Judaists. See A. VON HARNACK, *Marcion—Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott (Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, XLV)*, Leipzig 1924, pp. 40-41.

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Another passage, which occurs in a non-historical text, contains an even more derogatory statement concerning the Gospels:

(95a) 'Know . . . that these Christian sects<sup>87</sup> are the most ignorant people in the world with regard to Christ, his history<sup>88</sup> and that of his mother and that everyone among the authors of these Gospels learnt whatever he has written only a long time (*al-dahr al-ṭawīl*) after Christ and after the death of his companions (*aṣḥāb*) from (people) who lacked knowledge and were ill-informed (*man lā ya'rifu wa-lā yuḥaṣṣilu*).'

The second historical text—a short one—comes before the first (to which because of its importance I gave pride of place) with respect to the period of which it treats; it also precedes it in 'Abd al-Jabbār's work. It follows closely upon the modified quotation from Matthew v : 17–19, quoted above.

(70a) 'He<sup>89</sup> and his companions behaved constantly in this manner,<sup>90</sup> until he left this world.<sup>91</sup> He said to his companions: "Act as you have seen me act, instruct people in accordance with instructions I have given you, and be for them what I have been for you."<sup>92</sup> His companions behaved constantly in this manner and in accordance with this. And so did those who (came) after the first generation of his companions, and (also) those who came long after (the second generation). Then they began to make changes and alterations, (to introduce) innovations<sup>93</sup> into the religion (*al-dīn*), to seek dominion (*ri'āsa*), to make friends with people by (indulging) their passions, to (try) to circumvent the Jews and to satisfy<sup>94</sup> the anger (which) they (felt) against the latter, even if (in doing so) they (had) to abandon the religion. This is clear from the Gospels which are with them and to which they refer and from their book, known as the *Book of Praxeis*<sup>95</sup> (Acts).

It is (written) there: A group (*qawm*) of Christians left Jerusalem (*bayt al-maqdis*) and came to Antioch and other towns of Syria (*al-Shām*).

87 The Orthodox, the Jacobites and the Nestorians.

88 *Bi'l-masih wa-akhbārīhi*. *Akhbār* may signify 'information' (concerning Christ).

89 Jesus.

90 I.e., they observed the commandments of the Mosaic Law.

91 *Ilā an kharaja min al-dunyā*; literally: 'went out of this world'.

92 Cf. Matthew xxviii : 19–20. But the quotation in the text—if indeed it corresponds to the verses—has been amplified.

93 Or: 'heresies' (*bida'*).

94 Literally: *shifā'* (healing).

95 *Kitāb 'frāskas*.

They called upon the people (to obey) the law (*al-sunna*) of the Torah, to forbid offering sacrifices to those who have not the necessary qualifications (*laysa min ahlihā*) (to practise) circumcision, to observe the Sabbath, to prohibit pork and other things (forbidden) by the Torah. These things were regarded as burdensome by the Gentiles<sup>96</sup> and they took little notice (of the exhortations). Thereupon, the Christians of Jerusalem forgathered to take counsel as to the stratagems which were to be employed with regard to the Gentiles in order (to make) the latter respond and obey them. They were of the opinion that it was necessary to mix with the Gentiles, to make them concessions (*rukhs*), to descend to (the level of) their erroneous beliefs,<sup>97</sup> to eat (a portion) of the sacrifices they offer,<sup>98</sup> to adopt their customs and to approve of their way (of life). And they composed a book on this.<sup>99</sup>

The events related in this quotation seem to correspond more or less to those referred to in Acts xi : 17–22 (or 21; cf. also xv : 1–29). However, the attitude of the canonical Acts towards the conversion of the Gentiles in Antioch which they welcome, is diametrically opposed to that of the quotation which deplores the abandonment of the exigencies of the Mosaic Law with a view to this conversion.

It is possible that this quotation belonged to Jewish Christian Acts of the Apostles<sup>100</sup>—the *Praxeis* of our text. However, as far as this particular text is concerned, the *Praxeis* in question seem to derive from the canonical Acts. Unlike our first historical text, they do not belong to an independent tradition.

The other two historical texts will not be translated in full in this paper. Like the passage which has just been discussed, some portions of the first part of the biography of Saint Paul which is found in our texts (73a ff.) clearly derive from the Acts.

Paul, who is described as a villainous Jew with a passion for dominion, is said to have at first helped the Jews against the Christians. However, when he returns to Jerusalem after a prolonged absence, he changes sides, helps the Christians and tells them to separate themselves from the Jews

96 *Al-umam*; literally: 'the people' (τὰ ἔθνη).

97 *Ahwā*'; the word may also mean 'errant desires and caprices'.

98 Or: '(animals) they slaughtered'. Cf. also Acts xv : 15–21.

99 Two quotations from the Epistles of Saint Paul follow, one of which is quoted above.

100 On the Ebionite Acts of the Apostles mentioned by Epiphanius, see SCHÖEPF, *op. cit.* (above, n. 31), pp. 381–456. The biographical details concerning Saint Paul, which as Epiphanius heard were given in these Acts, do not agree with those mentioned in our texts, but the two stories are equally derogatory.

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and to associate with peoples hostile to the Jews. Asked by the latter why he had become a Christian, he related the vision on the road to Damascus (Acts ix). But in this version darkness envelopes him, instead of the heavenly light of the Acts (ix : 4); he is addressed not by Jesus (Acts ix : 5) but by 'the Lord' (*al-rabb*), who asks him why he ill-treats the disciples of His son, and is given back his eyesight not by 'the disciple' Ananias, but by the Jew Ḥayyim<sup>101</sup> the Kohen.<sup>102</sup>

Paul (who as a Jew was called Sha'ul) also says to the Jews that he spent fourteen days with God in heaven, who gave him many injunctions and told him 'many shameful (*qabiḥa*) things about you, which I will not tell you'. The last statement, concerning Paul's sojourn in heaven, probably derives from II Corinthians xii : 2-4. According to our text, the Jews were amazed at these stupid tales and took him to the companion (*sāhib*) of Caesar (*qayṣar*) who was their king,<sup>103</sup> having been appointed by the Romans (*al-Rūm*). The king ordered him to be beaten, but learning from him that he was a Roman, sent him instead to Constantinople.<sup>104</sup> There he associated with the Romans and tried to stir them up against the Jews. *Inter alia*, he scraped an acquaintance with the queen.<sup>105</sup>

He denied validity to the laws of Moses which were repugnant to the Romans, declaring, *inter alia*, that circumcision was an obligation for the Jews only and that the eating of pork was permitted, as nothing which enters into man is forbidden. He also denied validity to the commandments concerning ritual cleanliness. In accordance with the Roman usage<sup>106</sup> he prohibited polygamy and divorce, and thus won over the women. In short, no Roman customs<sup>107</sup> and also no beliefs held by Romans

101 *H.y.m.*, with a *tashdid* over the *y*. As far as is known at present, no person bearing this name antedates the ninth century. The father of the Ga'on Semah, who belongs to this century, is called Ḥayyim. See J. KUTSCHER, *Kedem*, I (1942), p. 44.

102 *Al-kāhin*; the reading of the *kāf* is not certain.

103 *Malik*; in these texts this word may perhaps sometimes signify 'governor'. In this context it may however be applied to Agrippas who is called 'king' in Acts xxv : 13, 26; xxvi : 2, 19, 30.

104 *Qusṭantīniya*. He is sent there in answer to his request to be sent to 'the country of the Romans' (*bilād al-Rūm*). The substitution of Constantinople for Rome, the city to which Paul was sent according to the Acts, as well as various other flagrant anachronisms found in this biography of Paul, seem to indicate that this text was evolved in a popular, rather ignorant, *milieu*. The western Roman Empire seems to have been beyond the ken of the author or authors of our texts, who also in some cases tended to assimilate the customs of Pagan Rome to those of the Byzantines.

105 This may refer to Poppaea.

106 This text clearly confuses the Romans with the Byzantines.

107 One of which consisted in turning to the east when praying. On this Greek, Roman and Christian custom, see F. J. DÖLGER, *Sol Salutis*, Münster 1925.

were opposed by him, whereas the Torah was described by him as being wholly evil.

Paul spoke to the Romans of the asceticism, the grace and the miracles of Jesus and people listened to him. However, if one considers that he denied the religious teachings of Christ<sup>108</sup> and adopted those of the Romans, one must come to the conclusion that the Christians became Romanized (*tarawwamū*), whereas the Romans were not converted to Christianity. It was in consequence of Paul's anti-Jewish propaganda that the Romans, led by Titus, marched against the Jews, killing great multitudes and carrying away their treasures.

This increased Paul's popularity. His prestige was high among the common people as he practised magic and medicine. For both the Romans and the Armenians<sup>109</sup> are excessively ignorant, though they are skilful in certain crafts. However, their kings were very able administrators.

One of these kings, Nero, found out what kind of a person Paul was, had him brought into his presence, and asked him about circumcision. Paul expressed his disapproval of this rite and of those who practised it, but had to admit that Jesus and the apostles were circumcised. And he was found to be circumcised himself. Thus, the king discovered that Paul encouraged the Romans to practise a religion opposed to the religion of Christ. The king ordered him to be crucified after various indignities had been inflicted on him. His wish that he be crucified horizontally, rather than vertically, as was Jesus, was granted.

This last trait seems to be a variation upon the story of the crucifixion of Saint Peter, told in the Acts of this apostle.<sup>110</sup>

The reason for Paul's execution was obviously invented by Jewish Christians; his shameful end was thus a direct consequence of his great betrayal.

The following are some of the salient points in the biography of the Emperor Constantine figuring in the text (74b ff.):

His father is said to have been a Roman king called *Bilātūs*. The spelling of the name of Pontius Pilate found in our texts is different, namely *Filāt.s*, and no attempt is made to identify the two; the father of Constantine is said to have lived a long time after Jesus. After the death of his first wife, he married Helena (*Hilāniyā*), a girl of Ḥarrān who worked in an inn (*funduqiyya*); as Saint Ambrosius says,<sup>111</sup> she was a *stabularia*. The author of our texts mentions the point several times; he clearly does

108 According to whom the Mosaic commandments had to be observed.

109 The juxtaposition of these two people pinpoints the geographical perspective of the authors or transmitters of these texts.

110 See E. HENNECKE, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, II<sup>3</sup>, Tübingen 1964, pp. 219 f.

111 See *De Obitu Theodosii Oratio*, 42 (MIGNE, *Patrologia Latina*, XVI, Col. 1399).

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so because it casts an unfavourable light upon Helena, whom he dislikes.

The statement that Helena was a native of Ḥarrān appears to be false, but may conceivably have been a local legend. The name of the town of Ḥarrān crops up several times in these texts. Their author or authors must have had some connection with this locality (see below). Helena was also a Christian, and she induced her husband to favour her co-religionists to whom the Jews were giving a bad name. Constantine, who as far as outward appearances went, professed the Roman religion, had been brought up by his mother to love the cross (whose worship as well as that of the crucifix seems to be repugnant to our texts) and had accustomed him to Christian ways. After he succeeded to the throne,<sup>112</sup> he was afflicted with leprosy, a disease which, according to Roman usage, disqualified the man suffering from it for kingship. In consequence, Constantine made a secret of it. He also decided to destroy the authority of the Roman religion, whose notions placed him in this predicament, and to replace it by Christianity.

It may be noted in parenthesis that the theme of Constantine's leprosy is found in various Christian texts, both eastern and western.<sup>113</sup> However, in these texts his cure is brought about by baptism. It is not certain whether this version antedates that of our text, which is derogatory to Constantine.

According to this Jewish Christian version, Constantine, using various stratagems, caused his soldiers to think that the sign of the cross brought them good fortune in war. In consequence, they replaced in their flags the emblem of the crescent by that of the cross.<sup>114</sup>

112 His half-brothers, the sons of his father's first wife, reigned before him.

113 One of the latter is found in *Actus Silvestri* (second half of the fifth century). See, for instance, W. LEVISON, 'Konstantinische Schenkung und Silvester-Legende', *Miscellanea Francesco Ehrle*, II (1924), p. 172. Scholars who have studied this legend disagree as to whether it is of eastern or western origin (see LEVISON, pp. 234-239, who himself favours the latter). The oldest known Syriac version of the legend may be approximately contemporary with the western ones. All of these versions—both the eastern and the western—which were studied up to now, are intended to glorify Constantine as well as the Pope, who is replaced at least in one case by a bishop. The Judaeo-Christian version has a hostile attitude towards Constantine. The possibility should be considered that the story concerning the Emperor's leprosy originated among his antagonists rather than among his partisans.

114 Peterson (*op. cit.* [above, n. 31], pp. 15 ff.) attempts to prove that the worship of the cross and the custom to face the east when praying (both of which are rejected in our texts) are connected. Certain sects which criticize the use of the cross are mentioned by him on p. 25. The Marcionites—who prayed facing the west—are one of these sects, and thus agree in this point as well as in their

Hereupon Constantine began to kill Pagan philosophers, of whom there were many in the country. It is indicative of the Jewish Christian position that the author of our texts, who appears to execrate Constantine, also disapproves of these victims of his. The philosophers' books were burnt and monks were lodged in their temples, which were transformed into churches (or monasteries).<sup>115</sup>

Constantine's mother Helena, the monks and the Christians in general, were overjoyed at these measures. She made them<sup>116</sup> come to her and turned them into informers and assistants for her son.

However, Constantine, while professing to venerate the cross, did not put an end to the observance of the Roman religious rites; one of them was the custom to turn to the east when praying. Nor did he prohibit the worship of the stars. On the other hand, worship of the Christ and of Jesus and belief in the latter's divinity tended to spread. The Romans, who worshipped dead bodies such as the stars, did not find it difficult to worship a man. The inhabitants of the West (*al-maghrīb*) in particular, such as the Copts, took very readily to the idea, for they were accustomed to worship the pharaohs. A description of a massacre of Pagans in Ḥarrān, who had brought upon them Constantine's anger by bruited abroad the fact that he was a leper, occurs at this point, and this is matched a little further on in this tale by the account of another slaughter of Ḥarrānian Pagans.<sup>117</sup> The author may have used a local chronicle.

Constantine called a gathering of Christian monks with a view to the formulation of obligatory religious beliefs, deviation from which would be punished by death. Approximately two thousand religious leaders assembled<sup>118</sup> and composed a text which came close to the symbol of

belief that the text of the Gospels was falsified (see above) with their antagonists, the Jewish Christians. Cf. also M. SULZBERGER, *op. cit.* (above, n. 49), pp. 349 f. and 391 f.

115 The statements of our text may be regarded as a piece of evidence to be used in the discussion concerning the attitude of Constantine after his conversion towards the Pagan cults. But the possibility that our text confused, with regard to this point, Constantine with some of his successors should be kept in mind.

116 The monks or the Christians in general.

117 This second account (fol. 77a) may be summed up as follows: Some Ḥarrānian Pagans did not eat beans, holding that, being of a cubic shape, they were enemies of Heaven, which has a spherical shape. Beans were therefore placed near the gates of churches; people were assembled in these churches, were told to go out and were warned that unless they ate the beans they would be killed. And this threat was carried out.

118 The assembly referred to may have been the Synod of Antioch in 325, which immediately preceded the Council of Nicaea. Three dissenters from the proposed

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faith. However, some of them disagreed with this text, holding that the Word of God was a created thing and that Christ was this word.

Among those present who regarded the Word of God as created were Arius, Macedonius, Eunomius, Apollinaris (?) and companions<sup>119</sup> of theirs (a list which is indicative of knowledge of the names of important theologians who manifested a tendency to Arianism but does not take into account chronological probabilities).<sup>120</sup> There was a scission and the symbol of faith which had been formulated was not regarded as valid.

Thereupon, three hundred and eighteen men gathered in Nicaea and formulated a symbol of faith, which was accepted and made obligatory by Constantine. People who dissented from it were killed and professions of faith differing from it suppressed.

In this way people who professed the religion of Christ came to do all that is reprehensible: they worshipped the cross, observed the Roman religious rites and ate pork. Those who did not eat it were killed.

Constantine continued for fifty years<sup>121</sup> to put to death people who did not worship the cross and did not believe in the divinity of Jesus; thus the religion he favoured became consolidated. He also left a testament, in which he recommended to worship Christ<sup>122</sup> rather than the stars or the opinions of the philosophers.

The Romans appreciated Constantine's vigour and firmness and said that his role among them was similar to that of Ardeshr̄ son of Bābak<sup>123</sup> among the Persians.

creed, who to a certain extent may have sympathized with Arius, were present at this Synod. They were excommunicated, but were given the possibility to recant their errors within a certain time. This episode may have given rise to the assertion of our text concerning the presence at this assembly of various heresiarchs, some of whom could not have been there for chronological reasons. On this Synod see for instance H. LIETZMANN, *Geschichte der alten Kirche*, III 2, Berlin 1953, pp. 102 f. A short account of this Synod and of the Council of Nicaea is also given in a non-historical section of our texts, fol. 43a.

- 119 The names are misspelt in various ways, but there can be no doubt as to the identity of the heresiarchs in question except in the case of Apollinaris. The name which I have conjectured to be his is rather more distorted than the others, being written *ūlūfryānūs*. Moreover, Apollinaris (of Laodicea) regarded the *Logos* as uncreated. Similar lists are frequently encountered in orthodox theological writings. All the theologians named in the text (as well as many others) were denounced by the fifth oecumenical Council convoked in Constantinople in 553.
- 120 The date of the Council of Nicaea is 325. Eunomius was active in the second half of the fourth century; Apollinaris died in 390. Macedonius was bishop of Constantinople from 342 to 359, when he was deposed.
- 121 Constantine was appointed Augustus in 307 and died in 337.
- 122 Or: 'the cross'.
- 123 The founder of the Sassanid dynasty, who lived in the third century of the Christian era.



A long time after Constantine one of the Roman kings established Sunday as a feast-day. This was also resolved by a synod.

The Romans and the Greeks had a feast, called the Nativity of Time, which celebrated the return of the sun in January. They introduced into it various modifications and called it the Nativity of Christ or the Nativity. This feast was unknown at the time of Jesus and of his companions.

This evidently refers to the feast of Epiphany on 6 January, which during a certain period was celebrated more particularly in the East, but according to sporadic evidence, also in the West, as the birthday of Christ, and is still celebrated for this reason by the Armenian Church.<sup>124</sup> In the Syrian Church, this signification seems to have been attached to the feast up to the end of the fourth century. This was also the period in which Epiphanius stated (*Panarion*, II, 51, 22, 8–11) that the date of the feast of Epiphany coincided with that of the birth of Aion celebrated in Alexandria. The fact that our text, which presumably refers to the Syrian Church, asserts that the Christians celebrate the birth of Christ in January and that it is informed about the connection between this feast and the birth of Aion seems to make it probable that it goes back to a period which was close to the end of the fourth century, i.e., to the fifth or perhaps the sixth century.

When the Romans adopted the religion which professes belief in the divinity of Jesus they kept (according to our text) their Pagan fast-days. 'At present' they fast fifty days till sunset, at which time they break on certain days their fast.

The use of incense in Christian churches is also denounced in our text as an adaptation of a Pagan custom.

No reference is made in the historical texts to the Moslem conquests of the seventh century, which, in the lands with which presumably the author of these texts was particularly concerned, put an end to the Byzantine rule, which he detests.

In the course of this preliminary investigation of these texts, we have had reason to believe that certain parts of them transmitted a tradition which, however distorted, went back, at least as far as its nucleus was concerned, without a break in its continuity to a very early period of Christianity, namely, to a period when the Jewish Christians had memories of the Jerusalem community and of the flight from Jerusalem. This supposition is supported by the fact that their account of the events which led up to this flight seems quite independent of the patristic sources.

124 On the whole subject, cf. for instance LIETZMANN, *op. cit.* (above, n. 118), pp. 321–329.

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Some of the statements they make concerning the early liturgy and the decision of the community to compose Gospels according to a certain pattern may also reflect early tradition. Above all, the importance they attribute to the Hebrew language and the fact that they deplore that it was given up—because its abandonment, while it led to the Christianization of many nations, destroyed the opportunity of converting the Jews—seems to prove that they and their positions derived without a hiatus, though probably—as far as the doctrines are concerned—not without some modification, from the early (or earliest) Jewish Christians. It may not even at this stage of our exposition be superfluous to add that quite evidently the historical traditions predate the advent of Islam and that the attitude of the texts to the conversion of the Jews and to the Hebrew language prove that their greater part was not written by a Moslem but by a Jewish Christian writer. Thus the examination of the historical texts reinforces the theory suggested by the polemical texts.

These conclusions do not of course answer the question as to the time when all the texts were composed. Another question however should perhaps be discussed first; it can be formulated as follows: did our texts, if we abstract from the additions of 'Abd al-Jabbār—which in many cases, though not in all, can be distinguished from the other portions—form before they were adapted by this Moslem theologian, part of one treatise which, while drawing upon various textual elements, amalgamated them into unity. No absolutely certain answer can be given, but the fact that the same dominant themes and the same references recur throughout the main part of the text (this expression will be presently explained) seems to indicate that such a treatise did exist, and that it must have comprised both the doctrinal-polemical and the historical portions (which in conjunction form what I have just called the main part of the original Christian texts).<sup>125</sup> This conclusion does not necessarily apply to the satirical and other stories,<sup>126</sup> which because of the inside knowledge of Christian ways which they denote, are probably, and in some cases quite certainly, of Jewish Christian origin. Some of them appear to be earlier than

125 In all probability, this treatise was intended to prove the opposition between the prevalent Christian doctrines and the religion of Christ and, to judge by our texts, was composed according to the following order: (1) a section polemizing against the Christology of the 'three' Christian sects, (2) the historical texts, (3) a section polemizing against the abandonment of the commandments of the Mosaic Law. However, this division was not carried out completely, as far as the subject-matter is concerned: themes belonging to one section tend to appear in another.

126 These stories cannot be discussed here; I intend to edit and translate them together with the rest of the texts.

others (see below). Their connection with the main part is a relatively loose one.

Some chronological pointers may be found in the doctrinal-polemical and the historical texts. Thus, to begin with the least convincing point, the resemblance in detail of a considerable portion of the argumentation of our texts with that of Epiphanius' Arians may, but need not, indicate chronological proximity.<sup>127</sup>

Conclusions based on the historical texts seem to me to carry greater weight. These texts carry on the tale to the successors of Constantine who continued his policy of persecution, and who instituted the observance of Sunday. The fact that the Pagan origin of the Epiphany is still remembered is also an indication.

The celebration of the Epiphany as the birthday of Christ appears to have been widespread in the East in the second half of the fourth century, but not later.<sup>128</sup> Incidentally, we may remark that this period is also that of John Chrysostom's anti-Jewish sermons in Antioch<sup>129</sup> in which he vehemently denounced the Judaizing tendencies of Christians who celebrate the Jewish rather than the Christian feasts and, *inter alia*, laid stress upon the observance of the Christian forty or, according to our texts, fifty days' fast.<sup>130</sup> In this connection, the importance which our texts attach to the observance of the Jewish feasts and their rejection of the fifty days' fast seems to be suggestive. Christian *Judaizantes* may well

127 In the course of his polemic against the Arians (*Panarion*, III, 69, 68), Epiphanius states that the fact that in the words ἡλί ἡλί λημᾶ σαβαχθαυῖ uttered by Christ the last two words are in Aramaic συριακῆ διαλέκτῳ, while the first two are in Hebrew was intended to diminish the claims of the partisans of Hebrew, other languages being also accorded the dignity of serving to fulfil that which was said about Jesus. The inclusion of this assertion in this particular chapter is interesting but need not necessarily signify that the Arians cherished the Hebrew language. The assertion does however indicate that a group of people had adopted this attitude and affirmed the superiority of Hebrew over all the other languages, including Aramaic. As our texts show, this was the position of the Jewish Christians.

128 Except in the Armenian Church.

129 Preached in 386 and 387. See M. SIMON, *Verus Israel*, Paris 1964, p. 256, n. 2. On John Chrysostom's sermons against the Jews, see also E. E. URBACH, *Tarbiz*, xvii (1946), pp. 10 f.

130 This apparent discrepancy is, no doubt, due to the fact that when the fast, which was originally a western custom, was introduced in the east (in Egypt in 337), it lasted six weeks and was for this reason called *quadagesima*. Later however, namely, as far as the region of Antioch and of Cappadocia are concerned, in the second half of the fourth century, this fast was extended to seven weeks (see LIETZMANN, *op. cit.* [above, n. 118], pp. 317 f.). This fact appears to account for the appellation 'the fifty days' fast' used in our texts.

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have been under the influence of the sectarian doctrine set forth in our texts.<sup>131</sup>

Thus, as far as can be judged, the polemics of our texts turn on points which may be supposed to have been in the forefront of discussion at the end of the fourth, in the fifth and probably also in the sixth centuries.

The historical texts, or at least some of them,<sup>132</sup> were quite evidently written some time after the death of Constantine. Probably (but this is by no means certain), the supposition that they go back to the end of the fourth century would excessively shorten this period of time. On the other hand, the historical texts do not refer or allude in any way to the advent of Islam. I cannot conceive that this could have been the case if they had been composed after the Arab conquests which in the territories with which the authors of the texts were mainly concerned put an end to Byzantine rule, which they hated, and the persecutions which went with it. It is also very unlikely that 'Abd al-Jabbār would have omitted all such references, which presumably would not have been uniformly hostile to the Arabs.

In addition, the fact that the parallel drawn by the Byzantines between Constantine and Ardeshr̄ir son of Bābak (or Pāpak) is referred to, appears to prove that the text was written before the downfall of the Sassanid dynasty brought about by the Moslem conquest. For, in this comparison, Ardeshr̄ir appears as the greater man. This parallel also suggests that the text was written in a locality such as Ḥarrān, which was connected both with the Persian and the Roman Empires. On the whole it seems probable (and more than probable) that what I have called the main part of the texts was composed either in the fifth, or the sixth or the beginning of the seventh century.<sup>133</sup> It is virtually certain that it was written

131 The massive return—combated by Chrysostom—to Judaizing observances seems surprising on any other hypothesis. As far as I know, no theory proposed by modern scholars offers an acceptable explanation of this curious phenomenon, which active though clandestine Jewish Christian propaganda would account for.

132 It is clearly possible that the first two historical texts, those which are translated in full above, were written at a much earlier period than the one suggested here—and at some later date were inserted into the same section of the treatise as the others.

133 An objection to this chronological hypothesis may be formulated on the basis of a historical passage in one of the non-historical sections of our texts. This passage states (43a) that the Council of Nicaea was convoked by Constantine approximately five hundred years after Jesus. It may be argued that men who were close to the year five hundred could not have made such a mistake. The objection is a serious one, but the erroneous date may be a gloss added a long time after the composition of the original Syriac texts by their translator, by 'Abd al-Jabbār, or by some third person. There also exists the possibility that

in Syriac. It is also clear that its author or authors had some connection with the region of Ḥarrān (and perhaps also with the district of Mosul).

The satirical and other stories added to these texts evidently date from different periods. At least one of them is clearly pre-Islamic, as it names the Arabs, with the Armenians and the Copts, as a people converted or partly converted to Christianity,<sup>134</sup> a statement which would claim some degree of truth only in the days of the pre-Islamic Arab Christian kingdoms Ḥīra and Ghassān.<sup>135</sup> In other stories Islam is mentioned,<sup>136</sup> or alternatively the events they refer to fall into the Islamic period. This is the case with regard to the passage concerning the conversion of the Khazars to Judaism, of which more hereafter. It is not clear whether these stories were amalgamated with the main part already in the Syriac original, or by the persons who translated these texts into Arabic or by 'Abd al-Jabbār himself in his wish to use the Jewish Christian materials which he had been provided with to the best advantage.<sup>137</sup>

the Jewish Christian author of the text was ignorant, even with regard to his own time, of the chronology of the Christian era.

- 134 In a description of Christian customs a Christian gathering is described (fol. 98a) in the course of which the people are asked: Why are the Christians among the Arabs (*fi'l-'arab*), the Copts, the Abyssinians and so on. Further on the question is formulated in the following manner: 'Why were the Armenians, the Arabs, the Copts, and the Abyssinians converted to Christianity?' The correct answer is that 'the first fathers' (*al-ābā' al-awā'il*) learnt in the course of a single night the language of the people they were destined to convert, and then went to the country of that people and operated the conversions.
- 135 The conversion of the Arabs of Ghassān is mentioned: (99b) 'The Romans (*al-Rūm*) associated in Syria (*al-Shām*) with Arab tribes (belonging) to Ghassān and others and called upon them (to be converted) to Christianity. They bestowed upon them royalty (*al-mulk*; this appears to be the vocalization of the text; *al-milk* means 'property') and told them about the religion of Christ and about the miracles in which they believed. (The Arabs) accepted this easily, for they worshipped idols, and (therefore) did not (regard) these (tales) as incredible (*lam yab'ud* 'alayhim *dhālika*).'
- 136 One scurrilous story mentions (90b) that when a woman confesses to a Christian priest that she has had intercourse with a man, the priest asks her if the man was a Christian or a Moslem. In the latter case, as the sin is greater, he demands a bigger sum for granting absolution. Stories of this kind, which must have been widespread, were evidently added by 'Abd al-Jabbār, his Jewish Christian assistants or the translators of the original Syriac texts. 'Abd al-Jabbār is obviously interested in the sexual habits of the Byzantines, *inter alia*, in prostitution, and he may have got information on the subject from Moslems whom he knew and who had been, as he mentions, for many years in Constantinople as prisoners of war and also, as regards some of them, as Christian converts; according to 'Abd al-Jabbār it was an outward conversion only.
- 137 As far as possible, the influence on 'Abd al-Jabbār of Moslem polemicists against

‘Abd al-Jabbār appears to give one or two hints as to the way these texts reached him. Thus he speaks in one passage of Syriac texts kept in the churches or monasteries of Ahwāz (a region which roughly corresponds to the present-day Khuzistan) which were translated into Arabic.<sup>138</sup> It is true that in the context these words seem to apply in the first place to Nestorian texts; but there is a distinct possibility that they also applied to Jewish Christian writings which may have been preserved by the Nestorians.<sup>139</sup> Indeed, some of the latter may have been crypto-Jewish Christians (see also below).

Christianity, whose names he quotes, should also be investigated. However, most of the writings to which he alludes are lost. ‘Abd al-Jabbār refers in this connection mainly, though not exclusively, to Mu‘tazilite authors, such as al-Nazzām, al-Jāhīz, al-Iskāfī, Abū ‘Alī (al-)Jubbā’ī, Abū Hāshim and Ibn al-Ikshīd, who is probably Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Ikshīd. The possibility that ‘Abd al-Jabbār became acquainted with the Jewish Christian sect through the intermediary of the Moslem writers mentioned by him is a very slight one.

138 ‘Abd al-Jabbār says:

(68a) ‘This is clear from the church books in Syriac characters which may be found in the districts of Ahwāz and in other districts of Iraq. A translation (from these books) is made in an epistle addressed by ‘Abdishū’ Ibn Bahrīz(?), who was bishop (*usquf*) of Ḥarrān and of al-Raqqā and who afterwards was appointed Metropolitan (*maṭrān*) of Mosul and of the Jazīra, to a Jacobite priest named Badūsi (?). You will not deny that the Pure Virgin is (not) a God, as you believe (literally: ‘see’, *tarāhu*) but a human being (*insān*) as we believe (literally: ‘see’).’

The Nestorian Metropolitan ‘Abdishū’ Ibn Bahrīz (the last name is sometimes written in other sources *B.h.r.in*, and deformed in our text in which it appears to be written *Y.h.r.y.n*) is an author who lived at the time of the Caliph al-Ma‘mun in the first half of the ninth century. He translated for this Caliph several works of philosophy and of logic. The name of the Jacobite priest to whom the Epistle quoted here is addressed, is read, usually, Badawi. On ‘Abdishū’ see G. GRAF, *Geschichte der Christlichen arabischen Literatur*, II, Città del Vaticano 1947, pp. 119 f.; IBN AL-NADIM, *Fihrist* (edited by FLÜGEL), Leipzig 1871, I, pp. 23 f., 244, 248 f.; II, pp. 12 f. According to IBN AL-NADIM, I, p. 24: ‘Ibn was in his wisdom (or philosophy) close to the wisdom of Islam.’ This may, though need not necessarily, mean that this Nestorian priest tended in his polemics against the Jacobites and perhaps against others to abandon certain of the positions which were common to the ‘three’ Christian sects. It may be a significant point that after having been bishop of Ḥarrān, he became Metropolitan of Mosul and of the Jazīra. Mosul, and possibly the Jazīra, are the places to which, according to our texts, the members of the first Christian community of Jerusalem betook themselves after having been obliged to leave Palestine. As for Ḥarrān, it is evident that the authors of our texts are very much interested in the town.

139 This is perhaps suggested in the Jewish work entitled *Toldot Yeshu*; see below. Schoeps believes (*op. cit.* [above, n. 31], p. 185) that a Jewish Christian work figures in a list of the texts found among the Nestorians of Syria.

A very interesting position is made clear by the Nestorian Patriarch Timothy I

A less equivocal passage (54b) refers to Christians, who, after a perspicacious investigation, having embraced Islam, had engaged in the study of the sayings attributed to Jesus, which are quoted in proof of the latter's divinity; their thesis was that the Gospel texts on which the Christian thesis was based were either spurious or required a correct interpretation. As the examples cited by 'Abd al-Jabbār show, they illustrated the application of their method of interpretation by means of examples of which one at least is drawn from the Old Testament.<sup>140</sup> There can be little doubt that these converts to Islam were Jewish Christians who may be supposed (this of course is a mere hypothesis) to have decided to exchange a clandestine existence as official members of the three universally known Christian sects for an equally official profession of the Islamic religion.

Our information concerning the Jewish Christians is on the whole surprisingly scanty. In part, the heresiographical schemas<sup>141</sup> of the patristic authors may be responsible for this fact. But the hypothesis that some of the Jewish Christians led a clandestine existence could provide a contributory explanation for the dearth of information concerning them. It would also account for the relatively rapid disappearance from the historical scene, especially if one accepts G. Strecker's view that as late as the first half of the third century the status of 'the Catholic doctrine'

(780–823) in the discussion which he is said to have had (in 780 or 782) with the 'Abbasid Caliph al-Mahdī (*Timothy's Apology for Christianity* [ed. by A. MINGANA], *Woodbrooke Studies*, II, Cambridge 1928; the facsimile edition and the translation are of the Syriac version). In pp. 88 f. of the translation, Timothy illustrates his point of view with the aid of the following parable: This world is compared to a dark room in the middle of the night, into which a precious pearl has fallen. The people in the room, who are aware of this having happened, try to pick up the pearl. But only one man succeeds in doing so. Among the others, one gets hold of a piece of glass, another of a stone or a bit of earth, but everyone of them is as happy and as proud as the real possessor of the pearl. In this parable, the pearl figures the true religion, whose truth can, however, become evident to all only in the other world, just as the pearl can only be clearly seen when day comes. The example implies that as far as human knowledge is concerned, there is nothing to choose between the various religions. It is true that, in answer to a question of the Caliph, the Patriarch somewhat qualifies this conclusion. Nevertheless, the parable has an evident similarity with the parable of the three rings, as used for instance, by Lessing. A community in which such views were current might well provide safety of some sort for Jewish Christians who chose to practise dissimulation.

- 140 They quote the verse of Exodus (vii : 1) in which Moses is said to be the God of Pharaoh and of Aaron. The provenance of the second example in which Joseph is quoted is unknown to me.
- 141 Cf. G. STRECKER's Appendix (p. 246 and *passim*) to W. BAUER, *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum* 2, Tübingen 1964.

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was not as yet recognized in Syria as indubitably superior to that of the Jewish Christians who lived in that country, and that in certain regions these sectarians had a preponderant position.<sup>142</sup> This view is based on the data concerning these Jewish Christians which may be gleaned from the Syriac *Didascalia*.<sup>143</sup> The Jewish Christians in question resemble Epiphanius' Nazarenes rather than his Ebionites; they are not vegetarians, and they do not reject certain portions of the Old Testament.<sup>144</sup> Like the Jewish Christians of our texts, they are, as far as the observance of commandments is concerned, orthodox Jews. The fact that they thus carried on the old tradition of the first Christian community of Jerusalem,<sup>145</sup> or of a part of that community, need not before the time of Constantine have necessarily led to excessive friction with the rest of the Christians in Syria.<sup>146</sup> However, when Christianity became the State religion, the position of the Jewish Christians in question must have radically changed for the worse; they may have had either to accept without any reservation the orthodoxy imposed by Constantinople or lead a clandestine existence within the orthodox Church or within sects that were more powerful or more energetic than their own. These repercussions of Constantine's religious policy may account for the importance which our texts accord to this emperor and for their bitter hostility towards him. It has been suggested above that there are some indications that Jewish Christians may have lived in some degree of clandestinity among the Nestorians.<sup>147</sup> The relation of the Jewish Christians to the Arians and later heretics (other than the Nestorians mentioned above) who made a great stir in the world should also be investigated in the light of these new texts.

The hypothesis postulating a clandestine existence of the Jewish Christians in the Byzantine Empire can clearly account for their brief reappearance under Moslem rule.

There is some reason to think that at some time during the Islamic period there were Jewish Christians who wished to go out of hiding and declare their beliefs openly. This tendency may have been furthered or even brought into being by the shake-up of the Christian establishment, com-

142 *Ibid.*, pp. 252 and 260.

143 Composed in the first half of the third century.

144 See G. STRECKER, *op. cit.* (above, n. 141), pp. 256 f.

145 Strecker (*ibid.*, p. 245) points out that the Jewish Christian doctrine started out by being the Christian Church doctrine and became a heresy only in the wars of historical evolution. Cf. also the views he cites, *ibid.*, n. 1.

146 Or in the other Christian communities; cf. the attitude of Justin in his *Dialogue with the Jew Trypho*, 47.

147 But this may have happened in the Sassanid rather than in the Byzantine Empire; see below.



prising the hierarchy of the three sects, which may have been a consequence of the Arab conquests or of later convulsions of the Islamic Empire. At any rate, we find in our texts at least once the statement that there exists a Christian sect (*farīq*) which considers that 'their Lord' (*rabb*) was a Jew, that his father was a Jew and his mother a Jewess, and that his mother was the wife of his father. The statement adds that the members of this sect are the *élite* (*khāṣṣa*) among the Christians. This last remark may indicate that the statement derives directly or indirectly from members of the sect.<sup>148</sup> The following statement of the Jewish author Sa'adia (d. 942) is even more relevant in this context. The passage occurs in *K. al-amānāt wa'li'tiqādāt* (S. LANDAUER [ed.], Leiden 1880, p. 90):

'These people (the Christians) (are divided) may God have pity upon you (into) four sects; three of them are more ancient (*aqdam*) (whereas) the fourth came out (*kharajat*) (only) recently (*qarīban*) . . . The fourth gives him (i.e., Jesus, called a few lines above their Messiah) only the rank of a prophet, and interprets the Sonship which according to them is attributed to him just (p. 91) as we interpret (the verse): My son my first born Israel being only (an indication of) his being honoured (*tashrif*) and preferred (*tafdīl*) and just as others than we (i.e., the Moslems) interpret the expression "Abraham, the Friend of God" (*khalīl allāh*).'

The interpretation given here, in the name of this sect, of the Christian concept of Sonship is identical with the one proposed in our Jewish Christian texts (see above). And even the example illustrating this interpretation as quoted by Sa'adia and by 'Abd al-Jabbār is the same, namely, Exodus iv : 22. The fact that Sa'adia states that the sect in question only appeared or 'came out' recently need not, as I see it, mean that the sect had not existed before (whatever Sa'adia may have believed), but that it had come into the open not too long before his time, which probably means after the advent of Islam.

It is possible that the fact that the Jewish Christian texts were translated into Arabic is connected with the attempt—apparently hinted at by Sa'adia—made by members of this sect to assume a more active role than they had played for some centuries. These sectarians may have also been interested in providing 'Abd al-Jabbār, who was a very well-known theologian, with these materials for his anti-Christian polemics.

No mention of an independent existence of the sect after the tenth cen-

148 Possibly from those with whom 'Abd al-Jabbār may be supposed to have had a personal contact. They may have been identical with the converts to Islam of whom he speaks elsewhere (see above).

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ture is known to me; its members may have been assimilated by the bigger Christian or other communities, but further inquiry with regard to this point is needed.<sup>149</sup>

Our new texts have also a bearing on Jewish history in the narrow sense of the word and on Jewish writing.

I shall start with the curious Jewish work called *Toldot Yeshu* (The History of Jesus).

As shall be stated, one of the accounts of the passion found in our texts resembles to a certain extent in one detail (which is not found in the canonical Gospels) the account of the *Toldot*.

The main resemblance is however in the description of conditions in Jerusalem, or in Palestine as a whole, after the death of Jesus. Both a historical Jewish Christian text translated above<sup>150</sup> and the *Toldot* emphasize one and the same point: there was hostility between the Jews and the followers of Jesus, and yet the two prayed and worshipped God in the same places.

Our historical text says (see above):

‘After him (i.e., Jesus) his disciples were with the Jews and the Children of Israel in the latter’s synagogues and observed the prayers and the feasts of (the Jews) in the same place as the latter. (However) there was a disagreement between them and the Jews with regard to Christ.’

*Toldot Yeshu* put the emphasis on the hostility and the fighting:

‘There was a great war between them and great slaughter, many cases of confusion, many killings and loss of money, everyone was killing his relatives without pity. And yet they did not abandon the Torah of Israel. And the Jews could not enter the Temple because of the reprobates.’

The version of the *Toldot* in which this passage occurs was published by S. KRAUSS in *Das Leben Jesus nach jüdischen Quellen*, Berlin 1902, p. 82.<sup>151</sup>

149 A systematic investigation of the Jewish Christian component in the information on Christianity given by Moslem writers should also be made.

150 It is the first of the historical texts translated above.

151 In an interesting work bearing the title *According to the Hebrews* (London 1937), H. J. SCHONFIELD compares certain passages of *Toldot* (drawn from a version different from the one quoted above) with passages from the Acts. However, neither the latter nor the former passages mention the difficulty which arose from the fact that both the Jews and the Christians prayed in the same place. According to both the Jewish Christian text and the passage from the *Toldot* quoted above this was a salient fact in the situation. The reconstruction of the Ebionite Acts

The Jewish Christian text describes the situation in a milder way than the *Toldot*. But it picks out the same traits as essential. This has no exact counterpart in the canonical Acts of the Apostles or in other Christian or Jewish texts. The fact is that in a characteristically fantastic way the author of *Toldot* seems to have been aware, as was the author of the Jewish Christian historical texts, that events in Jerusalem and elsewhere after the death of Jesus determined the answer to a historical question of the greatest importance, namely, the question as to whether the Jewish Christians would continue to live as Jews and with the Jews, or whether there would be a clean split.

On this point the wishes of the author of the last section of *Toldot*, who is in favour of the separation of the two religions, are diametrically opposed to those of the Jewish Christian author of the historical texts dealt with in this paper. Indeed, there is some reason to think that these chapters were written in reply to the Jewish Christian texts. Paul, who is denounced by the Jewish Christians for having brought about this separation, is approved of in *Toldot* for this very reason, and described as an agent of the Jewish Sages.<sup>152</sup> His original name is said to have been Elijah.<sup>153</sup> He is said to have given the Christians commandments which were not in accord with the Mosaic law and to have enjoined upon them to avoid the society of the Jews. *Inter alia*, he is supposed to have declared:<sup>154</sup>

‘Jesus wishes (to impose) another commandment: You should call the Jews (*Yehudim*) Hebrew (*Ibhrim*) as they (come) from the (other) side of the river and you will be called Gentiles (*goyyim*).’

In all likelihood this is an allusion to the appellation Hebrews (*Hebraioi*) by which at an early period the Jewish Christians were designated.

This conception of the role of Paul in the evolution of Christianity is (if one abstracts from the legend that he was an agent of the Jewish Sages) to a great extent in accord with that of the Jewish Christian texts, though the latter are hostile to him, while the relevant chapters of *Toldot*, apparently written in reaction to these texts, are friendly and ap-

attempted by Schonfield (pp. 174–202) does not correspond to the historical texts which are dealt with in this paper. However, the existence of Acts belonging to another Jewish Christian sect is possible and is indeed suggested by the details concerning the biography of Paul, which, according to the information received by Epiphanius, were contained in the Ebionite Acts. These details do not agree with those given in our texts (see above).

152 In certain versions of *Toldot* the role in question is primarily assigned to Simon Kepha.

153 See, for instance, KRAUSS, *op. cit.* (above, p. 41), pp. 83–85.

154 *Ibid.*, p. 84.

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probatory. The New Testament and patristic texts do not, as far as I can see, present as clearly as the Jewish Christian texts and the *Toldot* the separation of Christianity from Judaism as the main purpose and effect of Paul's activity.

On the one hand, their notion of the latter is less restricted; on the other, they do not, in contradiction both to *Toldot* and to our Jewish Christian texts, seem to consider that there had existed a real possibility of avoiding the separation of the two religions.

A passage in the last section of *Toldot*<sup>155</sup> treats of the heresiarch Nestorius, who is supposed to have lived in the Persian Empire, to have enjoined upon the Christians in opposition to Paul to follow the example of Jesus in observing the commandments of the Mosaic Law and to have taught that Jesus was not a God but a man inspired like the prophets by the Holy Ghost. The fact that Nestorius was denounced by the Council of Ephesus and by various Catholic polemicists as a Jew does not, as it seems to me, account for these statements. A reason for the latter could be found in the hypothesis referred to above, according to which the Nestorian community may have contained Jewish Christians. The teachings which *Toldot*, in the passages quoted above, attributes to Nestorius are those of our Jewish Christian texts. On one point this analogy breaks down. In the *Toldot*<sup>156</sup> Nestorius is said to have had great influence upon women, because, in contradistinction to Paul,<sup>157</sup> he enjoined monogamy. On the one hand, this passage contradicts our Jewish Christian biography of Paul which ascribes to the latter the establishment of monogamy in accordance with Roman usage. On the other hand, the passage is clearly connected in some way with this biography and probably derives from it in an indirect way. It is certainly related to a definite historical situation within the Nestorian community, on which a further investigation may shed some light.

To sum up, the last section of the *Toldot* seems in a great measure to have been composed in reaction to the Jewish Christian view of the events which led to the separation of Judaism and Christianity, and in order to counteract this view. It seems to pre-suppose knowledge of Jewish Christian historical texts similar to those quoted above. A passage in this section seems to corroborate the hypothesis that the Nestorian Church included Jewish Christians or crypto-Jewish Christians. However, the point requires further investigation.

The hypothesis that Jewish Christians may have led a more or less clandestine existence within various Christian communities does not exclude

155 See, for instance, *ibid.*, pp. 48 f. and 85 f.

156 *Ibid.*, pp. 49 and 86.

157 *Ibid.*, p. 86.

a second hypothesis, namely, that some of them may have intermingled with and exercised a certain influence on Jewish sects. In fact, coexistence with Jews may have been easier for them than with Christians, because of their observance of the Mosaic commandments. Moreover, the importance of Jesus for their religious thought tended perhaps to diminish because of their exacerbated antagonism against dominant Christianity.

Now, it is a fact that in the early period, i.e., at a time when the Jewish political and religious hierarchy, as well as the Christian, may not yet have completely adapted itself to the new situation brought about by the Arab conquest, certain Jews appear to have had pro-Christian proclivities. This could not have been a mere matter of political expediency, as these sectarians lived under Moslem rule, and could hypothetically be accounted for by the influence of Jewish Christians of various kinds.

It is not certain whether the sect of Abū 'Īsā al-Isfahānī, a Jewish heresiarch of the ninth century, should be mentioned in this connection. The fact that he admitted the prophethood of Jesus and of Mohammed (while claiming to be a prophet himself)<sup>158</sup> cannot, because of the possible influence of Islamic doctrine, serve as an indication of a pro-Christian tendency on his part. The existence of such a tendency would, however, be proven, if it could be shown that 'the expected *masih*',<sup>159</sup> who, if we may believe al-Shahrastānī,<sup>160</sup> was regarded by Abū 'Īsā as the most excellent of the children of Adam, and as greater than the prophets of the past, should be identified with Jesus rather than with the Jewish Messiah. This last identification seems to be more probable.<sup>161</sup> Like Epiphanius' Ebionites Abū 'Īsā prohibited sacrifices and the eating of meat. And as Qir-qisānī puts it,<sup>162</sup> (p. 51) 'like the Sadducees and the Christians' he abolished divorce. The founder of another Jewish sect, which originated in the ninth century—I refer to the Mishawites<sup>163</sup> who were still strong

158 See AL-QIRQISANI, *Kitab al-anwār wa'l-Marāqib* (edited by L. NEMOY), New York 1939, I, p. 52; cf. AL-BAQILLANI, *Al-Tamhid fi'l-radd 'ala'l-mulhida wa'l-mu'aqqila wa'l-rāfiqa wa'l-khawāriy wa'l-nu'tazila* (edited by M. M. AL-KHODEIRI & M. A. ABU RIDA), Cairo 1947, pp. 147 f.

159 *Al-masih al-muntazar*.

160 See *Kitāb al-milal wa'l-nihal*, II, Cairo 1947, p. 24.

161 According to al-Shahrastānī, Abū 'Īsā believed that his *al-masih* would be preceded by five envoys (*rusul*), Abū 'Īsā himself being one of them. The text does not make it quite clear whether he considered that he himself (this is the more probable interpretation) or *al-masih* was entrusted by God with the mission of delivering the Children of Israel from the impious nations.

162 See QIRQISANI, *op. cit.* (above, n. 158), p. 52 and SHAHRASTANI, *op. cit.* (above, n. 160), p. 24. He also forbade to drink wine. See QIRQISANI, p. 51.

163 See S. POZNANSKI, 'Meswi al-Okbari, chef d'une secte juive', *Revue des études*

in the eleventh century—was charged in violent terms with having abandoned Judaism for Christianity. Apparently, he is accused of professing the doctrine of the Trinity;<sup>164</sup> he is also taxed with belonging to the company of Matthew, Luke, John and Aba Sha'ul (i.e., Paul).<sup>165</sup> In other words, the Christianity alluded to does not seem to be of the Jewish Christian variety. However, in this connection various other points must be considered. This cannot be done in this preliminary paper.

Since the eighth century the Qaraites formed the Jewish sect *par excellence*: not only were they the only sect which presented a serious threat to Rabbinical Judaism; some of them, Qirqisānī, for instance, to judge by the first part of his *magnum opus*: *Kitāb al-anwār wa'l-marāqib*, had the perhaps vague idea that the Qaraites could to some extent regard themselves as the legitimate heirs and successors of many of the sects of the past which had been rejected by Rabbinical Judaism. A clear reference to the Qaraites occurs in 'Abd al-Jabbār's chapter on the Christians. The passage may be rendered as follows:

(66b) 'A sect among the Jews considers that Jesus, son of Maryam, who is regarded by the Moslems as a prophet and by the Christians as the Lord, he who was crucified and killed, was the son of Joseph the Carpenter. He is considered by them to have been a just and pious (man) and to have had a leading position among the Jews. Some of the latter, being jealous of him because of his position, slandered and vilified him until he was unjustly killed.

(According to the opinion of this sect which is) in contradiction to the allegations of the Christians or of the Moslems, he did not claim to be the Christ<sup>166</sup> or a prophet.

They say: Do you not see that he was examined as to this (point) by Herod (*Hiridūs*) and Pilate (*Filāṭ.s*) and that he has denied all this. If he had been a prophet he would have proved it by means of a demonstration and of miracles. As for the annunciation concerning him and (the belief that) he was born without (fecundation by) a male, they say: What is the confirmation for this? The Chris-

*juives*, xxxiv (1897), pp. 161–191; Z. ANKORI, *Karaites in Byzantium*, New York–Jerusalem 1959, pp. 372–415.

164 This is the most probable interpretation of the passage in POZNANSKI, *op. cit.*, p. 182, quoted in ANKORI, *op. cit.*, p. 402, n. 139.

165 *Loc. cit.*

166 Or: 'the Messiah' (*al-masiḥ*). As the passage sets forth the opinions of a Jewish sect, 'Messiah' may be a more suitable rendering than 'Christ'. The latter word has been chosen for reasons of consistency, as it is generally used in the translation of this text, which, in general, is concerned with Christians, as an equivalent of *al-masiḥ*.

tians say in the Gospels that this Jesus (*Īshū*) said to his disciples: "What do people say about me?" They said: "Some say that you are Elijah. Others say that you are John the Baptist." And he said: "And you my companions, what do you say about me?" And they said: "In our opinion, you are Christ."<sup>167</sup> And he said: "Do not say this."<sup>168</sup>

Do you not see that he himself forbade them to say that he was the Christ (*al-masīh*)? Hereupon what (is it that) remains clear? They say: The Jews have harassed him with their quarrels for three years and have lodged with the kings a complaint against him. (And yet) (no)<sup>169</sup> declaration (which affirmed) to his prejudice that he had claimed to be the Christ<sup>170</sup> or a prophet could be obtained. Neither his friends (67a) nor his enemies have testified against him on this point. As for the prodigies and miracles which as the Christians claim (were worked) by him, all this is baseless. He himself did not claim (to have worked) them. Nor is there in his time or in the generation which followed any disciple who claimed (that Jesus had worked miracles). This was first claimed only a very long time (*ba'd... al-azmān wa'l-aḥqāb*) after his death and after the death of his (direct) disciples; similarly the Christians have claimed that the Jew Paul (*Būl.ṣ al-yahūdī*) (has worked miracles and this) in spite of his being known for his tricks (*hiyal*), his lying (*kadhb*) and his baseness;<sup>171</sup> they have done the same for George (*J.ūrj.s*) and for Father Mark,<sup>172</sup> and they do the same at all times with regard to their monks and nuns. All this is baseless.'

The conception of the Jewish sect referred to in this passage, according to which Jesus was a righteous man whose death was encompassed by some Jews because of their envy,<sup>173</sup> is similar in essentials to that of

167 Or: 'the Messiah' (*al-masīh*).

168 This quotation roughly corresponds to Matthew xvi : 13-16 and 20, Mark viii : 27-30, and Luke ix : 18-21. But in our text Peter is not mentioned, and the prohibition, found in the three Synoptic Gospels, to speak about Jesus being the Messiah, is given an ambiguous formulation, which can be interpreted as a denial by Jesus of his being the Messiah. For a further discussion of this quotation, see below.

169 The Arabic equivalent of this word has been added, as it appears to be required by the sense.

170 Or: 'the Messiah' (*al-masīh*).

171 Or: 'his degradation' (*suqūf*).

172 *Abā marq.s.*—*Abā* being an Aramaic word meaning 'father'. George and Mark are Christian saints.

173 Cf. Matthew xxvii : 18; Mark xv : 10.

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certain Qaraites (*qawm min al-qarā'in*) mentioned by Qirqisānī.<sup>174</sup> According to this group, Jesus was a pious man, whose teaching was similar to that of Zadoq<sup>175</sup> and to that of 'Anan, the founder of the Qaraite sect. The Rabbanites sought to kill him as they sought to kill 'Anan, succeeding in the first case and failing in the second. Immediately afterwards Qirqisānī states that Christian religion as it is now (*al-ān*) was founded by Paul, who taught the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus and dispensed altogether with legal commandments. Both the hostility to Paul and the conception of Christianity as an antinomistic religion are, as we have seen, characteristic of the authors of our Jewish Christian texts. While the extract from 'Abd al-Jabbār quoted above is indicative of some awareness of Qaraite views, the text of Qirqisānī appears to point to a certain influence of Judaeo-Christian views on the Qaraites.<sup>176</sup>

This extract from 'Abd al-Jabbār follows in the MS nearly, though not quite, immediately upon 'Abd al-Jabbār's discussion on the longer of the two accounts of the passion translated below; I refer to the one which occurs in the MS, fols. 65a–66a. This account is very different from those found in the canonical Gospels, and, in view of the nature of the text in which it is quoted, may, as it seems to me, be *prima facie* attributed with a reasonable degree of likelihood to a Jewish Christian source.<sup>177</sup>

174 Cf. *op. cit.* (above, n. 158), pp. 42–43.

175 Apparently the founder of the Zadoquite sect described by Qirqisānī (*ibid.*, p. 41). This sect may not be identical with that of the Sadducees.

176 In the last part of the description on Christianity (pp. 44–47) Qirqisānī quotes the description of this religion given by the Jewish philosopher Dā'ud b. Marwān al-Raqqī al-Muqammiš (lived in the first half of the tenth century). This description is essentially different from that occurring in the beginning of Qirqisānī's section, as it contains the statement (p. 44) that, according to the Christians, Paul and Peter established the Christian commandments. Al-Muqammiš's references to Constantine the leper, to his mother Ghilānī (an obvious deformation of the name *Hilāniya* found in our texts), *al-funduqiyya* (the innkeeper; this word is likewise applied to her in our texts) and to the Council of Nicaea which was attended by three hundred and eighteen bishops (which is the number mentioned in the same context in our historical texts) seem to show that al-Muqammiš was acquainted with a Jewish Christian account of Constantine similar to or identical with the one found in the historical section of our Jewish Christian texts. According to Qirqisānī (p. 44), al-Muqammiš was converted in Nisibis through the instrumentality of a Christian philosopher and physician named Nānā to Christianity. Al-Muqammiš is said to have been for many years a student of Nānā, to have learnt to know all the foundations and secrets of Christianity and to have composed two works criticizing the Christians. The comparison of the extracts from these works quoted by Qirqisānī with our texts suggests that during his Christian period he may have lived in an at least partly Jewish Christian milieu.

177 It may have been one of several accounts of the passion which were current among the members of the sect.



Now the arguments of the Qaraites as set forth in the MS (and there is no reason to question the correctness of this exposition) clearly refer to this particular account. This can easily be proved by the fact that this argumentation mentions Jesus' examination by Herod as well as by Pilate and his denial in the course of this examination (of the claims made on his behalf); these are details which are found in the account in question. In other words, one group among the Qaraites seems, when engaging in religious debates, to have made use of an account of the passion which derived from the Jewish Christians.<sup>178</sup> I have tried to show that there exists some reason for thinking that at a certain period close relations existed between groups of Qaraites and groups of Jewish Christians.<sup>179</sup> The Qaraite liturgy possibly provides further evidence for this hypothesis. I refer to the fact that in the Qaraite prayers the congregation is sometimes called *nošre 'edothaw*.<sup>180</sup> This clearly refers to Psalm xxv : 10. However, the fact that the Qaraites occasionally use in speaking of themselves an appellation in which figures the word *nošerim*,<sup>181</sup> i.e., the Hebrew name for Christians, suggests the absence of certain taboos which exist in Rabbinical Judaism, and perhaps, in addition, the possibility that the Qaraites may have taken over from Jewish Christians who intermingled with them some of their prayers.<sup>182</sup>

An instance of sympathetic interest in, and perhaps solidarity with, Judaism, manifested by Jewish Christians or one of their sects, may be found in the account of the conversion of the Khazars to Judaism occurring in 'Abd al-Jabbārs' chapter on Christianity (fol. 88a).<sup>183</sup>

178 It may, of course, be argued that some particulars in this story were modified by the Qaraites for their own purposes. But it is highly improbable that the account as a whole could have been originated by members of this relatively late sect.

179 It seems quite clear that Harkavy was wrong in attributing the fact that the Qaraites were less hostile to Jesus than the Rabbinical Jews to Moslem influence (see *Altjüdische Alterthümer*, St. Petersburg 1876, p. 212, n. 3). Insofar as the Qaraite attitude was not determined by certain tendencies peculiar to the sect (see above), it seems to have been due to contact with the Jewish Christians.

180 See, for instance, *Tefillot Haq-qara'im* (edited by S. WEISSCHWITZ), III, Vienna 1854, p. 126. The passage occurs in the *Yom Kippur* morning prayer.

181 On this term see now CH. RABIN's paper 'Nošerim', *Textus*, v (1966), pp. 44-52.

182 The fact that the Qaraites habitually call themselves in their prayers 'the poor'—*'aniyyim, ebhyonim* and various other synonyms (see for instance *Tefillot haq-qara'im*, III, pp. 30, 97, 106, 107, 131, 138 and *passim*) might be due to the influence of liturgy of the Jewish Christians, who were probably called Ebionites because of the value which they attached to poverty. It might, however, be also due to the adoption of traditions of even earlier sects or to an autonomous development of a Qaraite tendency.

183 This text was published, translated and discussed by me in a paper which

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It is, as far as is known, the earliest text which seems deliberately to stress the role and extol the personal qualities of the Jewish missionary who was responsible for this conversion. The latter is used to illustrate the point that the propagation of Christianity by means of persuasion only and without the use of coercion (even if for argument's sake this view of the spread of Christianity is supposed to be true)<sup>184</sup> has its counterpart in the annals of Judaism. It is virtually inconceivable that a Moslem theologian (as our treatise shows, 'Abd al-Jabbār was second to none in his religious zeal, and as his chapter on Judaism shows, he was very anti-Jewish) would not have rather cited—if the text had been really conceived and not merely adopted by him—some suitable example of conversion to Islam. Our text does not, however, refer to any such episode; it does not even mention the well-known story that a Moslem and a Christian missionary, as well as the Jewish one, engaged in the attempt to convert the Khazars to their respective religions. There is sufficient reason for believing that the account of the Judaization of the Khazars is not an interpolation of 'Abd al-Jabbār, but is due to Jewish Christians. It may be regarded as a later addition—there seem to be several (see above)—to the older portions of our text, which were composed, I believe, in the fifth or the sixth century, or perhaps, as far as certain sections are concerned, even earlier.

The question may, however, be asked whether this origin by itself can be regarded as accounting for the evident complacency with which this historical event is regarded. This supposition would quite evidently postulate a high, perhaps improbable, degree of identification on the part of the Jewish Christians with the Jews in general. Accordingly, an alternative hypothesis could perhaps be tentatively envisaged. For various reasons the supposition has occasionally been advanced that the Khazars were converted by the adepts of some unknown sect. *Inter alia*, this would of course explain the fact<sup>185</sup> that this important event aroused in the period which was close to it no interest and no enthusiasm among the Qaraites and the Rabbinical Jews of the East. This indifference contrasts, as we have seen, with the attitude of the Jewish Christians. It is at least a possible supposition—admittedly it is nothing more—that the sympathy of the latter may have gone out to a Jewish sect which was in some way doctrinally akin to them.

appeared in the *Journal of Jewish Studies*, XIII (1962), pp. 45–55. When writing this paper I was totally unaware of the Jewish Christian aspect of its subject-matter.

184 Our texts regard this view as false. They consider that the spread of Orthodox Christianity was mainly due to the intervention of the State, i.e., the persecution of other religions and of the Christian heresies.

185 Stressed by Ankori (*op. cit.* [above, n. 163], pp. 60–78).

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This supposition would entail another one, namely, that at some later period the influence of this sect must have been superseded in the Jewish portion of the Khazar people by that of Rabbinical Judaism and of Qaraism. All these are of course mere hypotheses.

As far as the conversion is concerned, the additional evidence provided by our texts, though very suggestive, is too scanty to permit us to move to more solid ground.

At the end of this section I wish to mention a point which cannot be discussed here and which will form the subject of a separate paper. I refer to the probability that Jewish Christians who, as we know, cultivated the Hebrew language, were the authors of at least one text included in the medical work attributed to Asaph the Physician.

II

In this section some quotations (most of which are not cited above) from the canonical and other Gospels occurring in our Jewish Christian texts will be translated.<sup>186</sup> In the case of quotations which in general agree with the canonical text, sometimes only the salient points on which they differ will be indicated.

(94b) 'It (is said) in the Gospel that when Christ was born he was circumcised after eight days<sup>187</sup> and that Joseph the Carpenter took him (together) with his mother and went off with them (*kharaja bihimā*) to Egypt.<sup>188</sup> He stayed there twelve years, then he took them and returned with them to Jerusalem.

It (is also said) there: Joseph entered his house and asked Maryam:<sup>189</sup> "Where is the boy (*ṣabī*)?" that is to say, Jesus Christ.<sup>190</sup> She said to him: "I thought he was with you." And he said: "I thought he was in the house and beside you." Both were worried, being afraid that he was lost, and they went together to search for him. And Joseph the Carpenter said to Maryam: "Take one road, and I shall take another. Perhaps (*fa-la'alla*) one of us will find him." And they went full of anxiety.<sup>191</sup> Maryam, his mother, found him and said: "My son, where have you been? I thought you were with your father, and your father thought you were with me. When he did not see you, we were anxious. Your father took (another) road, and I took this road. Where were you and with whom? Your father is full of anxiety<sup>192</sup> on your account." He said: "I was in Jerusalem,<sup>193</sup> and I studied (*ata'allam*)."<sup>194</sup>

186 In this preliminary study not all the quotations from the Gospels occurring in our texts can be given. These will be found in the full translation of these texts, which I have already completed, and, of course, in the edition of the Arabic text, which is planned for the near future. No rigorous rules have been followed in the choice of the texts figuring in the limited selection included in this section.

187 Cf. Luke ii : 21.

188 Cf. Matthew ii : 14.

189 *Sa'ala li-Maryam*; the use in this case of the preposition *li* indicates that the text follows an Aramaic original.

190 *Ya'nt 'Isā al-mashī*; the use of the form '*Isā*, which is the usual Moslem name for Jesus, seems to indicate that the three words figuring at the beginning of this note were added by or for the benefit of the Moslem author. In these texts the form *Īshū* occurs more frequently than '*Isā* (see also above).

191 The Arabic word may be read *mutaḥarriqayni*, literally: 'burnt', or *mutakharriqayni*, literally: 'torn'.

192 *Mutaḥarriq* or *mutakharriq* (cf. above, n. 191).

193 *Bayt al-maqdis*; literally this expression signifies the Temple.

194 Cf. the various accounts in Luke ii : 43-49; *The Gospel of Thomas*, XIX, 1-3; the Arabic *Evangelium Infantiae*, v.

In our text the beginning of the temptation which is quoted (78a–78b) reads as follows:

(78a) ‘It is written in your Gospel: Satan imprisoned Christ and held him captive in order to subject him to a trial; and Christ refrained from eating and drinking because of his fear that Satan’s stratagem with regard to him would be carried out.’

In the continuation of the story which, in the greater part of the text, differs only slightly or not at all from the canonical texts, the order of the temptations is that of Matthew iv : 1–11 and not that of Luke iv : 1–13. The beginning of the second temptation is recounted as follows:

(78a) ‘Then Satan brought him to the town of Jerusalem<sup>195</sup> and placed him on the roof (?) of the Temple.’<sup>196</sup>

In the third temptation Satan says to Jesus:

(78b) ‘If you will fall down upon your face in order to worship me, I will give you all this world, just as I gave to those who were before you.’<sup>197</sup>

195 Or: ‘The town of the Temple’, *madinat bayt al-maqdis*; see above. However, in this very phrase, the Temple is called *haykal*; see the following note.

196 ‘*Alā q.r.y.at al-haykal*. The word *q.r.y.at* poses a problem. In the context it is very unlikely that the translator had in mind the word *qarya*, ‘borough’, ‘village’, not even if its meaning is supposed to have been coloured by that of the Hebrew *qiryā*, ‘citadel’. The word could also be read *qariyya*, which may mean—like the Syriac—*qur*’, *qurītā*, ‘beam’, ‘rafter’, but this signification is not satisfactory either. However, this Arabic could have taken its colouring from the Hebrew *qorah*, which may mean ‘roof’, or from *qarya*, rendered in JACOB LEVY, *Wörterbuch der Talmudim und Midraschim*, IV, Berlin–Vienna 1924, pp. 379 f., by *Wölbung*. Cf. also *Aruch Hash-shalem*, VII, Vienna 1926, p. 198.

If the last solution were accepted, it would perhaps mean that, as far as this word is concerned, the quotation from the Gospel given in our text was translated from an Aramaic (i.e., most probably but not certainly a Syriac) rendering of the Gospel, which was not translated from the Greek. The equivalent Greek word both in Matthew (iv : 5) and in Luke (iv : 9) is *περὺγιον*. The *Peshitta*, which seems mindful of the etymology of the Greek term, renders this by the word *kenpa* whose first meaning is wing. However, an older Syriac translation (*The Four Gospels in Syriac Transcribed from the Sinaitic Palimpsest* [edited by R.L. BENSLEY, J. RENDEL HARRIS & F.C. BURKITT], Cambridge 1894) has—while using in Matthew iv : 5 (p. 7) the same word as the *Peshitta*—in Luke iv : 9 (p. 145) the translation *qarna*, a word whose first meaning is horn, but which also means ‘angle’. There is accordingly a possibility of a second solution, namely, that the Arabic *q.r.ya* should be read (the emendation would be a very slight one), *qurna*, which signifies ‘projecting angle’.

197 Cf. Matthew iv : 10; Luke iv : 6–7.

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After giving Jesus' answer to this proposal, our text has:

(78b) 'Then God sent an angel, who removed Satan from his place and threw him into the sea, and who freed the road before Christ.'<sup>198</sup>

The account of the passion which follows is apparently the one which was used by the Qaraites in order to prove that Jesus denied being a prophet or the Messiah. The same story is used by 'Abd al-Jabbār, or a Moslem assistant of his, in order to prove that not Jesus, but some other man, was crucified. This contention is clearly formulated in the introductory remarks of the story:

(65a) '... If the Christians would refer to the information (they have) and to what is written in their Gospels, they would know, as they give credence to the latter, that it was not Christ who was killed and crucified.'

The quotation follows:

(65a) 'When the Gospels speak of him who was killed and crucified, and of the crucifixion<sup>199</sup> they say:<sup>200</sup> On the Thursday of Passover, the Jews went to Herod (*Hayriḏh.s*), a companion of Pilate (*Filāṭ.s*) the king of the Romans, and said to him: "There is a man here, one of us,<sup>201</sup> who has corrupted and led astray our brethren. We stipulate accordingly with regard to you that you should give us power over (the man) whose way is (as described) so that we should carry out our judgment on him." Accordingly, Herod said to his auxiliaries: "Go with them, and bring their opponent (here)." Thereupon the auxiliaries went forth with the Jews and came to the gate of that government house.<sup>202</sup> The Jews turned to the auxiliaries and asked them:<sup>203</sup> "Do you know our opponent?" They said: "No." The Jews said: "Neither do we know him. However, come with us. We shall not fail to find somebody who will show him to us." Accordingly they went, and Judas Iscariot<sup>204</sup> met them. He was one

198 Cf. Matthew iv : 11; Luke iv : 13. The belief of the Christians that Jesus, who is regarded by them as a God, was in the power of Satan, and had to be delivered by an angel (a detail which does not occur in the canonical gospel) seems absurd to 'Abd al-Jabbār or to his source. (78b) Satan cannot hold God in his power. He is even unable to do this to a Jew's donkey (*himār al-yahūdī*).

199 The word which is used might also mean 'the crucifix'.

200 A marginal note may be rendered: 'On the way the Jews crucified a man as being Christ'.

201 Apparently these words mean that he was a Jew.

202 Or: 'the ruler's house'.

203 Literally: 'said to them'.

204 Written *Y.hūdhā s.r.ḥūṭā*.

of the intimates and followers <sup>205</sup> of Christ, one of his greatest disciples, one of the Twelve. He said to them: "Do you search for Jesus the Nazarene (*Ishū' al-naṣiri*)?" They said: "Yes." He said: "What shall I get from you, if I show him to you?" One of the Jews wanted to give him monies <sup>206</sup> which he had with him, counted thirty pieces and said: "They are yours." Judas said to them: "As you know, he is my friend, and I would be ashamed to say: that one, that's he. However, be with me and look at (the man) to whom I shall give my hand and whose head I shall kiss. Take hold of him as soon as my hand will let go his and lead him away."

There was a great (crowd) of people in Jerusalem where, (coming) from all places, they gathered to celebrate that feast. Judas Iscariot took the hand of a man, kissed his head, (65b) and as soon as his hand let go that of (the other), he plunged into the crowd.<sup>207</sup> Then the Jews and the auxiliaries seized (the man). He said to them: "What do you want from me?" and felt a poignant anguish. They answered <sup>208</sup> him: "The government <sup>209</sup> wants you." He said: "What have I to do with the government?"<sup>210</sup> And they led him away and made him come before Herod. But the man's reason had flown because of his fear and anguish.<sup>211</sup> He wept and had no self-control. Having become aware of his fear, Herod pitied him and said: "Let him be." He asked him to come nearer, made him sit down and tried to make him feel at ease. Thanks to him (the man) became calm.<sup>212</sup> Herod said to him: "What do you say with regard to the claim (about which they speak), namely that you are the Christ, king of the Children of Israel? Have you said this, or appealed to the people on this subject?"<sup>213</sup> He denied that he had said or claimed this. In spite of this, his perturbation was not quieted, although Herod tried to tranquillize him. Herod said to him: "Remember what is yours and try

205 I read *tibā'ihī*, instead of *tha'b.h.* which occurs in the MS.

206 *Darāhim*, a word which derives from the Greek *drachmē*.

207 Literally: 'people'.

208 Literally: 'said'.

209 Or: 'the ruler' or 'governor' (*al-sultān*).

210 *Ma li wa-li'l-sultān*; the expression may mean: 'What has the government against me?' Similar expressions exist in Hebrew and Syriac as well as in Arabic; cf. also Mark iv : 24.

211 As to the fear and anguish attributed to Jesus, cf., *inter alia*, the Epistle to the Hebrews v : 7 f. As to the meaning of εὐλάβεια, cf. for instance, O. CULLMANN, *Die Christologie des neuen Testaments*, Tübingen 1958, pp. 95 f.

212 Or: 'he tried to calm him'.

213 Another possible meaning could be: 'Have you claimed this?' But this interpretation presupposes a slight emendation.

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to convince (people) if it is really yours.” He did not want to make him deny (the thing). For it was not (the man) who had said it; they, and not he, had said it, and they had wronged him through what they had claimed and said with regard to him.

Accordingly Herod said to the Jews: “I do not see that he agrees with you, that he says what you claim. I only see that you attribute to him utterances (that were not his) and that you wrong him. There is a basin and water for me to wash my hand in (so that it should be innocent) of this man’s blood.”

(Then) Pilate the great king of the Romans addressed Herod. He said to him: “Information has come to me that the Jews have had an opponent of theirs, a man of education (*adab*) and knowledge, conducted before you for judgment. Give him over to me, so that I should probe him and see what is the matter with him.” And Herod gave him over to Pilate.

Thus (the man) who was (still) in a state of perturbation, fear and anguish, was brought before Pilate. The king tried to tranquillize him and asked him as to what the Jews had asserted with regard to him, namely that he was the Christ. He denied having said this. (Pilate however) did not cease asking him and trying to make him feel at ease, so that he should give an explanation about himself <sup>214</sup> and that (Pilate) should hear from him a witty saying (*adab*) or a precept. However, he could not allay the perturbation,<sup>215</sup> fear, anguish, the weeping and the sobbing (of the man) and he sent him back to Herod, saying to the latter: “I have found in this man nothing that has been ascribed to him. There is nothing good in him.”<sup>216</sup> And he explained this (by referring) to the man’s deficiency (66a) and ignorance.<sup>217</sup> Herod said: “It is now night. Conduct him to prison.” And they conducted him (there). The next day the Jews became importunate,<sup>218</sup> seized him, proclaimed his infamy,<sup>219</sup> tormented him, inflicting upon him various tortures, then at about the end of the day they whipped him and brought him to a melon-patch (*mabtakha*) and a vegetable garden (*mabqala*). There they crucified

214 More or less literally: ‘as to what was in him and with him’ (*mā ‘indahū wa-mā ma’ahu*).

215 Another possible translation would be: ‘he did not want to add to the perturbation.’

216 Pilate’s disappointment is apparently due to his not having found in the man the superior intellectual qualities which he had expected.

217 Or: ‘stupidity’ (*ghāba*).

218 I read *nakada*, which may also mean ‘molested’. The MS has *nakara*, ‘disapproved’.

219 *Shaharūhū tilka’l-shuhra*; the translation is not quite certain.



him and pierced him with lances in order that he should die quickly. As for him, crucified upon a piece of wood as he was, he did not cease crying out as loudly as he could: "My God, why did you abandon me, my God, why did you forsake me" until he died.

Then Judas Iscariot met the Jews and said to them: "What did you do with the man you seized yesterday?" They said: "We have crucified him." Judas was amazed at this, and thought (the thing) hardly credible (*istab'ada*). But they said to him: "We have done it. If you want to know it (for sure), go to a certain melon-patch." He went there, and when he saw him, he said: "He is an innocent man." He insulted the Jews, got out the thirty pieces which they had given him as a reward and threw them in their face. And he went to his (own) house and strangled himself.'

On the basis of this account, 'Abd al-Jabbār tries to prove (66a-b) the thesis propounded in his introductory remarks (see above); namely, that not Jesus but somebody else was crucified. Apparently, he tries to suggest (rather than explicitly say) that Judas pointed out the wrong man. While his arguments are by no means convincing, at least they direct our attention to the fact that the text as quoted does not wholly put out of court this interpretation. It is, however, most improbable that if the point of the story had been that somebody else was crucified instead of Jesus, this all-important fact would not have been stated clearly. On the whole, it seems likely that the Moslem author's thesis is a mere piece of Islamic apologetics.<sup>220</sup>

In this account of the passion which we are discussing, Herod plays one of the parts. This is also the case, though to a much lesser extent, in Luke xxiii : 6-11.<sup>221</sup> Herod is given a capital role in the fragment known as the Gospel of Peter.<sup>222</sup>

The words translated above 'On the Thursday of Passover' read in Arabic *fi khamis li'l-fish*.<sup>223</sup> It may be noted in this connection that Epiphanius appears to allude in *De Fide* to a tradition according to which the Last Supper took place on a Thursday.<sup>224</sup> In another work he attacks the opinion that Jesus was arrested on the night from Thursday to Fri-

220 The Qaraites (see above) do not seem to be aware of the thesis maintained by 'Abd al-Jabbār, or do not pay it any attention. It is probable that they know that, according to the prevalent interpretation, the account did not imply that Jesus was not crucified.

221 Cf. Acts iv : 27.

222 See *L'Évangile de Pierre* (edited by L. VAGANAY), Paris 1930, pp. 202-206.

223 This last word is often spelt *fish*. The translation 'On the fifth day of Passover', though perhaps not absolutely impossible, seems most improbable.

224 *De Fide*, XXIII. Cf. A. JAUBERT, *La Date de la cène*, Paris 1957, p. 88.

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day<sup>225</sup> and proves thereby that such an opinion existed. It may be relevant that the founder of the Jewish Mishawite sect, which, as mentioned above, was attacked because of its pro-Christian tendencies, considered that Passover should always fall on a Thursday.<sup>226</sup>

H. J. Schonfield has collected various texts which state that Jesus was crucified or buried, or both, in a garden;<sup>227</sup> sometimes, as in our text, they speak of a vegetable garden.<sup>228</sup> From our point the most significant passage may be the one in which at the end of the second century, Tertullian cites, as it were, an opinion of the Jews concerning Jesus: 'This is he whom his disciples have stolen away secretly, that it may be said that he is risen, or the gardener abstracted that his lettuces (*lactucas*) might not be damaged by the crowds of visitors!'<sup>229</sup>

According to the story of the passion which is under discussion, Pilate hoped to enjoy an instructive and edifying conversation with Jesus and was bitterly disappointed when the latter did not live up to his expectations. This trait is somewhat reminiscent of the objection against Christianity, deriving from Porphyry, which is quoted by Macarius Magnes.<sup>230</sup> The philosophical critic of Christianity asks why Jesus did not speak to the (Roman) Governor and to the high priest words worthy of a wise and divine man; he should have addressed to Pilate wise and earnest words.

225 *Loc. cit.*

226 See QIRQISANI, *op. cit.* (above, n. 158), p. 58. Cf. ANKORI, *op. cit.* (above, n. 163), p. 377.

227 *Op. cit.* (above, n. 151), pp. 103–105, 125–130.

228 *Ibid.*, p. 127.

229 *De Spectaculis*, xxx (translated by Schonfield, *ibid.*, p. 104).

230 See A. VON HARNACK, *Kritik des neuen Testaments von einem griechischen Philosophen des 3. Jahrhunderts (Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, xxxvii)*, Leipzig 1911, Fragment III, 1, p. 32. While Herod is not mentioned in this fragment, he is mentioned in Fragment II, 14, pp. 24–26, where the question is asked why Jesus did not appear after his death to Pilate, Herod and the high priest.

In his early treatise *De Philosophia ex Oraculis haurienda*, of which only fragments remain, the distinction between Jesus and the Christians, which is a main theme of our Jewish Christian texts, is made by Porphyry, or the oracles he cites and interprets. In a fragment quoted by AUGUSTINE (*De Civitate Dei*, XIX, 23) and by EUSEBIUS (*Praeparatio Evangelica*, IX, 10), the gods are said to declare that Christ was a very pious man, but that the Christians are polluted, contaminated and involved in error. Hecate, asked whether Christ was God, answered, *inter alia*: his soul is that of a man of outstanding piety, they worship it because truth is a stranger to them. Porphyry interprets the answer of the goddess (a part of which has been omitted) to mean that (Jesus) was a very pious man, whose soul, like the souls of other pious men, was after death granted immortality and that the Christians worship it through ignorance.

The fact that Pilate is described as *malik* ('king') may signify that in a particular *milieu* this Arabic or the corresponding Syriac word may also have been applied to a Governor.<sup>231</sup> It is possible, however, that at the time of the final redaction of the text, presumably in Syriac, Pilate was believed to have been a king. As a matter of fact, he is not infrequently designated by this title in various Christian texts.<sup>232</sup>

In spite of the arguments of 'Abd al-Jabbār, we came to the conclusion that in the account of passion quoted, Jesus is supposed to have been the man who was crucified. There are, however, passages in our texts apparently deriving from another story of the passion (which is not quoted in full) that accredit the view that Jesus was not crucified. They may be translated as follows:

(67a) '(It is said) in the Gospel: Christ was standing on one side <sup>233</sup> in the place (*mawḍi'*) of the crucifixion and Maryam, the mother of Christ, came to the place. He who was crucified looked at her and said, (attached) as he was to the piece of wood: "This is your son," and he said to Christ: "This is your mother." Then Maryam took his hand <sup>234</sup> and went off <sup>235</sup> (leaving behind her) the people present.

(It is) also (said) in the Gospel: "Christ died without anything having touched him."

The second complete account of the passion figuring in our texts is very different from the first.<sup>236</sup> It is much shorter (as it does not include the story of the judgment) and in several particulars it is reminiscent of the corresponding passage of Saint John. It may be translated as follows:

(56b) 'Both the Christians <sup>237</sup> and the Jews assert that Pilate (*Filāṭ.s*) the Roman, king of the Romans, seized Christ, because the Jews had maligned him, and delivered him up to them. They led him away upon an ass, with his face turned towards the ass' hind quarters, put upon his head a crown of thorns and went around in order to

231 Cf. also the use of the word above, in the section on Paul's biography.

232 As well as in the Mandaic *Right Ginza* (29, 8), where he is mentioned as *Paltus malka ḡ-alma* (Pilate, the king of the world).

233 *Nāḥiya*; one side or one part of a given piece of land is meant.

234 I.e., Jesus' hand.

235 Literally: 'went off from the people present' (*maḡat min bayna'l-jamā'a*).

236 It should be noted that the account designated here as 'the second' occurs in the MS before 'the first'.

237 *Hādhihi al-naṣārā*; literally: 'these Christians'. But in all probability *hādhihi* is a rendering of the Syriac *haw*, which in certain cases virtually has the function of the article.

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make an example out of his punishment. They beat him from behind, attacked him from before and said to him in mockery: "King of the Children of Israel, who has done this to you?" Being thirsty because of the fatigue and the distress which afflicted him, he humbled himself<sup>238</sup> and said to them: "Give me water to drink." And they took a bitter tree, pressed out its juice, put into it vinegar and gave this to him to drink. He took it (57a), thinking that it was water, tasted it, and when he perceived that it was bitter, spat it out. They for their part, made him inhale this drink (or according to another possible interpretation: "forced him to drink it") and tortured him one whole day and one whole night. When the next day came—it was a Friday, the one which they call Good Friday<sup>239</sup>—they asked Pilate to have him whipped; which he did. Thereupon, they got hold of him, crucified him and pierced him with lances, while he, being crucified upon a piece of wood, did not cease from crying: "My God, why did you abandon me? My God, why did you forsake me?" until he died. (Then) they brought him down and buried him.'

The giving-over by Pilate<sup>240</sup> of Jesus to the Jews mentioned at the end of the first sentence of this account is perhaps slightly more reminiscent of John xix : 16 than of Matthew xxvii : 26 or Mark xv : 15, or even Luke xxiii : 25. The description of the indignities and torments suffered by Jesus, which immediately follows up on this sentence, does not have an exact parallel in the canonical accounts of the passion. However, the particulars of the episode in which Jesus is given to drink, have, as it seems to me, a significant relation, both in their similarity and in their difference, to the account of John. Such a relation does not exist in this point between the text under discussion and the accounts of the other canonical Gospels. A resemblance may be found in the fact that John (xix : 28) is the only canonical Gospel in which Jesus asks, as he does in our text, to be given to drink.<sup>241</sup> However, the way this request is explained is significantly different in the two texts. According to John,

238 *Istakhdhā*; that is the way the word is written in the MS. The omission of one diacritic point would give the reading *istakhdā*, which has a similar meaning: 'he submitted'.

239 *Jum'a ḥ.n.tā*; the reading of the second word may vary to a certain extent. This second word may be a corruption of the Arabic *ḥazīna*, *al-jum'a al-ḥazīna* being the Arabic name of Good Friday, or a corruption of the Syriac *nyāḥta* or *dan-yāḥtā*. The second supposition seems to me rather more probable than the first.

240 Who here too is called 'a king' (see above).

241 The fact that in John he puts this request in an indirect way by saying 'I thirst', seems to me to be of no consequence.

'Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished,<sup>242</sup> that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst', whereas according to our text, 'he humbled himself' in asking for water. There is, I think, a possibility that one of these explanations may have been deliberately substituted for the other. While the two texts do not agree with regard to various particulars concerning the death of Jesus, both of them mention in this connection the fact that he was pierced by a lance (John xix : 34) and that it was a Friday (John xix : 31). These two points are not referred to in the Synoptic Gospels.<sup>243</sup>

Apart from this account, there are in our texts several other quotations, which seem to have a significant connection with passages in John. Their tendency is different from that prevalent in this Gospel, and it is at least a tenable supposition that they, or some of them, may derive from an earlier redaction.

One of these quotations, already cited above, shall be repeated here, because it clearly illustrates the problem. It may be rendered: (52a) 'I shall not judge men,<sup>244</sup> nor call them to account for their actions. He who has sent me will settle (?) this with them.' Our text adds: (52b) 'This is in the Gospel of John.' As has been pointed out above, the antithesis of this statement is found in John v : 22.

A less clear example is provided by a quotation from John vii : 16,<sup>245</sup> which starts out by approximating to the canonical text and may be rendered thus: (52a) 'The speech which you hear is not my own, but his that sent me.' At this point, however, a sentence is added which does not figure in the canonical text. It may be rendered: 'Woe to me if I say something of my own accord (*min tilqā' nafsī*).'

An interesting problem is presented by the following quotation which apparently is also regarded as deriving from John: (52b) 'One may also find there <sup>246</sup> that Jesus has said: "They knew, O Lord, that You have sent me, and You have mentioned Your name to them." ' This *logion* may correspond to John vii : 28–29, a verse which implies a very different doctrine: "Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying: "Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but

242 Πάντα τετέλεσται.

243 The fact that Jesus was pierced by a lance is mentioned in certain MSS of Matthew (xxvii : 49). But the words seem to be an interpolation deriving from John. It may be noted that neither of the two complete accounts of the passion of Jesus occurring in our texts tends—if compared to the canonical Gospels—to minimize the part played by the Jews in the crucifixion. If anything, the contrary is true.

244 Literally: 'the servants' (*'ibād*; a Moslem expression, applied to the 'servants of God', i.e., to men).

245 In this case this Gospel is not explicitly mentioned in the text.

246 Apparently in John.

he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.”’ This verse is supplemented by John vii : 29: ‘But I know him, for I am from him and he hath sent me.’

In our texts the following saying is attributed to Jesus: (56a) ‘If you had been Abraham’s sons, you would have responded to me, for I am a son of Abraham.’ This probably corresponds to John viii : 39: ‘If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham.’ The fact that in the quotation occurring in our text Jesus declares himself to be a son of Abraham is especially significant if compared to the last part of John viii, which contains Jesus’ affirmation: ‘Before Abraham was I am.’ This is one of the sayings attributed to Jesus whose authenticity is questioned in our texts.

Certain variations in Jesus’ prayer for the resurrection of Lazarus do not appear to have much doctrinal importance: (52b) ‘I ask you to resuscitate this dead (man), so that the Children of Israel should know that You have sent me, and that You respond to my prayer.’ The last part of this sentence from ‘and that’ does not occur in John xi : 42, and there are other small variations. It may be significant that our text has ‘Children of Israel’, while John has ‘the people which stand by (τὸν ὄχλον τὸν περιεστῶτα)’.<sup>247</sup>

Apparently, quite apart from any of the accounts of the passion (at any rate no indication of any connection is given), the following passage is found in our texts:

(95a) ‘It is (said) in their Gospels and in their narratives (*akhbār*) that, when Christ was crucified, his mother Maryam came to him with her sons James (*Ya’qūb*), Simon (*Sham’ūn*) and Judah (*Yahū-dhā*), and they stood before him.<sup>248</sup> And he, (while attached) to the piece of wood, said to her: “Take your sons, and go away (*inṣarifi*).”’

This story may appear to have a remote similarity with the one told in Matthew xii : 47–49, Mark iii : 31–33 and Luke viii : 19–21, as in both cases Jesus seems to wish to make it clear that he does not acknowledge any close relationship with the members of his family. But the story in the Synoptic Gospels is not placed at the time of the crucifixion. In the canonical Gospels there is only one account of the passion, that of Saint John, which refers to Jesus’ speaking to his mother from the cross (John xix : 25–27):

247 I am not certain whether any importance attaches to the fact that our text speaks of the Children of Israel *knowing*, whereas Saint John refers to the people *believing*. But the fact should be noted.

248 I.e., before Jesus.

'Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas and Mary Magdalen. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple: Behold thy mother!'

The implications of Jesus' words to his mother as given in Saint John are obviously quite different from the implications of the words related in our texts. In other words, there exists between the two passages the antithetical relation that we noted in confronting other *logia* of our text with the corresponding verses of Saint John. It may thus be argued that one of the two passages may be a substitute for the other. As there does not appear to be any intrinsic reason for regarding one of them as prior to the other, this priority can only be determined on the basis of theories concerning the origin and mode of composition of the Gospel of Saint John.

James, the brother of Jesus named in the passage quoted above, is also mentioned in our texts in this second case, likewise together with the other brothers, in a quotation (94b-95a) which is described as deriving from the Gospel of Saint Matthew and which corresponds to Matthew xiii : 53-57.<sup>249</sup>

In our Jewish Christian texts he is not accorded a special position. Apparently, the sect which is represented in these texts differed on this point from the Jewish Christians of the *Pseudo-Clementines*. At present we do not dispose of any data which would enable us to determine whether this absence of reverence for James (and for other members of Jesus' family) is a trait which goes back to the early period of the sect, or whether it is a modern development.

Saint Peter, who is the protagonist of the Jewish Christians of the *Pseudo-Clementines*, is criticized in our texts (see also above) for having abrogated the commandments prohibiting the eating of various animals in consequence of the vision related in a passage of the Acts (x : 10-16), which is quoted *verbatim*. According to our texts, he had no right to regard the commandments in question as abrogated because of what is described as a dream. The reference, in opposition to this procedure, to what is regarded in Islam as a legitimate mode of abrogation, called *al-naskh*, is doubtless due to the Moslem adaptation of the text. But the objection to dreams as a source of authority is reminiscent of the *Pseudo-*

249 As well as in Mark vi : 1-4. The Arabic equivalent of the word *πατρις* occurring (with a pronoun denoting possession) in Matthew xiii : 53 and 56 (and also in the other Gospels) is the word *madina* ('town') used with a possessive suffix.

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*Clementines, Hom.*, xvii, 14 f., where it is set forth by Peter in his debate with Simon, who apparently represents Paul.<sup>250</sup>

The heavenly voice heard when Jesus was baptized is mentioned twice in these texts:

(47a) 'They say: When John (*Yūhannā*) baptized him in the Jordan, the gates of heaven were opened and the Father cried out: "This is my son and my beloved (*ḥabībī*) in whom my soul rejoices." '251

(94a) '(According) to their prevalent (traditions)...<sup>252</sup> people thought that Jesus was a son of Joseph up to the time when John baptized him in the Jordan and the voice came from the heaven: "This is my son in whom my soul rejoices." '253

As D. Flusser suggested to me, the fact that the words 'my soul' occur in this version, whereas they are absent from the version found in the Synoptic Gospels,<sup>254</sup> seems to indicate that with regard to this our text was closer to Isaiah xlii : 1, wherefrom the words of the heavenly voice have been held to derive.<sup>255</sup>

In the quotation already referred to above, which in our texts is said to derive from Matthew, and which in fact corresponds to Matthew xii : 1-5 and to Luke vi : 1-4, there is a point which may require some consideration.

Whereas according to Matthew xii : 1, the disciples plucked the ears of corn and ate them, and according to Luke vi : 1, they plucked and ate them, rubbing (*ψόχοντες*) them with their hands, our text (92b) does not mention their plucking the ears; according to this version they rubbed (*yafrukun*) and ate the ears of corn. In this particular, the Arabic *Diatessaron*<sup>256</sup> agrees with our text. The point is of some interest, as the Talmud (*Shabbath* 128a) mentions the opinion of the Sages (*hakhamim*) according to which 'rubbing' may be permitted within certain limits on Sabbath.<sup>257</sup>

250 Cf. SCHOEPS, *op. cit.* (above, n. 31), pp. 130 f.

251 *Allādhī surrīrat bihī nafsi.*

252 *Akthar mā 'indahum.*

253 *Allādhī surrīrat bihī nafsi*; as written in the MS, the second word may suggest the reading *Tasarrarat*, which does not involve a change of meaning.

254 Matthew iii : 17: ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκητα; cf. Mark i : 11, Luke iii : 22.

255 Cf., for instance, J. JEREMIAS, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, v, Stuttgart 1954, pp. 698 f.

256 See *Diatessaron de Tatién* (edited by A.S. MARMARDJI), Beirut 1935, p. 66. In most cases the quotations from the Gospels figuring in our texts markedly differ from the text of the *Diatessaron*.

257 I am indebted for this reference to S. Safrai and D. Flusser. The opinion of the Sages is preceded by that of R. Yehudah, according to which plucking is also



The following quotation also concerns the Sabbath:

(67a) '(It is said) there:<sup>258</sup> Maryam al-Majdalāniyya and the other Maryam refrained from sending (*ba'tha*) perfume to our master (*li-sayyidina*) the Christ on a Sabbath day because of the commandment (*sunna*) with regard to the observance of the Sabbath.'

This corresponds to Luke xxxiii : 56 (cf. also Mark xvi : 1).

The following quotation is an interesting example both of agreement with and of difference from, the canonical text:

(67b) '(It is said) there:<sup>259</sup> He said to the Children of Israel: "O serpents, children of vipers,<sup>260</sup> you profess the Scripture, and you do not understand. You wash the outside of the vessel, and its inside is full of filth.<sup>261</sup> You seek on land and on sea, in the plain and in the mountain, a disciple,<sup>262</sup> and when you find one, you teach him your ways,<sup>263</sup> so that he becomes worse than you.<sup>264</sup> You have not entered yourselves the Kingdom, and you have not let (other) people enter the Kingdom of Heaven—since you have not entered (it)." '265

As this preliminary study has tried to show, the texts we are discussing add a good deal to our knowledge of the Jewish Christian sect, whose conceptions and sentiments they express.

A certain complex of ideas, characteristic of theories, which is very much to the fore in these texts, but get little mention or none elsewhere, will in spite of the risk of some repetitiveness, be the subject of the brief recapitulative observations which follow.

On the evidence of these texts, these Jewish Christian sectarians were characterized by having a bitter and disenchanting view of history, or to

permitted within limits. It should be noted that both opinions refer to spices. This is, of course, not the justification proposed in our texts for the action of the disciples. As we saw, the Jewish Christians with whom we are concerned held that the action was legitimate, because they were compelled by the circumstances to act in this manner. Cf. also J.N. EPSTEIN, *Prolegomena ad Litteras Tannaiticas* (in Hebrew), Jerusalem 1957, p. 280.

258 I.e., in the Gospel.

259 I.e., in the Gospel.

260 Cf. Matthew xxiii : 33.

261 Matthew xxiii : 25.

262 *Sāhib*; the word may also mean 'a companion'. Matthew xxiii : 15 has προσήλυτον.

263 *Tar'āiq*; the word may mean 'rule of life'.

264 Cf. Matthew xxiii : 15.

265 Matthew xxiii : 13.

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be more precise, of the history with which they were mainly concerned, namely the succession of events—whose landmarks were the early Christian missionary work in Antioch and the activity of Paul, and after him that of Constantine and of his successors—events which in their opinion had brought about the corruption and ‘Romanization’ of Christianity. At the time of the composition of the texts this religion in its dominant manifestations was quite opposed to that of Christ. They believed this decadence to be due to love of power on the part of the Christian leaders, Paul and others. *Inter alia*, this love of power was in their view responsible for the fateful decision in consequence of which the Christian missionaries concentrated upon the proselytization of the Gentile nations, described in these texts as ignorant, as far as religion was concerned, rather than upon propaganda among those of the Jews who were unbelievers, but who might have been converted if addressed in their own Hebrew language. According to their interpretation, the Christian leaders were afraid that the Jews, a people instructed in the religious law, would see through their pretensions. While both the Jews, who had done their best to exclude the early Christians from their community, and the dominant Christian Churches, who often persecuted the Jews, considered the separation of Judaism and Christianity as an ineluctable fact which might be regarded with complacency—and for which the Christians had been provided with a theological explanation—the Jewish Christian authors of our texts and presumably other members of their sect may have been the only people in the world—at the relatively late period (perhaps the fifth or the sixth century) at which these texts were composed—who still deplored the split of Judaism and Christianity, two religions which should have remained one. They also deplored the fact that the Christians (or perhaps only most of them) no longer read the Gospels in Hebrew, the language of Jesus, and of all the prophets. Quite clearly, these Jewish Christians believed that they preserved and continued (perhaps clandestinely) the traditions of the first not yet corrupted Christian community of Jerusalem founded by the immediate disciples of Jesus, who professed his religion, i.e., believed that he was a man and not a divine being, and observed the Mosaic commandments.

TWO PASSAGES CONCERNING MANI

A

(53a) 'You know that the priest Mani (*Mānī al-qass*) claims that he knows the truth concerning Christ, that he is one of the latter's followers, that nobody with the exception of himself and his (i.e., Mani's) followers observes Christ's law (*sharī'a*) and precepts and that the Gospel which Mani has with him is the Gospel of Christ. With respect to the latter,<sup>1</sup> he <sup>2</sup> mentions that women, sacrifices <sup>3</sup> and eating meat were forbidden by him <sup>4</sup> to everybody, and (also) to himself, for the reason that (all) this has never been and will never be permitted to all those who regard these things as licit, being accursed;<sup>5</sup> and that he <sup>6</sup> has declared to have nothing in common (*tabarra'a*) (53b) with Abraham, Aron (*Harūn*), Joshua, David and all those who approve of the sacrificing of animals, of causing them pain, of eating meat and of other (similar) things. On this point Mani invokes the testimony of (some) passages (occurring) in the Gospels which are with you.<sup>7</sup> (But) according to you,<sup>8</sup> he has lied with regard to Christ and has been mistaken in his interpretations (*fīmā ta'awwalahu*). For (in your opinion the fact) that Jesus has regarded his prophets as righteous (men) is evident, and one cannot be made to set it aside by any interpretation.'

B

(80a) 'Something similar to what has been done by Paul as regards helping the Romans (to keep) their own religion and to abandon the religion of Christ, was done by the priest Mani, who (was) the chief of the Manicheans (*al-mānāniyya*). Mani lived a long time after

1 I.e., by Christ.

2 Mani.

3 Or: 'slaughter of animals' (*dhabh*).

4 I.e., Christ.

5 The following translation is equally possible: 'he (Christ) has cursed all those that regard these things as licit.'

6 I.e., Christ.

7 I.e., the Gospels recognized by the Christians.

8 I.e., the Christians (belonging to the dominant Churches).

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Paul and had a leading position; he became a Metropolitan of the Christians of Iraq (a country which belonged) to the Persian kingdom, after having been a (simple) priest. He associated with Persians and, in accordance with the doctrine of the Magians, praised Light and disapproved of Darkness. He also praised Zoroaster (*Z.rā.d.sh.t*), the prophet of the Magians.

Mani said: Light (*al-nūr*) chose him<sup>9</sup> and sent him to the East, sending Christ to the West. (On the other hand) Mani disapproved of Abraham and Ishmael (*Ismā'īl*),<sup>10</sup> as well as of the prophets, whom Christ has regarded as true. The Persians rejected them,<sup>11</sup> and were thus abetted by Mani, who came close to them in disapproving of these (men). He said: "Satan sent them." And he wrote: "From Mani, servant of Jesus,"<sup>12</sup> just as Paul used to write. He (tried) to resemble Paul and to follow his tracks. Mani took up the Avesta (*al-abastāq*)—this being the book of Zoroaster, the prophet of the Magians, a book which is not in the language of the Persians, nor in any language at all, and nobody knows what it is. It is a mumbling.<sup>13</sup> They<sup>14</sup> recite the words (of the Avesta) without knowing what they mean.<sup>15</sup> Mani claimed that he was the Messenger of Light, and he composed for them (things full of) ignorance and said: this is the interpretation (*tafsīr*) of the Avesta. The common people wanted this, and he enjoyed great popularity<sup>16</sup> among them. They watched him and ascribed to him prodigies and miracles. (However), one of the kings of the Persians had him arrested, put him to the test and instituted an investigation into his doings.<sup>17</sup> And lo (it became clear that Mani) was a liar and a trickster<sup>18</sup> who desired dominion, (*ri'āsa*) and who wished to come close to the Persians (80b) and the Magians with respect to their false beliefs, in order to come to an

9 I.e., Zoroaster.

10 The name is probably substituted for that of Isaac.

11 No doubt not only the prophets but also the patriarchs are meant.

12 The word occurring in the manuscript seems to be written 'l.y.t.w.'. No doubt *Ishū'* should be read.

13 *Zamzama*; a term applied to the mode of recitation characteristic of the Zoroastrians.

14 I.e., the Zoroastrians.

15 Literally: 'what it is'. It is not clear whether the Zoroastrians are said to be ignorant of the meaning of the words of the Avesta or of the nature of the book itself. However, there is very little difference between the two interpretations.

16 *Qāmat sūqūhu*; roughly: 'his market functioned successfully.' The same expression is used in the account concerning Paul, which points to both accounts having been written by one and the same author.

17 Literally: 'his states' (*aḥwāl*).

18 *Mumakhrīq*; a term which in these texts is also applied to Paul.

agreement with them on doctrines which do not belong to the religion of Christ. The king caused him to be killed, just as the (other) king caused Paul to be killed. But his disciples remained after him. They proclaimed that he was a prophet (*nubuwwa*) and profess (belief) in his having been a messenger (*risāla*)<sup>19</sup> and in his Gospel. Perhaps (..) <sup>20</sup> the Epistles of Paul.

Many among (the adherents of) these three sects <sup>21</sup> believe in Mani's teaching, but they scarcely show this for fear of the Christians and of the Moslems <sup>22</sup> in the case of those among them who live in an Islamic country. For the Manicheans are (not regarded) by the Moslems as having a protected status.<sup>23</sup>

These two passages call for a detailed commentary, which cannot, however, be given here. A few points will be dealt with in the following preliminary remarks.

The description of Mani as *qass*, i.e., a Christian priest, which occurs in both passages, does not appear to be corroborated in other sources. *A fortiori*, no confirmation can be found for the statement of passage B, that in the pursuance of his priestly career, Mani was finally appointed Metropolitan of the Christians of Iraq. This information, which may have been distorted by the anti-Christian bias of our texts, presents nevertheless some interest, as the attitude towards Manicheism which it reflects is an unusual one.

The fact mentioned in passage A, that Mani claimed to have with him the true Gospel of Christ, is also referred to by the ninth century bishop of Ḥarrān, Theodorus Ibn Qurra.<sup>24</sup> The text makes it pretty clear, though perhaps there is no absolute certainty, that the three-fold prohibition forbidding intercourse with women, sacrifices and the eating of meat was supposed to have been formulated in the gospel in question. This prohibition, which is part of Mani's teaching, is to some extent reminiscent of the voice said to have been heard by Mani's father, which forbade eating meat, drinking wine and intercourse with women.<sup>25</sup>

19 In the Islamic terminology, *rasūl*, from which the term *risāla* derives, is a prophet who is also a legislator, while a *naī*, from which *nubuwwa* derives, may be a prophet who is not a legislator.

20 Approximately three words are illegible.

21 I.e., the three Christian sects: the Orthodox, the Jacobites and the Nestorians.

22 An addition made by the Moslem author or with a view to Moslem readers appears to begin here, going on till the end of the text.

23 *Dhūmma*; this is the status of the Jews and the Christians under Moslem law.

24 See P. ALFARIC, *Les Écritures manichéennes*, II, Paris 1919, p. 173; cf. p. 177, where a similar statement, made by al-Birūnī, is quoted.

25 See, for instance, H. C. PUECH, *Le Manichéisme*, Paris 1949, p. 39.

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The Gospels (in the plural), said to be recognized by the Christians, which according to Mani contained passages disapproving of animal sacrifices and of eating meat, may be identical with an Ebionite gospel quoted by Epiphanius, which, as Alfarić<sup>26</sup> has conjectured, may have been used by Mani.<sup>27</sup>

This passage, as well as the references made in our texts to Jesus having participated in sacrifices, make it clear that the Jewish Christians whose doctrine is reflected in these texts are not Epiphanius' Ebionites. As has already been stated, they approximate to his 'Nazarenes'.

The parallel drawn in passage B between Mani and Paul is clearly offensive for both, but is in all probability directed in the first place against Paul, Mani's reputation as a heresiarch being firmly established among the Christians, and (at a later period), among the Moslem readers of the text. The analogy traced between Mani's concessions to Zoroastrianism and Paul's concession to Roman beliefs and customs is ingenious. Other particulars, for instance the opening words of Mani's writings, have suggested not only to the authors of our texts, but also to modern scholars, the idea that the heresiarch deliberately modelled himself upon Paul.<sup>28</sup>

The reference to the incomprehensibility or meaninglessness of the language of the Avesta, and its difference from the language of the Persians, probably goes back to the Sassanid period, during which Zoroastrianism was a State religion. The statement that Mani composed an interpretation of the Avesta may be due to his employing the names of Avestan gods in his mythology.

Mani's statement, quoted in passage B, that the Light chose Zoroaster and sent him to the East, sending Christ to the West, has great similarity with a passage of Mani's *Shabuhragān*, quoted by al-Bīrūnī,<sup>29</sup> but the two are not identical.

26 *Op. cit.* (above, n. 24), pp. 173 ff.

27 It is not impossible that this Gospel also expressed disapproval of some prophets. In the Ebionite portions of the *Pseudo-Clementines*, the doctrine of which largely corresponds to that of Epiphanius' Ebionites, an unfavourable view is taken of certain prophets. On the other hand, we do not know how Mani's use of the Ebionite Gospel can be reconciled with the fact that while the sect observed many commandments of the Mosaic Law, the latter was rejected *in toto* by Mani.

28 See H.H. SCHAEFER, *Urform und Fortbildungen des manichäischen Systems (Bibliothek Warburg, Vorträge, 1924–1925)*, p. 129; cf. ALFARIĆ, *op. cit.* (n. 24), p. 38.

29 See AL-BIRUNI, *Al-āthār al-bāqīya* (edited by C.E. SACHAU), Leipzig 1878, p. 207; cf. PUECH, *op. cit.* (above, n. 25), p. 59 and p. 144, n. 241.

THE GOSPEL OF BARNABAS

The purpose of the following remarks is a limited one: I shall merely attempt to point out very briefly the possible relevance of the so-called 'Gospel of Barnabas' to the main theme of this study. My attention was drawn to this Gospel by D. Flusser, who was struck by the observations concerning it made by John Toland in *Nazarenus*.

The Italian version of the Gospel of Barnabas, as well as fragments of the last version, have been edited with an English translation by Lonsdale & Laura Ragg (Oxford 1907). In their introduction they criticize the views of the eighteenth century authors who believed that the work was translated from the Arabic. They tend to believe that the Italian text constitutes an original (or virtually an original) work, which may have been composed in the second half of the sixteenth century or perhaps, more probably, at an earlier date. Some of their arguments carry weight. Thus it seems probable that the author or translator of the work was acquainted with the Vulgate. I may add that the fact that the names from the Old and the New Testament figuring in the work generally approximate to the Latin or Italian forms, can only be reconciled with the hypothesis postulating a translation from the Arabic, if one supposes that the translator's knowledge of the two Testaments was such that he could recognize the names in question in spite of their Arabic garb and in spite of the additional deformation to which, if one accepts the hypothesis, they may be presumed to have been subjected because of the peculiarities of the Arabic script.

Nevertheless, the editors' thesis and argumentation seem to be rather one-sided; they do not take into account the complexity of the work.

I am not concerned here with the evident Islamic elements in the work, many of which have been pointed out by the editors. Nor with the role assigned to Mohammed, who, rather than Jesus, is said to be the Messiah. While this thesis is not an orthodox Islamic doctrine, it seems evident that it must have originated in Islam. The notion that God created before all things his messenger (*il nontio suo*, p. 208), i.e., Mohammed, is certainly Islamic.

Many other examples can be adduced. *Pace* the editors, I believe that the hypothesis that considerable portions of this Gospel were translated or adapted from the Arabic can only be avoided if one does not take into account essential data of the problem.

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As Toland rightly pointed out, this Gospel also contains 'Ebionite' elements. It is because of this fact that it is germane to the subject-matter of this paper.

The texts which appear to attest the Ebionite character of the Gospel are quite numerous; I shall cite only part of the introductory remarks supposed to be made by Barnabas, the author of the Gospel:<sup>1</sup>

(p. 4) 'Dearly beloved, the great and wonderful God hath during these past days visited us by his prophet Jesus Christ in great mercy of teaching and miracles by reason whereof many, being deceived of Satan, are preaching most impious doctrine, calling Jesus Son of God, repudiating the circumcision ordained of God forever, and permitting every unclean meat: among whom also Paul was deceived, whereof I speak not without grief.'

This passage contains some of the main themes of the Jewish Christian texts found in 'Abd al-Jabbār's work; Jesus' prophethood is acknowledged, but to teach that he is the son of God is a most impious doctrine. The repudiation of circumcision and the permission to eat every unclean meat (*ogni cibo immondo*) are likewise blameworthy. The opposition to Paul is less virulent than in the Jewish Christian texts, but very explicit. It is also in evidence in the last chapter (CCXXII, p. 488), where Paul is again said to have been deceived, because he taught that Jesus was the son of God.

In Chapter LXI (p. 142) Jesus and his disciples are said to have washed themselves 'according to the law of God written in the book of Moses'.

Chapter xxx (pp. 66 f.): 'The feast of the Tabernacles (*Senofegia*) is called a feast of our nation (*festā della nostra gente*).'

Chapter XLVIII (pp. 112 f.): 'At that time the army of the Romans was in Judaea, our country (*la nostra regione*) being subject to them for the sins of our forefathers.'

In this quotation and in the one before it the author of the work seems to identify himself with the Jews.

In Chapter XLVIII the ascription of Divinity to Jesus is said to have originated with Roman soldiers. See in p. 113, n. 1 an enumeration of passages in which this doctrine is opposed.

In Chapter xxxii (pp. 72 f.) Jesus gives the reason for not eating forbidden food.

In Chapters xxii and xxiii (pp. 44-49) the obligation of circumcision is set forth (p. 45): 'Verily, I say unto you that a dog is better than an uncircumcised man.'

1 The editors' translation has been used.



If the historical references are taken into account, it seems certain that most of these passages cannot be of Moslem origin, and must be ascribed to Jewish Christians. It is, however, possible that these Jewish Christians did not belong to the same sect as the original authors of 'Abd al-Jabbār's texts. This may perhaps be inferred from the different attitude towards sacrifices.

'Abd al-Jabbār's texts do not oppose sacrifices. This is also true with regard to Chapter XIII (pp. 22 f.) of our Gospel, in which Jesus is said to offer a sacrifice.

However, in Chapter xxxii (pp. 70 f.) and in Chapter LXVII (pp. 154 ff.), some opposition to sacrifices is expressed. In this particular, certain sections of this Gospel are to some extent reminiscent of the much more extreme Ebionite doctrine of the *Pseudo-Clementines*. This is not the case with regard to 'Abd al-Jabbār's texts.

In a note published in the editors' Introduction (p. xlviij), Margoliouth states that there is no mention of a Gospel of Barnabas in the polemical literature of the Moslems. As far as I know, this assertion is true. There is, however, a possibility that this work, or a work closely connected with it, may be referred to in a non-polemical text, namely al-Bīrūnī's<sup>2</sup> *Al-āthār al-bāqiya* (*op. cit.* [above, p. 69, n. 29], p. 33). After having spoken of the Gospel used by the Manicheans, al-Bīrūnī refers to a recension (*nuskha*) of this Gospel. This recension, which he apparently regards as being different from the Gospel of the Manicheans, is said by him to be entitled 'The Gospel of the Seventy' and to be ascribed to *B.lām.s*. Its introduction contains the statement that it was written down by Salām b. 'Abd Allāh b. Salām and dictated by Salmān al-Fārisī. Al-Bīrūnī adds that whoever has a look at it can see that it is a forgery. According to him it is not accepted by the Christians or by others.

As we have seen (see above, Excursus I), the Manicheans appear to have used an Ebionite Gospel, which in its attitude towards sacrifices seems to have had something in common with certain sections of the Gospel of Barnabas. On the other hand, al-Bīrūnī apparently postulates a connection between this Ebionite Gospel and the Gospel of *B.lām.s*. We may add that the reference in the introduction to the latter Gospel, to Salmān al-Fārisī and Salām b. 'Abd Allāh b. Salām, are highly suggestive. The former is said to be a Persian convert to Christianity, who joined Mohammed either in Mecca or near Medina and embraced Islam. He is assigned a very important role in the doctrines of various extreme Shi'ite sects.<sup>3</sup> Salām b. 'Abd Allāh b. Salām is apparently the son of a

2 Al-Bīrūnī died in 1048 or thereabout.

3 On Salmān see L. MASSIGNON, *Salman Pak*, Tours 1934.

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Jewish companion of Mohammed converted to Islam. Taken at their face value, these indications seem to point to the Gospel of *B.lām.s*<sup>4</sup> having had Jewish Christian and Ebionite elements, in which case its make-up must have been similar to that of the Gospel of Barnabas. But even if one refrains from pressing too far possible inferences from the facts stated by al-Bīrūnī, it is, I think, a tenable hypothesis that the Gospel of *B.lām.s* may have been an early form of the Gospel of Barnabas. In view of the peculiarities of the Arabic script, the possibility of the transformation of an Arabic form of the name of Barnabas into *B.lām.s* can be envisaged. On this point, however, Alfaric (*op. cit.* [above, p. 68, n. 24], p. 178) proposes another conjecture. According to him a MS (he does not state which) has instead of *B.lām.s*—*Ikklāmīs*, i.e., the Arabic form of the name of Clemens, to whom, as he supposes, the Gospel was ascribed. Perhaps a study of the MSS of *Al-āthār al-bāqiya* may throw some light on this question.

While the editors of the Gospel of Barnabas were by no means categorical in their conclusions, their observation had, in point of fact, the effect of inhibiting research on the connections of the Gospel of Barnabas with Islamic or Ebionite texts. In my opinion, research of this kind might lead to interesting results.

Enlarged version of lecture read 14 June 1966

4 Cf. the remarks of H. C. PUECH in HENNECKE, *op. cit.* (above, p. 28, n. 110), I, pp. 191–193.

ADDENDA

(p. 7) The Jewish Christian version of the words of Jesus on the day of resurrection may—while basically deriving from Matthew xxv:31–46—owe something to Matthew vii:21–23 (noted by D. Flusser).

(p. 58) The Docetic passage in which the man who was crucified is said to address Jesus and his mother, may be a distorted version of John xix:26–27. John xix:26, may, as I have noted (see p. 61) have some relation with another quotation occurring in our texts.

(p. 60) While Jesus' statement that he will judge no man appears to have a close, though antithetical, relation with John v:22, it should also be compared with John iii:17–18, viii:15–16 and xii:48–49.