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THE ORIGINAL CHRISTIAN QURAN

Summary of the Argument

The oldest authentic document of modern Islam is the Othmanic Quran, dating from the middle of the 7th century AD. A close examination of the Othmanic Quran leads to the following conclusions: a) the original, to whatever degree preserved in the current edition, was dictated *to Muhammad by another party, who claimed to be a human prophet, speaking in the name of God (Allah) and the angels* (“We” in the text of the Quran means “Allah and the angels”), rather than being written by Muhammad himself, as the common Muslim tradition represents it; and b) the original was written in the area known in the 7th century AD to have been frequented by Abraham in his sojourning on the western side of the Euphrates, viz. *in the modern Levant and/or Sinai/Egypt* (not in Saudi Arabia which was not at that period associated with Abraham).

These conclusions are not in accord with the standard Muslim Hadith traditions, which date, for the most part, from around 200 years after Muhammad. However, they are in accord with the earliest alternative tradition preserved by the Christian scholar Al Kindi (dating equally from 200 years after Muhammad), who was prominent in Muslim court circles in Baghdad in the early 9th century. They also accord with the testimony of an Armenian chronicle which preserves a brief, but early and authentic, non-hagiographical, account of Muhammad’s rise to power, and was written within a generation of Muhammad himself, based on the testimony of eye-witnesses.

As regards conclusion (a): Al Kindi states that Muhammad himself was a *Nestorian Christian*, and that *the Quran* (Arabic = “Recitation”) was *originally a “recitation” of the major beliefs of Nestorian Christianity*, given to the illiterate Muhammad *by the Nestorian ascetic and prophet Sergius* (known as Bahira, “the Elect One”) at the turn of the 7th century AD. According to Al Kindi, the original “Recitation”, as written down by Muhammad’s literate relative Ali Abu Taleb, was worked over by several different “editors” in the first generation of Muhammad’s circle, who altered, amongst other things, its professedly Christian character. One of these edited versions, or, rather, a mixture of different edited versions, was imposed by force on the Muslim world a little while later, in the middle of the 7th century, by Muhammad’s “successor” Othman. As regards conclusion (b): Al Kindi and Muslim tradition generally, as well as, in more detail, Syriac Christian tradition, locate the prophet Sergius *in the vicinity of Arabia Petraea and Sinai*. Similarly, the Armenian chronicle records that some Jews were expelled from Edessa and sought refuge with Muhammad amongst the Saracens *in the Sinai desert*. They requested his help, and Muhammad led a military expedition on their behalf *from Sinai* into Palestine, intending to restore the Jews to their native land. He fought a battle near Jericho which he won, but died shortly thereafter.

Historical Background of the Othmanic Revision of the Quran

Since the current Quran is admitted on all sides to be the Othmanic edition (which is passed off by the Hadith as a perfectly faithful copy of the original, except for a few minor, purely orthographic, adjustments), the question arises, “Did Othman have any reason to foist on the world an illegitimate edition of the Quran?” The answer to this must be in the affirmative. The Arabian tribe to which Muhammad belonged was divided, at the time he had his spiritual experiences, into two major family divisions, the dominant Umayyads, and the less powerful Hashimites. Muhammad belonged to the latter clan, the Hashimites. As his ministry rose in popularity, the Hashimites acquired status, and this was resented by the Umayyads. The Umayyads lost, because of Muhammad’s Hashimite connections, their position as the politically dominant faction. The Umayyads at first, therefore, opposed Muhammad, but at last had to acquiesce, when they saw Muhammad’s Revelation widely accepted amongst their Arab neighbors and comrades. Friction between the two factions reignited after Muhammad’s death. The earliest successors of Muhammad were Hashimites, but finally Othman, of the rival Umayyad clan, became “successor” (Arabic “Caliph”). Since there was still friction between the factions, it is not surprising to find fighting broke out between them. This was not merely political, or secular factional, conflict, but religious too. It was claimed by Othman’s Hashimite opponents that the Umayyad party of Othman, now they were in possession of the Caliphate, had ALTERED THE INTERPRETATION OF THE QURAN, in the same way that, in the days of Muhammad, they had resisted the Revelation itself. At a battle fought between the two parties a man supporting the House to which Muhammad belonged cried (Masudi ii. 16) ‘Ye people, is there any among you that would find his way to God under the spears? By Him in whose hand is my soul, we shall fight you for its [the Quran’s] interpretation, as we fought you for its revelation.’ So he went forward to the fight, reciting:

‘We fought you for its revelation,
Now fight you for its explanation;
Our blows will cause decapitation,
And interrupt all conversation,
Till right return to its location.’”

Now it is obvious, in these circumstances, there being a difference in the interpretation of the Quran as between Muhammad’s own clan, the Hashimites, and the rival, and disgruntled, Umayyads, that the Hashimites would possess the authentic interpretation. If the first Umayyad to become head of the new religious movement, viz. Othman, imposed on that movement a particular edition of the Quran, as he did, there can be no certainty it was in accord with the authentic Hashimite interpretation. In fact, he would have an interest in promoting his rival interpretation (almost, we might say, any rival interpretation), in order to detract from the newly acquired religious and political status of the Hashimites. To counter the Hashimites’ claims, this edition would have to differ materially from the authentic Hashimite edition. Given the Umayyads’ this-worldly political status, which they originally opposed to Muhammad’s spiritual, or other-worldly (as their propaganda presented it, “unrealistic”, “anti-political”), claims, we might expect their altered edition to be a more down-to-earth, less supernatural, interpretation; a deliberate contrast to the spiritual, (and, according to Al Kindi,

supernaturalist, Nestorian Christian,) Hashimite interpretation. To hand in Arabia at that time were alternative “this-wordly”, but still monotheistic, systems, like the Jewish or Rabbinic one. According to Al Kindi, one very early phase of the editing of the original Quran had been precisely a Jewish one, in which the supernatural, Virgin, birth of Jesus, for example, was edited out. This editing feature survived in the Othmanic edition.

Some Major Geographical Alterations Made in the Quran

Characteristic of post-Othmanic exegesis was the relocation of the few precise geographical terms in the text of the Quran to far-off Saudi Arabia, away from the Levantine neighborhood, which was the scene of the original Revelation, and of the currently on-going Islamic advance. This had the effect of distancing the narrative of the post-Othmanic interpretation from the Syrian and Nabataean milieu of the Hashimite original, and hence made it more difficult to discredit, as well as removing it from its Nestorian Christian context. (Fuller details on the geographical location of the original Mecca and of the original Medina can be found in Testimony #10, *below*, >>>)

Thus, for example, the important shrine at “Bekka” or “Bakka” (also pronounced “Mecca”), mentioned in the Othmanic Quran, was originally located on Mount Sinai, and the city so named was the city of Pharan (also spelled Paran) within the wider territory of Arabia Petraea in the Sinai Peninsula: *sic*, according to the Othmanic Quran itself (Sura 95:1-4), 7th century AD, and according to Thomas Artzruni, 10th century AD, the city of Pharan being still known as Mecca in his day. The earliest historical witness to the location of the Mountain on which the Law was given, the Coptic monk Cosmas Indicopleustes (early 6th century AD, *Christian Topography*, Book V, MS p. 195f., ed. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* vol. 88, col. 198ff.) says the city of Pharan lay immediately under Mount Sinai. The relevant passage of Thomas Artzruni, cited in full hereafter, reads: “.... in the regions of Arabia Petraea in the place (called) P’aran {Pharan}, which is now called Mak’a {Mecca}”. The Quranic verses read as follows: “By the fig and the olive, and the Mount of Sinai, this City of Security, We [Allah and the angels] have indeed created man in the best of molds.” The words “City of Security” are used to describe the site of the shrine known as the Kaaba to which the Othmanic Quran commanded pilgrimages to be made, and prayers to be directed, for the reasons given in Sura 5:97, “Allah made the Kaaba the Sacred House as an asylum of security”, and in Sura 3:96-97, “The first house [= place of worship] appointed for men was that at Bekka In it are signs manifest, for example the station of Abraham [viz. where Abraham once stood]: whoever enters it attains security etc.” The Quran explicitly locates the City of Security at Mount Sinai. The Bekka/Mecca which was the sacred site of the Muslims, according to a Samaritan tradition (*Asatir* VIII. 3), was the Biblical Hebrew “Boachah” (in Samaritan Hebrew “Baka”) mentioned in Genesis 25. 18 as located within the district of Shur. The wilderness of Shur stretched southwards from the northern coast of the Sinai peninsula, east of the Nile Delta and Lake Timsah, along the western Sinaitic coast of the Gulf of Suez as far as Wadi Feiran (the site of the city Pharan), and thus immediately adjoined Boachah/Baka/Bekka/Mecca at Mount Sinai. Shur was inhabited by the Ishmaelites in their earliest days.

The wider area encompassing Pharan and the Desert of Paran was Arabia Petraea. It included the desert

east and south of the Dead Sea, the territory along the eastern shores of the Gulf of Akaba, and the Peninsula of Sinai. Pharan, in Wadi Feiran under Mount Serbal (which was Mount Sinai according to Cosmas Indicopleustes, viz. the mountain he locates six Roman miles from the city of Pharan in Wadi Feiran), a little to the north of the port of Tor on the Gulf of Suez, was the site of the first miracle of water from the rock performed by Moses, and Petra, the cave-city in the mountains south of the Dead Sea, the site of the second miracle of water from the rock, as well as of the tomb of Aaron. Muhammad's mentor Sergius is commonly reported to have been resident in Bozra near Petra and to have frequented Mount Sinai.

That the Mount Sinai referred to in the Quran was Mount Serbal, towering over Wadi Feiran, not the site at St Catherine's monastery much later identified as Mount Sinai, is proven by the reference in the Quranic verse to figs and olives, which are abundant in the luxurious palm-grove of Wadi Feiran, but absent in the parched plains around St Catherine's. (On this and the following geographical facts relating to Mount Serbal-Sinai, see the relevant sections of [The Sinaitic Exodus Inscriptions](#).) Another Quranic reference to olives at Mount Sinai is cited by Mukaddisi (179) and the description of the location only fits Mount Serbal, Cosmas' Mount Sinai, not St. Catherine's: "Tur Sina [Mount Sinai] lies not far from the Bahr al Kulzum (the Red Sea). One goes up to it from a certain village called Al Amn [viz. Elim] which same is the place where Moses and the children of Israel encamped. There are here twelve springs of fairly sweet water, and thence up to Sinai is two days' march. The Christians have a monastery (*Dair*) in Mount Sinai, and round it are some well cultivated fields, and there grow here olive-trees, said to be those mentioned by Allah in the Kuran (chap. xxiv., verse 35), where it is written concerning that 'blessed tree, an olive neither of the east, nor of the west.' And the olives from these trees are sent as presents to kings." Here Sinai is near the Red Sea, which is true of Mount Serbal, but not of the mountain at St. Catherine's; the fields around Sinai are cultivated, which is again true of the former, not of the latter, and Serbal is two days' journey from Elim (identified by the monks as the port of Tor on the Gulf of Suez), not three days' journey like St. Catherine's. Similarly in Idrisi (2): "Jabal at Tur [Mount Sinai] is reached from Faran (Paran) [i.e. the city of Faran in wadi Feiran]. It lies close to the (Red) Sea, and the mountain-chain stretches parallel thereto, and between it and the sea is a road that is much traversed. It is a high mountain into which you go up by steps, and at its summit is a mosque where there is a well of stagnant water, from which those who come and go may drink." Again here the location of Sinai is close to the Red Sea at the Gulf of Suez, in a mountain-chain running parallel to, and separated from, the sea by a plain. This is precisely the case with Mount Serbal. Serbal is located in the mountain-chain running like a vast granite wall parallel to the Gulf of Suez. The mountains are separated from the latter by the Plain of Kaa (inland from the port of Tor, the traditional monastic site of Elim). Travelers pass across the latter to Serbal and onward another day's journey to St. Catherine's. St. Catherine's is much further inland within the mountainous zone, and not noticeable from the Red Sea. There are steps running up the slopes of Serbal, as described by Idrisi. The mosque on one of the peaks referred to here, with a well of stagnant water in it, is doubtless the original Kaaba shrine, at the place called "Bekka". Only the pagan Arabs, and other Ishmaelites, before the reception of Muhammad's Revelation, were interested in this site, and its name is consequently unknown to Christian and Classical sources. When the Revelation popularized it, its name was transferred to the city of Pharan in Wadi Feiran, and this was known henceforth as the "city" of "Bekka/Mecca", being the principal civilian settlement in the vicinity of the sacred location on the mountain. The water in the shrine is referred to elsewhere in Muslim sources, e.g. Ibn Ishaq in Guillaume, *Life of Muhammad*, 2006, p. 176. He describes a pagan precinct at Mecca sacred to Tammuz under the title Dushara : "in it

was a trickle of water from a rivulet from the mountains.” The Kaaba is said to have been a pagan temple before Muhammad’s time, and Muhammad removed the idols from it. The pagan Saracens at Sinai (Serbal) are known to have had a temple to the moon-god on the mountain before the Muslim era. It contained a sacred stone which supposedly turned from white to black when the moon entered a certain phase. This undoubtedly was the original “black stone” at “Bekka” which became famous in Islamic legend, and this similarly is said to have turned from white to black.

The whole area of Paran (Pharan, Faran), and more widely of Arabia Petraea, was associated with Abraham in the most ancient sections of the Torah (where Petra is called Kadesh, “Holy Place”, and En-mishpat, “Fountain of Judgment”, retrospectively after the water miracle), and so too in the Quran. Abraham was indeed present in the vicinity of “Bekka” (Pharan), as he is said in Genesis to have camped “between Kadesh and Shur”, that is, between Petra and the desert east of the Nile Delta and along the shore of the Gulf of Suez, which included the territory of Pharan. Abraham dismissed Hagar and her son Ishmael into this wilderness area, and he is said to have dwelt henceforth in the “wilderness of Paran” or Pharan (Gen. 21. 21), which stretched from the vicinity of Mount Sinai and Wadi Feiran north and eastwards towards Kadesh (Petra), as demonstrated by a comparison of Numbers 10. 12 and the following passages describing the journey to Kadesh, with Numbers 13. 26. All the events referred to in those Biblical passages are described as having transpired within the wilderness of Paran. The Othmanic Quran itself (Sura 34:17) admits Abraham dismissed Hagar and Ishmael into the vicinity of Allah’s sacred house, the Kaaba: “O Lord,” Abraham is there quoted as saying, “I have caused some of my offspring [referring to Ishmael and his descendants] to dwell in an unfruitful valley [lit. wadi] near thy holy house”. Therefore, the Kaaba was in the near vicinity of the wilderness of Paran, since Paran was where Ishmael dwelt according to Gen. 21. 21. In fact, Wadi Feiran (Paran/Pharan) itself, so named after the wilderness, was most definitely in the days of Ishmael an “unfruitful valley”, as the Othmanic Quran states it was, since it was barren and without water as late as the time of Moses: Moses brought forth water from the rock at Rephidim within Wadi Feiran precisely because it was required in that parched and desolate valley to give drink to the Exodus Israelites. In the post-Othmanic interpretation “Bekka” was identified with Mecca in Saudi Arabia (an alternative spelling for which was “Bekka”). And the name Paran, referring originally, and in all the earlier historical sources, to the wilderness in the vicinity of the Sinaitic “Bekka”, was transferred, along with the name of the shrine, to Saudi Arabia. The word “Bekka”, “Boachah” in Biblical Hebrew and “Baka” in Samaritan Hebrew, will be shown (*infra*) to mean “Agitated” or “Frantic” in the act of running to and fro, and the fuller form of the place-name, Boachah Ashur, to mean “Frantic Step”, in reference, most probably, to the frantic search of Hagar for water for her and her son Ishmael, which God eventually provided by revealing to her a fountain at that place (Genesis 21. 12-21). Abraham, Hagar and Ishmael, of course, historically, were never present in Saudi Arabia. As a consequence of the post-Othmanic dislocation, the whole history of Abraham and his family was transported into the far-off southern deserts, and has remained there, in Arab mythology, ever since.

The association of Bekka on Mount Sinai with Hagar and Abraham in the Othmanic Quran built also on the typology employed by Paul in Galatians 4. 25, which identified Hagar (viz. the Hagarenes or Ishmaelites) with Mount Sinai in Arabia. Sinai signified, according to this exegesis of the Apostle Paul, the Mosaic Law dispensed on that mountain; and the fact that Sinai was located in Ishmaelite territory, signified that those (Jews) who were in bondage under the Mosaic Law were merely “children of Abraham” in a physical or genetic sense, like Ishmael, whilst spiritual (Christ-believing) children of Abraham were typed by Isaac, the “child of promise”, and their homeland was the heavenly Jerusalem.

Traditions associating certain rocky eminences around Bekka (originally, that is, the area of Mount Sinai-Serbal and Wadi Feiran), with Hagar, proliferated as a consequence in later Muslim tradition.

Similarly, the “Medina” of the Quran denoted originally (as in the very early text quoted in Testimony #3, [below](#), [>>](#)) a particular “city of Midian” in Arabia Petraea, that is, within the district east, south, and south-east of the Dead Sea, and the neighboring areas under Midianite control: but in the post-Othmanic interpretation “Medina” was identified with Medina in Saudi Arabia. The meaning of the name Midian was “dispute, disputatious judgment”, and the form Medinah or Medina, meant “the location of such a disputatious judgment”, hence “province, city etc.”, and this name too, for obvious reasons, was of frequent occurrence in the Near East. The obscure references in the current text of the Quran to a migration of people connected with Muhammad from Bekka to Medina was explained in terms of a supposed flight of Muhammad from the Saudi Arabian Mecca to the Saudi Arabian Medina in the post-Othmanic interpretation, instead of by the historical flight and migration of Muhammad and forty or so companions from his birthplace Bekka, viz. Pharan (where his prophecy was at first rejected), to the “city of Midian”, as Thomas Artzruni calls it. The latter was defined by Thomas as one of the Midianite cities destroyed by the Exodus Israelites, according to Numbers 31. The city named “Midian” referred to in Numbers, — the one associated with the daughters of Moab and the feast of Baal-Peor, — was that which was situated just south of the River Arnon adjoining Areopolis on the borders of Moab, as described in Jerome’s Latin version of the Onomasticon of Eusebius. (Areopolis is the Hebrew Ar Moab, the Byzantine Rabbathmoba, Moabite Rabbath, the modern Er-Rabba in Jordan.) The Onomasticon differentiated it from the identically named “city of Midian” near Tabuk further south, on the east coast of the Gulf of Akaba, which was where Jethro welcomed Moses in his flight from Pharaoh. By the time of Muhammad the population of the ancient, now ruined, city of Midian south of the Arnon, had transferred to the newer city immediately adjoining, that is, to Areopolis or Moabite Rabbath, and the latter had become known as the “city of Midian”. The followers of Muhammad preferred the Biblical name, city of Midian (Arabic Medina), because it reminded them that they were the “new Israel” entering the Promised Land by the same route as the ancient Exodus Israelites. In Muhammad’s day an army of 12,000 Jews had gathered in this city of Midian, having been expelled from Edessa in northern Syria by the Byzantines. Muhammad was accepted by the Jews as their prophetic leader, and they marched under his banner into Palestine. (This according to the Armenian chronicle, based on eye-witness accounts, and on the related sources drawn on by Thomas Artzruni.) The flight of Muhammad from Pharan (“Mecca”) to Midian (the “city of Midian”, or “Medina”) was the incident which triggered these later successful military adventures, and hence of major importance in the history and progress of the Revelation.

By the by, Muhammad is represented in the eye-witness account preserved in the Armenian chronicle as a strong supporter of the claims of Israel to the Promised Land, to the point of willing to die in battle in order to put effect to those claims. The same attitude is evinced in the behavior of Muhammad’s immediate successors, according to that account. This is the reverse of the post-Othmanic narrative, which has had such a deleterious effect on the relations of Muslims and Jews since the time of Othman.

Evidence of the Deviance of the Umayyads from Othmanic Islam

We might expect the Umayyads, not only to alter the text of the Quran, or, rather, promote the already-existing, particular variant, texts of the Quran which best accorded with their interpretation, but also to downplay even the resulting text's actual significance, since, after all, it was the Quran itself, in the original form or otherwise, which was the foundation of the Hashimites' claims. This is precisely what we find occurring when the Umayyads, shortly after Othman's decease, founded the first Muslim dynasty in Damascus. The Umayyad kings are acknowledged to have been, in the standard, orthodox, Islamic authorities, and from their particular perspective, little better than pagans, and to have demonstrated contempt even for the Othmanic Quran, which their own Umayyad Caliph had handed down to them. A contemporary, and reliable, account represents the first Umayyad king, Muawiya, as professing *Christian* beliefs in public and in an official capacity, not Muslim beliefs in the generally accepted sense of that term. This shows the milieu in which the earliest Muslims operated was predominantly a *Christian* one. The same picture is confirmed by other scraps of contemporary historical accounts that have survived from that era. It was only later, when Islam was on the defensive, and threatened by the Christian Crusades (early eleventh century AD on), that the mutilated Othmanic Quran was staunchly and unequivocally upheld as the sole authentic voice of Islam. The original Hashimite hostility to Othman's interpretation was forgotten and the strange doctrines of the Othmanic edition imposed on the whole of the Near East by the sword. Nevertheless in Al Kindi's time, as late as c. AD 820, there was still a variety of different texts of the Quran in circulation, including Ali's original, based on the Nestorian Gospel of Sergius.

Testimony #1: Al Kindi on the Corruption of the Original Christian Quran

Al Kindi on the Origin of the Quran. Written c. AD 820. (Muir's translation/paraphrase, with slight alteration to the orthography of some words, and only the most relevant of Muir's footnotes. My notes in braces {}. The original Arabic text of Al Kindi is downloadable [here](#), ed. Tien, 1885.)

“The Quran as an evidence of Muhammad's Mission (Apology 75-90).

{Al Kindi is addressing his protagonist, who was a fervent Muslim.}

“We come now to what thou regardest as thy stronghold, to wit, the Book which is in thy hands. Thine argument is that the narratives therein of the prophets and the Messiah prove that it was revealed by God, because thy Master {viz. Muhammad} was unlearned, and could have no knowledge of the same excepting by way of inspiration. Again, thou sayest that ‘neither Man nor Genius could produce the

like thereof” [Sura 2:23]; and, ‘If ye be in doubt as to that which We have revealed unto our servant, then bring a Sura the like thereof, and call your witnesses other than the Lord, if ye be true men.’ And, yet again, ‘If We had sent down this Quran unto a mountain, thou wouldest see it humbling itself, and cleaving asunder, from fear of the Lord’ [Sura 59:21]; and the like effusions. This in thy view is the main evidence of thy Master’s claim, ranking with the miracle of the Red Sea, the Staying of the Sun, the Raising of the Dead, and other wonderful works by the Prophets of old and the Messiah. And, by my life! this argument hath deceived many. But it is a weak and hollow subterfuge. The answer is near at hand, and not far off, as I will show thee. The disclosure may be bitter, but it will be wholesome in the end.”

The following important section about the original composition of the Quran and its subsequent, but still pre-Othmanic, corruption is presented here in three forms. The first (A) is my rendering of the most up-to-date (French) translation of the Arabic text of Al Kindi’s Apology (Risalat al-Kindi) by G. Tartar. It is followed by (B) my rendering of the Medieval Latin translation, commissioned by Peter Abbot of Cluny in the 12th century AD, of a version of the Apology containing a few details absent in extant (and chronologically posterior) Arabic texts. The equivalent section of Muir’s translation/paraphrase follows immediately after these (C). With all three renderings before the reader, a fuller view of the text and its variety of readings may be obtained.

The following is my rendering of Tartar’s French translation of the Arabic text.

(A) G. Tartar, Dialogue Islamo-chrétien sous le Calife al-Ma’mun (813-834), NEL, Paris 1985, p. 180ff.:

*“The Activity of the monk Sergius
and his influence on Muhammad*

“There was a Christian monk, called Sergius, who, following an occurrence for which he was blamed by his fellows, was excommunicated and expelled: he was forbidden to enter the church and all communion with him was severed, such being their custom in cases of this sort. Being remorseful for what he had done, he desired to accomplish something whereby he could make up for his mistake and receive pardon from his Christian friends.

“{p. 181} He betook himself to the region of Tihama {footnote 10 *ibid.*: Tihama, a plain bordering the Red Sea, extending from the north to the south of Arabia}, passed through there and arrived at Mecca. He found two religions were practiced in the region, the most important being Judaism, and the other idolatry. He showed continual benevolence to your master {Muhammad}, and paid special attention to him, till he won him round. He gave himself the name Nestorius, wishing, by this change of name, to promote the doctrine of Nestorius to which he had attached himself and of which he was a professor. He persistently kept company with

him and maintained a one-to-one relationship, imparting to him his doctrine little by little, until he persuaded him to renounce idolatry, and made him his disciple, and a propagator of the religion of Nestorius.

“When the Jews became apprised of the matter, they manifested hostility towards him, on account of the ancient feud they maintained against the Christians. Meanwhile his project went unflinching forward and progressed to the point it had now arrived at. That is the reason why he speaks, in his book, of Christ, of the Christian religion, and defends it, eulogizing the Christians, and bearing witness in their favor, “because they are the nearest in amity, and because there are amongst them pastors and monks, and because they are not proud at all.”

“When the Christian cause had reached this pass and was on the point of prevailing, Nestorius died. Then arose Abd Alla b. Sallam and Kaab surnamed al-Ahbar, two Jews who conducted themselves deceitfully and maliciously in the presence of Muhammad, encouraging him to believe they were following him, and adopting his doctrine. They persevered in their ruse and stratagem, hiding their secret intent under the profession of sincerity, till they found an auspicious moment after his death.

“In fact, it was only after Muhammad was dead, and the people abandoned Islam, the power passing to Abu Bakr, and when Ali b. Abi Talib abstained from recognizing him, that these two Jews found they had achieved, finally, what they had been looking for and aiming at in secret. They {p. 182} inveigled themselves into the presence of Ali b. Abi Talib and said to him: “Why not lay claim to the status of a prophet? We are ready to support you, in the same way Nestorius the Christian gave your master a sound doctrinal education, and you are in no way inferior to him.

“Indeed, Ali b. Abi Talib was well aware of the existence of the monk Nestorius, because he was a youth when he accompanied Muhammad, though he had been recommended not to tell a living soul where Nestorius was to be found and not to speak of him to any member of his family. Ali accepted their suggestion, on account of his youthful age and his lack of experience.

“Ali allowed himself frankly to be influenced by their proposal. Meanwhile God did not permit these Jews to prevail and achieve their objective, for Abu Bakr became apprised of their plot and summoned Ali. When the latter presented himself before him, Abu Bakr called him back to fealty to Muhammad. Ali bowed to the position of Abu Bakr and his compelling demeanor and renounced the design he had entertained in his heart.

“The Quran which Ali possessed.

“The two Jews got hold of the book which Ali b Abi Talib possessed, and which he had received from his master {Muhammad}, the book written in accordance with the Gospel. They introduced into it stories from the Torah {the Hebrew Old Testament}, a certain number of regulations, the stories of their own country. They distorted the text, added to it and subtracted from it. They inveigled into it contentious texts, like this declaration, “The Jews say: ‘The Christians are founded on nothing’, and the Christians say, ‘The Jews are founded on nothing’”, as well as the stories of miracles and contradictory texts, which convince him who looks into

the matter that many different people are speaking here, each contrary to the other. They inserted the Suras, like the Sura “The Bees”, and the Sura “The Spider”, and many similar texts.

“Do you not see that Ali, despairing of the caliphate’s ever coming round to him, presented himself before Abu Bakr forty days after — or, according to some, six months after, — rendered fealty, and put his hand with his? Abu Bakr demanded of him: “Why did you keep yourself away from us, and fail to render fealty, O Abu l-Hasan?” {P. 183} He replied, “I was busy assembling the book of God, as the prophet had instructed me.”

“Reflect, O man of reason, on this manner of speech, and attempt to comprehend what precisely is signified by the statement “being busy assembling the book of God”! You realize al-Hajjaj b. Yusuf was another who assembled the sacred collections, and he suppressed many things.

“Indeed, the book of God, O deluded one, cannot be assembled, and nothing can be suppressed from it. These things you and other Muslims know perfectly well, and cannot contest them, because your credited narrators report these facts, verifying their authenticity, and there is no disagreement amongst them. You know also that they report that the original manuscript of the Quran was in the hands of the Koreishites. Ali b. Abi Talib ordered this manuscript to be seized, when the situation became difficult for him, with the intention of putting an end to all addition or suppression, and no-one was allowed to get their hands on it apart from him.

“This collection was in conformity to the Gospel, and it had been committed to Muhammad by Nestorius, to whom Muhammad made reference when addressing his companions sometimes under the name of Gabriel and sometimes under that of the “Faithful Spirit”.

“The arrangement for the collection of the Quran by the Caliph Abu Bakr.

“When Ali declared to Abu Bakr in the course of first swearing his fealty, “I was busy assembling the book of God, as he had commanded me”, he was told, “We have one manner of speech, you another. Cannot we assemble the book of God?”

“They began accordingly to assemble together the texts which people had learned by heart, as for example [p. 184] the Sura Bara’a (the Immunity) [Sura 9], which they transcribed according to the bedouin who had come from the desert {for whose history and spurious Quranic verses, see Testimony #7, [below](#), [>>](#)} as well as texts which had been lost and rediscovered, and whatever was written on leaves, or pieces of tree, palm-branches, shoulder-blades etc. The text was not assembled together in a single volume. There were leaves and scrolls similar to those of the Jews, the shrewd trick of the two aforementioned Jews.

“People had different readings between themselves. Some read the text of Ali b. Abi Talib. These were his people, his partisans, and members of his family. Others read according to the lone bedouin who had come out of the desert, saying, “I have a word, a verse, more or less than you”.

“These were incorporated into the text, but no-one knew the history behind them or why they were revealed.

“Others read according to the reading of Ibn Masud, on account of this declaration: “Whoever would read the Quran in its pristine delicacy and sweetness, as it was revealed, let him read according to the reading of Ibn Umm Abd.” Once a year the text was presented to Muhammad, but in the year he died it was presented twice.

“Others read according to the reading of Ubbay b. Kaab, on account of this saying: “The best reader is Ubbay”. Indeed, the readings of Ubbay and Ibn Masud are comparable.”

(B) *My rendering of the 12th century AD Latin translation of Al Kindi as excerpted by Vincent of Beauvais in Speculum Historiale, Liber 23, capp. 51-52, and reproduced by Bibliander in his Alcoranus vol. II p. 8ff.*

[8] “HOW THE BOOK AL-QURAN {text: “ALCHORANUS”} WAS COMPILED

Sergius the monk, having committed a serious sin {sic} in his monastery, was excommunicated and expelled on that account, and made his way to the district of Cuhenne. From there he went down to [9] Mecca, where there were two communities, one that worshiped idols, and the other comprised of Jews; and there he came across Muhammad {text: “Machumet”}, who worshiped idols. Desirous of achieving something whereby he might ingratiate himself with those monks who had expelled him, and merit reconciliation with them (these being Nestorian heretics {sic, from Al Kindi’s own Christian sectarian point of view} who say Mary did not give birth to God, but merely to a human being), he put all his attention and effort into persuading him to abandon his idols, and to become a Nestorian Christian. Once he had set himself this goal, Muhammad became his disciple, and he, on account of this, named himself Nestorius. The upturn was that, having learned from the aforesaid monk elements of the Old and New Testament, he incorporated the same in his Al-Quran in a fabulous and mendacious manner {sic}. He also persuaded him to insert in his Al-Quran the divine pronouncement that Christian monks and presbyters ought to be more favorable towards him, on account of their humility. Now when the Jews were informed that monk was winning over many followers, and even Muhammad himself, to what can only be described as some pale shadow of Christianity {sic}, and, it might be argued, what had been accomplished latterly by Muhammad, had up to that time been achieved through the influence of Nestorius, three {sic} Jews became proselytes, and, out of fear Muhammad at some time or other might stumble across genuine Christianity {sic}, they attached themselves closely to him, claiming with malicious subtlety they were his associates or disciples in this sect, and encouraging the inclusion in the written text of Al-Quran of all the elements that are too debased or worthless to be credited to him. They were permanently at his side to the end of his days. Now following the death of Muhammad, at the time when, as we have already rehearsed, each returned to his own sect, and Abu Bakr {text: “Ebuberc”} had succeeded to the dominion, and Ali {text: “Hali”} also, the son of Abitalib, though he was of higher rank than he, remained under his authority, the aforesaid Jews aimed to throw everything into commotion once more and brought Ali round to their views, with the following words: “Since you have power and rank, why not promote yourself to the status of a prophet, as your associate Muhammad did, who was a Nestorian Christian? And we shall be with you, as we were with him, to help you in every way we can.” Now it was a simple matter for them to

impose on him thus because he was a youth, and lived his life in accord with tenets of a wholly beneficent nature. He had as it were been predisposed by earlier training to adopt this attitude. At any rate, when he was a boy, of the roving, restless, nature common to children of that age, he strayed one day along some pathways off the common track, and stumbled across the hideaway of that false monk {sic} Nestorius, from which answers to Muhammad's questions were given by the latter out of public view. When he realized he had been caught in this predicament, he induced the boy by a mix of threats and blandishments, not to reveal this to any living soul. And so already, it could be said, at this formative moment in time, Ali had yielded to external pressure. Now the chief Abu Bakr, when he found out about the recent event, issued a command for him to appear in his presence. Having done so, he laid down guidelines for him, with a profusion of blandishments and promises, to desist wholly from the course he had thus embarked on, and show himself in all matters subject to him. Still the Jews did not cease meddling any way they could. They had, in fact, come into possession of the book from the hands of Ali himself, which Muhammad had left to the latter, and had added to it, or subtracted from it, or altered within it, anything that seemed good to them. One such was the following passage: "The Jews say the Christians are nothing. The Christians say, on the contrary, the Jews are fools." Likewise, amongst many other passages and fabulous narrations, that chapter containing the fable of the Ant, and the other with the fable of the Bee, and the other relating the story of the Spider.

HOW THIS MAN'S SCRIPTURE WAS DISMEMBERED

But how this scripture was worked up in various ways, not only by the Jews, but also by a multitude of other parties, interpreted in different senses, expounded multifariously, and finally almost totally dismembered, we shall explain in detail, from the angle appropriate in each case. After forty, or, others say, six months, of the rule of Abu Bakr, he summoned Ali son of Abitalib, and said to him: "Why were you not present when I was made chief, and standing there alongside us all, in spite of the fact you are a mighty leader and a member of the nobility?" Ali replied, "Because I was busy gathering together the scriptures, as the prophet instructed me." Already, indeed, Eleage the son of Nizef {al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf} had gathered together many book-form manuscripts, and had subtracted many things from them. Many others had done likewise. Some read the text according to Ali, namely his family, and the members of his extended household, and his near relatives, that scripture which had been in circulation amongst the Koreish, and was said to have been his original text, [10] which the monk Nestorius had handed down to him, and whom it [or, he] called sometimes Gabriel, sometimes the Faithful Spirit. Others read what had been gathered together by different men; many, indeed, according to the text of a certain Arab who came in recently from the desert, who had written down there numerous things without commonsense or reason. Others read according to the text of Zabefatis {Zeid ibn Thâbit} and Arabis {Abdallah ibn Abbâs}, others according to the text of others. They all transferred to parchments and rolls whatever each thought appropriate. Therefore they differed amongst themselves and were at discord, and they would say, when reading the text one to the other: "I have a better reading than you. No. on the contrary, you a worse than I." So in this manner some added to the text, others subtracted from it, others altered it, and others corrupted it in any which way, until that book was rendered undeserving of any credit

whatever.”

(C) Muir’s rendering and/or paraphrase of the corresponding passage in the Arabic copies used by him now follows, and subsequent passages relating to Othman and Quranic compilers after him:

“[Al Kindi] then proceeds to give a lengthy account of the origin of the Quran. His story in short is this.

“Sergius, a Nestorian monk, was excommunicated for a certain offence. To expiate it, he set out on a mission to Arabia, and reached Mecca, which he found inhabited by Jews and idolaters. There he met Muhammad, with whom he had intimate converse, and persuaded him, after being instructed in the faith of Nestorius, to abandon heathenism, and become his disciple. This, while it excited the hatred of the Jews, was the reason of the favorable mention of the Christians in the Quran, to wit, that ‘they are the nighest unto believers in friendship; and that because there are amongst them priests and monks, and because they are not haughty.’ [Sura 59:21.] And so the matter prospered, and the Christian faith was near to being adopted by Muhammad, when Sergius died. Thereupon two Jewish doctors, Abdallah and Kab, seized the opportunity, and ingratiated themselves with thy Master, professing deceitfully to share his views and be his followers. Thus they concealed their object and bided their time.

“Then upon the Prophet’s death, when Ali kept aloof and refused to swear allegiance to Abu Bekr, the two Jews sought him out, and tried to persuade him to assume the prophetic office, for which they declared him fit, and promised to instruct him, as Sergius had instructed Muhammad. Ali, yet young and inexperienced, listened to them, and was instructed secretly. [Sura 2:113.] Before they had fully gained their object, Abu Bekr heard of it and sent for Ali, who finding opposition useless, abandoned his ambitious claim. But the Jews had already succeeded in tampering with the text of the Quran which Muhammad had left in Ali’s hands, that namely which was based upon the Gospel. It was then that these Jews interpolated the Quran with histories from the Old Testament, and portions of the Mosaic law, and introduced such passages as this [Suras 16, 27, 29]:—‘The Christians say that the Jews are founded upon nothing, and the Jews say that the Christians are founded upon nothing; and yet they read the book. Thus did the ignorant people aforetime speak as they do. Wherefore the Lord will judge between them in the day of the Resurrection as to that concerning which they differ.’ Hence also arose inconsistencies in the Quran,— passages proceeding from one source differing from passages that proceeded from another; as in Chapters, the Bee, the Ant, the Spider.

“Now when Ali despaired of succeeding to the Caliphate, he at the last presented himself before Abu Bekr, forty days (some say six months) after the Prophet’s death. As he was swearing allegiance to him as Caliph, Abu Bekr asked him, ‘O Father of Hasan, what hath delayed thee so long?’ He answered, ‘I was busy collecting the Book of the Lord, for that the Prophet committed to my care.’ Reflect, my Friend, what could have been the meaning of his being busy in ‘collecting the Book of God’? Thou knowest how the tyrant Hajjâj ‘collected’ the leaves of the Quran, and left out much thereof. Ah, deceived one! the Book of God is not ‘collected,’ nor can any part thereof be lost. Thou, and those of thy persuasion, know and acknowledge whatsoever I have said, for it is altogether taken from traditions of your own in which all of you agree. According to some authorities the first copy of the Quran was left in the hands of the Koreish; and Ali, when he came to power, ordered it to be taken possession of lest it should be tampered with by being added to, or taken from; and this was the copy which was in

accord with the Gospel as delivered to Muhammad by Sergius. [Muir's footnote: Our Author tells us here that this Sergius was also called by the Companions "Gabriel," and at other times "The faithful Spirit," — epithets, namely, of the Angel that descended with the Quran to Muhammad.]

"Now when Ali spake to Abu Bekr, as related above, those about him represented that there were scraps and pieces of the Quran with them as well as with Ali; and then it was agreed to collect the whole from every quarter together. So they collected various parts from the memory of individuals (as Sura Barât, [Sura 9] which they wrote out at the dictation of a certain Arab from the desert), and other portions from different people, and from the embassies and deputations which had visited the Prophet; besides that which was copied out from tablets of stone, and palm-leaves, and shoulder-bones, and such like. It was not at first collected in a volume, but remained in separate leaves,—entries being made after the method of the Jews,—a cunning device of theirs.

"Then the people fell to variance in their reading. Some read according to the version of Ali (and they follow the same to the present day); some read according to the collection of which we have made mention. Others read according to the reading of the Arab from the desert, who in his ignorance made changes and additions. A party read according to the text of Ibn Masûd, following the saying of thy Master,—'Whosoever would read the Quran in its pristine purity and freshness, let him read after Ibn Omm Mabad'; and he used to repeat it over to him (Muhammad) once every year, and in the year he died, twice. And, yet again, some read after Obey ibn Kab, following thy Master's word,—'The best reader amongst you all is Obey.' Now the readings of Obey and Ibn Masûd are closely alike one to the other. "Thus when Othmân came to power, and people everywhere differed in their readings, Ali sought grounds of accusation against him, compassing his death. [Muir's footnote: The sentence is remarkable, preceding as it does the notice of Othmân's recension, and also as plainly imputing to Ali a design prepenes on the life of Othmân.] One man would read a verse one way, and another man another way, each saying that his reading was better than his neighbor's, and contending for the same; and there was change and interpolation, some copies having more and some less.

"When this was represented to Othmân, and the danger urged of division, strife, and apostasy, he thereupon caused to be collected together all the leaves and scraps that he was able, together with the copy that was written out at the first. But they did not interfere with that which was in the hands of Ali, or of those who followed his reading. Obey was dead by this time. As for Ibn Masûd, they demanded his exemplar, but he refused to give it up, and so Abu Mûsa was appointed governor of Kufa in his room. Then they commanded Zeid ibn Thâbit, and with him Abdallah ibn Abbâs (others say Mohammed, son of Abu Bekr), to revise and correct the text, eliminating all that was corrupt. Now both were young; and they were instructed, when they differed on any reading, word, or name, to follow the dialect of the Koreish. On many points they did differ. For instance, Zeid wrote Tâbûh, and Ibn Abbâs Tâbût.

"When the recension was completed, four exemplars were written out in large text, and one sent to Mecca, and another to Medina. The third was dispatched to Syria, and is to this day at Malatia (Melitene). The copy at Mecca remained there till the city was stormed by Abu Sarâya (that is, the last time the Kaaba was sacked, A.H. 200); he did not carry it away; but it is supposed to have been burned in the conflagration. The Medina exemplar was lost in the reign of terror, that is, in the days of Yezîd ibn Muâvia. The fourth exemplar was deposited in Kûfa, then the centre of Islam and home of the Companions of the Prophet. People say that this copy is still extant there; but this is not the case, for it was lost in the insurrection of Mukhtâr. [Muir's footnote: Mukhtâr was slain in the rebellion here

referred to, A.H. 67.]

“After what we have related above, Othmân called in all the former leaves and copies, and destroyed them, threatening those who held any portion back; and so only some scattered remains, concealed here and there, survived. Nothing remained to show the discrepancies which are known to have existed. It is said for example that Sura Nûr (24) used to be longer than Sura Bacr (2), [Muir’s footnote: The longest Sura in the Quran] and that Sura Ahzâb (33), is mutilated and incomplete; so also that there was originally no division between Sura Barât (9) and Sura Anfâl (8), and accordingly we see that the invariable heading, In the name of God most Merciful, is wanting in the former. Similar is the case of the two ‘Incantation Suras,’ [Muir’s footnote: The last two Suras, of only a line or two each] of which Ibn Masûd said when they were placed in the Quran: Add not thereto that which is not therein.

“And then there is the speech of Omar delivered from the pulpit (of the Great Mosque at Medina), ‘Let no one say that the Stoning Verse is not in the Book of God; for verily I have myself read, The man and the woman that commit adultery, let them both be stoned to death; and if it were not that men might say, “Omar hath added to the Quran that which is not therein,” I would have inserted the same with my own hand. Likewise at the close of another address: ‘Truly I know not of any one who saith that the Ordinance of temporary marriage (Al Mutâh) is not in the Book of the Lord, for, indeed, I have myself read it; but it hath fallen out. And verily the Lord will not reward him well that caused it to fall out; for a trust was given, and he fulfilled not the trust of the Lord and of his prophet; and verily much that belonged to the Quran hath thus fallen out.’ And yet once more, Omar said: ‘The Lord minded to deal gently with mankind, and verily he sent Muhammad with a wide and comprehensive faith.’ “And Obey ibn Kab said that there were two Suras which he used to recite (as part of the Quran): Al Canût and Al Witr; in them were these words: ‘O Lord, we ask thee for help and pardon and guidance, and we believe in thee and put our trust in thee,’ and so on to the end of Al Witr. This he said in respect of the first compilation, no longer extant.

“Again, as regards the same Ordinance of temporary marriage (Al Mutâh), Ali caused the passage about it to be entirely excluded. They say that while Caliph, he overheard a man reciting the verse, and had him scourged for the same and forbade its further repetition. And this was one of the things for which Ayesha reproached Ali after the battle of the Camel, when she had retired to the house of Ibn Khalaf (at Bussora); for, among other things, she said that Ali had beaten men in this matter of the Quran, and forbade the repetition of certain passages, and tampered with the text. Moreover, Ibn Masûd retained his exemplar in his own hands, and it was inherited by his posterity, as it is this day; and likewise the collection of Ali hath descended in his family. “Then followed the business of Hajjâj ibn Yûsuf, who gathered together every single copy he could lay hold of, and caused to be omitted from the text a great many passages. Amongst these, they say, were verses revealed concerning the House Omeyya with the names of certain, and concerning the House of Abbâs also with names. Six copies of the text thus revised were distributed to Egypt, Syria, Medina, Mecca, Kufa, and Bussora. After that he called in and destroyed all the preceding copies, even as Othmân had done before him.

“And the result of all this is patent to thee who hast read the Scriptures, and seest how in thy book histories are all jumbled together and intermingled; an evidence that many different hands have been at work therein, and caused discrepancies, adding to the text, or cutting out therefrom whatever they liked or disliked. Are such, now, the conditions of a Revelation sent down from heaven?

“Furthermore, thy Master was an Arab, living amongst the Bedouins; and to them, and in their

language, he submitted his lucubrations. Now it is notorious that the Arabs as a nation are incorrigibly heathenish and graceless; how then could such a people receive from him the secret of the Lord, or truths proper to be revealed to a prophet? Thou knowest the enmity subsisting between Ali and Abu Bekr, Omar, and Othmân; now each of these entered in the text whatever favored his own claims, and left out what was otherwise. How, then, can we distinguish between the genuine and the counterfeit? And how about the losses caused by Hajjâj? Thou well knowest what kind of faith that tyrant held in other matters; then how canst thou make him an arbiter as to the Book of God,—a man who never ceased to play into the hands of the Omeyyads whenever he found opportunity? And besides all this, the Jews also had a hand in the business; and foisted in what they thought would further their own seditious and rebellious ends.

“All that I have said (continues Al Kindi, after an affectionate personal appeal) is drawn from your own authorities; and no single argument has been advanced but what is based on evidence accepted by yourselves. And in proof thereof, we have the Quran itself, which is a confused heap, with neither system nor order. The sense moreover consisteth not with itself; but throughout one passage is contradicted by another. Now, what could betray greater ignorance than to bring forward such a book as an evidence of Apostleship, and to put it on a par with the miracles of Moses and Jesus! Surely no one with a grain of sense would dream of it; much less should we who are versed in history and philosophy, be moved by such deceptive reasoning. Tell me now, what thy Master intended, when he said ‘that neither Men nor Genii, let them strive together never so hard, could produce a book like unto the Quran.’ If the contention be that the language surpasseth all other composition in eloquence, our answer is that every nation regardeth its own language the most beautiful, while the Arabs hold every other tongue but their own as barbarous; and similarly the Arabic, held by them as the most beautiful, is regarded by other nations to be barbarous. [On the following section see Sura 12:2, 43:2, also Sura 13:40; 20:111; 39:28; 41:2; 42:6; and 46:12.] If the claim be that (apart from all other tongues) the Quran is an unparalleled and miraculous model of Arabic (according to the text, Verily, We have sent down the Quran in the Arabic tongue, if perchance ye may comprehend); then, why do we find in it foreign words, as *namâric* from the Persian, and *mishkât* from the Abyssinian, vocabulary. Here is a defect either in the messenger or the message. If there be in the Arabic language no words to express the ideas, then the medium of communication, and therefore the message itself, is imperfect; if otherwise, the messenger.”

“That not the former, but the latter, was the case, Al Kindi enforces by the congenial argument that there were poets, such as Imrul Cays, and men of eloquence and oratory, without number before Muhammad, whose productions surpassed his, both in conception and language. This was cast in the Prophet’s teeth by the Meccans; for he turned round and called them ‘a contentious race.’ And, indeed, Muhammad himself admits as much when he attributes their compositions to magic. [Muir’s footnote: The imputation was often made by the Meccans, as against Muhammad (Sura 34:43; 43:29; 46:6). But here Muhammad is represented as attributing to magic the eloquence of profane writers, whose writings therefore could form no proper argument against a true revelation.] The introduction then of foreign expressions into the Quran must be owing to one of two things; either to the poverty of the Arabian vocabulary, while confessedly it is the richest and most copious of all tongues, or to the fact that different persons had a hand in the work; and our Author leaves his Friend on the horns of this dilemma. “If, again, the claim put forth be that there is in the Quran a supernatural harmony and cadence of language, and beauty of conception; that will be determined by the accuracy of the measures, the purity and fitness of the composition, and the point and charm of thought and imagery.

But thy book throughout is broken in its rhythm, confused in its composition, and in its flights of fancy unmeaning.”

“Yet once more, if the claim rest on the matter revealed in the Quran, Al Kindi asks what single truth we find there revealed, unknown to the ancients, and which indeed had not already been handled threadbare. “In our own day,” he says, “mankind are pursuing every branch of knowledge to results unparalleled before; yet what had that to do with such superhuman conditions as were required for miracles like those of Moses or of Christ? The truth, in short, is that the Quran with its manifold defects could only have appeared a miracle of eloquence and learning in the eyes of rude ignorant tribes and barbarous races.” The three false prophets who appeared at the rise of Islam played the same game as Muhammad; and our Author had read passages given out by Moseilama, which would have drawn away the Moslems after him, if only he had had Helpers to support him like those of Muhammad.”

Testimony #2: “Sebeos” on the Origin of Islam

From “External References to Islam” <http://www.christianorigins.com/islamrefs.html>:

A chronicle ascribed to Sebeos, Bishop of the Bagratunis (written in the 660s, i.e. within a single generation of Muhammad himself, and, according to the author, based on eye-witness accounts.)

[From the book (pp. 124-125):] “There has been much controversy over the authorship of this work. Its first modern commentator tried to identify it with the History of Heraclius referred to by five medieval historians and attributed to a bishop Sebeos, presumably the ‘lord Sebeos, bishop of the House of Bagratunis,’ who attended the Council of Dwin in 645 and witnessed its canons. This was for a long time generally accepted until the researches of Abgarian, who pointed out that the three surviving excerpts from Sebeos’ composition are not found in, or even contradict, our anonymous chronicle. So the two must be considered distinct documents, the one by Sebeos having been lost bar the excerpts Unlike the question of authorship, studies on dating and reliability have not been forthcoming, and a few comments are therefore necessary. There are indications that Sebeos [the anonymous chronicler] lived through many of the events that he relates: he maintains that the account of the Arab conquests derives from fugitives ‘who had been eyewitnesses thereof’ and, speaking of happenings in 652, declares that the Armenian faith has prevailed ‘until now.’ Gero considers that Sebeos’ notice on the launching of a fleet by Muawiya to attack Constantinople must refer to ‘the great siege in 674-78.’ But the text describes a single assault rather than a long siege, and the event is clearly to be identified with that reported by a mid-eighth-century Syriac source. Both emphasize that a great force of ships was readied and that the expedition took place in the thirteenth year of Constans (654). Sebeos concludes with Muawiya’s ascendancy in the first Arab civil war (656-61), and the above points would suggest that the author was writing very soon after this date.”

“[The following is from chapter 30 of Bedrosian’s translation:]

External References to Islam <http://www.christianorigins.com/islamrefs.html>

“I shall discuss the [line of the] son of Abraham: not the one [born] of a free [woman], but the one born of a serving maid, about whom the quotation from Scripture was fully and truthfully fulfilled, “His hands will be at everyone, and everyone will have their hands at him” [Genesis 16. 11,12]. Twelve peoples [representing] all the tribes of the Jews assembled at the city of Edessa. When they saw that the Iranian troops had departed leaving the city in peace, they [122] closed the gates and fortified themselves. They refused entry to troops of the Roman lordship. Thus Heraclius, emperor of the Byzantines, gave the order to besiege it. When [the Jews] realized that they could not militarily resist him, they promised to make peace. Opening the city gates, they went before him, and [Heraclius] ordered that they should go and stay in their own place. So they departed, taking the road through the desert to Tachkastan {= land of the Arabs} to the sons of Ishmael. [The Jews] called [the Arabs] to their aid and familiarized them with the relationship they had through the books of the [Old] Testament. Although [the Arabs] were convinced of their close relationship, they were unable to get a consensus from their multitude, for they were divided from each other by religion. In that period a certain one of them, a man of the sons of Ishmael named Muhammad, became prominent [t’ankangar]. A sermon about the Way of Truth, supposedly at God’s command, was revealed to them, and [Muhammad] taught them to recognize the God of Abraham, especially since he was informed and knowledgeable about Mosaic history. Because the command had [g104] come from on High, he ordered them all to assemble together and to unite in faith. Abandonning the reverence of vain things, they turned toward the living God, who had appeared to their father—Abraham. Muhammad legislated that they were not to [123] eat carrion, not to drink wine, not to speak falsehoods, and not to commit adultery. He said: “God promised that country to Abraham and to his son after him, for eternity. And what had been promised was fulfilled during that time when [God] loved Israel. Now, however, you are the sons of Abraham, and God shall fulfill the promise made to Abraham and his son on you. Only love the God of Abraham, and go and take the country which God gave to your father Abraham. No one can successfully resist you in war, since God is with you.”

“Then all of them assembled together, from Havilah to Shur, which is opposite Egypt [The text is corrupt here. The citation is from Genesis 25.18 {Shur is the area inhabited by Ishmaelites immediately to the east of the Nile Delta bordering Sinai}, and they set out from the P’arhan desert {the Paran desert is the desert area stretching from Wadi Feiran (“Paran”) at the foot of Mount Serbal in western Sinai to Petra between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Akaba in the east} [being] twelve tribes [moving] in the order [of precedence] of the Houses of the patriarchs of their tribe. They were divided into 12,000 men, of which the sons of Israel were in their own tribes, 1,000 to a tribe, to lead them to the country of Israel. They traveled army by army in the order [of precedence] of each patriarchy: Nebaioth, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah [Genesis 25. 13-16]. These are the peoples of Ishmael. They reached Moabite Rabbath, at the borders of [124] Ruben’s [land]. The Byzantine army was encamped in Arabia. [The Arabs] fell upon them suddenly, struck them with the sword and put to flight emperor Heraclius’ brother, T’eodos. Then they turned and encamped in Arabia.

“All the remnants of the sons of Israel then assembled [g105] and united, becoming a large force. After this they dispatched a message to the Byzantine emperor, saying: “God gave that country as the inherited property [i kaluats zharhangut’ean] of Abraham and of his sons after him. We are the sons of Abraham. It is too much that you hold our country. Leave in peace, and we shall demand from you

what you have seized, plus interest [tokosiwk' pahanjests'uk' i ken zkalealn]". The emperor rejected this. He did not provide a fitting response to the message but rather said: "The country is mine. Your inheritance is the desert [k'oy vichak zharhangut'ean anapatn]. So go in peace to your country". And [Heraclius] started organizing brigades, as many as 70,000 [troops] giving them as a general, a certain one of his faithful eunuchs. He ordered that they were to go to Arabia, stipulating that they were not to engage them [125] in war, but rather to keep on the alert until he could assemble his other troops and send them to help.

"Now [the Byzantines] reached the Jordan and crossed into Arabia. Leaving their campsite on the riverbank, [the Byzantines] went on foot to attack [the Arabs'] camp. [The Arabs], however, had placed part of their army in ambushes here and there, lodging the multitude in dwellings around the camp. Then they drove in herds of camels which they penned around the camp and the tents, tying them at the foot with rope. Such was the fortification of their camp. The beasts were fatigued from the journey, and so [the Byzantines] were able to cut through the camp fortification, and started to kill [the Arabs]. But suddenly the men in the ambushes sprung from their places and fell upon them. Awe of the Lord came over the Byzantine troops, and they turned in flight before them. But they were unable to flee because of the quicksand which buried them to the legs. There was great anxiety caused by the heat of the sun and the enemy's sword was upon them. All the generals fell and perished. More than 2,000 men were slain. A few survivors fled to the place of refuge.

"[The Arabs] crossed the Jordan and encamped at Jericho. Then dread of them came over the inhabitants of the country, and all of them submitted [g106]. That night the Jerusalemites took [126] the Cross of the Lord and all the vessels of the churches of God, and fled with them by boat to the palace at Constantinople. [The Jerusalemites] requested an oath [from the Arabs] and then submitted. The emperor of the Byzantines was no longer able to assemble his troops against them. [The Arabs] divided their army into three parts. One part went to Egypt, taking [territory] as far as Alexandria. The second part went north [to war] against the Byzantine empire. In the twinkling of an eye they had seized [territory stretching] from the Farthest Sea to the shores of the great Euphrates river, as well as Edessa and all the cities of Mesopotamia, on the other side of the [Euphrates] river. The third part [of the Arab army] was sent to the east, against the kingdom of Iran. In that period the kingdom of Iran grew weaker, and their army was divided into three parts. Then the Ishmaelite troops who were gathered in the east, went and besieged Ctesiphon, since the king of Iran resided there. Troops from the land of Media [zawr ashxarhin Marats'], some 80,000 armed men under their general Rostom assembled and went against [the Arabs] in battle. Then [the Arabs] left the city and crossed to the other side of [127] the Tigris river. [The Iranians] also crossed the river, pursuing them. And they did not stop until they reached their borders, at the village called Hert'ichan. [The Iranians] continued to pursue them, [eventually] going and encamping in the plain. Present were Mushegh Mamikonean, son of Dawit', the general of Armenia with 3,000 armed men, and also prince Grigor, lord of Siwnik', with 1,000 men. [The Iranian and Arab armies] attacked each other, and the Iranian forces fled before them. But [the Arabs] pursued them, putting them to the sword. All the principal naxarars died, as did general Rostom. They killed Mushegh and two of his sister's sons, as well as Grigor, the lord of Siwnik', along with one son. Some [of the Iranian troops] escaped and fled back to their own land. The remnants of the Iranian forces assembled in Atrpatakan at one spot and made Xorhoxazat their general.

"Then they hurried to Ctesiphon and took the treasury of the [g107] kingdom, the inhabitants of the cities, and their king, and then hurried to get back to Atrpatakan. But as soon as they had departed and

gone some distance, the Ishmaelite army unexpectedly came upon them. Horrified, [the Iranians] abandoned the treasury and the inhabitants of the city, and fled. Their king also fled, winding up with the southern troops. Now [the Arabs] took the entire treasury and returned to Ctesiphon, taking the inhabitants of the cities along too. [128] And they pillaged the entire country.

“The venerable Heraclius ended his life in good old age. He reigned for 30 years [610-40/41]. [Heraclius] made his son Constantine swear to have clemency upon all those transgressors whom he had ordered exiled. He made him vow to send each back to his place, and to bring back the aspet, his wife and son, and to establish him in his former rank [i kargn arhajin; perhaps, “in the foremost rank”]. “Should he want to go to his land, as I have sworn — may my oath not be false — release him, and let him go in peace”.

“Heraclius died and his son Constantine ruled. But no one was chosen as general of the land of Armenia [och’ ok’ entrets’aw zawravar yashxarhin Hayots’], since the princes were disunited and quit each other’s presence. The corruptive army [of the Arabs] arose from Asorestan and came through the valley route to the land of Taron. They took [Taron], Bznunik’ and Aghiovit and then, going to the Berkri valley via Ordspu and Gogovit, poured into Ayrarat. None of the Armenian troops was able to carry the bad news to the awan of Dwin. There were, however, three of the princes who went and gathered the dispersed troops: T’eodoros Vahewuni, [129] Xach’ean Arhaweghean, and Shapuh Amatuni. They fled to Dwin, reached the Metsamor bridge, crossed it, destroyed it, and then they went to take the bad news to the awan. All the people of the land had assembled in the fortress, and they had come in harvest time for the vineyards.

“T’eodoros went to the city of Naxchawan. The enemy Busha reached Metsamawr bridge but was unable to cross over. [g108] However, [the Arabs] had as a guide Vardik, prince of Mokka’, who was called Aknik [“Little Eyes”]. Crossing the Metsamawr bridge, they raided the entire country. They accumulated a very great amount of loot and captives, then came and encamped by the edge of the Xosrakert forest. On the fifth day [of the Arabs’ sojourn], on a Friday, the 30th of the month of Tre [= the fourth month in the Armenian calendar, November], they came against the city [of Dwin] and it was betrayed into their hands. For they set fires here and there, and drove away the guards on the wall by smoke and by shooting arrows. They then erected ladders, scaled the wall and, once inside, opened the city gates. The army of the enemy poured inside and put most of the city to the sword. Then, taking the loot and booty of the city, they departed and encamped at their same campsite. After passing some days there, they arose and departed by the same route they had come. They had a multitude of captives with them, some [130] 35,000 souls. Now the prince of Armenia, the lord of Rshtunik’, who had been concealed in an ambush in the district of Gogovit, went against [the Arabs] with few troops. But he was unable to resist, and so fled before them. [The Arabs] pursued [Rshtunik’s troops] killing many of them. Then they went to Asorestan. This occurred in the days of kat’oghikos Ezer.

“As a result of that battle, an order came from the emperor [granting] the military command [zawravarut’eann] and the dignity of patrician to T’eodoros, lord of Rshtunik’. All this took place as a result of kat’oghikos Nerses who succeeded Ezer on the kat’oghikos throne.

“When the sons of Ishmael had arisen and issued from the desert of Sinai, their king Amrha {Omar} did not accompany them. But when [the Arabs] had militarily routed both kingdoms, seizing from Egypt to the great Taurus mountain, from the Western Sea [the Atlantic Ocean] to Media and Xuzhastan, they

then emerged with the royal army [and went] to the [g109] natural borders of the holdings of Ishmael. Then the [Arab] [131] king gave an order to assemble boats and many sailors and to navigate southwardly, going east to Pars, to Sagastan, to Sind, to Srman, to the land of Turan and to Makuran as far as the borders of India. The troops swiftly prepared and implemented the command. They burned every country, taking loot and booty. They then turned and made expeditions on the waves of the sea, and reached their own places.

“We heard this [account] from men [who had returned] from captivity in Xuzhastan Tachkastan, who themselves had been eye-witnesses to the events described and narrated them to us.

[The following is from chapter 31 of Bedrosian’s translation:]

“Now I shall speak about the plot of the Jewish rebels, who, finding support from the Hagarenes for a short time, planned to [re]build the temple of Solomon. Locating the place called the holy of holies, they constructed [the temple with a pedestal, to serve as their place of prayer. But the Ishmaelites envied [the Jews], expelled them from the place, and named the same building their own place of prayer. [The Jews] built a temple for their worship, elsewhere. It [132] was then that they came up with an evil plan: they wanted to fill Jerusalem with blood from end to end, and to exterminate all the Christians of Jerusalem.

“Now it happened that there was a certain grandee Ishmaelite who went to worship in their private place of prayer [i teghi aghawt’its’ iwreants’ miayn]. He encountered three of the principal Jewish men, who had just slaughtered two pigs and taken and put them [in the Muslim] place of prayer. Blood [g110] was running down the walls and on the floor of the building. As soon as the man saw them, he stopped and said something or other to them. They replied and departed. The man at once went inside to pray. He saw the wicked [sight], and quickly turned to catch the men. When he was unable to find them, he was silent and went to his place. Then many [Muslims] entered the place and saw the evil, and they spread a lament throughout the city. The Jews told the prince that the Christians had desecrated their place of prayer. The prince issued an order and all the Christians were gathered together. Just as they wanted to put them to the sword, the man came and addressed them: “Why shed so much blood in vain? Order all the Jews to assemble and I shall point out the guilty ones”. As soon as they were all assembled and [the man] walked among them, he recognized the three men whom he had previously [133] encountered. Seizing them, [the Arabs] tried them with great severity [datets’in agahin datestanawk’] until they disclosed the plot. And because their prince was among the Jews present, he ordered [Ew zi ishkan nots’a er i hreits’ anti, hramaveats’... The subject probably is the Arab, not Jewish, prince] that six of the principals involved in the plot be killed. He permitted the other [Jews] to return to their places.

Further chapters speak of more conquests of the Ishmaelites (Arabs) and the first Arab civil war (in chapter 38 {relating to the period of civil war immediately before the reign of Muawwiya}: “....Then God sent discord into the army of the sons of Ishmael. Their unity dissolved, they clashed with each other and divided into four parts. One part was in the Indian area. Another was that army which held Asorestan and the northern areas. Another was the one in Egypt and in the T’etal region. Another was in the Tachik area and at the place called Askarawn. They began fighting with each other and destroyed each other with endless killings. Now the troops who were in Egypt united with those in the [182] Tachik area and they killed their king and took the multitude of treasures as loot [g152]. They

enthroned another king and returned to their places.

“Now when their prince Mu’awiya, who was in Asorestan and was second to their king, saw what had happened, he united his troops and he too went to the desert. He killed the king whom they enthroned, battling with and severely destroying the troops in the Tachik area. He then returned to Asorestan in triumph. Now the army which was in Egypt united with the Byzantine emperor, made peace and was incorporated. The multitude of the troops, some 15,000 people, believed in Christ and were baptized. But the bloodshed of countless multitudes increased and intensified among the Ishmaelite armies. They engaged in frantic battles and killed each other. Nor were they able to stop even somewhat from wielding swords, taking captives and intense battles on land and sea, until Mu’awiya grew strong and conquered all of them. He subdued them, ruled as king over the property of the sons of Ishmael and made peace with everyone [g153].”

Testimony #3: The name Medina formed from Midian

From “External References to Islam” <http://www.christianorigins.com/islamrefs.html>: Contemporary evidence from the generation in which the Quran was written, that “Medina”, the Arabian city-state, was named after Midian, viz. that it meant “the city of Midian”:

A Chronicler of Khuzistan (written before ca. 660s, i.e. within a single generation of Muhammad himself, and a very short time after the Othmanic edition of the Quran was imposed on all Muslims.)

“[From the book (p. 185):] “In either case, one would not wish to date the text’s completion later than the 660s. The title declares the finishing point to be ‘the end of the Persian kingdom,’ and certainly there is no clear reference to any event after 652. If, as seems likely, the narrative on the siege of Shush and Shustar derives from eyewitness testimony, then one would not wish to place its composition, given its vividness, much more than two decades after the event. It is not stated that Elias of Merv was already dead, but it is perhaps implied, and this probably occurred not long after 659, when he witnessed Ishoyahb’s demise.”

“Then God raised up against them the sons of Ishmael, [numerous] as the sand on the sea shore, whose leader (*mdabbrana*) was Muhammad (*mhmd*). Neither walls nor gates, armor nor shield, withstood them

“.... *Medina is named after Midian*, Abraham’s fourth son by Qetura; it is also called Yathrib. And Dumat Jandal [belongs to them {viz. the Muslims}], and the territory of the Hagaraye {the Hagarenes, i.e. Saracens}, which is rich in water, palm trees and fortified buildings {this description can only apply to Wadi Feiran, the capital of the kingdom of the Saracens}.... (Chron. Khuzistan, 38-39 [pp. 187-188]).”

Testimony #4: Early List of Muhammad's Successors

From "External References to Islam" <http://www.christianorigins.com/islamrefs.html>: List of Early Muslim leaders:

Ad Annum 705 (October 705)

"A report giving information about the kingdom of the Arabs, and how many kings there were from them, and how much territory each of them held after his predecessor before he died.

Mhmt {Muhammad} came upon the earth in {year} 932 of Alexander, son of Philip the Macedonian ({AD} 620-21); then he reigned 7 years.

Then there reigned after him Abu Bakr for 2 years.

And there reigned after him 'Umur for 12 years.

And there reigned after him 'Uthman for 12 years, and they were without a leader during the war of Siffin (Sefe) for 5½ years.

Thereafter Ma'wiya {Muawiya} reigned for 20 years.

And after him Izid the son of Ma'wiya reigned for 3½ years.

{In margin: and after Izid for one year they were without a leader}

And after him 'Abdulmalik reigned for 21 years.

And after him his son Walid took power in AG 1017, at the beginning of first Tishrin (October 705).

[From the book (pp. 394-395):]

"This list of Arab rulers is found in a late ninth-century manuscript of very varied contents, sandwiched between 'select sentences from the proverbs of Solomon' and 'extracts from the discourse of Isaac of Antioch on prayer.' Its provenance is thus unknown and it is presumably incomplete since the promised statistics regarding Muslim-occupied lands do not appear. Rather than the ten years apiece granted them by Muslim sources, Muhammad is given a seven-year reign and 'Umar, possibly to make up the shortfall, is accorded twelve years. An accession date is provided for Walid alone, which suggests that the list did end with him and that this event was recent. Hence October 705 or shortly after is the most probable time of composition."

Testimony #5: A Monk of Beth Hale and an Arab Notable

Date post-717.)

“This Arab man then, O my lord, was one of the chief men before the emir Maslama and by reason of a malady which he had, he came to us and remained with us for ten days. He spoke freely with us and debated much about our scriptures and their Quran (quran). When he saw our rites performed at the appropriate seven times, in accordance with what the blessed David said: “Seven times a day I praise you for your judgments, O righteous one,” he called me to him. And because he had acted as steward in the government for a long time and because of his exaltedness and our lowliness, he would speak with us via an interpreter. He began by reproving us for our faith, saying: “You make prayers much, night and day you are not silent, and you outdo us in prayer and fasting and in your petitions to God. However, in my own opinion, your faith rules out that your prayers will be accepted.” (Monk of Beth Hale, Disputation, fol. 1a [p. 466])

[From the book (pp. 470-472):]

“... In his account of Muhammad’s initiation of the Arabs into monotheism the monk says that “he {Muhammad} first brought you {the Arabs} to know the one true God, a doctrine which he had received from Sargis {Sergius} Bahira.”

Testimony #6: Thomas Artzruni and the Origins of Islam

From Thomas Artzruni, II. 4 [14], composed at the beginning of the 10th century AD, based on early sources. Thomson’s translation in R. W. Thomson, *Studies in Armenian Literature and Christianity*, Variorum, 1994, X, p. 829-858, Muhammad and the origin of Islam in Armenian literary tradition. The orthography has been slightly modified and some of my notes added in braces {}.

{The following account presumes an angel communed with Muhammad, imparting to him the Revelation, and shows itself, accordingly, to be based on the testimony of one or more of those who corrupted the original Quran preserved by Ali, since that corruption included specifically the substitution of the Angel Gabriel for the prophet Sergius. Thomas Artzruni was not familiar, as Al Kindi was, with the process of the formation of the Quran, and, besides, had a greater animus against the Muslims than Al Kindi, because of the subjugation of his people by them, which clouded his judgment regarding the inspiration of Muhammad himself. The ultimate source of this account was probably Salman, one of the corrupters of the original Quran, given the centrality of Salman in the narrative. The accusation that Muhammad slew Sergius “secretly”, — because he denied Sergius’ role in the Revelation and held to its angelic origin, — is, of course, based likewise on the testimony of one or more of those who transferred the authorship of the Quran from Sergius to Gabriel. Whilst rejecting the more negative elements of this testimony, we note also the numerous very valuable historical details embedded in it, which prove it originated at an early stage in the corruption of the tradition, only a little later than the eye-witness accounts in Sebeos, and in an era when the Sinaitic milieu of the original Revelation was still taken for granted. These historical details include: 1) the location of what was later known as the city of “Medina” at the “city of Midian” destroyed by the Israelites in Numbers 31, viz. Areopolis or Moabite Rabbath (Er-Rabba) south of the Arnon River; 2) the

location of Mecca at the city of Pharan in Wadi Feiran, Sinai, within the wider domain of Petra, Pharan being, indeed, in Muhammad's era, the center of the kingdom of the Saracens; 3) the gathering of 12,000 Jews at, and their conquest of, the "city of Midian", that is of Moabite Rabbath, Areopolis, in an obvious comparison with the 12,000 Israelites who took the cities of Midian in Numbers 31, and, thus, the implicit comparison of their subsequent campaign in Palestine with the Israelites' invasion of Canaan, which similarly followed the Midianite war; 4) the true background of the flight of Muhammad from "Mecca to Medina", viz. the flight of Muhammad from Pharan to Moabite Rabbath; 5) the subsequent success of Muhammad at "Medina" proved to be the alliance of Muhammad at Moabite Rabbath with the 12,000 Jews and their acceptance of him as a prophetic leader; 6) the seminal influence of Sergius Bahira on Muhammad; 7) the dating of the death of Sergius to the period following Muhammad's initial successes in Palestine, and prior to the death of Muhammad himself. }

Thomas Artzruni, II. 4 (14) (composed beginning of 10th century AD):

"How the wicked kingdom of the Persians came to an end and was succeeded by the even more wicked (kingdom) of the Ishmaelites

"In the time of the Byzantine emperor Heraclius the Persian kingdom reached its end. And at that time there came and gathered in the city of Edessa 12,000 men from all the tribes of Israel. As they had seen that the Persian army had left and abandoned the city, they entered (Edessa), closed the gates, fortified themselves therein, and began to rebel against Roman rule. But the emperor Heraclius commanded them to be besieged. The king's brother Theodore and the host of the army wished to slaughter them, but the king commanded them to go from his territory. They took the desert road and went to Arabia to the sons of Ishmael, to the city called Madiam {Midian}, which Israel had destroyed on leaving Egypt in its war with Balak, king of Moab. {For the account see Numbers ch. 31.} And because the Persian power had become very weak, they fearlessly entered the city of Madiam and dwelt in it.

"They sent messengers to the sons of Ishmael, indicating their close relationship: "We are sons of Abraham, we and you, brothers. You must come to our help, and we shall take the land of our inheritance". But although the latter were persuaded, yet there was a great division among them, because they were divided by the worship of idols according to each one's desire.

"At that time there were some despotic brothers in the regions of Arabia Petraea in the place (called) P'aran {Pharan}, which is now called Mak'a {Mecca} — warlike chieftains, worshipers of the temple of the Ammonites of the image called Samam and K'abar. It happened that one of them, called Abdla, died leaving a son of tender age called Mahmet {Muhammad}. His uncle Abutalib took and raised him until he reached puberty. On attaining a sufficient age he dwelt with a certain wealthy man from among their kin. He served him faithfully, pastured camels, and was the steward of his house. When some time had passed, the master of the house died. Seeing that Mahmet was a faithful man and very judicious in all worldly affairs, the wife (widow) married him and turned over to him all the supervision of the house and property. So he became a merchant by trade and skilled in commerce. He undertook distant journeys on mercantile business, to Egypt and the regions of Palestine. And while he was engaged in this business he happened to meet in the regions of Egypt a monk called Sargis Bhira, who had been a disciple of the mania of the Arians. {Thomas wrongly describes Sergius as an Arian, simply because he

denied the particular Trinitarian theology of the Armenian sect Thomas belonged to. Sergius was a Nestorian, with idiosyncratic doctrines which led to his exclusion from his parent community.} Becoming acquainted with him and in the course of time becoming friendly, he taught (Mahmet) many things, especially concerning the old testaments and that God has by nature no Son. {This, again, reflects Thomas' mistaken views as to Sergius' beliefs.} He tried to persuade him to follow the former faith of the Israelites: "For if you accept this, I predict that you will become a great general and the leader of all your race". He reminded him of God's promise to Abraham and of the rites of circumcision and sacrifice and all the other things which it is not necessary to mention here in detail. On these the Ishmaelites speculate to the very end (i.e. the *n*th degree). It happened one day when he was departing from him that a strange voice, an inspiration fearsome and demonic, fell upon him and drove him out of his senses {Thomas inserts here an aside concerning the mother of Antichrist.} For when his traveling companions asked why he had lost his wits, he said: "Some fearsome angel's voice fell on me and ordered me to go as a messenger to my nation, to show (them) God the Creator of heaven and earth, to take upon myself the title of leadership and to refute and destroy the false faith in idols". Coming to P'aran he repeated these same words to his uncle called Abljehr. He said: "What is this new faith which is now being revealed by you? If you say any more you will be responsible for your own safety". Grieved, he went to his own house, for he was continuously oppressed by the demon; perhaps God allowed him to suppose that his loss of reason (was caused) by an angel. And many of them believed him when he said he was a messenger of God.

"One day, when he was depressed from his uncle's threats, Ali son of Abutalib came in and said to him: "For what reasons do you sit depressed?" He said: "I preach God the creator of heaven and earth, but they reject me with threats". Now Ali was a valiant man. He said to him: "Arise, let us go out, for there are many men with us. Perhaps there may be some good solution to this matter."

"When they had gone outside, Mahmet began to speak the same words publicly. There was a great outcry among them and such a dispute that many of them drew their swords. Mahmet's side was defeated; many on both sides were wounded, and Mahmet and Ali fled with about forty men. They came to the city of Madiam which we mentioned above. On hearing the cause of their flight the Jews, like zealots for God and as sons of Abraham and mutual brothers, were emboldened to unity and to proclaim that his words were true. They joined him and made a pact, gave him a wife from their nation, and made ready to support him in whatever way his wishes might dictate. So one could say that it was by a command of God that this undertaking began. The Jews joined with the Ishmaelites, forming a large army. Attacking P'aran, they inflicted a great defeat on their opponents, killed Abljehr and many of the Ammonite and Moabite troops, destroyed the images of Samam in his temple, and dared say that the temple was the house of Abraham. They subjected all the inhabitants of the neighboring regions and wiped out by the sword all resistance.

"When Mahmet saw the success of this venture and the concord of the Jews, he proclaimed himself head and leader of them all. He appointed as his officers and generals Ali and Abubik'r and 'Amr and Ut'man. He sent a message to Theodore, the brother of Heraclius, in that the Jews had cooperated:

"God promised this land to Abraham and his seed, and it was in their possession for a long time. And if God was disgusted with their wicked deeds and gave it into your hands, let the period you have held it suffice for you. Now we are the sons of Abraham and you know the promise made to Ishmael our father. Give to us our land peacefully, otherwise we shall take it by war — and not only that (land) but also many others". He (Theodore) wished to show it to the king, but

Heraclius died in those same days. His son Constans did not agree to respond as he (Theodore) had wished, but simply ordered caution and not to wage war against them until he saw the outcome of events. But the army of Ishmael was vigorously straining for war. So wishing to defend the country (the Byzantines) went out against them. Leaving their horses, they opposed them on foot. The latter, having been at rest, attacked them. Exhausted by the weight of their arms, the great heat of the sun, the density of the sand which gave no support to the feet, and their tramping on foot, and distressed in every way, they fell into the hands of the enemy who slew them with their swords. Reaching the site of their camp, (the Muslims) seized a great amount of booty, and began fearlessly to spread over the land because they had no worries of any battle.

“Then the inhabitants of Jerusalem, seeing the perilous situation with no hope of help, took the divine holy symbol of the Lord with their church ornaments and brought them in flight to the imperial capital to Constans. And Ishmael ruled over all Judaea.

“Now the Arian monk whom we mentioned above, Mahmet’s teacher, on seeing his success rose up and went to Mahmet (to ask for) his kind favor, as if he had attained such things on being instructed by his teacher. But since (Mahmet) said he had a message from an angel and not from a man, he was very vexed at this and killed him secretly.

“At this very time there was a certain hermit in the regions of Persia who had a pupil called Salman. At the hour of his death the hermit gave him these instructions: “My son, on my death do not remain in this land lest you lose your faith among the infidels, but go to the regions of Egypt to dwell in the numerous company of brethren (monks) so that you may gain your soul”. When the hermit died, Salman intended to carry out his instructions. On his journey he happened to come to the city of Madiam; he had knowledge of the scriptures, though not a perfect one. When Mahmet saw him, he summoned him and attached him to him, and ordered him to write a book of laws for his nation by the hand of Abut’uraba the Ishmaelite; for he himself did not know writing or reading. Salman agreed to write for him and composed a fictitious book, some of it from accurate memory, other parts being imaginary sayings. But Mahmet himself, moved by a raving spirit, had him write perverse (things), of which we shall give brief extracts.

“He said that he was the Consoler whom the Lord Christ had promised to send to his disciples; he said he was equal to the Savior, his travelling companion — in the words of Isaiah: “riding one on a donkey, and the other on a camel”. All this he applied to himself. Instead of holy baptism (he prescribed) continual washings with water, and reckoned this was sufficient for purification. The heavenly gifts which the Lord has promised for the future, the ineffable and angelic renewal, he said were vast quantities of food and drink; should one wish to eat insatiably one would find them (already) prepared. And there would be continual and insatiable intercourse with women who remained virgins. It is too long to repeat all his impure sayings, for they are many and opposed to God. And all this he affirmed and set down for his nation, calling it the Quran.

“.... {Thomas inserts a diatribe against the Muslims.} All these evils he {Mahmet} accomplished, and even more laws than these he established for his nation in his multifarious wickedness. Having lived for twenty years in this fashion he died, and appointed Abubak’r to the leadership of the Arabs.”

Testimony #7: The Original Christian Quran According to the Arab from the Desert

This is what is called (in the Fourth Long Arabic Recension, [below](#), [>>](#), introduction and epilogue) the “History of Bahira with the Arab from the Desert”. The “Arab from the Desert” (*al-‘Arabi*) is here named as Mar Yahb (East Syriac Recension), Ishoyahb (West Syriac Recension) or Marhab (Arabic Recensions). The Arab from the Desert played an important role in the corruption of the text of the original Evangelical Quran as explained in the citation from Al-Kindi, [above](#), [>>](#). Al-Kindi dates the Arab’s Quranic work later than the Jew Ka’b’s interpolations and alterations. Accordingly, in all these recensions we find an original Christian (Nestorian) Evangelical catechism (viz. the original ‘Quran’ or ‘Recitation’ of Christian truths by Muhammad, as dictated to him by Sergius Bahira), followed immediately by a concluding section obviously representing a Jewish corruption and mockery of that catechism (viz. the forged Ka’b passages), followed towards the end of the History by a lengthy passage containing quotations and allusions to verses of the Quran supposedly dictated to Muhammad by Sergius Bahira. Amongst these verses in the Long Arabic Recension, [below](#), [>>](#), at 16.4, [below](#), [>>](#), 16.18, [below](#), [>>](#), 16.26, [below](#), [>>](#), 16.27, [below](#), [>>](#)) is Sura 9 (“The Immunity”) which is specifically said to have been derived from the Arab (or “Bedouin”) from the Desert in Al-Kindi (see [above](#), [>>](#)). Sergius is here represented as having repented at the end of his life for ever having given such deceitful messages to Muhammad, and as having confessed his evil to the Arab from the Desert. The Arab is said to have met Sergius in the last few days of his life, and to have personally written down his “confession”. Since Sergius died very shortly thereafter, there would be no way for any reader of the account to verify it with Sergius personally. Clearly, therefore, and in the light of Al-Kindi’s account of the Arab from the Desert, we can take it that this History was a forgery intended to undermine the authenticity of the original Evangelical Quran, of the prophet Sergius Bahira himself, and of Muhammad’s mission, and to validate the spurious Quranic verses peddled by the Arab from the Desert. This explains why the History incorporates also within the body of its text the corrupt passages added to the Evangelical Quran by the Jew Ka’b, even though the Arab from the Desert had no love for Jews. It was meant similarly to expose and mock the pretensions of Sergius and Muhammad. As the stratagem of the “near death confession” could have been employed only to explain to people who had personally known Sergius Bahira why they had not heard such things from him during his lifetime, this History, in its earliest form, may be presumed to have been composed within a single generation of Sergius and Muhammad, viz. c. AD 620-660, and prior to the formation of the Othmanic Quran which incorporated verses derived from the Arab from the Desert. It is therefore a powerful witness to the correctness of Al-Kindi’s account of how the Othmanic Quran was compiled.

The translation is that of B. Roggema (*The Legend of Sergius Bahira*, Brill, Leiden, 2009, pp. 255ff.), whose conclusions and interpretative analysis, however, are much different from mine. There are a few orthographic adjustments made here in order to simplify the reading of names.

My occasional notes are indented and enclosed in braces {}.

THE EAST SYRIAN RECENSION

{0} With the power of our Lord Jesus Christ we begin to write the account of Sergius, who is called the hater of the cross, which was done by Mar Yahb Alaha the Wanderer.

Note: this copy was made from an old copy, which was present in the monastery of Mar Jacob the Recluse, which is near Seert. In the year 1884 of our Lord it was copied and it was brought by the monks of Rabban Hormizd to the Monastery of the Virgin in the year 1896. During the depopulation and killing that happened to the Armenians that old copy perished and only this one remained.

{1} Now I, Mar Yahb the Wanderer, while I wandered in many places, {1.2} I also reached the inner desert {1.3} and I went up to Thebes {1.4} and I also went to the mountain of Yathrib.

{Note: Yathrib is traditionally the site of Medina, but Medina was originally the city of Midian, viz. Ar or Rabbath-Moab, the Roman Rabbathmoba and Areopolis, modern Er-Rabba in Jordan. Yathrib is elsewhere the name of a desert, not, as here, a ‘mountain’. The reference, evidently, is to the mountainous location of Rabbath-Moab:



*The location of The City of Midian, the original Medina, at Rabba, Jordan, at the foot of the “Mountain of Yathrib.”
An arm of the Dead Sea is visible to the west.*

Murray’s Handbook for Travellers in Syria and Palestine, Part II, London, 1868, p. 286: “RABBATH-MOAB, now called *Rabba*, is $\frac{1}{2}$ h. from Beit el-Kurm. The ruins are about 13 m. in circumference, and are *situated on a low hill commanding a view over the plains of Moab.* {My emphasis.} Here are the prostrate remains of some temples and other structures, possessing little interest in themselves, but historically important as the site of AR (which means “city”), the ancient capital of Moab (Deut. ii. 9, 29). There was an old proverbial expression, well known in the days of the Hebrew prophets, descriptive of the conquest of Moab by the Amorites, under Sihon their king. “There is a fire gone out of Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon; it hath consumed *Ar* of Moab, and the lords of the high places of Arnon ” (Num. xxi. 28; Jer. xlvi. 45). A prophecy of Isaiah, as explained by Jerome, is also worthy of notice: “In the night Ar of Moab is laid waste and brought to silence” (xv. 1); on which Jerome, commenting, states, “I have heard from a certain Areopolitan that one night during my infancy there was a great earthquake, which laid prostrate the whole walls of this city.” This occurred in the year A.D. 315. Eusebius informs us that it was also called *Rabbath* Moab-hence its modern name Rabba; it likewise received from the Greeks the more euphonious appellation of Areopolis. It

became an episcopal see, and, after the fall of Petra, the metropolis of the province of *Palaestina Tertia*. It has now been for centuries desolate. In fact, at the present time there seem to be only *four inhabited places* within the territory of Moab — Kerak, Ketherabba, 'Orak, and Khanzireh — the 3 last mere hamlets (Rte. 4); and Kerak itself has only 3000 Inhab. From Rabba to Kerak is 2 hrs. (For Kerak, see Rte. 4.) Such as desire to pass round the S. end of the Dead Sea, without throwing themselves into the hands of the Kerak robbers, may *descend the mountains from Rabba to the S.W.* {my emphasis}. The plain at the ruins of Zoar, near the neck of the peninsula, can thus be reached in about 8 hrs.; the road leading down a wild ravine called Wady Beni Hemad. The remainder of the way round the southern end of the Dead Sea and through the wilderness to Hebron is described in Rte. 4." Perseus <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>, citing "The Princeton encyclopedia of classical sites. Stillwell, Richard. MacDonald, William L. McAlister, Marian Holland. Princeton, N.J. Princeton University Press. 1976, under Rabbathmoba: "Town in the Provincia Arabia E of the Dead Sea, in Moab, built on the site of the biblical town of Ir Moab. The first settlement of the Roman period was by the Nabateans, and the first mention in the sources is by Ptolemy (5.16.4). In the 2d c. A.D. it was an administrative center, as is attested by documents sealed there and found in the Dead Sea Caves, and by impressions made by the official seal of Rabbathmoba, found in the 2d c. Nabatean necropolis of Mamphis in the central Negev. Eusebius (Onom. 124.15-17) states that the city was known as Areopolis, the city of Ares, a name which frequently figures in Byzantine sources. Ares, in the form of the Semitic god Phanebalos, appears on another seal impression of the city found at Mamphis. Rabbathmoba figures on the Peutinger Table and, according to the Notitia Dignitatum, a unit of Illyrian cavalrymen was stationed there. No excavations have been made, but surveys have identified the remains of a Nabatean temple with a tripartite plan."}

I entered the desert of the Sons of Ishmael and I saw the whole of the people of the Sons of Hagar, {1.5} who are barbarian and primitive like wild desert asses. {2} And I found Sergius [2a] there with them. {2.2} They call him 'Bahira' and 'the chosen one', because he prophesied to them about their kingdom and about the twenty-four kings that would rule their future generations.

{2.3} Sergius, now, was of old age. {2.4} I went to him and greeted him. {2.5} He sighed and wept bitterly and said to me: 'I have been here for forty years and I have not seen a single Christian here, except you. Now I know that the end of my life is at hand.' {2.6} Then I began to converse with him and to ask him about how he had come there. He then said to me: 'O Sir, I was for a long time in the monastery of the Hireans. {2.7} Then the idea of going to Jerusalem occurred to me, so as to travel around the holy sites. And this I did indeed. {3} Next I went up to Mount Sinai, where Moses received a divine revelation. {3.2} And I heard people say that anyone who passes the night on top of the mountain is worthy [2b] of a divine revelation. {3.3} 'And he who is from the East is sent to the West and he who is from the West is sent to the East.'

{3.4} And next they finished the psalms in the church inside the monastery, and when they left the refectory, guards went around that monastery and nobody was permitted to stay there overnight. {3.6} Then I got up secretly and climbed to the top of the mountain. {3.7} And there I saw a great, unspeakable light and innumerable myriads of angels. And I saw a great cross that gave light to the whole creation, and in brilliance it surpassed the sun. {3.8} I was very frightened and great fear befell me. {3.9} Then one of the angels approached me and said to me: 'Take heart and do not fear!' {3.11} And I saw the four winds of the sky stirring up each other.

{3.12} And I saw a white beast coming on the wind of the South and it ate the East and the West and the South and the North and the sea and it settled in the desert. And [3a] on its head were twelve horns. And I said to the angel: ‘What is this, my lord?’ And he said to me: ‘This is the kingdom of the Ishmaelites’.

{3.13} Then I saw a black beast on the wind of the North and it ate the East and the West and the South and the North and the sea and it settled in the land of Babel. And on its head were seven horns. And I said to the angel: ‘What is this, my lord?’ And he said to me: ‘This is the kingdom of the Sons of Hashim son of Muhammad’.

{3.14} And then I saw a bull coming in great calm and humility, on the wind of the South. And on its head were five horns. And it ate the four quarters of the world and it settled in Assur. And I said to the angel: ‘What is this bull, my lord?’ And he said to me: ‘This is the kingdom of Mahdi, son of Fatima, and as the bull is calm and humble and peaceful, likewise his kingdom will be more humble and peaceful than all the kingdoms. All the tribes of the Sons of Ishmael await him and with him [3b] the kingdom of the Arabs will end.’

{3.15} And I saw a panther dressed in a garment of blood, on the wind of the West. And I said to the angel: ‘And this, what is this, my lord?’ And he said to me: ‘This is the kingdom of the Sons of Sufyan. And he will raise all the kingdoms of the Sons of Ishmael with the edge of the sword, and he will persecute them to the mountain of Yathrib.’

{3.16} And then I saw a yearling goat coming. And I said to the angel: ‘Who is he, my lord?’ He said to me: ‘This is the seed of Joktan, who are the people from Qatar’.

{3.17 } And then I saw a lion coming with great and mighty force. It trampled and struck all, and it devoured all. And there was no one that could withstand him. And I said to the angel: ‘Who is he, my lord?’. He said to me: ‘The Mightiest Mahdi, son of A’isha, is his name. And in his days there will be great suffering and persecution, the like of which is not in the world.’

{3.18} And then I saw a man dressed in a green garment. And I said to the angel: ‘Who is this, my lord?’. He said to me: ‘This is the last kingdom [4a] of the Sons of Hagar, with which will be their end and their disappearance from the earth’.

{3.19} And then I saw a chariot, ornamented with all kinds of beautiful things. And I said to the angel: ‘Who is this, my lord?’. He said to me: ‘This is the kingdom of the Romans, who will rule at the end of all the kingdoms of the world’.

{3.20} Then I saw a great dragon, as it came creeping and devouring mercilessly. And I said to the angel: ‘Who is this dragon, my lord?’ He said to me: ‘He is the Son of Perdition, who is bound to come at the end of the world’.

{3.21} And then I saw Satan who fell like a flash of lightning from the sky, and he was filled with envy, contention and hatred toward the whole of the race of Adam.

{3.22} And then I saw a man coming on the wind of the East, who was dressed in glory, honor and magnificence. And I said to the angel: ‘Who is this, my lord?’. He said to me: ‘This is the Prophet Elijah, son of strangers, who will come at the end of the world. And he is a messenger before Christ.’

{3.23} And then I saw the crown of the king and [4b] the venerable cross, being raised up and ascending to heaven.

{3.24} And then I saw three angels dressed in fire and arrayed in flames. And I said to the angel: ‘Who are they, my lord?’ And he answered, saying to me: ‘Gabriel and Michael and ‘Azrael.’ {3.25} And I went forward a little. And one of them said to me: ‘Follow me!’ And I followed him in fear and trembling. {3.26} And I ascended behind him to heaven. {3.27} And there I saw a great unspeakable light, {3.28} and the nine orders of angels in nine ranks, {3.29} and the Spirit of God descending from heaven, {3.30} and the Ancient of Days, highly extolled in the clouds, who is Christ, Saviour of the world, {3.31} and the world being dissolved and passing away, and heaven, being rolled up like a scroll and passing away, {3.32} and everything passing away and vanishing, {3.33} and the earth being dissolved, passing away and becoming desolate and waste. And everything became like nothing.

{3.36} And there I saw Adam, father of all of us, and all the righteous and virtuous [5a] fathers, and Noah and his sons, and also Melchizedek and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Joseph and Job and Enoch and Elijah and Moses and Aaron, and the host of the prophets and the company of the apostles and the twelve thrones of the apostles, and King David chanting hallelujah, {3.37} and the tree of life, and the tree of good and evil, and the great spring that goes out in the middle of paradise and spreads into four rivers, Gihon and Pishon and the Tigris and the great river Euphrates, which give life to the whole world.

{3.38} Then the angel said to me: ‘Look down and observe the bottomless pit, for it is Gehenna’ {3.39} And I saw the unquenchable fire and the worm that does not die, and great eternal torment and innumerable people, screaming, gnashing their teeth, weeping and lamenting endlessly and sighing. And I sighed and wept and said: ‘What gain is there to a man if he acquires the whole world and loses his soul’. {3.40} All this I saw with my soul and not with my body.

{4} Then [5b] the angel said to me: ‘Go to Maurice, King of the Greeks, and break your staff before him and say to him: “In like manner will your kingdom be broken, and you will not let your sons inherit it, as you expect”.’ {4.2} And I went and did as the angel had told me. He did not get angry with me and he did not answer me anything evil, but said to me: ‘the will of our Lord shall be’. {4.3} And when one of the officers heard that I was sent by God, he set up a revolt against him and killed [him], and it was fulfilled.

{4.4} Then I left for the land of the Persians and went to Chosroes the King, and I broke the half of my staff before him and said to him: ‘In like manner will your kingdom be broken by the wild asses that are in the desert, who are the Sons of Hagar’. He did not get angry with me either, nor did he say anything evil. {4.5} But he asked me: ‘How did you go to Maurice, King of the Greeks, and what did you say to him and what did he reply to you? {4.6} And what is Mount Sinai where you received a revelation from God?’, and he said to me: ‘What did you see [6a] there?’ And I told him that I saw that the wild ass from the desert came and took the crown from his head and the earrings that he had. And he did not answer me anything evil, but said to me: ‘Go in peace’.

{5} Then I left Bet Parsaye and went to Bet Aramaye, preaching to them that they should bow in worship to one cross and not to many. And when the bishops and leaders of Bet Aramaye heard about me they chased me from place to place {6} and then I left Shinar and went into the desert of the Sons of Ishmael. And when they saw that I had come to them, {6.5} I proclaimed to them a kingdom of ten great weeks. {6.8} And they built a cell for me, and dug for me this well.’

{7} I, now, Mar Yahb, when I had stayed with him seven days, Mar Sergius became ill and died, {7.1} and I enshrouded him and they put his bones in his cell, and they took his body and put it in a [house].

{7.2} Because he had prophesied to them something they liked and {7.3} had written and handed down [6b] to them this book which they call ‘Quran’, {7.4} they embalmed him and put him in the grave with great pomp. {8} Next to his bones God performed a great miracle, as one man murdered his brother and the murderer said: ‘The slave of the victim killed my brother’. And by means of the bones of Mar Sergius the killer became known before the eyes of all the people, {8.1} for right at that moment his hand withered.

{9} Then, after Mar Sergius died, a man rose up from the Jews whose name was known as Ka‘b the Scribe, {9.2} and he was a teacher, a scribe, and a prophet for them. {9.4} He corrupted the teaching of Mar Sergius, {9.5} since he told them that the one about whom Christ said: ‘Behold, after me the Paraclete will come to you’ that that is Muhammad. {9.6} And lo, until our day they adhere to and follow this tradition that Muhammad is the Paraclete.

{10} From his disciple, who was called Hakim the White, {10.1} I heard: ‘In my youth, [7a] my whole body was filled with leprosy, and I was also tempted by Satan and my parents chased me away from them. {10.2} While I was wandering in the desert, this Father Mar Sergius, whom they call ‘Bahira’ and ‘the Chosen One of God’, found me and asked me: ‘Why are you wandering through the desert all alone?’ I then answered him: ‘My parents chased me away from them, because I had this illness of leprosy and a foul ulcer’. {10.3} He answered me: ‘If you believe in Christ Son of the Living God you will be cured’. I then answered him: ‘If I will be cured I will believe’. Then he put his hand on me and cured me. {10.4} He pronounced the following, while he blessed my body and placed his right hand on my head: ‘In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit’ and ‘In the name of Jesus Christ’, and that evil spirit left me. {10.5} Then I went immediately to my parents and when my parents saw that he had cured [7b] my body, {10.6} they were struck with astonishment and surprise. {10.7} And when all the people in that desert had heard this, they brought a man to him who was very badly driven by a demon. He then made to him the sign of the cross and cured him entirely. They also brought a deaf and dumb boy to him. He cured him instantly and opened his mouth and ears, and he spoke and heard clearly. Another boy who was full of leprosy was purified. {10.8} And the Lord wrought many miracles through the hands of this Mar Sergius.

{11} And because there was no water in that desert in which they lived, they came to him continuously, they and their cattle, and they refreshed themselves at his water well. {11.1} This water well was also made to sprout for him at that place by our Lord Christ. {11.2} Everybody would approach him and ask him questions about everything. {11.3} And they would do everything he told them, because he taught them this belief [8a] to which they adhere a little. {11.5} He prophesied to them and said: ‘God will raise up a great man for you from amongst you {11.6} and kings of the earth will come forth from his loin and he will become very numerous on the earth and his name is Muhammad’.

{12} And on a certain day when they were coming to the well, Bahira was standing outside of his cell. He looked and saw them coming from far away, Muhammad being with them. {12.1} And when he saw him, he knew that something great was to become of the boy, {12.2} as he saw a vision above him and he knew that in him his prophecy would be fulfilled. {12.3} When they arrived at the well, they went to him in the cell, according to their habit. {12.4} The boy Muhammad was sitting outside at the well, saying to himself ‘When my brothers come out and leave, I will enter too’. {12.5} Then Mar Sergius Bahira said to them: ‘There is someone with you who is bound to become great’. They said to him: ‘There is a [8b] simple-minded foolish boy with us’. Father Sergius said to them: ‘Call him, so

that I can see him'. {12.6} And when he came in, Sergius stood up and sat down again. He told them about the vision that was above his head. {12.7} They, however, were not aware of the vision.

{13} He then blessed him {13.1} and said to him: 'The Lord will magnify you and your sons after you, and you will become very mighty and numerous on the earth. Twelve kings will come forth from your loins, and their seat will be in the land of Babel. Your kingdom will be mighty on the whole earth and they will conquer many areas and cities and they will defeat strong kings. And there will be peace in the whole world. There is not one kingdom that draws near to them which they will not defeat'.

{Note: here begins the Original Evangelical Quran, meaning "Recitation". It was a recitation by Muhammad of the catechism taught to him by Sergius Bahira. Muhammad was unable to read and write, and therefore had to learn the catechism by heart in order to repeat it to his Ishmaelite compatriots.}

{13.2 } When Muhammad had heard from Sergius that he had prophesied to him about his family and about him and his tribe, {14} he asked Sergius: 'From where did you receive this revelation?'

Sergius said: 'From Mount Sinai where Moses received [9a] divine revelations'.

{14.2} Muhammad said: 'For what reason?'

Sergius Bahira said: 'You are destined to become a master and a king and a prophet and a leader and a head of your people. {14.3} Twenty-four kings will come forth from your loins and {14.4} you will convert the sons of your people from the worship of demons to the knowledge and worship of the One True God'.

{14.5} Muhammad said: 'And you, which God do you worship?' Mar Sergius said: 'The God who made heaven and earth, light and darkness, the seas and the rivers, the birds of the sky and the animals and the cattle and all that creeps on the earth, and all of mankind, together with the orders of fire and of spirit. Him they worship and praise and cry "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, by whose praises heaven and earth are filled".'

{14.6} Muhammad said: 'And where is the dwelling-place of the God about whom you say these things?' Sergius said: 'In heaven'.

{14.7} Muhammad said: 'From [9b] where do you know Him?' Sergius said: 'From His creation and from the ancient prophets'.

{14.8} Muhammad said: 'Who are they, the prophets?'

Sergius said: 'They are righteous people, who fear God and keep His commandments. The Lord revealed himself to them through the Holy Spirit'.

{14.9} Muhammad said: 'Who is the Holy Spirit?'

Sergius said: 'The Spirit of God, who is sent from Him to whoever fears Him and does His will'.

{14. 10} Muhammad said: 'You, whom do you worship?' Sergius said: 'The Living God'.

{14.11} Muhammad said: 'And people, whom did they worship of old?'

Sergius said: 'Some of them worshiped fire, some of them stones, some of them stars, some of them trees, some of them demons, and some of them graven images. And when God saw all this erring in the world He pitied the race of man and sent prophets to them and they turned the peoples from the false

worship of the demons to the knowledge of Truth and to the worship of One [10a] God’.

{14.12} Muhammad said: ‘Which one of those do you worship and what is your belief?’.

Sergius said: ‘I am a Christian and I worship the One God’.

{14.13} Muhammad said: ‘What is Christianity?’

Sergius said: ‘It is the faith that Christ taught us’.

{14.14} Muhammad said: ‘Who is Christ?’

Sergius said: ‘Christ is the Word of God and His Spirit’.

{14.15} Muhammad said: ‘Is he a prophet or a human being like you and me?’

Sergius said: ‘[The human being in whom God dwelled.] The Word of God was sent from heaven through Gabriel the Archangel to Mary the Virgin, who descended from Abraham and from the seed of David. And she conceived without intercourse through the power of the Holy Spirit, and she gave birth to a son without intercourse as the prophets had prophesied’.

{4.18} Muhammad said: ‘How did the Virgin give birth without intercourse?’

Sergius said: ‘The Spirit of God descended from heaven and the Word clothed himself with a body from the Virgin, and she gave birth to a son without [10b] intercourse and God came to be in a human being’.

{4.19} Muhammad said: And where is Christ now?’

Sergius said: After he rose from the grave he went to heaven’.

{14.20} Muhammad said: And how long was he in the grave?’ Sergius said: ‘Three days’.

{14.21} Muhammad said: And what was the cause of his death?’ Sergius said: ‘Willingly he came to the passion and not by force, and he delivered himself up into the hands of the Jews, the oppressors, and they crucified him in Jerusalem. He died and he was put in the grave and on the third day he rose from the grave and showed himself to his disciples and he gave them certainty about his resurrection. He stayed on earth for forty days and after that he went up to heaven and took seat at the right hand of God, in the heavenly holiest of holy, above the principalities and powers. And as he came to be, likewise will be done to the whole of his race’.

{14.22} Muhammad said: ‘Why do you worship a crucified man?’ Sergius said: ‘It is Him I worship, in the man by whom He worked many miracles and wonders on earth and whom [11a] he raised with Him to heaven and through whom He will bring about the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked, for He is the adorable God in his invisible nature’.

{15} Muhammad said: ‘Ask me anything you desire and I will do it for you, if these things will happen to me like you have told me’. {15.1} Sergius said: ‘I make a request to you on behalf of the Christians, the followers of Christ, that those who will come forth from your loins and your religion will not shed the blood of Christian people, who have put on Christ. There are people among them who are dressed like me, and they are called ‘monks’, {15.2} being priests and deacons. They abandoned their parents and brothers and houses and cities and everything in the world, and they went out to the desert and the wilderness, and they built monasteries and convents. And they are humble, neither haughty nor arrogant. They fear God and keep his commandments, and they do not care for anything in the world,

nor do they have women or sons. Nay, all their hope depends on [11b] God. And therefore they set themselves apart and they abandoned the world, and they pray and beseech God, for the kings and the judges, for the righteous and the wicked, that we may live a quiet and peaceful life. {15.3} And when you treat them with this kindness, God will lengthen your life and also that of your sons after you. He will make them great and your kingdom will increase during all the years of the life of the world. And no kingdom that rises against them will be able to defeat them. None will defeat you, {15.4} except the kingdom of the Romans, which has sought recourse with the cross, which is the strong, invincible weapon, on which Christ, Saviour of the world, was crucified’.

{Note: here begins the corrupt passages inserted into the original Christian Quran by Ka’b the Jew. The Jewish tone is evident, as well as the intention to undermine the credibility of the Nestorian Christian mission of Sergius and Muhammad.}

{16} Then Muhammad said to Mar Sergius: ‘Everything you ask will be for you, but how will they believe in me, not knowing a book?’ Mar Sergius said to him: ‘I will teach you everything’.

{16.1} Muhammad said: ‘I fear that they will not recognize me and that they will kill you and do me harm, and that they will regard me as [12a] an impostor.’

{16.2} Sergius said: ‘I will teach you everything at night, and you teach them during the day’.

{16.3} Muhammad said: And if they say to me: “From where did you receive this vision or teaching?”, what shall I say to them?”.

Sergius said: ‘Say to them “The angel Gabriel has come to me at night and he has taught me all that will happen”.’

{16.4} Muhammad said: And if they say to me: “What is there in the other world?”, what shall I say to them?”.

Sergius said: ‘Say to them that there is a paradise and trees and that the best of all things are there.’

{16.5} Muhammad said: And if they say to me: “What will we eat and drink there?”, what shall I say to them?”.

Sergius said: ‘Say to them: “you will eat and drink and enjoy in paradise”, and “there are four rivers there, one of honey, one of milk, one of wine and one of water”.’

{16.6} Muhammad said: ‘When I say to them: “you will eat and drink in paradise” they will say to me: “there is food and drink there and nature’s call”.’

Sergius said: [12b] ‘Say to them: “it will disappear from the body like sweat”.’

{16.7} Muhammad said: ‘And when I say to them: “you will eat and drink in paradise and enjoy” and they say to me: “we cannot endure there without intercourse”, what shall I say to them?’

Sergius said: ‘You tell them also: “there are beautiful young girls there with big eyes and beautiful appearances and with lovely looks, who are very plump. Seven will be given to each man”.’

{16.8} Muhammad said: And if I say: “fast and pray” and they say to me: “we will not pray and fast all day” what shall I say to them?’

{16.9} Sergius said: ‘Command them to fast thirty days only and say to them: “eat and drink all night until you can distinguish a white from a black thread”.’

{16.10} Muhammad said: And if they say to me: “what is allowed to us to eat and drink and from [what] should we abstain?”, what shall I say to them?”

Sergius said: ‘Warn them [13a] against wine, fornication, gluttony, pork and anything strangled and carrion, against murder, false witnessing, hypocrisy, adultery and drunkenness, and against theft, rapine and oppression.” Treat the orphans and widows justly,” and honor your father and your mother, so that days of your life will be many on the earth. [Then] your sins will be forgiven.’

{16.12} Muhammad said: And where should one pray to God every day?’.

Sergius said: ‘Build a house for God and pray five times a day and twice at night, every day of your lives. And strike the sounding-board. {16.13} And let Friday be distinguished for you and more honored than all other days. And make a great congregation on it and a fixed prayer, because on that day you will have received the Law’.

{16.14} Muhammad said: And if they say to me: “give us a testimony that your promise to us is true” what shall I say to them?’ [13b]

Sergius said: ‘I will write a book for you and teach it to you. And on Friday I will put it on the horn of a cow and you go and gather all of the sons of your people in one place. Sit down with them and say to them: “know that today God sends to you from heaven a great book of commandments and laws according to which you shall live every day of your lives”. And when you see the cow coming, stand up from your place, go towards her and take the book from her horn in the presence of all of them. And say to them: “this book descended from heaven, from God. The earth was not worthy to receive it, so this cow received it on her horn”.’ {16.15} And until this day it is called the ‘Scripture of the Cow’.

{Note: here ends the corruptions added by Ka‘b.}

{16.16} Because he was a humble, simple boy, Muhammad liked the daily teaching of Mar Sergius. And he wrote [14a] for them this book which they call ‘Quran’, at the hands of Muhammad. They studied it every day of their lives until the death of Bahira, he who prophesied to them.

{17} He said that all these things are bound to happen in the days of the Sons of Ishmael, saying: ‘There will be much suffering and slaughter and famine and plague in every region, and a quake in heaven and great bloodshed in many places. {17.1} And cities will be overturned upon their inhabitants and in them will be fulfilled that which the blessed David said: ‘their graves are their houses forever and their dwelling place for generations’, {17.2} because the Lord despised his people and He let not live His inheritance, who are the sons of the Promised Land.

{17.3} And in the year 1055 of Alexander, son of Philip, King of the Romans, the Arabs killed their king and after that there was much unrest in the world during one week. {17.4} And in that very year [14b] the word of God toward the Ishmaelites was fulfilled, as ‘he will beget twelve great leaders’ and ‘lo, twelve kings will come forth from his loin’. The kingdom of the rulers of the Sons of Ishmael came to an end.

{17.7} Then the kingdom of the Sons of Muhammad. That is: the kingdom of the Sons of Ishmael will come to an end, and it will be given to your youngest son Hashim, he whom you love. {17.8} He will come from a foreign land on the wind of the North in the likeness of a dark cloud that covers the whole earth. {17.9} And they are the Sons of Hashim. Eight kings will come forth from of his loin. {17.10}

Woe to the people in the time when the Sons of Hashim reign. {17.11 } He called them and said [about them] that they are ‘the carnal ones’, the dark scepter, which is sent in order that God chastise the world through them {17.12} with the rod of anger, ‘the Assyrian’, in accordance with the words of the Prophet Isaiah who said that {17.13} the coming of the Sons of Hashim on the whole earth will be [15a] in the likeness of ‘the Assyrian’. {17.14} He calls them haughty, proud and vainglorious, and they let the hairs of their head grow like women. {17.16 } They are not satisfied with anything {17.19} and they will shed the blood of the people like water. {17.20} Through them there will be severe famine and plague everywhere, and slaughter and bloodshed. {17.21} And people will sell their sons for the poll-tax. {17.22} And they will enslave free men and women. {17.23} And they will not have mercy on the old people and the infants. {17.24} People will become food for the birds and the beasts of the earth. {17.25} His yoke will be seven times heavier on the world than that of their brothers. {17.26} And the people will not count for anything in their eyes. {17.28} And they will uproot the cities of the ancient kings and they rebuild them {17.29} and they will enlarge the walls of Shinar. {17.30} All their glory and might will be in the city of Babel, and in the land of the Chaldeans they will glorify themselves. {17.31} And the kings of the earth will come to Babel, {17.32} bound in fetters and their honored ones in iron chains. {17.33} And all the cities of the kings will be subdued to Babel and they will come to it from [15b] all nations. {17.35} And the land of Babel will be filled with people from the four winds of heaven, {17.36} like locusts that are gathered by a whirlwind. {17.37} And Babel will be tormented by its inhabitants. {17.38} In that time the wisdom of the wise will be despised {17.39} and the knowledge of the ignorant will be glorified. {17.40} And people will be destitute of love. And fathers will not love their sons, and sons will not have respect for their fathers. A brother will not keep the truth for his brother. A man will not reveal his secret to his son and a man’s enemies are the men of his own house. {17.41} Slaves will rule and march in triumph on chariots and {17.42} free men will be despised and will walk on the earth. Old men will be mocked and youngsters will be honored. The rich will go bankrupt. Slaves will sit on thrones and the master on the ground. {17.43} And trees will be deprived of fruits and the earth of crops. Springs will dry up and they will not sprout forth as usual, because of the evil of these men. {17.51} All these things are bound to [16a] happen in the days of the Sons of Hashim {17.52} Signs will be in the sky and mighty acts on earth. And the sun will become dark, and the moon will not show its light. Dust will come down from heaven and stars will fall like leaves, and they will appear in the sky like spears. The land of Babel will tremble and quake twice on a day. {17.53} And the Sons of Ishmael will be numerous like stars in the sky and like sand at the seaside. {17.54} [If they could, they would convert the whole people to their worship and their belief.]

{17.56} Then the Sons of Ishmael and the Sons of Abraham will split in two and kill and plunder and destroy each other and they will be left to themselves, because their end is near and because of the completion of their days.

{17.57} Hashim will father eight sons. Two with one name. Two from the Torah. One with three signs and another with seven. Another with five. {17.58} And when all these things have been fulfilled: know that the kingdom of the Sons of Hashim has come to an end. {17.59} Then they will wake up as if from sleep and stand up [16b] against each other. And every one of them will say about himself ‘I am the king’. {17.60} God will let them go their way, and He will incite them against each other. {17.61 } And their end will be brought about by themselves, because they became corrupted. And the earth is filled by them.

{17.62} Then God will entrust the kingdom of the Sons of Hashim into the hands of Mahdi, son of Fatima, and all kingdoms and tribes of the Sons of Ishmael await him. {17.63} And God will recompense them for their deeds. {17.64} He will uproot the city of Babel and destroy its stronghold and pull down its walls. {17.66} In it will be fulfilled: ‘Woe to you Shinar, woe to you city of the Chaldeans. {17.67} You raised yourself up to heaven, to Sheol you will be brought down.’ And Babel will be the laughingstock and disgrace. And all who pass it will hiss and say: ‘where is your glory, mother of cities, who subdued kings with your tyranny?’

{17.68} And in the days of Mahdi, son of Fatima, there will be peace on earth, the like of which was never before in the world. And behold, he observes all [17a] commandments and laws of his father Muhammad, all days of his life and of the sons after him. {17.69} And from the first Muhammad to the last Muhammad, the one with whom their kingdom will come to end, there will be twenty-five kings, sons of Muhammad.

{17.71} Then people dressed in clothes of blood will go out from the East. Their scheming and anger and wrath will be against the Sons of Ishmael. And they will make them get up and chase them up to the mountain of Yathrib. {17.72} They have neither mercy nor pity for the Sons of Ishmael. And they kill them with the edge of the sword, from men to women, from children to infants. They will not have mercy for pregnant women and they will smash their infants against a rock, because they are sent for a speedy end.

{17.73} And then the Sons of Joktan will come from the North, who are the yearling goat, and they will reach the Promised Land, who are the people of Qatar. Then [17b] the sons of the earth shall fear.

{17.74} Then comes a lion that eats everything and tramples everything and will say: ‘I am the Mahdi who is sent by God as a messenger to convert the world to one belief and to the knowledge of truth’. And there will be much persecution the like of which was never before. {17.76} And all his anger and wrath will be on the Sons of Israel and especially on the people that chose Christ for its name. {17.78} He will uproot churches and monasteries and places of congregation. And he will pull down the altars and there will be a lot of blood among the people. {17.79} There will be many deaths by famine and deaths by the edge of the sword. {17.80} Many of the sons of the church will stray from the truth and they will follow him in order to worship demons and bring sacrifices to them. And those who repent are one in ten. {17.83} And then people will begin to say to the mountains ‘Fall upon us!’, and to the hills ‘Cover us!’. {17.85} And whoever perseveres to the end will live. {17.86} God does not send him to the world out of love, but because of the wickedness of the people which is great in the world, and especially among the sons [18a] of the church, who corrupted the way of God and did not keep His commandments which were commanded by Our Lord Jesus Christ who said: ‘do not swear at all, not by heaven, which is the throne of God, nor by the earth which is the footstool beneath His feet, nor swear by your head, on which you could not make one hair, either black or white’. And now they do not resemble Christians, when they deny God and forswear His Christ, without being forced. {17.88} They feared and served created things, more than the Creator of these to whom are due all praises and blessings for ever and ever, Amen. {17.89} Because of this, God has delivered them up to all tortures, on account of the wickedness of their deeds, {17.90} for they are deceivers, lovers of themselves, hypocrites, lovers of their belly and lovers of vainglory of this world more than lovers of God. {17.91} And because of this, He delivered them to the chastisement of the Sons of Ishmael, the wicked ones, {17.92} the reckless ones [18b] who are sent all over the whole world. {17.93} And know that when all these things have come to pass, the world has come to an end and the end of times has arrived.

{17.94} Then a king dressed in green clothes will come from the East and through him there will be great peace and quiet in the world. Churches will be built and monasteries will be restored. He is the last one whom the world expects to come at the end of the kingdoms of the Sons of Ishmael.

{17.100} Then the Romans will come {17.101} and they will rule on the whole earth for a week and a half. And there will be great peace in their days, {17.102} for this is the last peace, of which Our Lord has spoken. {17.103} And then the four winds of heaven will be stirred up and kingdoms will stand up against each other. {17.104} And the Turks will come, who have the likeness of wolves. {17.105} And then the Daylamis will go out, who are wolves, and they will destroy each other. {17.107} Then the gates of the North will be opened and the people of Gog and Magog will go out, who resemble dogs, {17.108} and they will do all that is evil in this world. They eat the reptiles of the earth and they eat the people [19a] and kill the children and give them to their mothers to boil and to eat. And they pity neither the old people nor the infants. {17.109} Then the great evil dragon will come, who is the Son of Perdition and he creeps on the earth and swallows all without pity. {17.110} Then God will send the angel of wrath and he gathers them to one place and destroys them in one hour. And they will burn and dissolve like wax before fire.

{17.114} Then Elijah, man of fire, will appear and he will destroy the dragon with the breath of his mouth. {17.115} Then the cross will be raised up and made to ascend to heaven {17.116} and the king will surrender himself to God. {17.118} Then death shall rule over all.

{17.119} And the first horn will sound and all the people will sleep the sleep of death. And the second horn will sound and all the ones buried will wake up and stand up as if from sleep. And the third horn will sound and the angels will descend from heaven, and then they will choose the tares [19b] from among the grains of wheat. The grains of wheat will be collected in the stores of the house of the Father, in the heavenly habitations. And the tares will be thrown into an unquenchable fire, {17.120} on the day of the revelation of our Lord.

{17.121} In sum: his coming is full of fright. And the earth will be stirred up upon its inhabitants. In every place where there is dust from the remains of people, it will swiftly come to life. And the command will swiftly resurrect all the people from the dust.

{17.122} And we ask and beseech Our Lord Jesus Christ that on that hour He will deem us worthy, by His grace, of the intimacy with His chosen ones, to chant praise continuously, here in life and there in life, with that infinite delight forever and ever. Amen.'

{19} The account of Mar Sergius, called Bahira, written by the monk Mar Yahb, has come to an end. Now I, Mar Yahb, composed it after the death of Mar Sergius, after I had learned everything from his own mouth. And when I departed, after his death, and came to Bet Aramaye and undertook a careful investigation about him, [20a] I found out that he was originally from the region of Bet Garmai, from a village called Shushan. He was priest in rank and he was well versed in the holy books. And wherever he stayed, in a church or in a monastery or the shrine of a martyr, he used to secretly get up at night and break all the crosses. He would not leave any except one single one, not because he hated crosses he honored crosses more than all people but he used to say: 'we ought to bow in worship to one cross and not to many. This is why it is proper for us to honor one: because also Christ was crucified on one and not on many'. And because of this he was banished from the church and he fled to the Sons of Ishmael.

{20} Further, the tradition which Ka'b the Scribe — cursed be his memory, Amen — passed on to the

Ishmaelites. He confounded and corrupted everything that Sergius had written originally.

{Note: here the Arab from the Desert admits the original Quran had been corrupted by Ka‘b, as exemplified in the passages given *supra* following the Christian catechism Similarly at section 22 *infra*.}

For the Sons of Ishmael were uncivilized pagans, like horses [20b] without a bridle. They bowed in worship to the idol of al-Kabar, who is Iblis. The names of the demons are these: Bahrain, god of the Persians, [Anahid], goddess of the Arameans, and ‘Udi of the Hittites: these are the sons of Hormizd. And Awkbar of the Ishmaelites, Baal of the Babylonians, and Artemis, goddess of the Ephesians; these are the Sons of the South. And they attribute the names of the demons to the stars and bow in worship to them until this day.

When the false worship of the demons was established everywhere, they worshipped Awkbar and the Stone and the well that is called Zamzam and the grave of Jannes and Jambres, the magicians of Egypt. And in their days there was division and false worship of demons among the people. About Hormizd and Ahriman they say that Hormizd gave birth to light and Ahriman to darkness, and Hormizd gave birth to good and Ahriman to evil. Bahram, ‘Udi and Anahid, the children of Hormizd: their names are on high, in heaven. Baal, Awkbar and Artemis, the children of Ahriman: [21a] their names are down on the earth. And the Sons of Ishmael, lo, they provoke the anger of God every day of their lives with their polytheistic worship of Awkbar, without being aware of it. And the name of Awkbar is proclaimed by them shamelessly with a loud voice, and lo, they sacrifice to him year after year, until our day.

{21} Further, the affair of Muhammad’s death: If a person asks some of them about his grave they do not know it, because they adhere to the tradition which, as they say, Ka‘b the Jewish scribe handed down to them, who said to them that Muhammad is the Paraclete, whom Christ has promised, and that after him no other prophet would rise, because he is the Seal of the Prophets. And because of this, Muhammad, about whom Sergius Bahira prophesied and afterwards Ka‘b, is held in great honor. When Muhammad died he was highly esteemed in the eyes of all of his people. They embalmed him with myrrh and aloe and they put him on a bier and brought him [21b] to a big house and closed the door. And they sealed the door of that house, saying that on the third day he would go up to heaven, to Christ, who sent him. And after three days they all came together and opened the door of the house to see what had happened to the Prophet of God, and they could not enter due to the smell of the body of the Prophet. And it is not necessary to explain anything about his grave that the listeners do not comprehend. And lo, until this day they hold on to this tradition that Muhammad is the Paraclete who would come after Christ. My brothers, let me leave all the confusion and error and the rest of the words of this writing of Ka‘b the Scribe for what it is! Ka‘b then died, and he was buried in the shroud of Muhammad and his prophecy was not fulfilled.

{22} Further, the affair of the Quran, which Sergius handed down to them for them to study. After the death of Sergius, Ka‘b the Scribe rose up and he changed the writing of Sergius Bahira and he handed down another teaching to them. And he put in it [22a] confusion, corruption, superstitions, ridiculous and arbitrary things, circumcision, ablution, ‘an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth’ and ‘a killing for a killing’ and divorce, and that when a woman is repudiated, if another man does not take her, he cannot return to her. He gave them this name and one order of demons that lives down on the earth and that they call *Jinni*’, and all that they adhere to from the teaching of Ka‘b. Sergius gave them the New

and Ka'b the Old Testament. Sergius gave them the sounding-board and Ka'b the announcer with a loud voice. Sergius explained and handed down to them twenty-four kings, and Ka'b thirty six, for he said 'I saw three kingdoms from a great sea, which Muhammad will lead, wearing a green robe, and there were twelve allotted to each one of them. The first is of the Sons of Ishmael, the second of Sons of Muhammad, and the third of the Sons of Fatima', and everything else they adhere to and devote themselves to, until a man stood up whose name is al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf, who was governor of the whole land of Bet Aramaye. He built a great city there and called it Wasit because he built it in the middle of that land: therefore it is called 'Wasit'.

Then he summoned [Kufa] and Basra and all the cities in its territory, and they collected and brought their books and their learned men to him. And when all of them examined the Quran, they found all of it to be full of error. And there was nothing of use in it it was all corrupted and confused and laughable and absurd. Not the slightest fear of God was to be found in it, because all that Sergius had handed down to them had been changed by Ka'b the Jew. Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf was opposed to changing the book, which was all confused. And they collected their books and he burnt them before the eyes of all the people in the center of the city of Wasit. He sent for all the Christian teachers and priests, and they gathered them and they explained the text of our Old [23a] and New Testament; from the Gospel and the Torah and the Prophets. And every word which pleased him and which everyone liked, he noted down in it, and he copied and quoted from the books and called it 'Quran'.

He wanted it to have sections, like some sort of stories. They have the following names: the first is Surat al-Baqara, which is honored more by them than any other of their tales. And after that: Surat 'Imran, Surat Yusuf, Surat Maryam, Surat 'Isa, Surat Ya-Sin, Surat Ha-Mim, Surat Alif-Mim, Surat Musa, Surat Aaron, and many more of which we do not need to give the names. These suffice for the keen-witted.

{*Note: this interesting passage describes in more detail than Al-Kindi the methods of Al-Hajjaj in the creation of what amounted to a brand new Quran. The spurious Quranic passages passed off as original by the Arab from the Desert himself are found towards the end of the Arabic recensions.*}

Praise be to the wisdom of God and His stupendous economy of the ineffable and unfathomable mysteries. Glory to Him. May His mercy and love rest on the whole world, on us and on you. Amen.

The account of Sergius Bahira has come to an end.

THE WEST-SYRIAN RECENSION

{0} [48a] Next, by the power of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, my hope, we write the account of Rabban Sergius, who is called [in the Saracen language 'Bahira', while the Syrians call him 'the Hater of the Cross'], the monk who stayed at Mount Sinai, and how he taught Muhammad. Amen.

My friends, this Rabban Sergius told me, the monk Ishoyahb, about his illness and about his visit to the holy Mount Sinai and about the kingdom[s] of the Sons of Ishmael, one after the other until the end they showed themselves to Sergius in the form of twelve beasts, that differed from each other and above all about the faith of the Sons of Hagar and about the conversations that took place between Sergius and Muhammad, the prophet of the Saracens, and about the questions and answers of

Muhammad with Sergius, and about Rabban Sergius going into the desert of Yathrib, to the Sons of Ishmael, and about how he was persecuted by the bishops of his time and, as they say, because he hated the cross, he was banished from the church, because he said that [48b] only one cross should be placed in the church and that we should worship only one, since Christ too was crucified on a single cross, and not on many. Furthermore he said: ‘It is not proper for us to worship a cross of stone, silver, gold, copper or of any other material except wood, lest the matter would resemble to us the idols which the pagan peoples, the idolaters, make.’

And after he was persecuted by the bishops and priests on account of these words, Rabban Sergius Bahira left and went to the desert of Yathrib, to the Ishmaelites. He stayed with them in peace and quiet, and he enjoyed affection and intimacy with them, with the help of Father Mar Sabrisho, the monk who worked many great miracles and for whom Numan the King, ruler of the Arabs, sent, because of a certain illness of which Numan suffered. He was tormented by an evil demoniacal spirit, like Saul in the days of the Prophet David. This King Numan lived in the ancient city of the Ishmaelites, which is called ‘Arabia’, which was theirs in the days of Chosroes, King of the Persians. And through the guidance of the true pastors of the rational flock of Christ, Mar Sabrisho, Catholicos of the East and Mar Ishozekhaya the monk, Numan [49a] was cured of the evil demoniacal spirit that had been vexing and tormenting him severely.

Because the monks were few at the time and only present in some places and regions, Numan and the entire city of Arabia received the sign of baptism at the hands of Mar Sabrisho Catholicos of the East, since before they were baptized they worshiped the star al-Uzza, who is Aphrodite Venus, about whom even these days they say the following, when they swear ‘No, by the Father of al-Uzza!’. I said to them:

‘Who is it by whom you swear?’ and they told me: ‘That is God the Mighty’, still adhering to this old tradition.

{1} And after these things, when I, the monk Ishoyahb, wandered among mountains, caves and gorges in which hermits were living, I went up to the holy Mount Sinai. And I went into Egypt and the desert of Scete {1.2} and next I reached the inner desert, {1.3} and I went up to Thebes {1.4} and from there I went to the desert of Yathrib and the desert of the Sons of Ishmael, the Sons of Hagar, the Egyptian woman.

{1.5} The Sons of Ishmael were uncivilized and primitive and ignorant. They resembled desert asses and they had neither order nor law, being wild like untamed horses. They worshiped the idol of Awkbar, [49b] which is a demon.

{2} And there with them I found this Rabban Sergius. {2.1} He was from the region of Bet Qudshaye, from a village called Tshn. He was a priest in rank and he was well versed and learned in the study of the Holy Scriptures. {2.2} He was called ‘Bahira’ and ‘prophet’ by the Sons of Hagar, because he prophesied to them about their kingdom and about the twenty-four kings who would rule their future generations.

{2.3} Rabban Sergius was of old age. {2.4} I, the monk Ishoyahb, came to Rabban Sergius, to his cell, and I greeted him and was blessed by him. {2.5} Rabban Sergius, then, when he saw me, sighed and wept bitterly, saying: ‘Lo, I have been in this desert for forty years and I never saw a Christian here except you today. Now I know for sure that the end of my life is at hand.’

{2.6} Then I, Ishoyahb, began to talk to him and I asked him how and why he had come to that desert. He answered me and said: ‘While I was staying I in a community of monks, in which I have spent a long time, {2.7} it occurred to me to go to Jerusalem to pray and receive blessing from the holy sites which are there. And I got up and left that monastery, fulfilling that [50a] idea, and I went and sought blessing from the Holy Sepulcher and from Golgotha and the other holy sites.

{3 } After that I went to Mount Sinai and I went up to the place where the Prophet Moses received a divine revelation. {3.1} In that place there was a monastery, in which there were monks, and there were many brothers who were administering there . I stayed with them for many days {3.2} and I heard from the brothers who lived there that they say that whoever stays the night, that is to say: sleeps, on top of this Mount Sinai is worthy of a certain revelation from heaven, {3.3} for ‘he who is from the East is sent to the West. And he who is from the West is sent to the East’.

{3.4} Then, when we finished the psalms of David and the evening prayer [we] descended from the upper church to the monastery below, and guards went around that upper church, in order to prevent anyone from going up to pass the night there on the top of the mountain, because they would not allow anyone to go up and sleep there. {3.5} And when we had invoked the peace to them and when we had eaten bread with them, {3.6} I, Sergius, stood up secretly and I went up to the top of Mount Sinai. I prayed there and took blessing from it and a glorious vision was revealed to me by God. {3.7} And I saw an unspeakable light and innumerable myriads of angels. And I saw a great cross that gave light to the whole earth, [50b] seven times brighter than the light of the sun. 15 {3.9} I approached one of the angels, saluted him and bowed to him. He said to me: ‘Be strong Sergius and do not fear!’

{3.11} I looked and saw the four winds of heaven stirring each other up.

{3.12} And I saw a white animal coming on the wind of the South and it ate the East and the West and the North and the South and it settled in the West. On the head of the beast were twelve horns.

I said to that angel: ‘What is this, my Lord?’

He answered me and said: ‘This is the kingdom of the Sons of Ishmael’.

{3.13} And then I saw a black beast on the wind of the North that came and ate the East and the West and the North and the South and the sea, and it settled in the land of Babel. And on its head were seven horns of iron, one of gold and two of silver and copper. And I said to the angel: ‘What is this, my lord?’ And he said to me: ‘This is the victory of the Sons of Hashim, son of Muhammad.’

{3.14} And then I saw a bull coming with great calm and humility on the wind of the South and on its head were five horns of gold, two of silver and one of iron. And it went to the four corners of the earth and came and settled in Assur. And I said to the angel: ‘What is this bull?’ And he said to me: ‘The kingdom of Mahdi, son of Fatima, and as the bull is [51a] quiet, humble and peaceful, likewise will his kingdom be more quiet and peaceful than all the kingdoms of the Arabs.’

{3.15} And I saw a lamb dressed in the clothes of a wolf, coming on the wind of the West. And I said to that angel: ‘What is this, my lord?’ And he said to me: ‘This is the kingdom of the Sons of Sufyan that will destroy all the kingdoms of the Sons of Ishmael with the edge of the sword and that will persecute them to the mountain of Yathrib.’

{3.16} And then I saw a yearling goat coming from the North. And I said to the angel: ‘Who is this, my lord?’ And he said to me: ‘The seed of Joktan, who are the people from Qatar.’

{3.17} And then I saw a lion that came from the South and hit all and trampled all with great force and nothing could withstand him. And I said to the angel: ‘Who is this, my lord?’ And he said to me: ‘Mightiest of Mighty’ is his name, who is Mahdi, son of A’isha, in whose days there will be great distress the like of which was not in the days of Nebuchadnezzar and in the days of his son Belshazzar.’

{3.18 } And then I saw a man dressed in a green dress, coming from the East. And I said to the angel: ‘Who is this, my lord?’ And he said: ‘This is the last kingdom of the Sons of Hagar and Ishmael, in which will be their end and their perdition.’

{3.19} [51b] And then I saw a chariot, that was decorated with all kinds of beautiful things, and I said to the angel: ‘What is this, my lord?’ And he said to me: ‘This is the kingdom of the Romans, who will rule at the end of all the kingdoms of the earth’.

{3.20} And then I saw a great serpent creeping and swallowing all that was before him without pity. And I said to the angel: ‘What is this, my lord?’ And he said to me: ‘This is the Son of Perdition, the Antichrist, who comes at the end of the world.’

{3.21} And then I saw Satan who fell like a flash of lightning from the sky. And he was filled with envy and hate toward the whole of the race of man.

{3.22} Then I saw a man who came on the wind of the East and who was dressed in glory and honor and magnificence. And I said to the angel: ‘Who is this, my lord?’ And he said to me: ‘This is the Prophet Elijah who will come at the end of the world and he is a messenger before Christ.’

{3.24} Then I saw three angels who were dressed in white and arrayed in flames. I said to the angel: ‘Who are they, my lord?’ And he said to me: ‘They are Gabriel and Michael and Seraphael.’ {3.25} One of the angels drew close to me and said to me: ‘follow me!’ And I went after him in great joy and in fear. {3.26} And I ascended with him in spirit to heaven, not in body, [52a] and I saw heaven and the heaven, of heavens of the Lord {3.27} and a great unspeakable light {3.28} and the orders of the angels that were in nine ranks, {3.29} and the Spirit of God, descending and hovering from heaven, {3.30} and the Ancient of Days, highly extolled, who is Christ, God, Savior of the world, Son of God, {3.31} and the world being dissolved and passing away, and heaven being rolled up like a scroll and passing away {3.32} and everything that passed away and vanished, {3.33} and the earth being dissolved and becoming desolate and waste. And all became like nothing. {3.34} I saw the Judge sitting and recompensing everyone according to his deeds. {3.35} And I saw the righteous entering paradise {3.36} and I saw Adam and Eve and Enoch and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Moses and Elijah and Aaron the priest and the assembly of the prophets and the company of the apostles, and the twelve thrones of the apostles and the choir of the martyrs and the confessors, and David chanting psalms and saying hallelujah, {3.37} and the tree of life and the tree of good and of evil and the source that issues in the middle of paradise and is divided into four sources, the Tigris, Euphrates, Pishon and Gihon, which give life to the whole of creation.

{3.38} And then the seraph said to me: ‘look and observe that bottomless pit which is Gehenna’.

{3.39} And I saw the unquenchable fire and the worm that does not die and the eternal torment and innumerable people screaming and gnashing [52b] their teeth and wailing and lamenting and sighing. And there was no one who listened to them and no one who answered them and relieved them from the suffering that does not pass away. And immediately I sighed to myself and said: ‘what does a man gain if he acquires the whole world but loses his soul?’ {3.40} And all this I saw in spirit and not in body.

{4} And the angel said to me: ‘Go to Maurice, King of the Romans, and break your staff before him and say to him: “in like manner will your kingdom be broken, and you will not, as you expect, let your sons after you inherit it”.’ {4.2} I went and did as the angel had told me, but he did not get angry with me and he did not give me an evil answer, but he said to me: ‘the will of the Lord God shall be’. {4.3} And when one of the officers, whose name was Phocas the Wicked, heard that I was sent by God, he raised a rebellion against him and killed him and it was fulfilled.

{4.4} Then I went to the land of the Persians, to Chosroes, the king of the Persians, and I broke half of my staff before him, and I said to him: ‘in like manner will your kingdom be broken by the Sons of Ishmael’. And Chosroes did not get angry at me either and was not enraged against me. {4.5} He asked me and said: ‘how did you come to Maurice, King of the Romans, and what did you say to him and what did he answer you and from where did you receive this revelation?’ {4.6} And I answered and said to him: ‘I saw that wild asses [53a] attacked you and took the crown from your head and threw it on the ground and trampled it’. Chosroes then, when he had heard this, did not give me an evil answer and said to me: ‘Go in peace wherever you want.’

{5} And I left the land of the Persians and I went to the land of Bet Rumaye, 14 preaching that the people ought to bow in worship to one cross, and not many, because Christ was crucified on one cross, and one cross ought to be put in church. The bishops and church leaders of Bet Rumaye heard of me and persecuted me and set ambushes for me in order to kill me. {6} When I heard this, I left Shinar and went into this desert of the sons of Ishmael where nobody would harm me.’ {6.1} All this Rabban Sergius Bahira told Ishoyahb.

Sergius’ journey to the Sons of Ishmael, to the desert of Yathrib:

{6.4} ‘When I arrived here, I found the Sons of Ishmael, who were primitive and simple-minded and led an awful life. They sustained themselves with meagre and scarce food. And they worshipped idols and stones and the stars in the sky everyone worshiping whatever he liked. They behaved like animals [53b] and did not possess any reason or knowledge. When I realized that they were like this, and that they were stubborn, I prophesied concerning them whatever they liked and brought them to [proper] reason. {6.5} I proclaimed to them: ‘for sure you will rule the entire world for ten weeks of years’. {6.8} And when they heard that from me, they all arose together and built a cell for me in their midst, and they dug a water well for me. {6.9} I lived with them until today in peace and calm, away from persecutors.’

{7} I, Ishoyahb, stayed with Bahira for seven days and I learned from him all that had happened. Then Sergius Bahira became ill and died. {7.2} He instructed the Sons of Ishmael and was a leader for them, because he had prophesied to them what they liked {7.3} and had written and handed down to them this book which they call ‘Quran’.

{7.4} When this Rabban Sergius died they embalmed him with myrrh and aloe and many unguents, and they put his body in a vault and buried him. {8} At his bones a great miracle was performed. That is: a brother killed his brother and the murderer said that the slave of the victim had killed him. And they sought recourse with the bones of Sergius and by the operation of God and through the mediation [54a] of the bones of Sergius it became known who had killed him, {8.1} for after a while the right hand of the murderer withered, while he confessed it before the eyes of many.

{9} After the death of Sergius another man stood up, who was called Kalb the Scribe. {9.1} He was from the race of Abraham. He was a bastard of the Jews from there {9.2} and he was a scribe. This

Kalb the Scribe became a teacher for them and a scribe after Sergius and a false prophet. {9.3} He taught falsehood and proclaimed untruth {9.4} and he changed what Sergius had written and taught. {9.5} He said to them ‘the one about whom Christ son of Mary, has said, “behold, I will come and send you the Paraclete”, that is Muhammad’. And ‘there will be a sign to you: when Muhammad has died he will go up to heaven like ‘Isa son of Maryam, and he will rise after three days’. And it happened that when Muhammad died the people of his community came together and they embalmed him and put him in a house with great reverence. Then they closed the door to see what would become of him. And after three days they opened the door and nobody could enter the house because of the foul smell of Muhammad’s body. And no one needs to investigate [54b] what happened to it.

When Kalb the Scribe died he was buried like a donkey, because his prophecy had not been fulfilled. He was also found to be a liar and an impostor. However, because of their irrationality, they abandoned the words of Rabban Sergius Bahira, which were true, and accepted and adhered to this tradition which Kalb the Scribe had given them {9.6} and until this day they say that the Paraclete is Muhammad.

{10} After the death of Sergius Bahira, I, Ishoyahb, went to the disciple of Sergius, who was called Hakim and I asked him about his master Sergius and his life. From him I learned everything very clearly.

{10.1} This Hakim told me: ‘In my youth I was full of leprosy and I was vexed by Satan. My parents repudiated me and chased me away from them. {10.2} Then, when I was wandering in this desert, this Sergius found me and said to me: ‘Why, my son, are you wandering in this deserted and lonely wilderness?’. I answered Rabban Sergius: ‘Because of the foul and severe leprosy which is in my body, my parents chased me away’. {10.3} Then Rabban Sergius said to me: ‘My son, believe in Christ, Son of the Living God, and He will heal [55a] you’. I, then, believed in Christ, God, immediately, as Sergius spoke, and I was cleansed from the horrible leprosy and the demon that had been tormenting me left me. {10.5} I, Hakim, took Sergius and brought him to my parents immediately and when they saw me healed {10.6} they were struck by great astonishment and wonder, because of the greatness of the miracle that had been done to me. {10.7} When the people in that desert heard this, they brought a man to him who was driven cruelly by a demon, and he healed him. Then another man who had gangrene in his mouth: when they brought him to him, he healed him. Then a barren woman came to him and by means of his prayers she became the mother of many children. {10.8} Many other miracles, which are not described in this book, were performed by this man.

{11} Because there was no water in that desert the Arabs came to him continuously, with their cattle, and they refreshed themselves with Sergius, at that well. {11.2} They would approach him and ask him all sorts of questions. {11.3} And anything which Rabban Sergius told them they would do, because he taught them this faith to which they adhere a little. {11.5} This is [55b] the prophecy of Rabban Sergius Bahira about Muhammad, which he prophesied to them, saying: ‘God will raise up a great man for you, and his name will be Muhammad’.

{12} And on a certain day, when they were coming to that well with their cattle, Rabban Sergius was standing outside the cell and he saw them coming from far, and the boy Muhammad was coming with them. {12.1} And when Sergius saw the boy Muhammad, he knew that that boy was destined to be a great man, {12.2} for he saw a certain vision above his head, like a cloud. And he knew that in him his prophecy would be fulfilled.

{12.3} They went towards that well and came to him, according to their habit. {12.4} Muhammad,

however, stayed outside watching, so that when they would leave Sergius, he, Muhammad, would go to him. {12.5} Now, Sergius said to those Saracens: ‘A great man has come with you, order him to come in!’ They said to him: ‘There is an orphan with us and he is an ignorant fool’. Sergius said to them: ‘Call him in, so that we can see him’. {12.6} And when Muhammad entered he showed them the vision that was above his head. {12.7} They, however, were not aware of that vision.

{13} [56a] Sergius stood up and blessed Muhammad. {13. I } He said the following to him: ‘The Lord God will magnify you and your descendants after you. You will become very mighty and numerous on the earth. Twelve kings will go forth from your loins, who will have their seat in the land of Shinar. Their kingdom will become mighty in the whole world and they will conquer many cities and they will make powerful kings tremble before them. They and their sons will prosper and there will be peace and tranquility in the world. There will be no kingdom that rises up against them which they will not defeat. And they will subdue many nations.’

{14} At once, the boy Muhammad opened his mouth, saying to Sergius: ‘Tell me, from where did you receive this revelation?’

Sergius said to him: ‘From Mount Sinai, from the place where Moses received divine revelations’.

{14.1} Muhammad said to him: ‘Who revealed this to you about me?’

Sergius said to him: ‘God, blessed be His name, He revealed and disclosed this to me concerning you’.

{14.2} When Muhammad heard these things from Sergius Bahira, i.e. that he had prophesied about him and about his sons after him, he said: ‘For what reason?’

Sergius said to him: ‘Because of you, for you are destined to become a king and a leader for your people. {14.3} Twenty-four kings will come forth from you {14.4} and you will convert your people from the worship of idols to the worship of the one true God’.

{14.5} Muhammad said [56b] to him: ‘Which god do you worship?’ Sergius said to him: ‘The Living God I worship, He who made heaven and earth and light and darkness and the seas and the rivers the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth. This true God I worship, and I profess and believe in his Son Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit. The angels in heaven and the people on the earth worship Him and praise Him, crying out: “Holy, Holy, Holy, the Lord Almighty, with whose praises the heavens and earth are filled”.’

{14.6} Muhammad said to him: ‘And where is the dwelling-place of the god about whom you say these things?’

Rabban Sergius said to him: ‘His dwelling-place is in heaven’.

{14.7} He said: ‘From where do you know that?’

He said: ‘From the Torah and the prophets’. {14.8 } He said: ‘Who are they, the prophets?’

Rabban Sergius said: ‘They are righteous, holy people, who feared God and kept his commandments. They received revelations through the Holy Spirit, and He made the hidden and future things known to them’.

{14.9} And Muhammad said: ‘What is the Holy Spirit?’

Rabban Sergius said to him: ‘The Spirit of God is sent forth from Him and enters everyone who fears

Him and does His will’.

{14.10} Muhammad said: And you? Whom of these ones do you worship?’

Sergius said to him: ‘I worship God’.

{14.11} Muhammad said: And whom did the people [57a] worship in former days?’

Sergius said to him: ‘Some of them fire, some of them the sun, the moon and the stars, some of them stones. And when God saw all this error being committed in the world, He pitied the race of mankind and sent prophets and visionaries to them, who converted them from the error of the demons to the worship of the one true God’.

{14.12} Muhammad said: ‘Whom of these do you worship and what is your faith?’

Sergius said: ‘I am a Christian’.

{14.13} Muhammad said to him: ‘What is Christianity?’ Rabban Sergius said: ‘That is the religion of Christ’.

{14.14} Muhammad said to him: ‘What is the religion of Christ?’ Sergius said to him: ‘Christ is the Word of God and his Spirit’.

The Ishmaelites confess Christ in this manner, that he is ‘the Word of God and his Spirit’.

{14.15} Muhammad said to him: ‘Is Christ a god or a prophet or a human being?’

Rabban Sergius said: ‘Christ is the Word. The Word of God the Father was sent from God and descended and dwelt in the womb of the Holy Virgin Mary. She conceived and gave birth without intercourse, as the Prophet Isaiah had prophesied: “Behold, a virgin will conceive and bear a son and his name will be Emmanuel”, which is explained as ‘our God is with us’.

{14.18} Muhammad said to him: [57b] ‘How can a virgin conceive without intercourse?’

Sergius said to him: ‘The Word of God descended from heaven and he put on the body from the Virgin, and Christ was born from her, according to the flesh, being God in hypostasis and nature’.

{14.19} Muhammad said to him: ‘Where is Christ now?’

Sergius said to him: ‘After he stood up from the grave, Christ ascended to heaven’.

{14.20} Muhammad said to him: ‘And how long did he stay in the grave?’

Sergius said to him: ‘Three days’.

{14.21} Muhammad said to him: ‘And where did he die?’

Sergius said: ‘The Jews crucified him in Jerusalem and he died. After he stood up from the grave, he showed himself to his disciples and revealed his resurrection to them. And after forty days he ascended to heaven and sat at the right hand of his Father, above the principalities and powers . And he is the cause of life for all people.’

{14.22} Muhammad said: ‘Why do you worship a man whom the Jews crucified?’

Sergius said to him: ‘I worship him, because with his crucifixion He brought about the redemption of all people and He freed them from subjugation and servitude to death and Satan’.

{14.23} Muhammad said to him: ‘Is there another prophet who has prophesied about him, apart from the Prophet Isaiah?’

Sergius said to him: ‘Isaiah saw him on the high throne [58a] and Ezekiel saw him on the chariot of the cherubim. Daniel saw him highly extolled on the clouds. And his disciples saw him manifestly when he walked on the earth and on the sea after his resurrection’.

{15} Muhammad said to Sergius: ‘Ask me and whatever you desire I will do for you, on condition that the things will happen to me like you said’.

{15.1} Sergius said to him: ‘I make a request to you on behalf of the Christians, who are the followers of Christ. {15.2} Amongst them are hermits and monks and priests and deacons. They are humble and righteous, and not proud or haughty. They fear God and keep His commandments. They have no concern for this world, and they are not deceitful or arrogant. Some of them have neither women nor sons nor daughters nor riches nor possessions. Nay, all their hope depends on God. Therefore they set themselves apart and abandoned the world, in order to pray for the king and the judges and the righteous and the wicked. They enter monasteries and cloisters to live peacefully and quietly. {15.3} And if you do this to them, God will preserve you and your sons after you, and your kingdom will become powerful on the whole earth. And there will not be any kingdom that rises against you, that will not be defeated by you. {15.4} You will defeat it in accordance with the word of [58b] Our Lord Jesus Christ. None will defeat [you] except the kingdom of the Romans with the invincible cross, the holy cross on which Christ our Savior was crucified.’

{16} Then Muhammad opened his mouth and said to Sergius: ‘How will my people believe, since I cannot read a book and I do not know anything?’

Rabban Sergius said to him: ‘I will teach you anything you desire’.

{16.1} Muhammad said to him: ‘I fear that they will find out about me and kill me and do you harm. And they will regard us as impostors’.

{16.2} Sergius said to him: ‘I will teach you anything you desire at night and you teach them during the day’.

{16.3} Muhammad said to him: ‘If they say to me: “From where did you receive that vision?”, what shall I say to them?’

Sergius said to him: ‘Say to them: “The angel Gabriel came to me and spoke to me, and he taught me everything”.’

{16.4} Muhammad said to him: And if they say to me “what is there in the other world?”, what shall I say to them?’

Rabban Sergius said to him: ‘Say to them: “Paradise and trees of all choice are there”.’

{16.5} He said to him: And if they say to me “What will we eat and what will we drink there?”, what shall I say to them?’

Sergius said to him: ‘Say to them “You will eat and drink [59a] and enjoy yourselves in paradise. There are four rivers in paradise: one of wine, one of milk, one of honey and one of cool water. These are the Tigris of wine, the Euphrates of water, the Pishon of milk, and the Gihon of honey”.’

{16.6} Muhammad said to him: And if they ask me how does ‘nature’s call’ get out of the body, what

shall I say to them?’

Sergius said to him: ‘Say to them: “It disperses and leaves the body like sweat”.’

{16.7} Muhammad said to him: And if I say to them “You will eat in paradise and enjoy yourselves”, they will say to me “We cannot endure without intercourse”.’

Rabban Sergius said to him: ‘Say to them “In paradise there are beautiful-looking plump girls with big eyes, and seven are given to each man”.’

{16.8} Muhammad said: And if I tell them to fast and they say to me “We cannot fast the whole night and the whole day”, what shall I say to them?’

{16.9} Sergius said: ‘Say to them “Eat and drink the whole night until you can distinguish a white thread from a black thread and from a red thread, during thirty days only”.’

{16.10} Sergius said to him: ‘Keep them from wine, pork, carrion and [59b] strangled animals, from iniquity, from drunkenness, from licentiousness, from fraudulence and from vicious talking. Treat the orphans and widows justly and honor your father and mother, in order that your life on earth be long, and you will have what pleases the Lord and your sins will be forgiven.’

{16.12} Muhammad said to him: ‘How does one pray to God properly?’

He said to him: ‘Pray seven times per day and that will not be burdensome to you, five times during the day and twice during the night, all the days of your life, as the Prophet David used to pray, who said “Seven times a day I praised you because of your judgments, O Righteous One”. {16.13} Let Friday be a more special day for you than any other day of the week, and make a congregation and [fixed] prayer on that day, because on that day you will have received the commandments and divine laws.’

{16.14} Muhammad said to him: ‘If they say to me “Bring us testimony so that [we] may verify your promises to us”, what shall I say to them?’

Sergius said to him: ‘I will write a book for you and I will teach you. Then on a Friday I will put it on the horn of a cow. You go and gather your people in one place, sit with them and say to them: “Today God will send you from heaven a great book [of] commandments and laws according to which you shall live all days of your life”. Then, when you see the cow coming, you get up from your place and go towards it and take the book from its horn, before the eyes of all your people, and say to them “This book has come down from heaven, [60a] from God. The earth was not worthy to receive it, so this cow received it on her horn”.’ {16.15} From that day until today, that book is called the ‘Chapter of the Cow’.’

{16.16} Now, Muhammad was a humble and simple boy. He loved the teaching of Rabban Sergius, and he learned from him the book which they call ‘Quran’.

{17} This is the prophecy of Rabban Sergius, who prophesied about them, saying:

‘All these things are bound to happen in the days of the Sons of Ishmael. There will be great distress and strife and famine and plague in many places and regions. {17.1} And cities will be overturned upon their inhabitants. In them will be fulfilled the saying of David: ‘their graves will be their houses forever and their dwelling places for generations’. {17.2} And those who remain will be one in ten, because the Lord despised his people and withheld his inheritance, which is the Promised Land.

{17.3} And in the year 1055 of Alexander, son of Philip, the Arabs will rise up and kill their king.

After that there will be great, sevenfold, unrest. {17.4} In that very year the sixth millennium will come to an end. Then will be fulfilled the word of the prophet ‘he will beget twelve leaders’ and lo, twelve great leaders came forth from his loins. {17.5} Sergius, however, added twelve others, which makes twenty-four. {17.6} In four colors the kingdoms of the Arabs distinguish themselves: the white kingdom [60b] of the Sons of Ishmael, and the black kingdom of the Sons of Hashim, son of Muhammad, and the red kingdom of the Sons of Sufyan, and the green kingdom of the green king who comes at the end of the rule of the Sons of Ishmael, {17.7} which is the kingdom of the Sons of Muhammad, which will take over the kingdom of the Sons of Ishmael, and it will be given to the young man Hashim.

{17.8} And this one will come from a foreign land on the road of the North with force and might in the likeness of a black cloud that covers the world, who are the sons of Hashim. {17.11} He calls them ‘[girdles] of darkness’ and they are the rod of chastisement which is sent against the whole earth, with whom God is pleased to chastise the world. {17.12} For God called the Assyrian ‘a rod of anger’. {17.13} Such will be the chastisement of the Sons of Hashim on the whole earth, while they call them haughty and proud and vainglorious, boasting about themselves and their tyranny. {17.14} They will increase and let their hair grow like women. {17.16} All that they see they will desire and they will not be satisfied with it. {17.18} And they will kill everything with ease {17.19} They will shed the blood of the people like water. {17.20} In their days there will be famine and plagues in all places and distress, trials, misery and rebellions everywhere and strife and bloodshed. {17.21} In those days the people will sell their sons for the poll tax, which is exacted mercilessly [61a] and is heavy upon them. {17.22} And they will enslave free men and women {17.23} and they will not care for the elderly and they will not have pity on the youths. {17.24} People of that time will be food for the beasts and the birds and the fowl and the raptors. {17.25} And their yoke will be heavy on the people, seven times more than that of their brothers. {17.26} And Christians will be considered nothing in their eyes. {17.28} They will uproot cities and they will call them with their names. {17.29} They will increase in power and live in the land of Shinar. {17.30} And their kingdom and their might will be in the city of Babel and in the land of the Chaldeans. {17.31} They will take the kings of the earth captive and bring them to the city of Babel, them and their wives and their sons, {17.32} bound in fetters and chains. {17.33} All the cities of the earth and their realms will become subject to Babel. {17.44} And kings will bow with their crowns before Babel {17.45} and the peoples of the earth will be gathered to her. {17.46} And the people and the cattle will be subdued under her yoke for working and building. {17.47} They will show signs and marvels in her. {17.48} And every man will show wisdom and knowledge in his workmanship. {17.49} Finally then, the city of Shinar will be uprooted onto its inhabitants. {17.50} And then will be fulfilled through them that which was said: ‘Woe to you city of the [Medes], a king shall come and uproot you’. {17.51} All these things are bound to happen in the days [61b] of the Sons of Muhammad. {17.52} Signs will appear in the sky and mighty wonders on earth. The sun will darken in their days and the moon will not show its light. A force will descend from heaven with strong winds that blow, and the land of Babel will quake and tremble twice in one day. {17.53} And the Sons of Ishmael will become numerous like stars in the sky and like the sand of the sea. {17.54} If they could they would convert all the people to their worship and to obedience to them. {17.55} And the people in that time will like to be called ‘Sons of Ishmael’ and not sons of their fathers.

{17.56} Then the Sons of Ishmael will divide themselves into two factions. That is: Sons of Hashim and Sons of Umayya and they will combat each other. And they will take spoil and kill each other. And

their destruction and perdition will be brought about by themselves, because the end of their kingdom has drawn near and arrived.

{17.57} Hashim will beget seven kings. Two are called with one name. One is called with two names. And two of them have their names from the Torah. And one is called with a name of three signs and one is called with a name of seven signs. {17.58} And know that when they rule and die, the end of the reign of the Sons of Hashim has come. {17.59} Then the Sons of Ishmael will wake up as if from sleep and they will fight with one another. And every one of them will say about himself [62a] ‘I am the king’. {17.60} God will let them go their way, and He will [incite] them against each other. {17.61} And their end and their perdition will be brought about by themselves, because the earth is tormented and filled by their evilness and wickedness.

{17.62} And in that time the kingdom of the Sons of Hashim will be taken away from them and God will deliver the Sons of Hashim into the hands of the [Son] of Fatima, whom all the kingdoms of the Sons of Ishmael await. {17.63} And he will recompense the Sons of Hashim according to their deeds, because they did not follow the Law that Muhammad taught them. They adhered to a teaching and tradition from themselves, for the teaching of the Sons of Fatima and that of the Sons of Hashim do not agree with each other. {17.64} And this Son of Fatima, whose name is Mahdi, will uproot the fortified city which Hashim had built in the land of Babel and he will pull down its wall and destroy its stronghold and trouble its inhabitants. {17.66} And then will be fulfilled that which was written: ‘Woe to you city of Shinar, woe to you city of Babel of the Chaldeans’.

{17.68} In the days of Mahdi son of Fatima there will be lasting tranquility and secure peace, the like of which was never in the world, because this Mahdi is sent by God. And he observes and performs the commandments and laws of their prophet Muhammad, without altering or subtracting anything [62b] of that which is written in the book of the Quran. {17.69} These ones will reign from the first Muhammad until the last Muhammad, the one under whom their rule of twenty-four kings, Sons of Muhammad, will come to an end.

{17.70} The names of the Sons of Fatima are: ‘Slave’, ‘Good’, ‘Hearer’ and ‘Worker’ .

{17.71} Those who are called the Sons of Sufyan, and who wear red like the color of blood, all their anger and wrath will be directed at the Sons of Ishmael, because their kingdoms do not agree with each other, just like that of the Sons of Fatima does not agree with the Sons of Hashim. And they will chase the Sons of Ishmael and make them flee to the desert of Yathrib, {17.72} having neither pity nor care, neither for the old nor for the young. They will slaughter among them like locusts. And they will cut open pregnant women and they do not pity them, in order to reward evil unto them, {17.73} as they did to the Sons of Joktan, who are the yearling goats. They will reach the Promised Land.

{17.74} They will be defeated by a lion who is the Mahdi, who is sent by God as a messenger to convert the world from error to the one belief in God and to the knowledge of truth. And there will be terrible persecution in the world, the like of which has never been. {17.75} And with him will be fulfilled the word of our Lord who said: ‘when [63a] the Son of Man comes will he find faith on earth?’ {17.76} He will direct all his anger and wrath to the Sons of Israel, and especially to the people who chose Christ for its name, {17.77} saying ‘I have been sent by God to convert the world to one belief’. {17.78} Churches and monasteries and places of congregation will be overturned. {17.79} There will be great affliction, the like of which never was, not even in the days of Cyrus, and there will be much slaughter on the earth. {17.80} And many of the people [will stray from the church and] from the truth

and follow the worship of demons. And the one who remains Christian will be one in ten, and from one hundred one. {17.81} Then the people who live in that time will say: ‘blessed are the dead who have not seen this time of distress and suffering’. {17.82} And there will be famines and captivity and persecutions [and] panic and earthquakes and battles and wars. {17.83} And they will begin to say to the mountains: ‘Fall upon us!’ and to the hills: ‘Cover us!’. {17.84} And churches will be destroyed, because of the evilness of the people. {17.85} Blessed is the one who has the strength to persevere until the end of these things, as he will live. {17.86} And know that it is not because God loves him that He sends him to the world, but because of the evilness and sinfulness that is great in the world, and especially among the sons of the church, who corrupted the way of God and did not keep the commandments that were given by Christ, who said: ‘do not swear at all’ and lo, they swear by Christ falsely; who said: ‘love [63b] your enemy’ and lo, they hate each other. And lo, they swear by Christ without being compelled. And they forswear Christ without being forced. {17.87} And they feared and served the created things more than their Creator. {17.88} And because of this God will deliver them to all tribulations. And then priests will be killed and monks will be stoned and deacons will be slaughtered like goats. And without love or mercy believers will be brought to destruction through all the tortures, because there is much mutual hate amongst them. {17.90} And they are hypocrites, deceivers, sorcerers, lovers of money, lovers of their stomach, lovers of vainglory, haughty, proud, wrathful, oppressors, ravenous, fraudulent, fornicators, adulterers, greedy, gluttonous, drunkards, contentious, in whom one finds all evils. {17.91} Because of this He will deliver them to the chastisement of the Sons of Ishmael, the wicked ones, {17.92} who are the evil rod and the chastisement that was sent against the whole world because of their evil deeds. {17.93} And when these things come to pass, know that the end and the completion have arrived.

{17.94} Then a man will come from the East, a merciful king, who is dressed in a green garment. And in his days there will be peace and quiet in the whole world. Churches and monasteries will be built and renewed and the truth will be proclaimed. He is the last king who comes at the end [64a] of the kingdom of the Sons of Ishmael {17.95} and he will gather the Sons of Hagar and bring them to the desert of Yathrib {17.96} and punish them and take vengeance on the former sins of their forefathers. And he will heavily scourge the Christians who apostatized and called themselves Ishmaelites and he will make them suffer {17.97} and put on them the heavy yoke [of tax], saying: ‘Why did you renounce the confession of your fathers and called yourselves Ishmaelites while you are not, and why did you cut the flesh of the foreskin, that you may look like real ones? All this you did in order to be freed and escape from the poll tax. And you abandoned your confession and the noble laws of your fathers and sought refuge with the Sons of Hagar. {17.98} O you shepherd of camels, all prophets accuse you, and the peoples of the earth are persecuted by you. No man escaped your chastisement, who was not enslaved and made subservient to you. And everyone sought refuge with you.’ {17.99} And through them will be fulfilled that which is written: ‘Woe to them, deniers of Christ’.

{17.10} And after this the king of the Romans will go out from the West, he and a great crowd with him. {17.101} They will rule over the whole earth for a week and a half. And there will be peace and quiet in those days, the like of which never was. A great peace will be in their kingdom, {17.102} for this is the last peace of which the Lord spoke in his Gospel. {17.103} And then, in that time, the four winds of heaven will be stirred up and kings will rise against [64b] each other. {17.104} And the Turks will come, who resemble wolves. {17.105} And the Libyans will go out, who resemble dogs and go all the way to the river Euphrates. And there they will destroy each other. {17.106} And their end and perdition will be caused by themselves. {17.107} After this the treasuries of the North will be opened

and the people of Gog and Magog will go out, those who are called ‘dog people’. {17.108} And they will do and commit all atrocities on the earth, eating all the vermin of the earth. And they do not pity the old and they do not care for the sucklings.

{17.109} And after that the Son of Perdition will go out and come in the likeness of an evil dragon that creeps over the earth and swallows and ravages without pity. {17.110} And then He will send the angel of wrath against him, and he gathers him and his crowd to one place and he burns them and finishes them off in an eyewink. And they will burn and [dissolve] as though they were nothing. {17.111} And on that very day the world will be dissolved entirely. {17.112} And the deeds of all the people will be requited. {17.113} And the deniers will be counted with the devil.

{17.114.} Suddenly the Prophet Elijah will appear and come. And he will destroy the dragon with the breath of his mouth. {17.115} And the king of the Romans will surrender to God and entrust the kingship to Him. {17.116} And then will be fulfilled the word of David, King and Prophet, who prophesied and chanted saying: ‘Kush will stretch out her hand to God’ . {17.117 } And the crown of the king and the cross of the Lord will be raised to heaven. {17.118} Suddenly the King Christ will appear and arise, and the resurrection will rule. {17.119} And the first horn will sound, and all the people will sleep the sleep [65a] of death. And the second horn will sound and all who sleep in the dust will arise and they will be stirred up as if from the sleep of death. And angels will descend from on high. And the third horn will sound and they will select the grains of wheat and they will separate the tares from the grains. They will collect the grains in the storehouses of the house of the Father and in the mansions of on high. And they will bind up the tares and throw them into the unquenchable fire. {17.120} And the King Christ will appear with his angels.

{17.121} In sum: the whole of the coming of the Son of God is full of terror and swift, so that it removes and drives away all visible things from their foundations. And the earth will be overturned upon its inhabitants.

{17.122} That we may beseech Christ our God, pray for His grace and entreat him for His love, in order that He grant us that we will find intimacy with Him and confidence and that He deems all of us worthy, the sons of the Holy Church, bearers of baptism, drinkers of His absolving blood, venerators of the redemptive cross, to place us at His right-hand side, to call with that sweet-sounding voice: ‘Come, enter, O blessed ones of my Father, inherit the Kingdom of Heaven that I prepared for you from the foundation of the world’, which shall be through the prayers of the Virgin, full of grace, Mother of God, the blessed Mary, with all the saints, who love God and kept His commandments, and Mar Bar Sauma and Mar Asia, may their prayers be with us, Amen.’

The End

THE SHORT ARABIC RECENSION

In the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, One God

{1} The man who was entrusted with the reports about Sergius the monk said: ‘As I was wandering around mountains and caves, {1.2 } I went into the inner desert {1.3} and I went up to [Thebes]. {1.4}

And I went to Yathrib and went into the desert of the Sons of Ishmael. {1.5} I looked at them and found them to be like wild animals, I mean their sheikhs. {2} And with them was Sergius the monk, {2.1} whom they call 'Bahira'. They regard him [2a] as a prophet, and he announced their kings to them, saying to them that forty kings would reign from among them, who would rule the whole earth and kill the kings.

{2.3} This Bahira was of old age, {2.4} and when I heard about him, I went to him, greeted him and bowed to him. {2.5} And when he looked at me, he wept bitterly and said to me: 'Welcome to you, my brother. I have been here for forty years, during which I have never seen [2b] a Christian, or anyone who mentioned Christ the true God. Now I am certain that my departure from this world is at hand.'

{2.6} So I began to comfort him and to calm him down. Then I asked him about his journey to that desert and his dwelling among the Sons of Ishmael. He made the sign of the cross and said to me: 'Praise be to God, who led you to me, so that you may relieve me of what is in my heart. And gratitude be to Him forever' and he began and said: 'I had lived in the dwellings of the solitary monks [3a] since my youth, {2.7} and while I was there an idea occurred to me and I said to myself 'How long should this idleness be? Why not go out to the great holy places pertaining to God, and look at its vestiges? I have been here forty years; now go and pray in the places where there are noble vestiges of our Lord Jesus Christ.' And I did this and I have tales and stories about those places that would take a long time to set forth.

{3} After that I went up [3b] to Mount Sinai, to the mountain on which our Lord revealed himself to the prophet Moses. {3.1} I stayed with the brothers who are there and I asked them about their stories. {3.2} They told me about the secrets of the place and they said to me: 'Anything you want know about the mysteries you will see on top of this mountain'.

And I said: 'Will I find the way to this mountain?'

They became silent and one of them beckoned to me and said: 'I will tell you'. Then, a moment later, he came close to me [4a] and said to me: 'The bishop forbids what you have asked for, but I know a trick for you. When the monks perform their prayers, you leave secretly, in order to go to the place, while trusting in Christ.'

{3.4} And when the evening prayer had been performed in the church and the monks went down to their quarters, guards went around and nobody stayed outside his cell, {3.5} after they had come together to eat the bread. And I said to them: 'I am a strange monk and I do not like to go into anyone's cell. I would rather stay in the lower [4b] cell.' And they allowed me to do that, {3.7} and when they withdrew, I got up secretly and climbed to the top of the mountain. And then I saw a great light, the like of which I had never seen. And I saw thousands and myriads of cherubim, the like of whom I had never seen. And amongst them I saw a great [cross] that gave light more wonderful than the light of the sun.

{3.8} While I was there like that, my heart sank and my mind took flight, and I almost fell down from the intensity of my fear, {3.9} when one of the angels approached me [5a] and said to me: 'Take heart and do not fear, O man! Trust in Christ and open your eyes to understand all that you will see.'

{3.10} When he said these words to me, I calmed down a little and my fear disappeared. {3.11} I began to look as the four winds in the sky were stirred up by each other, {3.12} and suddenly there was a white beast approaching from the winds of the South. It swallowed up the whole of the East and the

West and the South and the North, and it drank most of the water of the sea, and it went down in the West [5b] and on its head were twelve horns. And I approached the angel who spoke to me and I said: ‘What is this white beast?’ And he said to me: ‘This is the king of the Sons of Ishmael, the inhabitants of the desert’.

{3.13} And I looked and suddenly there was a beast like that one, but its color was black, and it appeared on the winds of the North [and it ate the East and the West and the North] and the South and it drank the water of the sea and it settled on the earth. And on its head were seven big horns as well as small horns.

And I said to the angel: ‘Who is this, my lord?’

And he said to me: ‘This is a king [6a] of the Sons of Ishmael as well, from the progeny of a man who is called Hashim, and the name of the one whom they will follow is called M.’

{3.14} I also saw a bull approaching with gentleness and humility, coming out of the road of the South and on its head were five horns and he ate all the lands and he ran a gentle course until he settled on Tabor. And it said to the angel: ‘Who is this, my lord?’

And he said to me: ‘This is the king Hadi Mahdi from M’s family, from the progeny of the sons of a woman called Fatima, M’s daughter. [6b] And just as the bull is calm and humble, his reign will also be in humility and calmness. In his day there will be great bloodshed. And all the kings, his cousins and his family, will fear him and the Sons of Ishmael will stand in awe of him. He will appear in a garment like the one in which his forefather M appeared. And he will be the completion of the Sons of Hagar’.

{3.15} And I looked at a panther dressed in red, coming out of the road of the West. And I said to the angel: ‘Who is this, my lord?’

And he said to me: ‘This is the king that will appear from the family of Sufyan, relatives of M. He will mount the horses of [7a] the Sons of Hagar, and put them all to the sword. And he will chase them to the desert of Yathrib.’

{3.16} Then I also saw a bird in the likeness of a goat on the winds. And I said to the angel: ‘Who is this, my lord?’ And he said to me: ‘This is the king who will emerge from the Sons of Qahtan.’

{3.17} Then I saw a great lion. He hit all who looked at him and he trampled and ate and swallowed and there was nothing left of whatever came into his sight. And none of those animals could withstand him. And I said to the angel: ‘Who is this, my lord?’ And he said to me: ‘He is a strong king whose name is Mahdi, son of Esau. He will say about himself [7b] that he is M and that he has risen from the dead and that if he comes and is not pleased with what was before him, he will unify the whole of the faith. And there will be terrible things in his days and great sorrow, the like of which was never in the world.’

{3.18} Then I saw a man dressed in a yellow garment. And I said to the angel: ‘Who is this, my lord?’ And he said: ‘This is the last king from the kings of the Sons of Ishmael. And in his days will be their destruction and disappearance.’

{3.19} Then I looked and suddenly there was a chariot, the most beautiful chariot and decoration possible. And the angel said to me: ‘why do you not ask me about this chariot and its decoration?’. And I said: ‘for whom is this?’. And the angel said to me: [8a] ‘This is the King of the Romans and he comes at the end of the reign of the Sons of Ishmael and he will rule the whole world’.

{3.20} Then I looked and suddenly there was a big goat approaching and there was nothing that encountered him or he would swallow it. And I said to the angel: ‘Who is this, my lord?’.

And he said to me: ‘This is the Son of Perdition who comes at the end of the whole world, and he will rule the whole world’.

{3.22} And I looked at a man approaching from on the winds of the East, dressed in great dignity, gravity and [8b] glory.

And I said to the angel: ‘Who is this, my lord?’.

And he said to me: ‘This is the Prophet Elijah, from the progeny of Abraham. He is the most magnificent one in the world before our Lord Christ’.

{3.23} Then I saw a cross and a crown going up [9a] to heaven, {3.24} and I saw two angels of fire burning. And I said to the angel: ‘Who are these, my lord?’.

And he said: ‘These are Michael and Gabriel’.

{3.25} Then a fair man came close to me and to the angel. And he said to me: ‘Come with me!’ And I followed him, with great delight, and it was as if he took my arm and took away my spirit and made it go up to heaven.

{3.26} And I looked at heaven {3.27} and suddenly there was a great light, the like of which there is not. {3.28} And I looked at the nine hosts of angels standing in rows, {3.30} and the Ancient of Days and the Savior of the world. Likewise he will come at the end of time, with such majesty, {3.33} and everything will become like nothing. {3.34} And everybody will be recompensed for his deeds. {3.41} O man, open your eyes and your heart to all that you see. {3.35} Look at the righteous; how they form rows in the gardens of felicity with the angels chanting praise. And look at the sinners; how they are in agonizing [9b] torment.

Then the angel left me and said: ‘Stay close to me’, and I stayed close to him. And he entered a place, more beautiful and pleasantly scented than I had ever seen. {3.36} And he said: ‘This is the dwelling-place of your father Adam and your mother Eve. And these are the virtuous fathers: Elijah, Enoch, Moses and Aaron, and all the virtuous prophets and apostles’. And I looked and they were there together and there were twelve thrones standing. And David played the lyre and chanted psalms. {3.37} And that person said to me: ‘Comprehend and look closely and ask me questions, so that I may enlighten you again. [10a] O man, these are two trees. As for that one, it is the tree of life. As for this one, it is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And do you look at that great spring, the source of the water springs, from which the four rivers that are in the world, Sihon, Jihon, the Tigris and the Euphrates, come out. {3.38} Look down and reflect on the depth that is Gehenna. {3.39} Look at the sinners who renounced their religion; how they are in the fire that will not be quenched. Because they denied Christ and believed in his opponent they are in eternal [10b] torment.’

And I looked and there were innumerable people in it, crying for help and gnashing their teeth, and there was no one who heard their voices.

{4} Then that angel struck me on my back, as if he woke me up from sleep. And he said to me: ‘Go to Maurice, the King of the Romans, and break your staff before him. And say to him: “Likewise will your rule be broken, and it is not, as you say you would want, for yourself”.’ {4.2} I then, as I left Mount Sinai, went to Maurice. [11a] And I told him as the angel had told me to do. And Maurice did

not get angered nor did he try to refute me. On the contrary, he said to me: ‘Let the will of the Lord and His volition be done’. {4.3} And this was in the presence of his officers and soldiers, and one of them, when he heard my speech and what I had said to him and that he will be defeated and that that will be from God, he rebelled against him, fought with him and killed him, and the matter was fulfilled through him.

{4.4} Then the Holy Spirit inspired me to go Persia and I did so and I went to Chosroes. And I broke half of my staff before him and I said to him: ‘Likewise will your rule be broken by the progeny of the desert [11b] ass, who are the Sons of Ishmael’. And Chosroes was not angered nor did he give me an evil reply. On the contrary, he asked me: ‘Did you call on Maurice, the King of the Romans?’

I said to him: ‘Yes’.

And he said to me: ‘What did he reply to you?’, and I said : ‘he said “Let the will of God be”.’ {4.5} And he said: ‘O, blessed sheikh, from where have you brought us these wonders and from where, in truth, are these matters which you have brought?’

So I said to him: ‘From Mount Sinai, from the place where God spoke to Moses and where he received the Torah’.

And he said to me: ‘O monk, inform us about what you saw there’. [12a]

{4.6} And I said: ‘I saw the desert ass taking the crown off your head and he trampled it with his foot’. And Chosroes did not reply anything to this.

{5} Then I left Persia and went to the land of Armenia and I started to preach and say ‘One should bow in worship to one cross only, not to many, and there should be only one cross in the church’, and I gave them clear proofs and testimonies.” This reached the bishop of Armenia [12b] and it enraged him. He ordered his officials to expel me and to remove me from their country. They began to chase me from city to city and when I became aware of this I left their country, sad as I was. {6} And I went to the desert, I mean the desert of the Sons of Ishmael, {6.4} and they were like animals. I informed them of what would happen to them {6.5} and about their rule and about the fact that they would rule the lands for ten great weeks. {6.6} I taught them and affirmed to them the news about the God of heaven and His power, His glory and His might, and I took pains to rid them [13a] of their unbelief and to convert them from the worship of idols. {6.8} And when many days had passed, they built a cell for me and dug a water well for me next to it. And I have been staying here for forty years. And this but that you see and the little garden; that is where I find solace. And I am honored by all the Sons of Ishmael.’

{7} When I had stayed with him seven days, an illness struck this Sergius and then he died. {7.1} Then Sons of Ishmael came together with his pupil and with me and we put him in cloths and placed him in a coffin, after we had prayed for him. {8} And his bones showed great miracles, for [13b] a brother killed his brother, and the one who killed his brother claimed that his slave had killed him. And they put him with the bones of Sergius and then it was known who killed him, {8.1} as the hand of the murderer withered.

{9} After that a man appeared who is known as [Ka‘b] al-Ahbar, {9.1} from the progeny of Abraham. He began to teach the Sons of Ishmael {9.4} and to invalidate the word of Sergius. {9.5} And he said to them: ‘The one who will appear from amongst you, he is the Paraclete whom Christ mentioned as coming after him’, {9.7} and he taught them many things from the Torah and the Prophets and also some of the stories of theirs.

{10} Sergius' pupil enlightened me, while I was with him in his cell, which had belonged to his teacher, and he began to [14a] tell me about his virtues, the greatness of his knowledge, his excellence in the sciences and his saintliness. And he said to me: 'Verily, I will inform you, my brother, and with the truth of the Lord Christ whom I worship, I will not add to nor detract from my words. {10.1} I was afflicted by the devil and terrible pustules had erupted in my whole body. So my parents were displeased with me {10.2} and I was kept away, wandering around alone. Then Sergius, this blessed old man, found me. He inquired about my situation and I let him know that my parents had chased me away because of the devil having taken hold of me [14b] and the illness that had manifested itself in me. {10.3} And he said to me: 'Do you believe in the Lord, Christ? He will cure you from your ailments'. And I said to him: 'If I see the healing, I will believe in the Lord Christ'. At that moment he put his hand on me and made the sign of the cross over me and then he healed me and the devil left me. {10.5} And he said to me: 'Go back to your parents'. I did that, and returned to my parents, freed from what I had had. When they saw me healed {10.6} they rejoiced greatly and they were astonished by what God had granted me. {10.7} [15a] And the news spread in that town, and when the Ishmaelites heard it, they went and took a madman to him, bound in chains, and he healed him. As for me, I left my mother and father and returned to him. I used to serve him and pray with him. And they came to him with a mute and dumb boy, and another man who had a tumor, and another who had mange and ulcers, and he healed them. And he used to devote himself to their camels and sheep and to bless them, and they grew and increased. {10.8} He performed many wonders, {11} and their important and eminent men [15b] used to come to him and he would teach them the divine sciences. They would listen to his words and marvel at him. He taught them his faith and many sheikhs used to come together and rest with him, while their sheep and camels grazed freely and they watered them from that well of his. {11.3} Whatever he used to say to them they would believe, and whatever he commanded they would do. And he taught them the faith little by little. {11.4} He used to say to them: 'Sons of Ishmael and Sons of Hagar, inhabitants of the desert, {11.5} God, praise be to Him, will raise up from you a great man, {11.6} and from amongst you there will be [16a] kings of the earth, from his loins, his people and his tribe. He will become great and his affair will become very important, magnificent and glorious will he be called on the earth. All of you will submit yourselves to him and obey him. The Lord, God of heaven, will give him rule and dominion over you and others, and his name will be M'. {11.7} And the Ishmaelites used to listen to his talk and marvel at it.

{12} And on a certain day, while the teacher was outside his cell, he saw people from far away approaching the water well, and M, [16b] still a small boy, was with them. {12.1} And when he looked at him, he recognized him and he said to me: 'A great and glorious person is with them. Something great will be achieved by him'. And he said to me: 'Woe to you! That one, who is approaching the well with the Ishmaelites, will acquire the standing of prophethood. He and his sons will rule over the earth for many years'. And he began to talk to me about wondrous events that will happen. {12.3} And while he was talking to me, the people arrived at the well and went inside his cell, according to their habit. {12.4} And M stayed at the well, saying to a comrade of his: 'When the sheikhs come out, [17a] you and I will enter'.

{12.5} And the teacher said to those who were with him: 'There is someone important with you, who will have great stature'.

They said to him: 'There are two boys with us'.

He said to them: 'Call them in, so that I can see them'.

{12.6} And they called them in and when they entered he extolled one of the two and glorified him and raised him to a higher position than the other one. He showed them the sign that was on him and informed them of what he saw above his head. {12.8} And he said to them: ‘Protect him and guard him against the Jews’, {13} and the teacher rose, prayed, blessed him, and called him to him. {13.1} And he said: ‘God will grant the kingship, my son, [17b] to you and your sons after you. And your name will become great and your repute will spread over all the nations. Your armies will be very numerous and twelve kings will come forth from your descendants. Many kings will reign from amongst your kin and their rule will be in the West and in the land of Babel and other places. Their abode will be most of the great land of the people of Babel and their rule will last long on earth. They will capture great cities and defeat many armies and they will overpower giant kings. And there will be peace amongst them. No king will rise up [18a] against them who will not be defeated.’ And he said to him: ‘Return to me, My son’. And when M had heard the words of the teacher he embraced him and departed with the group. After some time he returned and greeted him. The teacher said to him: ‘My son, listen and keep all that you hear from me in your heart’, and they continued to talk for a long time.

{14} And M said to him: ‘From where did you get this knowledge?’ He said to him: ‘From Mount Sinai where God spoke to Moses’.

{14.1} And M said to him: ‘And who was the one who revealed it to you?’

And Bahira said to him: ‘God is the one who revealed it to me and who taught it to me’.

{14.2} [18b] And M said to him: ‘And who is the one who sent you to prophesy about it?’

And Bahira said to him: ‘It was God who sent me to inform you of what will become of you and that you will be king, head and leader of your people and others from all the nations. {14.3} Twenty-four kings will rise from your progeny and your people will be honored because of you. {14.4} You will liberate them from the worship of idols and devils and polytheism, in order that they worship the One God.’

{14.5} And M said to him: ‘And you, what do you worship?’

And Bahira said to him: ‘I serve God, [19a] who has created the heavens and the earth, light and darkness, the seas and the mountains, the birds in the sky and the beasts of the land, the people and all that creeps on the face of the earth, whom the angels praise, saying “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of hosts, with whose praises the earth is filled”.’

{14.6} M said: ‘Where is the abode of this god, whom you describe in this way?’

Bahira said to him: ‘His abode is in heaven’.

{14.7} And M said to him: ‘And you, from where do you know this?’ And Bahira said to him: ‘From the Torah and the Prophets’. [19b]

{14.8} And M said to him: ‘Who are they, the prophets?’

Bahira said to him: ‘Righteous people from Adam’s children, who fear God and keep his commandments. The Holy Spirit taught them and God inspired them to say a thing before it happens’.

{14.9} M said to him: ‘Who is the Holy Spirit?’

And Bahira said to him: ‘The Holy Spirit is the spirit of the Living God. God sends it from with Him to all who fear Him and fulfill His will’.

{14.10} And M said to him: ‘And you, who do you worship?’

And Bahira said to him: ‘Have I not told you that I worship God?’

{14.11 } [20a] M said to him: ‘And all the people; whom do they worship?’

Bahira said to him: ‘As for my friends and those who advocate the same as what I say, they worship God. As for the other nations, they differ; some of them worship stones, some of them the sun, some of them the moon, some of them the devils, some of them carved idols, like most of your people and those who are until now polytheists. And when God, may His name be glorified and may His remembrance be exalted, looked at the world He pitied them and had compassion for His creation and He sent the Prophets to convert His creation to the knowledge of God [20b] and the worship of God’.

{14.14} M said to him: ‘I heard you mention Christ. Tell me who this Christ is’.

And he said to him: ‘Christ is the Word of God and his Spirit’.”

{14.15} And M said to him: ‘Is Christ a prophet or a god?’ And Bahira said to him: ‘Christ is God and man’.

{14.17} And M said to him: ‘How can that be?’

Bahira said to him: ‘Because God sent his Word and his Spirit from heaven, at the hands of the angel Gabriel, to a virtuous virgin, whose origin was from the progeny of Abraham. She conceived without intercourse with a man and without the seed of a human, in accordance with the word of Gabriel. And she gave birth and she remained virgin as she was. And that Spirit and the Word abided in that man born from the Virgin Mary, and he became God and man’.

{14.18} [21a] M said to him: ‘And how can a virgin give birth without seed and remain a virgin like she was?’

Bahira said to him: ‘Do I not tell you that the Spirit of God descended from heaven and clothed himself with body, as Gabriel said to this woman: “Rejoice, O virgin, since the Lord is with you, blessed you are among the women and blessed is the fruit of your womb. You will give birth to a son and his name will be Emmanuel”. And she said: “How will this happen to me, while I do not know a man at all?” And he said to her: “The Holy Spirit I will overshadow you and the one born from you will be the Son of God”. He, M, is Christ, him do I serve and him do I worship, because he is the Word of God and His Spirit, incarnate from the Virgin Mary.’

{14.19} And M said to him: ‘And where is Christ?’ Bahira said to him: ‘He is heaven’.

{14.20} And M said: ‘And when did he ascend to heaven, and how long did he stay on earth?’

Bahira said to him: ‘As for his stay on earth, he was thirty years in a town called Jerusalem and he worked great miracles. He raised the dead, opened the eyes of the blind and healed the dumb, cleansed the lepers and made the lame stand up, and he did many, innumerable, things. [22a] And he used to teach the people a good teaching and demonstrated to them the wondrous deeds of the works of piety, but the Jews who were in the Jerusalem crucified him, at the hands of a man who was ruler over them, before the reign of the Greeks’.

M said to him: ‘Who are the Greeks?’

And Bahira said to him: ‘They are the ‘Rum’. And they put him in the grave and he rose after three

days and ascended to heaven, and a group of Jews saw him ascend, so they followed him and believed in him and accepted his teaching’.

And M said to him: ‘Yes, this matter is astonishing and it is an abominable matter. You are indeed a trustworthy [22b] speaker, so is this matter true according to you?’

And he said to him: ‘Has the news not reached you about the signs and miracles that I worked in your companions?’

M said to him: ‘Yes’.

He said to him: ‘I did this with the power of Christ and in his name’. {14.22} M said to him: ‘How can you worship a man whom the Jews crucified?’

Bahira said to him: ‘God forbid that I worship a human being! Nay, I worship God who came and clothed Himself with the human nature of man. Indeed, and know, M, that he will come and judge the living and the dead on the day of the resurrection.’

{14.24} M said to him: ‘What is the resurrection?’.

Bahira said [23a] to him: ‘That is when the world comes to an end, and heaven and earth will be rolled up like a scroll. God will sit down on His lofty pulpit and order the angels to collect His creatures and to place them on His right-hand and His left-hand sides. And the people on the right, they are the righteous, the triumphant. And the people on the left are the sinners, on whom wrath rests, those who are astray. ‘

M said to him: ‘Bahira, you have already brought us something, so tell us more’.

Bahira said to him: ‘I have some more hidden mysteries from on high, which I may disclose, so do not stay away from me, [23b] as I bring you marvelous things. Know that if it were not for your people and your relatives, I would come to you, because you are great and exalted in my eyes and my heart, and I do not deserve to receive you — that is only through your kindness.’

M wished him the best and thanked him, embracing him and kissing him between his eyes and on his head. {15} And M said: ‘Bahira, if what you say is true, then ask me whatever you like, and I will give it to you’.

{15.1} And Bahira said to him: ‘My request to you concerns my friends, the believers in Christ, who are known as Christians’.

And M said to him: ‘And they are your friends?’.

{15.2} [24a] Bahira said to him: ‘They are a humble people, and among them are priests and monks and deacons, who fear God and believe in the hereafter. They are not haughty and not proud, and they pray for the righteous and the wicked, they love their friends and their enemies, and among them there are hermits, who live in monasteries, which they have built in the deserts.’ They do not have company of women, nor do they love earnings. {15.3} Know, M, that if you protect them, God will lengthen your life and the life of your relatives after you. And no king will rise [24b] against you or you will defeat him and gain victory over him. {15.4} And no one will withstand you except the kings of the Romans, as they will be your equal in wars and dominion. And at the end of your reign and the reign of your descendants, the Romans will triumph over the whole earth, because they trust in the cross, and with it they will combat you.’

{16} M said to him: ‘Bahira, how will my relatives and my people believe in me?’.

Bahira said to him: ‘I have taught you what you need, and I will teach you more, and God’s power will help you, because it is God who appointed you for this affair’.

{16.1} Then M said to him: ‘My relatives, when they know that [25a] I will become a ruler over them, they will trick me and you and they will kill both of us’.

{16.2} Bahira said to him: ‘Have I not told you that you will come to me at night, when nobody sees you? And I will explain to you what you should say to them.’

{16.3} M said to him: ‘If they say to me: “From where do you have this knowledge?”, what shall I say to them?’

Bahira said to him: ‘Say to them: “Gabriel the archangel has come to me and he has instructed me”.’

{16.4} And M said to him: ‘And if I describe the hereafter to them, which you have mentioned, and they ask me about it, what shall I say to them?’

Bahira said to him: ‘Say to them “there are gardens [25b] of pleasure in it, and trees and many good things and all that your souls desire”.’

{16.5} ‘And if they say to me “after we eat and drink there” what do I say to them?’

And when he said this, Bahira bowed his head to the ground. Then he said: ‘Say to them: “You will eat and drink and rejoice. And there are four rivers in paradise, one of wine, another of milk, another of honey and another of water”.’

{16.7} And he said to him: ‘And if I say this to them, they will say to me: “We eat and drink and rejoice, but we do not marry”; then what do I say to them?’

Bahira said to him: ‘These words are [26a] very difficult, but it is necessary that you grant them things according to their aptitude and what their minds can bear; like a boy who is first suckled, then weaned, then eats tender food and then gets more, bit by bit, until he becomes mature. Yes, M, say to them: “In paradise there are houris with beautiful looks, seven of whom are given to men”. {16.8} Yes, and it is incumbent on them to fast continuously.’

And he said: ‘They are not capable of fasting’.

{16.9} And he said to him: ‘Say to them that they shall fast a month of thirty days during which they shall not eat food that contains fat’.

And he said: ‘They are used to [26b] eating meat and I fear that they will not accept that from me’.

Bahira said to him: ‘I told you that you should guide them gently, so let them eat and drink and cohabit. And when they break the fast they can continue eating until the morning comes.’

{16.10} And M said: ‘And if they say to me: “From what should we abstain and what is allowed to us?”, what do I say to them?’.

Bahira said to him: ‘Forbid them to drink wine, because when they get drunk their hearts will harden. And forbid them to eat pork, because it increases idle talk [27a] and it hardens the heart and it is absent with you. And forbid them to eat carrion and blood, and false testimony and adultery and stealing and rape and iniquity and enjoin on them the care of orphans and widows and respect for their parents.’

{16.12} M said to him: ‘And how many times per day should they pray to God?’

And Bahira said to him: ‘Seven prayers, as the prophet David has said’.

M said to him: ‘Who is he, David?’

Bahira said to him: ‘David is a Prophet of God and he said: “Seven times I pray to You, O Lord”.’ But impose [27b] on them five times per day and two per night. {16.13} And create for them a day per week for inactivity and rest.’

M said to him: ‘And which day shall I make it?’

Bahira said to him: ‘Make it Friday, because on Friday they will receive your teaching, on that day your mission will commence and on that day your laws will appear amongst them. You should congregate on it so that they will be united in prayer in one place’.

{16.14} And M said to him: ‘And if they say “give us a sign and testimony by which we can believe in you, so that we may know that your words are true” [28a] what shall I say to them?’

Bahira said to him: ‘I will write a book for you containing all you want and I will put it on the horn of a cow. And you should sit down wherever you sit down and I will use a trick with my pupil, in that he will go with her to a place from where she will go to their gathering place, while you will be sitting there, and that will be on Friday, and you go and gather your folk together and say to them: “Revelation will descend upon me on Friday”.’ Bahira said to him: ‘when you see the cow approaching, stand up immediately and go [28b] after her, take the book and say: “This is the Book from the Lord of all Being. The earth was not able to receive it, so this cow received it”.’

{16.16} M was a humble simple boy, good-natured, bright and eager to learn. He received knowledge from Bahira, memorized it and devoted himself to it day and night, until the day that the Quran was written. {16.17} He continued to visit Bahira frequently and to consult him about his affairs and to do what he said. And he visited him every day and he continued that consistently [29a] until Bahira died.

On a certain night M went to the cell and woke me up, because I was sleeping. And he sat with me and began to weep about his teacher and he made me swear that I would not tell anyone anything about that. {17} And the teacher used to say to me: ‘My son, in the days of the Sons of Ishmael there will be many hardships and great tribulations and anxiety and death and blood in every place. There will be fires appearing in the sky and much bloodshed {17.1} and the world will be overturned upon its inhabitants. In it the prophecy of [29b] David will be fulfilled, as he said: ‘Their houses will be their graves forever’. {17.3} And know, my son, that in the year 1055 from the years of Alexander, Philip, king of the Romans, will go out and kill one of the mighty kings from the Sons of Ishmael. And after that many things will happen, sevenfold. {17.4} And in that year the word of God which he spoke to Ishmael will be fulfilled: “Twelve kings will be brought forth from you” and also: “Twelve kings will go out from your loins”.

{17.7} [30a] Then the reign of Ishmael will be taken and given to his youngest son and twelve kings will rule over the earth, all from his loins. {17.10} Woe to the world that is ruled by the Sons of Hashim. {17.11} They are the ones who are called ‘the dark birds’ and they are the rod with whom God requites the world, the rod of chastisement. {17.12} This is the one whom the prophet Isaiah called: the [Assyrian]. Like cows the Sons of Hashim will pass over the earth. {17.13} He also called them the haughty, [30b] the proud, {17.14} and the hairs of their heads will be like fire. {17.15} And in

their days men will have intercourse with each other and other blatant things will occur. {17.16} They will not shrink from anything, {17.17} and they will mingle with the opposite sex. {17.19} The blood of people will flow like milk in their days. {17.21} Free men will sell their sons {17.22} and they will take possession of free men and women. {17.26} Their evil will be great in the world and the people will not count for anything in their eyes. {17.28} And they will tear down the cities of the ancient kings and build new cities for themselves. {17.30} All [31a] their honor and their treasures will be in the land of Babel and in the land of the Canaanites. {17.31} Their pride will become great {17.32} and the kings will be led to the land in iron chains and the nobles of the people will be sent to it in fetters and shackles. {17.33} And all the cities of the kings will be subdued to Babel. {17.34} And they will demand the *kharaj*. {17.35} The earth will be full of Sons of Ishmael and their followers, from the four corners of the world {17.36} and they will be in the land like locust. {17.37} As for Babel, it will be destroyed in that time. {17.38} And the wisdom of the wise [31b] will cease in it {17.39} and the talk and the deeds of the wicked will flow in it. {17.40} Mercy will be lifted from the hearts of the people. {17.41} Slaves and strangers will rule. Free men and noblemen will be subdued, {17.42} and youngsters will overpower the old.

{17.68} And in the days of Mahdi ibn Fatima there will be deliverance and great peace the like of which never was, as M protects his son and his daughter after him. {17.69} And know that M will be the first of the kings of the Arabs and the last king will have the name M as well, because it is known that there will be [32a] a first M and a last M, at the time of whom the end of their rule will be, and that is the completion of twenty-four kings.

{17.71} Then after that, the Sons of Sufyan will go out, dressed in clothes of blood. And they will chase the Sons of Ishmael to the mountain of Yathrib {17.72} and they will kill men and women and children without compassion at that time.

{17.73} And from the West those who are the [yearling goats] will come and they will enter the promised land and they will come to Syria.

{17.74} And they will be defeated by the lion who is Mahdi [32b] ibn A'isha. {17.76} His anger and fury will be against the Sons of Israel and the Christians as well. {17.78} And he will destroy churches and monasteries and tear down the altars. {17.79} And there will be great distress, as was never before in the world. And those who die from famine are more than those killed by the sword. {17.80} Many of them will be from the sons of the church. They will go astray and follow the devil. {17.83} And in those days the people will say to the mountains: 'Fall upon us!', and 'may the hills cover us' from the amount of hardships and sorrows [33a] and hunger and destruction. {17.93} And when this comes to pass, know that the destruction of the entire world and the perdition of those who are on it has drawn near.

{17.94} And then the king will come who is dressed in green and there will be great well-being and goodness in the world, the like of which never was. Churches will be built and the truth will become manifest and falsity will cease to be. And the reign of the Sons of Ishmael will come to an end {17.101} and the Romans will rule the earth for one great week and a half. {17.103} Then the winds of heaven will be convulsed and kings will stand up against each other. {17.107} After that [33b] Gog and Magog will go out, like rapacious dogs, {17.108} and do all evil things on earth. {17.109} Then the Son of Perdition will go out, in the likeness of a dragon, and he will swallow all without mercy in one hour. {17.110} God will gather them to one place and send to them [angel] of wrath and he will kill

them in their entirety in one hour. Then there will be with the holy great endless rejoicing forever, and with the sinners torment and weeping and gnashing of teeth everlastingly.’

{*Note: here begins the description of passages in the Othmanic Quran supposed to have been composed deceitfully by Sergius to extricate Muhammad out of various difficulties. These represent the variants and spurious passages of the Quran derived from “the Arab from the Desert” according to Al-Kindi.*}

{18} [34a] I, Marhab the sinner, stayed in the monastery with the monk Bahira for a long time. {18.1} And he told and described all these matters to me. I took notice and was witness to this whole history and at his command I wrote it down.

{18.2} And he said to me: ‘Do not reproach me, my brother, neither you nor any of the Christians, the believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, who find this book, for what I composed and set down’.

{18.3} Then he said to me: ‘My brother Marhab’, after he had finished his discourse and what he had prophesied. Then he prophesied for a long time and sighed and wept [34b] bitterly, {18.4} for having committed this grave sin, this heretical invention, this error and for having ventured against God and doing what God had not commanded.

{18.5} And he said: ‘Woe to me, from God, for having lied and witnessed falsely’.

{18.6} I said: ‘God is merciful to His servants’.

{18.7} And he said to me: ‘O monk, I know that I have brought this upon myself on account of my sins, my many transgressions and the ugliness of my actions.

{18.8} I know and I am certain that this book will inevitably fall [into the hands of many Christians], and it will become for them a proof against their enemies [35a] and everyone that is hostile to them like a cutting sword. They consolidate the laws of their book with it. {18.9} I know that most of them will reproach me for my deed, because I set up enemies to them and I made them powerful until the time when their power, the power of the Arabs, disappears. {18.10} Through them, they will be overcome by humiliation and degradation and defamation. They will burden them with what they cannot bear, and they will weaken their positions and they will hate them and disdain them.

{18.11} Before I saw [...] {18.12} the vision at Mount Sinai, as I described in the beginning of this book of mine, and I was entrusted with what [35b] I did as regards the affair of the kings to whom I went, the King of the Romans and the King of Persia.

{18.13} Father Marhab, write, on my behalf, the entirety of my sin, regarding what I have described in this book, which I made to contain testimony of prophethood and apostleship for him, {18.14.} and regarding that for which I have repented, because of having slandered and ventured against God. I testified to the absurd and ventured against my God Jesus Christ, praise be to Him, {18.15} and I gave power to those who oppose the servants of Christ and invent lies about the Holy Spirit, [36a] as they deny the divine nature of Christ. I know that I am very guilty because of this, {18.16} but I tried hard and I [strove] to make him acknowledge the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, {18.17} as much as I could. But he did not obey me and that is my greatest sin, his crime and my crime, and my venturing against God, exalted is His name. {18.19} I sinned by establishing false prophethood for him. I made for him a book which testifies for him to apostleship and revelation.

{18.20} This was in order that the saying of our Lord [36b] Jesus Christ in the holy Gospel, ‘There will

come to you false prophets. Woe to the one who follows them' would be fulfilled.

{18.21} And I made mention in this book of the Divinity and humanity, the virtuous Mother of Light, the Virgin Mary, and I confirmed all the miracles that our Lord Jesus Christ, praise be to him, worked. And I affirmed in it the curse on the Jews and their punishment, and I brought the Christians close to him, {18.22} and provided a directive concerning them and all the monks and I relieved them from the burden of the *jizya* and the *kharaj* [37a] and the hardship. I compelled him to honor the monks and not to humiliate them.

{18.23} Then he came to me after some days, mentioning that his companions inclined toward the worship of idols, so that the word of the Lord in his Holy Gospel 'no one can come to me unless the Father who is in heaven draws him' would be fulfilled.

{18.24} And I also wrote the following *sura* for him, and this is my crime, my sin and my utter misfortune that I made God like their idols of stone, as I said in the book: [37b] 'Say: He is God, the One, the Everlasting God. He begets not nor is He begotten and there is no one like unto Him'." And I instructed him to say to them: 'This *sura* has been revealed to me', and {18.25} this is the greatest of my sins; I made God, the exalted, an idol like their idols, solitary, solid, not hearing or seeing, like a stone. I did not do this until all my hope in him had been dashed.

{18.26} Then I wrote for him: 'Jesus son of Mary, did you say to the people "take me and my mother as two gods, next to God"? He said: "Praise be to You. I do not say [38a] that to which I have no right. If I had said it You would have known it. You know what is in me and I do not know what is in You. Praise be to You. You are the Knower of the mysteries"' . I wrote this in reply to them and as a reproach to them.

{18.27} I wrote in this book from beginning to end, {18.28} and as Jesus said: 'I did not say to them except what you ordered me; that they should worship God, my Lord and Your Lord'."

{18.29} And I also wrote for him: 'We believe in what has been revealed to you and what has been revealed before you' and with that I meant the Holy Gospel and that it is the truth that descended from [38b] with Him and that what I taught him was falsity, because I am a sinful, guilty liar.'

{18.30} The monk Marhab said: 'And when Bahira had said all that, he began to weep and to wail and to knock on his breast, repenting his sin. I comforted him and made him quiet and said to him: 'God is forgiving and merciful'.'

{18.31} And he said: 'My brother Marhab, all people commit sins, but not like mine. There is no forgiveness for my error, {18.32} because I wrote according to my fancy, as my sinful self desired.

{18.33} [39a] I left my home and went to this desolate forsaken desert to write this terrible thing there. It is contrary to monks, because monks live in the desolate wilderness to have their sins effaced and to increase their piety, except the miserable me. My sins doubled and my error increased, and I became an enemy to the Holy Spirit and I denied God, may He be praised, and I gave false witness.

{18.34} I confess that I sowed tares [39b] amid the wheat, as is mentioned in the Holy Gospel. And the Arabs, they are the tares, and I have sowed them amid the Sons of Baptism. I have truly become an enemy to the Holy Spirit. I strayed like a lost lamb, because of the sin that I committed. Verily, an unquenchable fire has been prepared for me, because I opened the door of ignominy and disgrace, and I blasphemed against the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, because I turned falsity into truth and I suppressed [40a] the real truth.

{18.35} I let loose rapacious wolves on the lambs of Christ and ravenous eagles and vipers that bite them and predators that devour them. I gave a rebellious ignoble people power over a faultless people. I set back the servants of Christ and put forward the servants of the malicious devil. I made them [lower] their heads, [handed them over] to their enemies and made them captives in a kingdom of others.

{18.36} I compelled them to *jizya*, which they will have to pay throughout the days of their lives. And I made their lives miserable.

{18.37} So who is he who has done [40b] what I did, and how can someone who has arrived to this state and condition and threw himself in it, expect mercy? Woe to me, I have deemed good what is not good and I have told things about God which are not true and I have disdained God and his Christ and I have defied their power. Verily, all of the people of Christ who persevere during the degradation that is to come, while firm in the faith, will enter heaven, even without good deeds, {18.38} and blessed is the one who perseveres.’

{18.39} And I, Marhab the Sinner, said: [41a] ‘Hope for the mercy of the One who has shown you the visions on the mountain and who willed this kingdom for the Sons of Ishmael. He receives whoever turns to Him in repentance and knocks on the door of His mercy, even just before descending into his grave.’

{18.40} He said: ‘My brother, Marhab, write down what remains from this book of mine.

{18.41} M, the subject of all these things that happened, came to me after that, weeping bitterly and heavily. He said to me: ‘You are the one who did this to me, O blessed monk.’

So I said to him: ‘What is the matter?’

{18.42} He said: ‘My companions came to me and said: “Every prophet who has come has worked miracles. And Christ has come and raised the dead and shown wonders and miracles, and others like Moses and David. So we want to see a sign from you and then we will accept you”.’

{18.43} And I said: ‘I will take charge of this matter’ and I wrote for him: ‘Nothing has prevented us from sending the signs except that the ancients cried lies to them. We brought Thamud a she-camel as a clear sign, but they harmed her and we will not send signs except to frighten’. With this saying I wanted to dismiss and dispel the matter. [42a] And I taught them that someone who does not make known the hidden things of the future is not a prophet, like Moses and Isaiah and Ezekiel and Daniel and others.

{18.44} And I also wrote for him: ‘Marry such women as seem good to you, two, three, four, but if you fear you will not be equitable, then only one, or what your right hands own’.

That was because he had bought a slave-girl and he wanted to inform his women by means of this verse that it had been revealed to him, in order to silence them, and to show them that God had permitted him [42b] to marry slave-girls.

{18.46} Then I made a verse for him saying that he ascended with him to heaven and I informed him about all the things I saw when the angel ascended with me to heaven. And I described it to him in greatest detail. And I made him say to his people that he rode *al-Buraq* to the heavenly Jerusalem, as a sign of honor, and that *al-Buraq*, whom he mounted, asked him to forgive her sins, {18.48} and that he tied her to the ring of the door of the lowest heaven, [43a] with a knot, so that she would not flee, {18.49} until he had asked forgiveness for sins. I composed this against him and his companions, and

wrote that after his tour, when he came to mount her, she would not stand still for him until Gabriel the Archangel had told her that it was M, and that she then stood still for him.

{18.50} Then I asked him, but they had given him the lie and said to him: “We do not want you to give us a description of heaven. Give us a description of Jerusalem and how it is.”

{18.51} So he said: “Let me ask my Lord about what you requested from me”, {18.52} [43b] and he came to me, sad of heart, and I gave him the description of Jerusalem {18.53} and I said to him: ‘Say to them: “I asked my Lord and he promised me that he will send it to me on the wing of Gabriel so that I can describe it to you bit by bit”.’

{18.54} And I wrote for him: ‘Praise to the one who traveled at night from the Holy Mosque to the Further Mosque the precincts of which we have blessed’.

{18.56} And I made sure that nobody from his community would be able to deal with this passage or understand it, because he neither went up nor did he come down, nor [44a] is he a prophet or an apostle. {18.57} But by means of my great sin and the completion of the command of my forgiving and merciful Lord, He fulfilled it through me, and to Him belongs the economy vis-a-vis his servants.

{18.58} Then he came to me days later and said: ‘I went to a friend of mine called Zayd and I called him. Then his wife came out to meet me. I saw her and became infatuated with her, but her husband found out and he is alarmed because of me. My heart is very restless because of her, and I want you to guide me in this matter, because you have taken care of me and you have solved everything for me and there is [44b] nothing which you have not settled for me. Now this terrible matter has crossed my path, which is a huge sin in the eyes of the Arabs and others.’

{18.59} And I said to him: ‘I will protect you in this matter, so that there be no disgrace with them. You say to them: ‘Gabriel the Archangel came to me {18.60} and said to me: “Say: ‘When Zayd had dissolved his marriage with her, We married her to you, in order that it may not be a fault with the believers regarding their wives”.’

{18.61} And I made many things for him that do not resemble prophecy {18.62} nor befit [45a] the chosen of God. {18.63} And from all that I wrote for him, the one part invalidates the other.

{18.64} And I constructed proof against him and against his companions, by means of his book, because it is like poetry and it does not resemble the Scriptures of the ancient prophets, who were sent by God [with the truth]. And with every Scripture its master brought exegesis, except with this one.

{18.65} Then I wrote for him: ‘K.H.Y. ‘.S’ and ‘ṬH’ and ‘A L M. That is the Book’, because there is exegesis in it about the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. {118.66} [45b] and I said: ‘Nobody knows the exegesis except God, the exalted, and the well-versed in knowledge’.” And I made everyone after him an expert in it, because I did not make him an expert in it, since I did not make exegesis of it like the other Scriptures, {18.67} accepting that each one of them interprets it according to his own intelligence. And I know for sure that after him they will disagree about it and add to it and subtract from it. Everyone will write what he likes and prefers, as I have mentioned above in this book of mine.”

{18.68} I have disclosed in it the reality of God’s beneficence to us, the community of the Christians. God’s economy has been fulfilled, with what He wanted for this man at my hands. And I have attained his care for my brothers, the sons of baptism, and the fathers and the monks, and I have assured their

care for them and the directive concerning them. And we ask God for salvation and peace, {18.69} because I know that we will have enemies from amongst them, who will do us harm with their evil and make us drink their gall, {18.70} and their horrendous shameful deeds will come our way.’

{18.71} And I, Marhab the Sinner, stayed in the monastery [46b] with Bahira for a long time and he related and described to me all that I have explained exhaustively in this book of mine. I took notice of it and was witness to it, and its circumstances were clear to me. I wrote it down literally in his presence, and I corrected it in his presence. {18.72} And he said to me: ‘Do not reproach me for what I did and described in this book, neither you nor anyone from the other Christian brothers who finds it or hears it, because I did what I did and I comprehended and saw {18.73} [47a] that he is a king and that his kingdom, his success and the accomplishment of his mission were inevitable, as well as the things I had read, comprehended, heard and observed. I placed the believers in Christ under their care, and I obtained a treaty from him for them and a pact throughout the days of his rule.’

{18.74} And I thanked him for that. He was well-mannered and understanding, noble and honored, loved and well liked. He belongs to those who deserve fortune and prominence. He used to [47b] settle their affairs and act as a judge between them. And all the Arabs were grateful to him for that.

{18.75} The whole world is on its guard for their evil and their slyness, because they are an evil, brutish people. Blessed are the believers amongst them who endure and discern, heirs of the eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven, for ever.

Amen, Amen, and praise be to God everlastingly.’

THE LONG ARABIC RECENSION

{0} In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, One God, we begin to write, with the aid of God, exalted is He, and the goodness of His assistance, the history of the monk Bahira with the Arab from the desert, and what he told about himself to the monk Marhab, with the peace of the Lord, Amen.

{1} The monk Marhab said: ‘When I, Marhab the sinner, had been wandering in the desert for a long time, I suddenly saw a large monastery from a distance.’ {2} I went towards it and when I reached it and went inside, I found an old monk there who was called Bahira. {2.5} And when he saw me, he greeted me and was very glad to meet me. And he said: ‘Praise be to God, who showed me your face on this blessed day. Today it is forty years that I have not seen a Christian face, besides you, and now I know for sure that my life has come to an end and that my death is at hand. And God, praised be He, has made you come here in order to learn my whole history so that you can inform the believers about it and about what happened to me in this place.

I tell you, my brother, I am a sinful man from the people of Antioch. {3} One day I went to Mount Sinai to receive blessing from the historical sites of the holy men and to receive blessing of the prayers of the men living there. {3.2} And when I came to them, I prayed in those holy places and one of the old monks [155a] said to me: ‘My brother!’.

I said to him: ‘at your service!’.

He said: ‘O righteous man, God will show you a great secret when you go out of this place’.

And I said: 'Let God's will be done, exalted is He'.

Then I fulfilled my duty of the pilgrimage and I went out of that place. {3.7} And when I went onto the mountain, I saw a great light, the like of which has not been seen, and many angels. And I saw a great cross that gave light to the whole earth, seven times brighter than the sun, and a great angel.' {3.8} I feared deeply because of that.

{3.9} But the angel said to me: 'Do not fear!' {3.11} And I saw the four heads of the winds stirring up each other.

{3.12} And I saw a white lion coming from inside the desert and it ate the East, the West, the desert and Syria.' It drank the water of the sea and it descended in the West. And on its head were twelve horns. And the angel said to me: 'This is the kingdom of the Sons of Ishmael'.

{3.13} Then I saw a black beast and it ate the East and the West and it had three horns. And the angel said to me: 'This is the kingdom of the Sons of Hashim, son of Muhammad'.

{3.14} And I saw a bull that came from the desert and it had five horns. It ate the four corners of the world and descended in Mosul. And I said to the angel: 'What is this?' And he said to me: 'This is the kingdom of the Mahdi, son of 'Ali and Fatima. And as the bull is humble [155b] and quiet, likewise his kingdom will be humble and quiet.

And just as the lion shatters all that is in front of him, so will the one of the lion be. No one who fights him will withstand him. This Mahdi is expected by all tribes of the Sons of Ishmael. With him the reign of the Arabs comes to an end.'

{3.15} And then I saw a panther that came running from the West, wearing clothes of blood. And I said to the angel: 'What is this?' And he said to me: 'The kingdom of the Sons of Sufyan who will destroy the Sons of Ishmael with the sword'.

{3.16} And I also saw a goat-buck coming from the West, and it reached Jerusalem, and I said to the angel: 'What is this?' And he said to me: 'This is the kingdom of the people from Qatar, who are the Sons of Joktan'.

{3.17} And I also saw a roaring lion coming from the desert with great force. He ate all and trampled all, and nothing could withstand him. And I said to the angel: 'What is this?' And he said to me: 'This is the one who is called the Mahdi, son of A'isha. And in that time there will be great distress, the like of which has never been before in the world'.

{3.18 } And I also saw a man wearing green clothes and I said to the angel: 'What is this?' And he said to me: 'This is the last king of the Sons of Ishmael with whom their end will be'.

{3.19} And I saw also a chariot adorned with all beauty and I said to the angel: 'What is this?' And he said to me: 'This is the King of the Romans who [156a] will rule the whole world until the end of all kingdoms'.

{3.20} And I saw also a great dragon that opened its mouth and swallowed all without pity or mercy or sympathy. And I said to the angel: 'Who is this?' And he said to me: 'This is the false Messiah called Antichrist, who will come at the end of times and destroys all that comes his way'.

{3.21} And I also saw Satan (may God, exalted is He, confound him) going up to heaven, coming like lightning. And he was filled with envy and wrath.

{3.22} And I also saw a man coming from the East in beautiful white clothes, and I said to the angel: ‘What is this?’ And he said to me: ‘This is the Prophet Elijah, who comes at the end of times before the true Christ’.

{3.24} And I also saw three angels dressed in fire and girded with gold. And I said to the angel: ‘Who are these?’ And he said to me: ‘These are Gabriel and Michael and one of the Seraphim’.

{3.25} Then the two angels went away from me and the one belonging to the Seraphim stayed and he said to me: ‘O fearful man, may your soul be calmed down’, and I calmed down and became quiet and silent. And he said to me: ‘Follow me and do not fear’. {3.26} And I followed him and he took me up to heaven, as if I were asleep, in the spirit, not in the body. And I looked at heaven and at the heaven of heavens of the Lord, {3.27} and I saw an unspeakably great light there {3.28} and I heard the melodies of the angels, endlessly extolling the Ancient of Days, with great praise and with unfathomable and innumerable voices [156b] glorifying the One Unified Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, saying: ‘Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts’. {3.31} And I also saw the world about to dissolve and become nothing, and heaven being rolled up like a scroll. {3.33} And the earth dissolved and became empty. {3.35} And I saw the holy going to paradise and the sinners going to eternal torment. And He made me enter in spirit, not in the body. {3.36} And I saw the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ on a high and lofty rank that I cannot describe and to which my tongue is unable to do full justice. And I saw John the Baptist, of high rank, above all the prophets. And I also saw the martyrs beneath them, all together at their ranks, and the prophet David, praising God with jubilation, and all the prophets reading what they used to recite in the world with great joy, happiness and jubilation. {3.37} And I saw the tree of disobedience, which is the tree of death, and I saw the tree of repentance, which is the tree of life. {3.39} And I saw a tremendously great and deep gorge, in which there was an unquenchable fire, and a worm that does not sleep, and torment that does not stop, and people, more than the sand of the sea, screaming and gnashing their teeth like great thunder and shuddering like a storm, from the intensity of the torment. And I sighed and wept and said: ‘What does a man gain if he acquires the whole world and loses [157a] his soul?’ {3.40} All this I saw in the spirit, not in the body.

{4} Then the angel in charge of me said to me: ‘Go to Maurice, King of the Romans, and break your staff before him and say to him: “Likewise shall your empire be broken by the Sons of Ishmael”, and go to Chosroes, King of Persia, and break half your staff before him and say: “Likewise your empire shall be broken by the wild beasts of the desert”.’ {4.2} And I went to Maurice, the King of the Romans, and I did before him as the angel had ordered me to do. And he did not get angry at me, and he said: ‘Let the will of God be done to His creatures’. {4.4} And I went to Chosroes, the King of Persia, and I did before him as the angel had ordered me to do, {4.5} and he answered and said: ‘Why do you say this and where did you see this vision?’ {4.6} And I said to him: ‘On Mount Sinai, the place where Moses received the Torah from God’. And he said to me: ‘What did you see there?’ And I told him: ‘I saw a wild ass raising up and seizing a goat and trampling it with its feet’ and I told him my history. When he heard this he sighed and said: ‘Go in peace’.

{5} And I left him and went to the country of [Shinar], and I began to proclaim to the people that they should not bow in worship to many crosses, but just to one, and that they should not depict many crosses in their churches, but just one in every church: ‘You should bow in worship to that and your hearts should be devoted to the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ the Savior by whom the world is redeemed, [157b] just as I have seen one cross on Mount Sinai standing above of the whole world’.” And when the bishops of that region heard that about me they expelled me from their country {6} and I

ended up in this desert with the Sons of Ishmael. We became intimate with each other and conversed together. I sought shelter in this monastery and made it my home. {6.8} I made a well of fresh water next to it, {11} and the Arabs began to come and draw water from it, {11.2} and they would sit with me all the time and we got on well. They fulfilled my needs and I theirs. {11.3} And whatever I commanded and advised them to do, they fulfilled obediently.

{6.5} And I began to say to them: ‘You will rule a great mighty kingdom for seven weeks. You will [leave] this entire desert behind and call it ‘Qibla’.¹⁸ And you will have a great vast empire’. And I began to inform them about their father Ishmael and God promising Abraham, with regard to him [i.e. Ishmael], the future appearance of the rule and power and the great number of his descendants, and about the history of his mother Hagar and how an angel met her on the road three times and said to her: ‘Do not be sad. From your son a great people will come forth, by whom you will be strengthened, and he will have a great kingdom’. Then I informed him about what I had read of the sayings of the prophet Isaiah, when he says that the length of the rule of the Sons of Kedar will be the number of the year of a [hireling], after which their nobility will disappear, and of what I read from Balaam, when he says ‘The Sons of Ishmael will rule for seven great powerful weeks’. [158a]. And I told them about what I had read from the prophet Daniel when he said ‘Ishmael’s people will come and stay in the holy place’. And I informed them about what I read from the sayings of Methodius, who mentioned the rule of the Sons of Ishmael, their spreading over the earth and their dominion over it, and that no one will be able to stand before them, and that they will have a mighty powerful rule: {11.5} And God will raise up from among them a great man, {11.6} and a number of kings will come forth from his loins and they will be many on the earth, and his name will be Muhammad, and he will be praised and mentioned in the corners of the earth.

{12} And one day I was standing at the well, drawing water, three weeks after having last talked with them, when I saw them approaching towards me. And with them was an eloquent, astute young man with a sharp tongue, who behaved like a leader. He was bright, well mannered and quick witted, and he had command over the camel drivers, and the tradesmen obeyed him as well. {12.2} And I said to myself, while asking my Lord for guidance and protection: ‘This man is bound to become the head of the Sons of Ishmael. He will become their king and he will have the power, because he is a young man perfectly fit for leadership. He is respected and has authority’.

I said to him: ‘Young man, what is your name?’ And he said: ‘Muhammad’.

{13.1} And I said to him: ‘The rule and the power will be in your hands. You will have a great realm. Your name is the one mentioned and tribes and peoples will follow you. And your name will be mentioned in the corners of the earth and your story will spread [158b] in the whole world and everyone who mentions your name and your glory will regard it as offering a pure and wholesome sacrifice to God.’

Then I told him to go away and leave with his companions and to come back later on his own, so that I could teach him and acquaint him with all he wanted to learn. The youngster departed with the Arabs who were with him and who were sad and full of envy of him. Then he came back to me after three days, worried and anxious, because of what I had told him. So he sat with me and we conversed together. He asked me questions and interrogated me, and was inquisitive and mindful. And he said to me: ‘May I be your ransom!’ I have heard a story from some sheikhs, of which I do not know whether it is true or not.’

I asked him: ‘what story have you heard?’

And he said to me: ‘The tribes of the Arabs have ruled Syria and subjugated its people and they remained under their power for sixty years, until a man of the Sons of Israel stood up against them, called Gideon the Judge. He waged war against them, put them to flight and defeated them. None but a few escaped and they returned to this place. And nine contingents of the Arabs established a friendly relationship with him, settled in Syria, and never came back until now. I fear that this time it will go like that first time; that me and my companions will withdraw defeated.’

I answered him: ‘By my life, no! You will not withdraw defeated. Instead, you will triumph and gain victory, and you will rule seven great sevenfold weeks, {14.4} and you will convert [159a] your family and the whole of your people from their worship of idols to the worship of God, the exalted, alone.’

{14.5} And he said to me: ‘Which Lord do you worship?’

I said to him: ‘God, the Eternal, the Creator of the heavens and the earth and that which is in between.’

He said to me: ‘Who is this, so that we may know Him and make Him known?’

I said to him: ‘The eternal living God, who does not die, the One Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the One God Sabaoth, the Creator, who speaks with His Word to all, who lives and gives life with His Spirit, Trinity in hypostases, One in substance.’

And he said to me: ‘This is a great and wise belief, which the minds of my people will not grasp or understand. I would like you to restrict yourself, for my sake, to the concise form of the creed and its benefit.’

And I said to him: ‘The ultimate object of worship is the creating eternal Word of God, one in substance with the Father and the glorious Holy Spirit, who has come down from heaven and became incarnate from the Holy Spirit and from the Virgin Mary and who has worked miracles and ascended to the heavens and who will come again to judge the living and the dead, whose Kingdom shall have no end and no cessation.’

And he said to me: ‘If I would preach this Word and this Spirit would I succeed?’

And I said to him: ‘How could you not succeed, when the prophets before you preached this, without being doubted and without their words being questioned? They succeeded and they were honored and their work was praised, and their sayings proved true [159b] by the fulfillment of the work of Christ on earth. And you will confirm the coming of Christ and his signs, his resurrection and his ascension to heaven. Your sayings will be given credence by the nations and peoples, except by the cursed Jews. They lie, saying “the Messiah has not come yet, because the one who brought heretical innovations we crucified him, killed him and destroyed him”. They are lying about this, and through their slyness they have become enemies of all nations. Whenever two of them fix their mind on a man they plot to kill him. With that his anger at the Jews increased and he encouraged me to hate them, to detest them and to curse them.

{15} Then he said to me: ‘If I succeed in this matter, O blessed monk, you can desire anything you like from me and I will fulfill all your needs and wishes in the world.’

{15.1} And I said to him: ‘I do not want anything from you from this world, neither little nor great, nor do I have any wishes except I that you I care for the situation of the Christians during the days of your

rule, as well as the rule of your people, because they are feeble. They have been commanded to be very humble and patient. {15.2} Amongst them are poor monks who have renounced this world and detest its fine and pleasurable things. They have resigned from it and have fled to the desert and the wilderness and have secluded themselves in search of their Creator. So prevent them from being harmed, troubled, molested or attacked by any of your people, and command them that no *kharaj* or *jizya* be taken from them, because they have rejected this world [160a] and they care neither for women nor for children, nor for money. They do not seek any of this at all. And I also desire from you that you order them that none of the Christians be oppressed or wronged. {15.3} If you take care of this, I expect that God will lengthen your rule and make your power last.’

{15.5} He said to me: ‘It is my duty to order my people not to take *jizya* or *kharaj* from monks, to respect them and to fulfill their needs and to care for their circumstances. And I will demand from them, with regard to all the Christians, that they do not to act unjustly towards them, and that their ceremonies will not be changed, and that their churches will be built, and that their heads will be raised, and that they will be advanced and treated justly. And whoever oppresses one of them I will be his adversary on the day of the resurrection.’

And I said to him: ‘May God recompense you and bless you with what He has granted you, as you have spoken as befits you’.

{16} Then he said to me: ‘One difficulty remains. How will my family and my people accept me and approve of my being their king, while I am, in their view, contemptible and poor, since I am an orphan, living with my uncle Abu Talib?’

And I said to him: ‘Claim prophethood first, as a beginning. That will open the door for you. You will enter the house and once you have entered you can choose for yourself. That is more beneficial and proper and fitting for you, because poor, wretched, lowly prophets have prophesied before, like the prophet David, none of whose brothers was lowlier, more wretched and poorer than him, and he was accepted, rather than disbelieved and contradicted. Likewise no one will [160b] give you the lie and oppose you when you say: “I am the apostle of God to you”.’

He said to me: ‘How will they believe me, while I do not possess a book?’

{16.2} I said to him: ‘I will teach you at night and you inform them during the day and say to them: “Gabriel informed me and I make known to you what he taught me”.’

And I said to him: ‘I will take it upon me to write for you what you need and to tell you about any given matter that they ask you about, be it reasonable or not. I will instruct you with knowledge and issues, be it from books or from reason, as you wish, God willing.’

Then he said to me: ‘Begin and write something for me that I may say and teach’.

{16.16} And I wrote for him: ‘In the name of the God, the Merciful, the Compassionate’. With this I mean the Holy Unified Trinity: ‘God’ is the Father and the Eternal Light, and ‘the Merciful’ is the Son, who is merciful to the peoples and has purchased them with his holy blood, and ‘the Compassionate’ is the Holy Spirit whose compassion is bestowed amply on all and who dwells in all believers’. And I taught him things that brought him close to the true faith.

And I wrote for him: ‘A most excellent ingenious form like a veiled mighty king’.

And amongst the things I wrote for him is: ‘We sent him in the Night of Power. And what tells you

what the Night of Power is? The Night of Power is better than a thousand months. The angels and the spirit descend in it, with permission of their Lord, upon every command. [161a] Peace it is until sunrise'. With this I mean the glorious holy night in which the angels descended and announced to the shepherds the birth of the Lord, the Redeemer, in Bethlehem.

And I also wrote for him: 'The immersion (*sibgha*) of God. And what is better than the immersion of God?'. With this I meant God's holy immersion with which the Lord was baptized at the hands of John the Baptist in the river Jordan.

{16.17} And I also wrote for him: 'Mary, daughter of Joachim, who guarded her virginity. Then we blew in it from Our spirit and she believed in the words of her Lord and she became one of the witnesses'.

And I also wrote for him: 'O Jesus Christ, I will make thee die and raise thee to me, and I will purify you from those who disbelieve and I will place the ones who follow you above those who disbelieve until the day of judgement'. With this I mean his death and his ascent to heaven and his baptism with water, to the exclusion of those who disbelieve, and that He placed those who followed him and believed in him above those who disbelieve in him, until the day of the resurrection, by the victory of the Roman emperor over the king of the Jews and their dominion over them.

And I also wrote for him: 'And when You had made me die, You were the watcher over them'. This I also wrote for him with regard to the saying of our Lord: 'Father, in Your hands I entrust my spirit', when he handed over the spirit of his humanity he became watcher over his church and his disciples.

And I wrote also for him: 'They did not kill him and they did not crucify him, but it was made to appear to them'. With this I mean that Christ did not die in the substance of his divine nature but rather in the substance of his human nature. When they wanted to break his legs on the cross like [161b] the two robbers, it seemed to them that he had died, so that they broke no bone of his, 'so that the scripture, saying "a bone in him they shall not break" would be fulfilled'.

{16.18} And I also wrote for him: 'You will surely find the nearest of them in love to you those who say: "We are Christians". And that is because there are amongst them priests and monks and they are not proud.'

And I also wrote for him: 'You will surely find that the strongest in enmity to those who believe are the Jews and those who are polytheists'. Then I saw that he presumed that 'those who are polytheists' are the Christians, but he did not make that clear to me, out of vicarious shame, as I had not revealed the mystery to him, fearing for the ignorance of his companions. So then I explained to him that Quraysh are the haughty polytheists.

And I also wrote for him [Sura 9:28]: 'The polytheists are unclean, and they should not approach the house after this year', because Quraysh were worshiping idols in the house of Mecca, and they were staying around it, bowing to graven images. So he learned that the reference is to them, and thus he took them away and prevented them from going there. Then I assured him of its meaning, and I wrote for him: 'If you meet the polytheists around the house, chase them away and hit them and when they fight you, fight them'.

And I wrote also for him: 'If the Merciful had a son, I would be the first of the worshipers'. He inferred, however, that it meant 'the first of the deniers'. So I also wrote for him, to let him know that the worshipers are not the deniers and the deniers are not the worshipers, {16.19} and I wrote for him:

‘O unbelievers, I do not worship what [162a] you worship and you are not worshipping what I worship, and I am not worshipping what you have worshiped, and you are not worshipping what I worship. You have your religion and I have mine’.

And I also wrote for him: ‘When you make a deal let witnesses from amongst you witness’ . I mean the witness of the Father and the Holy Spirit to the Son at the River Jordan, through the voice which John the Baptist heard, with all the people who advocate the testimony of the two hypostases to the one hypostasis through the uniformity of the oneness of the substance, the Eternal, One, Living, Rational God.

And I also wrote for him: ‘The Jews say: “God’s hand is fettered”. Their hand is fettered and they are cursed for what they said’. With that I mean the words of the Jews about Christ when he was on the cross ‘He saved others and himself he cannot save. Let him come down from the cross now so that we will see and believe’. With this they wanted to mock him and show that he was weak and powerless.

And I also wrote for him: ‘If you are in doubt about what has been revealed to you, then ask those to whom the book was given before you’. With this I intended to prove that the Holy Gospel is truer than any book, and cannot be impaired by those who want to discredit it, nor can it be referred to in terms of falsification and corruption.

{16.20} And I also wrote for him: ‘When Jesus said to the disciples “who are my helpers unto God?” the disciples said. “we are the helpers of God” and a party of the Sons of Israel believed and a party disbelieved. And we supported those who believed against their enemies [162b] and they became victorious’. With this I mean that when Christ said to his disciples ‘Who do you say I am?’ they said ‘You are Christ, the son of the living God’. And he praised them and thanked them for that, and called them ‘Helpers of God’ and a party of the Sons of Israel believed and a party disbelieved, and [He] supported those who believed against their enemies after that, and they became victorious on the day of his resurrection from the dead. Then people [believed] in him and in his ascension, and He raised them high and made their kingdom and their might triumph over those who do not believe in him until the Day of the Resurrection.

Innumerable things I wrote for him with which to try to make him incline toward the faith of truth and the confession of the coming of Christ to the world and also I to make him I denounce the Jews regarding what they allege against our Lord, the True Messiah.

{16.21} And he said to me: ‘How do I begin to make a religion and a law (*sharia*) among them?’

And I said to him: ‘It is crucial for you [to] impose religious duties on them and to prescribe an easy, uncomplicated way of life (*sunna*) to them’.

And he said to me: ‘My companions are rough Bedouin Arabs. They are not accustomed to fasting and praying or to anything that tires or troubles them’.

And I said to him: ‘You will not succeed or achieve anything if you do not begin to impose fasting and prayer on them and to set up rituals for them, so that they will learn and know for sure that you are a prophet, who is sent to them and who commands and prohibits. [Then you make] a fixed law for them, so that they will not fight each other and [follow] that [163a] which is proper. Otherwise no kingdom will be established for you, and you will not accomplish or secure anything’.

{16.9} He said to me: ‘Do you think I should order them to fast and pray, even though they cannot

stand it? Considering that I am not in a position to force them, how should I act?'

And I said to him: 'Say to them: "Fast from the early morning until the night, and eat from the beginning of the night until the morning, until you can distinguish a white thread from a black thread at dawn".'

{16.12} And he said to me: 'Do you think I should order them to pray, even though they cannot stand it, because they are not used to it? What should I do?'

So I said to him: 'Put them in rows behind you. And when they make up many rows, you should pray in front of them, and when you bend your head they will bend their head, and when you raise your head they will raise their heads, and when you bow down they will bow down and when you get up they will get up, so that they will learn and become accustomed. This is not tiring or exhausting, since the burden is only on the one who is in front of them. Prescribe three *Rak'as* to them for every prayer, so that they do not get displeased and go away'.

I designed all the matters of the prayer in a threefold manner and told him how to pray. I made its beginning threefold: when one gets up to pray one flattens the hand and puts it at both ears, as a confirmation of the Trinity and the main principle of the faith. Then I made all *Rak'as* threefold in his prayer: bending one's head, raising it and then prostrating. [163b] Then sitting, prostrating and rising. And I also confirmed the Unified Trinity at the end of his prayer, turning one's face to the right, and saying "Peace upon you, and God's mercy", then turning one's face to the left, saying the same, and then to the front as well. I demonstrated this in the saying "O God, You are peace, and from You is peace and to You is peace", which means: the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, his Word and His Spirit from Him and to Him, the Son born from Him and returning to Him, and the Holy Spirit emanating from Him and uniform with Him."

Then I said to him: 'It is not permissible to fast and pray except after cleansing and washing with clean water.'

And he said to me: 'How does one do the cleansing and washing with clean water? Please teach me this'.

And I said to him: 'The greater purity is veiled, concealed, so strive earnestly for the simple purity that is present with every prayer'. And he said to me: 'Describe to me how it is done'.

And I said to him: 'Take a vessel in your right hand and wash your head with water and the inside of your ears and the inside of your mouth'. This I intended as a symbol of the Trinity. And I said to him: 'This is the cleansing. The washing still remains, because this is not the full washing and the full cleansing as I have told you before, in the beginning'.

He said: 'What is that washing? Teach it to me, too'.

And I said to him: 'Wash your face and your hands and your feet'. This I intended as a symbol of the Trinity.

Then he said to me: 'How many prayers do I prescribe them per day, considering that they are people who are not accustomed [164a] to praying?' And I said to him: 'Prescribe seven prayers per day to them, just like the Christians. Let them read with every prayer a great psalm with three homilies and a [nocturnal prayer], next they should congregate for prayer with much prostration and *witr*.'

And he said to me: ‘They are not capable of this and they do not have the strength for this. They will not obey me or accept all these kinds of things from me’.

{16.22} And I said to him: ‘Make the prayer for them so as to have three times a *Rak’a*, and do not exceed it or shorten it, just as I described to you. But there should be seven prayers at seven times, which they should know. The first one is three hours before dawn. With us it is called ‘the prayer of daybreak’. Call it for them ‘the sunrise prayer’. The second is at the first hour of the day. With us it is called ‘the first prayer’. Call it for them ‘the morning prayer’. And the third is at the third hour of the day. With us it is called ‘the third prayer’. Call it for them ‘the forenoon prayer’. And the fourth is at the sixth hour of the day. We call it ‘the sixth’. Call it for them ‘the noon prayer’. And the fifth is with us at the ninth hour of the day. It is called ‘the ninth’ with us. Call it for them ‘the afternoon prayer’. And the sixth is at the end of the day. It is called ‘the prayer of sundown’ with us. Call it for them ‘the sunset prayer’. The seventh is after the evening. With us it is ‘the prayer of sleep’. Call it for them ‘the evening prayer’.

And he said to me: ‘To which place do I command them to turn their faces, as they are praying now around the House to the idols?’ And I said to him: ‘Make them pray to the place where the sun rises, because from there all light and brightness radiates [164b] and every star moves and proceeds from there. And below it is the garden of Eden, Paradise, from below which rivers flow’.

Then I said to him: ‘Order them to beat the sounding-board to inform the people that they should come to prayer, so that they will come to you in crowds’.

{16.23} Then he returned to me and mentioned that he had ordered them to prostrate themselves and pray to the East, but they stood up against him saying to him: ‘We will not obey you and abandon the *Qibla* that we and our forefathers have known, to pray to another one’. And they rebelled against [him]. So I said to him: ‘Say to them: “God has ordered me to pray to Mecca” and pray in that direction with them’.

Then he returned to me and said to me: ‘How much fasting do I impose on them, considering that they are not capable of it?’

And I said to him: ‘Impose a month on them so that they can hold on to that and know it’.

And he said to me: ‘They do not know what a month is, and they do not realize when it begins or ends, because they are Bedouins. They are not used to it and they do not count’.

So I said to him: ‘Say to them: “begin the fast when the new moon appears and break the fast when it appears, so that you do not need numbering or counting”.’

{16.24} And I taught him various issues and matters and explained the background to him, and I strove to make him incline towards the correct belief and to the clear and indisputable truth and to the true luminous belief. And I assured him of the situation of our Master and Lord Christ and his coming, and of his being the Word of God and His Spirit.

As a confirmation of this I wrote for him: [165a] ‘O Mary! God gives you tidings of a Word, whose name is Christ’. And in the book I confirmed his coming to the world and his incarnation from the Virgin Mary, and that she remained virgin after having given birth, so that it would be for the Christians a testimony of his coming to earth, his showing signs and miracles, such as his raising of the dead and his ascent to heaven (because there were prophecies about that from the prophets and clear

signs from the apostles and testimonies from the world), as well as a disproof of the Jews regarding his coming to earth and their claim that he is not the Messiah.

And I knew that this young man would rule and that he would have an invincible dominion, mighty rule, great power and renown that would spread over the quarters of the earth, because of what I had seen about him in the vision on Mount Sinai and because of what I had read from the Torah and what Methodius had mentioned and what I had read in other books: ‘He will have a great kingdom and a large mighty realm and the Sons of Ishmael will spread on the earth and none of the kings that fight them will withstand them, until their rule comes to an end, and their time finishes and their power vanishes’.

And I confirmed for him the coming of the true Messiah, in his Divinity and his humanity, the oneness of his name, the profession by Christians of his eternal Lordship and the fact that the one who comes after him is the Antichrist, who leads those who follow him astray, so that he, and after him his book, would be a witness to us, while refuting the Jews and vindicating those who believe that the Messiah has come. And I strove [165b] to reveal the well-kept mystery to him which the Lord has revealed. But his mind could not grasp that and the confession of the cursed Arius became firmly rooted in his mind, the unbelieving heretic who said ‘I believe that Christ is the Word of God and the Son of God, but he is created, because he is a limited body’. And the message of the truthful prophecies, the clear proofs, the manifest testimonies and the evident miracles escaped him.

{16.4} Then the youngster returned to me, saying: ‘If they ask me about paradise, what shall I tell them?’

And I said to him: ‘Say to them “He prepared a garden for you, from underneath which rivers flow, and you will be there forever.” [Sura 9:89, 100] Endless quantities of fruit are to be found there” and the fowl you desire,’ all kinds of good things”.’

{16.5} And he said to me: And if they ask me about these rivers which flow from paradise, what shall I tell them?’

I said to him: ‘Say to them: “Four rivers flow from paradise. One river of water, one river of wine, one river of honey and one of milk, a pleasure for those who drink”.’ With this I mean that the four rivers that flow from paradise and give water to the whole world are a symbol and a sign, and the interpretation of Christ of what the scriptures had said before that from inside of him rivers would flow that would water the world, that is to say: the four gospels that watered the whole world and guided it to the straight path, because I saw that the people did not seek anything but the lusts of their hearts and their pudenda. So I gave them what they liked: that they eat there and drink and have pleasure.

{16.7} Then he said to me: [166a] ‘If they ask me: “are there women in paradise whom we can enjoy?” what shall I tell them?’

And I said to him: ‘Say to them: “There are beautiful *houris* there, in whom men take pleasure every day, virgins like moons, who have not been touched by men or *jinn*, whose length is so-and-so much and whose width is so-and-so much and that which one is ashamed to mention is so-and-so much”.’ And I described paradise to him and its food, its drinks, its pleasures and delights, its *houris*, its gardens, its castles, its rooms, its beds, its clothes, its dresses, its types of beverages and its wines.

{16.25} And he said to me: ‘You have taught me and done it well, you have made me understand and

summarized it all, you have given me good tidings and shown the right way. However, you have advised me initially to teach them a Law and impose on them a *Sharia*, and I have taught what you have described to me, but they did not understand. So condense it for them now according to that which their minds can grasp and appeases their souls. Let it be an indisputable religion for them, to which they can get accustomed, that will not be difficult for them, and for which they will not need to investigate and study, lest they disobey and return to the idol worship to which they were accustomed’.

And I said to him: ‘If the people were used to take them as gods, then give them a concise expression: “The true faith is that you say ‘there is no god but God’ and you will be Muslims. God said to me ‘I have approved Islam as your religion’”.’ I meant with this the name ‘Muslim of Christ’ in order that they have a name that will be fixed for them until the end of their rule, together with the first name that I gave them.

{16.10} And I said to him: ‘Forbidden for you are: carrion, blood and pork . [166b] {16.13} Let there be a holiday for them on every Friday, in order that they have a well-known law, and when it is Friday, order them to gather with you in the mosque from everywhere. You will lead them in prayer and you will command them not to be hostile toward anyone and to help one another and to celebrate like Christians in their church on Sunday. They glorify it because it is a venerable day, the day of the redemption of the world. The time of Adam’s baptism was the prayer of noon, so their prayer on Friday should be at noon.’

Then he said to me: ‘You told me that the prayer of the Christians is long, but my people cannot stand things which take long.’

So I said to him: ‘Impose three *Rak’as* on them with every prayer in the way Christians pray when they enter the church. If someone prays by himself, before standing behind the Imam, then you should make your companions pray behind him in a group. And if someone from your community prays by himself, then he should pray neither more nor less than the communal prayer.’

{16.14} Then he returned to me worried, saying: ‘My people have said “We want you to prove and substantiate for us that you are a prophet and that your words are true, in order to believe that you have been sent to us with a prophetic mission to make us relinquish the worship of our gods”.’

And I said to him: ‘Say to them “God will send me a book from heaven and he has promised it to me in a week. It will be brought to me by a messenger who does not speak, who brings me good tidings, just as He brought Noah in the boat good tidings with a messenger who does not speak, through the withdrawal of the water from the face of the earth. Likewise guidance will reach you [167a] through the withdrawal of the error from your hearts and the establishment of faith in your breasts by means of commandments, histories and tales, and it will testify to prophethood and apostleship”.’

{16.26} And I wrote for him too: ‘Muhammad is the apostle of God. He sent him with guidance and the religion of truth, that He may make it triumph over the whole of religion, though the polytheists be averse.’ [This incorporates Sura 9:33.]

And I wrote for him: ‘Muhammad is no more than an apostle. Apostles have passed away before him.’

Also: ‘You are the apostle of God.’

And: ‘God bears witness that you are His apostle.’

And: ‘God and His angels bless the Prophet. O you who believe, bless him and salute him.’

And also: 'We have omitted nothing from the book.'

Numerous important things I wrote and devised for him, although I know that they will be changed and subtracted from and added to many times, because after him people will follow him who will become inimical and [hateful] to us and so on. Every one of them will deem appropriate whatever he likes, and after him they will change most of what I have written for him. A group of his followers will rise up and fight about the rule and the power and many of them will be killed. And there will be discord and enmity amongst them after his death. And they will be full of dread and fright from the beginning until the end of their rule. Their rule will vanish, but the enmity, hatred and slander amongst them will not stop. They will regard the killing of one another as a sacrifice to God. And they will not perish except by the sword.

Then he came to me and said: 'I have done as you have commanded me and advised me to do, and they consented to what I promised them.'

{16.27} And I said to him: [167b] 'I have written a masterly book for you, which contains all of the matters you need, as well as the histories and the stories of the prophets and the righteous, the tales of the martyrs, the virtuous and excellent exhortations and clear testimonies that prove prophethood and apostleship for you, and what he who sent you with prophethood and guidance and the religion of truth ordered you, and I did not omit anything from the book'.

And I wrote for him also: 'We have given you *al-Kawthar*, so pray to your Lord and sacrifice. Your hater is the one cut off.' With this I mean the threeness of the hypostases and the oneness of Lordship and the slaughtering of the pure Paschal lamb, without blemish.

And I also wrote for him: 'I have not created mankind and the *jinn* except to worship Me'. With this I meant the oneness of God, the Creator, the Living, the Rational.

And I also wrote for him: 'Do not dispute with the People of the Book except in the best way'. With this I meant that the people of the Gospel should only be addressed with nice speech and that they should not be suspected of falsehood, but rather be given credence.

And I also wrote for him: 'You desire to extinguish the light of God'. [Sura 9:32, Sura 41:8.] With this I mean that He is a living rational and creative light.

And I also wrote for him: 'O Mary, God has chosen you and purified you and He has chosen you above all the women of the world.' With this I meant the affirmation of the veneration of the chaste Virgin, mother of the Light.

{16.28} Then he came to me and said to me: 'A certain crowd and tribe have turned against me. They are rough, obstinate, ignorant and aggressive. They act arrogantly to me and they are haughty and proud. They disdain [168a] my mission and humiliate me. They do not accept my words, and say that there are better Arabs than me, while I am better than they are, both with respect to my mother and my father. I cannot stand up to them, because they have such a rude nature; they stick together and help each other and vie with one another. I am not strong enough to dispute with them and to deal with their mischief and their opposition.'

And I said to him: 'Do not be sad. I will protect you from this problem'. And I wrote for him in the book: 'O people, We have made you into peoples and tribes in order that you know that the noblest of you with God is the most pious of you.'

And I also wrote for him: ‘The Bedouins say “we believe”. Say: ‘you do not believe. The faith has not entered your hearts. Say “we have become Muslims” With that I mean that the true faith is the belief in Christ, and Islam is the submission of Christ’s disciple[s] . All of these maxims I wrote for him and I took the burden and the hardship off his shoulders.

{16.14} Then he said to me: ‘When will you send me the book?’

I told him: ‘I cannot send it with a human being, for fear that it will be suspect. I have explained to you earlier that it will be sent with a messenger who does not speak. I will put the book on the right horn of a cow and I will let her walk between the cows. When she comes towards you, you should all be sitting together talking, so that they see her. And when she comes close, amid the cows, and you see her approaching among them from a distance, then get up on your feet and meet her with awe and apprehension, while they are looking at you. Take the book from her horn, kiss it, place it on your eyes, [168b] and rub your face with it in their presence. And say to them: “Praise be to God, who has guided us, who were not guided before”.’

And I had already written for him in the beginning: ‘That which is in the heavens and that which is on earth praise God, the King, the Holy, the Mighty, the Wise, who sent [to the unlettered people] a messenger from amongst them, who recites His signs to them and [who purifies them and] who teaches them the book and the wisdom, even though they were in obvious error before’. And when you have taken the book, say to them: “See, He has sent this mighty book to you from heaven and since no one from the people is worthy of carrying it and receiving it, this faultless, pure, innocent, immaculate, flawless cow has received it, in accordance with His true words ‘I will send it with a prophet who does not speak’.”

{16.15} The boy did everything as I had ordered him and he called this book *Furqan*, because it was made up of different pieces and it was assembled from many books.’

{17} Then Bahira prophesied and said: ‘there will be great distress and great fear, and much blood will be shed in every place, {17.3} because God will turn away his face from the whole earth in the year 1050 of the years of Alexander. And the Arabs will kill their king and there will be great slaughter amongst them for one great week, {17.4} during which will end the rule of the twelve kings, the ones of whom God said to Abraham that twelve [169a] great kings will come forth from his loin.

{17.7} After that the powerful rod of the Sons of Hashim will rule, {17.13} and with it God will chastise all the people and the cattle and the beasts. They will lay waste the earth and [destroy] it, and the trees and the streams and everything else will be set in motion by it. Then the Sons of Hashim will glorify themselves {17.14} and they will let the hair of their heads grow like women, {17.16} and it will not [satisfy] them. {17.20} And in their days there will be famine and death and killing and much bloodshed. {17.24} And in that time people will become food for the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth. {17.25} Their yoke will be seven times harder on them than before. {17.27} And people will sell everything they possess for the *kharaj* and when all they have runs out, they will sell their sons and daughters for the *jizya*. Then they will flee from place to place because of the great oppression and the *kharaj*. And when all their hope is cut off, when their flight is of no avail, and when they have nothing left, they will return to Him. Then all who have no firm belief and righteous faith in our Lord Jesus Christ will not know the end and the conclusion and the reward that God grants the righteous, as He said in the Holy Gospel. [And] those who will endure the calamities and the hunger and the thirst, their piety will increase, but those who do not and who have no steadfastness when these things befall them,

they will deny Christ and they will not remember what he did for them, as he ransomed them [169b] with his blood and redeemed them with his own self, and they will not contemplate his reward for them after that, if they endure the calamities that befall them. And those who have strong belief and good faith and righteous hope in our Lord ,Jesus Christ, He will reward them for their hope in him; He will bless them and bless their houses, their sons and their daughters, their dwelling places, their villages and their lands. And he will liberate them from the servitude to the Arabs and the oppression by the Sons of Hashim.

Then the Sons of Hashim will pile joy upon joy, grandeur upon grandeur, and pride upon pride. {17.28} They will devastate great cities of the ancient kings, {17.32} and their nobles will be in Babel, handcuffed and fettered in iron. {17.35} And the land of Babel will be full of people from every nation from the four corners of the world. {17.38} In that time the wisdom of the wise will cease to be and the fools will glorify themselves. The learned man will become despised and the man of reason will become irrational, the virtuous foolish, the truth nonsense and nonsense the truth. This will all be proper in that time, in the eyes of the people, because they have made irrational laws and rules for themselves, and the truth and its laws become irrational. {17.40} Mercy is taken away from the people, to such an extent that fathers will not have mercy on their sons and sons will not have mercy on their fathers. A man will call his brother a liar and he will be contemptuous of his relatives. {17.43} And the trees will not bear fruit and the earth will not give its riches and the plains and the mountains [170a] will not produce their crops. And rain will not come at the right time. And the summer will come in winter and the winter will come in summer. And in that time there will not be a year in which the wrath of God does not come, either as cold or frost or heat or locusts or plague or killing or destruction. {17.52} Signs will appear in the sky and it will become dark. And dust will come down from the sky [or] stars will be [scattered about].

{17.53} Then the Arabs will become as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sand of the sea. Mosques will be built at the doors of churches, and on markets and at sites and in the middle of the land and between the graves and on flat roofs and dwelling places and houses. And when they hear the voice of the muezzin, they will come out quickly to the mosque for the prayer. And it will be so full that they will even stand outside the mosque in rows. {17.56} And when they do this, know that the end of their rule and their exit from the land of Syria to the land of their fathers have drawn close.

{17.57} Hashim will beget seven kings, one with two names and two with one name, two in the Torah and one with three signs and one with seven signs to his name. {17.58} When these things have been fulfilled, know that the rule of the Sons of Hashim has come to an end. {17.59} Then they will awaken each other as one who wakes up from sleep. And every one of them will say about himself, ‘The rule belongs to me’. {17.60} And God will incite them against each other with rage. {17.61} Their destruction and their disappearance will be brought about by themselves. And they will treat each other unjustly. [170b]

{17.62} Then their rule will be taken, and given to the Mahdi son of ‘Ali and Fatima. He will come to them from the West, from the Mountain of Nanus. {17.63} He will recompense them according to their deeds {17.64} and he will pull down cities, their walls and their strongholds, {17.65} and they will become a dwelling place for the birds of the sky. {17.66} In them will be fulfilled the saying of the David the prophet ‘Woe to you, Babel, woe to you Shinar, city of the Chaldeans’.

{17.68} And in the days of Mahdi son of Fatima there will be deliverance and peace, the like of which

was never in the world. He will observe the testament of his father Muhammad and his sons after him. {17.69} And there will be from the first Muhammad until the last Muhammad, with whom their rule ends, twenty four kings of the Sons of Muhammad.

{17.71} Then one of the Sons of Sufyan will come from the West, dressed in the clothes of blood, and he will chase the Sons of Ishmael to the Mountain of Yathrib {17.72} and they will kill men and women and old people and youngsters mercilessly. {17.73} Then from the West those who are the [yearling goats] will come and they will enter the Promised Land and reach the land of Syria. {17.74} And they will be defeated by the lion, who is the Mahdi son of A'isha. {17.76} His anger and his fury will be directed at the Sons of Ishmael and the Christians. {17.78} And he will destroy churches and monasteries, and he will overturn the altars. {17.79} There will be great distress in the world, the like of which never was. And those who die from famine are more than those who die by the sword. [171a] {17.80} And many of the sons of the church will stray from the truth, and they will go to the devils and bring sacrifices to them. {17.83} In those days the people will say to the mountains: 'Fall upon us!', and to the hills 'Cover us!'. {17.85} And whoever perseveres to the end will live. {17.93} And know that when all of this has come to pass, the destruction of the world has drawn near.

{17.94} Then the greatest king, dressed in a green garment, will come from the East, like the sun. And there will be great peace in the world, the like of which was never before. Churches will be built and the truth will become manifest. With him the rule of the Sons of Ishmael [will come to an end].

{17.100} The Romans will come {17.101} and rule the world for one great week and a half. {17.103} Then the winds of heaven will be stirred up and kingdoms will rise up against each other. {17.104} And the Turks will come who are like wolves and they will fight each other, {17.107} and the doors of the disgrace will open will open and Gog and Magog will go out, who are like dogs, {17.108} and they will kill every human being on the earth. {17.109} Then the Son of Perdition will go out, resembling a dragon, and he will swallow all without pity in an hour, {17.110} and God will gather them in one place, and He will send the angel of His wrath to them, and he will kill them in one hour.

Then there will be great rejoice with the holy, which will not pass until eternity, and with the sinners there will be torment and weeping and gnashing of teeth until eternity.'

{18} Now I, the monk Marhab, stayed in the monastery [171b] with Bahira for a long time, {18.1} and he told and described this story to me. And I saw and witnessed this whole history and he elucidated its circumstances and its causes for me. In his presence I wrote it down and at his command I edited it.

{18.2} And he said to me: 'Do not reproach me for what I have done and set down, neither you nor whoever hears it'.

{18.3} Marhab said: 'After the end of the prophecy which Bahira prophesied he sighed and wept {18.4} about the sin which he had committed against God. {18.6} And I wept for him and said 'God has mercy on His servants who believe in His resurrection'.

Then he turned to me {18.7} and he said to me: 'O brother Marhab, know that I have brought my guilt upon myself by what I did and what this book contains. {18.8} It will fall into the hands of many Christians and they will reproach me for what I did to them, {18.9} because I know that I have played into the hands of those who will be their enemies until the time when their power disappears and comes to an end, {18.10} and at the end of this period they will be overcome by unbearable degradation.

{18.11} Before I saw this vision, which I saw at Mount Sinai, I studied all the books with prophecies of

the Prophets and the Torah and the things described by the learned regarding astrology on the basis of the conjunctions and rules of the stars and what it indicated about the reign of the Sons of Ishmael, who are the worst of all people, and what God Almighty imposed on his servants. {18.12 } After that I saw the vision on Mount Sinai, which I have expounded in this book of mine. And I was commanded to do what I did, what I have mentioned [172a] before regarding the affair of the kings, which I have unreservedly recorded in the book.

{18.13} So write, on my behalf, the entirety of my sin, and what I have described in the book, which I made to contain testimony of prophethood and apostleship for him, {18.14.} and about how I have ventured against God in it and against my Lord and my God Christ {18.16} after I had strived to let his prophethood be in the name of the Unified Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, {18.17} since he could not mention that because of my great resolution and decisiveness vis-a-vis God, {18.18} because I wanted to confirm the kingdom of the Sons of Ishmael, in order that the promise of God to Abraham about Ishmael would be fulfilled. That was all I intended, {18.19} so I devised prophethood for him and I produced a book for him and I presented it as having come down to him as a revelation, {18.20} so that the words of our Lord Christ in his Gospel: ‘After me false prophets will come to you. Woe to the one who follows them’ would be fulfilled.

{18.21} I have made most of the book mention the Divinity and the humanity, the virtuous Mother of Light, and all the miracles that He worked among the Sons of Israel, and I affirmed the curse on the Sons of Israel and I brought the Christians near to him.

{18.23} Then he came to me after some days and said that none of his companions could recollect what I had explained to him about the mysterious matters, and that they only cared for their idol worship. This was in order that the words of our Lord Christ in his Gospel ‘No one can [172b] come to me except the one whom the Father who is in heaven has chosen’ be fulfilled.

{18.24} And I also wrote for him: ‘Say: He is God, the One, the Everlasting God. He begets not nor is He begotten and there is no one like unto Him’, and I told him: ‘Say to them “this verse has been revealed to me”’ and {18.25} the fact that I likened Him to that which they were accustomed to serve and I made Him solid, solitary, not hearing or seeing, like a stone, is my offense against God. All this happened when my hope had been dashed.

{18.26} And I also wrote for him: ‘Jesus son of Mary, did you say to the people “take me and my mother as two gods, next to God”? And he said. “Praise be to You. I do not say that to which I have no right. If I had said it You would have known it. You know what is in me and I do not know what is in You. Praise be to You. You are the Knower of the mysteries. And I made the rebuttal to him a reproach.

{18.27} And much more like this. And also that he ventured against the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, {18.28} and I said what I said.

{18.29} And I also wrote in it: ‘Believe in what has come down to you and in what has come down to you before. But most of them do not know’. With this I meant the Pure Holy Gospel and that it is the truth and that what has come down to him is falsity from a suspicious liar, who is at fault with himself, {18.30} and asks God for forgiveness for the sin that he has committed. While I said to him: ‘God is forgiving and compassionate’.

{18.31} Then he turned to me and said: ‘O man, [173a] all people commit sins, after which they hope

for the mercy of their Lord. But I have committed a sin for which there is no forgiveness, {18.32} and that is the fact that I set out on a grave and disgraceful affair with him, and that I yielded to my fancy and did what my wicked devilish self favored. O Marhab, what do you think of my words and the wickedness of my soul, {18.33} and how I left my home and went into this desolate empty desert {18.34} and sowed wicked seed in it, which will remain forever? The sower, with the tares that he sows, will be remembered and by sowing this I threw myself in an unquenchable fire. I left the lambs like a stray one and I remained in debt for the sin that I committed before my Lord and my God and for my words about Him, which He had not commanded me to say, regarding the prophethood in the [affair] of this man who claims prophethood and apostleship on the basis of my words to him. The door which I have opened for myself and for others is the gravest door: I presented falsity as truth and avouched absurdity.

{18.35} I let loose rapacious wolves and serpents and ravenous predators on the lambs of Christ, and I let loose a refractory evil people onto a faultless people. I made them lower their heads under the rule of others {18.36} and I forced the *jizya* upon them, which they will have to pay throughout the days of their lives. And I made their lives miserable. {18.37} [173b] Whoever has done what I have described to you does not hope afterwards for mercy from God and His Christ whom He sent to save the world.

{18.38} Blessed are those of His servants who persevere throughout the days of the rule of those people, and that is the total of the years of the hireling.

{18.39} And I, Marhab, said to him: ‘Hope for the mercy of God, the One who showed you His signs in heaven and elected you for His vision concerning many of His creatures. He is the One who accepts the repentance of one who repents to Him, even if it is just before his death.’

{18.40} These words made him feel better and he said: ‘Write down what still remains of the matter.’

{18.41} Then the monk Bahira said to me: ‘Some time later he came to me weeping and said: “O monk, you are the one who did this to me.”’

So I said to him: ‘What is the matter?’

{18.42} And he said: ‘My companions and my relatives say: “Every prophet that has ever come has worked miracles, such as raising the dead and showing marvels and the like, but you have not presented anything like that and we will not accept prophecy from you if you do not give us a clear proof”.’

{18.43} And I said to him: ‘I will solve this matter for you, God willing’. And I wrote for him: ‘Nothing prevented Us from sending signs, except that the ancients cried lies to them. We brought Thamud a she-camel as a clear sign, but they hamstrung her, so their Lord destroyed them’. This was to dismiss him with this saying, because Thamud was presented with a camel from an unknown place and others have been presented with well-measured words from the Holy Spirit [174a] who foretell what will be, others revived the dead, such as Ezekiel and others. And he detested this passage.

{18.44} After that he came to me and said: ‘My people are shameless and they like marriage’.

So I said to him: ‘In the book four and five and six and seven and eight and nine and ten are permitted to them, and what exceeds it is permitted to them, as well as slave-girls, whom their right hands possess, whom their money has bought’.

And this was because he had bought a slave-girl and he wished to let his women know by means of this

verse that it had been revealed to him, in order to appease them with it, since God had permitted the marriage to him. {18.45} And this passage violates this book.

{18.46} I also taught that he ascended with him to heaven, and I informed him about what I had seen that time when the angel took me up to heaven, and I described everything in greatest detail. And I made him say: 'I have ridden *al-Buraq* to the heavenly Jerusalem' and that she had asked him to forgive her sins {18.47} and that she was grateful to him and to his words. Certain things in this passage I stated succinctly, about Gabriel and others, {18.48} and the tightening of *al-Buraq* lest she would flee.

{18.50} When he related this account to his companions they gave him the lie and said to him: 'We do not want you to describe heaven to us. Give us a description of Jerusalem and what is to be found there.'

[174b] {18.51} And he said to them 'Please let me ask my Lord'. And they allowed him to do that. {18.52} So he came to me filled with sadness and said: 'I have told them, but they did not accept a word of what I said. They have demanded a complete description of the House of Holiness'. So I gave him a complete description of Jerusalem. {18.53} And I said to him: 'Say to them: "I have asked my Lord and he has promised me that he will send it to me on the wing of Gabriel so that I can describe it all for you"'. And he did what I had told him.

{18.54} And as a confirmation of what he had said, I wrote for him the verse: 'Glory be to Him who carried his servant by night from the Holy Mosque to the Further Mosque, the precincts of which we have blessed'.

{18.55} And I wrote for him: 'He was two bows'-lengths away or nearer'. {18.56} And I made sure that nobody after him from his community would understand or comprehend this passage, because he neither went up nor did he come down, nor did he prophesy nor was he sent by God, {18.57} but through the command of my mighty Lord the perfection of my forgiving merciful Lord became manifest, and the will of God and the fulfillment of His command to His servants was effected through me.

{18.58} Then, after some days he came to me and said: 'I passed by the house of one of my friends, called Zayd. I called him and his wife appeared and I looked at her, without her being aware of it, and I became infatuated with her. I wish you would settle this matter for me, as you have solved all issues for me. There is nothing that you have not settled for me, and now this terrible affair has come on my path, which is of grave concern to my companions [175a] and other Arabs.'

{18.59} And I told him: 'I will write a verse for you so that there will be no disgrace with them, and you tell them "this verse has come down with Gabriel".' {18.60} And I wrote for him: 'when Zayd had dissolved his marriage with her, We married you to her, O Muhammad'.

{18.61} I taught him many things like this and none of it resembles prophecy. {18.62} It was detestable to his companions and those after him. I did this and also wrote for him that God blesses him and I protected him once again.

{18.63} Of all the things I wrote, certain parts invalidate other parts. And this verse nullifies other ones. {18.64} I made a book for him that does not resemble the Scriptures of the Prophets, because there is none of that in it. And with every Scripture its master has brought exegesis, except with this one.

{18.65 } And I wrote a verse for him and called it ‘K H Y ‘ S’. And another one: ‘A L M. That is the Book in which there is no doubt, guidance for the god-fearing’. With that saying I meant nothing but the Pure Gospel and that its followers are the God-fearing, and that the Father is the first and the Son and the Holy Spirit.’

{18.66} And I said to him in this book ‘no one knows the exegesis except the Living God, and the well-versed in knowledge’.

{18.67} I made all who come after him confused about it, because it is a book for which no exegesis is made, as with other books. I made everyone after him explain it according to his intelligence and I made no exegesis for it, except what is in [175b] this book of mine. And I knew that it was also something about which his future followers would disagree, and that they would change it and add to it and subtract from it. And everyone will write what he likes for himself, as I have described above in this book of mine once before.

{18.68} I have laid bare the status of the religions in it and God’s beneficence to us, the community of Christians, and how kind He is to us. So ask God, who with His might wills the fulfillment of His wisdom and the singling out of His servants, to save the great and the {18.70} Because I know that we will have enemies from amongst them and that those who are not chosen will go over to them. And on them there is no mercy. Their evil will come upon us, even more steadily than the evil of those who were before.’

{18.71} Now, I, Marhab the sinner, stayed in the monastery with the monk Bahira for a long time. He related and described this whole history to me in great detail. I took notice of it and was witness to it, and I verified its circumstances and its foundations. In his presence I wrote it down and I arranged it at his command.

{18.72} And he said to me: ‘Do not reproach me, neither you nor the one who reads it, for what I have done and committed, because I knew what I knew and comprehended, and I saw {18.73} that he would rule and that his rise, his success and the accomplishment of his mission were inevitable, on the basis of what I had read, understood, heard and observed. So I wrote all of it for the believers and I obtained for them a treaty [176a] from him, as well as promises of his care throughout the days of his rule.’

{18.74} And I invoked God’s reward upon him and I thanked him. I saw that he was honored and distinguished amongst the Arabs and that amongst his people he was loved and well-liked. He used to act as a judge between them, settled their affairs and managed their business, and they were thankful to him and honored him.

{18.75} And glory, praise and honor are to our Lord, now, forever, and to eternity and praise be to God forever, eternally, everlastingly.’

The history of the monk Bahira with the Arab from the desert is to end, with the peace of the Lord.

Testimony #8: An Account of the Conflict between Umayyads and Hashimites

From Umayyads and Abbasids, being Part IV of Jurji Zaydan's History of Islamic Civilization, trans. D. S. Margoliouth, E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series Vol. IV, Leyden, London, 1907.

Pp. 57-66.

Please note: this work bases itself on standard Islamic authorities and their legendary views of early Islamic history. It provides valuable information, however, about the Muslims' own traditions concerning conflict in the tribe to which Muhammad belonged, between the Umayyads and Hashimites, and is useful as evidence of the Othmanic animus against Muhammad's clan.

“CHAPTER II.

Mode of Government during the Umayyad Period

(41-132 A.H.).

“§ I. It has been seen that the fundamental principle of government during the period of the Pious Caliphs was the union of the Arabian race, whereas its mainstays were justice, mercy, and chivalry. Within a few years they founded the Islamic empire, subduing the greater part of the civilized world, their purpose being religious, their weapons piety, justice, and scrupulous observation of the Quran and the Tradition; their aim being the propagation of their religion, and their ultimate object the reward of the next world. Their appointment was by election and committees, whereas the methods of the Umayyads were the reverse of these in every respect.

§ 2. Transference Of The Caliphate To The Umayyads.

“When the Umayyads first began to aspire to the Caliphate, the throne had come to Ali son of Abu Talib, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law; the Moslems regarded him as the person with the greatest claim to the Caliphate on the ground of his near relation to the Prophet, his piety, courage, learning, the early date of his conversion, and his services in propagating it. A rival arose in the person of Muawiyah son of Abu Sufyan, whose father and brethren had been the fiercest opponents of Islam at its rise, and who had only adopted it after the taking of Meccah in the year 8 A.H. They adopted it only because they were compelled, finding Islam already so firmly established in the Arabian Peninsula that there was no chance of resisting it.

“Abu Sufyan, Muawiyah's father, had led the people of Meccah, had fought a number of pitched battles against the Prophet, had made no concealment of his animosity, and had assailed him in every way possible. When the Moslems had got sufficiently powerful to think of taking Meccah, and were started on their way, Abu Sufyan, with some of the magnates of the city, went out to spy the enemy's movements. They were met by Abbas, the Prophet's uncle, to whom Abu Sufyan, now repenting, made

the observation that his nephew had grown very great; the uncle then advised him to capitulate, and this he felt compelled to do. Presently Meccah was taken; Abu Sufyan and his family, including his son Muawiyah, became Moslems, and received gifts from the Prophet to confirm them in their faith.

§ 3. Rivalry Between Umayyah And Hashim.

“The reason that led Muawiyah to seek the Caliphate goes back to pagan days. The Bani Abd Manaf were the most aristocratic clan in Kuraish, the most numerous, and the most powerful. They were divided into two branches, the Umayyads and Hashimites, the former being the more numerous. Before Islam they were of recognized nobility, the last eminent man of the line being Harb Ibn Umayyah, leader of the Meccans in the Fijar wars. He was a man of power and influence in both clans. When Islam appeared, the fact that the Prophet was a Hashimite was ungrateful to the Umayyads, and they, in consequence, headed the resistance to him, but without success. Still, they compelled the Prophet to migrate from Meccah to Medinah, where the Helpers—Kahtanites by race— aided him until his scheme was realized. Before his flight his uncle Abu Talib was dead, and his sons joined the Prophet’s migration. Presently Mohammed was joined by his uncle Hamzah, then by his uncle Abbas and others of the sons of Abd al-Muttalib, and the field was left free for the Umayyads in Meccah; their leadership over the tribe Kuraish was confirmed, and became additionally strong after the battle of Badr, since in that battle the leading men of the other Kurashite clans perished. Abu Sufyan became the leader of the Kuraish, and acted as general in the battle of Uhud, and again in the battle of the Ditch, and afterwards; and when the Moslems became strong and took Meccah, and Abu Sufyan capitulated, the Prophet regarded it as sound policy to deal generously with the Meccans after he had taken their city by force; so he gave them all their liberty, saying, “Go free, ye are the released.” Among these persons was Muawiyah, who, like the rest, became a Moslem.

“After the Prophet’s death, when Abu Bakr was Caliph, the Kurashites, and especially the Umayyads, came and complained to him of their being regarded as inferior to the Helpers and Refugees, but were reminded by him that they had entered the fold late and that only by zeal in the Sacred War could they overtake their brethren. Hence they displayed great zeal in the war with the Renegade Arabs. When Omar I became Caliph he perceived the feeling that lay hid in their bosoms, and was anxious that they should not remain in Medinah, so he sent them against the Byzantines, and held out to them the prospects of settlements in Syria. Abu Sufyan’s son Yazid was made by him governor of Syria, and with him the bulk of the Kuraish wandered thither, where the fruitfulness of the land pleased them; there, then, they remained till the death of Yazid, when Omar appointed his brother Muawiyah in his place. When Uthman became Caliph in the year 23 he confirmed Muawiyah in his appointment, whence the leadership of the Umayyads continued in Syria as it had been in pagan times in Meccah over the Kuraish, the Hashimites being occupied with Prophecy and having cast aside this present world.

§ 4. MUAWIYAH AND ALI.

“The Umayyads then kept their eyes fixed on the sovereignty and honour which the Hashimites had gained by the prophetic office, and were biding their opportunity to seize on the reins of monarchy. And when Omar was killed and a commission appointed to choose another Caliph, the Companions of the Prophet chose Uthman son of Affan, who was himself an Umayyad, and doubtless his choice was due to some Umayyad plotting. He was a weak man who favored his relatives in his administration, and the Umayyads taking advantage of his weakness possessed themselves of the governorships, and

also obtained great wealth, to the vexation of the other Companions of the Prophet, who out of resentment killed the Caliph.

“This murder was seized by the Umayyads as a means of obtaining the Caliphate, the chief of the Umayyads being Muawiyah, who, as we have seen, held the governorship of Syria for the last two Caliphs. The people of Medinah had already chosen as Caliph Ali son of Abu Talib, they being mostly Helpers. Thus the Moslems found themselves divided into two parties, recognizing each a different head—the Helpers, who claimed the right to appoint to the sovereignty a member of the Prophet’s house, in virtue of their having aided him when he fled to them from Meccah, and the Kuraish in Syria, who claimed the right to bestow it on the head of the family which had been supreme in pagan days. The majority of the Companions of the Prophet acknowledged the claims of Ali, and Muawiyah saw no way of gaining his end save by cunning and underhand dealing, and in these qualities he was the first man of his age. He proceeded therefore to compass the sovereignty, like the ambitious of every age, without any thought of religion. And his efforts were aided by the fact that his rival Ali thought of the Caliphate as a religious office, and was of an ascetic turn of mind, with no ambitions save for his reward in heaven. And a further aid was the circumstance that Muawiyah’s supporters had outgrown their awe of religion and the prophetic office, and had tasted the pleasure of wealth, had grown accustomed to the first place, and the sphere of their ambitions had been enlarged. Muawiyah’s efforts to gain adherents were rendered fruitful by his employment of a principle which he is supposed to have stated in a conversation with Amr Ibn al-As: “Were there but a hair between me and my followers,” said Muawiyah, “it would not snap.” When asked to explain, he went on to say that if they drew it tighter he would let it loose, whereas if they loosened he would tighten.

“His first step was to press into his service three eminent members of the Companions, who were famed for their diplomatic ability—Amr Ibn al-As, Ziyad “his father’s son,” and Al-Mughirah Ibn Shubah. Without their aid he could scarcely have succeeded. At the battle of Siffin, when things were going against Muawiyah, Amr saved the day by suggesting that copies of the Quran should be lifted up with a view to stopping the war; he then advised arbitration, and as arbiter deceived Ali’s representative, Abu Musa al-Ashari, and declared Ali’s election void and Muawiyah’s valid—a service in return for which he obtained the governorship of Egypt for life. Ziyad “his father’s son” was a man of unknown parentage: when Muawiyah was satisfied as to his talents, he made an adherent of him by declaring him to be his brother, and giving him a place in the pedigree of his own family as Ziyad son of Abu Sufyan (his own father); the narrative of this is lengthy, and a summary of it has been given above. This adoption of Ziyad was the first occasion on which an Islamic law was publicly abrogated. Ziyad was of great help to Muawiyah in governing Irak and Fars. Al-Mughirah Ibn Shubah has the distinction of being the first Moslem forger of false coin, and the first who gave a bribe. It was he who encouraged Muawiyah to proclaim as his heir his son Yazid, making the Caliphate a hereditary office.

“The assistance of these and other eminent leaders was gained by Muawiyah by diplomacy and by offering inducements: Egypt was given in fief to Amr, Fars to Mughirah, whereas of Ziyad he made a brother. He was easygoing in the scrutiny of his lieutenants, and winked at malversation, while bestowing on them lavish honours. Had Ali displayed any similar qualities, the Moslems would have been on his side, but Ali was a sharp scrutinizer, obstinate in carrying out his own ideas, and unable to swerve from what his conscience dictated. Similar had been the character of the first two Caliphs, but in their days religious fanaticism and Arab patriotism were still in their bloom: a word from their Caliph was sufficient for them. Ali’s conduct was regarded by his contemporaries as weakness, and his

partisans gradually deserted him for Muawiyah. Of these deserters the first was Al-Mughirah Ibn Shubah: he came to Ali the day on which the latter had been proclaimed Caliph, while Muawiyah was watching for an opportunity of dethroning him, and advised Ali to deal gently with Muawiyah and refrain from cashiering him till he (Ali) was quite secure in his throne, when he might cashier Muawiyah if he so pleased; Ali did not assent, so Al-Mughirah came again on the following day and treacherously advised him to cashier Muawiyah, as he wished to do. Al-Mughirah thereupon deserted to Muawiyah, and became one of his most zealous supporters.

“Quite similar was Ali’s treatment of his cousin Abdallah Ibn Abbas, whom, as we have seen, Ali by his conscientious scrutiny vexed and alienated from his cause; when Ali was assassinated, his son Al-Hasan regarded himself as unequal to the task of opposing Muawiyah, and he, therefore, conceded the Caliphate to him, whence Muawiyah’s seat became firm. This happened in the year 41. In the sequel the fortunes of the Alids and Umayyads reproduced those of Ali and Muawiyah: the unscrupulous side was always the winning side, and the Alids passed most of their time in fear and exile, and the majority of them died violent deaths, notwithstanding that they were persons of piety, worth, and probity. Whence we may infer that religion and politics do not go together, save in rare cases, and that their union in the days of the Pious Caliphs was an accident such as is unlikely to recur. Still, the word political is scarcely applicable to the dynasty of the Pious Caliphs, whose sovereignty was religious in type.

§ 5. The Ambition Of The Umayyads.

“The pivot on which the policy of the Umayyads turned, and the object which they regularly held in view, was the recovery of the sovereignty which they had enjoyed in pagan days. They cared little for the difficulties that stood in the way of the realization of that end, and the ghastly character of the means to be employed in its accomplishment. Accomplish it they did; and in their days the Islamic Empire grew strong, stronger than ever it was in Abbasid times. They wished to enjoy the sovereignty exclusively. The most autocratic of all was Abd al-Malik Ibn Marwan, whose motto was “There is not room for two stallions in one thicket.”

“The Umayyad desire for exclusive sovereignty, while others existed who had a better right to it than they, led them to commit many acts which blacken their memories. The two instruments whereby they succeeded in acquiring autocracy in the face of all their rivals were the clan-feeling of the Kurashites, and pressing into their service the other clan-feelings. These lie at the base of all that is known of Umayyad politics.

§ 6. Arab Patriotism In Umayyad Days.

“The Arabs and the Kuraish.—In the pagan period Arabic patriotism was confined to the tribes; when Islam arose, that form of patriotism was forgotten, and the Arabs were united under the name Islam, or the Islamic community. And during the period of the Pious Caliphs this name included all the Arabs with their different tribes and clans; and, indeed, when the Umayyads aspired to autocracy, and seized on the Caliphate, they displayed a sort of chauvinism in favour of the Arabs, maintained the obligations of Bedouin life, held firmly to Bedouin customs, and allowed Bedouin asperity to characterize their government and affect their policy, albeit the Bedouin virtues which have been mentioned had disappeared. Of all the principles of pagan days the only one which they maintained was patriotism towards their tribe, Kuraish, and preference for their family over others. This aroused much envy in the breasts of those other tribes that had been of importance in pagan days, and been deprived of it by

Islam; especially was this the case with the people of Basrah and Kufah, as well as Syria, most of the Arabs who settled in these places having been ill-disposed towards Islam and having associated but little with the Prophet, and so having scarcely experienced the refining influence of his character, while retaining the old wildness and clan-patriotism of pagan times. When the Umayyads became firmly seated, these tribes found themselves under the thumb of the ‘Refugees’ and ‘Helpers,’ members of the tribes Kuraish, Kinanah, Thakif, Hudhail, the people of Hijaz, and the people of Yathrib: to this condition they strongly objected, remembering the nobility of their ancestry, the numbers of their families, and how they had borne the brunt of the Byzantine and Persian powers. The tribes of which we are speaking included Bakr Ibn Wail, Abd Kais Ibn Rabiah, Kindah, Azd, all Yemenite; with Tamim and Kais of Mudar. They began to detract from the Kuraish, and to display open hostility towards them. Thus clan-patriotism, similar to what had existed in pagan times, was restored.

“This renewed patriotism, then, began with the general aversion of the Arabs to the Kuraish, occasioned by envy of that tribe, as we have mentioned, and by the fact that the Kuraish assumed absolute sovereignty to the exclusion of the rest of the Companions of the Prophet and the succeeding generation, and that they claimed the whole of the booty for themselves and such members of the Yemenite or Adnanite tribes as Muawiyah thought fit to conciliate. The first dispute of this sort that arose in Islam was in the time of Uthman. When Said Ibn al-As had been appointed by this Caliph governor of Kufah, he selected the chief Kufans, and the people who had fought at Kadisiyyah, and the Kufan Quran-readers to keep him company. These persons would sit with him at night, having among them members of all the tribes. The Umayyads and other Companions of the Prophet had by this time commenced owning landed property and building mansions, the Umayyads being able to carry on these operations on a vaster scale than others owing to their relationship with the Caliph. It happened that at one of these entertainments one of those present made mention of the liberality of Talhah son of Ubaidallah, an eminent Companion of the Prophet. Said observed that “a man with an estate like Nishastaj may well be liberal; had I an estate of the sort, God would have bestowed abundance on you all out of it.” The estate to which he referred was a vast one in Kufah, producing a vast revenue, purchased by Talhah of some Kufans who had taken up their residence in the Hijaz with some property of his own at Khaibar. He had then cultivated the estate with care, and increased the revenue.

“When Said said this, a young man who was present rose up and said, “I wish Miltat here were yours!” Miltat was land belonging to the Persian kings in the neighborhood of Kufah on both banks of the Euphrates. Another of those present, not a member of the Kuraish, rose and rebuked the young man, for whom his father made excuse, saying, “He is a lad, don’t be severe with him.” “How dare he,” said they, “want our Sawad?” Safd replied that the Sawad was the Garden of the Kuraish. Al-Ashtar al-Nakhai, a Yemenite, and a vehement partisan of Ali son of Abu Talib, then said angrily to Said, “Do you aver that the Sawad which God has given us by our swords is your and your friends’ garden?” Hereupon Abd al-Rahman al-Asadi, of Said’s bodyguard, said to him, “Do you bandy words with your commander?” and rebuked him coarsely. Thereupon Al-Ashtar made a sign to his friends, who leaped on Abd al-Rahman, and trampled on him so violently that he fainted; they then dragged him by the feet and sprinkled water on him till he recovered, when he said to Said, “Your choice entertainers have killed me.” Said determined to have no more nightly gatherings.

“From that time relations became strained between the Kuraish and the other tribes, especially between the former and the Yemenites, particularly the Yemenite Helpers. The Helpers remained constant in helping the people of the Prophet’s House against the other Kurashites, as they had done at the

beginning of Islam when the Prophet came to them as a refugee, flying from his relatives. The battle of Siffin, fought in the year 37 between Ali and Muawiyah, was regarded as a trial of forces between the Helpers and the Kuraish. When that battle was raging furiously a Yemenite Helper of Ali said, “Ye people, is there any among you that would find his way to God under the spears? By Him in whose hand is my soul, we shall fight you for its [the Quran’s] interpretation, as we have fought you for its revelation.” So he went forward to the fight, reciting:

‘We fought you for its revelation,
Now fight you for its explanation;
Our blows will cause decapitation,
And interrupt all conversation,
Till right return to its location.’”

Testimony #9: Muawwiya’s Public Acknowledgment of His Christian Beliefs

MUAWWIYA’S PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CHRISTIANITY IN ADAMNAN’S DE LOCIS SANCTIS, FROM THE ACCOUNT OF EYE-WITNESSES GIVEN TO PILGRIM ARCULF

From “The Pilgrimage of Arculfus in the Holy Land (About the Year A.D. 670)” Trans. J. R. Macpherson, London 1889, p. 14f. = Adamnan, De Locis Sanctis I. xi:—“The Napkin with which the head of the Lord was covered in the sepulcher.

“As to the sacred napkin which was placed upon the head of the Lord in the Sepulcher, we learn from the narrative of the sainted Arculf, who inspected it with his own eyes.

“The whole people of Jerusalem bear witness to the truth of the narrative we now write. For on the testimony of several faithful citizens of Jerusalem, the sainted Arculf learned this statement which they very often repeated to him as he listened attentively: A certain trustworthy believing Jew, immediately after the Resurrection of the Lord, stole from His Sepulcher the sacred linen cloth and hid it in his house for many days; but, by the favor of the Lord Himself, it was found after the lapse of many years, and was brought to the notice of the whole people about three years before [this statement was made to Arculf]. That happy, faithful thief, when at the point of death, sent for his two sons, and, showing them the Lord’s napkin, which he had at first abstracted furtively, offered it to them, saying: ‘My boys, the choice is now given to you. Therefore let each of you say which he rather wishes to choose, so that I may know without doubt to which of you, according to his own choice, I shall bequeath all the substance I have, and to which only this sacred napkin of the Lord.’ On hearing this, the one who wished to obtain all his sire’s wealth, received it from his father, according to a promise made to him under the will. Marvelous to say, from that day all his riches and all his patrimony, on account of which he sold the Lord’s napkin, began to decrease, and all that he had was lost by various misfortunes and came to nothing. While the other blessed son of the above-named blessed thief, who chose the Lord’s napkin in preference to all his patrimony, from the day when he received it from the hand of his dying sire, became, by the gift of God, more and more rich in earthly substance, and was by no means deprived of heavenly treasure. And thus this napkin of the Lord was faithfully handed down as an

heirloom by the successive heirs of this thrice blessed man to their believing sons in regular succession, even to the fifth generation. But many years having now passed, believing heirs of that kindred failed, after the fifth generation, and the sacred linen cloth came into the hands of unbelieving Jews, who, while unworthy of such an office, yet embraced it honorably and, by the gift of the Divine bounty, were greatly enriched with very diverse riches. But an accurate narrative about the Lord's napkin having spread among the people, the believing Jews began to contend bravely with the unbelieving Jews about the sacred linen cloth, desiring with all their might to obtain possession of it, and the strife that arose divided the common people of Jerusalem into two parties, the faithful believers and the faithless unbelievers.

“Upon this, Mavias, {Muawiya} the King of the Saracens, was appealed to by both parties to adjudicate between them, and he said to the unbelieving Jews who were persistently retaining the Lord's napkin, ‘Give the sacred linen cloth which you have into my hand.’ In obedience to the king's command, they bring it from its casket and place it in his bosom. Receiving it with great reverence, the king ordered a great fire to be made in the square before all the people, and while it was burning fiercely, he rose, and going up to the fire, addressed both contending parties in a loud voice: ‘Now let Christ, the Savior of the world who suffered for the human race, upon whose head this napkin, which I now hold in my bosom, and as to which you are now contending, was placed in the Sepulcher, judge between you by the flame of fire, so that you may know to which of these two contending hosts this great gift may most worthily be entrusted.’ Saying this, he threw the sacred napkin of the Lord into the flames, but the fire could in no way touch it, for, rising whole and untouched from the fire, it began to fly on high, like a bird with out spread wings, and looking down from a great height on the two contending parties, placed opposite one another as if they were two armies in battle array, it flew round in mid air for some moments , then slowly descending, under the guidance of God, it inclined towards the party of the Christians, who meanwhile prayed earnestly to Christ, the Judge, and finally it settled in their bosom. Raising their hands to heaven, and bending the knee with great gladness, they give thanks to God and receive the Lord's napkin with great honor, a gift to be venerated as sent to them from heaven; they render praises in their hymns to Christ, who gave it, and they cover it up in another linen cloth and put it away in a casket of the church.

“Our brother Arculf saw it one day taken out of the casket, and amid the multitude of the people that kissed it, he himself kissed it in an assembly of the church; it measures about eight feet in length. As to it let what has been said suffice.”

Testimony #10: The Traditional Location of Mecca at Pharan and Medina at Midian (Moabite Rabbath, Areopolis, modern Er-Rabba) in Arabia Petraea

Please read as an introduction to the following account the Chapter titled “Some Major Geographical Alterations Made in the Quran”, [above](#), >>>. According to Thomas Artzruni, Mecca was the later name for the city called Pharan in the days of Muhammad himself: “At that time {the era of Muhammad} there were some despotic brothers in the regions of Arabia Petraea in the place (called) P'aran {Pharan}, which is now called Mak'a {Mecca} — warlike chieftains, worshipers of the temple of the Ammonites of the image called Samam and K'abar.” Pharan, also spelled Paran, was a small city in

Wadi Feiran (Feiran = Pharan) at the foot of Mount Serbal, that is, in the far west of the Sinai Peninsula, somewhat to the north of the port of Tor on the Gulf of Suez. Mount Serbal, according to the 6th-century Coptic monk Cosmas Indicopleustes, was the Mount Sinai of the Hebrew Scriptures where Moses received the Law. Note the statement of Thomas Artzruni that Pharan was in the territory which the Romans called Arabia Petraea. The metropolis of this province was Petra, a little south of the Dead Sea in modern-day Jordan.

The connection of Mecca with the city-state of Petra passed down into Medieval and Renaissance times. From J. H. Hottinger, *Historia Orientalis*, Zürich, 1660, p. 215: “‘The capital of Arabia Petraea is the City of Petra’, according to the account of Lud. Godof. page 230, ‘which the Holy Scriptures call Petra Deserti {Petra of the Desert}, and there are many who consider this to be the same Mecca in which Muhammad was born.’” He cites Alessandro Sardi, the Renaissance scholar, *ibid.* p. 214f., as calling Mecca “Arach”, in spite of the fact Mecca in Saudi Arabia never had this name. Hottinger argues that the appellative “Arach” became attached wrongly to the Saudi Arabian Mecca because of the widespread tradition that the Mecca or Bekka where Muhammad was born was Petra, as Petra was indeed called “Arach” (also “Archam”) in the Middle Ages. Hottinger (p. 215) quotes Adrianus Romanus in *Theatro Urbium* in this regard: “Arach was formerly called Petra.”

There is a little confusion in the nomenclature because the ancient names had specific meanings, and the later names more general ones. The name Arach and Archam was derived from the ancient Midianite chief Rekem of Numbers 31, who inhabited the rock-caves of Petra before the Exodus, hence the Greeks knew this place as Arkem or Arekeme (from Rekem, producing the later Medieval form Archam) and Arke (whence the Medieval Arach). At the time of the Exodus, the Israelites inhabited the site some time themselves under the name of Kadesh, the “Sanctuary” (so-called on account of the second miracle of water from the rock performed there). Later still the location was known in Hebrew as Sela, the “Rock, Cliff-face”, which is nowadays denominated the Sik. The Sik is a huge rock-face, split by a chasm along its length, which was formed, according to the Bedouin account, by the smiting of Moses’ rod, when he brought forth the water. The chasm is the entrance, and a very magnificent entrance, to the ancient cave-city. The Hebrew term “Sela” for this rock-face translates into Greek as “Petra”, the “Rock”.

In Roman Imperial and early Byzantine times the Nabataeans ruled the whole of Arabia Petraea, along with some adjoining districts, from the aforesaid cave-city. It was called in that era Petra. Thus what might be termed the city-state of Petra (as opposed to the cave-city itself) included at the time parts of what was anciently termed the Desert of Paran or Pharan, which stretched from the notable city of Pharan in Wadi Feiran in Sinai eastwards and northwards to within a few miles of the cave-city of Petra. The city of Pharan in Wadi Feiran was itself the center of an important Late Roman and Byzantine Saracen state. The term Paran or Pharan denoted both the city of Pharan in Wadi Feiran and the adjoining desert, the eastern portion of which was included in the territory of Petra. Hence, no doubt, the belief arose in Medieval times that Mecca where Muhammad was reared, — originally the *city of Pharan*, according to Thomas Artzruni, — was “Petra” or “Arach”, Pharan in this case being understood to be a geographical name referring to that *portion of the desert of Pharan included within the territory of the city-state of Petra*, rather than as the name of the city in Wadi Feiran. This belief would have acquired a stronger hold on the Medieval historical consciousness on account of the fact that the city of Pharan by that time had been reduced to a heap of ruins, and had ceased to be permanently inhabited. Petra, though deserted too in Medieval times, had a more prominent name than

the city of Pharan in the ancient history of the East, and would naturally be adopted by preference as a geographical anchor-point for the traditions about Muhammad's early life. Thus, the name of the metropolis itself, "Arach", came to be used as an alternative name for the whole of Arabia Petraea, including the city of Pharan at the base of Mount Sinai. An example of this usage is found in the commentary of J. W. Goebelius to the Works of H. Conringius (ed. Brunsvigae, 1730, p. 451 note [g]): "[Arabia] Petraea, which took its name from the city of Petra, and was the Nabathaea of the ancients, nowadays called Herac and Arach, in which are the mountains Sinai and Horeb, likewise the deserts of Sin, Zur, Kedar, Kades, and the notable cities Bussereth, Herath, Eltor, Eilan, Havarra and Median." (Latin: "[Arabia] Petraea, quae ab urbe Petra nomen tulit veterumque Nabathaea fuit, nunc Herac & Arach appellata, in qua sunt montes Sinai & Horeb, item deserta Sin, Zur, Kedar, Kades, urbes praecipuae Bussereth, Herath, Eltor, Eilan, Havarra & Median.")

Even in the earliest stages of the textual corruption of the Evangelical Quran, traditions of the Subba, or Mandaeans of Iraq, were inveigled into the text. The Mandaeans were classed as Nabataeans by the Muslims, and the Nabataeans were traced from Nebajoth, the firstborn of Ishmael. There was, therefore, an ethnological connection between the Subba and the Ishmaelite family of Muhammad who were geographically located in the regions of Sinai inhabited by the Nabataeans.

The Subba derived their religious traditions from the Samaritans. It would be no surprise to find Subba, "Nabataean", or early Muhammadan traditions in general, preserved by the Samaritans. And, in fact, we find unique traditions relating to the geography of the Nabataean Ishmaelites of Muhammad's era preserved in the Samaritan chronicle known as the Asatir. (Asatir, ed. trans. Gaster, [Pitron, or, Commentary] VIII. 3f., p. 243, and [Asatir text] VIII. 3, and footnote 3 *ibid.*, p. 262.) This chronicle states that the people of Nebajoth son of Ishmael built Mecca or Beccah within thirty years of the death of Ishmael, and it identifies the famous Arabian city with the place-name mentioned in Genesis 25. 18: This reads as follows, according to the original Hebrew text: Gen. 25. 17f.: "17. And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, an hundred and thirty and seven years: and he gave up the ghost and died; and was gathered unto his people. 18 And they [the Ishmaelites] dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, which happened to be located [*naphal*, lit. "fell"] opposite Egypt at Boachah Ashur [Heb. *Boachah Ashurah*], in the presence of [or, "east of", or "overlooking"] all his brethren." We shall leave what we take to be the place-name Boachah Ashur for discussion *infra*. The relative clause "which happened to be located ..." clearly relates to the land of Shur, where the Ishmaelites inhabited a place located opposite Ishmael's Egyptian kinsmen, thus fulfilling the prophecy relating to Ishmael in Gen. 16. 12, that he would dwell "opposite", "east of", or "in the face of" all his brethren. This was taken to mean, as Gen. 25. 18 indicates, "opposite", "east of", or "in the face of" his Egyptian brethren, the kinfolk of his Egyptian mother Hagar. However, the word translated "happened to be located", Hebrew *naphal*, occurs at the end of the sentence in verse 18, and is thus commonly understood to mean "he (*viz.* Ishmael) happened to be located", literally "fell", that is, encamped, or, perhaps even, "fell in death". The two verses might now be read in a different sense, thus: "17. And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, an hundred and thirty and seven years: and he gave up the ghost and died; and was gathered unto his people. 18 And they [his people] dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, which (is) opposite Egypt at Boachah Ashur; he [*viz.* Ishmael, or, the Ishmaelite people] encamped, or he [Ishmael] fell dead, in the presence of [or, "east of", or "overlooking"] all his brethren." This is an awkward and unlikely translation, for the reason that it contains either a reference to the death ("falling dead") of Ishmael a second time in verse 18b, after its first mention in verse 17b, and after an intervening clause which changes the subject to the dwelling-place of his Ishmaelite descendants (verse 18a); or, alternatively, it

improbably alters the plural verb “they [the Ishmaelites] dwelt” (verse 18a) to a singular “he [the Ishmaelite people] was located, or, encamped” (verse 18b). The Samaritans understood verse 18 in the latter sense, nevertheless, and took it to refer principally to the Ishmaelite people of the family of Nebajoth. They also split the verse at the word “Egypt” and identified the Hebrew word *boachah* in the second half of the verse as the place-name Becca/Bakkah/Mecca and the following word *ashur* as a reference to Assyria (Heb. Ashur). Asatir’s text reads (trans. Gaster): “And all the children of Nebaot [Nebajoth] ruled for one year in the lifetime of Ishmael, and for thirty years after his death, from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates; and they built Mecca. For thus it is said: ‘*Boachah* [Heb. *boachah*, understood to mean “at Bakh/Mecca” see the Pitron (Commentary) *infra*] towards Ashur [Heb. *Ashurah*] before all his brethren he lay.’” (Ed. trans. Gaster VIII. 2-4, p. 262, the Pitron on the same passage reads the last verses thus: “from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates. And they built Bakh. As it is written: at Bakh [*Boachah*, interpreted to mean “at Bakh”, *Boach*, Bakh/Bekka/Mecca, followed by a locative *-h*] towards Assyria [*Ashurah*, interpreted to mean “toward Assyria”, *Ashur*, Assyria, followed by a locative *-h*,]: he abode in the presence of all his brethren.” Ibid. p. 243.) The word is read *Baka* in Samaritan Hebrew. The common Muslim tradition, accordingly, holds that Ishmael lived and died (understanding the reference in verse 18 to be to the “falling dead” of Ishmael) in “Mecca”.

Contrary to the Samaritan understanding of the verse, in one respect, and agreeing with it in another, the Hebrew phrase “boachah ashurah” is usually translated: “as thou goest [*boachah*] to Assyria [*Ashurah*]”. Grammatically there is no objection to that translation. But it has always remained a mystery why the rather limited territory occupied by the Ishmaelites in their earliest days, around Shur in the zone immediately east of Egypt in the Sinai peninsula (“before Egypt” as the text states), should be extended in that same text as far as Assyria, which was hundreds of miles away to the north and east. The Egyptian road known as the “Way of Horus” did run eastwards through Shur and onwards through Palestine and Syria as far as Assyria, but there is no Scriptural or historical evidence, and, indeed it is inherently improbable, that the Ishmaelites inhabited those vast intervening territories in their early days. The sensible translation of the two verses, as given *supra*, shows Ishmael himself, fulfilling the prophecy in Gen. 16, inhabited the region “from Havilah to Shur” and the latter was “opposite” (lit. “against the face of”) Egypt. Assyria is not included within these bounds. Furthermore it is a semantic-cum-logical impossibility that the complementary phrase *boachah ashurah* means “as thou goest to Assyria”. The reason is that in Hebrew the viewpoint in the preceding word “opposite”, literally “against the face of”, is *from Shur* looking towards Egypt. Shur, the abode of the Ishmaelites, “happened to be located” (lit. “fell”), as prophesied of Ishmael earlier in Genesis, “*against the face* of the Egyptians [or, Egypt]”. In English the word “opposite” has no specific direction as between subject and object, but the Hebrew phrase for “opposite” used here, “against the face of”, means the subject is looking, as it were, at the face of the person before him. Here the Ishmaelites of Shur look at “the face” of the Egyptians and therefore west across the Gulf of Suez. It could not be said of such a location and direction, described by such a phrase, that it was “as thou goest to Assyria,” since Assyria was *east* of Shur, behind the Ishmaelites’ backs, as they looked towards Egypt. If one thought the meaning intended was that Shur itself was *east of Egypt* (“as thou goest to Assyria”, that is, to the east, when looked at from Egypt), it could only be truly said in this way in Hebrew, with the Egyptians as subject, not the Ishmaelites of Shur: “The *Egyptians* dwelt *against the face of Shur*, as thou goest to Assyria”. Therefore “Boachah Ashur” does not mean “as thou goest to Assyria”, but is a place-name in its own right. *Boachah* would be a Poal participle of the verb *b’k* (for *bwk*, as *q’m* for *qwm*), meaning

“disturbed/agitated/frantic”, and *ashur* (which can be feminine in gender) means “step”. The final *-h* is locative, *Boachah Ashurah* = “at (*-h*) Boachah Ashur”. Boachah Ashur could be translated “Frantic Step”. Since Mecca (and therefore Boachah [Ashur], according to the Samaritans) was traditionally, and specifically, the place Hagar *frantically ran backwards and forwards* searching for water for her dying son Ishmael, the place-name “Frantic Step” is highly appropriate. From the early Armenian sources we know Mecca was located at Pharan in Wadi Feiran, and more precisely, on Mount Sinai, where a small fountain supplied water. According to Muslim tradition the fountain at “Mecca” was the well Zamzam, miraculously opened up for Hagar by an angel, thus supplying her and her son with life-giving water. It is a notable fact that the strand along the Gulf of Suez where the stream from Wadi Feiran and the watershed of the original Mount Sinai (Serbal) debouches, is known to this day as the plain of “Markah”. In Semitic dialects, and in Arabic, as in Hebrew, an “r” is commonly inserted in place of a doubled consonant, so “Markah” could also be pronounced “Makkah” — viz. Mecca. In other words, the early place-name Mecca, Bekkah, etc. is still preserved as a name for Feiran, but attached only in modern times, like a fossilized relic, to the exit of Wadi Feiran at the sea.

One of the mountain peaks Hagar ran between during the episode referred to was Mount Arafat (traditionally also located near “Mecca”). Arafat features in the same Samaritan chronicle and a parallel source exchanges “Paran” for “Arafat”. (Gaster, Asatir, p. 190, Asatir I. 17, and *ibid.* note.) Here too, evidently, the real geographical setting is Wadi Feiran. In Asatir it is Adam and Eve who are associated with Arafat, and the same association has been transferred from the original Paran in Sinai to the Saudi Arabian “Paran” and “Mecca” in post-Othmanic Muslim mythology: Adam and Eve are thus represented as having frequented the same sites in the vicinity of the Saudi Arabian Mecca as Abraham, Hagar and Ishmael. The original association of Adam with Paran (and hence, secondarily with Mecca) arose from a midrash on Joshua 14. 15. The ancient name of Hebron, Kiryath-Arba, is explained in that verse by the phrase: “He [Arba] is Adam the Great [thus interpreted, rather than, “the great man”, Hebrew *ha-adam ha-gadol*] amongst the Anakites.” Kiryath-Arba and the dependent Anakite territories as far as El-Paran (“the terebinth of Paran”), which are referred to in Genesis 14 as the scene of the war between Amraphel and the Anakites of Kiryath-Arba, were now understood to be the home-territory of Adam (“Arba”): the location, that is, outside Paradise where he was formed from the dust, and whither he returned after the Fall. (This region is called “Campus Damascenus” in Medieval literature, meaning, the scene of the battle between the Anakites allied with Abraham and Amraphel, which was terminated by the victory of Abraham near Damascus.) Asatir locates Adam accordingly in Arafat (Paran) after the Fall.

The text in Genesis 25. 18 locates Boachah Ashur by implication in Shur, just east of Egypt. Wadi Feiran and Mount Serbal-Sinai do indeed communicate directly with the wilderness of Shur at its southern end, this being the zone known nowadays as the Plain of Markah (Mecca), through a series of intervening wadis, which include Wadi Mukatteb. The wilderness of Shur stretches from the region immediately east of Lake Timsah, east of the Nile Delta, and runs southwards along the western Sinaitic seaboard. The name Shur means “Wall” and this word appropriately describes the characteristic feature of this region, viz. the wall of mountains which separate the coastal strip from the mountainous zone of the hinterland. The location of Boachah Ashur at Mount Serbal overlooking, and eastward of Egypt in the land of Shur, the most northerly section of the Ishmaelite homeland, explains the statement in the text that Ishmaelites (or Ishmael himself) encamped there *al pene*, that is “overlooking/east of/in the presence of”, their brethren.

The original site of Hagar's fountain on Mount Sinai, Boachah Ashur (Baka, Bakka, Mecca), became a shrine of the Ishmaelites in later times. The Ishmaelites here drifted into idolatry and idols were set up in the shrine. Muhammad is said to have cleared the idols out of the shrine at Bakka, including pictures of Abraham and Ishmael carrying games of chance in their hand. Only Ishmaelites ("Saracens") and exiled Jews frequented the shrine in Christian times, the latter presumably because of its association with Abraham. The Christian ascetics lived in caves or other dwellings around the mountain, and in greater numbers in the town of Pharan in Wadi Feiran. Occasionally gangs of outlaw Saracens raided the Christian sanctuaries, which is why Justinian built a guard-post at the mountain, and a fortress (the present-day monastery at Saint Catherine's) a short distance away to the east, to prevent their conducting raids eastward of Pharan into Palestine. The relationship between Saracens and Christians, therefore, was uneasy, as it was also between the Jews who frequented the shrine and the Christians, on account of the religious conflict between them. That is why Muhammad only found Jews and idolaters at Bakka when he introduced them to Sergius' Christian revelation, and was at first rejected. By Bakka in the earliest days was meant the local shrine on the mountain. Later, as aforesaid, the name Bakka was extended to Pharan, when it was conquered by Muhammad, and Wadi Feiran. As Thomas Artzruni says of the Pharan in Arabia Petraea, it "is *now* called Mak'a {Mecca}", that is, following the spread of Islam, as described in that work, but prior to the beginning of the 10th century AD when Artzruni was writing.

Christians in pre-Islamic times rarely visited the pagan shrine at Bakka for the reasons mentioned, as well as for the more obvious reason of the idolatry practiced there. Providentially, however, a record of one such visit has survived from the mid-sixth century AD just before the rise of Islam. It shows the separation in those days between the Coptic Christians in Wadi Feiran and the environs and the pagan Saracens at their shrine. It also provides details about the sacred (idolatrous) stone in the shrine, which was adopted by the later Muslims as the Black stone of Mecca. The shrine is said to have been located on Mount Horeb, which in these early Christian accounts is treated as one of the seven peaks of Serbal adjoining the central and highest peak, called Sinai. The name Sinai was also extended at this period to the seven-peaked mountain as a whole. Thus, the shrine is said to have been located on Sinai, though strictly it was on the peak called Horeb. The following account is from the Itinerary of the Pilgrim of Placentia c. AD 550-570 (ed. Geyer, recensio prima, 37ff., my additional notes in braces {}) reads as follows:

"37. Traveling on foot through the desert, on the eighteenth day we arrived at the place where Moses brought forth water from the rock. Passing on from there the next day, we came to the Mount of God, Horeb, and pressing forward with the aim of ascending Sinai, there met us an innumerable multitude of monks and hermits, carrying crosses and singing psalms. They prostrated themselves on the ground at our feet, and we at theirs, with tears in our eyes. They then conducted us to the valley separating Horeb from Sinai, at the foot of which latter mountain is the spring where Moses caught sight of the miraculous burning bush, when he was watering his flocks in the place. This spring is enclosed within a monastery and the monastery itself surrounded by fortified walls. There are three abbots within it who speak several languages, namely Latin, Greek, Syriac, Egyptian and Persian [Persian: from a variant in the second recension], as well as many interpreters of individual languages. There are monastic establishments inside it. We then proceeded on up the mountain without halt for three [Roman] miles, until we came to the location of the cave in which Elijah hid, when he fled from Jezebel. A spring bubbles forth in front of this cave, providing water for the mountain. We then

proceeded on upwards three [Roman] miles to the peak of the mountain. There is a place of prayer there of modest proportions, about six feet long in both directions. No-one is presumptuous enough to stay there permanently, but at first light the monks make their way up to it and perform divine service. The custom is for all visitors to clip their beards and hair and deposit the clippings there, and I accordingly cut my beard. 38. Mount Sinai is wholly composed of rock, and hardly any gravel. There are many cells of God's servants around its circumference, and similarly on Mount Horeb, and they say Horeb is clean gravel. On this mountain, in a certain part of the mountain, the Saracens have set up their idol, made of marble, as white as snow. Here they have a priest on permanent duty, arrayed in a long woolen inner robe and a linen outer robe. So when the time of their festival comes round, with the revolution of the moon, before the moon moves out of its phase, on their feast day the color of that marble begins to change: presently the moon enters its phase, and when they begin to worship the idol, the marble becomes black as pitch. When their festival is over, it resumes its original color, at which we were all amazed.

The "city of Midian" to which Muhammad fled from Pharan, and where he joined forces with 12,000 Jews, was defined by Thomas as one of the Midianite cities destroyed in ancient times by the Exodus Israelites, according to the Book of Numbers, chapter 31. "They {the 12,000 Jews who fled from Edessa} took the desert road and went to Arabia to the sons of Ishmael, to the city called Madiam {Midian}, which Israel had destroyed on leaving Egypt in its war with Balak, king of Moab. {For the account see Numbers ch. 31.} And because the Persian power had become very weak, they fearlessly entered the city of Madiam and dwelt in it." The particular city named "Midian" referred to in Numbers, — the one associated with the daughters of Moab and the feast of Baal-Peor initiated by Balak king of Moab, — was that which was situated just south of the River Arnon adjoining Areopolis on the borders of Moab, as described in Jerome's Latin version of the Onomasticon of Eusebius. The entry in Jerome's version of the Onomasticon, s.v. Madian, reads: "Madian {the later form of the name Midian. Jerome proceeds to describes the first city of this name on the coast of the Red Sea} There is another city of the same name as this, adjoining the Arnon and Areopolis, the ruins of which only remain as evidence in our days." Areopolis is the Hebrew Ar Moab, the Byzantine Rabbathmoba, the modern Er-Rabba in Jordan. The ancient city of Midian had been supplanted in Byzantine times by the more recent city of Areopolis, known locally as Rabbathmoba, the "Rabbath [Great City] of Moab" or "Moabite Rabbath".

That this was indeed the city of Midian referred to is demonstrated by a comparison of the accounts of "Sebeos" (the contemporary account of the rise of Islam) and of Thomas Artzruni. Thomas tells us Muhammad enlisted the help of 12,000 Jews at the city of Midian, campaigned successfully against the unbelievers at Pharan, then returned in triumph to the city of Midian, from which he launched his invasion of Palestine. "Sebeos" tells us Muhammad traveled from Pharan to "Moabite Rabbath", and launched from the latter site his invasion of Palestine. The "Moabite Rabbath" of the account of "Sebeos" corresponds to the "city of Midian" of the account of Thomas Artzruni, confirming the identity of the one with the other. Jerome in the Onomasticon more precisely identified the city of Midian with what were in his day (late 4th century AD) ruins "adjoining" (Latin *iuxta*) Areopolis, Areopolis being also termed Rabbathmoba or "Moabite Rabbath". The older site, evidently, was abandoned, and, as commonly in such cases, the population transferred to the newer city immediately adjoining. The Onomasticon, by the by, differentiated this city of Midian from the identically named "city of Midian" near Tabuk further south, on the east coast of the Gulf of Akaba, which was where

Jethro welcomed Moses in his flight from Pharaoh.

Accordingly, in Muhammad's day, as inferred from the account of Thomas Artzruni, the Arabic name for Moabite Rabbath or Areopolis was "Medina", viz. "the city of Midian". In Arabic legend Muhammad fled from the unbelievers of Mecca to Medina, where he was received. In Thomas Artzruni's account, based on contemporary sources related to "Sebeos", Muhammad fled from Pharan (later called Mecca), to the city of Midian (corresponding grammatically and otherwise to the Arabic Medina). Thus, in the early account of Al Kindi, Muhammad is said to have fled from Mecca to Medina "which was in ruins", and "where resided only enervated people, mostly Jews without purpose" (ed. French trans. Tartar, *Dialogue islamo-chrétien*, p. 140, translation into English mine). This accurately describes the state of the old city of Midian adjoining Areopolis, where the Jews who accepted Muhammad's prophecy were located.

Cf. also H. Schaevius, *Skeleton Geographicum*, 1662, p. 14: Arabia Petraea "Where is Arach *and Medina*. Likewise Petra." Medina here is likely to be, as in Thomas Artzruni, the city of Midian, viz. Moabite Rabbath, Areopolis, in Arabia Petraea. The "Petra" referred to in Schaevius, being differentiated specifically from Arach (the city we know as Petra) can only be the city of Kerak in Arabia Petraea, as that was also called "Petra" by the Crusaders. Kerak is the Hebrew Kir Moab, the Byzantine Caracmoba, south of the Arnon, on the borders of Moab, located in Roman Imperial times within the territory of Arabia Petraea. This entry in Schaevius is listed separately from Arabia Felix (Saudi Arabia). It is a reflection of the widespread belief in Renaissance times that Medina, the site of Muhammad's death, as well as Mecca, the site of his birth, was in Arabia Petraea.

Similarly, since (1) Medina is the Arabic term for the "city of Midian", (2) the "city of Midian" in Thomas Artzruni's account is the site referred to in Numbers 31, viz. Moabite Rabbath or Areopolis (Er-Rabba) south of the River Arnon, and (3) Muhammad was buried in Medina, then the original tomb of Muhammad must have been in Moabite Rabbath or Areopolis (Er-Rabba) in modern-day Jordan. His remains may have been removed subsequently to the Medina in Saudi Arabia. The later Muslim era, that of the *Hejira*, was, and still is, based on the date of Muhammad's flight from Pharan (Mecca) to Moabite Rabbath, the city of Midian (Medina, Er-Rabba), as described by Thomas Artzruni.

Speaking of the flight of Muhammad in Muslim tradition from Mecca to Medina, and comparing it with the Biblical Exodus traditions, Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, p. 24, say: "The Islamic tradition operates with two basic categories: the exodus takes the Prophet to the 'province', the *madina* {= Medina}, whence he prepares the recovery of the 'metropolis', the *umm al-qura* {= Mecca}." The *madina* is Midian in the Khuzistan chronicle (ibid. and endnote). Indeed the city of Midian was commonly referred to by the Arabs as "*madinat qaum Shuaib*", that is, the "Province/city of the tribe of Jethro". (Golius, al-Fargani p. 143; al-Kazwini, obit AD 1255, *Kitab Asar al-Bitad*, p. 173, ed. Wüstenfeld, 1848: "Madyan [Midian] is a city of the tribe of Shuaib [*madinat qaum Shuaib*], upon whom be peace! It was founded by Madyan son of Ibrahim [Abraham], the Friend (of Allah), the grandfather of Shuaib".) The post-Othmanic Muslim writers generally never associated the Quranic Medina with the more famous city of Midian on the Red Sea, as indeed, it was never so associated: they transferred the site instead to the city in Saudi Arabia. But in this case, specifically, the province/city [*madina* = Medina] to which Muhammad fled was Moabite Midian, Rabbath Moab, as in Sebeos and Thomas Artzruni, not the other Midian on the coast of the Red Sea.

The archaeological facts showing the direction of Muslim prayer marked in the earliest mosques was

towards the general direction of the Sinai peninsula, not Mecca in Saudi Arabia:

P. Crone and M. Cook, *Hagarism: The Making Of The Islamic World*, 1977, Cambridge University Press, pp. 23-24.

“But the importance of the targumic north-west in the sacred geography of the Hagarenes is most dramatically confirmed by what we know of early history of the qibla {that is, the direction of Muslim prayer — ed}: it is towards somewhere in north-west Arabia that they appear to have turned in prayer. In the first place, we have the archaeological evidence of two Umayyad mosques in Iraq, that of Hajjaj in Wasit and another attributed to roughly the same period near Baghdad. These mosques are oriented far too north by 33 degrees and 30 degrees respectively; and with this we may compare the literary testimony to the effect that the Iraqi qibla lay to the west. Secondly, we have the literary evidence relating to Egypt. From the Islamic side there is a tradition that the mosque of ‘Amr b. al-‘As in Fustat pointed too far north, and had to be corrected under the governance of Qurra b. Sharik.”

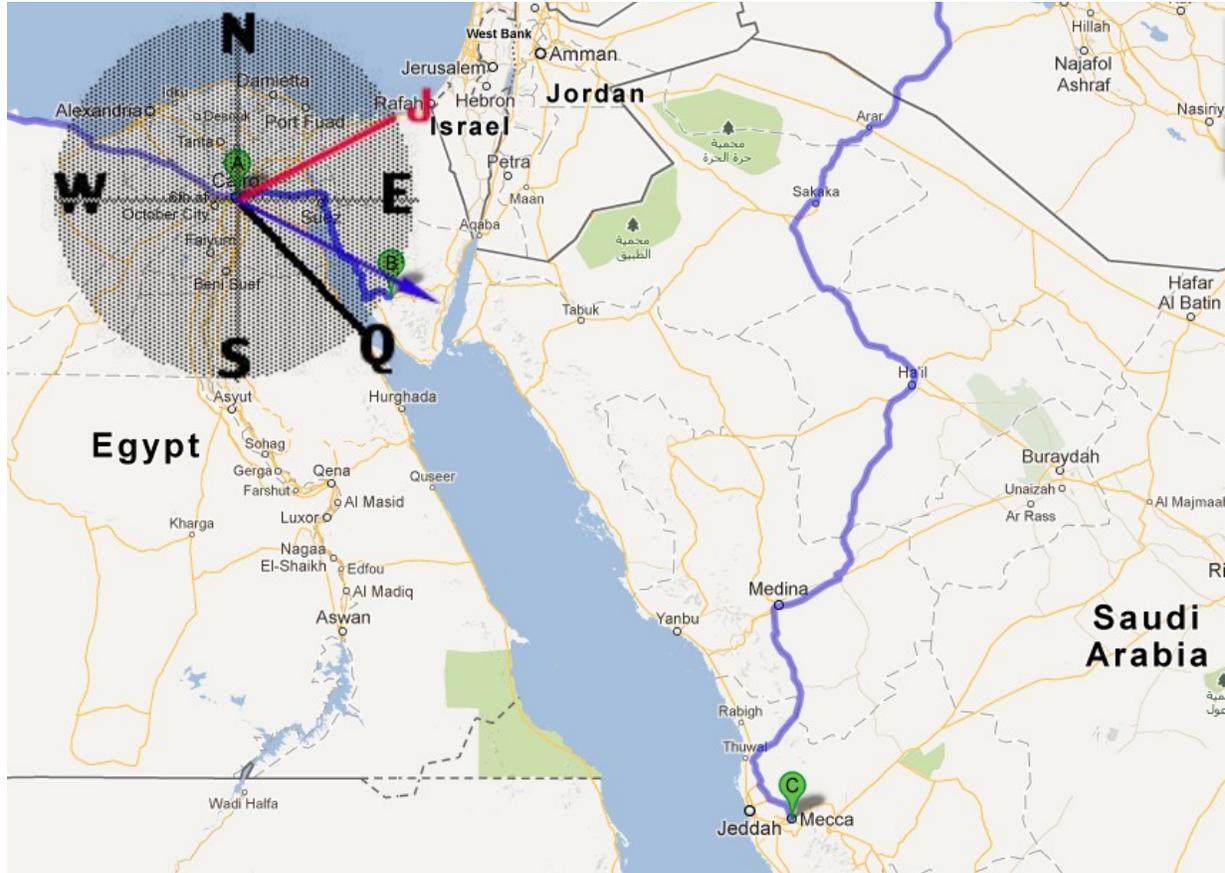
Cook: “According to archaeological research carried out by Creswell and Fehervari on ancient mosques in the Middle East, two floor-plans from two Umayyad mosques in Iraq, one built by the governor Hajjaj in Wasit (noted by Creswell as, “the oldest mosque in Islam of which remains have come down to us” — Creswell 1989: 41), and the other attributed to roughly the same period near Baghdad, have qiblahs (the direction which these mosques are facing) which do not face Mecca, but are oriented too far north (Creswell 1969: 137ff. and 1989: 40; Fehervari 1961: 89; Crone-Cook 1977: 23, 173). The Wasit mosque is off by 33 degrees, and the Baghdad mosque is off by 30 degrees.”

Maps of the Qiblas of the three early mosques mentioned *supra*.

Note: the orientation circles superimposed on the following maps are taken from a Muslim study, http://www.islamic-awareness.org/History/Islam/Dome_Of_The_Rock/qibla.html, which argues against the findings of Crone, Cook et al., and may therefore be taken as an independent, unbiased, confirmation of the orientations illustrated here. The principal argument employed on the islamic-awareness website, — that the direction of prayer was based solely on astronomical considerations, — is not realistic in the earliest phase of the Muslim advance, when these mosques were built. Then, as pointed out by the adherents of the Crone-Cook position, the direction of prayer was the simple geographical orientation towards the site held sacred by Muhammad, as commanded in the Quran. And that, as the argument outlined *supra*, and the following maps, illustrate, was towards Mount Sinai. However, the location of Sinai itself doubtless was computed by its astronomical orientation, viz. from Cairo, the direction of sunrise at the winter solstice, and in Iraq, the direction of sunset at the winter solstice, from which in each case the qibla is only a few degrees off, as shown at that link. The following reference is found in External References to Islam at <http://www.christianorigins.com/islamrefs.html>. The following passage is from the Syrian Christian Jacob of Edessa (Jacob of Edessa, Letter to John the Stylite no. 14, fol. 124a; summarized by Wright, Catalogue, 2.604, and translated by Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 173 n. 30 [pp. 565-566]). Jacob of Edessa died in AD 708, and states he was an eyewitness of the direction of prayer of the Muslims, viz. in the first century of the Muslim conquest. He states the Muslims prayed “towards the Kaaba”, but also “towards the east” (if the Muslims were in Egypt), or “towards the Kaaba” and “towards the west” (if the Muslims were in Babylon). The term “east” in Syriac indicates

the *direction of sunrise*, and “west” the *direction of sunset*. Evidently in this case, more precisely, as shown by the alignments of the early mosques, the direction was towards *midwinter sunrise* and *midwinter sunset* respectively. Jacob emphasizes that the direction of prayer was not towards the compass direction itself, marked by the position of the sun, but *towards the physical sacred site*, that is, for Muslims, the Kaaba. Thus, he says, in Syria the Muslims prayed towards the south, only because the Kaaba was in that direction, and not because they were praying “towards the south”. In other words, the position of the sacred site was worked out by its position in relation to the sun, then the mosque was pointed towards the sacred site by reference to the position of the sun. Presumably Jews and/or Christians in the pre-Muslim era had already computed the location of Mount Sinai from Cairo (that is Old Cairo, called Babylon in the later Roman Empire) and from Babylon in Mesopotamia, and had found it coincided with the direction of midwinter sunrise and midwinter sunset respectively. This knowledge will have passed down to the Muslim conquerors when they emerged out of Sinai and overwhelmed the Near East. The relevant passage of Jacob of Edessa reads: “Your question is vain . . . for it is not to the south that the Jews pray, nor either do the Muslims (*mhaggraye*). The Jews who live in Egypt, and also the Muslims there, as I saw with my own eyes and will now set out for you, prayed to the east, and still do, both peoples—the Jews towards Jerusalem and the Muslims towards the Kaaba. And those Jews who are to the south of Jerusalem pray to the north; and those in the land of Babel, in Hira and in Basra, pray to the west. And also the Muslims who are there pray to the west, towards the Kaaba; and those who are to the south of the Kaaba pray to the north, towards that place. So from all this that has been said, it is clear that it is not to the south that the Jews and Muslims here in the regions of Syria pray, but towards Jerusalem or the Kaaba, the patriarchal places of their races.”

Map 1. Fustat Cairo



Map: A = Fustat, Cairo Egypt, the site of the ancient mosque, B = Wadi Feiran, C = Mecca, Saudi Arabia. The Blue arrow is the orientation of the earliest mosque (pointing to Wadi Feiran, the original Bekka or Mecca). The black arrow Q marks the direction to Mecca, and the Red arrow J marks the direction to Jerusalem.

Map 2. Baghdad, Iraq



A = Baghdad, the site of the ancient mosque, B = Wadi Feiran, Sinai, C = Mecca, Saudi Arabia

The Blue arrow marks the orientation of the ancient mosque (to somewhere near the tip of the Sinai peninsula, viz. not as accurate as the nearer situated mosque in Cairo of the first map), the Black arrow marked Q is the direction to Mecca and the Red arrow marked J is the direction to Jerusalem.

3. Wasit mosque, Iraq



A = Wasit, Iraq, the site of the ancient mosque, B = Wadi Feiran, C = Mecca, Saudi Arabia

The Blue arrow marks the orientation of the mosque (to roughly the tip of the Sinai peninsula, again not as accurate as the nearer situated mosque in Cairo of the first map), the Black arrow marked Q points to Mecca, and the Red arrow marked J to Jerusalem.