

## **Christian Books in Jewish Libraries: Fragments of Christian Arabic Writings from the Cairo Genizah**

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Jews under Islamic rule did not live in seclusion; as is well-known, they were engaged in manifold contacts with the surrounding world. Many facets of the profound influence exercised by the Muslim environment on Jewish life and culture have already been explored. But Jewish relations with Christians, the other main religious minority of central Islamic lands, have gone largely unnoticed. The goal of the present paper is to contribute some new information about Jewish-Christian contacts in the Islamic world by drawing attention to a small group of Christian Arabic fragments preserved in the Cairo Genizah,<sup>1</sup> and to suggest that their survival there is not accidental, but reflects a certain

- \* This paper is in many respects the outgrowth of my work as a research assistant at the Center for the Study of Judaeo-Arabic Culture and Literature (Ben-Zvi Institute for the Study of the Jewish Communities in the East, Jerusalem). I have been involved in two projects: cataloguing Karaite exegetical fragments in the Firkovich Collection (St. Petersburg, Russia), and cataloguing philosophical, theological and polemical fragments in various Genizah collections (the latter as part of the Friedberg Genizah Project). These projects are supervised by Prof. Haggai Ben-Shammai, Dr. David Sklare and Prof. Sarah Stroumsa, and I feel exceptionally fortunate to have had the opportunity to learn from them how to work with Genizah fragments, and to become acquainted with aspects of medieval Jewish intellectual life through their explanations. I am deeply grateful to them all. I also acknowledge the permission of the Syndics of the Cambridge University Library and the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary to publish Genizah fragments from their collections in this article.
- 1 For the Cairo Genizah in general see S. C. Reif, *The Cambridge Genizah Collections: Their Contents and Significance*, Cambridge 2002; idem, *A Jewish Archive from Old Cairo: The History of Cambridge University's Genizah Collection*, Richmond (Surrey) 2000.

level of Jewish acquaintance with the religious literature of the Eastern Christian communities.

## Introduction: Jewish interest in Christianity

Jewish anti-Christian polemic and some Jewish intellectuals' acquaintance with Christian religious literature are two traceable manifestations of Jewish interest in Christianity. They represent the different concerns of distinct layers of Jewish society. On the one hand, Jewish polemical writings against Christianity, with their legendary material and simplistic arguments, must have appealed mainly to the lower strata of society, and the written versions known to us today probably represent only one of the channels of their dissemination. On the other hand, the explicit references to the views of Christians found in some Jewish works, especially in works dedicated to Biblical exegesis, point to the familiarity of some broadly educated Jewish authors with Christian religious writings originally intended for Christian audiences. Although the majority of the extant works that will be mentioned in this introduction were written in Iraq, they are all attested either in the Cairo Genizah or in the Firkovich Collection, the two largest collections of Jewish manuscripts of Egyptian provenance;<sup>2</sup> most of them in fact do not survive anywhere else. For this reason they are useful indicators of the type of literature that circulated among Cairene Jews.

### (1) Jewish polemical interest in Christianity

Jewish interest in Christianity is most conspicuous in the field of polemical literature. From the manuscripts of the Cairo Genizah it appears that Jewish polemical interest in Christianity was present throughout the Islamic world, from its earliest centuries until well after the classical Genizah period. Many Genizah fragments belong to Jewish anti-Christian polemical writings. By far the most frequently encountered are *Qiṣṣat mujādalat al-usquf* (*The Account of the*

2 For the Firkovich Collection see D. E. Sklare, "A Guide to Collections of Karaite Manuscripts," in: M. Pollack (ed.), *Karaite Judaism: A Guide to its History and Literary Sources* (Handbook for Oriental Studies 73), Leiden 2003, pp. 905–909.

*Disputation of the Priest*)<sup>3</sup> and *Toledot Yeshu (Life of Jesus)*.<sup>4</sup> *Qiṣṣat mujādalat al-usquf* was composed in Judaeo-Arabic, probably in the middle of the ninth century,<sup>5</sup> and soon gained immense popularity as evidenced by the great number of Genizah fragments of the text and its various Judaeo-Arabic recensions.<sup>6</sup> *Toledot Yeshu*, a polemical legend which originated centuries before the birth of Islam, continued to engage the interest of Jews under Islamic rule, as indicated by its copious attestation in Genizah fragments. The *Toledot Yeshu* fragments are usually written in Hebrew or in Judaeo-Arabic, and a few Aramaic pieces have been found as well. Significantly, these manuscripts represent various recensions in all these languages, a fact which provides further evidence for the popularity of the legend in the classical Genizah period.<sup>7</sup> While *Qiṣṣat*

- 3 Both the Judaeo-Arabic and the Hebrew versions have been published with an introduction, English translation and commentary in D. J. Lasker and S. Stroumsa (eds.), *The Polemics of Nestor the Priest: Qiṣṣat Mujādalat al-Usquf and Sefer Nestor Ha-Komer*, Jerusalem 1996 (2 vols., English and Hebrew).
- 4 Although the polemical strategy of *Toledot Yeshu* is different from that of the polemical treatises dealt with here, the overall tenor of the legend leaves no doubt that it must be counted as an additional piece of Jewish polemical literature against Christianity. There is no comprehensive recent study of all extant versions of *Toledot Yeshu*. Many versions were edited and translated into German in S. Krauss, *Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen*, Berlin 1902. The most recent study is that of J. Deutsch, "New Evidence of Early Versions of *Toledot Yeshu*," *Tarbiz* 69 (2000), pp. 177–197 (Hebrew), published in 2002. The Judaeo-Arabic *Toledot Yeshu* material is as yet unexplored.
- 5 Lasker and Stroumsa (n. 3 above), vol. 1, pp. 15–19.
- 6 For the Genizah fragments see *ibid.*, pp. 39–48. Additional fragments of the *Qiṣṣa* have been identified since the publication of this book as research in the Genizah collections continues. For the distinct Judaeo-Arabic versions see *ibid.*, pp. 25–26.
- 7 Unedited fragments from the Taylor-Schechter Collection, Cambridge University Library, include: T-S NS 164.26; 224.123; 246.24; 298.55, 57, 58 (in Judaeo-Arabic); T-S AS 120.189, 190; 121.237 (in Hebrew). I am indebted to Ephraim Ben-Porat and Yonatan Meroz for drawing most of these fragments to my attention. For the description of the T-S NS fragments see A. Shvitiel and F. Niessen, *Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts in the Cambridge Genizah Collections: Taylor-Schechter New Series*, Cambridge 2006, p. 150 (no. 2305), p. 254 (no. 3869), p. 336 (no. 5113), p. 411 (nos. 6247, 6249, 6250). For edited Hebrew and Aramaic Genizah fragments of *Toledot Yeshu* cf. Deutsch (n. 4 above). There are also several Judaeo-Arabic fragments of the legend in the Firkovich Collection, see below.

*mujādalat al-usquf* and *Toledot Yeshu* were the most widely disseminated, one occasionally encounters other polemical writings against Christianity as well: two fragments of Dawūd b. Marwān al-Muqammaš's (ninth century) *Al-radd 'alā 'l-naṣārā min ʿarīq al-qiyās* (*The Logical Refutation of Christianity*) have been found,<sup>8</sup> and there are two additional unidentified fragments with decidedly anti-Christian polemical content.<sup>9</sup>

What is surprising about these fragments is not so much their great number, but rather the fact that they are more frequently encountered than fragments of polemical treatises against Islam. The Arabic material of the New Series and the Additional Series in the Taylor-Schechter Collection is being systematically handlisted in the Center for the Study of Judaeo-Arabic Culture and Literature (The Ben-Zvi Institute for the Study of Jewish Communities in the East, Jerusalem), and while numerous fragments of *Toledot Yeshu* and *Qiṣṣat mujādalat al-usquf* have been found, very few (if any) fragments of anti-Islamic polemical treatises have come to light. The index of the catalogue of the Arabic Old Series of the Taylor-Schechter Collection shows the same picture: it indicates that the number of polemical pieces against Christianity found in that part of the collection is fourteen, as against only two anti-Islamic polemical fragments.<sup>10</sup> We obtain a similar but somewhat more balanced result if we count the anti-Christian and anti-Islamic polemical fragments in the Firkovich

8 See S. Stroumsa, "Jewish Polemics against Islam and Christianity in the Light of Judaeo-Arabic Texts," in: N. Golb (ed.), *Judaeo-Arabic Studies: Proceedings of the Founding Conference of the Society for Judaeo-Arabic Studies*, Amsterdam 1997, p. 246 n. 26; idem (ed.), *Dāwūd ibn Marwān al-Muqammaš's Twenty Chapters ('Ishrūn Maqāla)*, Leiden 1989, p. 20 n. 38. One of these fragments was published by H. Hirschfeld, "The Arabic Portion of the Cairo Genizah at Cambridge," *Jewish Quarterly Review, Old Series* 15 (1903), pp. 688–689.

9 T-S Ar. 45.27 and T-S Ar. 50.168. For the description of these fragments see C. F. Baker and M. Polliaek, *Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts in the Cambridge Genizah Collections: Arabic Old Series (T-S Ar. 1a-54)*, Cambridge 2001, pp. 428, 512–513 (nos. 6219, 7416).

10 Baker and Polliaek, p. 614. According to this catalogue the number of the anti-Christian polemical fragments is seventeen; three of these, however, are part of a Christian theological treatise (T-S Ar. 39.86, 87, 337; see below). Almost all the other fourteen pieces belong to *Qiṣṣat mujādalat al-usquf*.

Collection in St. Petersburg. *Qiṣṣat mujādalat al-usquf* is by far the most frequently encountered text, and it is followed by *Toledot Yeshu*: they are represented by twenty-one fragments altogether, while the overall number of fragments from anti-Islamic polemical tracts is only eight.<sup>11</sup> Significantly, the fragments of *Qiṣṣat mujādalat al-usquf* and *Toledot Yeshu* derive from a great number of manuscripts: hardly any two of the fragments I have seen are parts of a single copy of one of these treatises. Moreover, the popularity of these writings can be observed from the beginning of the classical Genizah period until well after it ended: there are fragments of *Qiṣṣat mujādalat al-usquf* dating from the tenth until the fifteenth century,<sup>12</sup> while the earliest Judaeo-Arabic manuscripts of *Toledot Yeshu* known to me seem to come from the eleventh century at the latest, and other fragments were written after the fifteenth century.

But it can be misleading to simply count the Genizah fragments of a literary genre: as is the case here, many fragments may belong to different manuscripts of a single work, and thus simply reflect its popularity among readers. The number of treatises written, on the other hand, can shed light on the importance which intellectuals attributed to a certain topic. When we count the polemical treatises directed against Christianity and Islam, the picture changes significantly. Only four polemical writings against Christianity read by Jews in the classical Genizah period are known: (1) the *Toledot Yeshu* legends; (2) the anonymous *Qiṣṣat mujādalat al-usquf*; (3) Dawūd b. Marwān al-Muqammaṣ's *Al-radd 'alā 'l-naṣārā min ṭarīq al-qiyās*,<sup>13</sup> and (4) *Kitāb al-darā'a* (*The Book of Urging on to Attack*) by the same author.<sup>14</sup> The literary

11 I have counted thirteen fragments from *Qiṣṣat mujādalat al-usquf*, eight from *Toledot Yeshu*, and two additional fragments from unidentified anti-Christian polemical writings as against eight fragments of various anti-Islamic polemical tracts. The calculation was made with the help of the handlists prepared in the Center for the Study of Judaeo-Arabic Culture and Literature and P. B. Fenton, *A Handlist of Judeo-Arabic Manuscripts in Leningrad: A Tentative Handlist of Judeo-Arabic Manuscripts in the Firkovic Collections*, Jerusalem 1991 (Hebrew).

12 Lasker and Stroumsa (n. 3 above), vol. 1, p. 18.

13 Parts of the treatise have survived in the Cairo Genizah (see p. 110\* above).

14 The treatise is known only from the quotations of al-Qirqisānī (Stroumsa, "Jewish Polemics"

output of Jewish authors against Islam includes: (1) a treatise written by the Karaite Ya'qūb al-Qirqisānī (first half of the tenth century),<sup>15</sup> (2) a tract by the Karaite Abū 'l-Ḥusayn ibn Mashiah (of the same period),<sup>16</sup> (3) the Rabbanite Samuel b. Ḥofni's (d. 1013) *Kitāb naskh al-shar'* (*Treatise on the Abrogation of the Law*),<sup>17</sup> (4) another treatise written by the Karaite Yūsuf al-Baṣīr (d. after 1045) against the doctrine of the inimitability of the Qur'an,<sup>18</sup> and (5) a one-leaf treatise by the Karaite 'Alī b. Sulaymān (turn of the twelfth century).<sup>19</sup>

The way the chronological distribution and the intellectual propensities of these two groups of treatises differ is noteworthy. Polemical writing against Christianity both began and ended earlier than its counterpart against Islam: *Toledot Yeshu* originated before the birth of Islam, and was translated probably quite early into Arabic,<sup>20</sup> while *Qiṣṣat mujādalat al-usqf* and al-Muqammaṣ's treatises were all written in the ninth century. Jewish polemical treatises against Islam were produced only later. Al-Qirqisānī and Ibn Mashiah are the earliest

[n. 8 above], pp. 246–247). Some hitherto unidentified Genizah fragments might contain portions of additional Jewish anti-Christian polemical treatises (cf. the fragments mentioned above, p. 110\*).

- 15 This work is lost, but some of its arguments are summarized by the author in his *Kitāb al-anwār wa-l-marāqib* (*Book of Lights and Watchtowers*). See Stroumsa, *ibid.*, p. 244; D. E. Sklare, "Responses to Islamic Polemics by Jewish *Mutakallimūn* in the Tenth Century," in: H. Lazarus-Yafeh, M. R. Cohen, S. Somekh, and S. H. Griffith (eds.), *The Majlis: Interreligious Encounters in Medieval Islam*, Wiesbaden 1999, pp. 137–138.
- 16 This work too is lost (see Sklare, *ibid.*).
- 17 A significant part of this work has survived in Genizah fragments (cf. Stroumsa, *ibid.*; Sklare, *ibid.*, p. 138; the contents are summarized *ibid.*, pp. 144–150).
- 18 Almost the entire treatise has survived in Genizah fragments, but the beginning and the title are lost (see Sklare, *ibid.*, p. 138; its contents are summarized *ibid.*, pp. 150–160).
- 19 Published by H. Hirschfeld, "Ein Karäer über den Mohammed gemachten Vorwurf jüdischer Torähfälschung," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete* 26 (1912), pp. 111–113. Similarly to the anti-Christian polemical fragments (see p. 110\* above), there are some unidentified Genizah fragments with polemic against Islam too. These are either parts of hitherto unknown Jewish polemical treatises against Islam or polemical excurses in works belonging to another genre (Sklare, *ibid.*, p. 138).
- 20 If the strong Aramaic influences on the Arabic of one fragment (T-S NS 298.55) can indicate early translation.

authors: both lived in the early tenth century, and the surviving works of Samuel ben Hofni and Yūsuf al-Baṣīr date from the first half of the eleventh century. The authors of anti-Islamic polemical treatises were usually prolific writers and distinguished members, sometimes leaders, of their respective communities, well versed in contemporary Muslim theology and disputational technique. Their integration into the high culture of Islam is reflected by their polemical treatises as well.<sup>21</sup> In contrast, two of the four anti-Christian texts are anonymous, and all four are of a rather popular bent.

The emergence of Jewish anti-Christian polemic was in tune with the times: the Islamic world in the ninth century witnessed vigorous interreligious polemical activity, including a proliferation of Muslim anti-Christian writings.<sup>22</sup> In the ninth century Christians were still numerically predominant in most regions, and, if we are to believe the Baṣran Muslim al-Jāḥiẓ (ca. 776–868), they were also wealthier, more respected and more influential members of society than the Jews.<sup>23</sup> But while Muslims continued to write polemical treatises against Christianity in later periods, it appears that Jewish intellectuals lost interest in polemicizing against this religion during the tenth century, when the amelioration of the social position of the Jews and the emergence of a Jewish elite deeply immersed in the intellectual life of the contemporary Islamic world coincided with a substantial decrease in the number of Christians. Leading Jewish thinkers now concentrated on coping with the religious challenge of Islam: while after the tenth century there are still long polemical sections refuting Christianity in Jewish writings of various literary genres, these are gradually

21 Cf. the description of these treatises in Sklare, *ibid.*, pp. 144–161.

22 A. Charfi enumerates seventeen Muslim polemical treatises written specifically against Christianity up to the end of the ninth century. Cf. R. Caspar et al., “Bibliographie du dialogue islamo-chrétien,” *Islamochristiana* 1 (1975), pp. 143–147; R. Caspar et al., “Bibliographie du dialogue islamo-chrétien (deuxième partie),” *Islamochristiana* 2 (1976), pp. 190–191. (The sections referred to were written by Charfi.)

23 ‘Amr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ, “al-Radd ‘alā ’l-naṣārā,” in: ‘Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (ed.), *Rasā’il al-Jāḥiẓ*, Cairo 1979 (4 vols.), vol. 3, pp. 313–322; see also S. M. Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew: The Problem of Symbiosis under Early Islam*, Princeton 1995, pp. 18–27 on Jewish occupations in early Islamic societies.

overshadowed by the polemical effort devoted to refuting the claims of Islam. This change of interest among the elite, however, did not influence readers: the polemical treatises against Christianity were copied and read throughout the classical Genizah period. Their relative popularity may be partly explained by the fact that while polemic against Christianity was certainly not discouraged by Muslim authorities, possessing anti-Islamic polemical treatises was potentially dangerous.<sup>24</sup> The popular style of anti-Christian polemic could have been another reason: while the authors of anti-Islamic polemical treatises (at least of those extant today) expected their readers to be acquainted to some extent with *kalām*, none of the Jewish polemical writings against Christianity necessitated any similar knowledge.<sup>25</sup> For whatever reasons anti-Christian polemic was very popular among Jews; if we may indeed attribute to interreligious polemic the function of safe instruction about the religion being criticized, Jews had a surprisingly intense interest in Christianity.<sup>26</sup>

- 24 Cf. Maimonides' oft-quoted remark in *Iggeret Teiman* (Rabbi Moshe Ben Maimon [Maimonides], *Iggerot: Letters: Arabic Original with New Translation and Commentary by Rabbi Joseph Kafih*, Jerusalem 1994 [Hebrew], p. 56). Samuel ben Ḥofni avoided treating *ʿġjāz al-Qurʿān* [inimitability of the Qurʿān] in his treatise for the same reason (cf. Sklare [n. 15 above], p. 150). However, the threat of action by Muslim authorities alone does not provide a satisfactory explanation for the predominance of Jewish anti-Christian polemical fragments over their anti-Islamic counterparts in the Cairo Genizah: were this threat the decisive factor, Christian anti-Islamic polemical treatises would also have been copied less.
- 25 Cf. D. E. Sklare, "The New Edition of *Qiṣṣat Mujādalat al-Uṣqūf*," *Pe'amim* 75 (1998), pp. 104–107 (Hebrew).
- 26 Cf. the remarks in S. Stroumsa, "On the Usefulness of Faulty Manuscripts for Understanding Polemical Literature," *Pe'amim* 75 (1998), pp. 98–99 (Hebrew), on the various possible functions of polemical literature. On the other side of the polemical field, Christians continued to display considerable interest in anti-Jewish polemic, an interest inherited from pre-Islamic times. There were at least eight independent polemical treatises written against Judaism in Arabic from the ninth to eleventh centuries; others were translated into Arabic from Greek or other languages, still others were incorporated into larger theological works (cf. the list composed on the basis of G. Graf, *Geschichte der Christlichen Arabischen Literatur*, Vatican City 1944–1953 [5 vols.] in S. K. Samir, "La tradition arabe chrétienne: état de la question, problèmes et besoins," in: idem [ed.], *Actes du premier Congrès d'Études Arabes Chrétiennes* [Orientalia Christiana Analecta 218; Rome 1982] pp. 415–416, and the more detailed inventory in S. Rosenkranz, *Die jüdische-christliche Auseinandersetzung*

## (2) Jewish intellectuals' interest in Christian religious literature

A polemicist needs to know his enemy. While popular polemical literature (like the anti-Christian writings discussed in the previous pages) does not require a profound knowledge of the criticized religion (it does not attack its actual doctrines, but rather the erroneous stereotypes current among outsiders), some Jewish polemicists undoubtedly had substantial knowledge of Christianity. Furthermore, their close acquaintance with this religion probably did not stem solely from oral communication with Christians or from their familiarity with the anti-Christian polemic of previous generations, but at least partly from reading Christian scriptures and theological writings. Such is the case with the anti-Christian polemic of al-Qirḡisānī in the third chapter of *Kitāb al-anwār wa-l-marāqib* (*Book of Lights and Watchtowers*),<sup>27</sup> or that of Saadya (d. 942) in *Kitāb al-amānāt wa-l-i'tiqādāt* (*Book of Beliefs and Opinions*). The polemic of both is to a great extent based on the refutation of the Christian interpretation of Biblical verses, and the acquaintance with Christian Biblical exegesis thus revealed is remarkable.<sup>28</sup>

But there are also other, non-polemical, traces of the acquaintance of some Jewish intellectuals with Christian religious literature. As Sarah Stroumsa has observed, such vestiges can be most conclusively identified in Bible commentaries: while other literary genres were shared by Christians, Jews and Muslims alike, and thus the influence of the dominant Islamic culture may be suspected automatically as the source of common features, Biblical

*unter islamischer Herrschaft: 7.-10. Jahrhundert* [Judaica et Christiana 21], Bern 2000, pp. 42–66). Hardly any of these writings have been studied or even published.

27 Although al-Muqammas's writings constituted an important source for al-Qirḡisānī's knowledge of Christianity, it was certainly not the only material he perused. On the one hand, al-Qirḡisānī refers to al-Muqammas only in the first chapter of *Kitāb al-anwār*, in the context of the history of Christianity; on the other hand, no extant polemic of al-Muqammas is based on a refutation of Christian Biblical exegesis similar to that undertaken by al-Qirḡisānī in his third chapter.

28 For an inventory of anti-Christian polemical passages in Jewish literature written under Islamic rule see Rosenkranz (n. 26 above), pp. 117–170.

exegesis is immune from such presumption, since it was cultivated only by Christians and Jews.<sup>29</sup> The earliest known Jewish thinker writing in Arabic whose works are extant, Dāwūd b. Marwān al-Muqammaṣ, studied (after converting to Christianity) in the famous Christian academy of Nisibis. Having returned to Judaism, he wrote his *ʿIshrūn maqāla* (*Twenty Chapters*), the first Jewish *Summa Theologica*, which has understandably, in view of his biography, much in common with contemporary Christian theology.<sup>30</sup> In addition to his theological and polemical oeuvre, he also translated or rather paraphrased [*naqala*] two Syriac commentaries into Arabic: one of them is *Kitāb al-khalīqa* (*The Book of Creation*), a commentary on the first chapter of Genesis, a Genizah fragment of which has survived, and the other a commentary on Ecclesiastes.<sup>31</sup> Although al-Muqammaṣ had returned to Judaism, he apparently did not see anything reprehensible in publishing Arabic versions of Christian commentaries.

Neither did al-Qirqisānī: he says in the introduction to his commentary to the Pentateuch, *Kitāb al-riyāq wa-l-ḥadāʾiq* (*Book of Meadows and Gardens*), that he perused al-Muqammaṣ's *Kitāb al-khalīqa*. In this way he incorporated ideas of Christian origin at least into the exegesis of the first chapter of Genesis.<sup>32</sup> In addition to this, al-Qirqisānī explicitly quoted in *Kitāb al-riyāq* the Christian interpretation of two verses which must have reached him in ways independent of al-Muqammaṣ. Thus he explains Exodus 40: 26:

If someone inquires about His word *and he put the gold altar in the tent of meeting in front of the veil*,<sup>33</sup> we answer that He says that [it was] in

29 Cf. S. Stroumsa, "The Impact of Syriac Tradition on Early Judaeo-Arabic Bible Exegesis," *ARAM* 3 (1991), pp. 83–85.

30 Cf. the introduction to Stroumsa (ed.), *Twenty Chapters* (n. 8 above), pp. 15–35.

31 See S. Stroumsa, "From the Earliest Known Judaeo-Arabic Commentary on Genesis," *Jerusalem Studies on Arabic and Islam* 27 (2002), pp. 379–380.

32 See Stroumsa (n. 29 above), pp. 86–87; H. Hirschfeld, *Qirqisāni Studies*, London 1918, p. 40.

33 The Bible is quoted according to the New King James Version, except in cases where the meaning conveyed by this translation does not sufficiently express the idea which the context here requires. Italics in the English translation, and bold letters in the Hebrew transcription, indicate Biblical citations.

front of the veil. As to whether it was inside together with the ark and the mercy seat or outside together with the candelabrum and the table, we say that the passage is obscure, not clear, for both [meanings] are possible in the case of His word *in front of*, that is, inside and outside. Some scholars [*mashāyikh*] of the Ananites related about Paul, master of the Christians [*Fūluṣ ṣāhib al-naṣārā*] that he said that it is outside together with the candelabrum and the table, and that he [Paul] made an obvious mistake, because they [the Ananites] thought that it was inside without doubt. But as for me, I have already said that I think it is obscure, not clear.<sup>34</sup>

Although one is left wondering about the source of this information on Paul's explanation of the passage (he actually would have agreed with the Ananite exegesis),<sup>35</sup> it is remarkable that both the Ananites and al-Qirqisānī found it expedient to refer to its alleged Christian interpretation. Another verse where al-Qirqisānī quotes a Christian interpretation is Deuteronomy 27: 26. In spite of the sharp polemical edge of this exegesis, al-Qirqisānī did not argue against it:

He sealed [the recitation of] all the commandments by His saying [*cursed is*] *the one who does not keep all the words of this law*.<sup>36</sup> The Christians always condemn the Jews with this verse, saying to them: 'you are accursed, for you know and admit that you do not keep all that is imposed upon you by the commandments of the law'. Many Jews shudder and deny that they would be cursed, and deny the Christians' claim by saying: 'He only indicated [in this verse] that one who violates all [the commandments] is cursed, but whoever keeps some of them is

34 MS St. Petersburg, Russian National Library (henceforth RNL), Yevr.-Arab. I:4531, fol.167r: פאן סאל סאיל ען קו' וישם את מזבח הזהב באהל מועד לפני הפרכת פנקול אנה יכבר אנה בין די אלסתארה פהל כאן ז'ך דאלכהא מע אלארין ואלכפורת או כאן כארגהא מע אלמנרה ואלשלחן קלנא אן אלקול פי ז'ך משתבה לים באלואצת אד כאן קו' לפני יגוז פיה אלמרין גמיעא אעני דאכל וכארג וקד כאן קום מן משאיך אלענייה יחכוך ען פולץ צאחב אלנצארי אנה קאל אן ז'ך כארג מע אלמנארה ואלמאידה ואנה קד גלט פי ז'ך גלסא בינא וכאן ענדהם אנה כאן דאכל לא מתאלה ואמא אנה פקד קלת אנה ענדי משתבה גיר בין

35 These sentences may refer to Hebrews 9: 2–4 where the Sanctuary is described in detail.

36 The parts of the Biblical passages supplied in square brackets are not quoted by al-Qirqisānī.

not cursed'. Whoever says this either chose this pleasing interpretation [arbitrarily]<sup>37</sup> or did not read what is before this verse, for He states in the case of each of the previous twelve commandments that whoever does not keep it is cursed. In our opinion the correct answer to this [claim] is that the curse is nothing else than the befalling of misfortunes and calamities threatened by it, and most of them have undoubtedly befallen us. Even if there were nothing else than His saying *you shall become troublesome to all the kingdoms [of the earth; Deuteronomy 28: 25]*, and His saying *the Lord will lead you and your king [whom you set over you to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods — wood and stone; ibid. 28: 36]*, and His saying *you shall serve your enemies [whom the Lord will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you; ibid. 28: 48]*, and then *the Lord will scatter you among all peoples [from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known — wood and stone; ibid. 28: 64]* — who doubts after [all] this that we are [indeed] accursed, since these things which He mentioned about the exiles, etc. are included in His saying *now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse [which I have set before you; ibid. 30: 1]*.<sup>38</sup>

37 The two manuscripts give מתטרס and מתטרס here; they are probably corruptions of *مَطْرَس* which is defined as “one who seeks, pursues, or desires, the most pleasing of things; who picks or chooses” in E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, Cambridge 1863–1893 (8 vols.), vol. 5, pp. 1840–1841.

38 MS RNL, Yevr.-Arab. I:4532, folios 99v–100v, and I:4531, folio 259v: וכתם בנמיע אלפראיץ: בקו' אשו לא יקים את דבוי התורה הזאת אלנצארי אבדא תעיר אליהוד בהדא אלפסוק ויקולון להם אנכס דאכלין פי אללענה אד כנתם עארפין ומקריין באנכס לים תקימון בנמיע מא יגב עליכס מן פראיץ אלתורה וכתיר מן אליהוד יקשערון ויאבו אן יכונו דאכלין תחת אללענה פיגיבו אלנצארא פימא סאלו ענה פיקולו אנה אנמא אכבר אנה יכוון מלעון מן כאן מחלף לכלל פאמא מן אקאם באלבעץ פליס במלעון פמן קאל דלך פליס יכלו אן יכוון מתגרסס [מתטרס] או לם יקרא מא קבל הדא אלפסוק אד יכבר פי כל ואחדה מן אליב' פריעה אלמתקדמה אן מן לם יקימהא פהו מלעון ואלגואב אלחק פי דלך ענדנא הו אן אללענה אנמא הי חלול אלפאזת ואלבלאיא אלמועוד בהא ונחן פדאכלין פי אבתרהא לא מחאלה לו לם יכוון אלא קו' והיית לזעוה לכל ממלכות קו' יולדך יי אוחד ואת מלכך וג' קו' ועבדת את אויבך וג' והפיצך

MS RNL Yevr.-Arab. I:1430, a translation and commentary of the Psalms, is another example which is of interest in the present context.<sup>39</sup> The author is unknown, but on the basis of the text it can be established that he was a Rabbanite Jew, and probably lived in Iraq either in the eleventh or in the thirteenth century.<sup>40</sup> The commentator mentions the Christian interpretation of the Psalms three times in a detached, matter-of-fact way, even in controversial cases. The following is part of the interpretation of Psalm 77:

The Christians do not contradict this [interpretation], except that they say that it is about the first exile from which redemption [*ge'ulah*] occurred with the return of the Second Temple. Nevertheless this and similar things undeniably did not occur in the days of David (peace be upon him), nor for a long time after him, which it [the Christian interpretation] necessitates, and which is said about it [the psalm]. It is only about what will happen [in the future], in accordance with the prophecy of the Messenger (peace be upon him)...<sup>41</sup>

The Christian exegesis of Psalm 80: 18 is also quoted:

According to the Syriac interpretation his Word *upon the son [of man]*<sup>42</sup>

י"י בכל העמים ו'ג' פמן אלדי ישן מע הדא אנא פי אלענה אד כאנת הוה אלאשיא אלתי זכרהא מן אלולא וגירה דאכלה פי ק' והיה כי יבאו עליך כל הדברים האלה הברכה והק' ו'ג'

39 This commentary has been briefly analyzed in Stroumsa (n. 29 above), p. 95.

40 The author deferentially mentions "the Gaon Isaac ben Asher" (36r). There were two Babylonian Gaons called Isaac whose patronymic is unknown: an Isaac, Gaon of Sura, lived in the middle of the eleventh century, and another Isaac, Gaon of Bagdad, in the first half of the thirteenth. It is unclear to which one the text refers. Cf. J. Mann, *Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature*<sup>2</sup>, New York 1972 (2 vols.), vol. 2, p. 1461; M. Gil, *In the Kingdom of Ishmael I: Studies in Jewish History in Islamic Lands in the Early Middle Ages*, Tel-Aviv — Jerusalem 1997 (4 vols., in Hebrew), vol. 1, p. 373 n. 222 and p. 461. The hand of the manuscript's copyist is too late to answer the question.

41 MS RNL, Yevr.-Arab. I:1430, fol. 37r: (!) בית שני ואלא פהדא ואמתאלה ממה לא יגחד אנה לם יכן פי איאם דוד ע' אלס' ולא בעדה במדד מדידה מא יקחציה ויקאל לאגלה ויאנמה הו עלי מא סיכון מואפקא לנבה אלרוסול ע' אלס'...

42 The word *man* [אדם] is omitted in the quotation in the manuscript.



The examples presented above were chosen at random, and as such they are insufficient to support wider generalizations. But they are indicative of some interaction between Christian and Jewish intellectuals in the Islamic world, and clearly show that the “apologetic milieu” of the age did not necessarily lead to an automatic denial of the other’s religious ideas, and that several Jewish writers were capable of a detached exposition of religiously sensitive Christian notions.<sup>47</sup>

## The Christian Arabic fragments of the Cairo Genizah

While fragments of Muslim works are usually recognized as such in the printed catalogues of various Genizah collections (even if they are also rarely identified), the descriptions of Christian Arabic fragments most often provide no clue as to their provenance, let alone their exact identification. The following list contains those fragments of Christian Arabic writings I have detected so far:<sup>48</sup>

(1) Ten leaves from the Christian legend of Muhammad’s instruction by the monk Bahīrā (in Judaeo-Arabic; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Heb. d. 57, and Cambridge University Library, Taylor-Schechter Collection [henceforth T-S], Ar. 14.11);<sup>49</sup>

47 For additional examples of contacts between Christian and Jewish intellectuals see Stroumsa (n. 29 above), pp. 93–95.

48 For the physical condition of the fragments see the relevant catalogues referred to after each manuscript, and for the descriptions of their contents (which are often misleading in the catalogues) see below. Six fragments (nos. 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 11 here) are edited and translated into English in the Appendix (nos. I–VI, respectively). All of them are fully transcribed, except for no. 6 (IV): in this case I have omitted the lections, and edited only the Good Friday homily, one page out of four.

49 Cf. A. Neubauer and A. E. Cowley, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*, Oxford 1906 (2 vols.), vol. 2, p. 170 (no. 2745.25); Baker and Polliack (n. 9 above), p. 50 (no. 646), respectively. Although T-S Ar. 14.11 was identified by Sh. Shtober, “The Monk Bahira, the Counselor of Muhammad, and the Jews: Between Polemic and Historiography,” in: *Proceedings of the Tenth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, Jerusalem 1990, Series B, vol. 1, p. 72 (Hebrew), it was still described incorrectly in the catalogue. I am grateful to Naamah David for drawing my attention to the first fragment.

- (2) Two leaves from the disputation of the patriarch Timothy (in Arabic script; T-S Ar. 52.244);<sup>50</sup>
- (3) One leaf from a Christological treatise attributed to the Fāṭimid caliphs (in Arabic script; T-S Ar. 39.320);<sup>51</sup>
- (4) Seven leaves from an unidentified Christian theological work (in Arabic script; T-S Ar. 39.86, 87, 337);<sup>52</sup>
- (5) One leaf from another unidentified Christian theological work (in Arabic script; T-S Ar. 39.125);<sup>53</sup>
- (6) Two leaves from a Copto-Arabic lectionary for Good Friday with a homily (in Judaeo-Arabic; T-S Ar. 52.220);<sup>54</sup>
- (7) Six leaves from another Copto-Arabic lectionary (in Arabic script; T-S Ar. 52.219);<sup>55</sup>
- (8) Two leaves from an unidentified collection of rhymed Christian homilies (in Arabic script; T-S Ar. 39.393, 42.97);<sup>56</sup>
- (9) Two leaves from an unidentified Christian hagiography (in Arabic script; New York, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, ENA 3918.4–5);<sup>57</sup>
- (10) One leaf from the chronicle of Saʿīd b. Biṭrīq (in Arabic script; Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle, ar. 41);<sup>58</sup>
- (11) One leaf from a Christian document (in Arabic script; ENA 3917.2).<sup>59</sup>

50 Cf. Baker and Polliack, p. 533 (no. 7703).

51 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 338 (no. 4873).

52 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 323, 339 (nos. 4639, 4640, 4891).

53 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 326 (no. 4678).

54 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 531 (no. 7680).

55 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 531 (no. 7679).

56 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 343, 379 (nos. 4947, 5500).

57 No printed catalogue includes this fragment: it consists of the lower parts of two leaves, slightly faded, and partly blackened; the script is beautiful *naskhī*.

58 The fragments written in Arabic script were not included in the catalog of the collection (M. Schwab, "Les manuscrits du Consistoire Israélite de Paris provenant de la gueniza du Caire," *Revue des études juives* 62 (1911), pp. 107–119, 267–277; 63 (1912), pp. 100–120, 276–296; 64 (1912), pp. 118–141). This fragment is the upper part of one leaf, preserved in good condition. Only one side contains writing, in orderly *naskhī*.

59 No printed catalogue includes this fragment: it is the upper part of one leaf, torn in several

This list includes fragments from a wide range of literary genres: polemic, theology, liturgy, historiography, hagiography, etc. What they have in common is that all are specimens of Christian Arabic religious literature written for a Christian audience. Had I included all the Genizah fragments of scientific, medical or philosophical works produced by Christian authors, the list would have been incomparably longer. For example, a fragment of *al-Madkhal ilā sinā'at al-handasa* (*Introduction to the Art of Geometry*) written by the Christian Qusṭā b. Lūqā (died ca. 912) is found in the Arabic Old Series of the Taylor-Schechter Collection,<sup>60</sup> as are four fragments of the similarly Christian Ḥunayn b. Ishāq's (808–873) main medical work, *al-Masā'il fi 'l-ṭibb* (*Medical Problems*).<sup>61</sup> The majority of the fragments that deal with ophthalmology (both in Judaeo-Arabic and in Arabic) come from *Tadhkirat al-kaḥḥālīn* (*The Reminder of the Oculists*) written by the most famous of the Arab oculists, 'Alī b. 'Īsā (d. 1010),<sup>62</sup> who was also a Christian. There are also a few Genizah fragments of the Nestorian Ibn Buṭlān's (d. 1066) *Da'wat al-aṭibbā'* (*The Physicians' Dinner Party*).<sup>63</sup> This list could be greatly expanded. The occurrence of such fragments

places; the two sides were written by different hands. A printed Judaeo-Arabic fragment from the Epistle to the Hebrews has been also found (one leaf; T-S NS 267.57), but it belongs to the missionary activities of the nineteenth century rather than to the age of the classical Genizah. I am grateful to Ephraim Ben-Porat for drawing my attention to this fragment. The fragment is not mentioned in Shvitiel and Niessen (n. 7 above; cf. p. 345).

60 T-S Ar. 53.39. For a description of this fragment see Baker and Polliack (n. 9 above), p. 537 (no. 7755).

61 T-S Ar. 39.200, 389, 41.134, 42.99. For descriptions of these fragments see *ibid.*, pp. 330, 343, 373, 380 (nos. 4753, 4943, 5396, 5502).

62 See H. Isaacs, "Medical Texts in Judaeo-Arabic from the Genizah," in: J. Blau and S. C. Reif (eds.), *Genizah Research after Ninety Years: The Case of Judaeo-Arabic: Papers Read at the Third Congress of the Society for Judaeo-Arabic Studies*, Cambridge 1992, p. 101; *idem*, *Medical and Para-Medical Manuscripts in the Cambridge Genizah Collections*, Cambridge 1994, p. ix. The index of the catalogue of the Arabic Old Series of the Taylor-Schechter Collection enumerates 37 fragments of this work, and the only other ophthalmological piece it mentions belongs to another work by the same author (Baker and Polliack [n. 9 above], p. 562).

63 T-S Ar. 19.8 (one leaf in Arabic script); it is published in facsimile in C. F. Baker, "A Note on an Arabic Fragment of Ibn Buṭlān's *The Physicians' Dinner Party* from the Cairo Genizah,"

in the Cairo Genizah is interesting, because they provide primary evidence that the religious affiliation of the author had no impact on the appreciation of his non-religious scientific works. But it is impossible, of course, to reach any conclusions about Jewish interest in Christian Arabic literature on the basis of acquaintance with writings in such religiously neutral fields of study.

The Genizah fragments of Christian Arabic religious literature, however, clearly indicate that some Jews were acquainted with such writings. One might nevertheless be tempted to dismiss their survival in the Cairo Genizah as merely accidental, without any significance, because of their extreme rarity compared to the total number of Genizah fragments. But the small number of Christian Arabic Genizah fragments presently known is certainly not final: tens of thousands of Genizah fragments are still unidentified, and further research will undoubtedly bring to light additional fragments of Christian religious literature. The proportion of Christian Arabic fragments may even be slightly higher among the unidentified fragments, since manuscripts of such unusual content are more likely than others to remain unidentified. Even more importantly, as Geoffrey Khan put it in connection with Genizah fragments in Arabic script in general: "While the Arabic fragments in the Genizah may be considered to be qualitatively representative of the Arabic written material which circulated in the mediaeval Jewish community of Egypt, their quantitative proportion vis-à-vis the documents in Hebrew script very likely does not correspond to that which originally obtained. This is because... fragments in Arabic characters found their way into the Genizah by accident and not by design."<sup>64</sup> If we accept this very probable scenario, even the rarity of Christian Arabic fragments in the Cairo Genizah need not reflect a corresponding rarity of Christian Arabic religious writings in Jewish libraries, since these were also mostly written in

*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 3 (1993), pp. 207–213. Another fragment from the *Da'wat al-atibbā'* is MS RNL, Yevr.-Arab. II:1545 (in Judaeo-Arabic transcription).

64 G. A. Khan, "The Arabic Fragments in the Cambridge Genizah Collections," *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 1 (1986), p. 59.

Arabic script. Their true proportion may well have been higher, but we have no way to determine whether significantly higher or only negligibly so.

Whatever the results of future research may be, the present list of Christian Arabic Genizah fragments is extremely short, and I have been unable to identify almost half of the works represented. The following analysis is therefore based on a very small amount of data, which allows only tentative generalizations. Nevertheless, it appears to me that it is possible to suggest some factors which probably governed the course followed by Christian Arabic writings on their way to Jewish readers, and then from their possession to the Genizah chamber of the Ben Ezra Synagogue.

#### (1) Christian-Muslim polemic

"Many scholars have already refuted [*radda 'alā*] the Christians' claim that His saying *in our image, after our likeness* [Genesis 1: 26] strengthens their doctrine of 'the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit'. We do not need to refute those who oppose us among the gentiles, since many exegetes (may God be pleased with them) have disproved them already, and even the gentiles refute each other."<sup>65</sup> These remarks of Yefet ben Eli in his commentary on Genesis indicate that his readers were conversant enough with the refutation of the doctrine of the Trinity to make its reiteration unnecessary, and also that a Jewish intellectual like him was familiar with the ongoing polemic between Christians and Muslims on this issue. The Genizah material indeed evinces some Jewish interest in the polemics of Christians and Muslims against each other. Fragments of two very popular Christian anti-Islamic polemical writings have been found in the Cairo Genizah: two pieces in Judaeo-Arabic from the legend of Muhammad's instruction by the monk Bahīrā,<sup>66</sup> and one piece from the disputation of the patriarch Timothy.<sup>67</sup>

The legend of Muhammad's instruction by the monk is an example of

65 Edited in H. Ben-Shammai, *The Doctrines of Religious Thought of Abū Yūsuf al-Qirḡisānī and Yefet b. Eli* (Ph.D. dissertation, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1977, 2 vols., in Hebrew), vol. 2, p. 99.

66 See no. 1 on p. 121\*.

67 See no. 2 on p. 122\*, and no. I in the Appendix.

outspoken Christian polemic against Islam, extant in two Syriac and two Arabic versions. It presents Islam as the creation of a Christian monk: Muhammad merely acted as a puppet in the hands of this monk, and established Islam under his direction. The story is enclosed in a frame of two long apocalyptic visions attributed to the monk about the imminent rule of the Arabs. The Qur'an is presented as the monk's composition, and many of its passages are given a Christian interpretation in the Arabic versions of the legend. In addition, numerous anti-Islamic polemical arguments, also known from elsewhere, are woven into the story in various places.<sup>68</sup> The apologetic treatise known as the account of the defense of Christianity by the Nestorian patriarch Timothy I (780–823) in the *majlis* of the caliph al-Mahdī (775–785), was one of the most popular representatives of its genre among Christians under Islamic rule: it circulated in several Syriac and Arabic recensions, the content and tone of which often varied considerably.<sup>69</sup> Timothy discusses with the caliph various issues drawn from the standard repertoire of Christian-Muslim polemic: the divinity of Christ, his death on the cross, the Trinity, the authenticity of the Christian scriptures, passages of

68 Two Syriac versions and one Arabic version of the legend were published by Richard Gottheil more than a century ago in his series of articles "A Christian Bahira Legend", *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete* 13 (1898), pp. 189–242; 14 (1899), pp. 203–268; 15 (1900), pp. 56–102; 17 (1903), pp. 125–166. A new, truly critical edition of the legend by Barbara Roggema is scheduled to appear soon (cf. her article mentioned below, p. 58 n. 3). Modern studies of the legend include S. H. Griffith, "Muhammad and the Monk Bahīrā: Reflections on a Syriac and Arabic Text from Early Abbasid Times," *Oriens Christianus* 79 (1995), pp. 146–174; B. Roggema, "A Christian Reading of the Qur'an: The Legend of Sergius-Bahīrā and its Use of Qur'an and Sira," in: David Thomas (ed.), *Syrian Christians under Islam: The First Thousand Years* (Leiden 2001) pp. 57–73; idem, "The Legend of Sergius-Bahīrā: Some Remarks on its Origin in the East and its Traces in the West," in: K. Ciggaar and H. Teule (eds.), *East and West in the Crusader States: Context — Contacts — Confrontations II*, Leuven 1999, pp. 107–123; S. Gero, "The Legend of the Monk Bahīrā, the Cult of the Cross, and Iconoclasm," in: P. Canivet and J.-P. Rey-Coquais (eds.), *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam: VII<sup>e</sup>–VIII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Damascus 1992, pp. 47–58.

69 Various versions have been published over the last century, see n. 104 below. For a comprehensive discussion of the extant versions see R. Caspar, "Les versions arabes du dialogue entre le Catholicos Timothée I et le calife al-Mahdī," *Islamochristiana* 3 (1977), pp. 129–175.

the Bible interpreted by Muslims as prophecies about Muhammad, Muhammad's prophetic mission to the Arabs, and other topics.

Of all Christian fragments found in the Genizah, the presence of these two anti-Islamic polemical writings is the most readily understandable: while both of them contain some apology for Christianity, they also have much to offer readers who seek material to discredit Islam or to look for arguments which would be useful in disputations with Muslims. But it is still striking that the manuscript of the most characteristically Christian legend of Muhammad's instruction by the monk Bahīrā was not just purchased from a Christian scribe by a curious Jew: its interest for the Jewish reader is evinced by its transcription into Hebrew letters. That this is not an exceptional case is supported by the fact that another very popular Christian Arabic polemical treatise against Islam, the apology of al-Kindī, also circulated in Judaeo-Arabic.<sup>70</sup> It can hardly be accidental that precisely these two Christian polemical writings were transcribed into Hebrew letters: these two are perhaps the most outspoken Christian polemical treatises against Islam, while other similar Christian works are rather apologetic.<sup>71</sup> Obviously, for a Jewish reader a severe attack on Islam is more interesting than

70 Cf. P. Sj. Van Koningsveld, "La Apología de al-Kindī en la España del siglo XII: huellas Toledanas de un 'animal disputax'," in: *Actas del II Congreso Internacional de Estudios Mozárabes* (Toledo 1989), vol. 3, pp. 107–129. This article was not available to me; it is mentioned in idem, "Andalusian Arabic Manuscripts from Christian Spain: A Comparative Intercultural Approach," *Israel Oriental Studies* 12 (1992), pp. 77–78. The treatise was published by G. Tartar, *Dialogue islamo-chrétien sous le calife al-Ma'mūn (813–834): Les épîtres d'al-Hāsimī et d'al-Kindī* (PhD. dissertation, University of Strassburg, 1977), pp. 1–211. Were it not for other Christian polemical treatises against Islam also read by Jews, one could attribute the Jewish interest in the Christian Bahīrā legend simply to the impact of Jewish stories about Muhammad's instruction by non-Muslims. On the Jewish versions of this legend and for further bibliography see D. Z. Baneth, "Replies and Remarks on 'Muhammad's Ten Jewish Companions,'" *Tarbiṣ* 3 (1932), pp. 112–116 (Hebrew); M. Gil, "The Story of Bahīrā and its Jewish Versions," in: H. Ben-Shammai (ed.), *Hebrew and Arabic Studies in Honour of Joshua Blau* (Tel Aviv — Jerusalem, 1993) pp. 193–210 (Hebrew); Shtober (n. 49 above), pp. 69–76.

71 Including Timothy's apology: its Genizah fragment is written in Arabic script and punctuated with small crosses, leaving no doubt that the copy was the work of a Christian scribe.

arguments in defence of Christianity: he could easily recycle most of the Christian arguments in his own polemic against Islam.<sup>72</sup> The popular character of these Christian polemical writings, as well as their entertainment value, could also have paved their way towards the new audience: no Jewish polemical writing against Islam similar to the legend of Muhammad's instruction by the monk or the apology of al-Kindī has survived.<sup>73</sup>

Jewish acquaintance with Christian-Muslim polemic is further corroborated by Muslim anti-Christian polemical treatises which also reached Jewish audiences: Genizah fragments of two such works have come to light lately. I have identified a Judaeo-Arabic fragment as part of a sharply anti-Christian composition, *Hadīth Wāṣil al-Dimashqī* (*Account of the Damascene Wāṣil*), probably copied in the eleventh century. This short tract claims to be the account of a debate on religion which took place among Wāṣil (a Muslim prisoner in Byzantium), Bashūr (a Muslim convert to Christianity), and Christian priests in Byzantium. Like the Christian polemical treatises against Islam mentioned above, this work is of a rather popular nature.<sup>74</sup> In addition, two fragments of a hitherto unknown Muslim astronomical treatise, which criticizes the way Christians calculate the date of Easter, have been found in the Genizah. The work is entitled *Al-tanqīḥ fī tahrīr fiṣḥ al-Masīḥ* (*Examination into the Calculation of Christ's Easter*).<sup>75</sup> The fragments of the latter treatise are surprising for two

72 For arguments reshaped for a polemical purpose different from that of their original context, cf. S. Stroumsa, "The Signs of Prophecy: The Emergence and Early Development of a Theme in Arabic Theological Literature," *Harvard Theological Review* 78 (1985), pp. 101–114; idem (n. 8 above), pp. 248–250.

73 See pp. 112\*–114\* above.

74 MS RNL, Yevr-Arab. II:1543. The story has been edited from an apparently unique manuscript by S. H. Griffith and L. B. Miller, "Bashūr/Bēsēr: Boon Companion of the Byzantine Emperor Leo III; The Islamic Recension of his Story in Leiden Oriental MS 951(2)," *Le Muséon* 103 (1990) pp. 293–327. This two-leaf Genizah fragment contains two parts of the story in Judaeo-Arabic transcription, with a number of textual variants, corresponding to pp. 314–315, 320 in the edition. I am grateful to Yonatan Meroz for drawing my attention to this fragment.

75 T-S NS 100.58 and Halper 445. The first fragment (lower part of one leaf) contains the end of the introduction, the title, and the beginning of the first chapter (*faṣl*). The second, intact

reasons. According to the internal evidence it was written by a Muslim astronomer in Egypt in the second half of the fifteenth century:<sup>76</sup> it is rather unexpected that a Muslim in Mamluk Egypt would pay attention to this minor detail of the Christian religion, and even polemicize against it. In addition, the fact that the Genizah fragments are transcribed into Judaeo-Arabic means that in the fifteenth or sixteenth century (when the manuscript was probably copied) some Jews were still open enough to the surrounding society to have the curiosity to investigate the other, ever-dwindling minority religion.

Though it would be far-fetched to assume on the basis of the Genizah evidence that the works mentioned above and other similarly popular Christian writings were widely disseminated among Jews, one should be aware of the possibility that they could have had Jewish readers, and could have exercised a certain measure of influence on Jewish polemics against Islam. There is no consensus about the date of composition of the above-mentioned treatises, but the *terminus ante quem* seems to be the tenth century in the case of the apology of al-Kindī,<sup>77</sup> and it is unlikely that the long Christian Arabic version of the Bahīrā legend in its present form existed before that time.<sup>78</sup> The date of composition of the first

leaf contains the end of the second chapter and part of the third. I am grateful to Yonatan Meroz for drawing my attention to T-S NS 100.58. The two fragments are described (partly incorrectly) in the following catalogues: R. Brody, *A Hand-list of Rabbinic Manuscripts in the Cambridge Genizah Collections: Taylor-Schechter New Series*, Cambridge 1998, p. 28 (no. 516), Shvitiel and Niessen (n. 7 above), p. 66 (no. 1073), and B. Halper, *Descriptive Catalogue of Genizah Fragments in Philadelphia*, Philadelphia 1924, p. 215. I am currently preparing an edition of these two fragments.

- 76 The author mentions the Egyptian astronomer Shihāb b. al-Majdī who died in 1455 according to al-Suyūṭī, *Naẓm al-'iqyān fī a'yān al-a'yān*, ed. P. K. Hitti, New York 1927, p. 42 (no. 28).
- 77 On the controversy regarding its date of composition see S. H. Griffith, "The Prophet Muḥammad, his Scripture and his Message, according to the Christian Apologies in Arabic and Syriac from the First Abbasid Century," in: *La vie du prophète Mahomet, Colloque de Strasbourg, Oct. 1980*, Paris 1983, pp. 105–106. Griffith supports the opinion that the treatise was composed in the ninth century. On the possibility of a later dating see S. Stroumsa, *Freethinkers of Medieval Islam: Ibn al-Rāwandī, Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, and Their Impact on Islamic Thought*, Leiden 1999, pp. 193–198.
- 78 Cf. Griffith (n. 68 above), pp. 151–157.

version (probably in Syriac) of the disputation of Patriarch Timothy is unknown, but it may be as early as the ninth century. The manuscripts known to us were certainly not the only ones read by Jews, and probably also not the earliest, but one may suppose that writings aimed at so clearly defined an audience reached outsiders only after they had already achieved considerable popularity within the community which had created them. Comparison with the extant Jewish polemical treatises against Islam could determine whether these Christian works ever exercised a direct literary influence on them, and if so when.

## (2) Liturgical fragments

The two fragments of Copto-Arabic lectionaries belong to another group of Christian Arabic Genizah fragments: one of them contains some lections and the end of a homily for Good Friday in Judaeo-Arabic transcription, and the other, longer fragment has lections for another day of the ecclesiastical year in Arabic script.<sup>79</sup> The latter fragment was probably copied in the twelfth century, and the first as late as the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries. These pieces are the most enigmatic of all the Christian Arabic Genizah fragments. Why would a Jew, living in a society politically and by now also numerically dominated by Muslims, purchase a lectionary of the Coptic Church, and even transcribe it into Judaeo-Arabic? Moreover, the Judaeo-Arabic lectionary fragment is far from being a hasty copy: it is written very carefully, the unusual words being provided with full Arabic vocalization. Their occurrence in the Cairo Genizah can perhaps be partly explained by the preponderance of liturgical manuscripts in Christian

79 Cf. nos. 6–7 on p. 122\* and no. IV in the Appendix. For the identification of the lectionary for Good Friday cf. I. J. Jirjīs (ed.), *Tartīb usbū' al-ālām bi-ḥasab taqs al-Kanīsa 'l-Qibṭiyya 'l-Urthuduksiyya*, Beni Suef n.d., pp. 504–555 and O. H. E. Burmester, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church: A Detailed Description of Her Liturgical Services and the Rites and Ceremonies Observed in the Administration of Her Sacraments*, Cairo 1967, pp. 282–283. Unfortunately, I could not locate the second lectionary fragment in the Coptic liturgical year. The assumption that it belongs to a Copto-Arabic lectionary is based on Graf (n. 26 above), vol. 1, p. 186. For Coptic lectionaries in general cf. U. Zanetti, *Les lectionnaires coptes annuels: Basse-Egypte* (Publications de l'Institut Orientaliste de Louvain 33), Louvain 1985.

manuscript collections in general, and by the frequency of attacks on liturgy in interreligious polemics.

Prior to the appearance of the Protestant missionary societies in the Middle East it must have been easier to gain access to a lectionary than to any other kind of Christian Arabic religious literature: liturgical books were available even in small churches, but Gospels or other books of the Bible, and especially theological writings, were only to be found in the libraries of monasteries. The overall number of manuscripts copied for liturgical use was much higher than that of manuscripts copied for other purposes. A quick survey of the manuscripts preserved in the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai supports this assumption: there are 124 Biblical manuscripts in the Arabic Collection (nos. 1–124; including both Testaments), while 196 (nos. 125–320) belong to various liturgical genres; the proportion of Biblical and liturgical manuscripts is approximately 2:3.<sup>80</sup> The picture the Syriac and Greek Collections show is even clearer: in the Greek collection the proportion of Biblical manuscripts to liturgical ones is 349:745 = 1:2,<sup>81</sup> and the corresponding proportion in the Syriac collection is 55:150 = 1:3.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, many Biblical manuscripts are divided according to lections; they were, therefore, also copied for liturgical use.<sup>83</sup> Manuscripts from any other genre of Christian religious literature are rarer than Biblical manuscripts. It seems that liturgical books were the most accessible means for anyone who wanted — for whatever reason — to become acquainted with Christianity.

Every religious genre can be exploited for polemical purposes: one has to read the Bible in order to criticize it, and one has to be familiar with Christian theology in order to refute it. Perhaps the occurrence of the Copto-Arabic lectionary fragments in the Cairo Genizah can also be attributed to similar

80 M. Kamil, *Catalogue of all Manuscripts in the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai*, Wiesbaden 1970, pp. 11–26.

81 *Ibid.*, pp. 62–74, 93–118 (nos. 1–349, 794–1538).

82 *Ibid.*, pp. 151–152, 154–160 (nos. 1–55, 77–226).

83 *Ibid.*, pp. 11–17, 62–74, 151–152.

motives. Close acquaintance with texts read as part of the liturgy could be more useful for the casual polemicist than familiarity with the entire New Testament or with theological literature: while Christians participated in the liturgy at least once a week, and thus remembered the lections well, even monks and parish priests were rarely deeply acquainted with theological literature. Furthermore, criticism or mockery of the liturgy was part of the standard repertoire of both anti-Islamic and anti-Christian polemical literature. Polemic was most commonly directed against rituals. Muslim polemicists constantly attacked the veneration of the cross and icons,<sup>84</sup> while Christian authors wrote apologetical treatises in defence of these practices.<sup>85</sup> The rituals of Muslim pilgrimage also drew much criticism from both Christian and Jewish authors.<sup>86</sup> However, the most striking example of the polemical use of liturgy, and what might be a parallel to the Coptic lectionary in Judaeo-Arabic, is known from a Jewish apologetic tract reconstructed from Genizah fragments. The author of this tract informs the reader about the event which induced him to write it: in the *majlis* of Ya'qūb b. Killis (930–991), Fāṭimid *wazīr* and Jewish convert to Islam, those present mocked the *Siddur* of Saadya Gaon, which was passed around. The entire *Siddur* — both

84 E.g. the anonymous Muslim author in D. Sourdél, "Un pamphlet musulman anonyme d'époque 'Abbāsīde contre les chrétiens," *Revue des études islamiques* 34 (1966), p. 29, and Wāsil, the Muslim disputant in Griffith and Miller (n. 74 above), pp. 324–327. See also the references to such criticism by John of Damascus in *De Haeresibus* (D. J. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam: The "Heresy of the Ishmaelites"*, Leiden 1972, pp. 136–137); and by the Christian correspondent in A. Jeffery, "Ghevond's Text of the Correspondence between 'Umar II and Leo III," *Harvard Theological Review* 37 (1944), pp. 321–322.

85 See S. H. Griffith, "Theodore Abū Qurrah's Arabic Tract on the Christian Practice of Venerating Images," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 105/1 (1985), pp. 53–73, for an example; and especially pp. 62–68 for the Muslim context.

86 E.g. John of Damascus in *De Haeresibus* (n. 84 above, *ibid.*); the Christian correspondent in Jeffery (n. 84 above), pp. 322–324; 'Abd al-Masīh al-Kindī in Tartar (n. 70 above), pp. 140–145. An example of a reaction to such attacks is provided by the anonymous Muslim author in Sourdél (n. 84 above), p. 31. For the Christian critique of the *hajj* in general see B. Roggema, "Muslims as Crypto-Idolaters — A Theme in the Christian Portrayal of Islam in the Near East," in: D. Thomas (ed.), *Christians at the Heart of Islamic Rule: Church Life and Scholarship in 'Abbasid Iraq*, Leiden — Boston 2003, pp. 3–10.

the instructions and the prayers themselves — had been translated into Arabic and transcribed into Arabic letters.<sup>87</sup> With a stretch of the imagination the Coptic lectionary written in Hebrew letters can also be pictured in a similar situation, all the more so since it contains texts considered of central importance by Coptic Christians: for Eastern Christianity the Holy Week and Easter constitute the most central part of the ecclesiastical year.

### (3) Literary genres popular among Copts

Homilies and hagiographies were very popular among Coptic Christians, ever since the beginning of Christian literary production in Coptic. Two centuries after the conquest of Egypt by the Arabs, Egyptian Christians, Copts and Melkites alike, adopted Arabic as their literary language, and homilies and hagiographies were among the first genres to be translated. At the same time similar Copto-Arabic writings continued to be produced.<sup>88</sup> If an Egyptian Jew was curious as to what his Christian neighbors read he soon encountered hagiographies and homilies. These are also attested among the Christian Arabic Genizah fragments: an unidentified collection of rhymed Christian homilies has been found in two fragments of uncertain date,<sup>89</sup> and two fragmentary leaves from

87 See M. R. Cohen and S. Somekh, "In the Court of Ya'qūb ibn Killis: A Fragment from the Cairo Genizah," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 80/3–4 (1990), pp. 283–314; ideam, "Interreligious Majālis in Early Fatimid Egypt," in: H. Lazarus-Yafeh, M. R. Cohen, S. Somekh, and S. H. Griffith (eds.), *The Majlis: Interreligious Encounters in Medieval Islam*, Wiesbaden 1999, pp. 128–136. Further fragments of this treatise have been published by S. Somekh, "Remnants of a Polemical Treatise from the Cairo Genizah," in: I. Gluska and Ts. Kessar (eds.), *Shivtiel Book: Studies in the Hebrew Language and in the Linguistic Traditions of the Jewish Communities*, Tel Aviv 1992, pp. 141–159.

88 For the translation of patristic literature into Arabic by Copts, see S. Rubenson, "Translating the Tradition: Some Remarks on the Arabization of the Patristic Heritage in Egypt," *Medieval Encounters* 2 (1996), pp. 4–14; for the application of his conclusions to original Copto-Arabic literary production, see J. Den Heijer, "Recent Developments in Copto-Arabic Studies (1992–1996)," S. Emmel, M. Krause, S. G. Richter, and S. Schaten (eds.), *Ägypten und Nubien in spätantiker und christlicher Zeit: Akten des 6. Internationalen Koptologenkongresses, Münster, 20.–26. Juli 1996*, Wiesbaden 1999, vol. 2, pp. 49–64.

89 See no. 8 on p. 122\*. The script in which this manuscript is written was in use in Egypt from

what appears to be a hagiography have also come to light.<sup>90</sup> Both are written in Arabic script. The protagonist of the hagiography, which remains unidentified, is called Fr. Stephanus. Since only a few lines have survived from both leaves, even the plot on the extant pages cannot be reconstructed with certainty. In addition to the popularity of hagiography among Copts, its capacity for entertainment could also have attracted an outsider.

The only known Christian Arabic Genizah fragment of an historiographic nature may also be mentioned in this context, for Copto-Arabic literature was rich (certainly richer than Judaeo-Arabic literature) in this genre. The Cairo Genizah has preserved a half-leaf fragment in Arabic script of *Kitāb al-ta'rikh al-majmū' 'alā 'l-taḥqīq wa-l-taḥdīq* (*The Accurate and Authentic Book of the Complete History*), the first Christian history written in Arabic and the best known work of Sa'īd b. al-Biṭrīq (877–940, Melkite patriarch of Alexandria as Eutychius from 933 or 935 until the end of his life).<sup>91</sup> This is a universal chronicle compiled from various sources and arranged according to the reigns of rulers. At the beginning of the eleventh century the work was continued by the author's relative, Yaḥyā al-Anṭākī (ca. 980–1066), and it became very popular among its intended audience, the Arabic-speaking Melkite community; many manuscripts are extant.<sup>92</sup> Sa'īd b. al-Biṭrīq's *Kitāb al-ta'rikh* was not the only non-Jewish chronicle which reached a Jewish audience. Most Jewish historical works read by Jews were not concerned with contemporary history: the catalogue of the

the twelfth to the eighteenth century. St. George [*Mar Jirjis*], St. Moses [*Mār Mūsā b. 'Imrān*], St. Aaron [*Mar Hārūn*] and St. Mark [*Mar Markus*] (the word *mar/mār* is written inconsistently) are mentioned on the verso of T-S Ar. 39.393. From this list of saints it appears that the manuscript is of Melkite or Syrian provenance; as far as I know, the word *mar/mār* is used by Syrians and Melkites, but not by Copts.

90 See no. 9 on p. 122\*, and no. V in the Appendix.

91 See no. 10 on p. 122\*.

92 The chronicle was edited from several manuscripts about a century ago, see L. Cheiko, C. de Vaux and H. Zayyat (eds.), *Eutychii patriarchae Alexandrini Annales: Accedunt Annales Yahia ibn Said Antiochensis* (2 vols., CSCO 50–51, *Scriptores arabici*, ser. 3, 6–7), Louvain 1906–1909. For the author and the chronicle see F. Micheau, "Sa'īd b. Biṭrīk," *Et*<sup>2</sup>, vol. 8, pp. 853–855.

Arabic Old Series of the Taylor-Schechter Collection lists 57 fragments of historical works, a fair proportion of which belongs to *Yosippon*, the *Scroll of Antiochus*, or unidentified Biblical histories. Most of the remaining fragments are written in Arabic script, and on the basis of the description of their contents they seem to be of non-Jewish provenance — most probably Muslim, some perhaps Christian.<sup>93</sup>

A fragment of a fascinating Christological treatise attributed to the Fāṭimid caliphs, more specifically to the caliph al-Mu'izz, *Al-maqāla al-masīhiyya* (*Treatise on Christ*), has also been found.<sup>94</sup> This work, at least with regard to its underlying motives, is characteristically Egyptian. Perhaps the attribution of its authorship to Fāṭimid caliphs (based on Coptic legends according to which the caliph al-Mu'izz converted to Christianity) caught the imagination of the Jew who procured the manuscript.<sup>95</sup> It is probable that the treatise was copied for a non-Christian, possibly the Jew from whose possession it arrived at the Cairo Genizah: the Christian *basmala* at the beginning of the fragment is glossed by the common (Muslim) one in the same handwriting, squeezed between two lines written earlier.

#### (4) Other possible factors

There is a group of Christian fragments which places the *raison d'être* of the Christian Arabic *Genizah* fragments in another perspective: some

93 See the index in Baker and Polliack (n. 9 above), p. 605.

94 See no. 3 on p. 122\*, and no. II in the Appendix. With regard to this treatise see: R. Caspar, S. K. Samir and L. Hagemann, "Bibliographie du dialogue islamo-chrétien," *Islamochristiana* 5 (1979), pp. 309–310 (this section was written by Samir). Two different versions of the text have been published in G. Tropeau, "Un traité christologique attribué au caliph Fatimide al-Mu'izz," *Annales Islamologiques* 15 (1979), pp. 11–15 and P. Fahed, *Kitāb al-Hudā ou Livre de la Direction: Code Maronite du Haut Moyen Âge, traduction du syriaque en arabe par l'Evêque Maronite David l'an 1059*, Aleppo 1935, pp. 235–243.

95 On the legend of the conversion of al-Mu'izz to Christianity, see J. Den Hejjer, "Apologetic Elements in Coptic-Arabic Historiography: The Life of Afrahām ibn Zur'ah, 62<sup>nd</sup> Patriarch of Alexandria," in: S. K. Samir and J. Nielsen (eds.), *Christian Arabic Apologetics during the 'Abbasid Period (750–1258)* (Studies in the History of Religion 63), Leiden 1994, pp. 192–202.

Syriac, Greek and Coptic pieces are also encountered in the Cairo Genizah.<sup>96</sup> It is rather improbable that the writings to which these fragments originally belonged were purchased by their Jewish owners for purposes of reading. We can hardly suppose, for example, that the Syriac hymnary, the fragments of which are scattered in the Taylor-Schechter Collection and which was copied in the thirteenth or fourteenth century, was read by a Jew.<sup>97</sup> while there is evidence up to the eleventh century that there were Babylonian Jewish intellectuals who read Syriac,<sup>98</sup> one can hardly imagine a Cairene Jew knowing Syriac and reading such an improbable literary genre in this language so late in the Middle Ages. Two other fragments have New Testament passages in Syriac on the recto, while the verso contains a trousseau list in Judaeo-Arabic: in this case the (originally one) leaf was probably acquired in order to reuse it.<sup>99</sup> Another Christian fragment, in Greek, first arrived in the hands of a Muslim who wrote in the empty place in the middle of the leaf in large Arabic letters *al-ḥamdu li-llāhi waḥdahu wa-ṣalawātuḥu 'alā sayyidinā Muḥammad nabīyyihi wa-ālihi 'l-ṭāhirīn* [praise be to God alone, and his blessing on our master, Muhammad, his Prophet, and on his pure descendants]. The Jew from whose possession the leaf found its way to the Genizah chamber in Cairo was at least its third owner, and he did not leave any written trace on it.<sup>100</sup> There is a piece among

96 Cf. the reconstruction of a Syriac hymnary from Genizah fragments in S. P. Brock, "East Syrian Liturgical Fragments from the Cairo Genizah," *Oriens Christianus* 68 (1984), pp. 58–79 and idem, "Some Further East Syrian Liturgical Fragments from the Cairo Genizah," *Oriens Christianus* 74 (1990), pp. 44–61. Two further fragments, T-S NS J390 and T-S 13J7.8, contain passages from the Peshitta; see E. C. D. Hunter and F. Niessen, "Trousseau list tells only half a story," in <http://www.lib.cam.uk/Taylor-Schechter/GF/41>, and Shvitiel and Niessen (n. 7 above), p. 606 (no. 9118). Two Christian Greek liturgical fragments are mentioned in N. De Lange, "Byzantium in the Cairo Genizah," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 16 (1992), p. 37. I have also come upon some Coptic fragments in box T-S K24.

97 Brock, "East Syrian," p. 58; idem, "Further East Syrian," p. 44.

98 Cf. Stroumsa (n. 29 above), pp. 93–94, and p. 93 n. 37.

99 Hunter and Niessen (n. 96 above).

100 T-S K24.37. Although it is improbable that these Greek, Syriac and Coptic leaves or the writings to which they belonged were acquired by Jews for reading, it is not utterly

the Christian Arabic Genizah fragments which belongs to this group as well. It is a letter of complaint written by Christians: the surviving first few lines of the verso describe the abuse of one of their coreligionists by Muslims.<sup>101</sup> The recto was also written by a Christian, but its context is uncertain. This letter must have been sent to the Muslim authorities, and the route it traveled to Jewish possession, and subsequently to the Cairo Genizah, is rather mysterious.

These examples indicate that not all fragments of Christian Arabic writings found in the Cairo Genizah were purchased by Jews in order to read them: those written in Arabic script could have been acquired for eventual reuse — a fate they somehow escaped.<sup>102</sup> This is, of course, impossible in the case of those transcribed into Judaeo-Arabic, and the survival of two groups of fragments — the Syriac, Coptic, and Greek Christian pieces on the one hand, and the Judaeo-Arabic Christian ones on the other hand — helps us to assess the implications of the occurrence of Christian Arabic fragments in the Cairo Genizah in a balanced way: the books they belong to were probably, although not necessarily, read by Jews.

impossible: individuals' particular circumstances could make them acquire unexpected skills and interests. For example, there is papyrological evidence that as late as the ninth century Muslim officials in Egypt occasionally wrote to their Christian subjects in Coptic. Two Coptic letters written by a Muslim to another in the ninth or tenth century have survived as well (L. S. B. MacCoull, "The Strange Death of Coptic Culture," in: idem, *Coptic Perspectives on Late Antiquity* [Variorum Collected Studies], Aldershot 1993, p. 37). There is also information about a Jew who spoke Coptic in the twelfth century (S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, Berkeley 1967–1993 (6 vols.) vol. 2, p. 305). A person living in a linguistic enclave would have learned its language even in the later Middle Ages.

101 Cf. no. 11 on p. 122\* and no. VI in the Appendix.

102 The verso sides of two leaves (the fragments from *Al-maqāla al-masīhiyya* and from Sa'īd b. Bitrīq's *Kitāb al-ta'rikh*) were originally empty. Four lines of writing exercises (in Greek and Arabic) were subsequently written on the verso of the chronicle, and a few unintelligible Arabic words on the verso of *Al-maqāla al-masīhiyya*.

## The Christian Arabic Genizah fragments and Christian Arabic studies

While most Christian Arabic Genizah fragments are interesting only because of the context of their survival, some of them are significant in their own right, since they provide new information about the textual history of a few Christian Arabic works. The most important Genizah fragment for the study of Christian Arabic literature is the two-leaf fragment from the disputation of Patriarch Timothy.<sup>103</sup> It is the oldest extant manuscript witness of the text, and it contains parts of a hitherto unknown early medieval Arabic version, thus revealing an early phase in the complicated transmission history of the disputation. Of all the published versions, the content of the Genizah fragment (G) is closest to the Syriac version edited by Alphonse Mingana (M).<sup>104</sup> G precisely follows the sequence of argumentation in M: although not a precise translation, it is a faithful paraphrase. But the Arabic vocabulary of G is different from that of the Syriac version: it is more vivid and more variegated than the Syriac vocabulary of M, and some new ideas and descriptive phrases are also introduced. The parallel sections of M are rather monotonous: the argumentation is mechanical and repetitive, and the same words, expressions and ideas are employed throughout. The author of the Arabic paraphrase greatly improved the text stylistically, and created a more enjoyable treatise.

Robert Caspar divided the extant manuscripts of the disputation into

103 See no. 2 on p. 122\* and no. 1 in the Appendix.

104 The Arabic text corresponds to A. Mingana, "Timothy's Apology for Christianity," *Woodbrooke Studies* 2 (1928), pp. 117–118, 121 [facsimile of the Syriac text], and pp. 44–45, 47–48 [English translation]. Other versions for comparison: A. Van Roey, "Une apologie syriaque attribuée à Élie de Nisibe," *Le Muséon* 59 (1946), pp. 381–397; Caspar (n. 69 above), pp. 107–175; L. Cheikho, "Al-mubāwara al-ḏimīyya bayna 'l-khalifa al-Mahdī wa-Tīmāthāūs al-jāthlīq," *al-Machriq* 19 (1921), pp. 359–374, 408–418. The last version has recently been reedited in H. Putman, *L'église et l'Islam sous Timothée I (780–823): Étude sur l'église nestorienne au temps des premiers 'Abbāsides avec nouvelle édition et traduction du dialogue entre Timothée et al-Mahdi*, Beyrouth 1975, pp. 7–51 [Arabic section]. Further (unedited) Arabic versions are mentioned in Caspar (*ibid.*), pp. 107–113.

four groups: Syriac manuscripts; medieval Arabic translations from Syriac consisting of 27 questions; a medieval Arabic version summarized in 12 questions; and “modern” Arabic translations (from the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries).<sup>105</sup> As yet not all the versions have been edited; the Arabic summary of the disputation, for instance, is available only in manuscript form. Following Caspar’s categorization of the extant manuscripts, the Genizah fragment probably belongs to the full medieval Arabic recension which is closest to the “original” Syriac text, and as far as can be established on the basis of about three pages of text, G must represent the earliest Arabic recension of the disputation. First, G is its oldest extant manuscript: on the basis of the script it was probably written around 1100, while the earliest surviving manuscript of other Arabic recensions was written in the fourteenth century, and even the oldest Syriac manuscript is as late as the thirteenth century. Secondly, as I mentioned above, the text of G closely resembles M, but if we compare it to the medieval Arabic recension published by Caspar (C), we find that their sequence is often different, and that G is always closer to M than to C. The vocabulary of G and C, however, often agrees, and there are expressions, even entire clauses, in the two texts which are very similar.<sup>106</sup> On the other hand, if we compare G with the

105 Caspar (ibid.), pp. 107–113.

106 The intact leaf of G contains part of a discussion of the question whether the Jews can be blamed for killing Christ, even though it was his will to die. The parallel discussion can be found ibid., pp. 143–146. The following examples are taken from this section. G reads: *fa-kamā lam yaftit ulā’ika al-qātilūn min al-’uqūba wa-in kānū qad akmalū bi-dhālika masarrat al-maqtūlīn...* [Just as those murderers did not escape punishment even if they had fulfilled by it (sc. the murder) the desire of the murdered...], and C has *wa-kamā lā yaftit hā’ulā min al-’uqūba wa-in kānū akmalū irādat al-maqtūlīn...* [Just as these (the murderers) will not escape punishment even if they had fulfilled the will of the murdered...] (ibid., p. 144). One clause appears identically in both texts: *qad hammat al-yahūd bi-akhdhihi mirāran...* [The Jews intended to seize him (Christ) several times...] (ibid., p. 143). But there are also differences in the vocabulary: “will” is naturally mentioned often in this discussion, and while G consistently uses the verb *shā’a* and its derivatives, C prefers *arāda*. There are many parallel expressions which appear in similar contexts but in different wording in the two recensions. For instance, G reads *fa-lam yaqtulūhu rajā an yaqūm wa-yahyā bal li-yahlik wa-yabīd* [They (the Jews) did not kill him (Jesus) in hope that he would be resurrected, but that he would die and perish], while C has *wa-innamā arādū i’ dām*

nineteenth-century Arabic translation published by Putman, we do not find any correspondences at all.<sup>107</sup> G and C, the two medieval Arabic recensions, seem to be related to each other. The translator (or editor) of C probably knew the previous recension, fragmentarily extant today in G, and was influenced by it. The two versions might even originate in the same area: C was copied in Egypt in the fourteenth century, and G was preserved in the Cairo Genizah, and may thus also be of Egyptian provenance.

The intriguing short Christological treatise, *Al-maqāla al-masīhiyya* (*Treatise on Christ*), has survived in two different versions: as an independent work in a Copto-Arabic manuscript, and as part of a Maronite nomocanon.<sup>108</sup> Both versions are attested only in late fifteenth- and sixteenth-century manuscripts.<sup>109</sup> The first citation of the treatise is found in *Nahj al-sabil fī takhīl muḥarriḥi 'l-Ḥijl* (*The Manifest Way to Confound the Falsifiers of the Gospel*) of the Coptic writer al-Ṣafī b. al-'Assāl, an apology for Christianity written in 1243.<sup>110</sup> The *isnāds*(?) of the treatise claim that it was composed by Fāṭimid authors. The Copto-Arabic version attributes it to al-Mu'izz li-dīn Allāh, the first Fāṭimid caliph in Egypt (reigned 953–975),<sup>111</sup> the Maronite version and the Genizah

*wujūdihi wa-ibtāl dhikrihi* [... but they (the Jews) only wanted the annihilation of his (Christ's) existence and the abolition of his memory] (ibid., p. 143).

107 For example, the translator of this version never used the verb *shā'a* to express will, but rather employed *arāda* and its derivatives throughout. Cf. Putman (n. 104 above), pp. 38–40 (Arabic section).

108 The Copto-Arabic version was edited, together with extracts from the Maronite version, in Tropeau (n. 94 above), pp. 15–20. The full Maronite version can be found in Fahed (n. 94 above), pp. 235–243. For further discussion of this treatise see Caspar et al., “Bibliographie (deuxième partie)” (n. 22 above), p. 221; Caspar, Samir and Hagemann (n. 94 above), pp. 307–310 (this section of the article was written by Samir), and Tropeau's introduction to his edition (pp. 12–15).

109 For the Coptic version and the Maronite version see Tropeau, p. 11 n. 1; p. 12 n. 1; for the manuscripts of the Maronite nomocanon see Graf (n. 26 above), vol. 2, p. 98.

110 See S. K. Samir, “Une citation du traité christologique attribué au calife al-Mu'izz (m. 975) chez al-Ṣafī b. al-'Assāl,” *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 50 (1984), pp. 398–406.

111 The Coptic version begins with the words *faṣl min Al-maqāla al-masīhiyya ta'tīf al-imām al-Mu'izz al-khalīfa bi-Miṣr* [chapter of the *Treatise on Christ*, written by the imam al-Mu'izz, the caliph in Egypt] (Tropeau [n. 94 above], p. 12).

fragment to his ancestors in general,<sup>112</sup> while al-Ṣafī b. al-ʿAssāl says: "... one of the missionaries wrote it for one of the Muslim caliphs in Egypt" [... *'amalahā aḥad al-du'āt li-aḥad al-khulafā' al-miṣriyyīn al-muslimīn*].<sup>113</sup> Not only the *isnād* of the Genizah fragment agrees with that of the Maronite version, but also the only sentence it contains after the *isnād*.<sup>114</sup> The Genizah fragment, which can be dated on paleographical grounds to the eleventh or twelfth centuries, is thus the oldest known manuscript witness of *Al-maqāla al-masīḥiyya*, earlier than its citation by al-Ṣafī b. al-ʿAssāl. It provides evidence that this version also circulated in Egypt, and that its composition indeed dates back to the Fāṭimid period.

The Genizah fragments of the legend of Muhammad's instruction by the monk Bahīrā probably belong to the earliest extant manuscript of this work.<sup>115</sup> Georg Graf enumerated nine Arabic manuscripts of the legend, scattered in various libraries and monasteries in Europe and the Middle East.<sup>116</sup> The tenth known manuscript of the legend is the one represented by the two Judaeo-Arabic Genizah fragments. On the basis of the available manuscripts two Arabic versions of the legend can be distinguished, one of which is closer to the Syriac versions in its narrative frame and contains less Christian exegesis of Qur'anic passages than the other. About a century ago Richard Gottheil published the latter Arabic version on the basis of three manuscripts of the seven known to him.<sup>117</sup> The Judaeo-Arabic Genizah fragments follow faithfully the version edited by Gottheil; it will only be possible to determine whether this part is

112 The *isnād* of both the Maronite version and the Genizah fragment ends ... *'an mawlānā al-Mu'izz li-dīn Allāh ta'ālā amīr al-mu'minīn 'an abā'ihī*... [... from our lord, al-Mu'izz li-dīn Allāh (be He exalted), Commander of the Faithful, from his fathers...] (ibid., p. 13).

113 Samir (n. 110 above), p. 400.

114 Cf. no. 3 on p. 122\* and no. II in the Appendix.

115 Cf. no. 1 on p. 121\*.

116 Graf (n. 26 above), vol. 2, p. 50.

117 Gottheil used four of the six manuscripts available to him, but only three of them throughout the edition (Gottheil [n. 68 above], pp. 200–201 [introduction]). On the peculiarities of the second Arabic version, unknown to Gottheil, cf. L. Boisset, "Compléments à l'édition de la version arabe de la légende de Bahīra," *Parole de l'Orient* 16 (1990–1991), pp. 123–131.

identical in both Arabic versions after the earlier Arabic version is published. The fragments, ten continuous leaves altogether, cover about one-third of the entire story.<sup>118</sup> They are written in an oriental semi-cursive Judaeo-Arabic script which was in use from the eleventh to the thirteenth century, but the punctuation indicates that they probably belong to the first half of this period. On the basis of the available information about the dating of the extant Arabic manuscripts the Judaeo-Arabic Genizah fragments certainly represent one of the two oldest known copies of the text, and they may well be the oldest.<sup>119</sup> Since in some cases the readings of these Genizah fragments are superior to those found in Gottheil's edition, they could be used with profit in preparing a new edition of this version of the legend.

## Conclusion

I think of the Christian Arabic Genizah fragments discussed in this paper as only the tip of the iceberg. It would take several years to conduct a thorough search in all Genizah collections to ensure that every Christian Arabic fragment is found. I have not had the opportunity to do this: I came across the first fragments accidentally, searched parts of Genizah collections where fragments written in Arabic script are concentrated, and checked printed catalogues of Genizah collections for additional clues. As systematic research on the Cairo Genizah continues, more Christian Arabic fragments, both in Arabic and in Judaeo-Arabic script, will undoubtedly come to light and more pieces will be identified, making the picture presented here more complete and modifying or refuting it in various respects.

118 The two leaves of T-S Ar. 14.11 respectively preceded and followed those of MS Bodl. Heb. d. 57. The fragments are from the middle of the text, and they form one quire altogether. They cover pp. 62–81 (19 pages) out of pp. 252–268 and 56–102 (62 pages) in Gottheil's edition; the entire manuscript must have consisted of approximately thirty leaves.

119 MS Gotha ar. 2875 was copied in the thirteenth century according to Gottheil (n. 68 above), p. 201 [introduction]. Graf (n. 26 above), p. 149 does not mention the date of this manuscript. All the other manuscripts are later.

Most Christian Arabic Genizah fragments are written in Arabic script.<sup>120</sup> As for the Genizah material in general, the language of about half of the fragments is Arabic, and most of these are written in Judaeo-Arabic. The Genizah pieces in Arabic script account for about five percent of all the fragments.<sup>121</sup> The great majority of the fragments written in Arabic script are documents or parts of scientific, medical and philosophical works.<sup>122</sup> However, among the Genizah fragments written in Arabic script there is a corpus similar to the Christian Arabic fragments. These are fragments of Muslim religious works: leaves from the Qur'an, religious poetry, *ḥadīth* collections, *fiqh*, and Islamic mystical writings.<sup>123</sup> As far as I know, no attempt has been made to assemble and characterize this corpus; however, were such a project to be carried out, it would be illuminating to compare the Christian Arabic and the Muslim Genizah material in terms of their absolute and relative size, geographical origin of

120 Those surviving in Judaeo-Arabic script must also have been copied directly from Arabic originals. The most salient cluster of mistakes indicating this is occasioned by the appearance of the word Trinity (*thālūth*) outside its usual context in the legend of Muhammad's instruction by the monk Bahūrā. In the section where the monk recounts that he prescribed certain parts of the Muslim prayer to be performed thrice as an allusion to the Trinity, it takes the copyist several lines to understand the point. First he provides two unpointed consonant skeletons in Arabic script, recognizable as ثالوثا ثالوثا only if we know what ought to stand there. A few lines down he makes two more mistaken transcriptions of the same word (אלתלות, סכות) before he first successfully writes אלתאלות. The difficulty was probably caused not only by the unusual content, but also by the original Arabic manuscript from which the copyist made the Judaeo-Arabic transcription: it must have been unpointed and hastily written.

121 These figures are based on the proportions of the Genizah fragments in the Taylor-Schechter Collection of Cambridge University Library, where about two-third of all extant Genizah fragments are kept. Cf. Khan (n. 64 above), p. 55.

122 Ibid., pp. 55–58.

123 Ibid., pp. 58–59. The occurrence of some Muslim fragments can be explained by educational needs: they were used by Jews who acquired secular education in order to seek employment in the state administration. But it does not apply to all religious fragments: a clerk did not need to study *fiqh* or Muslim prayers, and Sufi writings were read by Jews of mystical inclinations.

the authors represented and the actual copies, the literary genres attested, the proportions of these transcribed into Judaeo-Arabic, etc.

The Christian Arabic Genizah fragments remind us that Arabic-speaking Jews lived in a more multifarious environment than is generally described. Although after the tenth century Christians probably were already less numerous than Muslims in most regions of the Middle East, and their voices were less audible than in previous centuries, it still took a long time until they became the vastly outnumbered minority familiar to us, hardly noticeable in many of their ancestral lands. It is also useful to keep in mind that this reshaping of the Middle East was not uniform: while in certain regions Muslims were numerically dominant soon after the Arab conquest, in other places Christians remained a majority — a few such small enclaves exist even today. Although the numerical proportion of a community does not necessarily correspond to its cultural influence on society as a whole, its perceptibility, literary productivity and intellectual creativity are closely related to its numbers, and Christians were present in Egypt, Syria and Mesopotamia during the classical Genizah period in numbers which were still large enough to attract the attention of members of other communities. This engagement of non-Christians expressed itself in various ways extending from anti-Christian polemical activity, through interest in Christian literature and the influence of Christian doctrines and rituals, to conversion to Christianity. Judaeo-Arabic culture developed for long centuries within this variegated medium, as the fragments of the Cairo Genizah eloquently attest. Further research, attentive to traces of Christian influence alongside the obvious Muslim influence in Judaeo-Arabic literature, may yet reveal the exact dimensions and the channels of the interaction between the two religious communities.

## Appendix: Samples of Christian Arabic Genizah fragments

The texts are transcribed as closely to their appearance in the manuscripts as possible. Their orthography (Middle Arabic peculiarities and the copyists' inconsistencies) are not corrected, and are only occasionally referred to in the notes. In order to facilitate reading, however, I have dotted the consonant skeleton everywhere. (None of the manuscripts is fully dotted.)

### Transcription

[ ] Indicates a tear, blur, stain or other physical defect causing a gap in the text. The enclosed dot(s) indicate the probable number of missing letters. Gaps apparently longer than three letters are indicated by spaces only.

< > Indicates an addition probably made by the copyist, written between the lines or in the margin.

{ } Indicates a deletion probably made by the copyist.

⸚ Indicates a letter preserved only partly when the reading is not certain. When the reading is certain, the illegibility of the letter is not indicated.

### Translation

[ ] Indicates a word supplied for the clarity of the translation, not found in the Arabic text.

— — Indicates gaps or untranslated fragmentary text.

### I. The disputation of Patriarch Timothy (T-S Ar. 52.244)

1a

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| لأنهم لم يشاؤوا الاستشهادَ فآبى [سبيلَ] الله] | 1 |
| فإن كان موتهم ذلك لمشيئه م[ن]هم               | 2 |
| ومسره فليت شعري أيعاقب قاتلو [ه]م             | 3 |
| أم لا فإن لم يعاقبوا + [ف]قال القائل وكيف     | 4 |

- 5 لا يعاقبوا وقد قتلوا ناسا مومنين مسلمين  
 6 وان كانوا اهلا للعقوبه فكيف يعاقبوا  
 7 [ق]انما اكملوا مشيه اوليك المسلمين الذين  
 8 اشتهوا ان يقتلوا في سبيل الله + فكاملته لم  
 9 يفلت اوليك القاتلون من العقوبه [و]ان  
 10 كانوا قد اكملوا بذلك مسره المقتولين  
 11 والى القتل يسارعوا وذلك [ل]انهم لم يقتلوه  
 12 وهم يريدون موافقتهم [م] واتباع مسرتهم  
 13 بل خلافا لهم وانتقاما منهم + كذلك  
 14 لن يفلت اليهود من نار جهنم لان المسيح كان يشا

## 1b

- 15 [ان يبدل نفسه للموت بدل خلاص العالم  
 16 ف]قتلوه [ات]باعا لمشيته كلا بل انما قتلوه  
 17 تبايعا في اعينهم وبتزيد المراره <في> نفوسهم  
 18 وغليان<sup>124</sup> قلوبهم ولم يقتلوه رجا ان يقوم  
 19 ويحيا + بل ليهلك ويبعد فعلى قدر الضمير  
 20 يثيب الله عز وجل ويعاقب ايضا لا على  
 21 قدر ظاهر الامور + فاما <سيدنا> المسيح فانا  
 22 نعلم [ل]انه قد كان قادر الا يسلم نفسه  
 23 للموت بيدي اليهود من خصال شتى  
 24 واسلم نفسه وذلك انه قال اني قادر  
 25 على نفسي ان [ضع]ها واقبضها + وايضا  
 26 قد همت [ل]يهي [و]دبا خذه مرارا فانسل  
 27 منهم انسلا لا ولم يقدروا على بسط ايديهم عليه

## 2a

- 28 من [ ]  
 29 وذكرهم الفرقليط + قال [ل]ي فما هـ [ذا]

- 30 التغيير الذي بينهم في صفاتهم ومخالفه  
 31 ب[ع]ضهم بعضاً في مواضع كثيرة + قلت له  
 32 اما تغير في الحروف فقدخل<sup>125</sup> بعض ذلك  
 33 فاما تكذيب او مخالفه بعضهم بعضاً فلا  
 34 كما لو ان نفرا من المتكلمين ارادوا ان يصفوا

2b

- 35 فحور] [أ به  
 36 وكثير عجايبه ومنهم من بلغ في وصف  
 37 الكواكب ونظمها ومسلكها شتى  
 38 وصيفا وسيرتها وطلوعها وجميع  
 39 عجايبها ومنهم من تكلم على مسلك الهوا  
 40 وانبساطه في هذا الجو بين السما والارض  
 41 وتلبده احيانا حتى يصير سحانا<sup>126</sup> غليظاً منظوراً<sup>127</sup>

### Translation

- 1 ... because they did not wish for martyrdom on behalf of God.  
 2 But if their death had happened according to their will and their  
 3 desire, I would like to know whether their murderers would be punished  
 4 or not. For if they were not punished, someone could say: How is it  
 5 that they are not punished, although they have murdered Muslim believers?  
 6 And if they were to be punished [he could say]: how is it that they are  
 7 punished,  
 8 although they only fulfilled the wish of those Muslims who  
 9 had desired to be killed on behalf of God? But [I say:] its fulfillment  
 10 does not exempt those murderers from the punishment, even  
 11 if they had fulfilled by it [the murder] the desire of the murdered,

125 Read فقد دخل.

126 Read سحاباً.

127 There is an addition, probably from another hand, under this line (it is illegible to me).

11 when [they were] hastening to murder. It is because they did not murder  
them  
12 wishing to act conformably to them, and to follow their desire,  
13 but in animosity and vengeance. In the same way,  
14 Jews will also not escape the fire of Hell, because Christ wanted  
15 to sacrifice himself for the redemption of the world —  
16 But did they kill him according to his will? Not at all! They killed him  
17 in agreeing between themselves, in the intense bitterness of their souls,  
18 and the vehement wrath of their hearts. They did not kill him wishing his  
resurrection  
19 and life, but his perdition and destruction. God (be glorified and exalted)  
20 rewards and punishes according to the innermost thoughts, and not  
according to the  
21 outward appearance of the matter. As for Christ, our Lord, we  
22 know from various incidents that it was in his power  
23 not to surrender himself to death at the hands of the Jews;  
24 He nevertheless surrendered himself. It is [as] He said: “I have  
25 power to lay my life down, and to take it back.”<sup>128</sup> And also,  
26 the Jews intended to seize him several times, but He escaped  
27 from them, and they could not put their hands on him.<sup>129</sup>  
28 — —  
29 and He mentioned to them the Comforter. He [the caliph] said to me:  
What is this  
30 difference among them [the Gospels] concerning their descriptions and  
their contradiction  
31 of each other in many issues? I [the patriarch] replied to him:  
32 As for alteration in the letter, some of it indeed happened,  
33 but denial and contradiction of each other did not occur.  
34 As if a group of *mutakallims* wanted to describe...

128 Cf. John 10: 18.

129 Cf. e.g. Luke 4: 29–30.

- 35 --  
 36 and many of its wonders. Some of them went to great length in the  
 description of  
 37 the stars, their arrangement, their orbit in winter  
 38 and in summer and their path, their rise, and all their  
 39 wonders. Others spoke about the movement of the air  
 40 and its expansion in this atmosphere between the sky and the earth,  
 41 and its contraction until it forms thick, visible clouds...

## II. The beginning of *Al-maqāla al-masīhiyya* (T-S Ar. 39.320)<sup>130</sup>

بسم الاب والابن والروح القدس	1
اله واحد	2
<الذي هو بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم> <sup>131</sup>	3
قال <sup>132</sup> اخيرنا الشيخ ابو الفوارس	4
الحسن <sup>133</sup> بن محمد المهدي قال رواه <sup>134</sup> محمد <sup>135</sup>	5
بن احمد الحلبي الداعي <sup>136</sup> رضي الله عنه عن مولانا	6
الامام المعز لدين الله امير المومنين عن ابيه	7
الطاهرين صلوات الله عليهم اجمعين	8

- 130 The transcription here contains only the text of the recto. On the verso عشرين مايه and two or three more letters are written in two lines, in another hand. In the footnotes I refer to the corresponding sections in Tropeau (n. 94 above), pp. 12–13 [Coptic version: TC, Maronite version: TM] in the case of the *isnād*, and to Fahed (ibid.), p. 235 [F] in the case of the text following the *isnād*. I do not refer to the variants in the *isnād* in Fahed's edition, because it is obviously very corrupt. On the state of this edition cf. Caspar, Samir and Hagemann (ibid.), p. 307 [this section of the article was written by Samir].
- 131 It appears that this line was added by the same copyist after the entire page had been written. The first two words (الذي هو) are written in smaller letters between this line and the next one, in the right margin.
- 132 قال is missing before the *isnād* in all the editions.
- 133 TC: الحسين.
- 134 Read رواه (thus also in TC and TM).
- 135 TM: علي.
- 136 TC and TM: القاضي الداعي.



[	أنتامه من [ه]والمسيح انها قد كانت [م]عده في	]	5
[	المسيح ولد اد[م] بديل الخطيه انها كا[ذ]ت سبب	]	6
[	الخطيه ويجب ال[..] وقال قرياقس ]	]	7
<sup>140</sup> [	من اد[م] الى زمان موسى يعني ال[ى]	]	8

verso

[	فصل يعمه القيامه بالمسيح على قطع الحكم الذي و[ج]ب بنجا و[ ]	]	9
[	الموت واشترك فيه جميع ولد ادم والحقهم الضد]	]	10
[	كان منجل واحد والموهبه اشتملت على جميع ال[ ]	]	11
[	واعطت من كان بعد الخطيه وقيا الحياه ال[بديه]	]	12
[	وموت الخطيه العقوبه وكان الموت انحل بال[ ]	]	13
[	وصحت بالقيامه فاما هذه الموهبه فهي با[ ]	]	14
[	[...] بعته ولا يبطل بسبب من الاسباب و[ ]	]	15
[	[قلم] زادت الخطايا وجبت ليزول [ ]	]	16
[	[ وظهرت بنزول الخطايا ]	]	17
[	[ خطايا ]	]	18
[	[ عليه ]	]	19

### Translation

- 1 -- from Adam to the time of Moses on those who did not sin in the likeness of
- 2 the sin of Adam.<sup>141</sup> And for those who committed various sins punishment and death was requisite,
- 3 -- the death like that of Adam. It was not the sin that made him dead, but
- 4 -- and God's word to him that 'In the day you eat from the tree you will surely die'.<sup>142</sup>
- 9 Chapter on the resurrection in Christ by the termination of law which --

140 Traces of two additional lines are discernible on this page, without any legible words.

141 Cf. Romans 5: 14.

142 Genesis 2: 17.

- 10 the death. All the offspring of Adam participated in it<sup>143</sup> — —  
 11 happened through one [man], and the gift spread on all<sup>144</sup> — —  
 12 and granted eternal life to those who were redeemed after the fall — —  
 13 Sin passes away by punishment, and death was dissolved by — —  
 14 and it proved true in the resurrection. As for this gift, it is...

#### IV. Homily for Good Friday (T-S Ar. 52.220)

	2a
ותציר אלצלמה עלי כל אלארץ: קאל והו [מ]כאטב	1
לליהוד ותכון אעיאדכם לכס חזון אוצח אן דאלך	2
יכון פי יום עיד אליהוד ואן מן דאלך אליום אלי אל	3
אבד תכון אעיאד אליהוד להם חזון ותסאביחהם	4
להם גנוח לאן מד צלב אלרב אלי אלאן ואלי אלאבד	5
לם יבקא לליהוד עיד ולא תסביח ולא פרח לאן	6
בית אללה אלדי פיה יקדסו ויקרבו במדינת אלקדס	7
קלע מנהם מן דאלך אלזמאן ואללה קד אמרהם	8
פי אלתוראה אן לא יעמלו להם היכלן אכר עלי	9
אלארץ ודאלך אלהיכל קד קלע מנהם פצארו מן	10
דאלך אלחין ואלי אלאן ואלי אלאבד לא היכל להם ולא	11
מדבח ולא דביחה ולא קרבאן ולא גפראן ולא פרח	12
ולא תסביח לאנהם לא יסתטיעו אן יסבחו באלת	13
[אל]תסביח אלבתה אלא פי דאלך אלהיכל אלדי כאן	14
להם במדינת אלקדס פקד תם עליהם קול עאמוץ	15
אלנבי וצארו פי חזון דאים ונוח לא ינקצי בל	16
וצארו מתל קולה פי גוע וגלא מן כלאם אללה <sup>145</sup>	17
לאן אללה צאר לא יכלמהם אלבתה מן פם נבי כמה	18
קד באן קדים אלזמאן לה אלמגר אלי אלאבד אמין:	19

143 Cf. Romans 5: 12.

144 Cf. Romans 5: 15–19.

145 Cf. Amos 8: 11–12.

**Translation**

1 ... and there will be darkness over all the land.<sup>146</sup> He said, speaking  
2 to the Jews: And your feasts will turn into grief for you.<sup>147</sup> He indicated  
that it<sup>148</sup>  
3 would be on a feast day of the Jews, and that from that day forever  
4 the feasts of the Jews would be a grief for them, and their praises  
5 lamentations for them, because since the crucifixion of the Lord until now  
and forever,  
6 no feast, no praise, no joy remained for the Jews because  
7 God's dwelling in which they [used to] worship and sacrifice in Jerusalem  
8 has been taken away from them since that time. God has commanded  
them  
9 in the Pentateuch not to make for themselves another Temple on  
10 the earth, and that Temple has been taken away from them, and  
11 from that time until now and forever they have no Temple, no  
12 altar, no sacrifice, no offering, no forgiveness, no joy,  
13 no praise, because they cannot glorify [God] by means of  
14 praise at all except in that Temple which they  
15 had in Jerusalem. The word of Amos the prophet has been fulfilled on  
them,  
16 and they have come to have constant grief and unending lamentation,<sup>149</sup>  
and they have  
17 even come to be — according to his word — in famine and exile from  
the word of God,  
18 because God does not speak to them at all from a prophet's mouth, as  
19 the Eternal has explained it; glory be to Him forever. Amen.

146 Cf. Amos 8: 9, and Matthew 27: 45, Mark 15: 33, Luke 23: 44.

147 Cf. Amos 8: 10. The prophet Amos is the subject of this and of the next sentence.

148 That is, the crucifixion. Cf. Matthew 26: 2.

149 Cf. Amos 8: 10.

## V. Fragments of a hagiography (ENA 3918.4–5)

		1a
[	]	1
[	البريه وانط]	2
[	من الحجار الع]	3
[	والجبال لا]	4
[	و]	5
[	وان]	6
[	فمجدت الله ا]	7
	واقدرني عليه وب[...لني له اهلا و]بيذ]ما	8
	انا اطوف اذ وجدت هامه ملقاه	9
	في بريه مليحه الرياض تشبه روضات	10
	الجنات لما فيها من عيون الما والعذبات	11
[	والحشيش الاخضر والباب]	12
		1b
	[ها وكيف صارت]	13
	[واذ لها لسان]	14
	[صآرت اليه وما نالها]	15
	[وما]	16
	[ت]	17
	[وسالت الله]	18
	اضلاعي [ع]ان ما اخبر[رني] باطني ولم اتمم	19
	صلاتي وسوالي اذ صوت خرج من تلك	20
	الراس وهي لم تتحرك من مكانها ولا رايت فيها	21
	اختلاج وهو يقول لي يا ايها الاب اصطافنوس	22
	[واخبرك واحفظ مقالتي]	23
		2a
[	وليس [ل]بي]	24

[	الصدقات و]	25
[	يا ابي اصطفانا نوس	26
[	تكسل]	27
[	الي ال]	28
[	الدينيا]	29
[	وارنكاب [ال]شهو ات]	30
	يتمنا الانسان ما ليس له ولا يخالف اياه	31
	فاني كنت لوالدي مخالفا ولشهو ات الدنيا	32
	محبا وباللهو لاهيا وعلى اللذات منعكفا	33
	وتابعا وتركت جميع الوصايا لم اعمل شي منها	34
	فاعلم ان الايمان بالرب يسوع	35

## 2b

[	الساعة فقلت له	] 36
[	الاخر عمل صالحا	] 37
[	وان	] 38
[	فقلت له	] 39
[	با ويل له	] 40
[	وما افزعها	من] 41
[	وما اعظم [ها]	] 42
	الحواس وتسترخي الاعضا ويذهب العقل والفهم ولا ينفع	43
	الاب ولا الاولاد وليس ينفع سوا ما قدمت يداك ثم ان	44
	الصدقات والرحمه والعمل الصالح فايالك يا ابي اصطفانوس	45
	ان تغفل عن فعل الخير ولا تكسل عن الصلاه فان العمل	46

## Translation

- 8 -- And while  
 9 I was wandering about, I found a skull thrown away  
 10 in a plain of beautiful groves, similar to the paradisiac  
 11 gardens because of the springs of water, the pasturages,  
 12 and the green herbage in it, and --

- 19 -- -- I had not finished  
 20 my prayer and my supplication when a voice came out of that  
 21 head, not moving from its place, nor could I see it  
 22 trembling, while it said to me: O Father Stephanus,  
 23 — — I am going to tell you. Keep my word...
- 31 one should [not] desire what is not his, and should not disobey his father.  
 32 But I disobeyed my father, loved the passions of  
 33 the world, delighted in [its] pleasures, clave to [its] enjoyments,  
 34 and pursued them. I have disregarded all the commandments, did not  
 follow any of them.  
 35 Know that faith in the Lord Jesus...
- 42 -- -- the senses  
 43 become numb, the limbs slacken, reason and understanding pass, and  
 neither ancestor  
 44 nor progeny avails. Nothing avails except what you have accomplished,  
 and  
 45 alms, mercy, virtuous deeds. Father Stephanus, beware of  
 46 neglecting good works, and do not abandon prayer, because -- --

#### VI. A documentary fragment (ENA 3917.2)

recto

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| الملا يليه هذا الدكّ ] به الكلمه بان              | 1 |
| تحل ويربط <sup>150</sup> فامر الله [...] يديه ] ل | 2 |
| المدينه العظما الاسكندريه سيد العلماء             | 3 |
| المسيحين شمس العارفين قمر الفايزين                | 4 |

150 Read either تحل وتربط or يحل ويربط.

قدوه الطالين <sup>151</sup> احد الايمه الاربعين <sup>152</sup>	5
الناطق بالقوال <sup>153</sup> التالوغسيه <sup>154</sup> المتادب	6
بالاداب الهرمسيه مترجم الغانت <sup>155</sup> [ القبطيه	7
والعربيه لانه صعب غير مستطاع ان ينطق	8
لسان قو ] [ الذي	9

### Translation

- 3 ... the great city of Alexandria, master of the Christian  
 4 scholars, sun of the knowledgeable, moon of the acquirers [of learning],  
 and  
 5 example of the seekers [of knowledge], one of the forty leaders,  
 6 the teacher of the theological tenets, the learned  
 7 in the hermetic sciences, the translator of the Coptic  
 8 and Arabic languages, because it is difficult, impossible to utter --

verso

ما قول الساده ايمه الدين وعلما المسلا [م] بن نفع آله	1
بهم العالمين امين في شخص نصراني تعصبو عليه	2
جماع <sup>156</sup> مسلمين بسول النصارى لهم في ذلك	3
فمسكوه وضربو وسحبوه لاسقف النصارى	4
يقدمه لهم قسيس ف[. ]ن كذلك <sup>157</sup> وحصل له	5
الضرب والبهدهله ] [ تقوله ان عملت	6
] [ للاحاج [ه]	7

151 Read الطالين.

152 The reading is uncertain; read either الاربعين or الادييين or الايوبيين.

153 Read الاقوال.

154 Thus in the MS.

155 Read اللغات.

156 Thus in the MS.

157 There is a small cross above the previous word, and another drawing besides it. The cross or the other drawing might indicate the place of the (incomplete) addition on the right margin, written vertically: ... فحيث ما صار ...

**Translation**

- 1 What is the opinion the masters, leaders of the religion, Muslim scholars (may God
- 2 make them beneficial for the entire world, amen) about a Christian person against whom
- 3 a group of Muslims have conspired, having been asked by the Christians to do that?
- 4 They grabbed him, beat [him], and dragged him to the bishop of the Christians...