

J. P. Monferrer-Sala

WA-BA'DA ZAMĀN QALĪL YAQŪMU FĪ AL-'ARAB INSĀN: APOCALYPTIC AS PROPAGANDISTIC TOOL AGAINST ISLAM

Under the concept "polemic" different samples of the Oriental Christian literary production are regarded, each of them being in turn suitable for further sub-classification according to their typology [1]. Thus, a wide range of types can be displayed starting from the apologetic literature till the apocalyptic, which were produced in the ample context of 'Abbāsīd era.

The problem of the Christian conversion to the Muslim faith [2], stimulated by economic causes affecting the *ahl al-dhimma* [3], seems to be the background agent that provokes the first treaties of apologetic nature — in Syriac as well as in Arabic — in order to set a controversial clash with the Muslims [4]. The oldest apologetic treaties produced by Syriac Christians in response to Islam [5] — if we are to believe Reinink's suggestion [6] — should not be considered the product of an argument or polemic, but rather a sort of "preventive literature" addressed to the members of their respective communities to warn them about the impending dangers of apostasy, and were produced as a response to the changing historical conditions which had occurred ever since the late 7th when the Islam first appeared.

The oldest apology which has come down to us in Syriac language is a brief report of a conversation between the Jacobite patriarch John I (d. 648) and a Muslim officer called 'Amr where the conversation *topoi* hinges around the Gospel, the Trinity and the canons ruling Christian life [7]. The first treaty worth mentioning that presents a more detailed apology is Chapter X of the "scholium" of Theodor bar Kōnī [8], finished in the last decade of the 8th c. In it there is a dialogue between a master and a pupil where the latter acts a Muslim who raises thorny points, while the master answers them in defence of the Christian faith [9]. The apologetic defence of Christianity made by the Nestorian patriarch of Baghdād, Timothy I (apart from his letter No. 40 addressed to Sergius) contains two of his interviews with the caliph al-Mahdī in which he comes up in defence of the Christian doctrines while answering the caliph's questions; the popularity of this letter can be appreciated not only in the reviews handed down to us in Syriac, one longer than the other [10], but also through the various Arabic versions [11].

The Jacobite Nonnus of Nisibis also wrote an apology in Syriac over the well known topics, among other, of the uniqueness of God, the Trinity and the Incarnation [12]. But rather than in Syriac, the Christian apologetic writers of

greater relevance wrote in Arabic. Some of them were the famous doctor and the Nestorian translator named Ḥunayn b. Ishāq (d. ca. 9th c.), the Melquite Theodorus Abū Qurrah (d. ca. 820), the Jacobite Ḥabīb b. Khidma Abū Rā'īṭah (d. ca. 8th c.) the Nestorian 'Ammār al-Baṣrī (d. ca. 850). Few works of Ḥunayn b. Ishāq's bulky production have apologetic character, notable among them perhaps being his *Kitāb al-ājāl*, that has human fate as the central topic [13].

As regards the also bulky work of the second of the above mentioned writers by far the most prolific of the Christian Arabic of his time [14], we can single out his general apology of christianism entitled "On the Existence of the Creator and the True Religion" [15], in addition to some theological treaties and his alleged interview to the caliph al-Ma'mūn [16]. What is worth mentioning about Abū Rā'īṭah's work, among other treaties, is his general apology of Chistianism known under the title of "Epistle About the Substantiation of the Christian Religion and Saint Trinity" where the style used by the *mutakallimūn* comes up quite frequently [17]. In addition to the *Kitāb al-burhān* or "The Book of the Test" by 'Ammār al-Baṣrī, clearly referring to the Qur'ān, we can mention his *Kitāb al-masā'il wa-l-ajwibah* ("The Book of Questions and Answers"), which shows the same controversial topics among Christians and Muslims and also his "Apology in Favour of the Doctrine of the Trinity" [18].

However, and even before the time of those three great apologetic writers, we must allow room for two anonymous apologetic texts dated around half of the 8th c.: one catalogued as *Heidelberg, Papyrus Schott-Reinhardt 438*, edited by Graf [19], and the other preserved in the *laura* (< gr. *λαύρα*) of Saint Catherine, in Mount Sīnā', with the register number *Sinait. Ar. 154*, written about 750 after Samīr Khālīl Samīr [20] (dated 33 years later by Swanson [21]), whose topic is about the Trinity with numerous quotations from the Old and the New Testament, as well as from the Qur'ān, but with no apparent use of the language or the philosophical resources as used by subsequent treaty writers. Moreover, we should bear in mind another crucial landmark in those early times: if the "central debate" between Hishām b. al-Ḥakam and Barīḥah included in the *Kitāb al-Tawhīd* by Ibn Bābawayh could be dated round mid-8th c., we should be dealing with another sample of the already well established *genre* of the polemistic literature that was written by Christians and Muslims [22].

In addition to all this, the apology by Ḥunayn b. Ishāq (d. 873) [23], plus another by Qusṭā b. Lūqā (d. 912) deserves a mention and no less that by 'Abd al-Masīḥ b. Ishāq al-Kindī. In fact the apology by al-Kindī in the form of a response addressed to 'Abd Allāh b. Ismā'īl al-Hāshimī, whose text still awaits a relevant critical edition [24], is both a defence of the Christian beliefs and moral behaviour and an attack, in turn, to the Muslim doctrine [25].

The Christian apologetic production in Arabic and in Syriac has, above all, an extraordinary relevance in the context of the early theological typology — when the Muslims seem to have had a role to play [26], as pointed out by Cook [27] — and moreover, it has set the standards and defined the topics to be later dealt with by Christian Arab polemicists of subsequent centuries.

For them the dialectic style of writing was the outmost importance. In fact, that typology, which may well be called "Christian Arabic Theology" — although it comes up vigorously during the first century of the 'Abbāsīd period — emerges some time later than the earliest apologetic treaties, during the Umayyad period and most probably in a Palestinian Melquite context, since these last people were the first to make use of Arabic as a *lingua franca*, as can be noticed in the evaluative picture of the apologetic literature drawn by Samīr Khālīl Samīr [28]. He distinguishes there four stages which he denominates, in turn: (i) "biblical and homiletic approach" (from mid-8th to mid-9th c.); (ii) "mixed approach biblical-philosophical" (from mid-9th to early 10th c.); (iii) "Aristotelian-based philosophical approach" (early 10th to mid-11th c.); and lastly (iv) "humanistic-spiritual approach" (from mid-11th to 13th c.). In contrast with the simple presentation of the first stage, which includes numerous treaties by Theodore Abū Qurrah, alongside with the apologetic section of *Summa Theologiae Arabica*, produced by Stephen of Ramla in 877 in the monastery of Mār Khārītun [29], there appears the second, where the biblical-homiletic tradition of the initial period combines with the logico-philosophical method that Abū Rā'īṭah's treaties put forward, section devoted to the "Trinity" in 'Abd al-Masīḥ al-Kindī, 'Ammār al-Baṣrī, Ibrāhīm al-Ṭabarānī [30], Ḥunayn b. Ishāq and Qusṭā b. Lūqā's great apology.

The evolution undergone in the second stage becomes more elaborated in the third where Yahyā b. 'Adī and his school implement the Aristotelian method in his philosophical treaties, where the biblical references are scarce. In this stage the process of acculturation that began to be felt at the end of the 9th c. is gradually gathering strength among Christian authors [31]. The fourth stage, in turn, is a kind of return to the second: through a more clearly expressed philosophical method they resort to the biblical and patristic tradition, side by side the Qur'ānic and Islamic, in order to explicate the Christian beliefs. The more and more polished literary style would undergo a process of ornamentation that promotes the use of the *saj'*. In this stage some characters like the Nestorian bishop Eliyah of Nisibis [32] and the Coptic bishop of al-Ashmunayn Severus b. al-Muqaffā' come to the foreground over all the rest.

It is quite apparent that in the light of the four phases put forward by the Samīr Khālīl Samīr the Gospels and its translation into Arabic lie at the very heart of the various types of arguments and controversies against the Muslims — in addition to the homiletic literature. Leaving aside

the problem of the alleged first translation of the Bible into the Arabic language, the oldest Arabic manuscript (9th c.) containing passages from the New Testament is to be found at St. Catherine's monastery [33], with the register number *Sinait. Ar. 151/110* [34].

It has a total of 269 sheets over parchment of 250×175 mm, and in it there is an Arabic translation of St. Paul's letters, as well as the Catholic Epistles and the Acts of the Apostles in a codex written with "transitional calligraphic script type" half way between *naskhī* and *kūfīc* [35]. It therefore represents, as suggested above, the oldest New Testament manuscript which has been handed down to us. In its concluding remarks we can read that some Bishr al-Sirrī [36] translated it from the Syriac in the city of Damascus during the month of ramadān in the year 253/867, i. e. thirty years before the first Arabic translation of the Gospels made by Stephen de Ramla in the year 284/897 [37].

In addition to this specimen we also have, among other preserved early samples, the fragments of *Vat. Ar. 13* found in the "Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana", from the laura of Mār Sābā close to Jerusalem, of which currently only St. Paul's letters and several fragments of the Gospels remain. Actually, the versions of the Psalms, the Acts of the Apostles and the remainder of the four Gospels as well as the epistles have been lost [38].

All this reflects the determinative function developed by the Palestinian monasteries in the bringing about of the manifold literary production [39]. The centre of culture generated in laurae like those of Mār Khārītun or the already mentioned of Mār Sābā or St. Catherine, are the ones which triggered the first steps of the Christian literature in Arabic, bearing in mind that the languages traditionally employed in these monastic centres had been Greek and Syriac, not only for the liturgy but also in the elaboration and copying of works of various kinds. And in a way they were still the tongues used till the end of the Umayyad period: the former at least by the Palestinian Melquite community till it was eventually replaced by Arabic. Whereas in Syria and 'Irāq the language used by the Christian communities was Syriac in liturgy as well as in written documents, in Egypt, Alexandria excepted [40], was however Coptic; in Palestine, in turn, the language of the Church was Greek, except in cases where the native Palestinians made use of a dialect of the Aramaic language [41].

In fact the Church maintained the basic ritual and the readings of the texts in Greek till the users of this language vanished, being later replaced by Arabic ever since the 8th c., and more fully so since the 9th c. [42]. One must not forget the relevant aspects of bilingualism, trilingualism and even quadrilingualism of some characters, a common case in monasteries like those of Mār Sābā and Mār Kātīrīnah [43], as exemplified by the prolific Theodore Abū Qurrah. The Syriac speaking regions, nevertheless, must wait until the 9th c. to see the first display of texts which were written in Arabic, while in Egypt in turn no Arabic literature can be identified until the middle of the 10th c. [44].

But if the literature of neotestamentary, homiletic and patristic character lie at the heart of the very origins of the apologetic production in Arabic — they represent the first literary stratum translated into the new language by Arabic speaking Christians [45] — then the apocalyptic tradition written either in Syriac or in Arabic represents an important chapter rapidly spread since the close of the 12th c., in the

formation of the ample, varied and diverse genre of "polemics" [46]. Such tradition conceives of the new religion as a "divine punishment" that Christianity must purge and overcome with the passing of time and God's help.

From the turn of the last century the term "apocalyptic" (*die Apokalyptik*), originated in Germanic circles who took it in turn from St. John's Gospel [47], has been employed to label a wide and varied **corpus** of literature both Jewish and Jewish-Christian [48]. In Glasson's opinion such term is insufficient to describe the literary instances implied [49], as in the similar case of the Carmignac's concept of "eschatology" ten years before, in which the idea of apocalyptic would be included [50]. At any rate, in spite of Glasson's radical position towards the conceptual "definition", there arises a more constructive proposal of offering a "description" of such material, starting from Assmann's claim: *contra definitionem pro descriptione* [51].

One of the factors that characterises this type of literature, taking for granted the religious-political constituent, recently acknowledged by Cook [52] and referred to by Abel [53], is the historical, which plays a prominent role, deemed mostly typical of the Muslim apocalyptic instances [54]. The Christianity living on either side of the river Euphrates before the arrival of Arabic Muslim numbers possesses socio-political specific features which are to undergo a major shift with the new political situation — including the Arabic and Islamic acculturation process — created with the settlement of a new Muslim state [55].

It is the Syriac culture living under the Byzantium Empire the more prominent of the two great blocks which constitute oriental Christendom for the type of literature described here [56]. They actually suffered discrimination and persecution at the hands of the Constantinople "orthodoxy", surviving in a sort of apartheid since 451, as a result of Calcedonia Council, which gradually widened the dissenting gap among the various oriental Churches [57]. By the time the Muslim troops appeared [58], every oriental Christian Church — except for the Melquites faithful to the Byzantine orthodoxy — were engaged in plotting a political scheme in favour of their own interests and opposite to the Byzantine Church. As a result the rising of those *m^ehagg^erōyē* (< *muḥājirūn*) meant a break to their expectations of political and doctrinal expansion.

However, in contrast with the idea still defended in some circles, namely, that the Christians considered the Arabs as the liberating force from the Byzantium yoke [59], as can be interpreted in the writings of St. John of Damascus, for whom Islam was but another Jewish-Christian heresy with strong Arrian or Monophysite influence [60], the Syrian, the Mesopotamic or Assyrian (Nestorians [61]), and the Egyptian Christians (Copts [62]), in fact, considered that "invasion" as the consequence of all their sins, and even the sins of the whole Byzantine Empire [63], ending by judging the Prophet Muḥammad as the "anti-Christ" (*al-Dajjāl*) and the Islam doctrine as the "fourth beast" and further the Arabs as the embodiment of evil. To this end they made avail of the apocalyptic iconography provided by Daniel's Apocalypse, very well known even through Arabic translations [64].

The vicissitudes undergone by the Middle East history with the irruption of the Arabs represent a period of political confrontation which is the seed of the flourishing of the ample genre of *disputatio* among the groups [65]. In the double chronological milieu when the Muslim revolution

took place, lies the dates for the initiation and development of the apocalyptic genre, the wide, revealing historical implications of which accounts for the circumstances surrounding the rise of this type of literature [66], and also the "cultural trade-offs" produced among Muslims and Christians from the very first moment [67].

To such an extent did that kind of literature mark the *tempo* that the relevance reached by some of the Christian texts was to cross the close borders of the original community, and travel to the West, as is the case of the Pseudo-Methodius [68], whose probable influence derived from the apocalyptic milieu in the al-Andalus Christian communities (the "Mozarabs") deserves a detailed study [69]. Furthermore, the conversions of Christians to the Muslim faith, ever since the beginnings (note Tamīm al-Dārī's case, for instance [70]) opened the doors for Islam to a long series of eschatological and apocalyptic traditions of various sources which followed a parallel development, and yet of varied realization, inside the circle of Muslim ideology [71].

From a typological point of view [72] this literature can be structured, in most cases, starting from the chronological frame of the *septimana mundi* [73], which consists, above all, in "revealing" (*ru'yā* = revelation < ἀποκάλυψις) all the unreachable and hidden realities that lie in wait for the human being. However, the features that characterise and define this literature prove to be hard to determine if we are to draw a difference between this and other instances where it comes up [74], since, for example, many of its specific features do not appear in some apocalyptic works, whereas they do so in other literary genres [75]. Hence, the apocalyptic literature, put in general terms, fits the generic or typological questions rather than specific contents.

In sum the apocalyptic production appears as a argument weapon in the hands of Syriac writers, displaying all their visionary weaponry in the manner of a fighting and propaganda response against the political power of the new Muslim state [76]. By the end of the 7th c., some Christian Syriac speaking circles had their time to think over the true consequences which from the religious and political standpoint brought about the "Arabic invasion" [77], thus projecting through a teleological perspective a metahistoric conception which Alexander has aptly named, making avail of Jewish apocalyptic ideas [78], "the Byzantine ideology of the empire" [79]. Needless to say these ideas are not shared by a few other researchers [80].

The "re-invidicative element", and also the prophetic [81], seems to be two of the main motives that globally characterizes this literary typology, but the internal elements that make out the *narratio* of the different apocalyptic works reveal at every stage the polemically-driven features that structure the work. As pointed out by Reinink, the idea of unity of Christianity in the apocalyptic literature has a remarkable political-religious expression connected with a strong "polemic" against the Arabs [82]. The apocalyptic atmosphere at the end of the 7th c. coincides with a long series of important political, economic, social and cultural change proposed by the Umayyad caliphs with the clear purpose of vindicating the last expression of power in the world for themselves and the category of the new and last divine manifestation for the Islam.

In fact, it is during the first century of the 'Abbāsīd dynasty when the Muslim civilization starts its construction. It is here — following Reinink's suggestion — that the Chris-

tian apocalyptic literature must be also situated, where the "polemic" acquires a tonality of violent rebellion in which the propagandistic element plays a unique and relevant role: that of vindicating an only standpoint of Christendom opposing the Islam by using a "discursive offensive" of political-religious type. The Christian apocalyptic terminology even left its mark on the primitive Muslim apocalyptic literature. A paradigmatic example of this is the "Legend of the Christian Monk Baḥrā" (in its Syriac and Arabic ver-

sions), where there takes place the masterly merging of apocalyptic and apologetic elements [83].

We face then another modality of what has been called "polemical literature" different from those more characteristic and standardised like the "apologetic" and the "debate" in their various guises, which constitute a very important section of the theological discourse that Eastern Christianity generated and handed down against Islam.

Notes

1. For a general introduction to this type of literature, see J. P. Monferrer-Sala, "La labor polemista de los cristianos orientales y su contribución a la difusión del saber en el Oriente musulmán", *Revista Española de Filosofía Medieval*, VII (2000), pp. 61—79.
2. See the statistical approach given by R. W. Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period. An Essay in Quantitative History* (Cambridge (Massachusetts), 1979); cf. R. Schick, *The Christian Communities of Palestine from Byzantine to Islamic Rule. A Historical and Archaeological Study* (Princeton (New Jersey), 1995), pp. 139—58.
3. About the tributes which the Christian population had to pay see D. C. Dennet, *Conversion and the Poll Tax in Early Islam* (Cambridge (Massachusetts), 1979).
4. About the Christian apologetic literature, see the articles by S. H. Griffith, "The prophet Muḥammad, his Scripture and his Message, according to the Christian apologies in Arabic and Syriac from the first Abbasid century", *La vie du Prophète Mahomet: Colloque de Strasbourg, 1980*, ed. by T. Fahd (Paris, 1983), pp. 99—146 and *idem*, "The concept of *al-uqūm* in 'Ammār al-Baḥrī's apology for the doctrine of the Trinity", *Actes du Premier Congrès International d'Études Arabes Chrétiennes (Goslar, septembre 1980)*, ed. by Samīr Khālīl Samīr (Rome, 1982), pp. 171—6.
5. About the apologetic literature in Syriac against Islam, see Griffith, "Disputes with Muslims in Syriac Christian texts: from Patriarch John (d. 648) to Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286)", *Religionsgespräche im Mittelalter*, ed. by B. Lewis, F. Niewhner (Wiesbaden, 1992), pp. 251—73. Bibliographical references by L. Sākō, "Bibliographie du dialogue islamo-chrétien. Auteurs chrétiens de langue syriaque", *Islamochristiana*, X (1984), pp. 273—92 and H. Suermann, "Bibliographie du dialogue islamo-chrétien (huitième partie). Auteurs chrétiens de langue syriaque", *ibid.*, XV (1989), pp. 197—213.
6. See G. J. Reinink, "The beginnings of Syriac apologetic literature in response to Islam", *Oriens Christianus*, LXXVII (1993), pp. 165—87.
7. For a discussion about this text, see *ibid.*, pp. 171—86.
8. Cf. the edition and translation by A. Scher, *Theodoros bar Kōnī Liber Scholiorum* (Paris, 1910 and 1912).
9. Griffith, "Chapter ten of the Scholion: Theodore bar Kōnī's anti-Muslim apology for Christianity", *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, XLVII (1981), pp. 158—88.
10. A. Mingana, "Timothy's apology for Christianity", *Woodbrooke Studies*, II (1928), pp. 1—162 and A. van Roey, "Une apologie syriaque attribuée à Elie de Nisibe", *Le Muséon*, LIX (1946), pp. 381—97. About the "Letter 34", see Th. R. Hurst, "The epistle-treatise: an apologetic vehicle letter 34 of Timothy I", *IV Symposium Syriacum 1984. Literary Genres in Syriac Literature (Groningen—Oosterheselen 10—12 September)*, ed. by H. J. W. Drijvers, R. Lavenant, C. Molenberg, G. J. Reinink (Rome, 1987), pp. 367—82.
11. R. Caspar, "Les versions arabes du dialogue entre le Catholicos Timothée I et le calife al-Mahdī (11e/VIIIe siècle). 'Mohammed a suivi la voie des prophètes'", *Islamochristiana*, III (1977), pp. 107—75. See also L. E. Browne, "The patriarch Timothy and the caliph Al-Mahdī", *The Muslim World*, XXI (1931), pp. 38—48 and F. del Río, "El diálogo entre el califa al-Mahdī y Timoteo I", *Ilu. Revista de Ciencias de las Religiones*, III (1998), pp. 229—47.
12. A. van Roey, *Nonnus de Nisibe. Traité apologétique* (Louvain, 1948); Griffith, "The apologetic treatise of Nonnus of Nisibis", *Aram*, III (1991), pp. 115—38.
13. See Samīr Khālīl Samīr, "Maqālah fī l-ājal li-Ḥunayn b. Ishāq", *al-Mashriq*, LXV (1991), pp. 403—25 and *idem*, "Un traité perdu de Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq retrouvé dans la 'Somme' d'Ibn al-'Assāl", *Aram*, III (1991), pp. 171—92.
14. Cf. Griffith, *Theodore Abū Qurrah. The Intellectual Profile of an Arab Christian Writer of the First Abbasid Century* (Tel Aviv, 1992).
15. For a whole description of this apologetic treaty, see I. Dick, "Le traité de Théodore Abū Qurra selon l'existence du créateur et de la vraie religion", *Actes du Premier Congrès International d'Études Arabes Chrétiennes*, pp. 149—68 and Griffith, "Faith and reason in Christian *Kalām*: Theodore Abū Qurrah on discerning the true religion", *Christian Arabic Apologetics During the Abbasid Period (750—1258)*, ed. by Samīr Khālīl Samīr and Jørgen S. Nielsen (Leiden—New York—Köln, 1994), pp. 9—43.
16. Cf. A. Guillaume, "Theodore Abū Qurra as apologist", *Muslim World*, XV (1925), pp. 42—51.
17. About Abū Rā'īṭah, see Griffith, "Ḥabīb ibn Khidmah Abū Rā'īṭah. A Christian *Mutakallim* of the first Abbasid century", *Oriens Christianus*, LXIV (1980), pp. 161—201.
18. Cf. Griffith, "The concept of *al-uqūm* in 'Ammār al-Baḥrī's Apology for the Doctrine of the Trinity", *Actes du Premier Congrès International d'Études Arabes Chrétiennes*, pp. 169—91. About the works by this author see M. Hayek, *'Ammār al-Baḥrī. Apologie et controverses* (Beirut, 1977).
19. G. Graf, "Christlich-arabische Texte: Zwei Disputationen zwischen Muslimen und Christen", *Veröffentlichungen aus den badischen Papyrus Sammlungen*, V (1931), pp. 1—34, quoted by M. N. Swanson, "Beyond proof-texting: approaches to the Qur'an in some early Arabic Christian apologies", *Muslim World*, LXXXVIII (1998), p. 303, n. 31.

20. Cf. Samīr Khālīl Samīr, "Une apologie arabe du christianisme d'époque umayyade?", *Parole de l'Orient*, XVI (1990—1), pp. 85—106 and *idem*, "The earliest Arab apology for Christianity", *Christian Arabic Apologetics*, pp. 57—114. About this manuscript, see also the "Catalogues" by A. S. Atiya, *The Arabic Manuscripts of Mount Sinai* (Baltimore, 1955), p. 6, n. 154 and M. Kamil, *Catalogue of All Manuscripts in the Monastery of St. Catharine on Mount Sinai* (Wiesbaden, 1970), p. 16, n. 111 = 154.
21. See Swanson, "Some considerations for the dating of *fi Tatliq Allāh al-wāhid* (Sinai ar. 154) and *al-Ġāmi' waḡūh al-īmān*" (London, British Library or. 4950)", *Parole de l'Orient*, XVIII (1993), pp. 115—41 and *idem*, "Beyond proof-texting", pp. 297—319.
22. See D. Thomas, "Two Muslim-Christian debates from the early Shī'ite tradition", *Journal of Semitic Studies*, XXXIII (1988), pp. 53—80; cf. *idem*, *Anti-Christian Polemic in Early Islam. Abū 'Isā al-Warrāq's "Against the Trinity"*, ed. and transl. by D. Thomas (Cambridge, 1992), p. 31.
23. R. Haddad, "Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq Apologiste Chrétien", *Arabica*, XXI (1974), pp. 292—302.
24. Cf. C. Farina, C. Ciaramella, "Per una edizione critica della Apologia di al-Kindī", *Actes du Premier Congrès International d'Études Arabes Chrétiens*, pp. 193—206; cf. G. Tartar, *Dialogue islamo-chrétien sous le calife al-Ma'mūn (813—34). Les épîtres d'al-Hāsimī et d'al-Kindī* (Paris, 1985).
25. About these two letters and the problematics of the authenticity, see Tartar, "L'authenticité des épîtres d'al-Hāsimī et d'al-Kindī sous le calife al-Ma'mūn (813—34)", *Actes du Premier Congrès International d'Études Arabes Chrétiens*, pp. 207—21; cf. Griffith, "The prophet Muḥammad", p. 106—8.
26. For the first steps of the Muslim theological schools, see W. Montgomery Watt, "The beginnings of the Islamic theological schools", *Early Islam. Collected Articles* (Edinburgh, 1990), pp. 185—90.
27. See M. Cook, "The origins of *kalām*", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, XLIII (1981), pp. 32—43.
28. Cf. Samīr Khālīl Samīr, "The earliest Arab apology for Christianity (c. 750)", *Christian Arabic Apologetics*, pp. 109—14.
29. Cf. Griffith, "A 9th century Summa Theologiae Arabica", *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, CCXXVI (1986), pp. 123—41.
30. See G. Bulus Marcuzzo, *Le dialogue d'Abraham de Tibériade avec 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Hāsimī à Jérusalem vers 820. Étude, édition critique et traduction annotée d'un texte théologique chrétien de la littérature arabe* (Rome, 1986).
31. Cf. Griffith, "The Muslim philosopher al-Kindī and his Christian readers: three Arab Christian texts on *The Dissipation of Sorrows*", *Bulletin of the John Rylands*, LXXVIII/3 (1996), p. 111—27.
32. About this author, see the articles by Samīr Khālīl Samīr, *Foi et culture en Irak au XIe siècle. Elie de Nisibe et l'Islam* (Aldershot (Hampshire), 1996), specially n. IV, VI, VI and IX.
33. About the Arabic and Turkish manuscripts of St. Catharine, see Atiya, "The Arabic and Turkish scrolls of Mount Sinai", in *Memoriam Paul Kahle*, ed. by M. Black, G. Fohrer (Berlin, 1968), pp. 10—6. On the monastery of St. Catharine, see Monferrer-Sala, "Documento fundacional en árabe del monasterio de santa Catalina en el monte Sinai", *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes*, X (1999), pp. 79—95.
34. H. Staal, *Mt. Sinai Arabic Codex 151, I. Pauline Epistles. (CSCO. Scriptores Arabici, 40—1)* (Louvain, 1983) and *idem*, *Mt. Sinai Arabic Codex 151, II. Acts and Catholic Epistles. (CSCO. Scriptores Arabici, 42—3)* (Louvain, 1984).
35. Cf. Atiya, *The Arabic Manuscripts of Mount Sinai*, p. 6, n. 151 and Kamil, *Catalogue of all Manuscripts*, p. 16, n. 110 = 151.
36. About this translator, see J. Nasrallah, "Deux versions melchites partielles de la Bible du IXe et du Xe siècles", *Oriens Christianus*, LXIV (1980), pp. 203—6.
37. A facsimile of this colophon is found in C. E. Padwick, "Al-Ghazali and the Arabic versions of the Gospels. An unsolved problem", *Muslim World*, XXIX (1939), pp. 134—40. See also Monferrer-Sala, "Dos antiguas versiones neotestamentarias árabes surpalestinen-ses: *Sin. Ar. 72, Vat. Ar. 13* y sus posibles *Vorlagen* respectivas greco-alejandrina y siriaca de la *Pešūtā*", *La Ciudad de Dios*, CCXIII/2 (2000), pp. 363—87.
38. See Griffith, "The Gospel in Arabic: an inquiry into its appearance in the first Abbasid century", *Oriens Christianus*, LXIX (1985), pp. 131—2, see also pp. 131—67; Monferrer-Sala, "Dos antiguas versiones", pp. 363—87; *idem*, "Una traducción árabe con 'pseudoescolio exegetico anónimo'. Una nota de crítica textual interna a propósito del ms. sabaítico *Vaticano arabo 13*", *Boletín de la Asociación Española de Orientalistas*, XXXVII (2001), pp. 67—82.
39. About the growth of Christian Arabic literature in the Palestinian monasteries, see Griffith, "The monks of Palestine and the growth of Christian literature in Arabic", *Muslim World*, LXXVIII (1988), pp. 1—28, especially pp. 6—20. Cf. also A. Vööbus, *Studies in the History of the Gospel Text in Syriac* (Louvain, 1951), pp. 127—34.
40. See J. Nasrallah, "La liturgie des Patriarcats melchites de 969 à 1300", *Oriens Christianus*, LXXI (1987), pp. 163—5.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 160.
42. Cf. the examples showed by Griffith, "Greek into Arabic: life and letters in the monasteries of Palestine in the 9th century; the example of the *Summa Theologiae Arabica*", *Byzantion*, LVI (1986), pp. 117—38; see also *idem*, "Anthony David of Bagdad, scribe and monk of Mar Sabas: Arabic in the monasteries of Palestine", *Church History*, LVIII (1989), pp. 7—19.
43. See Nasrallah, "La liturgie des Patriarcats melchites", pp. 165—8.
44. See A. Y. Sidarus, "Essai sur l'Âge d'Or de la littérature copte arabe (XIIIe—XIVe siècles)", *Acts of the Fifth International Congress of Coptic Studies* (Rome, 1993), ii, p. 443.
45. Cf. J. Assfalg, "Littérature arabe chrétienne", *Petit Dictionnaire de l'Orient Chrétien*, traduction de Joseph Longton, ed. by J. Assfalg, P. Krüger (Brepols, 1991), p. 300; cf. C. Brockelmann, "Die syrische und die christlich-arabische Literatur", *Geschichte der christlichen Litteraturen des Orients* (Leipzig, 1979) (= Leipzig, 1909), pp. 67—8 and A. Baumstark, *Die christlichen Litteraturen des Orients* (Leipzig, 1911), ii, pp. 12—9.
46. See Griffith, "The prophet Muḥammad", p. 109; S. P. Brock, "North Mesopotamia in the late seventh century: book XV of John Bar Penkāyē's *Riṣ Mellē*", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, IX (1987), pp. 53—4, and C. Villagomez, "Christian salvation through Muslim domination: divine punishment and Syriac apocalyptic expectation in the seventh and eighth centuries", *Medieval Encounters*, IV (1998), pp. 203—18 where the theme is developed as the central topic of her article.

47. A history of the word is found in M. Smith, "On the history of ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΠΤΩ and ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ", *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East. Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Apocalypticism (Uppsala, August 12—7, 1979)*, ed. by D. Hellholm (Tübingen, 1989 (2nd ed.)), pp. 9—19.
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49. Cf. Glasson, *op. cit.*; and nine years before Rollins, *op. cit.*
50. See J. Carmignac, "Les Dangers de l'Eschatologie", *New Testament Studies*, XVII (1971), pp. 365—90.
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52. D. Cook, "Moral Apocalyptic in Islam", *Studia Islamica*, LXXXVI (1997), pp. 37—69.
53. A. Abel, "La signification apologétique et politique des apocalypses islamo-chrétiennes au Moyen Age", in *Proceedings of the 22 Congress of Orientalists held in Istanbul* (Leiden, 1957), ii, p. 533.
54. W. Madelung, "Apocalyptic prophecies in Hims in the Umayyad age", *Journal of Semitic Studies*, XXXI (1986), pp. 141—86; S. Bashear, "Apocalyptic and other materials in early Muslim-Byzantine wars: a review of the Arabic sources", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, I (1991), pp. 173—207 (third series); and more recently S. Campbell, "It must be the end of time: apocalyptic *aḥādīth* as a record of the Islamic community's reactions to the turbulent first centuries", *Medieval Encounters*, IV (1998), p. 179 and T. Daryae, "Apocalypse now: Zoroastrian reflections on the early Islamic centuries", *ibid.*, pp. 188—99.
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56. About the Syriac population under the Muslim occupation, see Dick, "Retombées de la conquête arabe sur la chrétienté de Syrie", *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam VIIe—VIIIe siècles. Actes du Colloque international Lyon — Maison de l'Orient Méditerranéen Paris — Institut du Monde Arabe 11—15 Septembre 1990*, ed. by P. Canivet, J.-P. Rey-Coquais (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1992), pp. 89—95.
57. About the cultural milieu of the Syriac Christianity at the moment of the Muslim invasion, see Brock, "Syriac culture in the seventh century", *Aram*, I (1989), pp. 268—80.
58. For a general context, see A. Ducellier, *Chrétiens d'Orient et Islam au Moyen Age VIIe—XVe siècle* (Paris, 1996), pp. 27—217 and Schick, *op. cit.*, pp. 68—84; cf. also N. A. Koutrakou, "The image of the Arabs in middle-Byzantine politics. A study in the enemy principle (8th—10th centuries)", *Graeco-Arabica*, V (1993), pp. 213—24; Martínez, "The Apocalyptic genre in Syriac: the world of Pseudo-Methodius", *IV Symposium Syriacum 1984*, pp. 342—44 and Reinink, *op. cit.*
59. Cf. D. J. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam. The "Heresy of the Ishmaelites"* (Leiden, 1972), pp. 22—6.
60. *Das an ständigen Kampf Häretikern gewohnte Christentum war dem Islam dialektisch unendlich überlegen. Einwände, die man früher gegen Arianer und Monophysiten angewandt hatte, konnte man jetzt gegen den Islam gebrauchen*, cf. Becker, *op. cit.*, p. 433, see also p. 434; cf. in this respect J. W. Voorhis, "John of Damascus on the Moslem heresy", *Muslim World*, XXIV (1934), pp. 391—8.
61. For such a denomination, see Brock, "The Nestorian church: a lamentable misnomer", *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, LXXVIII/3 (1996), pp. 23—35.
62. Cf. P. Crone and M. Cook, *Hagarism. The Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 155—6, n. 28.
63. See for example Brock, "North Mesopotamia in the late seventh century", p. 53.
64. See F. Macler, "L'Apocalypse arabe de Daniel", *Revue d'Histoire des Religions*, XLIX (1904), pp. 265—305.
65. See the general exposition by Becker, *op. cit.*, pp. 432—48; also W. E. Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 220; see also Reinink, *op. cit.*
66. Cf. P. J. Alexander, "Medieval Apocalypses as historical sources", *American Historical Review*, LXXIII (1968), pp. 997—1018. About the apologetic literature which arrived to the Muslims, see Reinink, "The Romance of Julian the Apostate, as a source for seventh century Syriac apocalypses", *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam VIIe—VIIIe siècles*, pp. 75—86 and Griffith, "Muḥammad and the Monk Baḥīrā: reflexions on a Syriac and Arabic text from early Abbasid times", *Oriens Christianus*, LXXIX (1995), pp. 146—74. About the various literary genres in this type of literature see L. R. Sako, "Les genres littéraires syriaques dans l'apologétique chrétienne vis-à-vis des musulmans", *IV Symposium Syriacum*, pp. 383—5.
67. Cf. R. Hoyland, "Arabic, Syriac and Greek historiography in the first Abbasid century: an inquiry into inter-cultural traffic", *Aram*, III (1991), pp. 211—33.
68. Cf. K. Czegledy, "Monographs on Syriac and Muhammadan sources in the literary remains of M. Komosk", *Acta Orientalia*, IV (1955), p. 39; S. H. Cross, "The earliest allusion in Slavic literature to the Revelations of Pseudo-Methodius", *Speculum*, IV (1929), pp. 329—39 and M. B. Ogle, "Petrus Comestor, Methodius, and the Saracens", *ibid.*, XXI (1946), pp. 318—24.
69. Cf. J. Gil, "Judíos y cristianos en la Hispania del siglo VII", *Hispania Sacra*, XXX (1977), pp. 9—102, especially pp. 76—102 and *idem*, "Judíos y cristianos en Hispania (s. VIII y IX)", *ibid.*, XXXI (1978—9), pp. 9—88, especially pp. 32—88. See also Monferrer-Sala, "Salmo 11 en versión árabe versificada. Unas notas en torno a las fuentes del Psalterio de Ḥafṣ b. Albar al-Qūfī", *Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos* [= *Homenaje al Prof. Antonio Torres Fernández*], XLIX (2000), pp. 303—19 [Sección de Hebreo]; *idem*, "Mēmrā del Pseudo Metodio y Yōnṭōn, el cuarto hijo de Noé. Notas a propósito de un posible origen de la leyenda oriental llegada a Hispania en el s. VIII", *ibid.*, L (2001), pp. 213—30; *idem*, "An Eastern Arabic version of the three epistles of Saint John (Codex Ar. 1625) kept in the Monastery of El Escorial (Madrid)", *Parole de l'Orient*, XXVII (2002), pp. 27—49; *idem*, "Traductologica mvzarabica. Notas a propósito de un fragmento del *Codex Arabicus Monachensis Aumer 238*", *Meridies*, V—VI (2002), pp. 29—49; *idem*, "A Gospel quotation of

Syriac origin in the *Fīṣal* by Ibn Ḥazm", *Journal of Middle Eastern and North African Intellectual and Cultural Studies*, I/1 (2002), pp. 127—46; *idem*, "Anecdota muqtabisiana: sobre un hapax legomenon contenido en el *Muqtabis V* de Ibn Ḥayyān", *Al-Qanṭara*, XXIII/2 (2002), pp. 335—41.

70. D. Cook, "Tamīm al-Dār", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, LXI (1998), p. 20.

71. See Campbell, "It must be the end of time", pp. 179—80; cf. M. G. Morony, "Apocalyptic expressions in the early Islamic world", *Medieval Encounters*, IV (1998), pp. 176—7.

72. For a typological definition of the "Apocalyptic", see J. J. Collins, "Introduction: towards the morphology of a genre", *Semeia*, XIV (1970), pp. 1—20; cf. in the Syriac literary production the tentative by Sako, "Les genres littéraire syriaques". Concerning the Pseudo-Methodius, see Martínez, "The Apocalyptic genre in Syriac".

73. Cf. W. Witakowski, "The idea of *Septimana Mundi* and the millenarian typology of the creation week in Syriac tradition", *V Symposium Syriacum 1988. (Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven, 29—31 août 1988)*, ed. by R. Lavenant (Rome, 1990), pp. 93—109. About the number seven in St. John's Apocalypse, see A. Y. Collins, *Cosmology and Eschatology in Jewish and Christian Apocalypticism* (Leiden—Boston—Köln, [1998]), pp. 122—7.

74. Cf. H. D. Betz, "The problem of Apocalyptic genre in Greek and Hellenistic literature: the case of the Oracle of Trophonius", *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East*, p. 577.

75. Cf. for instance the case of the *Malḥamat Dāniyāl*, A. Fodor, "Malḥamat Daniyal", *The Muslim East Studies in Honour of Julius Germanus* (Budapest, 1974), pp. 85—133, and facsimile of the 'irāqī edition; also J. den Heijer, "Malḥamat Dāniyāl and Christian Arabic literature", *Actes du Premier Congrès International d'Études Arabes Chrétiennes*, p. 230.

76. Cf. *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles*, introd., transl. and annot. by A. Palmer including two seventh-century Syriac apocalyptic texts introd., transl. and annot. by S. Brock with added annot. and a historical introd. by R. Hoyland (Liverpool, 1993), p. 253. This argumentative weapon will be re-adapted by the Arab speaking Christians of the former centuries, see Monferrer-Sala, "Literatura apocalíptica cristiana en árabe. Con un avance de edición del Apocalipsis árabe copto del Pseudo Atanasio", *Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos*, XLVIII (1999), pp. 231—54.

77. Cf. V. L. Erhart, "The church of the East during the period of the four rightly-guided caliphs", *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, LXXVIII/3 (1996), p. 56.

78. See for instance Alexander, "The medieval legend of the last Roman emperor and its mesianic origin", *Journal of the Warburg and Courthauld Instituts*, LI (1978), pp. 1—15; cf. by the other side Suermann, "Der byzantinische Endkaiser bei Pseudo-Methodius", *Oriens Christianus*, LXXI (1987), pp. 140—55.

79. Cf. Alexander, "Byzantium and the migration of literary works and motifs. The legend of the last Roman emperor", *Medievalia et Humanistica*, II (1971), p. 55.

80. Cf. Martínez, "The Apocalyptic genre in Syriac", p. 340.

81. See in this respect, for instance, J. van Lent, "An unedited Copto-Arabic Apocalypse of Shenute from the fourteenth century: prophecy and history", *Akten des 6. Internationalen Koptologenkongresses, Münster, 20.—26. Juli 1996*, ed. by St. Emmel, M Krause, S. G. Richter and S. Schaten (Wiesbaden, 1999), ii, pp. 155—68.

82. See Reinink, "The beginnings of Syriac Apologetic literature", p. 183.

83. See Griffith, "Muḥammad and the monk Baḥrā"; cf. Swanson, "Beyond proof-texting", p. 303. See also Monferrer-Sala, "Un texto base polemista: la versión árabe andalusí de la 'leyenda del monje Baḥrā' incluida en el *I'lām* del Imām al-Qurṭubī", *Qurtuba*, IV (1999), pp. 133—48.

TEXT AND ITS CULTURAL INTERPRETATION

A. Kudelin

ARABIC LITERATURE: POETICS AND STYLISTICS. III: EARLY ARABIC POETRY: AN ATTEMPT OF HISTORICAL-FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS

The problem of authenticity of pre-Islamic poetry has a long tradition in the history of classical Arabic literature studies. The approaches to the problem were developed as early as since the Middle Ages, and the modern research has been started in the middle of the 19th c. Medieval philologists did not manage to solve this problem: their criteria of selection of authentic pre-Islamic poems turned out to be too vague and subjective. Little more successful were the attempts of modern researchers. As a result there is no unanimous opinion about the authenticity of early Arabic poetry and thus contradictory ideas about the most important works of pre-Islamic classics are expressed.

Let us give one characteristic example. It is known that

"of special popularity in the East since the 8th c. and in the scholar Europe since the 18th c. have been the so-called *mu'allaqas* ('suspended', 'beaded', 'selected'): they form a collection of seven (in other editions of nine and ten) large works of the same type" [1].

But a competent French researcher R. Blachère shares neither the delight of the medieval philologists about this collection, nor the praise of European critics under their influence. His attitude towards *mu'allaqas* the researcher justifies by the fact that they, in his opinion, are not reliable enough examples of archaic poetry. Thus, in a *mu'allaqa* by 'Amr b. Kulthūm the elegiac prologue must have been added to give the whole the form of a "usual" *qaṣīda*-poem. The harmony of the parts of Zuhayr's *mu'allaqa* must have suffered sufficiently in the period of verbal existence of this poem. *Mu'allaqa* by al-Ḥārith b. Hilliza, according to R. Blachère, is a work by an imitator inclined to rare terms. 'Antara's *mu'allaqa* reveals a mystifier: its length itself is suspicious as well as the connection of non-related themes. In Imru' al-Qays's and Ṭarafa's *mu'allaqas* a skilful imitator gets too carried away with the rare terms and beduinisms. Besides, in the latter's *mu'allaqa* the description of sailing along Tigers and Euphrates or the Persian Gulf must be considered an obvious interpolation of Iranian origin [2].

Blachère's quoted opinion can not be called too harsh. The harshest conclusions about this problem belong to an

Englishman D. S. Margoliouth and an Egyptian Ṭāhā Ḥusayn. The latter, for example, wrote:

"The majority of what we call *jāhiliyyan* literature has nothing to do with *jāhiliyya* and is forged after the appearance of Islam; this literature is Muslim, it reflects the life of Muslims, their inclinations and interests more than the life in the epoch of *jāhiliyya*" [3].

Ṭāhā Ḥusayn claims that

"the poetry ascribed to Imru' al-Qays or al-A'shā or other *jāhiliyya* poets cannot have been written by them neither from the linguistic, nor from the artistic point of view; this poetry cannot have been written and spread before the appearance of Qur'an" [4].

D. S. Margoliouth stated that the Arabs did not have poetry at all before the appearance of Islam and thus considered the earliest examples of Arabic poetry later forgeries [5].

Most contemporary researchers do not agree with D. S. Margoliouth or Ṭāhā Ḥusayn. At the same time, it is hard to find a specialist in medieval Arabic literature who would deny the existence of a sufficient number of late forgeries among the preserved works of early Arabic poetry. We can refer to the trustworthy opinion of I. Iu. Krachkovskii:

"Hardly any research today doubts that **part of the works** of the so-called pre-Islamic poetry is fake. But it is far from admitting that **all** pre-Islamic poetry is a late falsification, and hardly any researcher would agree with such an extreme idea" (bolded by Krachkovskii — A. K.) [6].

From Krachkovskii's words we should conclude that the study of pre-Islamic poetry should be preceded by the process of distinguishing authentic early Arabic works. Many speak about the complexity of this process, for example an Arabic scholar S. Khālīs: