Patricia Crone

From Kavād to al-Ghazālī

Religion, Law and Political Thought in the Near East, c.600–c.1100
shared, enjoyment of the here and now (in the right measure) being part of the
struggle against evil. Zaradushtism could be characterized as Gnostic thought
in a life-affirming spirit, and this is so odd a phenomenon that some scholars
have trouble accepting it. But whatever else may be said about Zaradusht-
ism, run-of-the-mill it was not. The key to its oddity seems to lie in the fact
that it was a Zoroastrian answer to Gnosticism.

POSTSCRIPT

p. 447:
For Xanthus of Lydia, see now A. de Jong, Traditions of the Magi:

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

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

See also the postscript to the previous article.

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

Historical Review 88 (1973), p. 3.
Islam be expected to have on Byzantium? We may begin to answer this question by spelling out the implications of a single but basic point. The distinctive feature of the Muslim threat to Byzantium was that it was at once conceptual and political: the Christian faith and the Christian polity were under simultaneous attack.

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

Vis-à-vis the Jews, the Christian possession of power thus provided some assurance that Christianity was God's own religion.

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

But vis-à-vis the barbarians, the Christian possession of truth demonstrated that Byzantium was God's own empire.

What the Byzantines had never experienced before was a monotheist attack on both their truth and their power.  

The Arabs were, so to speak, Jews who had come back with an army, or conversely, barbarians returning with a prophet: they were not just God's rod, but also claimed to be his mouthpiece, and their tremendous success lent some credence to their claim.  

So far from buttressing Byzantine

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

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

p. 53) and among the Turks (S. Vryonis, The Decline of Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century, Berkeley 1971, p. 425). Compare also the Spanish argument, that the pagan gods had failed to help the Indians, while the true God had allowed the Spanish to conquer Mexico (R. Ricard, The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico, Berkeley 1966, p. 87). And note how the Byzantines have to remind themselves that the victories of the Muslims were not a proof of the truth of their religion (A.-T. Khoury, Les Théologiens Byzantins et l'Islam, Louvain-Paris 1969, p. 166; similarly their descendants, in Vryonis, loc. cit., and the contemporary Armenians, in Levont, loc. cit.).

Also the moralizing effect of the Arab conquest is well brought out by C. Mango, "Historical Introduction," in A. Breyer & J. Herrin (eds.), Iconoclasm, Birmingham 1977, pp. 20ff.

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

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

Williams, Adversus Judaeos, pp. 151—80. Add now A.P. Hayman (ed. and tr.), The Disputation of Sergius the Stylite against a Jew (CSCO, Scriptores Syri, vols. 152f.), Louvain 1973, which may well have been Melkite (see the editorial introduction, p. *2). That disestablishment at the hands of the Arabs (and also the Persians) adversely affected the political balance between Christians and Jews, was also seen by F.J. Alexander, The Patriarch Nicetas of Constantinople, Oxford 1958, p. 21.

Bardy, Trophées, p. 177; K. Krumbacher, Geschichte der byzantinischen Literatur, Munich 1897, pp. 64ff; A. Baumstark, Geschichte der syrischen Literatur, Bonn 1922, pp. 260,
the simultaneous conversions to Monophysitism and, though the evidence here is tenuous, probably also to Islam.

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

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

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

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

\(^{12}\) The late 5th-century Syrian apocryphal of pseudo-Methodius comprises of conversions (E. Sackur, Syllyllische Texte und Forschungen, Halle 1898, p. 86). But it is not clear whether the apocryphal originated in a Melkite or sectarian environment, though the very fact that it passed into Greek (and Latin) would indicate the former. A Greek anti-jewish tract also conceives that some Christians have denied their faith, though more Jews are said to have done so without suffering persecution (A.C. McGregor (ed.), Dialogue between a Christian and a Jew Entitled Anatholit Apatishou kat Phiiinos Ioudaios pro monahos inu, Marburg 1889, p. 131, 132). The oldest preserved version of this tract was written shortly before the Arab conquest (we are told that the Christians have been preserved for 600 years, that Christianity is triumphant even in Britain, that the Jewish sanctuaries have become Christian and that the coinage displays the cross, ibid., p. 9; cf. also the editorial introduction, pp. 42f.). But it contains two or three interpolated passages in defence of image worship (§, 13, 150), which must have been added about 670 or 740, since we are now told that the Jews have been deprived of their sanctuary for 600 or 670 years (§16, p. 78f.; on these interpolations see also McGregor's introduction, pp. 38, and Williams, op. cit., p. 172); and it is in one of these interpolations that the reference to apostasy occurs. As far as the Jews are concerned, however, the reference is almost certainly to the biblical past. The case of the Christians is not clear, but the very fact that the interpolator would take up the subject suggests that it was of topical interest, particularly as he doubtless worked in a Muslim province (two MSS hold that the dispute took place in the presence of both Jews and Arabs; the Trophies and Quesstiones are the two main sources; the later recension was certainly done in the east; cf. Williams, op. cit., pp. 170f., 175). If so, the province must have been Syria (cf. n. 8).


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

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

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


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

\(^{16}\) Brown, "A Dark-Age crisis".
converge in Leo's forced conversion of the Jews: the Jews became "new citizens" and the Byzantines were henceforth "Verus Israel," one nation unto God. There is thus no doubt that with Iconoclasm Byzantine Christianity became a religion more like Islam, and few Byzantines had much doubt that the movement was actually triggered by Islam. But is there any specific evidence of interaction? It can certainly be argued that there is, and that in the three key domains of images, law and the milieu which sparked off the reformation, we may begin with the images.

The Byzantine reformation was, above all, an iconoclast one because on the Christian side images had long been a sore point. The scriptural prohibition of images comes in the one bit of the law that Christians usually considered themselves bound by, the Decalogue, and early Christian writers had certainly taken it seriously. It is true that the brunt of the Patristic attack on art was directed against idols rather than religiously neutral or Christian art, and that in practice Christian artists were less inhibited than one would have assumed from the literary evidence, but in principle figurative art of any kind was something which Christians would do best to dispense with. If it was not condemned outright, it was denigrated as distracting make-believe; it was to be kept out of the churches or, when it could not be kept out, to be tolerated there as visual aids for the illiterate; later it was even encouraged as such, but the perfect, as they hastened to assure themselves, derived no pleasure from it. Christian art, in short, was granted recognition by a series of concessions. Now had the spokesmen of Christianity been asked to concede no more than that, the outbreak of Iconoclasm would hardly have been so easy to provoke. But by the seventh century it had long been painfully obvious to everyone that representations of holy persons had actually come to be worshipped. That the Christians should thus have relapsed into idolatry is not, of course, entirely accidental. Where the holy law of Judaism or Islam is a concrete feature of everyday reality, divine grace by contrast is a more elusive entity which may have been incarnate in the past and which continues to generate miracles on Sundays, but which stands in need of additional modes of manifestation on Monday mornings: the point about images, saints and relics is precisely that they make the holy and the humdrum meet. But for those who think, it was evidently not a comforting thought that the Christians were engaged in a daily violation of God's will, and had conscience was never far below the surface. It is just possible that the classical justification of image worship had begun to be elaborated before the Arabs arrived on the scene, though a case can equally be made for placing its beginning after their arrival, and whatever the date of the treatises in question, they only had the classical theory in its embryonic form: long after the Arab conquests, invocations of scriptural precedents for images, appeals to their educational value and denials that they were more than reminders of past grace.

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19 Note that Theophanes attributes to Arab influence Leo's hostility not only to images, but also to saints and relics (Theophanes, Chronographia 1 [ed. C. de Boor], Leipzig 1883–85, p. 169, A.M. 625).
20 H. Koch, Die altchristliche Bilderverne nach den literarischen Quellen, Göttingen 1917, especially p. 86; E. Bevan, Holy Images, London 1940, pp. 84ff; cf. also N.H. Baynes, "Idolatry and the Early Church," in his Byzantine Studies and Other Essays, London 1955. The early Christians might well have argued that the prohibition was not to be taken literally, as the later Christians were to do (cf. John of Damascus, Oratio III in MPG XXIV cols. 1325f.), and if they took so long to reach this conclusion, it was doubtless because there were too many pagan idols around to make it safe: compare the hardening of Jewish attitudes to images when Christian kids in their turn became commonplace (below, n. 30).
21That much one may grant Sister C. Murray, "Art and the Early Church," Journal of Theological Studies NS 28 (1977), but her argument that all attacks on art referred to idolatrous representations, or did not mean what they said, or else were fabricated, is clearly partisan (for the traditional Catholic and Protestant views on the subject, see Bevan, op. cit., pp. 95f.).
22For these positions, see ibid., pp. 85–9, 106–16, 125–7; Baynes, "Idolatry," p. 136.
24 In Islam, by contrast, such conessions to practice were staunchly refused.
26 That comes across very well in Michael I's description of popular habits, in his letter to Louis the Pious (Martin, Iconoclaste Controversy, p. 30). As far as women were concerned, icons were simply a fancy version of cuddly animals— as Theodora so neatly illustrated when she was caught kissing an icon and pretended it was a doll (ibid., p. 210); the role of women in both iconoclastic riots and iconoclasm restorations has often been noted. Kitzeke, op. cit., p. 113; cf. also Baynes' observation that the anti-Jewish writings were meant to reassure the Christians rather than to persuade the Jews ("The icons before Iconoclasm," in his Byzantine Studies and Other Essays, p. 236).
27 As applied to statues of the emperor, the theory that the honour paid to an image is referred to the prototype had become sufficiently familiar for Basil of Caesarea and Athanasius of Alexandria to invoke it in illustration of the relationship between the Father and the Son in the fourth century (Basil, Liber de Spiritu Sancto, MPG XXII, col. 149; Athanasius, Oratio III contra Ariatos, ibid., XXVI, col. 332); but as an apology for worship or representations of divinities, it was still considered a pagan argument by John Philoponus in the mid-6th century (Alexander, The Patriarch Nicephorus, p. 55), and is first met as a Christian argument in the works of Leontius of Neapolis and John of Thessalonica in the early 7th (ibid., p. 33). Now, unlike the Arab conquests, the Persian wars can hardly explain this sudden need to justify the cult of icons: the rapprochement between the Persians and the Jews was very shortlived and, moreover, it was not conceptual. Since Leontius died after 650, he may well have written after the Arab conquests (I. Rydén, Das Leben des heiligen Symeon von Leontius von Neapolis, Uppsal 1963, p. 17); and so also may John of Thessalonica. It is true that the person of that name who wrote the discourses on the Life of St. Demetrius was archbishop between 610 and 649 (and that in the earlier rather than the later part of this period); but the grounds for identifying him with the author of the treatise on images are extremely weak (M. Juge, "La vie et les oeuvres de Jean de Thessalonique," Echos d'Orient 21 (1922), The John of Thessalonica who participated in the Council of 680 seems at least as plausible a candidate (ibid., p. 293).
on the newer ground, which is of more uncertain origin, that they involve a presumptuous attempt to imitate the creative power of God. This second reason is first attested in the ninth century and may not be much earlier, but the fear of idolatry finds eloquent expression in Umayyad and early 'Abbâsid art. Animate beings are represented wherever they could not be interpreted as idolatrous as, for example, in the secular and usually very private context of royal palaces, though even here the art is basically aniconic. But they are meticulously avoided wherever the suspicion of idolatry might arise, as in most public places and above all in religious contexts. This is not to say that there were no flagrant exceptions. But

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remained the primary method of Christian defence. At the time of the conquest, then, the Christian nerve-end was still completely exposed. All that was required for the mise-en-scène of Iconoclasm was someone to come and punch it. The Arabs were eminently qualified for this role in that from the start they took the Mosaic prohibition seriously. The prohibition is found, not in the Koran which merely condemns idols in general, but in hadîth, the sayings attributed to the Prophet which make up the oral law of the Muslims. In this literature, which was recorded in the eighth and ninth centuries, representations of animate beings are condemned partly on the old Judaic ground that they are idolatrous, and partly


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

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

22 R. Petet, "Textebelege zum islamischen Bilderverbot," in Das Werk des Künstlers, Studien zur Ikonographie und Formengeschichte H. Schrade dargebracht, Stuttgart 1960. Note the straight carry-over from rabbinical to Islamic rules of desecration. An image on a Jewish cup is desecrated by water running over it, one on a Muslim chafing-dish by being burnt; the Jews may have animate representations on mosaic floors, and the Muslims may have them on carpets and cushions; and what has been covered by dirt is inoffensive to both (E.E. Urbach, "The Rabbinical Laws of Idolatry in the Second and Third Centuries in the Light of Archiological and Historical Facts," Israel Exploration Journal 9 [1959], pp. 233, 237 n. 1.). Neumeyer, Talmudische Judenheit in Sassanidischen Babyloniens, Leiden 1976, p. 88n.; T.W. Arnold, Painting in Islam, Oxford 1928, pp. 73, 244; A. Zimmern, Der Islamische Bilderverbot und die Schrift," Festschrift W. Cskel, Leiden 1968, pp. 226, 228; 'Abd al-Razzâq b. Hâmân al-San'âî, al Muannâf (ed. H.-R. al-A'zâm), Beirut 1970. X (p. 399).

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

23 Petet, "Textebelege," pp. 33ff.; compare Clement of Alexandria, Stromata VI, 16, 144, where even aniconic representations are condemned on this score. That Clement is here adding the standard Muslim objection to images was noted by Bevan, who also found a remarkable Talmudic parallel: Joshua b. Levi (ca. AD 250) contrasted the painter's inability to put souls into his pictures with God's power to animate what he shapes, concluding that there is no sculptor like our God (Babkhal, f. 10a); Bevan, Holy Images, pp. 83, 87. The point of the comparison, however, is God's grandeur rather than the iniquity of painters, and though the dictum recurs elsewhere, it never seems to be used for a sweeping condemnation of art (cf. Urbach, "The Rabbinical Laws of Idolatry," p. 237; compare the absence of such condemnations in Koran 59:24, where God is also a malak-walîd). Clement, moreover, makes a special concession in favour of representations on signet rings, as do also the Muslims (Fardagors III, 112 [see below, n. 36]). It is true that here he is concerned with the frivolity of art rather than the prerogatives of God, and his genuine writings are not known to have enjoyed much circulation in the Christian Middle East; but there seems to be no trace in Islam of the complex rabbinical rulings regarding signet rings (cf. Avodah Zarah, f. 43b). On balance, then, there would suggest a Clementine rather than a rabbinic ancestry for this argument.

It was known to Abu Qudda (d. ca. 820) and 'Abd al-Razzâq (d. 827), and Becker's conjecture that it was fairly recent origin is to some extent borne out by the fact that it appears only in the hadîth attributed to the Prophet: the (presumably earlier) Companion hadîth gives no reasons for this hostility to images (Becket, Islamstudien-Leiden, and "History of Religions 3 [1963f.]") that the Arabs rejected images because they could not create a meaningful iconography without becoming like the Christians thus holds good for secular art alone; and even here it is hardly the only explanation. There is indeed a striking example of an unsuccessful search for an Islamic iconography in 'Abd al-Malik's coinage (O. Grabar, "Islamic Art and Byzantium," Dumbarton Oskars Papers 18 [1964], p. 80), but then 'Abd al-Malik was a Muslim high-priest and the Muslim rulers had no doubt that iconic coins might invalidate prayer (Parret, "Das Islamische Bilderverbot und die Schrift," pp. 225 ff.; compare Avodah Zarah, f. 104a; given that the concern with iconic coins became largely obsolete with 'Abd al-Malik's monetary reform, these traditions would appear to be a noteworthy example of
it is certainly hard to deny that, their black stone apart, the Muslims were almost completely free of pagan sins. Hence they could assault the Christians with impunity.

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

Sh'ite archaisms). The Companion Ḥadīths in 'Abd al-Razzaq are hostile to representations of animate beings regardless of context, and even inanimate ones come under attack when they are sculptural (Musannaf X, pp. 398 ff., Nos. 19487–9, 19493(f)). Scholarly endorsement of animat representations is in fact extremely rare, though there is a notable example in the case of signet rings (Bin Sa'd, Kitāb al-fabqūṭ [ed. E. Sachau] 1905–40, IV, pp. 96, 146, 210; VII, pt. 1, pp. 5, 11, 71).

37 According to Adam b. Sahil al-Razzāq al-Waṣṭī, Tārīkh Waṣṭī (ed. G. 'Awawdā), Baghdad 1967, p. 76, the newly built mosque of Waṣṭī was graced with a Venus whose breasts served as water spouts. Whether Hajjāj had argued, in the style of R. Gamaliel, that there is a difference between making a mosaic for Aphrodite and making an Aphrodite as an adornment for the mosque, is not recorded (cf. Minhābih, Avudah Zarah, 3:4).

38 One of the Saracen living in the Church of St. Theodore, shortly after the conquest of Syria, shot an arrow at the image of the saint which immediately burst into flames (E. N. A. M. [ed.], Les Révélations du moine Anastase = Extrait de la Revue de l'Institut Catholique de Paris, Paris, 1902, p. 54; the story is repeated by John of Damascus, Oratio III, col. 1393). Aṣbah b. 'Abd al-Azīz spat at an image of the virgin in Egypt, promising to uproot the Christians from the land (Severus b. al-Muqtaṣī's, History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria [ed. and tr. B. Ewett], in Patrologia Orientalis V, p. 52). The Council of Nicaea knew of a Saracen who knocked out the eye of an image, whereupon his own eyes immediately fell out (Martyria, p. 29). Crosses were removed in various places soon after the conquest of Syria (Michael the Syrian, Chronicque IV, pp. 421 ff. = II, pp. 431f; Chronicque ad annum Christi 1234 pertinent [ed. J. B. Chabot and tr. J. B. Chabot and A. Abouna] = CSCO, Scriptores Syri, vols. 36–7, 56, 154), Louvain 1920–74, vol. I, pp. 262f. = 205). In Egypt they were destroyed in the 680's (E. Amelineau [ed. and tr.], Histoire du Patriarcale Copie Iosè [Publications de l'École des Lettres d'Alger, Paris 1890, p. 43; Severus, Patriarch of Alexandria, p. 25). Maslama promised to break the cross over Leo III's head in 717 and, after the battle of Bagrawian in 772, the Arabs removed the sacred objects and relics from the church and broke the glorious cross of Christ (Ewoud, Histoire pp. 104, 147).


40 Muhāmmad b. Idrīs al-Shaffī', Kitāb al-Umm, Balāq 1321–25, IV, pp. 131f., with other casuistic details.

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

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

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

familiar with Basil's idea that "we revere the picture of the king for the sake of the king"; Soudel, "On pamphlet anonymo," pp. 29 = 17f.; A. Jeffery (tr.), "Guevend's Text of the Correspondence between 'Umar II and Leo III," Harvard Theological Review 37 (1944), p. 278; 'Abd al-Jabbār b. Ahmad al-Hamadhānī, Tārīkh dālāʾi al-nabawwā ā (ed. A. 'Uthmān), Beirut 1966, p. 167 = S.M. Stern, "'Abd al-Jabbār's Account of how Christ's Religion was Falsified by the Adoption of Roman Customs" Journal of Theological Studies 29 (1968), p. 147; cf. Becker, Islamstudien I, p. 448. For later attacks on the cult of images, crosses, graves and the Virgin, see Fritsch, Islam and Christentum im Mittelalter, pp. 138ff; Vryonis, The Decline of Hellenism, p. 434; and note the reappearance in the former work of the old Jewish question why the Christians do not worship ashes (Fritsch, op. cit., p. 139, compare Bâbî, Trophées de Damas, p. 248). In the Quaestiones, the Christian has heard this question from Jews and pagans (Helleroth); and since he had hardly been exposed to genuine pagans, we probably have here a translation of the Syriac tanpē, a common term for Muslims (Quaestiones, cols. 621f, question xii).

\(^{42}\) Cf. above, n. 30.

\(^{43}\) Thus, the Doctrina Iacobi and the Quaestiones (cf. Baynes, "The Icon before Iconoclasm", p. 237), the Trophées de Damas, the Dialogue of Papsicus and Philo (assuming that it is indeed Syrian), Jerome of Jerusalem, Stephen of Bostra and some Anthiasian spurs (Williams, Adversus Judaeos, pp. 159ff.). Similarly, the Disputation of Sergius the Stylete, which goes to town about crosses, images and bones of saints alike (pp. 22ff. = 24ff.).

\(^{44}\) Cf. above, n. 28.

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

\(^{46}\) G. Ostrogorsky, "Les débuts de la querelle des images," Mélanges C. Diethl I, Paris 1930. Theophanes' suggestion that Leo began to display his hostility to images already in 724f. is not so unlikely: the volcanic eruption in 726 was simply the sign that spurred him into action (cf.}
to be coincidental, and two further points reinforce the suspicion that what we see is a pattern. First, when Constantine of Nacreia, the Phrygian bishop involved in the iconoclast outbreak of 724, argued that pictures were idolatrous and against the law, Germanus, the Patriarch, sent him a letter telling him not to worry: their attacks on the Christians notwithstanding, the Jews are also idolatrous, and so for that matter are the Saracens who worship the black stone. The contemporary Germanus, in other words, had no doubts that the raw nerve of the Phrygians had been hit by Jewish and Arab polemics. Secondly, in Armenia there was a suggestive revival of iconoclasm after the arrival of the Arabs, while in the West there was an isolated outburst of iconoclasm at the hands of a bishop who came from Spain, combined his attack on images with an onslaught on intercession and saints and was, moreover, an Adoptianist, that is, an adherent of a Spanish heresy which had certainly been launched in response to Islam. The Arabs, in other words, appear to have hit raw nerves wherever they went. In sum, we have a general expectation that Islam might provoke iconoclasm, a perfect chronological sequence, explicit contemporary testimonia and striking parallels—a cluster of evidence which is all the more impressive for coming from a period for which most of the source material has been lost. To dismiss all this as accidental would require a scepticism verging on the fideist.

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

47 Germanus, Epistola, col. 168.
49 Martin, Iconoclastic Controversy, pp. 262 ff. Note that Claudius of Turin also asked the Christians why they did not worship asses (ibid., p. 266).
50 They would appear to have hit even the Jews; cf. Quinist’s rejection of incense, lamps and processions before the scrolls of the law in the synagogues (J. Mann, “A Tract by an early Karaitic Sceptic in Jerusalem,” Jewish Quarterly Review 12 [1922], p. 277 = 266; cf. N. Wieder, The Hidden Scrolls and Karaism, London 1962, p. 267); the Generic embarrassment about mosaic floors in synagogues (Neusner, Talmudic Judaism, p. 88; cf. n. 32); and the sarcastic references of a 10th-century Rabbinate to Christian icons and paintings (J. Mann, “An Early Theologico-Political Work,” Hebrew Union College Annual 12–13 [1937–38], p. 417). Christian iconoclasm on the other side of contrast failed to inhibit Jewish speculations about the images on Solomon’s throne (E. Ville-Pattagene, “Une image de Solomon en basilique byzantine,” Revue des Études Juives 121 [1962], pp. 265 ff.). And conversely Muslim iconoclasm failed to infect the Christians within the Arab dominions, presumably because unlike the Christians outside and the Jews within, they had to hang on to what they had.

Note also the effect of Christian counter-accusations on the Arabs. Germanus having identified the black stone as idolatrous, Umar had qualms about kissing it (Vasiliev, “The Iconoclastic Edict of the Caliph Yazid II,” p. 27; the black stone is similarly presented as the Muslim equivalent of the cross in K. Völlers (tr.), Das Religionsglaubens von Jerusalem (am 800 D) aus dem Arabischen übersetzt,” Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte 29 [1908], pp. 215 ff., and in Jeffery, “Chevon’s Text,” pp. 322 ff.). Abu Qura’s charge that God tells the angels to kneel for Adam in the Koran, is dealt with by Ibn Hazm, who presumably found his arguments in earlier sources (Becker, Islamstudien I, p. 449).

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

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

52 F. Nau (ed. and tr.), "Un coloquio del Patriarcado de Assia", Journal Asiatique (1ère série) 5 (1915), p. 251 = 261 (where the accusation still takes the form of a question: are the Christian laws in the Gospel or not?).
53 They seem in fact to have done more than that. The standard Jewish question before the rise of Islam is why the Christians have abrogated the law of Moses, not why they have no proper replacement; but by the late 8th century it is the second question that both Jews and Muslims ask (for the reference see below, n. 57).
54 J.-B. Chabot (ed. and tr.), Synode Orientale ou Recueil de synodes nesteriens (= Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale XXXVII), Paris 1902, pp. 215 ff. = 480 ff. Contrast the absence of such preoccupations in the earlier preambles.
55 Croce and Cook, Hagastin, p. 180, n. 10. Compare the preamble to the Syro-Roman lawbook, which would appear to be the Jacobite answer to the same accusations (K. Bruns & F. Sachau [eds. and trs.], Syrisch-römisches Rechtbuch, Leipzig 1880, preambles to Br., Al., Ar., Arm.: A. Völlers [ed. and tr.], The Synodeon in the West Syriac Tradition II [CSCO, Scriptores Syriac. Inscr. CLXCVI-CLXCVIII], Louvain 1975–76, pp. 100 f. = 106ff.; cf. also E. Sachau [ed. and tr.], Syrische Rechtsbücher, Berlin 1907–14, I, pp. 46f. = 47f., for its Nestorian version. The preamble is missing from the 6th century manuscript of the lawbook, and there is no evidence of interest in Christian jurisprudence in pre-Islamic Syriac: even John Bar Qansus, who does broach the subject, is interested in obedience rather than principles (Völlers, op. cit. I, pp. 145ff. = 142ff.). A pre-Islamic date thus seems implausible. But conversely, of course, it may be very late, for it is first attested in an 11th century manuscript (Bruns & Sachau, op. cit., p. 159), and as late as the 13th century Christians felt impelled to justify their antinomianism (M. Steinmeschel, Polemische und apologetische Literatur in arabischer Sprache zwischen Christen, Juden und Juden, Leipzig 1877, p. 33).
56 It is worth noting that the first codifier of Christian law in Armenia is John of Ojun (ca. 720).
57 Sachau, Syrische Rechtsbücher III, p. 20 = 21 (Iähbokh).
laws in the direction of greater utility. Leo by contrast improved his in the direction of greater philanthropy, a term which, however it is to be understood, was certainly loaded with Christian connotations. But it is above all Leo’s Old Testament orientation which is unusual. It is apparent in the selection of scriptural quotations, in the literal application of the Mosaic principle of retribution, in the selection of Mosaic laws appended to the Elogium by either Leo himself or one of his Iconoclast successors, and, most strikingly, in the presentation of the Elogium as scriptural law in Leo’s preamble. This orientation is very much in line with the general Iconoclast attachment to the Old Testament, and it is of course manifest Judaizing.

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65 Zepos & Zepos, Byzantine Iconoclasm, pp. 116-117.  
67 Gregor, Byzantine Iconoclasm during the Reign of Leo III, p. 277.  
68 The appendices to the Elogium, which consist partly of imperial legislation and partly of Mosaic law, were not found in the manuscripts used by Zacharias von Lingenthal, whose edition is reproduced in Zepos & Zepos, but in a 16th-century manuscript which was edited by A.G. Monteferratello, Elogium Leonis et Constantini, Athens 1889 (this is the edition used by Freshfield for his translation of the Elogium), and in a Norman manuscript of imperial codes dating from the 13th century (E.H. Freshfield, A Manual of Later Roman Law, Cambridge 1927, p. 6). There is no doubt that the appendices were added officially. Now, the Norman manuscript includes the Procheiron Nomos and a novel of Basili, but no later legislation, presumably because the Arabs completed their conquest of Sicily in 878 (ibid., p. 2), so the appendices must have been added before then; and since no Iconoclast ruler (least of all Basili) would wish to augment, as opposed to supercede, the Elogium, the only question is which Iconoclast emperor did it, a point of subsidiary interest in this context. The concern with sorcerers, magicians, Manicheans and heretics in the appendices might indicate a time when Paulicians and Athinganoi were very much in the open, i.e. the second Iconoclast period, and if that is correct, Michael II is an obvious candidate for the authorship.

69 Leo’s preamble may be paraphrased as follows: God gave man a law so that he might be saved; His word endures for ever and He will judge man according to his deeds; therefore I, who have been hidden to feed my flock, will break the bonds of wickedness by drawing up a selection of Roman laws in an intelligible language. Leo’s Roman laws are thus part of God’s enduring works. Contrast the wholly pragmatic attitude of Basil: the law is in a frightful mess which is tiresome to students (Zepos & Zepos, op. cit., pp. 115-116). Freshfield, “Official Manuals,” p. 43.

70 Cf. Theodore the Studite’s mockery of the Iconoclasts for their Old Testament obsession (Martin, Iconoclastic Controversy, p. 192).

71 That the Iconoclasts were Judaisers was not lost on contemporaries (cf. Gregor, Byzantine Iconoclasm, p. 60). But note that in the domain of political authority the Iconoclasts opted not for a Solomonic restoration in the style of the contemporary Franks, but for a Byzantine caliphate: Leo III’s assertion that he was both high-priest and emperor, Leo V’s order that the bishops must regard him as the highest ecclesiastical authority, Leo III’s and Constantine V’s appeal to the latry over the heads of the clergy, and Constantine V’s uncanonical election of a Patriarch all recall the Islamic imitate, not the Jewish monarchy (Ostrogorsky, “Débuts,” p. 250; Martin, Iconoclastic Controversy, pp. 52, 179; Alexander, The Patriarch Niconphoros, pp. 9, 11; contrast W. Ullmann, The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship, London 1969).

72 The worst error in this chapter, it is not surprising that the topos is still absent from the Nestorian preamble of 676.


74 It is absent from Justinian’s Codex, Basil’s Procheiron Nomos and the Syrian code.


78 Though needless to say, there are those who believe it a mere coincidence that Justinian II (685-95, 705-11) called himself servus Christi and put images of Christ on his coins, while Abd al-Malik (685-705) was experimenting with his misrabi and ’amara coins.

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

Now the Arab–Byzantine interaction might well have taken place directly; there was no lack of direct confrontation, be it military, political, polemical or cultural at the highest level, and the diplomatic warfare that was waged on contemporary coinage was certainly part of such a direct dialogue. There is, nonetheless, a case to be made for an intermediary milieu.
The milieu in question is one of Judaisers who had, so to speak, gone over the edge to become Judeo-Christians. There was nothing new about the existence of such groups, and Judaisers who had to a greater or lesser extent gone over the edge are attested, *inter alia*, in fifth-century Phrygia, and in Syria from the fourth to the thirteenth century, the Syrians in particular being recidivists. But once again Islam made a difference. For one thing, it was always in the Muslim interest to play minorities against the mainstream traditions, and for another, Muslims and Judeo-Christians were natural allies in that both claimed to be representatives of true Christianity. Islam made Judeo-Christianity a polemically viable position, and accordingly the Judeo-Christians came out of hiding and began to recruit. On the Byzantine side there is some weak evidence of baptized Jews being known as Montanists, presumably in Phrygia, and it is also in Phrygia, more precisely in Amorium, that we find the Athinganians who combined Christianity with Mosaic law and Gnostic beliefs, they appear, in fact, to have been Samaritan Gnostics, a point which will be taken up later. On the Arab side there is a tenth century attestation of Christians, apparently in the Jazira, who rejected the divinity of Jesus, accepting him only as a good man and more specifically as a good Jew — a point which distinguishes them from the many other Christians in Iraq, Egypt, Armenia and Spain, on exposure to the Muslims, denied that Jesus was other than a man or at the most a spiritual or adopted son of God. Conversely, there were also Jews, primarily Karaites, who accepted Jesus as a good and learned man of their own. And there is other evidence of Jewish-Christian contamination.

What did these sects have to say for themselves? On the Byzantine side the evidence is limited. The Athinganaios, we are told, accepted Christ as a mere man, replaced circumcision by baptism, or had neither one nor the other, observed the Sabbath, at least when with Jews, and also Levitical purity and Mosaic law in general; they had Jewish preceptors; they held that Melchizedek was a "great power" or God himself, basing themselves on Hebrews 7; they invoked the demons Arkhe, Sekhan and Sarou and practised divination and magic.

More interesting evidence, however, is available on the Arab side of the frontier. In a number of Muslim and Jewish sources there is a very odd account of how Christianity was corrupted by the introduction of Roman customs. The longest version is that preserved by 'Abd al-Jabâr, a Muslim who wrote in 995, but there is also a fairly substantial one in Qirqisânî, a tenth century Karait who excerpted it from a book by Dâwûd b. Marwân al-Muqamîs, a ninth century Jew who had converted to Christianity and studied Christian doctrine in Nisibis before he proceeded to write anti-Christian books, and of shorter versions there are a great many. The full argument runs that Jesus did not claim divinity, that he did not abrogate the law of Moses, that it was Paul (and/or Peter) who jettisoned the law in an attempt

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79 For the evidence, see S. Kazan, "Issac of Antioch's Homily against the Jews," *Oriens Christianus* 9 (1960-1965), to which Hayyan, *The Disputation of Sergey the Stylist*, pp. 73f. = 72f. should now be added. Cf. also B. Blumenkranz, *Juifs et chrétiens dans le monde occidental*, Paris 1960, pp. 55ff., for medieval Europe. Most of this Judaising appears to have been behavioural rather than doctrinal, a point which distinguishes it from that which was to appear in the Islamic world.
81 Leo the Grammariam has it that the Jews baptized by Leo were known as Montanists, and an abridgement version mentions that the Montanists stand outside the synagogue for unspecified reasons (A. Sharf, "The Jews, the Montanists and the Emperor Leo III," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 59 (1966), p. 40; Sharf's suggestion that the Montanists, who preferred death by baptism, were also such Jews is, however, not convincing.
86 Cf. the 8th century Serenas/Severus who converted to Judaism and proclaimed the coming of the Messiah in Mesopotamia (J. Stueb, "Le mouvement messianique au début du VIIIe siècle," *Revue des Etudes Juives*, NS 2 [1937], 'Abû 'Isâ's acceptance of Jesus as a prophet along with Muhammad, and the prohibition of divorce by the same heretic (Qirqisânî, *op. cit.*, pp. 51ff.).
87 For the references see above, n. 80.
90 For these see Stern, "Abd al-Jabâr's Account," pp. 176ff., to which the anonymous treatise published by Pines (below, n. 158), a passage in Ibn Hârm (discussed in the same publication), and another in Shahrastânî (below, n. 167) should be added.
to win over the gentiles, and that the adoption of Christianity by Constantine completed the process of paganism. In short, what the Iconoclast Council defined as a middle course between Judaism and paganism is here taken up for a close and hostile analysis. The Judeo-Christian character of this analysis is unmistakable. It is not, however, very likely that we have here a document going back to the Judeo-Christians of the fourth century, as was suggested by Pines. But equally, it is most unlikely that it was invented by Muslims or Christian converts to Islam, as Stern maintained. If, on the one hand, we have new Judeo-Christian sects and, on the other hand, new Judeo-Christian accounts, it seems natural to put the two together.

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

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

If we start on the Arab side, what we are told is this. A Jew promised Yazid II thirty or forty years of rule if he would smash up Christian and other images in his dominions; Yazid's successor killed the Jew, but the Phrygian bishops had got the idea; or according to another version, we do not know what happened to the Jew, but Leo got the idea from a Byzantine Christian who had converted to Islam in captivity and subsequently escaped. This convert, Béser, i.e. Bishr, is also known to the Islamic tradition, and there is some ground for identifying him with the Jew. The Jew was known as Tesserakontapétrous, "forty cubits", which is not a name, but a nickname and clearly a reference to the forty years which, according to Tabari, he had promised Yazid by misreading forty "trees" as forty years instead of forty weeks. Bishr, the convert, is known to have been a patrician. Now in a late Arabic source we meet a man by the name of "son of forty cubits" who was a patrician in the entourage of Leo III. Presumably, then, the Jew and the convert were identical.

What happened to Bishr? If we go by Theophanes he was killed, not on the death of Yazid II, but in the course of Artavasdes' revolt on the death of Leo III. According to Michael the Syrian, however, he escaped to the Arabs, pretended to be Tiberius and offered them his help. He was, we are told, a former Muslim and now once more a Melkite Christian; yet he was also something of a Jew, for he had the Jews come and sing their incantations for him, and when he was killed, the pilot and his family were among those who gathered around him. Michael the Syrian might have been thinking of the outcome of his venture. If we put the various testimonia together, what they suggest is, first, that the man was historical and, second, that he was very hard to classify.

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

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85 Fritzsch noticed it already for the versions preserved in thirteenth century sources (Islam und Christentum im Mittelalter, p. 50; cf. Stern, op. cit., p. 182).
86 S. Pines, The Jewish Christians of the Early Centuries according to a New Source (Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Proceedings II, 13), Jerusalem 1966. For a discussion of this theory which was by no means as unlikely as Stern would have it, see the section on the Judeo-Christians below.
87 Stern, "Abd al-Jabar's Account," pp. 184f. For one thing, Pines is certainly right that the original must have been in Syriac (The Jewish Christians, pp. 81f.); for another, it was not in the Muslim interest to argue that the Christians ought to be Jews (cf. the neat contrast between Jäger and 'Abd al-Jabar's handling of the same sources in Pines, "Israel, My Father's Son and the Sonship of Jesus," in Studies in Mysticism and Religion presented to G.G. Scholem, Jerusalem 1967, pp. 179f.). But it is, above all, the fact that the author purports to give the inside story which is such striking evidence that he was himself a Judeo-Christian.
88 Thirty years, according to John of Jerusalem's report at the Council of Nicaea in 787 (tr. L.W. Barmard, The Cretan-Roman and Oriental Background of the Iconoclastic Controversy, Leiden 1974, pp. 15ff.); forty years, according to Theophanes (Chronographia, p. 401f., A.M. 6215) and Tabari, who omits the condition that Yazid should destroy images (Ta'rikh al-musul wa'l-muluk (ed. M. De Goeje et al.), Leiden 1897-1901, ser. ii, pp. 1463f.).
The Athinganoi were Samaritan Gnostics. The Samaritan component is attested partly in their name, "touch-me-not", a reference to the Samaritan obsession with ritual purity with which the Koran is also familiar, and partly in the Mosaic fundamentalism of Michael II who, like the Samaritans, accepted only the Pentateuch as scripture. Now Pentateuchism was once associated with denial of the resurrection, and had continued to be so either in Samaritanism at large or else in Samaritan heresy. It was, moreover, clearly on Pentateuchal grounds, not for Gnostic motives, that Michael II would have none of the resurrection.

The Arab backing consists in the fact that the Arabs had themselves been Mosaic fundamentalists at one stage. That the Arabs once accepted the Pentateuch as their one and only scripture is admittedly not a traditional scholarly view, but it is attested in a dispute dating from 644. And it was surely because statement that Michael II’s grandfather was a Jewish convert to Christianity derived from the lost early 9th century chronicle of Dionysius of Tell-Mahre (Chronique IV, p. 521 = III, p. 72; the source is explicitly named on p. 520 = 70). Moreover, Theophanes’ commentator proceeds to give an account of Michael II’s beliefs which is far too coherent to be the product of scurrilous fantasy (pp. 48f.; p. 521). Nor can it be dismissed as merely an elaboration or paraphrase of the equation “Athinganos = Samaritan” (as does J. Gouillard, “L’hérésie dans l’empire byzantin des origines au xii siècle,” Traites et Mémoires 1 [1965], p. 311). For one thing, this equation is quite unknown to the early sources on the Athinganoi; Germanus does compare their fear of pollution to that of the Samaritans (De haeresibus et synodis [MPG CVIII], col. 85), but that is hardly to equate the two, and Theophanes’ commentator explicitly describes Athinganism as a new faith (Chronographia, p. 42). For another, such an elaboration would merely have reproduced the Patriotic stereotypes on the Samaritans; but just as the commentator’s account is not incoherent, so it is not stereotyped.

105 20:97; note also the Hagarene belief attested in Greek sources that the Samaritans will go to heaven where they will be busy keeping Paradise clean (Xhowy, Les Théologiens Byzantins et l’Islam, pp. 184, 198). This obsession with ritual purity was not peculiar to the Dositheans; Epiphanius notes it for all the Samaritans, and the 6th century Samaritan who burnt straw over the footsteps of the pilgrim from Piacenza and made him throw his coins into water to avoid his polluting touch, was hardly a heretic (Shaf., Byzantine Jews, pp. 35, 44). For the very similar behaviour of the Athinganoi, see Timothy of Constantinople, De Receptione, col. 33 = Band, “Melchisedek,” p. 37.

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

107 That it was the Samaritans at large and not the Dositheans who continued to deny the resurrection has recently been argued by S.J. Iser, The Dositheans, Leiden 1976.

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

109 Clone & Cook, Hagariam, pp. 14f. Mosaic fundamentalism (presumably combined with at least partial acceptance of the New Testament; cf. their use of Hebrews 7) is not attested for the Athinganoi before Michael II, so the possibility cannot be excluded that they picked it up from the Arabs. But it is not very likely, for Pentateuchism was not just a Samaritan, but also a traditional Judeo-Christian position: it is attested for Epiphanius’ Cilician Elkesiates whose combination of Judeo-Christianity and Gnosticism so recalls that of the Athinganoi (A.F.J Klijn & G.J. Reinkin, Patriarch Evidence for Jewish-Christian Sects, Leiden 1973, p. 186). At all events, the general point made here remains unaffected. The Arabs may have suggested this
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the Arabs took up this scriptural position that the old question of the resurrection was suddenly revived. Thus Zevon has ‘Umar II (717–20) deny the resurrection on Pentateuchal grounds, while Leo III refers to a Muslim sect which similarly denied it and which is perhaps also referred to in the Koran; and doubts over the resurrection are also indicated among the Zaydis. It was thus against the background of Muslim interest in the question that the doubts of the Athinganai could reach Constantinople.

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

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

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

119 Stone & Cook, op. cit., p. 165, n. 49. Note also the query “whence do we know for certain that the soul does not die with the body?” for there some who hold this view” (Quaestiones, col. 608, question xvii).


121 Note how veneration of images and saints is included in the formula for conversion from Islam (Khoury, Théologiens Byzantins et l’Islam, pp. 1930).

122 Cf. Michael II’s attempt to bury the issue by prohibiting all discussion of images, be it for or against (Martin, Iconoclast Controversy, p. 201).

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

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

As a fact about Christian history, however, the failure is an illuminating one. The pagan component of Christianity is intrinsic in respect of both faith and culture. In respect of the faith it has generated the trinity, and there is thus a limit to the extent to which Christians can afford to be monotheists. Constantine V (741–75) might well reject the saints, but he could not very well reject Christ, the intercessor par excellence; so it is hardly surprising that he was haunted by worries about Christology. The Christians across the border also worried. “If, on the one hand, we worship one God,” as a puzzled Syrian in a seventh century treatise put it, “it is plain that, being monarchians, we are practising Judaism; but if, on the other hand, we worship three gods, it is clear that we are practising paganism.”119 Constantine is accused now of having played up the divinity of Christ120 and now of having played it down,121 and he is likely enough to have tried both expedients; it was precisely because the Iconoclasts wished to be monothelists that they had to choose, as Theodore the Studite so rightly saw, between the error of Mani, who held that Jesus was wholly divine, and that of Paul of Samosata, who considered him wholly human.122 Within the middle course which constituted orthodox Christology, their problem was not amenable to solution.

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

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

121 Khoury, Théologiens Byzantins et l’Islam, pp. 169ff.

122 Quaestiones, col. 597, question 1 (foudalizomen . . . Hellenizomen). The answer characteristically is to stop thinking.

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

122 He asked the Patriarch if one could call Mary the mother of Christ (rather than the mother of God), which the Patriarch thought Nestorian, and on another occasion he denied that Christ was more than a mere man (Theophanes, Chronographia, I, pp. 415, 435, A.M. 6253, 6255; George the Monk, Chronographia II (ed. C. de Boor), Leipzig 1904, p. 756). Just how much of this is true is of course hard to tell, but that he worried is equally hard to deny.

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

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

Similarly, in the domain of learning the Iconoclasts were up against an unholy alliance between scripture and philosophy. What, in the words of 'Abd al-Jabbar, did Aristotle know of God? But again, where in Islam the dissolution of this alliance eventually led to the virtual occlusion of philosophy, in Byzantium the outcome was rather a cultural reorientation. Leo once more set out as a fundamentalist: he is credited with an attack on higher learning, presumably secular.

Michael the Amorianus is similarly described as hostile to Hellenic learning, and at the same time there appears to have been a significant shift from Greek to biblical reading matter in primary education. But it is no accident that the fundamentalism failed to last. In Christianity even Iconoclasts must have a philosophy. To take an obvious example, in the legal culture of Islam, hostility to images will generate the question "when precisely are images permitted?", but in the philosophical culture of Christianity the corresponding question will inevitably be "what precisely is the nature of an image?" And just as the Iconoclasts needed a theory of art to justify their Iconoclasm, so they needed theories of nature to support their fundamentalism. Now though the evidence is depressingly scarce, they seem to have solved this problem by recourse to a pre-Mosaic philosophy which, like that invoked by the Protestants in the West, was formally monotheistic and substantively Hermetic. That much is implied by the character of the book which Leo VI (775–80) sent to Mahdi (775–83), the number speculation and antiquarian bent of Leo the Mathematician and the magic skills of John the Grammarian. And it is in line with this that there are suggestions of Origenist as against Aristotelian lines of thought in the Iconoclast view of pictures, and of Alexandrian science in their view of the universe. The outcome of Iconoclasm was thus not the rejection of the pagan tradition, but rather the sponsorship of a different branch of it. And it is certainly to some extent thanks to the confrontation between these two traditions that what has here been dubbed the Byzantine Reformation issued in what others have called the Byzantine Renaissance.

THE JUDEO-CHRISTIANS

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

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125 The history of this process is certainly an interesting one, but its protracted nature does not invalidate the point. The misfortune of the Muslim rabbis was that 'Abbasid priestliness having worn off, the east fell to Zaydids and the west to 'Imams' (for the slightly more favourable attitude to images among Shi'ites see Paret, "Das Islamische Bilderverbot und die Schia"; note the typical instance of priestly discretion by Mu'izzr on p. 230). The Seljuqs did indeed restore Sunnism, but what with Turkish ethnicity, Persian culture, political dissolution and Christian secretaries, pictures inevitably came back; witness the neo-Hellenistic coinage of the Artuqids, the Christian scribe of the Arabic Dioscorides, and the general renaissance of Byzantine art in Islamic books. But the thirteenth century was a turning point, if for the Mongol conquest provided the background for the flowering of Persian miniatures, in the west the 'ulama' came back for ever.
126 Cf. R. Cornack, "The Arts during the Age of Iconoclasm" in Bryer & Herrin, Iconoclasm, pp. 33, 42ff.
129 This also took some time, but again the moral is clear.
131 Theophanes Continuatus, Chronographia, p. 49. The fact that Michael II himself had no education does not of course mean that he could have no views on the matter.
133 Compare the articles of Paret with for example L. Barnard, "The Theology of Images," in Bryer & Herrin, ibid.; note how the appeal to the immense antiquity of image worship never sparked any jurisprudential discussion of the authority of practice in Christianity.
136 Ibid., p. 145.
138 Leo the Mathematician had Ptolemy's Almagest copied and studied, thereby displaying the first Byzantine interest in astronomy since the days of Stephen of Alexandria and virtually the last until those of the Palaeologae (D. Pingree, "Gregory of Choniades and Palaeologian Astronomy," Dumbarton Oaks Papers 18 (1964), p. 135; cf. Diehl, Manuel, p. 376; the interest survived long enough for the Byzantines to translate Abh Ma'shar in the tenth century, cf. D. Pingree (ed.), Albumazaris de revolutione nativitatis, Leipzig 1968 (I owe this reference to Dr. F. Zimmermann).
mado concerns the Athinganoi. J. Starr, the one person to have worked on them in the past, tried to explain away their Judaism so as to make them a purely Gnostic sect along Paulalian lines. This is certainly arbitrary. But it is worth adding some evidence from the Syrian side in corroborataion of the Byzantine sources.

In the catalogue of heresies compiled by Mārūthā (d. before 420), there is a description of heretics known as Sabbatians. Their heresy consisted in belief that the Gospel did not abrogate the Old Testament, that the Mosaic law was still valid, that circumcision should be retained, and that the eucharist should be taken on the Sabbath; it was, according to Mārūthā, these heretics Paul had in mind when he spoke of circumcision. This is plainly a description of Judeo-Christians, not of the Novation schismatics similarly known as Sabbatians who cannot even have misrepresented here: we may take it that in the fifth century Middle East there were Judeo-Christians of that name. Now three centuries later we learn from Jacob of Edessa (d. ca. 715) that two kinds of heretics were known as Sabbatians, the first being the Novation schismatics and the second a sect which, like Mārūthā's, is said to date from the time of the Apostles. The natural assumption that he is referring to Mārūthā's sect is reinforced by his observation that they derived their name from their observance of both Sabbath and Sunday, which is not, of course, true of the Novation offshoot, and by his view that literalist exegesis is a "Jewish and Sabbatian" feature. The importance of this lies in the fact that, according to Jacob, the Sabbatians are still observing both Sabbath and Sunday in Galatia and Phrygia. That this is a reference to the Athinganoi is hardly in doubt. It is true that he goes on to say that the Novation offshoot (also?) survives in Galatia, but that is likely to have been correct, and unless he is simply muddle-headed (which he was not usually), it hardly invalidates his previous statement. Moreover, the Sabbatian name reappears on the Byzantine side. Thus the Athinganai obsession with ritual purity is presented by one source as a Sabbatian feature, while Michael II, who is usually known as an Athinganoi, appears as a Sabbatian in another. It was thus not only to the Byzantines, but also to the Syrian Christians, that the Athinganoi were known to be Judeo-Christians. Obviously, Starr is right that they were in some way related to the Paulicians with whom they are often enumerated in the Byzantine chronicles, for just as the Judaizing Athinganai subscribed to a number of Gnostic ideas, so the Gnosticizing Paulicians, or rather some of them, had Adoptionist beliefs. But Judaism and Gnosticism, though in theory antithetical, have in practice coexisted more than once.

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

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

139 Starr, "An Eastern Christian Sect."
141 Mārūthā does not say so, and Jacob clearly did not owe his knowledge of the sect to him.
143 Wright, loc. cit. = Nau, loc. cit.
144 The far older sect of the Quartodecimans (Tetradiai) has a continuous history in Asia Minor until the 9th century. Like the Novation offshoot they held Jewish views regarding the date of Easter, and by the time of Theodore they had also come to agree with the Novationists on the inefficacy of penance. In short, they had fused with the Sabbatians. (C. Mango, The Homilies of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople. Cambridge [Mass.] 1928, pp. 279ff.) Timothy of Constantinople could thus identify the Quartodecimans with the Sabbatians (ibid., p. 281n.); and it is very likely the same sect that Jacob had in mind.

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

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

114 Krauss, op. cit., p. 3.
117 The story of Paul gives the names of the Christian festivals in Syriac (Krauss, op. cit., pp. 60f.; cf. Stern, “‘Abd al-Jabbar’s Account,” p. 179n.; Peter (Simon Kefahl) is confused with Simon Stylites, the 6th century Syrian saint, Nestorius) and Bar ‘Arama, the 5th century Nestorian churchman (S. Geno, “The Nestorian Legend in the Toldoth Yeshu”, *Oriens Christianus* 21 (1975)).
118 Krauss, loc. cit.; there are no references to Islam in the other stories, and Geno may be right in dating the fixing of the Nestorian legend to the second half of the 6th or the beginning of the 7th century. (op. cit., p. 120). The reference to the Sassanid empire, however, is so vague that it was still in existence when the story was composed, only that it existed at the time of Nestorius, and the legend is so inconsistent that in various stages and dates can hardly be sorted out (Nestorius is a Judaizer, yet he prohibits polygamy and divorce; women like his pseudo-laws, yet he is killed by women).

119 As suggested by Stern, “‘Abd al-Jabbar’s Account,” p. 179f. But Stern’s view was clearly dictated by his extraordinary reluctance to concede that the Arabic accounts are Judeo-Christian in character.

120 Pines’ view that the stories in the Toldoth were composed as an answer to the Judeo-Christian argument seems a little excessive: Jews and Jewish Christians alike were concerned to refute the Christians, not each other (cf. Pines, *The Jewish Christians*, p. 42).
over, there is an anonymous author who combined the usual Judeo-Christian argument that Jesus was a Jew with an unusual insistence on the contention that Jesus endorsed retaliation. Inasmuch as Rabbanite law circumvented the Mosaic principle of retaliation, while Karaites law accepted it, this particular author would also indicate that it was in Karaites circles that Judeo-Christian views were current. Finally, Abd al-Jabbâr actually quotes the philo-Christian Karaites in the course of his discussion of Christianity, and what they say is that Jesus was a good and learned Jew who disclaimed messianic status, and that all the stories of his miracles were made up by the Christians, in particular by Paul, a well-known liar. This is, of course, very much in line with the general argument of both Muqammiss and Abd al-Jabbâr: what they offer is precisely accounts of how Paul made them up. We are thus unlikely to be far wrong in tracing both Muqammiss and other authors to such philo-Christian Karaites circles.

The philo-Christian Karaites were, however, not the only locus of such authors. The second milieu of relevance is that of the Christians mentioned by Abd al-Jabbâr, who held that "their lord was a Jew, his father a Jew, his mother a Jewess, and his mother the wife of his father." It was Christians of this kind who were the source of Shahristâni's short notice of how Paul ousted Peter from the leadership of the Christians and perverted Christianity by introducing philosophy and his own opinions. And it must similarly have been from such Christians that Abd al-Jabbâr got his apocryphal Gospel citations. But whereas Shahristâni's Christians clearly held views precisely opposite to those of the Armeno-Mesopotamian Gnostics who "execrated Peter and loved Paul", those of Abd al-Jabbâr were both Judaizers and Gnosticizers: Jesus is presented as a mere man and moreover an observant Jew, but the long account of the passion is dochetic. And this doctrinal combination shows that we have now arrived at circles closely related to the Athingani of the Byzantine sources.

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

Geographically, these sects can be located in the first instance in Mesopotamia. In Abd al-Jabbâr, the faithful flee to Mosul and Mesopotamia, while in

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165 Shahristâni, Mîlâl, pp. 172 ff.; compare the relationship between Peter and Paul (Simon Magus) in the Pseudo-Clementines. Shahristâni's tradition is independent of Muqammiss and Abd al-Jabbâr alike, the former being hostile to Peter and the latter having little to say about him, and it came from Christians who accepted both the crucifixion and the resurrection without recourse to doceticism.

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


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

170 No Athingani views of the passion have been recorded, but compare the revaluation of Judas by Michael II the Athingani (Theophanes Continuus, Chronographia, p. 49). Doceticism was commonplace among the Paulicians.

171 But the Gnostic beliefs of the Christian Judaizers have no Judeo counterpart: despite Anan's alleged belief in metempsychosis and Nihâwândi's demurge, Gnosticism does not appear to have infected Karaites Christology.

172 Note how Abd al-Jabbâr, Tathhîl, p. 194, twists Matthew 25:31 ff. so as to have Jesus bless the Christian Jews against the Christian majority who use his name, but do not bear witness to him in truth.

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Ishāq, who sent Salīm to Amorium, died in 767. Another account of Paul’s corruption of Christianity is attributed to Kalbī, who died in 763. With Jacob of Edessa died about 715. Jacob, moreover, knew not just of Sabbath-observers in Phrygia, but also of writings by a Judaizing Gnostic which had fallen into the hands of the faithful at home. But if we want to go beyond this date, the evidence becomes circumstantial. Evidence there nonetheless is. First, the Judeo-Christian argument was put to polemical use by both Muslims and Jews, and that at least the Jews, but probably also the Muslims, must have made use of it already in the second half of the seventh century is clear from the Christian treatises against the Jews, in which the authors display a powerful awareness of the fact that Christian customs fail to conform entirely with those of Christ. “If, as you say, your Christ has come... and was one of ours, why aren’t you circumcised?... why do you pray east if not to adore the sun?”, asks the Jew in a tract composed in 681. “If Christ was circumcised, why aren’t we?... why do we Christians pray towards east and the Jews towards south?” echoes the bewilder Christian. Second, it is worth noting that the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, a Christian story of the resurrection, got into the Koran via people who wrote in Aramaic and had it was certainly known to the author of the treatise on the Melchizedekites and the abjuration formula which it contains, doubtless dating from the ninth century in which attempts were made to eradicate the heresy. Note that according to this formula the heresy had been around for a long time: the convert has to anathematize the teachers of the Athingani who have appeared “generation upon generation until now” (Caspari, “Kirchentheorien Reiseführer,” pp. 311 = 316).

Or slightly earlier (cf. Encyclopedia of Islam 5, s.v.).

190. Of his letters answers the queries of John, a styliste in the vicinity of Aleppo, who had held of some homilies attributed to Jacob of Sarug and wanted further information. As Jacob said, they contained many un-Christian notions and could not possibly have been written by the man celebrated by the Syrians as the “Flute of the Holy Spirit.” They appear to have been primarily cosmological, describing the genesis of various powers, but the author also boasted of having Moses’ words and explained everything literally in the Jewish and Sabbanian fashion (Schreiter, “Erste Brief-Jacobs”). Jacob did not suggest that the author might be a Jabbanian: he thought him a minor rhetor. In other words, he did not know of sects that might be producing this kind of literature at home.

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


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

179. A marginal note in the Sin explicitly identifies Salīm as a descendant of the fugitives from Paul (Wüstenfeld, op. cit. II, p. 45, cf. Stern, “Abd al-Jabbār’s Account,” pp. 180f.). His Persian descent does not, of course, go very well with this story, but then it is likely to be a secondary feature, for his Semitic name is perfectly at home in Phrygia (A. Reimach, “Not Sangariou, étude sur le dérèglement juif en Phrygie,” Revue des Études Juives 65 [1913], pp. 216, 221), and his Iranian name, insofar as it is known at all, has no colour in the Islamic tradition.

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

181. Pines, “Israel, My Firstborn,” p. 182. The Copt who declared belief in the Christian faith to be polytheism also lived towards the middle of the ninth century (Madelung, Qasim, p. 89).


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

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

Chronologically, these sects are best attested in the tenth century, to which both Abd al-Jabbār and Qaraff belong, and there is no doubt that many of the Christians who denied the divinity of Christ were heretics of recent growth. But the phenomenon itself is considerably older. Muqamis flourished in the later ninth century, Christians who argue for a purely spiritual interpretation of Jesus’ sonship are mentioned in Muslim sources in the mid-ninth century, and the Athingani are first mentioned by Byzantine chroniclers under the year 811. The direct evidence in fact takes us to the beginning of the eighth century; for the Athingani were known to Byzantine theologians by about 730 at latest. Ibn
rules of kosher food.191 One tradition duly locates the cave in the vicinity of Amorium.192 Equally, the Sâmiri, the Samaritan magician who cries "touch me not" in the Koran, was perhaps not an ordinary Samaritan so much as an Athenian.193 There was at all events no lack of contacts between the Arabs and Amorium from as early as 644 onwards.194 and there are oddities to suggest that Amorium was more than just another Anatolian city to the Arabs at the time.195 All in all, the evidence certainly suggests that Judeo-Christian ideas had reached the Arab world already before the end of the seventh century.

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

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

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192 Huber, op. cit., p. 226.
195 For one thing, the Arabs write Amorium with an ʾyin, though there was none in the Syriac transcription (or Greek original, of course); from what Semitic population did they get this spelling of the name? For another, the "ancient historical books" of the Arabs prophesied that their kingdom would fall if they ever conquered the city, whence the reluctance of many Arabs to participate in Muʿāwiyah's campaign in 638. (Chronicon ad 1234 II, p. 34 = 24; Michael the Syrian, Chronique, IV, p. 538 = III, p. 100): from what predictive specialists did they get this idea?
196 For Samaritans in Constantinople in the days of Justinian see Sharf, Byzantine Jewry, p. 30. Note that confusion of aleph and ʾayn is commonplace in Samaritan Aramaic.
Samaritan) population lived in symbiosis with the Christians. It is precisely to the interaction of Jews and Christians that Theophanes' continuator attributes the genesis of the Athianic faith,203 and Mārūthā's heretics may well have come into existence in the same way.

The case for the survival of the Judeo-Christian tradition thus rests entirely on the Judeo-Christian writings, in particular the account preserved by 'Abbād al-Jabbār. Now 'Abbād al-Jabbār's account models Constantine's persecution of Judeo-Christians and pagans on Justinian204 and has references to the conversion of the Khazars.205 As we have it, the account is therefore not particularly old.206 But if that proves that it must have come from live Judeo-Christians, it does not in itself disprove that these Judeo-Christians had a venerable tradition to pass on. Of such a tradition, however, there is hardly a trace. On the one hand, the account contains little information that could not be gathered from the New Testament and current history books207 and, on the other hand, the apocryphal Gospel citations fail to correspond with those recorded in Patristic literature. Admittedly, one

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

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

203 Theophanes Cont. Chronographia, p. 42.
205 'Abbād al-Jabbār, Tathbit, p. 186. To what extent this was part of the Judeo-Christian account is not entirely clear. It comes in the course of a long argument against the Christian claim to have spread the faith without the use of force, the first objection being that the claim is untrue, and the second that even if it were true, other religions have spread in the same way (tibl', pp. 173, 182f). On the one hand it could be argued that a Muslim would be more concerned than a Jewish Christian to dispose of this claim and that it was 'Abbād al-Jabbār himself who supplied the evidence. But on the other hand the insistence that the many may go wrong against the few (p. 173), the account of Zoroastrian attitudes to conversion and of Persian grandeur (p. 185), the sympathetic attitude towards the Khazars converts, and the role of Paul, St. George and Abba Marqos in the discussion (p. 182; cf. above, n. 199), would all suggest that the entire discussion goes back to a Judeo-Christian and was simply adapted by 'Abbād al-Jabbār.

Pines suggested that the reference to the Khazars was added by a Judeo-Christian to an earlier account (The Jewish Christians, p. 49). This is possible. That the Judeo-Christian account has no references to the rise of Islam is perhaps not decisive, but the account of Persian grandeur and above all that of Zoroastrian attitudes to conversion certainly does seem to take the existence of the Sasanid empire for granted. The identification of late Byzantine and early Christian figures in 'Abbād al-Jabbār and the Toldoth (Justinian/Constantine, Simeon Stylites/Peter, Bar Sauma/Nestorius/Paul) would also suggest that, whatever the date of the writings as we have them, it was in the century before the Arab conquest that the sect's account of Christian history was shaped.

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

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

209 Cf. above, n. 165.
210 Note that Gnosticizing Gospel citations also circulated among the Isma'îlīs (Halm, op. cit., p. 113).
211 H.J. Schoeps, Theologie und Geschichte des Judentums, Tübingen 1949, p. 34 (also noted by Pines).
212 If it was in the century preceding the Arab conquest that the sect's account of Christian history was shaped (cf. n. 205), the possibility is of course virtually ruled out.
POSTSCRIPT

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

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

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

p. 90, note 183:

JÄHILĪ AND JEWISH LAW: THE QASĀMA*

How much, and in what way, did the customary law of the pre-Islamic Arabs contribute to Islamic law? The consensus would appear to be that it contributed decisively for the simple reason that it continued to be practiced. The legislation of the Koran, so the argument runs, was both intended and understood as a supplement to, rather than a substitute for, the ancestral law of the Arabs; and since moreover this legislation raised more questions than it answered, it had itself to be interpreted in the light of customary law.¹ Evidently, political and social change, Umayyad regulations, foreign influence, local conditions and the like all served to modify and amplify traditional law and customs,² and such modifications are particularly noticeable in Hanafi law, which reflects the metropolitan society of late Umayyad Kufa.³ But even so, Arab law, and above all the customary law of the Hijaz, may still be said to be the single most important source of the substantive law of the Sharia⁴. Its influence is manifest in all the schools, but especially in that of the Maliki, which,

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