BYZANTINA LODZIENSIA

XXII

Byzantium and the Arabs
The Encounter of Civilizations

from Sixth to Mid-Eighth Century

edited by

Teresa Wolińska

Paweł Filipczak



WYDAWNICTWO UNIWERSYTETU ŁÓDZKIEGO

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Series of the Department of Byzantine History of the University of Łódź



founded by

Professor Waldemar Ceran

in

1997

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Translated by

Jerzy Gaszewski I.7, II.3
Łukasz Gaszewski I.2, II.1, II.2, II.4, III.5
Artur Mękarski I.1, I.3, I.4, I.5, III.3, III.4, IV.1
Karolina Wodarczyk III.1, III.2, III.6, IV.2
Michał Zytka I.6

WYDAWNICTWO
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ŁÓDZKIEGO

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ADDRESS OF THE EDITORIAL BOARD
Katedra Historii Bizancjum UŁ
ul. A. Kamińskiego 27a
90-219 Łódź, Poland
bizancjum@uni.lodz.pl
www.bizancjum.uni.lodz.pl

Publisher's sheets 40.0; printing sheets 39.25
Photograph on the cover © Paweł Filipczak

The book has been financed by the National Science Centre – the agreement DEC-2012/04/M/HS3/00564

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https://doi.org/10.18778/7969-903-2

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Published by Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego

1st Edition • Printed on Stella Press 65 g by Zing Sp. z o.o. •
Order W.07054.15.0.K • Printed in Poland • ISBN 978-83-7969-902-5 • e-ISBN 978-83-7969-903-2

Łódź University Press / Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego • 90-131 Łódź, ul. W. Lindleya 8
www.wydawnictwo.uni.lodz.pl • ksiegarnia@uni.lodz.pl • phone (48 42) 665 58 63

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Introduction



Byzantium and the Arabs. The Encounter of Civilisations. We never had doubts about the title. An encounter – not a clash. If we were to seek the starting point of the Byzantine history in the reign of Constantine the Great – and this is what we are doing in the Łódź centre of Byzantine studies – then the Byzantine-Arab relations, examined in a long, multi-century perspective, shall appear to be a very complex phenomenon, one fluctuating between two extreme poles: peaceful co-existence and armed hostile actions, presenting varying degrees of threat to both of the sides. Times between the fourth and the mid-seventh century were those of an encounter: mutual cognizance, often multi-faceted infiltration – lingual or religious, but also political, economic and administrative – of the two great cultural spheres: Graeco-Roman and Oriental. Such an understanding of the Byzantine-Arab neighbourhood is certainly not unique to us. In 2011, a large conference was organised at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki; it was dedicated to Byzantine-Arab relations and, quite significantly, it was entitled *Byzantium and the Arabs. Encounter of Civilisations*. The correlation between the title of the aforementioned scholarly meeting (as well as of the title of its resultant volume) and the title of our book is impossible to miss. Admittedly, the Thessalonikan debates gave us a direct impulse to study the relationships between the Byzantine and Arab worlds – something we desired to do for many years.

Although we are writing about the encounter of civilisations, we cannot deny that they did, also, clash at times. During the mid-seventh century, the Muslims performed a military takeover of nearly all of the Byzantine Near East. It was achieved with violence, often brutality; there is no doubt about that. However it is impossible to ignore the fact that on the timeline of Byzantine-Arab relations, the Muslim conquest was a one-off event; even though simultaneously it is of critical significance, from the historical perspective. Following this clash, the Byzantine element in the Near East – devoid of the structures of imperial power, "represented" solely by the Greek-speaking populace and the local Churches – weakened considerably, and in some places became entirely extinct. This, however, did not happen instantly, but over time, during the new stage of co-existence between the two civilisations – though this time not within the Byzantine empire's borders, but within the caliphate.

The book's framing, accepting the Muslim conquest as the most clear chronological point, is based on three clear parts: the "before" the conquest, "during", and "after" the conquest. The exact contents of each of the parts are, of course, detailed in the table of contents – here we only wish to present a few general remarks. The majority of the chapters are scholarly *par excellence*, but there are also a few that – while maintaining the scholarly apparatus – are somewhat "lighter" and in their form resemble essays. This is intentional, agreed with the Press, but at the same time stemming from our deep conviction that a scholarly volume – and let us stress here that we are dealing with such – ought also to be comprehensible for readers without Byzantinological or Arabistic background. The stylistic differences between the chapters arise from the fact that the book has seven different authors. Some of its parts are more focused on sources, are analytical and examine fine details, others – on the contrary – are more general introductions or summarise particular topics. Even these, however, when we consider the vast amounts of academic literature that are nowadays being published, have great value. We are also dealing here with a compromise, as we are attempting to adopt a synthetic approach to nearly three centuries of history, extremely abundant in phenomena and processes that are often difficult to interpret. We could not have written about everything in as much detail as we would have liked to. Some of the themes or persons, while tied to Byzantine-Arab relations, have first and foremost a separate substance of their own, such as the person of Muḥammad or the emergence of the Islam, have been placed in the background, and are not discussed in detail.



It is always difficult to adopt a single, consistent and universally accepted approach to the matter of transcribing names from scripts other than Latin. We have adopted the following: Arabic names – primarily those of chieftains, caliphs, scholars, deities – are always given in a form containing diacritical marks (where such are present). We have done the same in the case of Arabic technical terms, referring to various taxes, the names of administrative units, social or religious groups, and certain events or historical phenomena. In such cases we are following *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (of which we have primarily used the second edition), and to a lesser extent *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, but we have also made recourse to indices of names from the best-known works in the English language, published in reputable series (primarily: *The Formation of the Classical Islamic World*, *Variorum Collected Studies Series*, and *Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam*).

We have done differently with geographic and ethnographic names. In case of terms ingrained in the English language, referring to not only historical reality but also to modern names of cities (Aden, Medina etc.) and states (Bahrain, Oman, Yemen etc.) we have used a simplified spelling, devoid of diacritical marks; we consider this to be the most clear, and thus fully justified. We were not pioneers in abandoning the exact diacritical notation – *Barrington Atlas of Greek and Roman World* abandoned the exact spelling of Arabic toponyms altogether.

In case of geographic terms that are not commonly used in the English language, ones that are not an intrinsic part of this language, and almost exclusively referring to less well-known, local toponyms, used in this book in a clearly historical context, we have retained the spelling that includes diacritical marks, whenever using them is necessary (occasionally, a variant form is used, e.g. Najd or Nadjd).

The risk of using the proposed criteria depends on a certain arbitrariness of what is considered linguistically more universal, and what more specific. The best example: Hejaz or Al-Ḥidjāz? There may be exceptions from the rules – the capital of Yemen, but at the same time an important historical centre, is spelled here Sana'a rather than Sana. Moreover, the works of modern scholars publishing in the English language do occasionally contain, major or minor, discrepancies in spelling of some of the names and terms.

As regards the Greek or Latin names denoting people or places, the scale of the problem was much smaller. We most commonly used Anglicised versions (e.g. Timothy rather than Timotheus or Timotheos, or Tyre rather than Tyrus or Tyros).

The spelling of non-Latin geographical and personal names is subject to the rules accepted in the volume, but to some extent it also arises from habit and literary tastes. In all cases, we have accepted common sense as the chief rule. This means that the proper name always ought to easily and unquestionably identify a person or a place. Any possible inaccuracies arising from the rules and principles described above would be the sole responsibility of the volume's scholarly editors.



We would like to thank the whole team of the Waldemar Ceran Research Centre for the History and Culture of the Mediterranean Area and South-East Europe (*Ceraneum*) at Łódź University for the highly supportive attitude to our work. We thank Professor Maciej Kokoszko, director of the Centre, and the employees of the Centre's office, Dr Karolina Krzeszewska and Dr Krzysztof Jagusiak, for assisting in efficiently performing numerous formal tasks associated with running of the project. Particular thanks are due to Dr Zofia Brzozowska, who was the first Reader of this book, a tireless editor and proof-reader of our texts and a true caretaker, so to speak, of the administrative side of the project. As always, we could count on the support of our Colleagues from *Ceraneum* and from our parent research unit, the Department of Byzantine History at the Institute of History of the University of Łódź: Professor Mirosław J. Leszka and Professor Sławomir Bralewski, as well as of Dr Kirił Marinow and Dr Andrzej Kompa. Mirosław and Andrzej, as usual in the case of the *Byzantina Lodziensia* series, extended editorial care to the book, offering advice during the exceedingly complex process of preparing the book for print. We owe thanks to Professor Marek M. Dziekan and Marta Woźniak from the Department of Middle East and North Africa Studies for consultation regarding Arabic names. We thank Professor Jacek Bonarek from the Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, the branch in Piotrków Trybunalski for the meticulous and positive editorial review. We thank Michał Zytka and Bruce Borne for editing and proof-reading of the English text.

The materials for the book were gathered in numerous libraries, both Polish and foreign. In the first instance, however, we need to list the Library of the Łódź University, directed by the custodian Mgr. Tomasz Piestrzyński, patient and favourable towards our successive initiatives aimed at expanding the *Ceraneum*'s book collection. We also thank Brother Riccardo Rączka from the *Pontificio Instituto Orientale* library in Rome and Ms. Carla Chalhoub from the Jaffet Library of the American University in Beirut for enabling our quick access to their collections and comfortable working conditions. Finally, we could always expect a warm welcome in the libraries of the Aristotle University in Thessaloniki and the local Centre for Byzantine Research, "Melissa".

Teresa Wolińska
Paweł Filipczak

PART
I

Sławomir Bralewski, Zofia A. Brzozowska,
Marek M. Dziekan, Paweł Filipczak, Teresa Wolińska

Before the Conquest

Paweł Filipczak

1. Geography and Environmental Conditions of Syro-Palestine. The Region's Geopolitical Importance in Late Antiquity

The path that led to Syria was narrow and muddy. Originating in Cilicia, it ran, as long as the weather was dry, over the precipices of the Amanus Mountains. In the rain, it dissolved into mud, and the passage through the mountains became extremely difficult, if not impossible. The decision to broaden and level the route was taken by Emperor Justinian I himself, who allocated significant means for the realization of the project[1]. This brief account, given by a Byzantine

[1] Procopius, *De aedificiis*, V, 5.

historian, Procopius of Caesarea, although it is derived from a work tendentiously favourable to this ruler, seems to be accurate. For, as we know from other sources, Justinian actually launched a large scale building programme in a number of places in Syro-Palestine[2].

Looking at a map, a long and massive range of the Amanus Mountains (today Nur Daĝlari) can easily be seen encircling the Alexandretta bay (İskenderun Körfezi) in a long, wide curve. The mountains run along longitude lines, stretching between the Mediterranean coast and the Taurus ridge, and clearly blocking the access to Syria from the direction of Asia Minor. One of the few relatively convenient passages, the one mentioned by Procopius, lay about 15 km from the sea, at an altitude of 700 m above sea level. Often referred to as the Syrian Gates, it is known today as the Belen Pass. An important communication route existed there long before the reign of Justinian I. North of the Syrian Gates, there was another mountain pass, usually called the Amanian Gate (Bahçe Geçidi). Less known, it, too, provided a way inland[3]. Thus the mountains, despite being 2240 m high and reaching down to the sea, offered access to the Syrian interior.

The descent from the Syrian Gates led down onto the vast Amuk plain which, extending between the Mediterranean Sea and the hills in the central part of the country, occupied the north-western part of Syria (today within Turkey). The most important city of the region, and at the same time the largest centre of the whole of Syro-Palestine, was Antioch on the Orontes. In the era of the late Roman Empire, it was a heavily-populated cosmopolitan metropolis, the major trading and artisan centre, reputedly inhabited by as many as several hundred thousand people. Destroyed by the powerful earthquakes of 526 and 528 and ravaged by the Persians in 540, in the seventh century its glory days were over, although it still played some economic, military and political role. In the 30s of this century, Emperor Heraclius used the city as the base from which to coordinate military action against the Arabs[4].

---

[2] For example: John Malalas, XVIII, 2; XVIII, 28; XVIII, 29; XVIII, 31.

[3] For more on the issue see: *Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World*, ed. R J.A. Talbert, Princeton 2000, p. 67; *Tabula Imperii Byzantini*, vol. 5.1, *Kilikien und Isaurien*, eds. F. Hild, H. Hellenkemper, Wien 1990, p. 174; I. Benzinger, [in:] *RE*, vol. I, cols. 1723–1724 [s.v. Ἀμανίδες πύλαι]; I. Benzinger, [in:] *RE*, vol. I, col. 1724 [s.v. *Amanos*]. On Syria's historical geography see a classic work: R. Dussaud, *Topographie historique de la Syrie antique et médiévale*, Paris 1927, *passim*; see also F. Millar, *The Roman Near East 31 BC–AD 337*, Cambridge 1993, pp. 236–242; M. Sartre, *D'Alexandre à Zenobie. Histoire du Levant antique (IV^e siècle av. J.-C.–III^e siècle ap. J.-C.)*, Paris–Beyrouth 2001, pp. 37–38, 69. For more bibliographical information see: M.A. Casanova, A. Egea Vivancos, *Selección bibliográfica sobre La Siria romano-cristiana*, AnC 15, 1998, p. 18.

[4] One of the most important work on the history of Antioch – G. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria from Seleucus to the Arab Conquest*, Princeton 1961, pp. 574–581 (Heraclius'

An important role in Antioch's life was played by a small coastal town called Seleucia Pieria. It owed its position to a conveniently situated harbour and a waterway – in the lower course of the Orontes River – which made it possible to transport army goods and all sorts of commercial commodities straight to Antioch and thence further to north-eastern Syria and Upper Mesopotamia. However, much evidence suggests that Seleucia, just like Antioch, suffered a lot of damage during the earthquakes mentioned above. Its harbour is most likely to have been silted up. The role of Seleucia was then assumed by a number of smaller towns scattered around the Orontes' estuary, Al-Mīnā being the most important among them (its ancient name remains unknown)[5].

Looking from the north, Seleucia is just the first of a great number of Syria's coastal towns. Although the road running south, parallel to the sea, is wedged apart by the vast massif Djabal an Nāṣiriyya, further south of this mountain range, from Latakia to faraway Gaza, the coastline stretches unceasingly straight. Adjacent to it is a narrow strip of fertile land. It is coastal lowland, bounded to the east and the interior by mountain ridges lying along the coast – its width ranges from just a few hundred metres to between ten and twenty kilometres. The sea moisture retained in the western hillsides – average annual rainfall here is 1100 mm – created perfect conditions for the development of agriculture. The soil was well-hydrated, especially as it was also misted by the brooks and rivers flowing down the mountains. And it is in the vicinity of these rivers' mouths – where the mountains had to give way to flat plains – that the towns were positioned. Traveling from the north, one passed Tripoli, Byblos, Beirut, Tyre, Sidon, Caesarea and Gaza – to name only the most well-known of them. Each of these coastal towns, in addition to having their own particular histories, were for centuries, including the Byzantine period, linked with one another in a variety of ways. All of them had their eyes turned towards the sea, relying for their economic development on the sea trade, which also often shaped their political history. Their large harbours opened up a way through which merchants and invaders could get to Cyprus, Crete, continental Greece and further afield

reign); among other works covering the sixth to eight centuries of particular note are: R. Ciocian-Yvanescu, *Sur le role d'Antioche au point de vue économique, social et culturel au VI^e siecle*, B 39, 1969, pp. 53–73; F. Trombley, *Demographic and Cultural Transition in the Territorium of Antioch, 6^th–8^th*, [in:] *Antioch de Syrie. Histoire, images et traces de la ville antique*, eds. B. Cabouret, P.-L. Gatier, C. Saliou, Lyon 2004, pp. 341–361.

[5] For more on Seleucia Pieria see: V. Chapot, *Sèleucie Pièrie*, MSNAF 66, 1907, pp. 1–78; P.A. Pirazzoli, *Seleucia Pieria: An Ancient Harbour Submitted to Two Successive Uplifts*, IJNA 21, 1992, pp. 317–327. For more on Al- Mīnā, see: T. Vorderstrasse, *A Port of Antioch: Late Antique Al-Mina*, [in:] *Antioch de Syrie. Histoire, images et traces*..., pp. 363–371.

to Italy and north Africa. And the safest and shortest sea route to Egypt started there, from the coast of Palestine[6].

It was not only a specific geographical location that enabled the Syrian coastal towns to acquire extra-regional significance. It was also highly qualified craftsmen to whom this coastal region owed its pre-eminent position. Some of the products made by local artisans were known for their peculiar style and luxurious character. This was particularly the case with the manufacturing of purple. The production of this dye was made possible by nature itself or, to be more precise, by snails of the Muricidae family that lived on the Syrian coast, somewhere between Tyre and Sidon. Three local species – *Murex trunculus*, *Murex brandaris*, *Purpura haemastoma* – referred to as murexes, secreted a light-yellow smelly mucus (the snails used the secretion as a protection against sea predators, or as an antimicrobial lining on egg masses). When the shell was opened, the light made the colour of the substance turn from light-yellow to purple. Drawing on this property, it may have been at the time of the Phoenician confederation or even earlier that a way of producing this precious dye on a large scale was developed. It continued to be known in the era of Rome and Byzantium. The snails' bodies were separated from the shells, gathered in big lead vats and salted. Then the vats were filled with urine. It took about three days before the snails began to ferment, acquiring a durable, purple colour. The cloth to be dyed was soaked directly in the vats. The whole process, beginning with the snail netting and ending with the cloth dyeing, took a significant length of time and required a lot of effort, without ensuring consistent results. However, the colours obtained in this way were very beautiful, their shades ranging from scarlet to dark purple. Purple-dyed robes were indicative of significant wealth and high social status. In the period of the late Roman Empire, including the reign of Justinian I, the production of purple fabric was subject to strict control by the state, with only the closest members of the imperial family enjoying the right to wear purple clothes or shoes[7].

Silk weaving was also peculiar to the region. Workshops processing raw silk into fabric or using ready-made silk materials exported from China were located

[6] A detailed description of coastal towns is to be found in: R. D u s s a u d, *La topographie...*, pp. 5–74 (Tyre, Beirut, Sidon and their vicinity), pp. 75–94 (Tripolis, along with neighbouring area); P.K. H i t t i, *Syria. A Short History*, New York 1959, pp. 16–18; G. D o w n e y, *A History of Antioch...*, pp. 19–20. See also: F. M i l l a r, *The Roman Near East...*, pp. 264–267; M. S a r t r e, *D'Alexandre à Zenobie...*, pp. 39–49.

[7] M. M o n a g h a n, *Purple*, [in:] *CDCS*, p. 735; G. S t e i g e r w a l d, *Das kaiserliche Purpurprivileg in spätrömischer und frühbyzantinischer Zeit*, JAC 33, 1990, pp. 209–239.

in Beirut and Tyre – *whence this commodity was distributed all over the world*[8]. Among a great number of different trades that established their presence in this part of Syro-Palestine of particular note was the glass production. It flourished especially in Tyre, Sidon and Beirut. Beirut was known, even far outside of Syria, for producing highly-praised window glass[9].

The development of the coastal cities was violently halted by the earthquakes taking place at the turn of the fifth and sixth centuries. The tremors of 15 July 551 are considered to have been the most destructive, with Beirut being reduced to rubble and Tripoli, Byblos, Tyre and Sidon also suffering serious damage. On the initiative of the imperial authorities the cities began to be rebuilt (Justinian I contributed significantly to their reconstruction), slowly resuming their normal activity – although none of them, either in demographic or in urbanistic terms, was ever restored to its former glory. The capture of these coastal cities, even if they were no longer what they used to be, meant that the Arabs obtained access to areas with great economic potential. The cities turned out to be easy to conquer. Most, like Antioch, the capital of the region, were taken over without a fight, their surrender being sealed by an agreement which the Arabs concluded with the local population. There were some exceptions to this rule – Caesarea Maritima was seized after a long siege; in Tripoli, a significant number of its inhabitants were evacuated by the imperial fleet, thus fleeing from the besieged city.

Standing at the seaside in any of these towns and looking eastward, one could see mountain ridges. At the latitude of Latakia there was the mountain range of Bargylus, with an average height of over 1500 m. It descended gently towards the ancient city of Emesa (Homs, Syria)[10]. Lying further to the south, behind the Homs Pass, were the highest mountains in the whole of Syro-Palestine – the Lebanon mountains. Consisting of a few ranges, bounded by the maritime plain of Akkar in the north and by the valley of the River Litani (Nahr al-Līṭānī, the ancient Leontes, Lebanon) in the south, they extended over a total length of 170 km. Two smaller chains, rising to between 1700 and 2000 m, formed the southern part of the massif. The middle and northern ranges were

[8] Procopius, *Anecdota*, 25. See also A. Muthesius, *Essential Processes. Looms, Technical Aspects of the Production of Silk Textiles*, [in:] *The Economic History of Byzantium from the Seventh to the Fifteenth Century*, ed. A.I. Laiou, Washington 2002, pp. 146–168 (enhanced by extensive bibliography of older works).

[9] R. Mouterde, *Inscriptions grecques mentionnant des artisans de la Béryte byzantine*, CRAIBL 73, 1929, pp. 96–102; N. Jidejian, *Beirut through the Ages*, Beyrouth 1973, pp. 155–156.

[10] For comparison see: J.-P. Rey-Coquais, *Arados et sa Pérée aux époques grecque, romaine et byzantine*, Paris 1974, pp. 66.

higher, with an average elevation reaching more than 2000 m. The highest peak of the mountains rises to 3083 m above sea level.

The fact that these mountains were so high at so close a distance from the sea does not mean that their west-facing ridges fell sharply away throughout the whole length of the range. Some slopes ascend quite gently. One may even say that the outskirts of some of the present Lebanese towns lie on acclivities – for example, Beirut. The region offers good conditions for farming and fruit-growing, including olive tree cultivation. Although olive groves covered almost the whole Syro-Palestine (because of the high demand for olive oil, olive trees were planted wherever their cultivation was possible), the most detailed information we have concerns the olive manufactory located in a small mountain settlement, Chhîm, which has been systematically explored by both Polish and Lebanese archeologists. Archeological works proved that Chhîm, whose economic life was also based on ceramics and wine production, enjoyed a significant economic prosperity. Its goods were first sent to the market in Jiyyeh and then to larger cities such as Sidon or Tyre[11]. The case of Chhîm indicates that the coastal towns relied for their economic development on the support of the hinterland. Thus there can be little doubt that the urban economy of the coastal towns was significantly fueled by the rural areas that lay in their close proximity.

The further east one goes, the higher the mountains become. The ridges in the highest, northern part of the range drop sharply down to the Mediterranean sea, but descend gently towards the east, in the direction of the Bekaa valley, forming something of a mountain foreland – 15 km wide, with an average elevation of 1000 to 1600 m, sporadically exceeding 2000 m and stretching between the two modern day towns of Zahlé and Hermel. Thus even in their lowest parts, the mountains of Lebanon constitute a natural barrier separating the Mediterranean coast from the interior[12].

With its massive trunk and widely splayed branches – arranged almost perpendicular to each other and forming something of a flat crown – along with its dark-green needles and vertically growing cones, cedar wood signifies the great-

[11] For more on the issue see in the first place – T. Waliszewski, *Elaion. Olive oil production in Roman and Byzantine Syria-Palestine*, Warszawa 2014; T. Waliszewski, R. Ortali-Taraz et al., *Village romain et byzantin à Chhîm-Marjiyat. Rapport préliminaire (1996–2002)*, Ba 6, 2002, pp. 5–105; T. Waliszewski, K. Juchniewicz, M. Gwiazda, *Preliminary Report on the 2008 and 2009 Excavation Seasons at Jiyeh (Porphyreon with Appendices: 1. Sunken Vessels in Late Roman and Byzantine Houses in Area D 2. Preliminary Remarks on Thresholds from Private Houses in Jiyeh (Porphyreon)*, PAM 21, 2012, pp. 423–445; T. Waliszewski, M. Gwiazda, *Preliminary Report on the 2010 Excavation Session at Jiyeh (Porphyreon)*, PAM 22, 2013, pp. 321–333.

[12] *Atlas du Liban. Géographie. Histoire. Economié et Société*, Beyrouth 2006, p. 14.

est treasure of the Lebanon Mountains and the whole of Syria as well. The region under consideration is home to the evergreen Lebanese cedar (*cedrus libani*). It ranges from 15 to 40 m in height, and although it does not need much to grow, it cannot do without a significant amount of sunlight and water. At the height of 1200 to 1800 m, the western slopes of Lebanon retain warm, moist air originating from the Mediterranean Sea, thus creating a perfect breeding ground for the growth of cedar trees. In these parts of the mountains, average annual rainfall exceeds 1000 mm, a level which is never reached in the other regions of Syro-Palestine. These trees suffer no harm from snowfalls or from the significant variations in temperature here which range from 5 degrees Celsius in January to a little over 34 degrees Celsius in August.

Displaying high resistance to atmospheric conditions and having no special requirements, cedar trees lived for a significant length of time. But for how long? In the Archeological Museum of the American University in Beirut there is a well-preserved fragment of a cedar trunk. After its thorough examination, the tree was found to have lived for about three hundred years and died about 7760 years ago. The field research carried out in the upper parts of the Lebanon Mountains resulted in identifying trees which were 530 years old. Although discovering older trees may be just a matter of time, the age of one thousand years – the forests of the Kadisha valley in northern Lebanon are estimated to be that old – has not thus far been scientifically ascertained.

Its dense, compact structure of straight fibres made the wood both durable and easy to cut – thin slices of cedar were used for producing all sorts of veneers and panels. Strong aromas exuded by the cedar resin (of all the known trees cedar contains the highest concentration of sesquiterpenes, strongly fragrant substances) kept both insects and fungi at bay. Cedar wood exhibited a high tolerance to even a prolonged exposure to sea salt and – because of low strain norms (the so-called tangential and radial shrinkage, respectively 2% and 4%) – had excellent physical and mechanical properties. It did not swell under moist conditions and did not shrink as a result of desiccation. And – due to high resin content – it was also heavy.

In antiquity cedar wood was used primarily in shipbuilding and in the construction "industry". Warships, freighter ships and even ordinary fishing boats were built of cedar by preference, and only alternatively out of pines or firs. Trunks shaped like pencils – cedars that grew tightly packed against each other were tall and slim – were naturally suited for use in building elongated constructions such as broadsides or decks. The use of cedar for building all sorts of vessels has a long history, extending back to the Egyptian kings of the fourth dynasty. The Phoenicians' naval strength was bound up with cedar wood of which most of their numerous military and commercial vessels were made. The Persian fleet,

reported to have consisted of as many as 1200 ships, produced in workshops located on the Syrian coast and then sent to fight against the Greeks, was also built mainly of cedar-wood. These are the examples of the oldest uses of cedar, but not the only ones, in this maritime context. The role of cedar wood in shipbuilding had not diminished at the time of the Arab conquest. We know that the Arab fleet reputedly composed of 1700 ships and built at caliph Muʿāwiya's order by "shipyard workers" from Acre, Tyre and Tripoli, seized Cyprus in 649 and Rhodes five years later.

Cedars were used for erecting palaces, temples and churches. Their long beams were utilized in the construction of ceilings and mighty doors. It is easy to offer a number of examples of such applications of cedar wood. Monumental Egyptian temples of Seti I in Thebes and Osiris in Abydos, Ishtar's sanctuary in Mesopotamian Uruk, King Solomon's temple in Jerusalem or Artemis' shrine in Ephesus – to confine oneself to mentioning only the most well-known examples – prove that cedars were used in the construction of sacred buildings long before the Byzantine era. The architecture of the last period also relied on the wood under discussion. A good illustration of this is Procopius' account of the construction of the New Church of the Holy Mother commissioned by Justinian I in Jerusalem. Those to whom the task of building the temple was entrusted had to struggle with the problem of how to lay a roof across the whole width of the erected structure. The completion of their work was made possible only after they found *a certain dense forest which produced cedars of extraordinary height*[13]. Some scholars presume that the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem (fourth century) also contained elements made of cedar wood.

Cedar was also used for burning lime, which in turn was needed to produce mortar or to heat up furnaces to be found in the artisans' workshops so densely scattered along the Syrian coast. Byblos, Sidon and Tyre served as the cedar's greatest trading centres. Logs of felled trees, often joined together into a kind of raft, were transported to these cities by the rivers flowing from the mountains towards the sea.

Cedar trees were also used for treating medical problems. Their resin, bark and needles have healing properties. Resin was used in the production of different oils, ointments and disinfectants. Cedars also show strong anti-fungal and anti-bacterial activity. The air in cedar forests contains minimal amounts of harmful germs. Over a twenty-four hour period, a hectare of these coniferous giants produce about 30 kg of airborne organic substances which are strongly bactericidal. The same effect is exerted by ozone, whose antiseptic and sterilization properties are three times higher in a cedar forest than anywhere else.

[13] P r o c o p i u s, *De aedificiis*, V, 6, 14 (transl. H.B. D e w i n g).

Cedar oils soothe inflammation, eliminate some bronchial diseases, including asthma-related ones, effectively reduce the swollen mucosa and have expectorant properties. They are also used for treating upper respiratory tract infections. In addition, cedar products, thanks to their fungicidal and bactericidal properties, are used to fight urinary tract infections and gynecological diseases. Their application extends to the treatment of rheumatic afflictions and oral diseases, including periodontitis. These extraordinary trees contain substances that can ease muscle and joint pains, especially those connected with arthritis and osteochondrosis. Inhaling cedar aromas helps overcome the fatigue caused by changing weather. Cedar resin, as well as being used as a disinfectant, was also used in the production of different medicaments and in the process of mummification.

Some cedar components had food-related applications. Cedar resin was used as a preservative, and ceramic wine jugs were lined with resinous cedar wood. Originating from the later period of Turkish rule, is the information that sheep were given water that contained a small amount of cedar resin. The addition of resin was believed to make the water especially effective in quenching animals' thirst.

Cedars' benefits, already widely known in the ancient Middle East in the old-oriental epoch, created so great a demand for both their wood and resin that in the Roman era there were only a few areas left in Lebanon where cedars continued to grow. Two factors led to their gradual extinction. Besides being in high demand, cedar trees were also subjected to predatory exploitation. As their resin was collected in a way which involved heating up their bark, the collection process entailed burning down vast tracts of cedar forests. In 134 CE, in order to curb the excessive exploitation of cedar trees, Roman authorities declared forests to be the emperor's personal domain. It is difficult to assess the effectiveness of the decision. Taken in the reign of Hadrian, the emperor who is regarded as having been the first to protect cedar forests, it was to no avail in the long term. Testifying to this are the examples of using cedar in the Umayyad and Byzantine periods, to which I have referred above. One might add in passing that things were no better later. Caliphs of the Abbasid dynasty decided to import wood from the Syrian coast to a distant Samarra where, in 836, they moved the capital of their state. Cedar trees were again widely used for the building of Christian temples during the Crusades. But the real apocalypse came in 1516, along with the advent of Turkish rule.

The scale of deforestation is well illustrated by the figures. In antiquity, the forests of northern Syria covered the area of several thousand square kilometres, with cedar trees occupying from 800 to 1000 km^2. Today, forests and other wooded areas in Lebanon account for less than 600 km^2 and cedars only 17[14].

[14] For more on cedar trees see a number of papers published in a special issue of AHL 14, 2001: F.N. H e p p e r, *The Cedar of Lebanon in History*, pp. 2–7; P. B i k a i, *Ishtar (the Cedar-*

Stretching east from the Lebanon Mountains is the valley of Bekaa. Bounded in the west by the Anti-Lebanon Mountains, it runs from north-east to south-west over the length of about 25 km. In the northern part it increases in width to about 20 km, while in the south it is about 8 km wide. It is actually a strip of highland plains that rise in elevation to no more than 600 m in the north, 1000 m in the central part and about 850 m in the south. These plains that make up the valley are significantly lower than the highest parts of the Lebanon Mountains. The valley lies as if in the shadow of these mountains, which significantly affects its climate and, by extension, its economic life. Average annual rainfall remained here at 600 to 800 mm, thus enabling the region to develop in a sustainable way. Only in the north part of the valley were the rains rare enough (200 mm) to make land cultivation or livestock farming dependent on artificial irrigation. The presence of two rivers – Leontes (Nahr el-Litani), which ran through the central and southern part of the valley, and Orontes (Nahr al-ʿĀṣī) – significantly facilitated such endeavours. Running through Bekaa was also the road, heavily exploited in antiquity, which connected Beirut to Emesa[15].

The Anti-Lebanon mountain range lies to the east of the valley of Bekaa. Bordered with the Homs plain in the north and with the Hermon mountains in the south, it abuts the Damascene oasis in the west. By taking a close look at a map, one can discern two distinct regions that make up the Anti-Lebanon range – the mountain range of Djabal Qalamūn, stretching over the length of about 120 km, and the vast massif of Hermon mentioned above. In its highest parts, Djabal Qalamūn rises to 2629 m above sea level, while Hermon, a powerful range easily visible at a distance, reaches a height of 2814 m, occupying an area which is 57 km long and 22 km wide. With its remarkable dimensions Hermon forms something of a topographical peculiarity to this part of Syria, constituting an interesting historico-geographical enclave. Looking carefully, it is possible to see its natural boundaries, circumscribed by the Damascene oasis in the east and by the tributaries of the Jordan River – Wādī et-Teim and Nahr al-Ḥāṣbānī – in the west.

-Tree) and the Defeat of Gilgamesh, pp. 14–23; C. P u l a k, *Cedar for Ships*, pp. 24–36; P. B i k a i, *The Cedar of Lebanon. Textual Evidence of the Sources*, pp. 50–57; F.N. H e p p e r, *The Bsharre Cedars of Lebanon as seen by Travelers*, pp. 96–105; C. C a r t w r i g h t, *Cedrus Libani under the Microscope. The Anatomy of Modern and Ancient Cedar of Lebanon Wood*, pp. 107–113; H. A b d u l - N o u r, *The Forest Inscriptions of Hadrian: Updating and New Discoveries*, pp. 64–95. See also: K. B a b o s, G. V o r o s, *Anatomical Investigation of 4000-years Old Cedrus Libani Wood Remains from Egypt*, ABH 43.3–4, 2001, pp. 275–286; B. Y a m a n, *Anatomy of Lebanon Cedar (Cedrus Libani A. Rich). Wood with indented growth Rings*, ABC.SB 49.1, 2007, pp. 19–23. For comparison see also: F. A b u I z z e d i n, *Memoirs of a Cedar. A History of Deforestation. A Future of Conservation*, Beirut 2013, *passim*.

[15] *Atlas du Liban...*, pp. 14–15.

In the north-east, where Syria bordered Mesopotamia, a natural boundary between the two regions was formed by the Euphrates river, bending eastward in a long curve[16]. Because of its strong current, the river, rushing swiftly down the Taurus Mountains, was difficult to cross. But, as its banks sloped down quite gently, at least at some points, and its bed was not yet too wide, getting to the other side was not impossible. And although it always presented some logistical challenge, meeting this challenge was never beyond the Romans' technical and organizational capacity. In the period of the late Empire, they crossed it several times as they tried to extend their domination to southern Mesopotamia, to the heart of the Persian state. The valley and the river itself presented one with the prospect of smooth "transit", making both land and, to a limited degree, water transport possible (the latter, because of the strong current, was possible only down the river, towards its estuary). The Romans tried to consolidate their military presence in the region of central Euphrates by stationing a number of garrisons there and by creating a fleet of which, however, they made only limited use[17].

Military ambitions concerning this region were not altogether abandoned in the Byzantine era. The old fortress on the Euphrates, Zenobia, named after its founder, Zenobia, the queen of Palmyra, was at least in part rebuilt in the reign of Justinian I, as evidenced by Procopius' accounts whose reliability has been confirmed by modern excavation[18]. However, the central Euphrates was not only used for the pursuit of military goals. Running through it was a trade route linking the Mediterranean Sea with Central Asia. It was used also in the Byzantine and Umayyad periods[19].

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[16] Cf. *Barrington Atlas...*, p. 67. One of the most important works on the Euphrates river in the era of Roman and Byzantine empires are: V. C h a p o t, *La frontière de l'Euphrate de Pompée à la conquète arabe*, Paris 1927, mainly pp. 3–62 (geography and ethnography of the Euphrates and its vicinity); R. D u s s a u d, *La Topographie...*, pp. 447–467. See also: F. M i l l a r, *The Roman Near East...*, pp. 437–445. Now the key publication is: J. G a b o r i t, *La vallée engloutie. Géographie historique du Moyen-Euphrate (IV Av. J.-C.–VII ap. J.-C.)*, vol. I–II, Beyrouth 2012. The issue is also discussed in: P.M. E d w e l l, *Between Rome and Persia. The Middle Euphrates, Mesopotamia and Palmyra under Roman Control*, London–New York 2008.

[17] For comparison see, for example: E. D ą b r o w a, *Rzeki w systemie obronnym rzymskiej Syrii (od Augusta do Septymiusza Sewera)*, [in:] *Studia classica et byzantina Alexandro Krawczuk oblata*, eds. M. S a l a m o n, Z.J. K a p e r a, Kraków 1996, pp. 119–127.

[18] P r o c o p i u s, *De aedificiis*, II, 8. Cf. also: J. L a u f f r a y, *Halabiyya-Zénobia. Place forte du limes oriental et la haute Mésopotamie au VI^e siècle*, vol. I, *Les duchés frontaliers de Mésopotamie et les fortifications de Zénobia*, Paris 1983; vol.II, *L'architecture publique, privée et funéraire*, Paris 1991.

[19] For comparison see, for example: E. F r é z o u l s, *Les fonctions du Moyen-Euphrate à l'époque romaine*, [in:] *Le Moyen Euphrate. Zone de contacts et d'échanges. Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg, 10–12 Mars 1977*, ed. J.-C. M a r g u e r o n, Leiden 1980, pp. 355–386.

A wide strip of desert territories, surrounding Syria from the east, did not present so diverse a landscape as the mountains or rivers from the northern part of the country. Generally, the terrains lying east of the coastal mountains are called the Syrian Desert, although the name, suggesting that one is dealing here with a barren and unpopulated land, encourages a simplified view of the matter. This is certainly a vast area – occupying about half a million square kilometres – flat and covered with rocks, with high acclivities looming here and there (from 500 to 800 m above sea level). It was covered with an irregular network of roads that enabled one to move around the desert[20]. Of key importance was the "artery" leading from the Mediterranean Sea to Mesopotamia and passing through the oasis of Palmyra – the only spot on the route which abounded in drinking water. Palmyra's key location, halfway between the Mediterranean coast and Euphrates, determined its development for centuries to come. The Palmyrene route was already used in the Old Testament era. It did not decline in importance in later epochs, remaining in the service of Roman-Persian trade until the end of the third century[21].

The Byzantines also tried to use Palmyra's geopolitical position to their own advantage. Although under Byzantine rule the city fell into decline, it was not altogether abandoned. Excavation has proved the continued existence in Palmyra of residential housing, workshops, churches and military infrastructure. According to ancient authors, an army unit, along with a dux – a military commander of the whole region – was installed in the city at Justinian's order. The emperor also provided the city with new walls. Whatever their scale (archeological findings seem to challenge written sources here), these efforts show that the ruler's intention was to strengthen Palmyra militarily. This in turn indicates that the city preserved its strategic role[22]. The capture of Palmyra in 634 by an Arab military leader, Khālid ibn Al-Walīd, allowed him to move on to the south, to Damascus and Jerusalem, which proves that the route through the Syrian desert still remained in use. This may even have been one of the most convenient routes by which, in 628, the Persians, who had occupied Syro-Palestine since about 613, left the area following the truce agreement concluded with the Romans in that year.

The eastern end of the Syrian desert held much importance for the Roman state. Running through this area was the empire's frontier, usually referred to as

[20] *Barrington Atlas...*, pp. 68–69. A thourough characterization of geography and environmental conditions of the region: D. Genequand, *Les établissements des élites omeyyades en Palmyrène et au Proche-Orient*, Beyrouth 2012, pp. 5–16.

[21] R. Dussaud, *La Topographie...*, pp. 247–265; F. Millar, *The Roman Near East...*, pp. 319–336.

[22] Procopius, *De aedificiis*, II, 11; John Malalas, XVIII, 2.

the *limes Arabicus*, although this name also simplifies reality. Apart from its section that actually passed through Arabia or the territories inhabited by the Arabs, this limes led far to the north, along the eastern borders of Syria. It reached as far as Amida, (now Diyarbakır, Turkey), the fortress town on the Tigris river. There were neither mountains nor rivers in Syria, and, consequently, the Syrian frontiers of the Roman Empire, in contrast to those existing in Europe – for example, on the Danube or on the Rhine – formed no natural barrier to be overcome by the people coming in from the interior of the Arabian Peninsula. For this reason, the *limes Arabicus* was viewed as a militarized defence zone, made up of a network of roads controlled by the army. Even in the Byzantine era, when the change in the defence strategy of the empire entailed abandoning (as most scholars believe) the limes' infrastructure, the region of eastern Syria did not lose its military importance. From then onwards, the task of defending this territory fell to Arab tribes allied with Rome[23].

In the reign of the first caliphs, Palmyra – where archeologists uncovered a number of buildings used for commercial purposes in the era of the Umayyad dynasty – along with the adjacent region, referred to by scholars as Palmyrene, experienced some economic recovery.

Recent archeological excavation has resulted in the identification of a number of Umayyad architectural complexes, which in English literature are sometimes called "desert castles". Most of them, while performing a variety of roles in the new state, combined residential and defensive functions. Generally, palaces and castles were given political roles. Built on caliphs' orders or on the orders of those who belonged to a group of their close associates, these desert castles were supposed to demonstrate the strength of the new dynasty, as well as the strength of the religion it represented, symbolizing its permanent rule over Syro-Palestine. In pursuing such goals, these desert castles also underlined the region's geopolitical importance. Caliphs' meetings with the representatives of local tribes or clans were held within their walls. There can also be no doubt as to their role in stimulating the local economy[24].

In the south, Syria bordered Palestine, a region whose history was strictly connected with that of Syria, including in the period under consideration. For this reason, modern scholars, including the authors of this work, use a broad term,

[23] There exists a huge literature on the *limes Arabicus*. Among more recent studies one should mention: S.T. P a r k e r, *Romans and Saracens: A History of the Arabian Frontier*, Winona Lake 1986; B. I s a a c, *The Limits of Empire: The Roman Army in the East*, Oxford 1990. Publications that appeared after a series of international conferences *Roman Frontier Studies* remain essential reading.

[24] For more on the issue see a new and thorough study: D. G e n e q u a n d, *Les établissements...*, *passim*.

Syro-Palestine[25]. The southern boundary of this region was marked by the Sinai Peninsula or the Gulf of Eilat (today the Gulf of Aqaba) on the Red Sea. Although Sinai was very mountainous in its interior, there were marked routes running along its coastline edges – both in the north, on the Mediterranean sea, and in the south, on the Red Sea – which allowed one to move between Egypt and Palestine[26].

Syro-Palestine was also easily accessed from the Gulf of Eilat. The most natural road led through a wide valley, called today Wādī al-ʿAraba, situated between the Red Sea and the Dead Sea. Wādī al-ʿAraba is actually part of a long tectonic earthfall, called the Great Rift Valley and stretching between eastern Africa and northern Syria. Looking from the direction of the Red Sea, the valley slowly gains height, reaching its highest point, 200 m above sea level, after about 80 km. Then it descends gently, cutting into the bottom of the Dead Sea at a depth of 419 m below sea level. This body of water – the world's greatest depression – is approached from the north by the Jordan River. Originating in the Anti-Lebanon Mountains, some 250 km away, it passes through Lake Tiberias and flows into the Dead Sea[27]. Under Roman rule, running almost parallel to the valley was *Trajan's via nova*, enabling one to quickly get from Aila (now Aqaba, Jordan) to as far as Bostra (Buṣrā al-Shām, Syria)[28].

Both regions, Wādī al-ʿAraba and the valley of Jordan, played an important role in the history of Muslim conquests. The first military confrontation between the Arabs and the Byzantines, the battle of Mu'ta, took place in their eastern, mountainous part (sometimes referred to as Hihglands at the Eastern Edge of Wādī al-ʿAraba – Jordan Garben)[29], at the altitude of the southern banks of the Dead Sea; the battle of Faḥl occurred on the middle course of the Jordan River; and the Yarmūk River, Jordan's unobtrusive tributary, witnessed a great battle that decided the fate of the Byzantine Syro-Palestine[30].

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[25] For more see, for example: G. T a t e, *La Syrie-Palestine*, [in:] *Le monde byzantin*, vol. I, *Empire romain d'Orient (330–641)*, ed. C. M o r r i s s o n, Paris 2006, pp. 373–401; A. W a l m s l e y, *Early Islamic Syria. An Archeological Assessment*, London 2007, *passim* – offering the following definition (p. 9: *In this work Syria-Palestine is used to describe the area covered by the modern states of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian territories, with a small part of southern Turkey, but not should be viewed as expressing any other opinion*), followed also in this work: F.M. D o n n e r, *Muhammad and the Caliphate. Political History of the Islamic Empire up to the Mongol Conquest*, [in:] *The Oxford History of Islam*, ed. J. E s p o s i t o, Oxford 1999, p. 3.

[26] *Barrington Atlas...*, p. 76.

[27] *Atlas of Jordan. History, Territories and Society*, ed. M. A b a b s a, Beyrouth 2013, pp. 42–43.

[28] *Barrington Atlas...*, pp. 76–77; *Atlas of Jordan...*, pp. 42–43, 163.

[29] For comparison see: *Highlands at the Eastern Edge of the Wadi Araba-Jordan Garben* (*Atlas of Jordan...*, pp. 172–173).

[30] *Barrington Atlas...*, pp. 69–71; *Atlas of Jordan...*, pp. 172–173.

The openness of borders is a fact whose historical significance can hardly be overrated. This openness was a factor which played a crucial role in shaping different states in the ancient and medieval eras in the region of the Fertile Crescent, including Syro-Palestine in late antiquity. It was an easily accessible region, lying almost open to a potential invader – no natural barrier separated the Byzantine territory from the lands inhabited by the Arabs. The region tempted with its abundant resources, of which the people were probably the greatest: skilled and talented artisans, efficient and brave merchants, patient olive and grape planters, scattered across the area extending from northern Syria to southern Palestine and Arabia, and – last but not least – intellectuals and spiritual leaders, politicians and local chiefs capable of negotiating with strangers. Natural treasures were equally important: the fertile soils of coastal lowlands, those of the Bekaa valley and the Ghab plain, purple and – so rare in the Middle East – the forests. Fir, pine and, most of all, cedar wood, desired as much as gold itself. And finally, the harbours – the Arabs' real window on the world.

Teresa Wolińska

2. Arabs, (H)agarenes, Ishmaelites, Saracens – a Few Remarks about Naming

There is no agreement among ancient authors on who the Arabs are – wrote Bert de Vries[1]. Geographically, they were the people of Arabia, the territory extending north of Syria, down to Yemen. Politically, the Roman province of Arabia was created in 106[2]. Initially it included the area of today's Jordan, from Bostra in southern Syria to the Bay of Aqaba. Later on it was limited to its northern part, while the southern territories became a separate province of *Palaestina Tertia*[3].

Maurice Sartre has pointed out three contexts in which the term *Arabia* appears: geographic (the Arabian Peninsula), administrative (province of Arabia) and ethnic (the area inhabited by Arabs)[4]. The scholar has also concluded that what defined Arabs was neither settlement, nor language, but their lifestyle. Arabs were either nomadic shepherds or robbers[5]. Still, we must keep in mind that talking of Arabs we think not only of the tribes from the border of the empire but, also of the population of Arabic origin, inhabitants of the territories which used to belong to Rome (and then to Byzantium) for a very long time[6].

Characteristic of the Greek, Syriac and Coptic sources is the fact that particular writers used a variety of terms to name the inhabitants of the Peninsula.

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[1] B. de Vries, *On the Way to Bosra: Arab Settlement in South Syria Before Islam – the Evidence from Written Sources*, [in:] *Hereux qui comme Ulisses a fait un beau voyage: Movements of People in Time and Space*, eds. N. Naguib, B. de Vries, Bergen 2010, p. 84.

[2] The chapter on the Roman administration in this volume has been written by Paweł Filipczak.

[3] B. deVries, *On the Way to Bosra...*, p. 78.

[4] M. Sartre, *Arabie, Arabies*, DArch 309, 2005/2006, pp. 2–7; B. de Vries, *On the Way to Bosra...*, pp. 79–80.

[5] M. Sartre, *Arabie, Arabies...*, p. 6.

[6] M.C.A. Macdonald, *On Saracens. The Rawwāh Inscription and the Roman Army*, [in:] idem, *Literacy and Identity in Pre-Islamic Arabia*, Ashgate 2009, art. VIII, p. 4.

Most frequent to be found are Arabs, Saracens or Skenites. Christian authors attempted to introduce the names of Arab tribes known to them from the Bible, hence such names as Ishmaelites or Agarenes (Hagarenes).

For John of Ephesus the inhabitants of the Peninsula were simply Arabs[7]. Also Theophanes uses mainly this name, sometimes switching to Hagarenes or Saracens[8]. In Theophylact Simocatta and Arethas we can also find Saracens (Theophylact emphasized that Arab tribes *are called Saracens by habit*)[9]. Anastasius Sinaite and Theodore Lector uses both, Saracens[10] and Arabs[11] alternatively. Cosmas Indicopleustes saw the Arabs as descendants of biblical Ham[12]. John of Damascus refers to them as Ishmaelites and – following Eusebius – derives the name from Ishmael, son of Hagar and Abraham. He calls them Hagarenes as well[13]. People of the Peninsula used to be Ishmaelites also for John of Nikiu[14] and Sebeos[15], although the latter happens to use the term Arabs[16] or *Hagar's descendants* occasionally[17]. In the treaty by Philotheus they appear as *friends Hagarenes*[18], whereas in the sources of Syriac origin they are commonly referred to as *Tayyāyē*[19].

The question which we must put here is whether all the above terms meant the same and whether an equality sign can be put between them. The issue gets complicated also due to the fact that there is no unique definition of the term Arab or Saracen. Sometimes they were used to denote a tribe, at other times they included all peoples of the Arabian Peninsula, or (later on) all Muslims. Scholars have noticed different meanings of the term Arabs in the works of Greek and Roman writers in comparison to these from the Middle East. The former use it

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[7] John of Ephesus, *HE*, III, 40–42; VI, 3; VI, 15–16.

[8] Theophanes, AM 6208, p. 387.

[9] Theophylact Simocatta, III, 17, 7; VIII, 1,1; Arethas, p. 293.

[10] Anastasius of Sinai, *Diègémata stèriktika*, B 9 [LI]; C 1; C 8; C 12–14; C 18; Theodore Lector, 185–186, 314, 513, pp. 69, 75, 93, 147 (e.g. writing about Mavia's mutiny, wars with Persians or Mundhir's baptism).

[11] Anastasius of Sinai, *Diègémata stèriktika*, C 4; Theodore Lector, 241, 259, pp. 79, 82.

[12] Cosmas Indicopleustes, II, 26; III, 66.

[13] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, 101, 1.

[14] John of Nikiu, CXI, 9 (ed. R.H. Charles, D. Litt; all references to the source in this chapter are after that edition).

[15] Sebeos, 30, p. 101; 32, pp. 104–105; 35, pp. 131–135; 38, pp. 145–146.

[16] Sebeos, 30, p. 99.

[17] Sebeos, 34, pp. 129–130.

[18] Philotheus, p. 163.

[19] Joshua the Stylite, 22, 24, 51, 55, 57–60, 63, 74–75, 79, 88 (transl. F.M. Trombley, J.W. Watt). Andreas Luther interprets *Tayyāyē* as *Arabs*.

in its ethnical dimension, whereas the latter usually refer to individuals of a particular lifestyle[20].

Still another difficulty is caused by the fact that the terminology used in the times covered by this monograph (sixth to eighth century) often refers to the Bible. It seems justified then to begin our discussion from the Scriptures.

2.1. Ishmaelites and Arabs in the Bible

According to the *Book of Genesis* Ishmael was the son of Abraham and Egyptian handmaiden Hagar[21]. The life of that woman was full of dramatic events. With the consent of Sara, Abraham's wife, Hagar gave birth to his child that Sarah was too old to have. But when Hagar was expecting, Sarah kept humiliating her. Disregarded, the woman decided to flee to the desert. There she met an angel, God's messenger, who ordered her to come back to her mistress and guaranteed that God would multiply her progeny[22]. Hagar heard the prophecy saying that her son would be *a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers*[23]. We should keep this in mind, as it was the starting point for negative opinions about Arabs.

When Ishmael was born, it seemed that both the mother and son would be safe. But when later, with the divine intervention Sarah gave birth to Isaac[24], the situation of the firstborn and his mother became difficult, indeed. Expelled by Sarah, she found herself on the desert again, this time with her son, heading towards Egypt, and again they were saved by an angel[25]. When Ishmael grew older he lived on the desert of Pharan where he taught himself to use a bow[26]. Following the promise given to Hagar by God he had twelve sons, each of whom became the progenitor of his kin[27]. In this way Ishmael became the ancestor of the twelve nomadic tribes, living in the deserts between Palestine, Egypt and Arabia[28].

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[20] U. S c h a r r e r, *The Problem of Nomadic Allies in the Roman East*, [in:] *Kingdoms and Principalities in the Roman Near East*, eds. T. K a i s e r, M. F e c e l l a, Stuttgart 2010, p. 265.

[21] Gen. 16,15.

[22] Gen. 16,6.

[23] Gen. 16,12.

[24] Gen. 21,2.

[25] J o s e p h F l a v i u s (I, XII, 2) explains Sarah's conduct by the fact that she was cared for her son, whom the elder brother could do a harm.

[26] Gen. 21,20–21.

[27] Ishmael's sons were: Nebajoth, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadar, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah (Gen. 25,13–15).

[28] Gen. 25,18. Ishmaelites are mentioned many other times in the Bible: Gen. 28,9; 36,3; 37,27–28; 39,1; Judg. 8,24; 2 Sam. 17,25; 1 Chron. 1,29–31; Bar. 3,23. I. E p h ' a l, *"Ishmael" and*

Ishmael's descendants frequently appear in the Bible. Joseph was sold to them by his treacherous brothers[29]. We can find them in the *Book of Chronicles,* describing the reign of King David[30], as well as in Psalm 83[31]. In the *Book of Judith*, written probably in the fourth century BC, the children of Ishmael are among those defeated by Nebuchadnezzar, ruler of Assyria[32]. A Babylonian chronicle, contemporary to the *Book of Judith* confirms his invasion on Syria and Palestine[33]. Ishmaelites are commonly identified with the *people of the east*, who were defeated by Gideon[34] and with Medanite and Amalekite tribes, also mentioned by the Old Testament[35]. It has brought some scholars to a conclusion that there could exist a confederation of Ishmaelite tribes somewhere south of Palestine[36].

I. Eph'al pays attention to the fact that all references to Ishmael and his descendants in the Bible come from the times before tenth century BC. In the later books we find neither Ishmaelites, nor Hagrites, Medanites or Amalekites[37]. None of these names can ever be found in any other sources of Biblical times which deliver information of other groups inhabiting the Arabian Peninsula[38]. The very terms Arabs and Arabic can also be found in the Bible[39], but their

"Arab(s)": a Transmission of Ethnological Terms, JNES 35.4, 1976, p. 225; A.G.C. Savvides, *Some Notes on the Term Agarenoī, Ismaelītai and Sarakenoī in Byzantine Sources*, B 67, 1997, p. 90; D.D. Grafton, *"The Arabs" in the Ecclesiastical Historians of the fourth/fifth Centuries: Effects on Contemporary Christian-Muslim Relations*, HTS 64.1, 2008, p. 180.

[29] Gen. 37,25–28; 37,36.

[30] 1 Chron. 1,28–31. See also: Jdt. 2,23.

[31] Ps. 83,7.

[32] Jdt. 2,22–27.

[33] D.J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings (626–556 BC) in the British Museum*, London 1956, p. 70; I. Eph'al, *"Ishmael" and "Arab(s)"...*, pp. 231–232.

[34] Judg. 8,24.

[35] Gen. 37,25–28: Joseph's brothers sold him to Ishmaelites carrying spicery, balm and myrrh to Egypt; Gen. 37,36: *The Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh*; 39,1; 1 Sam. 15,7: *And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah*.

[36] I. Eph'al, *"Ishmael" and "Arab(s)"...*, p. 226.

[37] I. Eph'al, *"Ishmael" and "Arab(s)"...*, p. 226.

[38] D.H. Müller, *Arabia*, [in:] *RE*, vol. III, Stuttgart 1895, cols. 344–359; E. Glaser, *Skizze der Geschichte und Geographie Arabiens von den ältesten Zeiten bis zum Propheten Muḥammad. Nebst einem Anhange zur Beleuchtung der Geschichte Abessyniens im 3. und 4. Jahrhundert n.Chr. Auf Grund der Inschriften, der Angaben der alten Autoren und der Bibel*, vol. II, Berlin 1980, *passim*; I. Eph'al, *"Ishmael" and "Arab(s)"...*, p. 226.

[39] 2 Chron. 9,14 (*And all the kings of Arabia and governors of the country brought gold and silver to Solomon*); 2 Chron. 17,11 (*Also some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents, and tribute silver; and the Arabians brought him flocks, seven thousand and seven hundred rams, and seven thousand and seven hundred he goats*); 2 Chron. 21,16 (*Moreover the Lord stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines, and of the Arabians, that were near the Ethiopians*); 2

significance for historical research is questioned, as it is disputable whether they concern the era being described or they refer to the later times[40].

The first information about Arabs, whose dating is reliable, comes from the *Book of Isaiah*, originating from the second half of eighth century BC[41]. It shows that the name Arabs started to appear in the time when the term Ishmaelites had already vanished[42]. Unlike Ishmaelites, it has nothing to do with biblical terminology. Nothing points out to its ancestral origin either. Rather than that, it denotes the nomadic way of life[43]. Considering this we may doubt if both terms regard the same ethnic group. It is worth considering if the Arabs could invade the areas inhabited by Ishmaelites and take their place there.

The Bible does not provide information about relations between Ishmaelites and Arabs. The only part that can point out identity of both terms is the verse from *Genesis* in which the sons of Ishmael are named[44]. The territories they inhabited cover with those which – according to Assyrian sources – used to belong to the Arabs.

The history of Hagar and her son made numerous Jewish and Christian writers identify both groups and call the Arabs by the name of Hagarenes or Ishmaelites. Already in Joseph Flavius' *Antiquitatum Judaicarum* they appear as Ishmael's progeny[45], but he uses also the name Arabs, referring to both biblical times and the times contemporary to him. According to his narration, the sons of Ishmael, known form *Genesis*[46] became the ancestors of the Arab tribes which controlled a country which extended from the Euphrates to the Red Sea[47].

Chron. 22,1 (*And the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah his youngest son king in his stead: for the band of men that came with the Arabians to the camp had slain all the eldest*); 1 Kings 10,15 (*Beside that he* [*Solomon*] *had of the merchantmen, and of the traffick of the spice merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia*); 2 Chron. 26,7 (*And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gurbaal, and the Mehunims*); Neh. 4,1–2; Neh. 6,1; 1 Macc. 5,39; 1 Macc. 11,17; 1 Macc. 11,39; 1 Macc. 12,31; 2 Macc. 5,8; 2 Macc. 12,10; Jer. 3,2.

[40] I. Eph'al, *"Ishmael" and "Arab(s)"...*, p. 227.

[41] Isa. 13,20 (about Babylon punished by God: *neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there*).

[42] I. Eph'al, "*Ishmael" and "Arab(s)"...*, p. 227.

[43] Isa. 13,20; Jer. 3,2 (*In the ways hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness*). I. Eph'al, *"Ishmael" and "Arab(s)"...*, p. 227.

[44] Gen. 25,13–16. I. Eph'al, *"Ishmael"and "Arab(s)"...*, p. 228.

[45] Joseph Flavius, I, 12, 2; I, 12, 4. The Jewish historian is reporting the story of Hagar, known from Old Testament. A.G.C. Savvides, *Some Notes...*, p. 92; A.J. Wensinck, *Ismail*, [in:] *EI*, vol. III, pp. 543–544.

[46] Joseph Flavius, I, 12, 4.

[47] Joseph Flavius, I, 12, 4; I. Eph'al, *"Ishmael" and "Arab(s)"...*, p. 232.

The historian writes that Abraham entrusted Arabia to them[48]. In another place he writes that their seat was in Petra[49].

According to the Old Testament the Arabs were, on the one hand, a group related to Israel as Abraham's descendants, on the other – a separate one, as the sons of Hagar. They could rely on the God's promise they would be a great nation[50], but they were also the children of a slave, expelled by her mistress. Their progenitor was Abraham's firstborn son, yet his own father sent him away when he had a legal offspring[51].

According to Eph'al, the biblical list of Ishmael's son is not based on actual historical data, as it was not written earlier than in eighth century BC[52]. Its author did not find any progenitor of the Arabs who would reach back to the beginning of mankind, instead he found out a tradition regarding Ishmaelites. Therefore he used that name to denote Bedouins of his time[53]. Scholars have been trying to find relations between Arabs and Ishmaelites in Assyrian sources. Eph'al maintains that no reference to Ishmael can be found either in Assyrian or old Arabic texts. Those texts know of no other name, but Arabs[54].

2.2. Inhabitants of Middle Eastern Deserts in Non-Biblical Sources

2.2.1. Skenites

The term Skenites appears in Roman and Byzantine sources and denotes *those who live in tents*[55]. It was used to describe the nomads inhabiting the territory between Sinai and the Euphrates[56]. We find them e.g. in *Naturalis Historia* by Pliny the Elder[57]. They have been mentioned also by Strabo[58]. Ammianus

[48] Joseph Flavius, II, 9, 3.

[49] Joseph Flavius, IV, 4, 7. On testimonies regarding Petra see: J. Retsö, *Petra and Qadesh*, SEA 76, 2011, pp. 115–124. The Swedish scholar pays attention to the fact that *hağar* in Arabic means "rock", which could be associated with *Petra*.

[50] Gen. 21,13.

[51] Gen. 21,10–14.

[52] I. Eph'al, *"Ishmael" and "Arab(s)"...*, p. 228.

[53] *Ibidem*, p. 229.

[54] *Ibidem*, pp. 229–231.

[55] Ammianus Marcellinus, XXII, 15, 2; XXIII, 6, 13; Zosimus, I, 8, 2; N. Lenski, *Captivity and Slavery among the Saracens in Late Antiquity (ca. 250–630 CE)*, ATa 19, 2011, p. 239.

[56] D.D. Grafton, *"The Arabs"...*, pp. 178–179.

[57] Pliny, V, 11; V, 16; V, 24; VI, 28.

[58] Strabo, XVI, 2, 11; XVI, 3, 1.

Marcellinus identifies Arab Skenites with Saracens and locates them in the area between Assyria, Nile waterfalls and the Blemmyes border, i.e. the territory of today's northern Sudan[59].

2.2.2. Arabs

The name Arabs (*Aribi*) appeared in Assyrian sources and were related to the nomads of Media. In those texts they were identified with the East: *the land of the Arabs, where the sun rises*[60]. An Arab named Gindību shows up in the inscription of Shalmaneser III, as a leader of allies who fought against the Assyrian ruler in 853 BC[61]. A century later Arabs began to appear in Assyrian texts more regularly. At that time the name was used to describe nomadic inhabitants of the Syro-Arabian desert and of northern Sinai. Similar terms were applied for inhabitants of the area of the *Fertile Crescent*[62].

I. Eph'al thinks that the term *al-ʿarab* in Arabic inscriptions from the south of the Peninsula and in classic Arabic texts meant Bedouins who inhabited those areas, contrary to settled tribes[63]. A different opinion has been presented by Jan Retsö, who says that there is no evidence that the word *Arab* meant a Bedouin[64]. The scholar sees no grounds to maintain that it was a general term to name people who lived in the Arabian Peninsula. His research reveals that Arabs appear as a group living among other peoples in Ḥawrān, central Mesopotamia and southern Arabia[65]. It is not certain either, if Peninsula inhabitants indeed identified themselves with Arabs. Fergus Millar tends to reject a possibility like that[66]. As late as in the first centuries of Islam the name was accepted by all tribes of the caliphate for self-identification[67].

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[59] Ammianus Marcellinus, XIV, 4, 3. They were the neighbours of Egyptians (XXII, 15).

[60] I. Eph'al, *"Ishmael" and "Arab(s)"...*, p. 227. The scholar points out lack of relations between them and the nomads from Palestine deserts. Jan Retsö has written more about that in his numerous publications. See: J. Retsö, *Arabs (historical)*, [in:] *EI*[3], vol. I, pp. 73–78; idem, *The Earliest Arabs*, OSu 38/39, 1989/1990, pp. 131–139.

[61] I. Eph'al, *"Ishmael" and "Arab(s)"...*, p. 227–228; J. Retsö, *Arabs (historical)...*, p. 73.

[62] I. Eph'al, *"Ishmael" and "Arab(s)"...*, p. 228; U. Scharrer, *The Problem of Nomadic...*, p. 262.

[63] E.W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, London 1874, p. 1933; I.A. Montgomery, *Arabia and the Bible*, Philadelphia 1934, p. 27sqq; I. Eph'al, *"Ishmael" and "Arab(s)"...*, p. 227.

[64] J. Retsö, *Arabs (historical)...*, p. 74; idem, *The Earliest Arabs...*, p. 133.

[65] Idem, *Arabs (historical)...*, p. 74; idem, *Arabs in the Pre-Islamic South Arabia*, ABY 10, 2005, pp. 127–130.

[66] F. Millar, *The Roman Near East 31 BC–AD 337*, Cambridge 1993, pp. 511–523. The scholar has noticed the fact that Arabs are almost invisible in the antic Greek and Syriac sources.

[67] J. Retsö, *Arabs (historical)...*, p. 76.

The origin of the word *Arab* is uncertain. Eph'al maintains that its source should be sought in old Arabic dialects, and its similarity to Hebrew *ʿarabah* (desert) is superficial[68]. The Greek tradition derived the discussed ethnic group from a certain man, named Arab (*Arabus*), a son of Hermes and Tronis[69].

Herodotus has written about Arabs as well. He characterizes them as foot or mounted warriors, armed in bows and clad in mantles[70]. They had expert knowledge about the desert and that was why Cambyses sought their advice[71]. Herodotus emphasizes that they were never subjects or slaves of Persians – both groups were just allies[72]. The *Father of History* described a *brotherhood of blood* ceremony, they strictly stuck to[73]. The writer informs about old Arab beliefs, including the cult of goddess Al'Lāt (identified with Urania), borrowed by the Persians as well[74].

In Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* we can find information about numerous Arab tribes[75], and the author pays much attention to distinguish between each of them. According to Pliny, they were either nomads – Skenites[76], or town people[77], as well as *savage Arabs* – descendants of Troglodytes[78]. Strabo repeats the opinion of Stoic philosopher Zeno, who says that Arabs appeared already in the *Odyssey*[79]. He himself characterizes them as cave-dwellers[80]. His narration includes the word *Arabs*, which – and it should be emphasized – would distinguish them

[68] I. Eph'al, *"Ishmael" and "Arab(s)"...*, p. 228. On the other theories about the origin of term Arab, see: J. Retsö, *Arabs (historical)...*, pp. 75–77; idem, *The Earliest Arabs...*, pp. 132–134; U. Scharrer, *The Problem of Nomadic...*, p. 263; V. Christides, *The Names Arabes, Sarakenoi etc. and their False Etymologies*, BZ 65, 1972, pp. 329–331.

[69] Strabo, I, 2, 34 (he quotes Hesiod). See: U. Scharrer, *The Problem of Nomadic...*, pp. 264–265.

[70] Herodotus, VII, 69; VII, 86–87. He emphasized that they used camels (VII, 184).

[71] Herodotus, III, 4 and 7.

[72] Herodotus, III, 88. Arab dependency on Persians can be proven by a yearly tribute in incense (III, 97).

[73] The description was based on Cambyses' efforts to make an alliance with Arabs. When it was concluded, the Arabs sent their reinforcements (Herodotus, III, 9). Other riches of Arabia included myrrh, cassia, cinnamon and gum (III, 107–113). The historian also describes fancy types of sheep to be bred in Arabia (III, 113).

[74] Herodotus, III, 8, 1; I, 131. Herodotus makes some ethnographic observations, e.g. regarding bathing after the intercourse (I, 198). See also: E. Lauzi, *Bizantini versus Saraceni. Un'accusa d'idolatria*, Ae 88.2, 2014, p. 285.

[75] Pliny, V, 24; VI, 9; VI, 23; VI, 26; VI, 28; VI, 29.

[76] Pliny, V, 11; V, 16; V, 24; VI, 28.

[77] Pliny, V, 24.

[78] Pliny, VI, 29.

[79] Strabo, I, 2, 34.

[80] I.e. Troglodytes (Strabo, I, 1, 3; I, 2, 34; XVI, 4, 27).

from Skenites[81]. It does not mean, however, that in Strabo's opinion all Arabs were settled. Some of them were farmers and shepherds, but others remained nomads[82].

Arabs can be found in Joseph Flavius' *Antiquitatum Judaicarum* . The author has paid much attention to complex relations between Rome, Herod the Great and the Arabs[83]. Without going into details, we can repeat after the author that Arab kings were equal partners to the Israelites and smartly maneuvered between Herod and the Romans[84]. They either made alliances with them or fought them[85], sent envoys to Rome to convince the Romans (with changing success) to their point of view[86] and offered shelter to political refugees[87] or bands raiding Herod's estates[88]. Marriages between the royals of Israel and Arab rulers to strengthen the alliance also took place[89]. At the same time Herod had serious problems to execute due tribute[90] or military support[91]. All of that is a proof of

[81] Strabo, XVI, 2, 11. U. Scharrer (*The Problem of Nomadic...*, p. 263) maintains that in the Greek inscriptions the term Arab referred to ethnic origin rather than lifestyle. It should be emphasized though, that at another place (XVI, 3, 1) Strabo writes about Arab Skenites.

[82] U. Scharrer, *The Problem of Nomadic...*, p. 263. The scholar pays attention to the fact that the Greeks writing about shepherds meant *animal husbandry in a sedentary context* (*ibidem*, pp. 270–271).

[83] Arabs appear in Joseph's description in earlier times as well (Alexander the Great, the Diadochi), but they are out of the subject of this monograph.

[84] Arethas became an ally to Rome due to his hatred for Herod (Joseph Flavius, XVII, 10, 9).

[85] Joseph Flavius, XIV, 9, 10; XVI, 9, 1 (Herod's war with Arabs caused by help given to some criminals by Sylaios, one of Arab leaders and pretender to throne); XV, 10, 2; XV, 5, 1 (Herod tries to force tribute; the Arabs obtain support from an unnamed general of Cleopatra); XV, 5, 4–5 (Herod defeats Arethas); XV, 6, 6; XV, 10, 2 (a conflict initiated by selling part of Ḥawrān by Herod); XV, 11, 3; XVII, 9, 2.

[86] Joseph Flavius, XVI, 9, 3 (Caesar accuses Herod of devastating Arabia in return for support given to robbers); XVI, 9, 3 (taking advantage of his visit to Rome, Sylaios complains of Herod's raid on his land and makes Caesar reprimand Herod); XVI, 10, 8–9 (Herod's envoy explains to Caesar the reason of the raid on Arabia); XVII, 3, 2 (Sylaios is planning a coup against Herod); XVII, 10, 9 (the Arabs are writing a denunciation on Herod to the emperor).

[87] Joseph Flavius, XIV, 1, 1 (Hisham gets a refuge by Arethas and then wins with his support); XV, 6, 2 (Hisham again turns to the Arab ruler for support).

[88] Joseph Flavius, XIV, 9, 1; XIV, 9, 2.

[89] Arethas' daughter was Herod's wife. Her rejection became the reason for a war in which Herod was defeated by his former father-in-law. It resulted in emperor Tiberius' reprisal. (Joseph Flavius, XVIII, 5, 1). Also Antipater married an Arab woman (XIV, 7, 1; XIV; VIII, 1, 3). Salome did not marry Sylaios, as he refused to convert to Judaism (XVII, 7, 6).

[90] Joseph Flavius, XV, 4, 4.

[91] Joseph Flavius, XIV, 14, 1 (Malchos, the Arab ruler does not give his support to Herod).

indirect dependence of Arab tribes from Rome on the one hand, and its serious limitations on the other. Arabs also took part in struggles inside the Empire[92] and made use of conflicts in the family of Herod, who himself interfered in the intra-Arabic struggle for power[93].

Arabs were not alien to the author of *Historia Augusta*, either[94]. There we can find information about Arab troops in the Roman army, but also of Arab forces who fought against it[95]. Interestingly, in at least one case the word Arabs was used to distinguish them from Saracens[96].

2.2.3. Saracens

In the third century AD the term Arabs began to gradually disappear from sources, being replaced by other names, among which that of Saracens was certainly most popular. The word was commonly used in Greek and Latin texts. The Syriac counterpart of it was, as it has been previously said, *Tayyāyē*. The term Saracens was first used in second century AD by Claudius Ptolemy in his *Geography*[97], but without any reference to Arabs[98]. Then we can find it in the works by Uranius, Pliny the Elder and Marcian of Heraclea[99]. Roman geographers located Saracens in the central part of northern Arabia, yet without any particular tribal identification.

The name Saracens with evident relation to Arabs was used for the first time by Bardaiṣan of Edessa in his *Liber legum regionum*, where we can find information about *Tayyāyē* and *Sarqāyē*[100]. Saracens as an ethnic group were first

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[92] Joseph Flavius, XV, 5, 1, 4–5 (when Herod by Antonius' order attacked the Arabs, they got a reinforcement from Cleopatra's general, which did not prevent the defeat).

[93] Joseph Flavius, XVI, 9, 4; XVII, 9, 4 (Sylaios and Arethas accuse each other before Caesar); XVI, 10, 9 (after Sylaios' frauds have been discovered, Caesar gives power over Arabia to Arethas, leaving Herod's pretences aside).

[94] *Historia Augusta*, *Severus*, XVIII, 1 (subordinated by Severus); *Macrinus*, XII, 6; *Aurelian*, XI, 3; XXXIII, 4.

[95] *Historia Augusta*, *Macrinus*, XII, 6 (Macrinus' war against the Arabs from the South); *Aurelian*, XI, 3; XXXIII, 4 (they are marching in Aurelian's triumphal march, called *Arabes Eudaemones*).

[96] *Historia Augusta*, *Tyranni Triginta*, XXX, 7 (Arabs as Zenobia's subjects).

[97] Ptolemy, V, 17, 3; VI, 7, 21. He situated them in Sinai, Egypt, west of the Black Mountains, at the Bay of Pharan.

[98] M.C.A. Macdonald, *On Saracens...*, p. 1; U. Scharrer, *The Problem of Nomadic...*, p. 259.

[99] A.G.C. Savvides, *Some Notes...*, p. 94; I. Shahîd, C.E. Bosworth, *Saracens*, [in:] *EI*, vol. IX, pp. 27–28.

[100] Bardaiṣan of Edessa, 39, col. 594; M.C.A. Macdonald, *On Saracens...*, p. 1.

mentioned in a Greek text in 251[101]. Not much later, in 291, we find the name in a Latin source in the description of a mutiny against emperor Diocletian[102]. The name was also used a few times by the author of *Historia Augusta*[103]. Ammianus Marcellinus related Saracens and Arabs to Skenites – the nomads who lived in tents[104]. The same author also mentions a certain Melechus Podosacis, an Arab phylarch of *Saracenorum Asanitanum*[105].

In the fourth century AD the term Saracens became more popular. Used initially to describe the shepherds from north-eastern parts of the Arabian Peninsula, was subsequently extended on all Arabs living outside the Roman *limes*[106] or, as suggested by M.D. Bukharin, on all enemies of Rome, who inhabited north-western Arabia[107]. Such a thesis stands in contradiction to that of G.W. Bowersock, who emphasizes different terminology used to tell between nomadic Saracens and settled down Arabs[108].

Scholars have tried different hypotheses to explain that varying terminology. The fact that the name Saracens suggested nomadic way of life[109] has made Ulf Scharrer maintain that its making popular was connected with the process of "bedouinizing" the Middle East[110]. It is possible that its popularity coincided with the arrival of new nomadic groups to Syrian areas[111]. Irfan Shahîd sees a difference between Romanized Arabs, who had inhabited Roman territories for centuries and newcomers who began to arrive in Syria in fourth century –

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[101] Eusebius of Caesarea, *HE*, VI, 42; N. Lenski, *Captivity...*, p. 243.

[102] *Panegyrici Latini*, 11[3]5.4.

[103] *Historia Augusta*, *Firmus*, III, 3; *Tyranni Triginta*, XXX, 7; *Aurelian*, XI, 3; XXVII, 5; XXVIII, 2, 4; XXXIII, 7; XLI, 10; *Probus*, IV, 1; III, 3; *Pescenius Niger*, VII, 8. See: G.W. Bowersock, *Arabs and Saracens in the Historia Augusta*, [in:] *Bonner Historia-Augusta-Colloquium 1984–1985*, Bonn 1987, pp. 71–80.

[104] Ammianus Marcellinus, XX, 15, 2 (*Scenitas praetenditur Arabas quos Sarracenos nunc apellamus*), XXIII, 6, 13.

[105] Ammianus Marcellinus, XXIV, 2, 4. M.D. Bucharin (*Proischoždenie ètnonima Sarakēnoi*, VV 67 (92), 2008, p. 59) thinks that it is about a Ghassānid sheikh.

[106] E. Lauzi, *Bizantini versus Saraceni...*, pp. 286–287.

[107] M.D. Bucharin, *Proischoždenie...*, p. 59.

[108] G.W. Bowersock, *Arabs and Saracens...*, p. 72; idem, *Studies on the Eastern Roman Empire*, Goldbach 1994.

[109] I. Shahîd, *Ghāssanid and Umayyad Structures: a Case of Byzance après Byzance*, [in:] *La Syrie de Byzance a l'islam VII^e–VIII^e siècles. Actes du Colloque International. Lyon–Maison de l'Orient Mediterranéen, Paris–Institut du monde Arabe. 11–15 IX 1990*, eds. P. Canivet, J.-P. Rey-Coquais, Damas 1992, p. 299.

[110] U. Scharrer, *The Problem of Nomadic...*, p. 262.

[111] *Ibidem*, p. 259.

particularly three large tribal groups: the Tanūkhs, Salīḥids and Ghassānids[112]. Jan Retsö has concluded that the change in naming was the result of the fact that camel-breeding warriors disappeared from the Roman borders at the end of second century[113]. We can also find an opinion that both terms: *Arab* and *Saracen* were synonymous[114]. This latter thesis seems oversimplified at least as far as Byzantine sources are concerned[115].

The etymology of the word *Saracen* is uncertain. It may origin from some derivatives meaning "the East," such as *sharḳ* or *sharqiyun*[116]. A Saracen would therefore be – as M.C.A. Macdonald wants it – "a man of the East"[117]. Another acceptable origin may come from the word *saraḳa* (robbery), or *sāriḳ* (robber)[118]. According to M.C.A. Macdonald the word means a simple theft rather than robbery raid, so it does not match very much with nomads[119]. C.C.R. Murphy has proposed another solution. He traces the name Saracens back to Aramaic *srāq* (deserted or empty), which according to him may have meant "desert"[120]. Following this direction, M.C.A. Macdonald refers to Alois Musil's research on the Berbers, according to which in their dialect the word *sarraḳa* means wandering in the desert[121]. He thinks that Saracens were the people who used to go to desert on a regular (yearly) basis[122].

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[112] I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, vol. I/I, *Political and Military History*, Washington 1995, pp. 166–167.

[113] J. Retsö, *The Arabs in Antiquity: Their History from the Assyrians to the Umayyads*, London 2003, pp. 505–525; idem, *Arabs (historical)...*, p. 75. Ph. Mayerson (*The Word Saracen (SARAKENOS) in the Papyri*, ZPE 79, 1989, p. 287) concludes that it was *a semantic transition of the word Saracen from a nomadic Arab to the occupying and settled Arab*.

[114] T.S. Parker, *Romans and Saracens: A History of the Arabian Frontier*, Winona Lake 1986; B. de Vries, *On the Way to Bosra...*, p. 85. It is worth mentioning that Greek papyri use the word Saracen when the Arab name is unknown. Ph. Mayerson, *The Word Saracen...*, p. 285.

[115] I. Eph'al, *"Ishmael" and "Arab(s)"...*, p. 225.

[116] D.D. Grafton, *"The Arabs"...*, p. 179; G.C. Savvides, *Some Notes...*, p. 94; E. Soulogiannis, *Sarakēnoi kai Christianismos*, Par 15.2, 1973, p. 293, footnote 2; M.D. Bucharin, *Proischoždenie...*, p. 57. The latter thinks there is no sufficient proof regarding the relation between *šarq* and *east*.

[117] M.C.A. Macdonald, *On Saracens...*, p. 3.

[118] A.G.C. Savvides, *Some Notes...*, p. 94; E. Soulogiannis, *Sarakēnoi...*, p. 293, footnote 2; D.D. Grafton, *"The Arabs"...*, p. 179; G. Fisher, *Between Empires. Arabs, Romans and Sasanians in Late Antiquity*, Oxford 2011, p. 76.

[119] M.C.A. Macdonald, *On Saracens...*, p. 2.

[120] C.C.R. Murphy, *Who were the Saracens*, ARev 41, 1945, p. 190; D.D. Grafton, *"The Arabs"...*, p. 179. For different interpretation see: M.C.A. Macdonald, *On Saracens...*, p. 2.

[121] M.C.A. Macdonald, *On Saracens...*, pp. 3–4; U. Scharrer, *The Problem of Nomadic...*, p. 260.

[122] M.C.A. Macdonald, *On Saracens...*, pp. 5. The term Saracens has been accepted in Greek in plural.

Still another possibility says that the name originated from *shrkt* (*širkat*), known to us from the inscription in Ruwwāfa, dated for 167–169 AD[123]. Irfan Shahîd thinks that it may refer to a tribe or particular place in Arabia[124], but some scholars try to translate it as "federation" or "union"[125]. Supporters of such an etymology maintain that it referred either to members of the tribal federation of Samud, which encompassed the nomads from central and south-western Arabia[126], or to Ptolemy's Saracens, known in some Syriac sources as *Tayyāyē*[127]. M.D. Bukharin is of a different opinion and does not believe the word Σαρακενοί is in any way related to *širkat*, supporting his view on linguistic analysis[128]. His opinion is shared by Macdonald, who insists that it is hardly possible for Σαρακενοί to be derived from *shrkt*[129]. He emphasizes that in the discussed inscription, *širkat* has been translated as *ethnos*[130] and that unlike *Tayyāyē* the name of Σαρακενοί never appeared in ancient Semitic languages[131].

Macdonald tries to relate the word to a group more specific than a tribe or confederation – namely to a military unit composed of members of one tribe (something like a *nation* in Pseudo-Hyginus)[132]. The inscription would therefore inform of a military unit named *Thamūd*, derived from a tribal name[133]. It should

[123] G.W. Bowersock, *The Greek-Nabatean Bilingual Inscription of Ruwwafa, Saudi Arabia*, [in:] *Le monde grec, pensée, litterature, documents. Hommages à Claire Preaux*, Bruxelles 1975, pp. 513–522. The inscription was made to honour emperor Mark Aurelius in a temple built by a group named *Thamūd*.

[124] I. Shahîd, C.E. Bosworth, *Saracens...*, p. 27; I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century*, Washington 1984, pp. 123–141; U. Scharrer, *The Problem of Nomadic...*, p. 259.

[125] D.F. Graf, M. O'Connor, *The Origin of the Term Saracen and the Rawwāfa Inscription*, ByzS 4, 1977, p. 65; G.W. Bowersock, *The Greek-Nabatean Bilingual Inscription...*, p. 516; M.C.A. Macdonald, *On Saracens...*, p. 5. D.D. Grafton (*"The Arabs"...*, p. 179) seems to be of the same opinion and accepts its origin from *sharika*, meaning association or partnership.

[126] D.F. Graf, *The Saracens and the Defence of the Arabian Frontier*, BASOR 229, 1978, pp. 1–26; M.D. Bucharin, *Proischoždenie...*, pp. 14–15; D.F. Graf, M. O'Connor, *The Origin...*, pp. 52–66. The tribe of Samud was known under that name already to Ptolemy, it also appears as *Thamoud* in Pliny the Elder and Uranius.

[127] I. Shahîd, C.E. Bosworth, *Saracens...*, pp. 27–28; R.G. Hoyland, *Arabia and Arabs from the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*, London–New York 2002, pp. 235, 255; M.C.A. Macdonald, *On Saracens...*, p. 2.

[128] M.D. Bucharin, *Proischoždenie...*, p. 58.

[129] M.C.A. Macdonald, *On Saracens...*, p. 7.

[130] τό τῶν Θαμουδηνῶν ἔθνος – cf. U. Scharrer, *The Problem of Nomadic...*, p. 259; M.C.A. Macdonald, *On Saracens...*, p. 8.

[131] *Ibidem*, p. 3.

[132] Pseudo-Hyginus, 19, 29, 43.

[133] M.C.A. Macdonald, *On Saracens...*, pp. 9–11; U. Scharrer, *The Problem of Nomadic...*, p. 261.

be noted that *equites Saraceni Thamudeni* were indicated in *Notitia Dignitatum* of the fifth century[134].

Bukharin, who rejects the origin of the name from *šrkt*, derives it from the valley of Wādi al-Sirḥān and maintains that its inhabitants using that name spoke Aramaic rather than Arabic[135]. In his opinion, another argument for this is a phrase *wolves of Arabia* found in Cyril of Scythopolis' work[136], because *al-Sirḥān* refers to a wolf.

The above considerations probably would not sound interesting to Byzantine authors, as they developed their own terminology, based on the Old Testament. Although incorrect, it was commonly used. Biblical interpretation of the name Saracens was laid out by Eusebius of Caesarea (264–ca. 340), relying on the origin of that nation from Hagar and thus referring to *Genesis*[137]. Eusebius wrote in his *Chronicle* that Saracens took their name from the fact of being *sent away* by Sarah[138]. The same interpretation can be found later in the works of John of Damascus, who used the original text by Eusebius[139]. John explains the term Saracens by quoting Hagar's expression that *Sarah threw her out denuded*. John simply blended two words: *Sarah* and *denuded* (κενός)[140]. A similarly wrong etymology can be found in Euthymius Zygabenus[141]. Both authors refer to Eusebius' text. On the other hand, Hieronymus emphasizes that the Saracens, sons of Ishmael[142] illegitimately thought they had descended from Sarah[143].

In his commentary to the *Book of Isaiah*, Eusebius links Saracens with Arabs and situates them in the province of Arabia, at the outskirts of the empire[144].

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[134] *Notitia*, Or. 28 (ed. N. Faleiro).

[135] M.D. Bucharin, *Proischoždenie...*, pp. 61–62. The author presents some other names derived from valleys.

[136] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii*, 15. Further references to Cyril in this chapter are after the edition by E. Schwartz.

[137] Gen. 16,1–16; 21,8–21. See: D.D. Grafton, *"The Arabs"...*, p. 180.

[138] The Greek text of Eusebius has not been preserved. There exists only the Latin and Armenian version.

[139] D.D. Grafton, *"The Arabs"...*, p. 180.

[140] Gen. 16,8; John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, 100, 5–6. It is an interesting, albeit incorrect attempt to identify its etymology. In fact, the name Saracens does not have connection to the Bible and appeared long before Christianity. The first who called the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula like that was Pliny the Elder. The etymology of that name is uncertain. More on that, see: M.D. Bucharin, *Proischoždenie...*, pp. 57–62; A.G.C. Savvides, *Some Notes...*, pp. 89–96.

[141] Euthymius Zygabenus, *Disputatio*, 29, col. 1360.

[142] *Liber Geneseos docet ex Ismaele Cedar et Agarenos, qui perverso nomine Saracenos vocantur, esse genitos* (Jerome, *In Isaiam,* V, 21, col. 193).

[143] *ergo per Madianaeos, Ismaelitas et Agarenos, qui nunc Sarraceni appellantur, assumentes sibi falso nomen Sarae* (Jerome, *In Hiezechielem*, VIII, 25, col. 233).

[144] He refers to: Isa. 15,7–9 and 42, 11. See: D.D. Grafton, *"The Arabs"...*, p. 182.

In *Praeparatio evangelica* Eusebius quotes Molon, a Greek author from the first century, according to whom the twelve sons of an unnamed Abraham's woman arrived in Arabia and divided the country between themselves, becoming its first kings. Due to that, according to Molon, until his times there had been 12 kings in Arabia[145]. The same source has preserved another quotation, according to which it was Ishmael and not Isaac who would be sacrificed, unless the intervention of an angel[146]. Subsequent Muslim tradition relied on that version[147].

In the opinion of E. Lauzi, the Arabs have never called themselves Saracens[148]. Saying this the scholar rejects the testimony of Sozomen, who has written that they preferred the name Saracens for they were ashamed of being sons of slave Hagar[149]. Cyril of Scythopolis has left another interesting interpretation, according to which through accepting Christianity the Arabs were no longer Hagarenes or Ishmaelites, but became *children of Sarah and heirs of the promise*[150]. If we take Cyril's interpretation, only those Arabs who accepted Christianity could be called Saracens. His views seem very private, though.

Although in the light of current knowledge of sources we are not able to find the etymology and significance of the word Saracens, it is difficult not to agree with a wise comment by Ulf Scharrer, who says that for Roman (i.e. Byzantine) writers the term became a general name of various ethnic groups[151]. Beginning from seventh century the name was used to identify both pre-Islamic Arabs and followers of religion of the Prophet[152].

2.3. Hagarenes vs. Ishmaelites

Beginning from the fourth century AD, after a long time of nonexistence, the name Ishmaelites began to appear again in Jewish and Christian sources, and then in early Muslim ones as well[153]. Byzantine writers used the name of

[145] Eusebius of Ceasarea, *Praeparatio evangelica*, 9, 19.

[146] Eusebius of Ceasarea, *Praeparatio evangelica*, 9, 19.

[147] A.G.C. Savvides, *Some Notes...*, p. 92.

[148] E. Lauzi, *Bizantini versus Saraceni...*, p. 287. The same opinion is V. Christides (*The Names...*, p. 331).

[149] Sozomen knew that they were descendants of Hagar (Sozomen, VI, 38, 10). See: D.D. Grafton, *"The Arabs"...*, p. 184.

[150] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii*, 10.

[151] U. Scharrer, *The Problem of Nomadic...*, p. 260. The scholar thinks that in the examined period (until fourth century) the term meant *nomads*.

[152] A.G.C. Savvides, *Some Notes...*, p. 95.

[153] I. Eph'al, *"Ishmael" and "Arab(s)"...*, p. 227.

(H)agarenes and Ishmaelites alongside to that of Saracens. Theodoret, who perceived the Arabs in a positive way, albeit only those who were Christians, noticed that they were proud of being descendants of Abraham and Ishmael[154]. Finding that particular moment when the Arabs, named Hagar's sons by Jews and Christians, began to confess to be Abraham's descendants[155] would certainly be interesting. Still, this would demand a separate research. Now we can only say that it certainly did not happen before Islam.

2.4. Other Names

Besides the terms discussed above, there are other names that occasionally appear in Byzantine sources. Philostorgius, writing about Ḥimyarites, refers to them as Homerites – i.e. Arabs from the south of the Peninsula, and adds that they were also known as Sabaeans[156]. Interestingly enough, the author confirms their origin from Abraham, but says that they were not the sons of Hagar but of a certain Keturah, Abraham's wife after Sarah's death[157]. It should be added that Ḥimyarites, were known as Homerites also to Procopius of Caesarea[158], which according to Greg Fisher may point out popularity of that name in Byzantine intellectual circles[159].

To sum up our considerations, we can say that in early Byzantine times biblical terminology was common among Jews and Christians. This regards both the name of Ishmaelites or (H)agarenes, as well as that of Saracens[160]. All of them are frequently found in Byzantine chronicles and lives of saints, in reference to pagan inhabitants of the Peninsula and to Muslims alike[161]. It does not mean, however, that the name Arabs was no longer in use. It should be noted that although in case of particular authors we can observe some regularities, on the level of the whole literary heritage of the empire it is difficult to find a clear and unique definition of these particular names.

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[154] Theodoret, *HR*, col. 1360. See: I. Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century*, Washington 1989, pp. 154–155; D.D. Grafton, *"The Arabs"...*, p. 184.

[155] More on that: P. Crone, M. Cook, *Hagarism. Making of the Islamic World*, Cambridge 1977, *passim*; G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, pp. 165–170.

[156] Philostorgius, III, 4.

[157] Philostorgius, III, 4.

[158] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 20, 9–10. See also: Theodoret, *HE*, IV, 20.

[159] G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, p. 166.

[160] F.E. Peters, *Introduction*, [in:] *The Arabs and Arabia on the Eve of Islam*, ed. F.E. Peters, Aldershot 1999, p. XIII.

[161] A.G.C. Savvides, *Some Notes...*, p. 92.

Marek M. Dziekan

3. The Arabs before Islam – the Birth of the New Religion

In medieval times, Muslim scholars, in referring to the region of the Middle East inhabited by Arab tribes, used the name *Bilād al-ʿArab* or *Dayr al-ʿArab*. However, the term most commonly used with regards to this region was *Djazīrat al-ʿArab*, that is, "the Island of the Arabs" – in spite of the fact that in most cases it denoted the area known today as the Arabian Peninsula[1]. "The Island of the Arabs" is a metaphor that underlines the isolation of the Peninsula, surrounded by sea from the south, east, and west, and separated from the land in the north by the sands of the desert.

In the work *Kitāb ṣurat al-arḍ (The Picture of the Earth)*, Ibn Ḥawḳal, the famous traveller and geographer from the tenth century, offers the following description of this region (which he calls *Dayr al-ʿArab*):

> The Lands of the Arabs are Al-Ḥidjāz which comprises Mecca, Medina, Al-Yamāma and the neighbouring regions. Nadjd links Al-Ḥidjāz with Bahrain, the Iraqi desert, Al-Jazeera desert (northern regions of Syria and Iraq) and the Syrian desert. Yemen encompasses Tihāma, Yemeni Nadjd, Oman and Mahra, including Sana'a, Aden and other Yemeni territories.[2]

Thus, according to him, the term "the Lands of the Arabs" refers to the lands known in antiquity as *Arabia Felix*, *Arabia Deserta* and *Arabia Petraea*, as well as to those extending along the present Iraqi-Syrian borderland.

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[1] Here is a selection of works on the history of the Arabs in Polish: J. D a n e c k i, *Arabowie*, Warszawa 2001; M.M. D z i e k a n, *Dzieje kultury arabskiej*, Warszawa 2007; Ph.K. H i t t i, *Dzieje Arabów*, transl. W. D e m b s k i, M. S k u r a t o w i c z, E. S z y m a ń s k i, Warszawa 1969; A. H o u r a n i, *Historia Arabów*, transl. J. D a n e c k i, Gdańsk 1995; D. M a d e y s k a, *Historia świata arabskiego. Okres klasyczny: od starożytności do końca epoki Umajjadów (750)*, Warszawa 1999.

[2] I b n Ḥ a w ḳ a l, p. 29.

The oldest traces of human presence in the Arabian Peninsula date to the seventh millennium BC. Rock paintings featuring elephants, rhinoceroses and antelopes appeared in that era. Around the sixth millennium BC, the climate began to change – the change is reflected in the rock paintings. The pictures of elephants and forest animals gradually disappeared, giving way to horned cattle. In the fourth and third millennia BC, there appeared desert and semi-desert creatures – ostriches and camels. In the second millennium BC, the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula domesticated the hump camel (dromedary) – initially probably in the region of today's Oman. Rock paintings, reflecting changes in human life, testify to the spread of nomadism. Social development advanced to the point where climate no longer played a crucial role in people's lives. Man's activity expanded and acquired new significance.

The introduction of the new saddle, at the end of the first millennium BC, played a significant role in that developpement. It allowed men to make better use of their camels, with nomadic shepherds quickly transforming into warriors[3].

It is worth stressing that the Arabian Peninsula is the cradle of Semitic people. They migrated from that area in waves occurring around every thousand years (the Mesopotamian-Egyptian wave around 3500 BC, the Syrian-Amorite one in around 2500 BC, and the Aramaic in around 1550–1200 BC), spilling all over the Middle East, where they formed different centres of ancient civilizations. The last wave of these migrations marked the end of prehistory of the Arabian Peninsula. The tribes that stayed, irrespective of the differences between them, can be referred to as Arabs.

In the middle of the second millennium BC, and for the first time in the history of the Arabs in *Arabia Felix* there emerged a number of strong political organisms, including Ma'in, Saba', Ḥaḍramawt, Ḳatabān and Ḥimyar[4]. The Sabaean state, with its capital in Sirvahu (40 km west of Ma'rib) and then in Ma'rib, existed from 950 BC to 115 CE (some historians trace its history back to the thirteenth century BC)[5]. Until the fifth century BC, it was ruled by priest kings called *mukarrib*. For this reason this epoch is referred to as the period of the *mukarribs*.

[3] M.M. Dziekan, *Arabia Saudyjska*, [in:] *Encyklopedia historyczna świata*, vol. X, ed. idem, Kraków 2002, pp. 23–24; J. Zdanowski, *Historia Arabii Wschodniej*, Wrocław 2004, pp. 15–18.

[4] F.R. Scheck, *Szlak mirry i kadzidła*, transl. J. Danecki, Warsaw 1988; R.D. Burrowes, *Historical Dictionary of Yemen*, London 1995; B. Doe, *Południowa Arabia*, transl. M. Gawlikowski, Warszawa 1979; M.B. Piotrovskij, *Južnaja Aravija v rannee srednevekov'e. Stanovlenie srednevekovogo obščestva*, Moskva 1985.

[5] S.A.A. As-Salim, *Tarikh al-Arab fi asr al-Dżahilijja*, Bajrut n.d., p. 119.

Then, with the seizure of power by non-religious rulers, a new secular monarchy, was established. The Sabeans played an important role in the trade between south-eastern Asia, Ethiopia and Europe. In the period of the Sabean kings, Arabian ports served as transit points on the so-called "Incense Route" running from India to the Mediterranean Sea[6].

In the second half of the first millennium BC, there also existed other states: Ḳatabān, with the capital in Timnaʿ (east of Ma'rib) and Ḥaḍramawt, with Shibām as its main centre. There survives little evidence concerning the history of these states. All we know is that for some time both remained under control of the neighbouring kingdoms of Saba' and Maʿin. Most information on these states comes from local inscriptions and archeological excavations. Ḳatabān, located east of today's Aden, is sometimes called the Southern Arabian Middle State. Its history probably dates as far back as the seventh century BC. Most often, however, the beginnings of the state are date about 450 or 400 BC. It grew rapidly between 350–250 BC, extending its influence over the coastal area, from the strait to the terrain east of today's Aden. Inscriptions from this period indicate that Ḳatabān managed to subjugate both Minā and Saba'. In the second century BC, it came to face the threat of losing its position to the Ḥimyarites. Taking advantage of their kingdom's location at Bāb al-Mandab, the Ḳatabanians occupied themselves mainly with trade. In 25 BC, the state fell under the control of Ḥaḍramawt, and that year is usually recognized as the end of the Ḳatabān state[7].

The kingdom of Ḥaḍramawt existed from the mid-fifth century BC to the fourth century CE. The Incense Route started there and then ran to Ma'rib or Karnav. Existing concurrently with the states created by the Sabeans and the Ḳatabanians, it probably avoided subjugation to either of them. Historical data regarding its history are very uncertain. In all probability, the kingdom came into being in around the fifth century BC. Initially ruled by priest kings, around 400 BC, it was taken over by lay rulers. Qana served as Ḥaḍramawt's main port. As in the rest of the South Arabian kingdoms, trade formed the basis of Ḥaḍramawt's economy. The state was the wealthiest and most diverse cultural centre in the region. However, in the mid-fourth century CE, after a number of failed attacks, rulers of the neighbouring countries finally succeeded in forcing it into submission, thus halting its development[8].

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[6] Ph.K. H i t t i, *Dzieje...*, pp. 47–48; B. Doe, *Południowa Arabia...*, pp. 85–101; K. K h e l l a, *Geschichte der arabischen Völker*, Hamburg 2007, pp. 49–53; F.R. S c h e c k, *Szlak...*, pp. 92–97.

[7] Ph.K. H i t t i, *Dzieje...*, p. 49; B. D o e, *Południowa Arabia...*, pp. 76–81; M.A.L. B a f a k i h, *Tarich al-Jaman al-kadim*, Bajrut 1985, pp. 33–37; F.R. S c h e c k, *Szlak...*, pp. 104–106.

[8] B. D o e, *Południowa Arabia...*, pp. 95–101; M.A.L. B a f a k i h, *Tarich...*, pp. 39–50; F.R. S c h e c k, *Szlak...*, pp. 106–108.

Ḥimyar was chronologically the latest centre of pre-Muslim *Arabia Felix*. Its history began in 115 BC and ended in 525 CE. Apart from the area of today's Yemen, the country's territory stretched over parts of the present Oman and Saudi Arabia. Ma'rib served as its first capital, to be replaced later by Ẓafār. Around the fourth century CE, Ḥimyar witnessed the spread of Christianity, with the city of Nadjrān becoming the Christian religion's main centre. In the fifth century, the city was elevated to the position of the Monophysitic bishopric. Later, Judaism appeared in the city, which led to the outbreak of a conflict between its rulers, who converted to the new religion, and their Christian subjects. Ḥimyar's most famous Jewish king was Dhū Nuwās. He ruled in the first half of the sixth century and began persecution of Christians[9]. They provoked an armed intervention of Ethiopia and subordinating the Ḥimyarite state to the Ethiopian Negus[10]. In 575 CE, it fell under the rule of the Persians, who remained in control of its territory until the advent of Islam. In the Arab historiography, Ḥimyar is referred to as the state of the *Tabābi'as* – the term derived from the name *tubba* by which its rulers were known[11].

The religious system of South Arabia was not uniform. Each pantheon was topped by different deities, regarded as both ancestors and protectors of their respective kingdoms. However, the same gods often appeared in different pantheons. We can say that these various cults had an analogous structure, for all of them were aimed at celestial bodies or representing them. A male lunar god usually headed each pantheon. The sun god and the planet Venus were also highly regarded. In the kingdom of Saba' those gods formed a „triad", and the cult was usually under the oversight of *mukarrib*. Processions held around sacred stones were the characteristic part of religious rituals.

We know at least fifteen deities of *Arabia Felix*. The most important of them was Astar, worshipped in every state of the region – the god of war, fertility and rain. His main role was to look after households and graves. ʿAmm (literally "uncle" or "little") was a lunar deity, from whom Ḳatabanians were believed to have

[9] N. N e b e s, *The Martyrs of Najrān and End of the Ḥimyar: On the Political History of South Arabia in the Early Sixth Century*, [in:] *The Qur'ān in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations Into the Qur'ānic Milieu*, eds. A. N e u w i r t h, N. S i n a i, M. M a r x, Leiden 2010, pp. 27–60; M.R. A l - A s s o u a d, *Dhū Nuwās*, [in:] *EI*, vol. II, pp. 243–245.

[10] In this book, more on this subject, see chapter written by Teresa Wolińska, *Difficult Neighbours. Enemies, Partners, Allies.*

[11] I. G a j d a, *Le royaume de Ḥimyar à l'époque monothéiste. L'histoire de l'Arabie ancienne de la fin du ive siècle de l'ère chrétienne jusqu'à l'avènement de l'Islam*, Paris 2009; Ph.K. H i t t i, *Dzieje...*, p. 50; A. M o b e r g, *The Book of the Ḥimyarites. Fragments of a hitherto unknown Syriac work*, Lund 1924.

descended. He served as the guardian of agriculture. Ilmuḳaḥ or Almaḳaḥ was the god of the moon, rain, abundant harvest and war. Worshipped mainly in Saba', he was raised to the position of the state's principal deity. After the Sabeans had seized control of the region's political centres, his cult spread across the whole of southern Arabia. Wadd (in Arabic "love") was worshipped in every state of the region. The Minoans saw in him their god-ancestor and the protector of their country. He was also known in the Central and North Arabia[12].

The southern Arabs spoke their own language, now called Epigraphic Old Arabic. Its alphabet was different from standard Arabic. No longer used in the region, it was adopted by Ethiopian languages[13].

While Yemen's trade relations with the outside world flourished, the country was less successful in developing its political relations. The Romans' attempt to take control of its territory in order to have profits from the country's trade was one of the most important events in its history. However, the Roman expedition, led by Aelius Gallus[14], ended in complete failure. Never again did the Romans try to conquer Yemen, and Roman historians usually showed much restraint in providing any information about that failed attempt.

3.1. The Nabateans

In the north edge of Al-Ḥidjāz, east and south-west of the Dead Sea, there existed a state founded by the Nabateans, with its capital in Petra[15]. The early history of Nabatea is shrouded in mystery. It is known that around the sixth century BC, coming, as it is believed, from the north-western part of the Arabian Peninsula, the Nabateans arrived in an area north of Moab. In the so-called inter-testament and New Testament era, they played an important role in the political and economic life of Palestine, and the neighborhood. The Nabateans conducted an effective policy, skillfully maneuvering between the middle-eastern powers of the time: the monarchies of the Seleucids and the Ptolemies. Significantly

[12] B. D o e, *Południowa Arabia...*, pp. 31–46; M.M. D z i e k a n, *Dzieje kultury...*, pp. 55–60.

[13] A. M a j e w i cz, *Języki świata i ich klasyfikowanie*, Warszawa 1989, p. 41.

[14] F.R. S c h e c k, *Szlak...*, pp. 44–50.

[15] Of the more recent publications see: M. S a r t r e, *Wschód rzymski. Prowincje i społeczeństwa prowincjonalne we wschodniej części basenu Morza Śródziemnego w okresie od Augusta do Sewerów (31 r. p.n.e.–235 r. n.e.)*, transl. S. R o ś c i c k i, Wrocław 1997, pp. 340–392; F. B o u r b o n, *Petra. Sztuka i historia. Przewodnik po stolicy Nabatejczyków*, Warszawa 2001; I.Š. Š i f m a n, *Nabatejskoe gosudarstvo i ego kul'tura*, Sankt-Peterburg 2007; W. M a c h o w s k i, *Petra*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 2007.

expanding the borders of their state, which reached as far north as Damascus, they stretched their influence over Al-Ḥidjāz and Egypt. Nabatean merchants travelled all over the Mediterranean, including Italy.

Petra, known from the fourth century BC, was Nabatea's capital. The city's name is translated as "a rock". Indeed, it was situated among rocks and, surrounded by steep cliffs, could be accessed only through a narrow and winding pass. Because of its geographical location, the city was very difficult to conquer. Its natural conditions with the streams flowing all year round, provided enough water for normal functioning, which was not always the rule in that desert region[16]. Besides, its inhabitants, unlike the people living in the neighbouring territories, never suffered from water shortages. By the end of the fourth century BC, Petra had already become an important hub on the caravan route from southern Arabia to the Mediterranean Sea. Of crucial importance in the life of the kingdom was its intermediary role in spice trade. The city reached the height of its development in the first century, during the reign of King Al-Ḥarīth III. The monumental remains of the city are evidence of the splendour of the epoch[17]. Following the shift of the caravan routes to the north, Petra was beginning to fade in importance in favour of the neighbouring Palmyra. 105 saw the fall of the Nabatean kingdom and its capital. One year later *Arabia Petrea* was incorporated into the Roman Empire as *Provincia Arabia*. Petra's fate was sealed by the earthquakes that took place, in 110, 303, and 505. Later, before it fell into oblivion, the city was briefly used by crusaders as their stronghold. It was not until the nineteenth century that it was rediscovered. Serious archeological excavations have continued there since 1965.

Although the Nabateans had their own language, they quickly adopted the *lingua franca* of the time, that is, Aramaic. However, Arabic (Nabatean) remained a spoken language, with a version of the Aramaic alphabet, called the Nabatean script, used in writing. Over the centuries it underwent gradual modification, finally assuming the form of modern Arabic.

At first the Nabateans led an exclusively pastoral nomadic life. With time, some of them settled in cities and began to occupy themselves with trade. The cities

[16] C. Blánquez-Pérez, *Cisternas, canales y presas: el sistema hidráulico nabateo en Petra*, [in:] *Dialéctica histórica y compromiso social. Homenaje a Domingo Plácido*, vol. III, Zaragoza 2010, pp. 1493–1506.

[17] Apart from the monographs I have already mentioned, see also: T.R. Paradise, *Architecture and Deterioration in Petra: Issues, trends and warnings*, [in:] *Archaeological Heritage at Petra: Drive to Development or Destruction?*, ed. D. Comer, New York 2011, pp. 87–119; idem, *Weathering of Sandstone Architecture in Petra, Jordan: Influences and Rates*, [in:] *Stone Decay in the Architectural Environment*, ed. A.V. Turkington, New York 2005, pp. 39–49.

often served as strongholds used for the protection of the caravan routes. People found themselves attracted to these city-like settlements: first by water collecting devices and secondly by irrigation systems that made the cultivation of land possible. These innovations were in use until the Muslim invasion in the seventh century. The Nabatean state was ruled by king who, in some periods, was deified. The rulers' wives were called sisters, while royal officials were addressed brothers.

The Nabatean religion appears to be of special interest. It was a fusion of local beliefs on one hand, and Aramaic and Greco-Roman religious ideas on the other. On top of the Nabatean pantheon was Dūshara. His main sanctuary was located in Petra. Elevated to the position of the supreme state god, Dūshara was worshipped under the form of a black uncut stone, which was four feet high and two feet wide. The Nabateans made animal offerings to their main deity. The female deity was called Al-Lāt, the cult of which was widespread in Nabatea. Regarded as a "mother of gods", Al-Lāt was known all over the Arab territories. In the Roman era she was equated to Athena-Minerva. Religious rituals were at first held on the raised ground while temples were built later. The so-called Pharaoh's Castle in Petra and the Temple in Khirbet et-Tannūr are among the most famous of these[18].

3.2. Palmyra (Tadmur)

Palmyra (Tadmur), a oasis lying northeast of Damascus, was undoubtedly one of the most famous Arab cities in the pre-Muslim Syria[19]. The earliest document-

[18] J. D a n e c k i, *Arabowie...*, pp. 44–47; J. M c K e n z i e, S. G i b s o n, A.T. R e y e s, *Reconstruction of the Nabataean Temple Complex at Khirbet et-Tannur, Jordan*, PEQ 134, 2002, pp. 44–83; J. M c K e n z i e, *Carvings in the Desert: the Sculpture of Petra and Khirbet et-Tannur*, [in:] *Petra Rediscovered, Lost City of the Nabataeans*, ed. G. M a r k o e, New York 2003, pp. 169–195; J. M c K e n z i e, A.T. R e y e s, J.A. G r e e n e, *The Context of the Khirbet et-Tannur Zodiac, Jordan*, ARAM 24, 2012 [2014], pp. 379–420.

[19] Among many publications devoted to ancient Palmyra, particularly in the Roman period, here are some newer and more important titles: Z. B u k o w s k i, K. D ą b r o w s k i, *Śladami kultur azjatyckich*, vol. I, *Od Jerycha do Pomostu Beringa*, Warszawa 1974, pp. 314–332; K. M i c h a ł o w s k i, *Od Edfu do Faras*, Warszawa 1983, pp. 88–112; J. S t a r c k y, M. G a w l i k o w s k i, *Palmyre*, Paris 1985; R. S t o n e m a n, *Palmyra and Its Empire: Zenobia's Revolt Against Rome*, Michigan 1994; M. G a w l i k o w s k i, *Les Arabes en Palmyrène*, [in:] *Presence arabe dans la Croissant fertile avant l'Hegire*, ed. H. L o z a c h m e u r, Paris 1995, pp. 103–108; T. K o t u l a, *Aurélien et Zénobie. L'unité ou la division de l'Empire*, Wrocław 1997; C.E. B o s w o r t h, *Tadmur*, [in:] *EI*, vol. X, pp. 79–80; P. E d w e l l, *Between Rome and Persia: The Middle*

ed reference to it comes from the eleventh century. While "Tadmur" is a Semitic term, the name "Palmyra", originating in the Hellenistic period, began to be used later. The beginnings of the city remain unknown. Its proper history can be considered to have begun in the first century, when Tadmur became the capital of the city-state. It existed as an independent political unit until the end of the third century.

The Romans took interest in the oasis not later than at the beginning of the first century. In the mid-first century, while retaining a measure of autonomy, the city came under Roman control. It was later given a military and economic role to play in Rome's wars against Persia. Its greatest prosperity came during the reign of Odaenathus II. Rome's ally, Odaenathus was murdered around 268. After his death, power was seized by his widow, Zenobia and her son, Vaballathus. Although her reign was filled with great accomplishments – above all she managed to conquer Egypt – she was finally defeated by Emperor Aurelian at the battle of Emesa in 272. After the victory, Aurelian took her to Rome where she was to live until the end of her life. Her future fate actually remains unknown. Palmyra, despite being quickly rebuilt, went into gradual decline and was finally conquered and destroyed by the Romans in 273, paying a high price for its attempt to become independent of Rome[20].

In the second and third centuries, Palmyra was not dissimilar in its structure to other Roman cities. Many of its buildings were typical of the urban areas found in the other parts of the Empire. Tadmur's culture began to flourish in the first century. The city owed this cultural growth to its geographical location. Situated at the intersection of important trade routes, it maintained contacts with other important cities, including those outside the Middle East. Goods from all parts of the world were brought there. The Palmyrean culture was a combination of Syrian, Hellenistic and Persian elements. From the religious point of view, it can be considered as part of Syria – its pantheon included the deities known in the rest of the region. However, the local cult, just like the whole culture, was syncretic. Shams, a sun deity, was the supreme god of the city. He had a separate temple. Emperor Aurelian, seeking to engraft the cult of the sun, moved the god's statue from Palmyra to Rome. Mesopotamian Baal and Phoenician Baalshamin were worshipped there, too. Another Palmyrean deity was Al-Lāt. As mentioned above, this female deity was similar in character and function to the Greek Athena[21].

Euphrates, Mesopotamia and Palmyra under Roman Control, London–New York 2007, *passim*; A.M. S m i t h, *Roman Palmyra: Identity, Community, and State Formation*, Oxford 2013. Cf. numerous articles devoted to Palmyrene architecture and art, published in *Studia Palmyreńskie*.

[20] R. S t o n e m a n, *Palmyra...*; T. K o t u l a, *Aurélien...*; P. S o u t h e r n, *Empress Zenobia: Palmyra's Rebel Queen*, London–New York 2008.

[21] J. D a n e c k i, *Arabowie...*, pp. 48–50.

3.3. Lakhmids

Towards the end of the fifth century, in the area between the Arabian Peninsula and Mesopotamia, the process of the formation of the Lakhmids' state was brought to completion (Banū Lakhm). Al-Ḥīra, its capital, was located in the vicinity of the later Al-Kūfa and today's Al-Nadjaf in Iraq[22]. However, there is no historical evidence that could shed some light on the foundation of Al-Ḥīra. The oldest document that contains the name of the city comes from 132.

The beginnings of the Lakhmids' kingdom date back to the third century and are connected with the arrival on these territories of the confederation of the Tanūkh tribes from the Arabian Peninsula. Following the dam breach in Ma'rib (the dam had cracked several times before it fell out of use altogether around 540), the Tanūkhs set out to journey in a northeasterly direction and settled in the environs of Al-Bahrain. Conflicts arose between these tribes which made some of them decide to migrate to Mesopotamia.

According to the tradition, the Lakhmids' dynasty was founded by Mālik Ibn Fahm al-Azdī. This buffer state was a vassal of Sassanid Persia. The Lakhmids professed Nestorianism, having adopted it from the local population. The bishopric was in Al-Ḥīra. Although the kingdom was to a great extent made up of Christians, Al-Nu'mān III Abū Ḳābūs (around 580–602), the last king of the Lakhmid dynasty, turned out to be the only Christian on its throne. According to some accounts, it was from Al-Ḥīra that Christianity spread to Nadjrān, in the south of the Arabian Peninsula. Besides, the Ḳuraysh – a tribe of which Prophet Muḥammad was once a member – were to owe their ability to write to the Lakhmids. However, the kingdom was definitely multi-religious. Apart from Christians, it was home to polytheists, Zoroastrians and the Jews. Imru al-Ḳays can be considered the most famous ruler of the Lakhmid Kingdom, known for bequeathing an equally famous epitaph called the Namāra inscription[23].

The Kingdom reached the peak of its power during the reign of Al-Mundir III (505/512–554). In the Byzantine sources the ruler appears under the name of Alamundaros. According to Arab historians, he remained in power for more

[22] G. Rothstein, *Die Dynastie der Lahmiden in al-Hîra: Ein Versuch zur arabisch-persischen Geschichte zur Zeit der Sasaniden*, Berlin 1899; I. Shahîd, *Lakhmids*, [in:] *EI*, vol. V, pp. 632–634; I. Shahîd, A.L.F. Beeston, *al-Hîra* [in:] *EI*, vol. III, pp. 462–463; N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby u granic Vizantii i Irana v IV–VI vv.*, Moskva–Leningrad 1964, pp. 57–123; M.M. Dziekan, *Historia Iraku*, Warszawa 2007, pp. 27–32; J. Danecki, *Arabowie...*, pp. 58–60.

[23] See: J. Danecki, *Wstęp do dialektologii języka arabskiego*, Warszawa 1989, p. 17. For the translation of this monument into modern languages see: K. Versteegh, *The Arabic Language*, Edinburgh 2001, p. 31; N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby...*, p. 23.

than a decade, to be deposed by the Sassanid ruler Kavad II (498–531) for refusing to accept Persian religion, Mazdaism. When Khusraw I (531–579), also known as Anushirvan, rose to power in Persia, Al-Mundhir managed to regain his position. One of the most belligerent rulers of Al-Ḥīra, his last advance to the west was stopped by the Ghassānids[24]. Al-Mundhir III was killed in the battle, referred to in the sources as the Halim's day. What is meant by the term is probably the battle of Ḳinnasrīn in 554. Al-Nuʿmān Ibn al-Mundhir was the last representative of the Lakhmid dynasty. He was executed by Persians in Ctesiphon in 602. The Lakhmid Kingdom lost its autonomy, and until the Arab-Muslim invasion in 633, was governed by the Persian viceroy.

According to medieval accounts, Al-Ḥīra was an important centre of science and education, including Christian one. Its royal castle played an important role in the development of pre-Muslim Arab culture, especially poetry.

3.4. The Ghassānids

The Ghassānids came from southern Arabia[25]. Around the sixth century, they adopted the Monophysite version of Christianity and established, under the Byzantine protection, a buffer state with the capital in Al-Djābiya. The Ghassānids assisted the Byzantines in their fight against Persia, which, in turn, was supported by the Lakhmids[26]. The state reached the height of its power in

[24] More on Al-Mundhir's raids on Byzantine territories can be found in the chapter *Difficult Neighbours. Enemies, Partners, Allies*, written by Teresa Wolińska.

[25] There exists huge literature on the Ghassānids; here I am going to give only a selection of the most important titles: Th. N ö l d e k e, *Ghassanischen Fürsten aus dem Hause Gafna's*, Berlin 1887; J. S a u v e g e t, *Les Ghassanides et Sergiopolis*, B 14, 1939, pp. 115–130; I. K a w a r (S h a h î d), *Procopius on the Ghassanids*, JAOS 777.2, 1957, pp. 79–87; N.V. P i g u l e v s k a j a, *Araby*..., pp. 180–214; I. S h a h î d, *Ghassan*, [in:] *EI*, vol. II, pp. 1020–1021; i d e m, *Ghāssanid and Umayyad Structures: a Case of Byzance après Byzance*, [in:] *La Syrie de Byzance a l'islam VII^e–VIII^e siècles. Actes du Colloque International. Lyon–Maison de l'Orient Mediterranéen, Paris–Institut du monde Arabe. 11–15 IX 1990*, eds. P. C a n i v e t, J.-P. R e y - C o q u a i s, Damas 1992, pp. 299–308; i d e m, *The Restoration of the Ghassanid Dynasty, AD 587: Dionysius of Tell-Mahre*, ARAM 5, 1993, pp. 491–503; i d e m, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, vol. I/I, *Political and Military History*, Washington 1995; vol. I/II, *Ecclesiastical History*, Washington 1995; vol. II/I, *Toponymy, Monuments, Historical Geography and Frontier Studies*, Washington 2002; vol. II/II, *Economic, Social and Cultural History*, Washington 1995, *passim*; J. D a n e c k i, *Arabowie*..., pp. 55–58; G. F i s h e r, *The Political Development of the Ghassan between Rome and Iran*, JLA 1.2, 2008, pp. 311–334.

[26] Much more on that can be found in the chapter *Difficult Neighbours. Enemies, Partners, Allies* by Teresa Wolińska, later in this volume.

the mid-sixth century, during the reign of Al-Ḥarīth (Arethas) (he died in 569). At the end of his life Al-Ḥarīth was elevated to the status of Patricius. In addition, Emperor Justinian conferred on him the title of Phylarch. That period was one in which the Ghassānids significantly extended their territory and set out to fight against the Lakhmids, Persia's vassals. Al-Mundhir (569–581), Al-Ḥarīth' son and successor, burned their capital, Al-Ḥīra. Accused of betraying Byzantium, he was banished to Sicily, just like his son, An-Numan. After the latter's death, the kingdom collapsed. Emperor Heraclius' later attempts to restore it were of no avail. The final blow to their state was dealt by the Muslims, by whom the Ghassānids were defeated in the battle of Yarmūk in 636. Although the tribe fell under the Arab domination, it did not accept the new religion. Even today there are Christian families in the Middle East that claim to be descended from the Ghassānids.

The castle at Al-Djābiya was an important centre of the old Arab culture and literature. It rivalled with Al-Ḥīra. The Ghassānid civilization remained under the influence of both Byzantium and Persia. In the Middle Ages, as well as in the periods that followed that long epoch, Arab historians marvelled at the Ghassānid culture. However, today there is almost nothing left of its splendour. Because the Arab civilization in the early Umayyad era remained so much indebted to the Ghassānids, some scholars tend to credit them with creating many monuments from that era. It is known that they made a significant contribution to the urbanization of Syria in the sixth century, being, as Christians, particularly active building cult edifices.

3.5. Central Arabia

The era known by historians as *Djāhiliyya* proved highly significant in the history of central Arabia. This Arab term, which denotes the state of ignorance, is translated in a variety of ways: sometimes it is used to denote sheer folly, while on other occasions it is taken to designate the era in which the Arabs lacked the idea of One God (although in reality, in the area under discussion, as early as the first century there already existed centres of Judaism and, a little later, Christianity)[27]. *Djāhiliyya* covers the period from around 500 BC to Muḥammad's migration from Mecca to Medina in 632. No higher forms of statehood were found at that time in central Arabia. The "kingdom" of the Kin-

[27] G. J a c o b, *Altarabisches Beduinenleben nach den Quellen geschildert*, Berlin 1897; M.M. D z i e k a n, *Arabia Magica. Wiedza tajemna u Arabów przed islamem*, Warszawa 1993.

da tribe bore only a passing resemblance to a state (its chief bore a title *malik*, that is, a king). Existing in the first half of the sixth century, it was nothing but a confederation of different tribes. The use of the term *malik* was here quite extraordinary, as the Arabs usually reserved it for foreign rulers only. As Philip Hitti writes:

> Kindah's rise is interesting not only in itself but as the first attempt in inner Arabia to unite a number of tribes around the central authority of one common chief. As such the experiment established a precedent for Al-Ḥidjāz and Muḥammad.[28]

The political system that existed in central Arabia was based on blood bonds and on a sense of tribal solidarity (*ʿaṣabiyya*)[29]. Chiefs of particular tribes, along with those on whose assistance they relied – tribal poets and religious servants, occupied the dominant role in the old Arab communities. The rhythm of the life of pre-Muslim Arabia was marked by the succession of wars and battles waged between different tribes and clans. The memory of these struggles has survived in the accounts called *ayyām al-ʿArab* ("days of the Arabs") written long after the events to which they refer. The most famous among them are probably the Basūs war and the war of Dāḥis and Ghabra. A mixture of fact and fiction, these accounts can only be relied on to a limited extent for the reconstruction of historical events. Nevertheless, they reflect the way of life of typical tribal communities inhabiting Al-Ḥidjāz and the lands it bordered[30]. The rivalry between beduins and the settled population formed one of the axes of the these conflicts. At that time there were several city centres in central Arabia. Besides Mecca, there were Yathrib, Khaybar, Taymāʿ or Taʿizz. The city-states and the whole of *Bilād al-ʿArab* functioned in a way that was tinged with tribalism – political centres were dominated by various tribes. In Mecca the dominant position was held by the Ḳuraysh, while in Medina power was dispersed between some Jewish families and two Arab clans: al-Aws and al-Khazradj, which often provoked conflict. By the time under consideration, Mecca had already risen to the position of the main centre of the old Arab polytheistic religion. It was also a home at the temple Al-Kaʿba, recognized later as

[28] Ph.K. H i t t i, *Dzieje Arabów*..., p. 74 [=London 1970, p. 86].

[29] J. Z d a n o w s k i, *Znaczenie kategorii ʿaṣabiyya. Uwagi do polemiki wokół teorii władzy Ibn Chalduna*, [in:] *Z Mekki do Poznania. Materiały 5. Ogólnopolskiej Konferencji Arabistycznej, Poznań, 9–10 VI 1997 r.*, ed. H. J a n k o w s k i, Poznań 1998, pp. 285–290; F. G a b r i e l i, *ʿAṣabiyya*, [in:] *EI*, vol. I, p. 681.

[30] E. M e y e r, *Der historische Gehalt der Aiyām al-ʿArab*, Wiesbaden 1970; M.M. D z i e k a n, *Dni Arabów (Ajjam al-Arab): między historią a legendą*, RTNW 66, 2003, pp. 183–187.

Islam's spiritual centre. Apart from playing an important role in the religious life of the tribes that inhabited the "Island of the Arabs", Mecca also served as an important trade centre. The city is sometimes referred to as the "Republic of Merchants" by Orientalists.

Pre-Muslim inhabitants of central Arabia were the followers of polytheistic cults. Hubal, worshiped in Mecca, and three goddesses: Al-Lāt, Manāt and Al-'Uzzā were among their most important deities. Mecca – the city where one could find the statues of all gods recognised by Bedouines across the whole *Djazīrat al-Arab* – established itself as a religious and pilgrimage centre of the Arabian Peninsula[31].

The first followers of Moses appeared in the Arabian Peninsula in the first century. They arrived there in two migration waves: following the destruction of Solomon's Temple in 70, and after the Bar Kokhba revolt in 132. Yathrib rose to the position of the most important centre of Judaism. Jews were also concentrated in Khaybar and Taymā'. Forming typical urban communities, they rarely lived among nomads, and speaking Arabic, they did not differ much from the Arabs[32].

Christians, in trying to escape religious persecution elsewhere, arrived in the Peninsula some time later. The Christians were mainly Monophysites who fled the Roman Empire following the condemnation of Eutyches at the Council of Ephesus in 431. Christianity found its followers mainly among the nomadic population. It was spread by traveling monks who preached their sermons at various fairs which, besides their economic function, played a significant role in the religious and cultural life of the Arab's land. Jews and Christians were willing to migrate to the Peninsula because of the isolation of its desert interior from external forces. This isolation made them feel relatively safe, as did the wide measure of tolerance for their religious beliefs that they enjoyed there[33]. There also existed a group of monotheists who identified themselves with neither Judaism nor Christianity. We have only some general knowledge of their doctrine[34].

The people of central Arabia did not leave behind any spectacular monuments of material life. However, the future Arab-Muslim culture drew a lot on some of its spiritual achievements. The old Arab poetry can serve as a good example. Classic Arabic, the language of the Koran, and the old-Muslim literature in general are much indebted to this poetry.

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[31] M.M. Dziekan, *Dzieje kultury...*, pp. 98–109.

[32] J.W. Hirschberg, *Jüdische und christliche Lehren im vor- und frühislamischen Arabien*, Kraków 1939.

[33] K. Kościelniak, *XX wieków chrześcijaństwa w kulturze arabskiej*, vol. I, *Arabia starożytna. Chrześcijaństwo w Arabii do Mahometa (†632)*, Kraków 2000.

[34] Sh. Kitab, *Rozwój koncepcji Boga w kulturze arabskiej przed islamem*, Toruń 2006.

Legal customs and beliefs of the tribal communities of central Arabia had a great impact on Islam – whether it is understood in purely religious or in socio-legal terms. In this respect central Arabia far surpassed both the southern and northern parts of the Peninsula which always remained on the margin of the history of the Arab world.

The discussion of Al-Ḥidjāz's political history in the sixth century has to take into account the so-called Year of the Elephant – 570 or 571[35]. Abraha, the viceroy of Aksum (the present Ethiopia) and the ruler of Yemen, launched a punitive expedition against Medina. In spite of the use of elephants, the expedition ended in failure. The Medinans won a victory to which some references are made in the Koran. Mysterious birds called *Abābil* pelted the invaders with stones. Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd Allāh, the future Prophet of the Muslim religion, was born in the Year of the Elephant. Muḥammad's actions, replete with new ideas, put an end to the ancient Arab era. His migration from Mecca to Medina in 622 is considered as a symbol of the end of pagan times. Then, the Arabs found themselves into the mainstream of the world history, building a civilization that has turned out to have a significant impact on our world.

3.6. Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd Allāh and the Birth of Islam

Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd Allāh, was born in Mecca about 570, in the so-called Year of the Elephant[36]. About 610 he received his first revelation of the Ḳur'ān. Initially, he treated his visions as an impulse to reform Judaism and Christianity rather than a new religion. With time, however, as neither Jews nor Christians were willing to accept the changes he proposed (initially, his views led him into a conflict with the Jews), he began to think of an entirely new religion – Islam.

[35] D. Madeyska, *Historia....*, p. 70.

[36] For more on the beginnings of Islam in Polish language see: I. Hrbek, K. Petraček, *Mahomet*, transl. G. Łatuszyński, A. Mrozek, Warszawa 1971; J. Nosowski, *Przepisy prawne Koranu. Wykład systematyczny*, Warszawa 1971; idem, *Teologia Koranu. Wykład systematyczny*, Warszawa 1971; J. Bielawski, *Islam, religia państwa i prawa*, Warszawa 1973; idem, *Islam*, Warszawa 1980; M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu*, transl.H. Olędzka, Warszawa 1988; R. Piwiński, *Mitologia Arabów*, Warszawa 1989; M. Rodinson, *Mahomet*, transl. E. Michalska-Novak, Warszawa 1991; H. Abdalati, *Spojrzenie w islam*, Białystok 1993; A.-M. Delcambre, *Mahomet. Głos Allaha*, transl. J. Łukaszewicz, Wrocław 1996; F. Robinson, *Świat islamu*, Warszawa 1996; K. Kościelniak, *Tematyczna konkordancja do Koranu*, Kraków 2006; J. Danecki, *Podstawowe wiadomości o islamie*, Warszawa 2007.

He found few followers among the inhabitants of Mecca. His main opponents comprised the representatives of Meccan aristocracy, from whom he himself descended. The new monotheistic religion was a direct threat to the interests of the Ḳuraysh – the leading tribe of the city that derived huge profits from supporting the movement of pilgrims to Al-Kaʿba. Egalitarian ideas found in the Muslim revelation, too, may have been regarded as jeopardizing the existing order. Muḥammad's followers were persecuted and isolated from the city's social and economic life. The poor formed the core of the new religious community. It was this difficult situation that led Muslims to migrate to Abyssinia (the First Hidjra)[37].

Around 620, following his attempt to find allies in a number of cities of Al-Ḥidjāz, Muḥammad succeeded in reaching an agreement with the inhabitants of Yathrib (later Medina), where there existed a numerous Jewish community (the tribes of Banū Ḳaynuḳāʿ, Banū Naḍīr, and Banū Ḳurayẓa) and where he went in 622, accompanied by a group of his followers. This was the so-called Hidjra, that is, emigration or hiking (the term was never meant to convey the meaning of "escape")[38]. That year marked the beginning of the Muslim era. Islam's first political document, the so-called *Medina Constitution*[39] is also dated to that year. The document laid down the principles to be followed by various religious communities inhabiting one city-state.

In Mecca, Muḥammad was above all an inspired prophet: the first revelations he experienced concerned mainly eschatological and moral matters. In Medina the situation changed. The city became the capital first of a commune and then of a state organized under Muḥammad's leadership and based on the doctrine of Islam. It was ruled by God himself, with Muḥammad serving only as the Messenger of His will.

The Medina period was was the time of a fight against Mecca. The Prophet wanded to defeat the city from which he came and to which he planned to return, especially that it had the status of the spiritual centre of his religion. The Muslims' first victory over the Meccans came in the battle of Badr in 624. The second military encounter took place a year later at Uḥud. This time the Muslims were defeated. The expulsion of the Jewish tribe Banū Naḍīr from Medina was one of the consequences of the defeat. In 627, the Muslims wiped out Banū Ḳurayẓa's clan, suspected of treason during the siege of Medina by the Meccans. The siege

[37] M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, pp. 68–69.

[38] For comparison see: E.W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. VIII, Beirut 1968, pp. 2879–2881. For a detailed analysis of Islamic Hidjra see: M. Mendel, *Hidžra. Náboženská emigrace v dějinách islámských zemí*, Praha 2006.

[39] J. Danecki, *Konstytucja Medyneńska*, PR 1, 1993, pp. 37–45.

came to be called the Battle of the Trench. In 628 Muḥammad made his first pilgrimage to Mecca. On his way, in Al-Ḥudaybiyya, he signed a treaty with the Meccans. It stipulated that the Muslims could make a pilgrimage to Al-Kaʿba. In 630 the Prophet again went to Mecca where he destroyed the statues of pre-Muslim deities. This meant Muḥammad's definitive victory over the Ḳuraysh tribe. Towards the end of his life, (he died in 632) the whole Peninsula was united under the banner of the new religion.

This unification should not be treated as tantamount to the actual islamization of the Peninsula and its inhabitants. The situation that crystallised in that period is best described with reference to the principle known in Europe as *cuius regio, eius religio*. Tribal leaders swore an oath of allegiance to Muḥammad and all the remaining members of their tribes followed in their wake, thus accepting the new religion. This is how that quasi-state was brought into existence. After the Prophet's death, it was called the Caliphate. From 661 onwards Medina was its capital. However, the process of islamization proper was only beginning, to be continued for many centuries to come. The unification of the tribes that adopted Islam and recognized Muḥammad's supremacy unfolded along similar lines. Their unity was based mainly on the Prophet's charisma, which his first successors, having to struggle with centrifugal forces within the movement, learned only too well. The strength of this "state" depended on the authority of subsequent caliphs. Islam aimed to eliminate tribal particularisms. However, all it managed to do was to cover them over, so that even in the world of today their role still remains quite significant.

After the Prophet's death, there began the process of the rapid expansion of Islam, which, it seems, was driven as much by religious factors as it was by economic ones. The term "conquests" is crucial here. In Muslim historiography its meaning is conveyed by the word *fūtuḥ*. I analyzed it elsewhere in the following way:

> the term is most often translated as "conquests", which at once suggests the way of interpreting the events to which it is supposed to refer. In Arabic the word *fatḥ* (pl. *fūtuḥ*) has nothing to do with a "combat" or "battle" with which we often link the word "conquest". *Fatḥ* literally means "opening". The term points to a philosophy that underlies the spread of Islam. After all, language only reflects thoughts and intentions that come to the fore in a specific situation. The term *fatḥ* is an abbreviation for *iftitāḥ dar al ḥarb* which means "opening the gates of war" and is strictly connected with the division of the world, introduced by the Muslim law, into *dār al-islam* and *dār al-ḥarb*. Another meaning of the word *fatḥ* is "victory" (*naṣr*) and "arbitrating between two opponents". The Ḳur'ān's first Sūra also derives its name from the same root *The Opening* (*Sūra al-Fātiḥah*). So, it carries connotations quite different from those invoked by the word "conquest". In explaining the term *fūtuḥ*, Bernard Lewis claims that it is not to be understood as the acquisition of new territories, but, rather, as the overthrow of infidel regimes and unjustified hierarchies. It was meant to

> convey the meaning of "opening people to the new revelation". As Lewis emphasizes, its meaning was not analogous to our "liberation". Sometimes in early Muslim works, there appears a term *ghalaba*, which literally means "to defeat" and which can thus be understood to carry a connotation connected with violence. However, it pertains only to individual armed clashes.[40]

The *Fūtuḥ* was of course one of the aspects of the *Djihād* whose complex connotations were changing depending on the political situation and religious views of the lawyer or theologian who was expressing his opinion on a given matter.

In the period discussed in this book, the Muslim law (*sharī'a*) was only beginning to shape. However, the merge of social, economic and political issues typified Islam from the very outset. After all, the life of Muḥammad left its mark on various aspects of the history of the Peninsula. Historical controversy surrounding the problem of which of these factors was most important in the process of forming the Caliphate will probably remain unresolved. The issues of economic history did not attract the interest of Arab chroniclers and historians of the classical period, as did the everyday life of the lover classes of the population. In trying to shed some light on these issues scholars have to rely on deduction and consequently all the knowledge we have is necessarily hypothetical. Muslim writers whose works are apologetic about *umma*, the Muslim community, stress the religious aspect of the expansion in question. However, many facts point to economic causes of the conquest[41]. It was not always necessary for the conquered people to convert to Islam. What is more, the acceptance of Islam by Christians or Jews resulted in a decrease of the state's income – the *djizya* (a tax levied on non-Muslim subjects) which was higher than the Muslim *zakat*. The People of the Book were supposed to be treated with tolerance, and in the context of the Muslim law, this tolerance was unambiguously connected with their subjugation.



[40] M.M. D z i e k a n, *Dzieje kultury arabskiej...*, pp. 178–179.

[41] Different aspects of this process are discussed by: H. K e n n e d y, *Wielkie arabskie podboje. Jak ekspansja islamu zmieniła świat*, transl. M. W i l k, Warszawa 2011, pp. 39–64.

Zofia A. Brzozowska

4. The Goddesses of Pre-Islamic Arabia (Al-Lāt, Al-'Uzzā, Manāt)

Prior to the advent of Islam the Arabs inhabiting the area of Al-Ḥidjāz and the territories that fell under the influence of Greco-Roman civilization (Nabatea, Palmyra) lived in a world replete with polytheistic religious systems, as was repeatedly mentioned in the previous chapter. Some scholars are of the opinion that the three goddesses: Al-Lāt, Al-'Uzzā and Manāt, whose cult reached back to the ancient times, occupied a particularly prominent place in the pre-Muslim pantheon[1].

The name of the first of these goddesses appears already in the work by Herodotus, written in the fifth century BC. In describing religious beliefs of the Persians, the father of history points to the Assyrians and the Arabs as those from whom the Persians adopted the cult of Aphrodite Urania. Enumerating various names given to the goddess by different ethnic groups, the Greek historian says that the Arabs called her Alilat (Ἀλιλάτ)[2]. He refers to her again when giving an account of the legation which shah Cambyses sent to an Arab ruler, laying

[1] T. Fahd, *Le Panthéon de l'Arabie Centrale a la veille de l'hégire*, Paris 1968, p. 111; Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów*, transl. W. Dembski, M. Skuratowicz, E. Szymański, Warszawa 1969, pp. 85–86; M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu*, transl. H. Olędzka, Warszawa 1988, pp. 17, 18, 36–38; R. Piwiński, *Mitologia Arabów*, Warszawa 1989, p. 33; M. Rodinson, *Mahomet*, transl. E. Michalska-Novák, Warszawa 1994, p. 21; G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam. From Polemic to History*, Cambridge 1999, p. 130; J. Danecki, *Arabowie*, Warszawa 2001, pp. 46, 69; Sh. Kitab, *Rozwój koncepcji Boga w kulturze arabskiej przed islamem*, Toruń 2002, p. 89; V. Christides, *Religious Syncretism in the Near East: Allāt-Athena in Palmyra*, CChO 1, 2003, p. 70; Z. Krzak, *Od matriarchatu do patriarchatu*, Warszawa 2007, pp. 360–363; M.M. Dziekan, *Dzieje kultury arabskiej*, Warszawa 2008, p. 100.

[2] Herodotus, I, 131, pp. 77–78.

emphasis on the fact that there are only two gods worshipped by the Arabs: Dionysus and Urania – the latter known by the Arabic name Alilat. Interestingly, in this part of his *History*, Herodotus offers a description of the custom to be found in a number of later texts that originated in the area under discussion, including those created in the Muslim period: the conclusion of an alliance by the Arabs is usually accompanied by the oath sworn on the names of their deities[3].

Certainly, Herodotus' account shaped the way in which the Arab religious beliefs were perceived in the Greco-Roman world. As we shall see, it became customary for both ancient and Byzantine authors to equate the goddess Al-Lāt (and later also Al-'Uzzā) with Aphrodite Urania who in turn was identified with the Morning Star, that is, the planet Venus. In addition, some sources contain fragments that betray a stylistic similarity to the passage found in the third book of Herodotus' *History*, mentioned above. For example, in the *Campaigns of Alexander*, Flavius Arrianus, the Greek historian living at the turn of the first and second centuries, remarks that, according to some rumours, the Arabs worship only two gods: Uranus (that is, the sky, in Greek τὸν Οὐρανὸν) and Dionysus[4]. Similar to this is the opinion expressed by Origen in the third century – in a polemical text *Against Celsus*. Indicating Herodotus as a source of his information, Origen repeatedly emphasizes the fact that there are only two gods in the Arab pantheon: Urania and Dionysus. He also adds that the Arabs attach particular significance to the gender of the venerated beings. In the religious imagination of this ethnos Urania is given an unequivocally female identity, whereas the male identity is always reserved for Dionysus[5].

According to many scholars, the Arab religious cults described by Herodotus and his continuators were particularly popular with the Arabs inhabiting the lands of Nabatea – the state that existed from the fourth century BC to the first century CE[6]. Archeological excavations conducted in this area prove that Al-Lāt and Al-'Uzzā, along with the god Dūshara, topped the Nabatean pantheon[7]. However, within the religious system under consideration the fig-

[3] Herodotus, III, 8, p. 232.

[4] Arrian, VIII, 20, p. 319.

[5] Origen, V, 34, 37–38, col. 1233, 1237, 1240.

[6] R. Dussaud, *La pénétration des Arabes en Syrie avant l'islam*, Paris 1955, pp. 45–46; Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 64; H. Petersmann, *Le Culte du Soleil chez les Arabes selon les témoignages gréco-romains*, [in:] *L'Arabie préislamique et son environnement historique et culturel. Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg. 24–27 juin 1987*, ed. T. Fahd, Strasbourg 1989, pp. 402–405; G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, p. 141; V. Christides, *Religious Syncretism...*, p. 70; J. Danecki, *Arabowie...*, p. 46; I.Š. Šifman, *Nabatejskoe gosudarstvo i ego kul'tura*, Sankt-Peterburg 2007, pp. 89, 113–114.

[7] R. Dussaud, *La pénétration...*, p. 44–46; Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 64; D.F. Graf, *Rome and the Saracens: Reassessing the Nomadic Menace*, [in:] *L'Arabie préisla-*

ures of both goddesses are tied up with one another to so great an extent that scholars are often uncertain whether to regard them as constituting two separate deities or to treat them as representing two different variants of one being[8]. This of course only adds to the difficulty one encounters in attempting to analyze the religious beliefs dealt with here.

The name of Al-Lāt ("goddess" in Arabic) appears already in Safaitic inscriptions. The texts of this kind usually contain requests for different favours such as travel support or protection against threats from abroad. For example, the author of the graffito, dated to the 40s of the first century CE and found in the territory of northern Jordan, turns to a deity with a plea for help during the invasion of the Persians[9]. There survives one inscription that appears to be of particular relevance to our topic. Written in Aramaic, it was brought into being in the reign of King Rabel II Soter, the last king of Nabatea. In it, Al-Lāt is referred to by an honorable name "mother of gods". This, according to some scholars, should be treated as a reminiscence of the cult of Ugaritic goddess Elat, which can be traced back to the second millennium BC[10].

It is not without significance that this inscription was discovered in Ṣalākhed in the Ḥawrān region (southern Syria), which was Nabatea's most important cult centre of Al-Lāt. Archeological research suggests that a temple dedicated to this goddess existed there as early as the first century BC. In 56 CE the temple underwent a significant reconstruction, assuming its final form just a few years before

mique..., p. 378; J. Danecki, *Arabowie...*, p. 46; W. Machowski, *Petra*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 2007, p. 153.

[8] S. Bowers Peterson, *The Cult of Dushara and the Roman Annexation of Nabataea*, Hamilton 2006, p. 18.

[9] R. Dussaud, *La pénétration...*, pp. 143–145; R. Piwiński, *Mitologia...*, p. 38; R. Schick, *Jordan on the Eve of the Muslim Conquest AD 602–634*, [in:] *La Syrie de Byzance a l'islam VII^e–VIII^e siècles. Actes du Colloque international Lyon – Maison de l'Orient Méditerranéen, Paris – Institut du Monde Arabe. 11–15 Septembre 1990*, eds. P. Canivet, J.-P. Rey-Coquais, Damas 1992, p. 109; R.G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs. From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*, London–New York 2002, p. 207; V. Christides, *Religious Syncretism...*, p. 70; S. Bowers Peterson, *The Cult of Dushara...*, p. 18; P.J. Alpass, *The Religious Life of Nabataea*, Durham 2011, p. 235.

[10] The issues of the inscription has been dealt with by the following scholars: T. Fahd, *Le Panthéon...*, p. 119; F.O. Hvidberg-Hansen, *Uni-Ashtarte and Tanit-Iuno Caelestis. Two Phoenician Goddesses of Fertility Reconsidered from Recent Archaeological Discoveries*, [in:] *Archaeology and Fertility Cult in the Ancient Mediterranean*, ed. A. Bonanno, Msida 1986, p. 176; K. Dijkstra, *Life & Loyalty. A Study in the Socio-Religious Culture of Syria & Mesopotamia in the Graeco-Roman Period Based on Epigraphical Evidence*, Leiden–New York–Köln 1995, p. 313; J. Danecki, *Arabowie...*, p. 46; S. Bowers Peterson, *The Cult of Dushara...*, p. 20; I.Š. Šifman, *Nabatejskoe gosudarstvo...*, p. 113.

Nabatea lost its political independence in 95. Interestingly, there survives a foundation inscription from 56, containing information that the shrine of Al-Lāt, *a goddess that is in Ṣalākhed*, was rebuilt in the seventeenth year of King Malichus II's reign (40–70). Epigraphic sources justify the opinion that priests to whose care the temple was entrusted came from one family – Rowaḥu[11].

Bostra also served as an important cult centre of the deity, as did Iram – known today as Wādī Ramm. Located north-east of the Aqaba port, Wādī Ramm is part of today's Jordan. In several inscriptions discovered in Iram, Al-Lāt is described as *a goddess that is in Bostra* and *a great goddess that is in Iram*. Wādī Ramm probably had a temple erected in Al-Lāt's honour. That this was the case is suggested by the epigraphic material containing references to Al-Lāt priests and discovered in the territory of the old Iram[12]. A sanctuary dedicated to this deity must have also been erected in the nearby Djabal Ram (Djabal Ramm/ Djabal Rām)[13].

The cult of the goddess did not cease to exist after Nabatea fell under the Roman rule in 106, but by assimilating elements typical of the ancient religion it acquired a new dimension. Al-Lāt began to be equated with Athena, as is evidenced by a basalt stele representing the goddess, which was discovered in Sharaba, not far from Bostra (Fig. 1). Dated to the second century CE, the stele shows Al-Lāt standing, with a spear in the right hand and a small shield in the left. Attired in Greek robes, the goddess is wearing a helmet and breastplate[14].

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[11] R. Dussaud, *La pénétration...*, p. 46; D.F. Graf, *Rome and the Saracens...*, p. 364; R.G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs...*, p. 161; S. Bowers Peterson, *The Cult of Dushara...*, pp. 19–20; I.Š. Šifman, *Nabatejskoe gosudarstvo...*, p. 114; W. Machowski, *Petra...*, pp. 154–155; P.J. Alpass, *The Religious Life...*, pp. 233–235.

[12] S. Bowers Peterson, *The Cult of Dushara...*, pp. 18–19; I.Š. Šifman, *Nabatejskoe gosudarstvo...*, pp. 114–115; W. Machowski, *Petra...*, pp. 146, 154; M.M. Dziekan, *Dzieje...*, p. 69; B. de Vries, *Between the Cults of Syria and Arabia: Traces of Pagan Religion at Umm al-Jimāl*, StHAJ 10, 2009, p. 180; P.J. Alpass, *The Religious Life...*, pp. 125, 165, 171, 232, 233; H. Al Fassi, *Kamkam the Nabataean Priestess: Priesthood and Society in Ancient Arabia*, [in:] *From Ugarit to Nabataea. Studies in Honor of John F. Healey*, eds. G.A. Kiraz, Z. Al-Salameen, Piscataway 2012, pp. 4, 8.

[13] J.A. Bellamy, *Two Pre-Islamic Arabic Inscriptions Revised: Jabal Ramm and Umm Al-Jimāl*, JAOS 108, 1988, p. 370.

[14] A.G. Lundin, M.B. Piotrovskij, I.Š. Šifman, *Allat*, [in:] *Mify narodov mira. Ènciklopedija*, ed. S.A. Tokarev, vol. I, Moskva 1987, p. 61; J. Danecki, *Arabowie...*, p. 46; R.G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs...*, p. 187; V. Christides, *Religious Syncretism...*, p. 73; S. Bowers Peterson, *The Cult of Dushara...*, p. 18; I.Š. Šifman, *Nabatejskoe gosudarstvo...*, p. 114; W. Machowski, *Petra...*, p. 154; M.M. Dziekan, *Dzieje...*, p. 69. It is likely that after 106 there began to spread in Nabatea the cult of Athena Minerva. The cult was independent from local beliefs. M. Gawlikowski, *Sztuka Syrii*, Warszawa 1976, pp. 200–202; V. Christides, *Religious Syncretism...*, p. 73.



Fig. 1. Al-Lāt. Bass-relief from the second century CE. Sharaba, Ḥawrān
(all copies in this chapter by Elżbieta Myślińska-Brzozowska)

Excavation proves the existence of the cult of Al-Lāt in Hegra (Madā'in Ṣāliḥ) in the south of the Nabatean kingdom. A baetyl found in this city contains an image of the enthroned goddess. However, one may find oneself puzzled by the lack of any traces of the deity being worshipped in Petra[15].

The reason for the absence of the cult in Nabatea's capital can be found in the fact that the city served as an important centre of another female old Arabian deity: Al-'Uzzā[16]. Her name, which means "great" or "powerful"[17], already appears in Lihianic inscriptions from the fourth and third centuries BC[18]. Dedicated to this goddess was, according to some scholars, the Temple of the Winged Lions, erected in Petra around 28 CE[19]. In the area under discussion Al-'Uzzā

[15] I.Š. Šifman, *Nabatejskoe gosudarstvo...*, pp. 114, 126; W. Machowski, *Petra...*, pp. 154–155; P.J. Alpass, *The Religious Life...*, p. 171.

[16] J. Danecki, *Arabowie...*, p. 46; R.G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs...*, p. 142; S. Bowers Peterson, *The Cult of Dushara...*, p. 20; I.Š. Šifman, *Nabatejskoe gosudarstvo...*, p. 124.

[17] A.G. Lundin, *Uzza*, [in:] *Mify narodov mira. Ènciklopedija*, ed. S.A. Tokarev, vol. II, Moskva 1992, p. 545; S. Bowers Peterson, *The Cult of Dushara...*, p. 20; I.Š. Šifman, *Nabatejskoe gosudarstvo...*, p. 124.

[18] T. Fahd, *Le Panthéon...*, p. 163; S. Bowers Peterson, *The Cult of Dushara...*, p. 20.

[19] F. Bourbon, *Petra. Sztuka i historia. Przewodnik po stolicy Nabatejczyków*, transl. B. Mierzejewska, Warszawa 2001, pp. 78–79; W. Machowski, *Petra...*, pp. 78, 155; P.J. Alpass, *The Religious Life...*, pp. 71, 76–78.

was regarded as Dūshara's wife. Even the cuboidal stele discovered in this temple is sometimes thought of as representing the image of Al-'Uzzā. Carved in it are pair of eyes and a nose[20]. The cult of this deity in Nabatea's capital is attested to by a number of inscriptions and baetyls[21].

It is believed that the cult of Al-'Uzzā continued as Nabatea came under Roman rule, mainly in Ḥawrān, north of Petra[22]. A temple dedicated to this deity may have also been built in Bostra – a presumption supported by the inscription containing the phrase *Al-'Uzzā, Bostra's goddess*[23]. Two baetyls featuring Al-'Uzzā and Al-Kutbā and embellished with a pair of bas-relief eyes were found in Iram. The Nabateans considered Al-Kutbā to be a goddess of writing[24]. The first century stele depicting a quasi-anthropomorphic image of two divinities is another artifact discovered in the city of Iram. In the inscription seen on the stele, the two deities are referred to as *Al-'Uzzā and the Lord of the Household/Temple*[25]. An identical inscription was also found in the southern outskirts of the Nabatean kingdom – in the temple Djabal Ithlīb, in the region of Hegra[26].

Some of the inscriptions discovered in Sinai contain references to priests conducting religious services in Al-'Uzzā's honour[27], which clearly suggests that the goddess was worshipped there too. This view is also supported by Byzantine sources, which I shall analyze later.

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[20] W. Machowski, *Petra...*, p. 155; E. Almasri, F. Alawneh, F. Bala'awi, *Nabataean Jewellery and Accessories*, ANES 49, 2012, pp. 159, 175.

[21] For more on the epigraphic material see: R.G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs...*, p. 142, 185; S. Bowers Peterson, *The Cult of Dushara...*, p. 20; I.Š. Šifman, *Nabatejskoe gosudarstvo...*, p. 124; W. Machowski, *Petra...*, pp. 68, 70; P.J. Alpass, *The Religious Life...*, pp. 133–134. Al-'Uzzā may have also been worshiped in the temple Kasr El-Bint, dedicated to Dushara. F. Bourbon, *Petra...*, pp. 80–81; W. Machowski, *Petra...*, p. 83.

[22] J. Danecki, *Arabowie...*, p. 46; S. Bowers Peterson, *The Cult of Dushara...*, p. 21.

[23] The fragment of the inscription is quoted from: S. Bowers Peterson, *The Cult of Dushara...*, p. 21; I.Š. Šifman, *Nabatejskoe gosudarstvo...*, p. 124; B. de Vries, *Between the Cults...*, p. 180; P.J. Alpass, *The Religious Life...*, pp. 231–232.

[24] J.F. Healey, *The Religion of the Nabataeans*, Leiden–Boston–Köln 2000, p. 121; S. Bowers Peterson, *The Cult of Dushara...*, p. 21; I.Š. Šifman, *Nabatejskoe gosudarstvo...*, p. 123; M.M. Dziekan, *Dzieje...*, p. 69.

[25] V. Christides, *Religious Syncretism...*, p. 71; W. Machowski, *Petra...*, p. 155.

[26] Most probably it was Dūshara who was referred to as the Lord of the Household/Temple in both inscriptions. P.J. Alpass, *The Religious Life...*, p. 180.

[27] The issue of the Sinai inscriptions has been dealt with by the following scholars: T. Fahd, *Le Panthéon...*, p. 72; R.G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs...*, p. 159; I.Š. Šifman, *Nabatejskoe gosudarstvo...*, p. 124; W. Machowski, *Petra...*, p. 155; H. Al Fassi, *Kamkam...*, p. 4.



Fig. 2. The Nabatean earring. The figure standing in the middle is thought to be Al-'Uzzā

Unfortunately, little can be said of the way in which Al-'Uzzā was represented in the Nabatean art. Modern scholarship tells us that the goddess was usually shown as a naked woman, standing, and with raised hands. Such images, which draw on the ideas that formed something of a canon followed in representing ancient goddesses in the Middle East, can be seen on the Nabatean jewellery (Fig. 2)[28]. Some scholars are of the opinion that the bas-relief from the Khirbet et-Tannūr temple, dated to the first century, should be regarded as representing Al-'Uzzā's head (Fig. 3). It shows the goddess wearing a resplendent diadem featuring two figures of fishes or dolphins[29].

It is worth noting that some elements of the religious imagination of the Greco-Roman world were assimilated into the cult of both Arab goddesses – Al-'Uzzā and Al-Lāt. In Nabatea Al-'Uzzā was equated with Aphrodite, as is demonstrated, for example, by a bilingual inscription (Greek and Arabic) carved in a ring discovered on the island of Kos. This artifact is considered to be an import from Nabatea, since it contains information that it was made in the seventeenth year of the reign of the Nabatean king, Arethas IV, that is, in 9/10 CE. The Arabic part of the inscription mentions Al-'Uzzā as a goddess for whom the ring was made; whereas the Greek version of the text relates it to Aphrodite[30].

[28] E. Almasri, F. Alawneh, F. Bala'awi, *Nabataean Jewellery...*, pp. 153, 169.

[29] Some scholars believe that the bas-relief shows an image of the goddess Atargatis. N. Glueck, *A Newly Discovered Nabataean Temple of Atargatis and Hadad at Khirbet Et-Tannur, Transjordania*, AJA 41, 1937, p. 367; M. Gawlikowski, *Sztuka Syrii...*, p. 178; W. Machowski, *Petra...*, pp. 109, 145.

[30] V. Christides, *Religious Syncretism...*, p. 72; S. Bowers Peterson, *The Cult of Dushara...*, pp. 20–21; I.Š. Šifman, *Nabatejskoe gosudarstvo...*, p. 124; W. Machowski,



Fig. 3. The image of the goddess (Al-'Uzzā or Atargatis)
from the temple in Khirbet et-Tannūr, first century CE

Manāt is another deity worshipped in Nabatea. In Aramaic the name means fate, which indicates that the Arabs must have considered her to be a goddess of fortune and destiny[31]. Archeological research justifies the opinion that Hegra, located in the southern part of Nabatea, served as the kingdom's major centre of the cult in question. Some inscriptions prove that Manāt was considered, along with Dūshara, to be a guardian of graves[32].

To the discussion of the main goddesses of Nabatea one should add a few remarks on the religious system that existed in Palmyra. Archeological excavations conducted by Polish scholars lead to the conclusion that Al-Lāt was one of the most important deities in Palmyra's pantheon[33]. Her name appears in a great number of inscriptions discovered in this city[34]. A temple dedicated to this god-

Petra..., p. 155; P.J. Alpass, *The Religious Life...*, p. 81; E. Almasri, F. Alawneh, F. Bala'awi, *Nabataean Jewellery...*, p. 153.

[31] A.G. Lundin, *Manat*, [in:] *Mify narodov mira. Ènciklopedija*, ed. S.A. Tokarev, vol. II, Moskva 1992, p. 98; J. Danecki, *Arabowie...*, p. 46; I.Š. Šifman, *Nabatejskoe gosudarstvo...*, p. 124; M.M. Dziekan, *Dzieje...*, p. 69.

[32] T. Fahd, *Le Panthéon...*, p. 72; G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, p. 112; J. Danecki, *Arabowie...*, p. 46; R.G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs...*, pp. 126, 144, 209; S. Bowers Peterson, *The Cult of Dushara...*, p. 17; I.Š. Šifman, *Nabatejskoe gosudarstvo...*, pp. 123–124; W. Machowski, *Petra...*, pp. 155–156; H. Al Fassi, *Kamkam...*, p. 10.

[33] R. Dussaud, *La pénétration...*, p. 90; T. Fahd, *Le Panthéon...*, p. 111; R.G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs...*, p. 142; M.M. Dziekan, *Dzieje...*, p. 79; P.J. Alpass, *The Religious Life...*, p. 165.

[34] M. Gawlikowski, *Le temple palmyrénien. Etude d'épigraphie et de topographie historique*, Warszawa 1973, pp. 34, 38, 91–92, 97–98; R.G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs...*, p. 159; V. Christides, *Religious Syncretism...*, p. 75.

dess was erected in the first century BC. It was rebuilt several times with a view to adjusting its architectural design to the changes in the development of the urban area[35]. Michał Gawlikowski is of the opinion that the temple survived Roman interventions which took place in the third century CE, and it was not until the end of the fourth century that it finally fell into ruin[36].

Scholars dealing with this issue agree that Tadmur's inhabitants equated the deity in question with Athena Minerva[37]. Bearing witness to this phenomenon is a large marble statue of Athena Parthenos. Discovered in 1975 by Polish archeologists who were involved in the excavating of the area of the Al-Lāt temple in Palmyra, it bears a remarkable likeness to its famous original created by Phidias in the fifth century BC and placed on the Athenian Acropolis. The statue of Palmyra dates back to the middle of the second century CE and, according to some scholars, was brought to that city by Roman legionaries or by local soldiers who served in the Roman army[38].

It is also worth noting that the son of Palmyra's last ruler, Zenobia, appears in primary sources under the Arab name Vahballatus (Wahb Al-Lāt, which means a "gift of Al-Lāt") or under the Greek name Atenodor (a "gift of Athena", Αθηνόδωρος)[39].

That Al-Lāt was identified with Athena Minerva is confirmed by figurative representations produced in Palmyra in the period between the first and third centuries. A relief discovered in Khirbet es-Sané (Fig. 4) shows Al-Lāt equipped with all the attributes for which Pallada's iconography is known. The goddess is

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[35] K. Michałowski, *Palmyre. Fouilles polonaises 1960*, Warszawa 1962, pp. 41–47; A. Sadurska, *Palmyra – narzeczona pustyni. Dzieje i sztuka*, Warszawa 1968, p. 58; M. Gawlikowski, *Le temple palmyrénien...*, pp. 23, 87–88, 101–103; idem, *Sztuka Syrii...*, pp. 229, 235–237; R.G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs...*, p. 156; V. Christides, *Religious Syncretism...*, pp. 77; M. Gawlikowski, *Palmyra. Excavations in the Allat Sanctuary 2005–2006*, PAM 18, 2008, pp. 532–533; P.J. Alpass, *The Religious Life...*, p. 64.

[36] M. Gawlikowski, *Sztuka Syrii...*, pp. 229, 235–237; idem, *Palmyra...*, p. 533.

[37] R. Dussaud, *La pénétration...*, p. 90; T. Fahd, *Le Panthéon...*, p. 111; A.G. Lundin, M.B. Piotrovskij, I.Š. Šifman, *Allat...*, p. 61; V. Christides, *Religious Syncretism...*, p. 79; M.M. Dziekan, *Dzieje...*, pp. 79–80; J.P. Monferrer-Sala, *Anecdotae preislamicae. On Deities Χαρι and Ναζαία in a Greek Inscription and some Remarks on the Toponym Ḥumaymah*, LAn 58, 2008, pp. 444–445. Interestingly, in the Al-Lāt temple in Palmyra an inscription from the sixth century BC that equated this goddess with Arthemida was also discovered. V. Christides, *Religious Syncretism...*, p. 78.

[38] M. Gawlikowski, *Sztuka Syrii...*, p. 229; E. Will, *De la Syrie au Yemen: problèmes des relations dans le domaine de l'art*, [in:] *L'Arabie préislamique...*, p. 278; V. Christides, *Religious Syncretism...*, pp. 77–78; M.M. Dziekan, *Dzieje...*, p. 80.

[39] A. Sadurska, *Palmyra...*, p. 41; G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, p. 141; J. Danecki, *Arabowie...*, p. 50; V. Christides, *Religious Syncretism...*, p. 72.

clad in a chiton and a breastplate adorned with a Gorgon's head. She is wearing a helmet, holding a spear in the right hand and a shield in the left. Contrary to the canon of the Greco-Roman art, where Athena is usually shown in standing position, the figure of Al-Lāt created by a Palmyran artist is enthroned, flanked on both sides by lions. One cannot fail to see that the artist was influenced in his addition of the lions by religious ideas of the ancient Middle East. According to Vassilios Christides, these animal figures usually went hand in hand with the images of goddesses such as Mesopotamian Ishtar or Syrian Atargatis[40].



Fig. 4. The enthroned goddess Al-Lāt. The bass-relief from Khirbet es-Sané, Palmyra.

The way in which this goddess is shown on two reliefs from the second and third centuries conforms with the Greco-Roman tradition. The first one, from Khirbet Wādī Swane, dated to the middle of the second century (Fig. 5), features Al-Lāt accompanied by two other figures: a priest and Shamash, a male solar deity who, as some scholars suggest, topped the Palmyran pantheon. Al-Lāt, with whom we are concerned here, is presented in traditional Greek robes: over a chiton, fastened at the arms, there is thrown a long himation that falls down to the goddess' feet. She is wearing a helmet, and her breast is adorned with an image of Gorgon. The goddess appears to be standing quite motionless, wielding a spear in the right hand and supporting a large shield, which rests on the ground, with the left[41].

[40] R. D u s s a u d, *La pénétration...*, p. 103; M. G a w l i k o w s k i, *Le temple palmyrénien...*, tabl. 9; R. P i w i ń s k i, *Mitologia...*, p. 37; V. C h r i s t i d e s, *Religious Syncretism...*, pp. 74, 76.

[41] R. D u s s a u d, *La pénétration...*, p. 102; V. C h r i s t i d e s, *Religious Syncretism...*, p. 76.

The second relief which comes from the turn of the second and third centuries, now housed in a museum in Lyon, presents us with an almost analogous image of Al-Lāt. The two representations of the goddess in question differ from one another only in some details of dress. The "second" Al-Lāt is wearing only a chiton, fastened under her breast, and she has no medallion with Gorgon's head.



Fig. 5. The goddess Al-Lāt. The bass-relief
from Khirbet Wādī Swane, the middle of the second century CE

Vassilios Christides contends that there was one more canon of presenting the goddess Al-Lāt in Palmyran art, which existed parallel to the one described above. Inspired by the representations of Atargatis and Ishtar, it can be seen, for example, in a bas-relief stele, dated to the first century and discovered in Baal-shamin's temple in Palmyra (Fig. 6). Here one can see the goddess seated on the throne and dressed in an intricately draped robe, fastened with buckles. On her head, adorned with carefully pinned-up curls, there is a veil. In the left hand the goddess is holding a palm branch, while her right hand is raised in a blessing-like gesture. However, the viewer's attention is in the first place drawn to her adorable companion – a lion sitting at her knee[42].

Palmyra's inhabitants also worshipped Manāt whom they identified with the Greco-Roman deities of fortune and fate: Nemesis and Tyche[43]. The temple dedicated to this goddess existed in Tadmur from 89 CE. A stele with an image of the enthroned goddess and an inscription mentioning her name was also found[44].

[42] V. Christides, *Religious Syncretism...*, pp. 75, 79.

[43] R. Dussaud, *La pénétration...*, p. 90; T. Fahd, *Le Panthéon...*, p. 125; M. Gawlikowski, *Le temple palmyrénien...*, p. 86; A.G. Lundin, *Manat...*, p. 98.

[44] R. Dussaud, *La pénétration...*, p. 90; S. Bowers Peterson, *The Cult of Dushara...*, p. 17.

Worthy of mention here is the fact that, thanks to the intensive contacts which the inhabitants of Palmyra and Nabatea maintained with the Mediterranean world, the knowledge of old Arabian deities was often transferred to areas located far from Syria. For example, in 60 CE, a Latin inscription was made on a commission from a Palmyran living in Dacia. Yet the most mysterious is the stele discovered in Cordoba whose inscription contains a phrase *A Lady Athena Al-Lāt* (Κυρίᾳ Ἀθηνᾷ Ἀλλᾶθ). This artifact has been widely discussed by scholars. It is thought to have been made in the second or third centuries CE and brought to Baetica from Gaza by Arab merchants[45].



Fig. 6. The goddess Al-Lāt with a lion. The stele
from the Baalshamin temple, first century CE, Palmyra

Not only did the incorporation of the Arab lands into the Roman Empire entail the Hellenization of Arab cults, thus opening up a possibility of their dissemination over wider territories, but it also affected the character of both ancient and Byzantine narratives concerning the issue under discussion. From the third century onwards, specific information about the customs and religious beliefs of the ethnos in question began to be included in various texts created in the Roman Empire.

Porphyry, whose work was written at the end of the third century, and Eusebius of Caesarea, whose account is in this respect indebted to that of Porphyry,

[45] F. Cumont, *Une dédicace a des dieux syriens trouvée a Cordoue*, Sy 5, 1924, pp. 342–345; H. Petersmann, *Le Culte...*, pp. 404–405; S. Bowers Peterson, *The Cult of Dushara...*, p. 17; V. Christides, *Religious Syncretism...*, p. 72; J.P. Monferrer-Sala, *Anecdotae preislamicae...*, pp. 443–445.

state that every year an Arab tribe (Δουματηνοὶ δὲ τῆς Ἀραβίας) killed a young boy as a sacrificial offering, burying his body in the ground before the altar[46]. In scholarly literature the ethnonym mentioned by the ancient authors is usually considered to refer to the inhabitants of Duma (today Dūmat Al-Djandal), which until 106 CE was part of Nabatea[47]. However, these sources do not contain the names of the deities for whom this offering was made.

Interesting information on the issue in question can be found in the pages of the *Panarion* by Epiphanius of Salamis. Written in the 70s of the fourth century, this polemical work contains a detailed description of the heresies widespread in the Empire at the time of the author. Epiphanius informs us that during his lifetime, in Petra there still existed a temple dedicated to a local goddess. Once a year, on December 25th, a religious ceremony was staged there with a view to celebrating the birth of god's son Dūshara, his mother being extolled on that occasion with hymns performed in the Arabic language. Similar celebrations also took place in Eluza[48]. Some scholars argue that Epiphanius' account pertains to Al-Lāt, since the Nabateans considered her to be Dūshara's mother[49]. However, given the fact that Al-'Uzzā was the main female deity worshipped in Petra, and the name of the city of Eluza is simply a Latinized version of her name[50], one leans towards the view that she was the goddess to whom these December celebrations were devoted[51]. A proclivity shown by Christian Arab women to treat the Virgin Mary as a goddess to be worshipped through processions and offerings, a practice condemned by the bishop of Salamis, can be considered to be a relic of Al-'Uzzā's cult[52].

References to annual celebrations held by the Arabs of Eluza in the temple of the goddess Venus (Al-'Uzzā?) can also be found in the *Life of Saint Hilarion* by Hieronymus, who was almost contemporary with Epiphanius. This work contains a remark that Saracens were particularly attached to worshipping Lucifer

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[46] Porphyrius, II, 56; Eusebius of Ceasarea, *De laudibus Constantini*, 13.7.

[47] Ch. Forster, *The Historical Geography of Arabia or the Patriarchal Evidences of Revealed Religion: a Memoir with Illustrative Maps and an Appendix, Containing Translations, with an Alphabet and Glossary, of the Hamyaritic Inscriptions Recently Discovered in Hadramaut*, vol. I, London 1844, pp. 280–282; G. Charloux, R. Loreto, *Dûma 1. 2010 Report of the Saudi-Italian-French Archaeological Project at Dûmat al-Jandal, Saudi Arabia*, Riyâdh 2014, p. 48.

[48] Epiphanius, 51.22.11 (ed. F. Williams, p. 51); J. Naumowicz, *Prawdziwe początki Bożego Narodzenia*, Warszawa 2014, pp. 358–360.

[49] H. Petersmann, *Le Culte...*, pp. 407–408; G. Fisher, *Between Empires. Arabs, Romans and Sasanians in Late Antiquity*, Oxford–New York 2011, p. 38.

[50] G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, p. 141.

[51] R.G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs...*, p. 252; T. Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber vor dem Islam*, Leuven–Paris–Dudley 2007, p. 36.

[52] Epiphanius, 78.23, 79.1 (ed. F. Oehler, vol. II, pp. 440–443, 446–449); T. Fahd, *Le Panthéon...*, p. 112.

(*Luciferum*) – the word which, one must add, does not mean here a Satan but the Morning Star, identified by ancient authors with Al-Lāt and Al-'Uzzā[53].

The cult of female deities popular with Arabs living in the eastern parts of the Empire is also attested to by a number of Byzantine authors from the fifth century. In the *Life of Symeon the Stylite*, Theodoret of Cyrus emphasizes that the ascetic managed to convert many Ismaelits to Christianity. It was under his influence that they were to renounce the *Mysteries of Aphrodite* – the goddess whom they had served for centuries[54]. In some way this information is consistent with the account given by Isaac of Antioch – Theodoret's contemporary and author of many homilies in the Syrian language. Isaac claims that the Arabs offered young boys and girls as a sacrifice to the goddess they worshipped. It is interesting to note that at one point in his work the Antiochan author refers to the goddess by her Greek name, while at the other he uses her Arabic name Al-'Uzzā[55].

If Theodoret and Isaac offer a description of the customs widespread among the Arabs in the region of Syrian Antioch, then Nilus of Ancyra – the author living at the turn of the fourth and fifth centuries – gives an account of the beliefs of their kinsmen from the Sinai Peninsula. He states quite unambiguously that the Arabs worship the Morning Star and make blood offerings to the deity. For this purpose they usually use animals captured during plundering raids conducted against neighbouring territories. However, they do not shy away from sacrificing their own children – usually those who are tall and pretty. Sometimes it is a white camel of which they choose to make an offering. Nilus gives a detailed description of the ceremony that accompanies the ritual slaughter: its participants go three times around the animal lying on the ground, singing songs in the Morning Star's honour, and then the chief priest, who is probably also the leader of the tribe, slashes the animal's throat[56]. Although the name Al-'Uzzā does not appear in the narrative of the Saint of Ancyra, one may presume that the bloody ceremonies he describes were an element of this goddess' cult.

It is in this context that one needs to analyze a story told in the *Spiritual Meadow*, the compilation work by John Moschus, Muḥammad's contemporary.

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[53] Jerome, *Vita Hilarionis*, 25, col. 41; R.G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs...*, p. 252; T. Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber...*, p. 36; P.J. Alpass, *The Religious Life...*, p. 200; J. Naumowicz, *Prawdziwe początki...*, pp. 360–361.

[54] Theodoret, *HR*, 26, col. 1476. Some commentators believe that the fragment under discussion is later interpolation. Cf. J.P. Berkey, *The Formation of Islam. Religion and Society in The Near East, 600–1800*, Cambridge–New York 2003, p. 44.

[55] Isaac of Antioch, pp. 210–211, 220–221; T. Fahd, *Le Panthéon...*, p. 168; M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, pp. 37–38.

[56] Nilus, III, 27–28, cols. 612–613; V. Christides, *Once again the "Narrations" of Nilus Sinaiticus*, B 43, 1973, pp. 47–49; R.G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs...*, p. 252; V. Christides, *Religious Syncretism...*, p. 71.

In this work, the story is told by a father Jordanes. While on his journey across Sinai, which took place in the reign of Emperor Maurice (582–602), Jordanes met three Arabs leading a twenty year old boy. As it turned out, the boy was their captive to be offered up in sacrifice. However, the author gave no information about the god to whom that sacrifice was to be made[57].

Byzantine sources from the sixth century refer to several ritual murders carried out in Al-'Uzzā's honour by the Lakhmids' king Al-Mundhir III (505/512–554). According to Eusebius of Caesarea, in 546/47, Al-Mundhir kidnapped a son of his political opponent, the Ghassānid ruler Al-Ḥarīth, and offered him up as a sacrifice to Aphrodite[58]. Moreover, the anonymous Syrian source, which was brought into being in 569 as a continuation of Zachariah Rhetor's chronicle, holds Al-Mundhir responsible for a real hecatomb: in 529, he was to offer four hundred Christian virgins from the congregation of Saint Thomas of Ephesus in sacrifice to Al-'Uzzā. The virgins were to be taken captive during an armed raid on the Empire's territory[59].

An-Nu'mān III Abū Ḳābūs (around 580–602), the last independent Lakhmid ruler, was among the ardent followers of the goddess in the first years of his reign. *The Ecclesiastical History* by Evagrius Scholasticus contains information that early in his career as a ruler he was an avowed and cruel pagan who carried out ritual slaughter with his own hands. Yet later he was baptized and ordered the melting down of Aphrodite's golden statue[60]. This act may have marked the end of Al-'Uzzā 's cult in the Lakhmids' state.

Al-Lāt, Al-'Uzzā and Manāt were also worshipped by Arab tribes inhabiting the vast areas of Al-Ḥidjāz. The work by Al-Kalbī, the *Book of Idols*, created in the latter half of the eight century, is regarded as the most important source concerning the beliefs of the people from this region in the pre-Muslim era[61].

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[57] John Moschus, 155, col. 3024. Cf. V. Christides, *Once again...*, p. 49.

[58] Procopius, *De Bellis*, II, 28, 1; N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby u granic Vizantii i Irana v IV–VI vv.*, Moskva–Leningrad 1964, pp. 49, 93, 96, 120; T. Fahd, *Le Panthéon...*, pp. 93–94, 169; V. Christides, *Once again...*, p. 49; M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, p. 15; R.G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs...*, p. 252; T. Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber...*, p. 78, 89; G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, p. 68.

[59] Pseudo-Zachariah, VIII, 5 (ed. G. Greatrex, transl. R.R. Phenix, C.B. Horn, p. 298); N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby...*, p. 49; T. Fahd, *Le Panthéon...*, p. 169; V. Christides, *Once again...*, p. 49; M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, p. 30; R.G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs...*, p. 252; T. Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber...*, pp. 78, 89; G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, p. 68.

[60] Evagrius Scholasticus, VI, 22; N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby...*, p. 57; T. Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber...*, p. 90; G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, pp. 68–69.

[61] Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 83; J. Danecki, *Arabowie...*, p. 69; M.M. Dziekan, *Dzieje...*, p. 98.

The first of the deities mentioned above had its major cult centre in the city Aṭ-Ṭā'if, inhabited by the tribe of Thaḳīf[62]. The temple of Al-Lāt was in the valley of Wadjdj[63]. Al-Kalbī says that the goddess was worshipped there under the form of a white square stone[64]. Some scholars think that it must have been an ornamented baetyl in which an image of the goddess was carved later[65]. Next to the shrine there was supposedly a cave turned into a treasury where valuables offered to the goddess by her followers were kept[66].

The Arabs held the area of the temple sacrosanct. Every living being that entered the place became untouchable[67]. Curiously, the memory that one of the most important old Arabian deities was worshipped in the valley of Wadjdj survived many centuries – in spite of the destruction of the shrine at Muḥammad's order. Al-Kalbī, who lived in the latter half of the eighth century, was able to indicate the location of the old temple of Al-Lāt. He reports that the temple was located in a place where, in his day, stood one of the minarets of the mosque stood in Aṭ-Ṭā'if[68]. Moreover, James Hamilton, the English traveler visiting

[62] T. Fahd, *Le Panthéon...*, pp. 19, 39, 111, 113, 117; Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, pp. 85, 86; A.G. Lundin, M.B. Piotrovskij, I.Š. Šifman, *Allat...*, p. 61; M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, pp. 17, 36, 143; R. Piwiński, *Mitologia...*, p. 38; M. Rodinson, *Mahomet...*, pp. 110, 260; G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, p. 138; N. Sayuti, *The Concept of Allāh as the Highest God in Pre-Islamic Arabia. A Study of Pre-Islamic Arabic Religious Poetry*, Montreal 1999, pp. 21, 51, 87; O. Bol'šakov, *Istorija Chalifata*, vol. I, *Islam v Aravii. 570–633*, Moskva 1989, p. 55; Sh. Kitab, *Rozwój koncepcji Boga...*, p. 106; H. Lammens, *L'Arabie Occidentale Avant l'Hégire. Chrétiens et Juifs à la Mecque à la veille de l'Hégire*, Paris–Tripoli 2006, pp. 104, 107; Z. Krzak, *Od matriarchatu...*, p. 361; M.M. Dziekan, *Dzieje...*, p. 100; M. Dhouib, *Maometto "profeta de li saraxini"*, Ita 87, 2010, p. 540; J.P. Monferrer-Sala, *Anecdotae preislamicae...*, p. 444.

[63] M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, p. 36; M.M. Dziekan, *Dzieje...*, p. 100.

[64] Kalbī, *Book of Idols*, 16; T. Fahd, *Le Panthéon...*, pp. 90, 111, 117, 176; Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 85; A.G. Lundin, M.B. Piotrovskij, I.Š. Šifman, *Allat...*, p. 61; M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, p. 36; R. Piwiński, *Mitologia...*, pp. 38, 46; G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, p. 138; O. Bol'šakov, *Istorija Chalifata...*, p. 55; Sh. Kitab, *Rozwój koncepcji Boga...*, p. 81; Z. Krzak, *Od matriarchatu...*, p. 361; M.M. Dziekan, *Dzieje...*, p. 100.

[65] G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, p. 138; Sh. Kitab, *Rozwój koncepcji Boga...*, p. 109.

[66] M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, pp. 31, 36; R. Piwiński, *Mitologia...*, p. 38; Sh. Kitab, *Rozwój koncepcji Boga...*, p. 106; Z. Krzak, *Od matriarchatu...*, p. 361; M.M. Dziekan, *Dzieje...*, p. 100.

[67] Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 86; M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, p. 36.

[68] Kalbī, *Book of Idols*, 16, p. 19; T. Fahd, *Le Panthéon...*, p. 120; G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, p. 138.

the city in the nineteenth century, claimed that he had been shown a baetyl of the goddess in question[69].

It is also worth noting that one of the few figurative representations of Al-Lāt originating in Al-Ḥidjāz was discovered in the cult centre mentioned above (Fig. 7). The goddess is shown en face, wearing a long and simple robe. The old Arab artist equipped her with the attributes seen in a number of depictions of the goddess from Palmyra and Nabatea: Al-Lāt's head is adorned with a helmet. The goddess is wielding a spear in the right hand and a small round shield in the left. What sets this artifact apart from Al-Lāt's Hellenized iconography is the figure of a camel, with the goddess shown sitting on its back.



Fig. 7. Al-Lāt. The bass-relief from Aṭ-Ṭā'if, around 100 CE.

Later sources – for example, Gregory Bar Hebraeus' chronicle from the thirteenth century – point to Nakhla as Al-Lāt's other cult centre[70]. However, considering the fact that Nakhla was home to the temple of Al-'Uzzā, this information should be regarded simply as a mistake.

Many scholars tend to believe that in the old Arabic world Al-Lāt was viewed as the goddess of the sun[71]. However, the existing evidence does not suffice for one to unambiguously resolve the issue. What speaks in favour of the view that the deity

[69] T. F a h d, *Le Panthéon...*, p. 120; R. P i w i ń s k i, *Mitologia...*, p. 38; Z. K r z a k, *Od matriarchatu...*, p. 361.

[70] B a r H e b r a e u s, *Specimen Historiae Arabum*, p. 5: *Thakif rediculam in superiore parte Nachlae, quae vocabatur Allat.* See also: G.R. H a w t i n g, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, p. 138.

[71] R. P i w i ń s k i, *Mity i legendy w krainie Proroka*, Warszawa 1983, p. 19; i d e m, *Mitologia...*, p. 38; G.R. H a w t i n g, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, p. 142; N. S a y u t i, *The Concept of Allāh...*, p. 51; J. D a n e c k i, *Arabowie...*, p. 69; Sh. K i t a b, *Rozwój koncepcji Boga...*, p. 106; Z. K r z a k, *Od matriarchatu...*, p. 361.

in question was held in particular reverence among the inhabitants of Al-Ḥidjāz is their adherence to the custom of swearing oaths by the goddess' name[72]. It is mentioned in a great number of sources – for example, in the writings of Al-Zamakhsharī, who lived at the turn of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

As mentioned above, there was a shrine of Al-'Uzzā in Nakhla, in the valley of Ḥurāḍ[73]. Al-Kalbī says that she was worshipped there under the form of three acacias, situated within the boundaries of the sacred grove[74]. For some time there was also an oracle in the grove area – the faithful visited the place to hear the goddess' voice[75]. The shrine of Al-'Uzzā in Nakhla was similar to that of Al-Lāt in Aṭ-Ṭā'if in that it also had a cave (*ghabghab*). It was probably in this cave that animals, and perhaps also humans, were offered in sacrifice to the goddess[76].

Assuming Al-Kalbī's account is accurate, the goddess was highly venerated by the Ḳuraysh – the tribe from which Muḥammad was descended[77] – and her figurative representation, a wooden female dove, is likely to have existed in

[72] Kalbī, *Book of Idols*, 16–17, 43, p. 19, 31; R. Piwiński, *Mity...*, p. 23; M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, p. 65; R. Piwiński, *Mitologia...*, pp. 65, 66; G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, p. 144; Sh. Kitab, *Rozwój koncepcji Boga...*, pp. 110, 123.

[73] Kalbī, *Book of Idols*, 18, p. 20; T. Fahd, *Le Panthéon...*, pp. 31, 119, 164, 166; Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, pp. 84, 86; M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, pp. 17, 31, 37, 91; R. Piwiński, *Mitologia...*, pp. 30, 36; A.G. Lundin, *Uzza...*, p. 545; G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, pp. 139–140; O. Bol'šakov, *Istorija Chalifata...*, p. 162; Sh. Kitab, *Rozwój koncepcji Boga...*, p. 82; Z. Krzak, *Od matriarchatu...*, p. 361; M.M. Dziekan, *Dzieje...*, p. 100; J.P. Monferrer-Sala, *Anecdotae preislamicae...*, p. 446; M. Dhouib, *Maometto...*, p. 540.

[74] Kalbī, *Book of Idols*, 25, p. 23; T. Fahd, *Le Panthéon...*, pp. 31, 90, 164, 167; Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 86; R. Piwiński, *Mity...*, p. 176; M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, pp. 25, 37; R. Piwiński, *Mitologia...*, pp. 30, 36, 46; G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, p. 139; O. Bol'šakov, *Istorija Chalifata...*, p. 162; Sh. Kitab, *Rozwój koncepcji Boga...*, pp. 82–83, 105; Z. Krzak, *Od matriarchatu...*, p. 361; M.M. Dziekan, *Dzieje...*, p. 100.

[75] Kalbī, *Book of Idols*, 18, p. 20; A.G. Lundin, *Uzza...*, p. 545; M.M. Dziekan, *Dzieje...*, p. 100.

[76] Kalbī, *Book of Idols*, 19, p. 21; T. Fahd, *Le Panthéon...*, pp. 39, 167; Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 84; M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, p. 31; R. Piwiński, *Mitologia...*, p. 50; Z. Krzak, *Od matriarchatu...*, p. 361; M.M. Dziekan, *Dzieje...*, p. 100.

[77] Kalbī, *Book of Idols*, 18, p. 20; T. Fahd, *Le Panthéon...*, pp. 119, 164; Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 86; M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, p. 37; R. Piwiński, *Mitologia...*, p. 36; A.G. Lundin, *Uzza...*, p. 545; J.P. Monferrer-Sala, *Anecdotae preislamicae...*, p. 446.

Al-Kaʿba[78]. According to later sources, there was one more shrine dedicated to Al-ʿUzzā in the region of Al-Ḥidjāz. Similar in appearance to the Meccan Al-Kaʿba, it remained in the care of priests from the Ghaṭafān tribe[79]. Invoking her name in the oath-taking or spell-casting rituals – a practice attested to in a number of sources – can be adduced as proof of the high regard in which she was held by the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula[80].

The Arab goddess of fortune and death, worshipped in Al-Ḥidjāz from time immemorial, was Manāt[81]. According to Al-Kalbī, the oldest sanctuary of the deity was to be found in Ḳudayd, located on the Red Sea, on the important caravan route between Mecca and Yathrib, near the Al-Mushallal[82]. The goddess in question was worshipped there in the form of a black rock[83]. Some scholars maintain that before the seventh century two Arab tribes inhabiting Yathrib renounced the gods they had traditionally worshipped and elevated Manāt to the position of their city's only sacred guardian. As a result Medina became the second important cult centre of this deity[84].

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[78] R. Piwiński, *Mitologia...*, p. 36; Sh. Kitab, *Rozwój koncepcji Boga...*, p. 105; Z. Krzak, *Od matriarchatu...*, p. 361; M.M. Dziekan, *Dzieje...*, p. 100.

[79] T. Fahd, *Le Panthéon...*, p. 165; A.G. Lundin, *Uzza...*, p. 545; G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, p. 139.

[80] Kalbī, *Book of Idols*, 17, 19, pp. 19, 21; R. Piwiński, *Mity...*, p. 23; idem, *Mitologia...*, pp. 65–66; G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, p. 144; N. Sayuti, *The Concept of Allāh...*, p. 87; Sh. Kitab, *Rozwój koncepcji Boga...*, pp. 110–111, 123, 145.

[81] T. Fahd, *Le Panthéon...*, p. 123; Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 86; M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, p. 36; R. Piwiński, *Mitologia...*, pp. 38–39; M. Rodinson, *Mahomet...*, pp. 21, 142; N. Sayuti, *The Concept of Allāh...*, p. 52; J. Danecki, *Arabowie...*, p. 69; Sh. Kitab, *Rozwój koncepcji Boga...*, p. 105; Z. Krzak, *Od matriarchatu...*, p. 361.

[82] Kalbī, *Book of Idols*, 13, p. 17; T. Fahd, *Le Panthéon...*, p. 123; Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 86; M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, pp. 17, 36, 108; R. Piwiński, *Mitologia...*, p. 38; M. Rodinson, *Mahomet...*, p. 21; G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, p. 140; O. Bol'šakov, *Istorija Chalifata...*, p. 162; Sh. Kitab, *Rozwój koncepcji Boga...*, p. 105; Z. Krzak, *Od matriarchatu...*, pp. 361–362; M.M. Dziekan, *Dzieje...*, p. 100.

[83] T. Fahd, *Le Panthéon...*, pp. 90, 125, 149; Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 86; R. Piwiński, *Mity...*, p. 176; idem, *Mitologia...*, p. 38; G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, pp. 140–141; Sh. Kitab, *Rozwój koncepcji Boga...*, p. 81; Z. Krzak, *Od matriarchatu...*, p. 362; M.M. Dziekan, *Dzieje...*, p. 100.

[84] Kalbī, *Book of Idols*, 13, p. 17; T. Fahd, *Le Panthéon...*, p. 124; Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 86; M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, pp. 17, 36, 77; R. Piwiński, *Mitologia...*, p. 39; A.G. Lundin, *Manat...*, p. 98; M. Rodinson, *Mahomet...*, pp. 142, 156; N. Sayuti, *The Concept of Allāh...*, p. 52; Z. Krzak, *Od matriarchatu...*, p. 362; M. Dhouib, *Maometto...*, p. 540.

The Arabs who inhabited the Peninsula used to offer their hair as a sacrifice to Manāt[85]. Interestingly, having made a pilgrimage to Al-Kaʿba in Mecca, the goddess' followers believed that the Ḥadjdj ritual could be deemed complete only after they also visited the goddess' sanctuary in Ḳudayd[86]. Manāt's name, just like that of Al-Lāt and Al-ʿUzzā, was invoked during the oath taking ceremonies[87].

The three goddesses were also worshipped in the Ḳuraysh's Mecca. According to many scholars, in the pre-Muslim era the famous Al-Kaʿba served as the all-Arab cult centre of Al-Lāt, Al-ʿUzzā and Manāt, all of whom were later recognized as daughters of the supreme god: Hubal and then Allāh, whom the Arabs were to equate with Hubal[88]. If Al-Kalbī is to be believed, during the ritual circling of the shrine the Ḳuraysh uttered the following formula: *Have you considered Al-Lāt and Al-ʿUzzā and Manāt, the third one, the other, those are the swans exalted, their intercession is desired*[89].

One has reason to believe that in his early life Muḥammad, too, respected the cult of the old Arab deities. After all, he came from the Ḳuraysh tribe. Al-Kalbī mentions that in his youth the Prophet offered a white sheep as a sacrifice to Al-ʿUzzā (according to a different version, it was a reddish goat)[90]. What is more, some Arab historiographic sources – for example, Al-Ṭabarī's chronicle – even contain a story about Muḥammad's attempt, undertaken during his stay in Mecca in 622, to work out a religious compromise with the Ḳuraysh. When trying to

[85] M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, p. 36; M.M. Dziekan, *Dzieje...*, p. 100.

[86] Kalbī, *Book of Idols*, 14, p. 18; M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, pp. 36, 77; G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, p. 143; O. Bol'šakov, *Istorija Chalifata...*, pp. 54–55; M.M. Dziekan, *Dzieje...*, p. 100.

[87] Kalbī, *Book of Idols*, 14, p. 18; Sh. Kitab, *Rozwój koncepcji Boga...*, pp. 111, 145.

[88] Kalbī, *Book of Idols*, 26, p. 23; É. Dhorme, *Les religions arabes préislamiques d'après une publication récente*, RHR 133, 1947, p. 36; T. Fahd, *Le Panthéon...*, pp. 96, 113, 172; Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 85; M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, pp. 16–17, 36–38, 64; R. Piwiński, *Mity...*, pp. 24, 176; L. Ahmed, *Women and the Advent of Islam*, S.JWCS 11, 1986, p. 672; A.G. Lundin, *Manat...*, p. 98; idem, *Uzza...*, p. 545; M. Rodinson, *Mahomet...*, p. 21; G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, pp. 130, 136, 143–144; J. Danecki, *Arabowie...*, p. 69; H. Lammens, *L'Arabie Occidentale...*, p. 42; Z. Krzak, *Od matriarchatu...*, pp. 360–361; W. Machowski, *Petra...*, p. 156; M.M. Dziekan, *Dzieje...*, p. 100; J.P. Monferrer-Sala, *Anecdotae preislamicae...*, p. 446; A. Wąs, *Anikoniczny obraz Boga w islamie*, Art 6, 2008, p. 8; M. Dhouib, *Maometto...*, p. 540.

[89] Kalbī, *Book of Idols*, 19, p. 20; G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, p. 147; W. Machowski, *Petra...*, p. 156.

[90] Kalbī, *Book of Idols*, 19, p. 20; Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 86; M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, pp. 37, 50; R. Piwiński, *Mitologia...*, p. 36; A.G. Lundin, *Uzza...*, p. 545; M. Rodinson, *Mahomet...*, p. 52.

come to terms with the tribe, and at the same time to make its members approve of his teachings, the Prophet was to recognize the three goddesses worshipped in Al-Kaʿba as Allāh's daughters, viewing them as intermediaries between Allāh and the Faithful[91]. According to Al-Ṭabarī, this is when the following verses of the Ḳur'ān, to be later included in the Sūra 53, were revealed: *Have ye seen Al-Lāt and Al-ʿUzzā/ And another, the third* [*goddess*] *Manāt*[92]. Then, in the word of the chronicler, Satan was to tempt Muḥammad include in his teachings the formula recited by the Ḳuraysh during the ritual circling of Al-Kaʿba: *Those are the swans exalted, their intercession is desired*[93].

This step elicited an enthusiastic reaction from Mecca's inhabitants. Later, however, Muḥammad not only abandoned this compromising formula, removing the so-called "Satanic verses"[94], but he also added new, greatly meaningful remarks to his view of Al-Lāt, Al-ʿUzzā and Manāt:

> What! for you the male sex, and for Him, the female? Behold, such would be indeed a division most unfair! These are nothing but names which ye have devised, – ye and your fathers, – for which Allāh has sent down no authority [whatever].[95]

The final rejection of the cult of the old goddesses leads to the escalation of the conflict between the Prophet and the Ḳuraysh and must have been one of the reasons for his migration to Yathrib in 622[96]. Interestingly, Muḥammad was offered refuge by the two tribes that worshipped Manāt: Aws and Khazradj.

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[91] Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, vol. XVI, p. 108 (eds. W. Montgomery Watt, M.V. McDonald); Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 85; L. Ahmed, *Women...*, p. 672; A.G. Lundin, M.B. Piotrovskij, I.Š. Šifman, *Allat...*, p. 61; M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, pp. 64–66; A.G. Lundin, *Uzza...*, p. 545; M. Rodinson, *Mahomet...*, p. 108; G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, p. 136; O. Bol'šakov, *Istorija Chalifata...*, p. 79; Sh. Kitab, *Rozwój koncepcji Boga...*, pp. 90, 106; Z. Krzak, *Od matriarchatu...*, p. 362.

[92] *Ḳur'ān*, 53, 19–20; Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, p. 108. See: M. Rodinson, *Mahomet...*, p. 108; G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, p. 131; K. Modras, *Koncepcja jedynego Boga w islamie*, RKul 3, 2012, p. 89.

[93] Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, vol. XVI, p. 108; M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, pp. 64–65; M. Rodinson, *Mahomet...*, p. 108; G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, p. 131; Z. Krzak, *Od matriarchatu...*, p. 362.

[94] Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, vol. XVI, pp. 108–111; Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 85; L. Ahmed, *Women...*, p. 672; A.G. Lundin, M.B. Piotrovskij, I.Š. Šifman, *Allat...*, p. 61; M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, p. 65; A.G. Lundin, *Uzza...*, p. 545; M. Rodinson, *Mahomet...*, pp. 108–109; G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, p. 132; O. Bol'šakov, *Istorija Chalifata...*, p. 79; Z. Krzak, *Od matriarchatu...*, p. 362.

[95] *Ḳur'ān*, 53, 21–23; Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, p. 110; M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, p. 65; G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, p. 132; Z. Krzak, *Od matriarchatu...*, p. 362.

[96] L. Ahmed, *Women...*, p. 672; M. Rodinson, *Mahomet...*, p. 110.

The new religion spread among those tribes relatively fast, encountering opposition only from a few Aws families, who were so attached to the old goddess as to call themselves Aws Manāt (the gift of Manāt)[97].

It appears that the Ḳuraysh felt particularly strongly connected with the old beliefs. Testifying to this is their calling of the names of old deities during the battle of Uḥud in 625, fought against the followers of the new religion for whom the battle ended in defeat. Abū Sufyān, who was in command of the Meccan army, was to cry out during the clash: *we have Al-ʻUzzā and you do not!*, clearly crediting the goddess with a favourable turn this military confrontation took for his troops[98]. According to tradition, one of the Ḳuraysh warriors was to utter the following words: *you, Muḥammad's men, claim that your fallen* [*warriors*] *will go to heaven, while ours will go to hell. I swear on Al-Lāt that you are lying!*[99].

On 11 January 630 Muḥammad's army seized control of Mecca. Then, the Prophet, assuming one can rely on traditional accounts, removed the baetyls and images of the old deities from Al-Kaʿba[100]. The year 630 was also the point at which the shrines of Al-Lāt, Al-ʻUzzā and Manāt ceased to exist. It is difficult to say who destroyed the temple of Manāt. Most sources ascribe this deed to ʿAlī whom Muḥammad was to order to break a black rock worshipped in Ḳudayd and to take away two swords from Manāt's shrine: Mikhdam and Rasub. Some sources connect this incident to the Prophet's other companion Sa'īd bin Zayd[101].

With regard to the destruction of the Al-ʻUzzā Temple, two different accounts are to be found in primary sources. Some texts provide information that the temple was demolished by Zuhayr ibn Djanāb al-Kalbī. Some scholars try to link these accounts to the second shrine located in the territory of the Ghaṭafān tribe[102]. The final obliteration of the cult of Al-ʻUzzā in Al-Ḥidjāz, effected through the destruction of her shrine in the valley of Hurad, is ascribed by tradition to Khālid ibn Al-Walīd. Al-Kalbī offers an almost fairytale story about this event. According to the chronicler, Khālid, acting on the Prophet's order, went to Nakhla and cut down one of the three sacred acacias. On returning to

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[97] T. Fahd, *Le Panthéon...*, p. 126; Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 86; R. Piwiński, *Mitologia...*, p. 39; M. Rodinson, *Mahomet...*, p. 156.

[98] M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, p. 104; H. Lammens, *L'Arabie Occidentale...*, p. 120.

[99] Quot. from: Sh. Kitab, *Rozwój koncepcji Boga...*, p. 110.

[100] M. Rodinson, *Mahomet...*, pp. 252, 256; G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, p. 109; K. Łyszcz, *Malarstwo miniaturowe a tendencje ikonoklastyczne w sztuce islamu*, Art 6, 2008, p. 14.

[101] R. Piwiński, *Mitologia...*, p. 38; G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, p. 141; O. Bol'šakov, *Istorija Chalifata...*, p. 162; Z. Krzak, *Od matriarchatu...*, p. 362.

[102] G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, p. 139.

his principal, he was surprised to discover that his deed had produced no effect. Then, Muḥammad ordered him to go back to the valley of Ḥurāḍ and hew down the second tree. As this time, again, nothing happened, Khālid was ordered to destroy the third acacia. On entering the sanctuary, he saw a dishevelled, black woman standing before him and furiously gnashing her teeth. It was Al-'Uzzā. Behind her stood a priest in whose care the temple was placed. At the sight of Khālid, he turned to the goddess imploring her to kill the assailant and thus save her life. However, the Prophet's emissary turned out to be faster. With one blow, he smashed the skull of the horrible woman, who at that moment crumbled into powder. Then, he cut down the last acacia growing in the sacred grove and slaughtered the priest. Upon his return, he bragged about killing the goddess and ending her cult among the Arabs[103].

The temple of Al-Lāt was destroyed following the capture of Aṭ-Ṭā'if by Muḥammad's troops in December 630. Tradition has it that the tribe living in the city attempted to negotiate with the Prophet, hoping to obtain permission to worship their goddess for the next three years. However, as Muḥammad was adamant in his decision to end the pagan cult, the inhabitants asked him for only one favour: they did not want to be forced into destroying the temple themselves. To this request he acceded, entrusting the task of closing the shrine to Mughīra and Abū Sufyān. However, the latter evaded this duty – probably for fear of the reaction of the local population. It is worth noting here that the conduct of the Prophet's companion in Aṭ-Ṭā'if could not be as radical as that of Khālid al-Walīd in Nakhla[104]. Indicative of this is the fact that some of the relics of the Al-Lāt cult (for example, a baetyl dedicated to her) survived to the modern era.

There is no doubt that the events of 630 marked a turning point in the history of the religiosity of the people inhabiting the region of Al-Ḥidjāz. The old cults were fading into oblivion, displaced by the faith in One God – Allāh. The Arab poet of the seventh century says with nostalgia: *Al-Lāt, Al-'Uzzā and Wadd become forgotten and we take away from them their ornaments and swords*[105]. Interestingly, many experts stress the fact that there survive many elements of the old

[103] K a l b ī, *Book of Idols*, 24–26, pp. 22–23; T. F a h d, *Le Panthéon...*, p. 173; M. G a u d e f r o y - D e m o m b y n e s, *Narodziny islamu...*, pp. 37, 154; R. P i w i ń s k i, *Mitologia...*, pp. 36–38; G.R. H a w t i n g, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, pp. 109, 126, 139–140; O. B o l ' š a k o v, *Istorija Chalifata...*, p. 162; Z. K r z a k, *Od matriarchatu...*, p. 361. Some accounts contain information that Al-'Uzzā punished Khālid ibn Al-Walīd by inflicting on him a disease. G.R. H a w t i n g, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, p. 109.

[104] M. G a u d e f r o y - D e m o m b y n e s, *Narodziny islamu...*, pp. 31, 143; M. R o d i n s o n, *Mahomet...*, p. 260; G.R. H a w t i n g, *The Idea of Idolatry...*, pp. 107, 138–139; O. B o l ' š a k o v, *Istorija Chalifata...*, pp. 173–174.

[105] Quot. from: Sh. K i t a b, *Rozwój koncepcji Boga...*, p. 107.

religion in Muslim culture. An illustration of this is, for example, the belief in the protective power of amulets. In the *Life of Antara* by an anonymous author there is a reference to a talisman containing the image of the three goddesses: *And he saw an amulet on his arm, made of yellow carneol/ with an image of three red gold goddesse / and their eyes resembled emeralds*[106].

According to Shakir Kitab, one of the essential Islamic formulae: *Allāhu akbar* (*God is the greatest*) also needs to be regarded as a relic of the transitional period, the one existing between *Djāhiliyya* and the final establishment of monotheism among the Arabs. This scholar claims that the inhabitants of Al-Ḥidjāz for some time clung to their old beliefs, at the same time viewing Allāh as their supreme deity. This phenomenon can be traced in a passage taken from the poem by Aws ibn Ḥajar, who lived in the sixth century: *I swear by the name of Al-Lāt, Al-'Uzzā and by their followers/ and by God who, indeed, is greater than them*[107].

Yet the most important relic of the old Arab goddesses that survives in Islam is a great esteem in which the famous Al-Ka'ba, the old Ḳuraysh sanctuary in Mecca, along with the Black Stone set in its wall, was held by the followers of the new religion. Interestingly, the worship of the stone, connected with female goddesses of the pre-Muslim era, was reported by a number of medieval Byzantine authors, especially by polemicists from the eighth and ninth centuries who laid different charges against Islam[108].

Patriarch Germanus (715–730) of Constantinople was probably the first to raise this issue. He remarked in one of his writings that the Saracens living in the desert worship a dead stone called *Hobar* (τήν τε τοῦ λεγομένου Χοβὰρ ἐπίκλησιν)[109]. A suggestion that there is a link between the object found in Al-Ka'ba and the cult of the female goddess appeared for the first time in the treatise *On Heresies* by John of Damascus. The author, revisiting some of the topics dealt with in Greek, Latin and Syrian texts from the third–fourth centuries discussed above, remarks that the Arabs worship the Morning Star and Aphrodite, whom they call *Habar* (Χαβὰρ), that is, the Great[110]. The work also includes surpris-

[106] R. P i w i ń s k i, *Mitologia...*, p. 32; M.M. D z i e k a n, *Arabia Magica. Wiedza tajemna u Arabów przed islamem*, Warszawa 1993, p. 81; Z. K r z a k, *Od matriarchatu...*, p. 360. I rely here on the translation by Ryszard Piwiński.

[107] Quot. from: Sh. K i t a b, *Rozwój koncepcji Boga...*, p. 123.

[108] A.Th. K h o u r y, *Polémique byzantine contre l'islam (VIII^e–XIII^e s.)*, Leiden 1972, p. 275.

[109] G e r m a n u s, col. 168; J. M e y e n d o r f f, *Byzantine Views of Islam*, DOP 18, 1964, p. 119; A. A b o u - S e a d a, *Byzantium and Islam (9th–10th Centuries). A Historical Evaluation of the Role of Religion in Byzantine-Muslim Relations*, Birmingham 2000, p. 90; T.M. M u h a m m a d, *The Concept of Al-takbīr in the Byzantine Theological Writings*, Bsl 72, 2014, pp. 80–81.

[110] J o h n o f D a m a s c u s, *De haeresibus*, 101, col. 764; J. M e y e n d o r f f, *Byzantine Views...*, p. 118; A. A b o u - S e a d a, *Byzantium...*, pp. 12, 88–89; G. M a k s i m o v, *Prepodob-*

ing information concerning the Black Stone from Mecca. According to John of Damascus, the stone in question is nothing but a representation of Aphrodite's head. In addition, the Byzantine author maintains that in his day it was still possible to see on the *Ḥadjar* the outlines of her image[111].

On Heresies by John of Damascus became one of the most important sources on which authors of later polemical texts drew in addressing the issue of Muslims' beliefs. In the work *Refutatio Mohamedis* Nicetas of Byzantium refers twice to the issue under discussion. He states that there was an idol in Al-Kaʿba called *Hubar* (τῷ Χουβὰρ εἰδώλῳ), who was actually a representation of Aphrodite[112]. Some interesting details are also offered by George the Monk, in the pages of the chronicle written in the ninth century. The Byzantine author stresses the fact that from time immemorial the Arabs worshipped the goddess of the dawn. The deity, whom the Arabs called by her Greek name Aphrodite, was referred to in Arabic as *Kubar* (Κουβὰρ), that is, the Great. George the Monk offers an interesting explanation of one of the most important formulae in Islam: *Allāhu akbar.* In his opinions it means *God is greater and more powerful than Aphrodite*[113].

References to the treatise by John of Damascus can also be found in a work by Bartholomew of Edessa, a Christian polemist living at the end of the ninth century. Bartholomew explicitly says that the Arabs worship Aphrodite[114]. He also tells an interesting story about the capture of the city Susaita (Black Stone) by Muḥammad's troops. In this city, a woman whom the Prophet's companions tried to persuade to accept Islam replied that the only deity she acknowledged was Aphrodite, the Morning Star[115].

It is now necessary to devote a few words to the unique liturgical ritual of the renunciation of Islam. It was compiled in Byzantium in the latter half of the ninth century. Its goal was to purify converts to Christianity from Islam from

nyj Ioann Damaskin ob islame, ŽNDS 4, 2010, p. 26, 27; T.M. Muhammad, *The Concept...*, pp. 79–80.

[111] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, 101, col. 769; A.Th. Khoury, *Polémique byzantine...*, pp. 275–276; A. Abou-Seada, *Byzantium...*, pp. 12, 89; G. Maksimov, *Prepodobnyj Ioann Damaskin...*, p. 28; T.M. Muhammad, *The Concept...*, pp. 80, 88.

[112] Nicetas of Byzantium, 37, col. 720; 95, col. 793; J. Meyendorff, *Byzantine Views...*, p. 119; A.Th. Khoury, *Polémique byzantine...*, pp. 277–278.

[113] George the Monk, 24 (ed. C. de Boor, vol. II, pp. 705–706); J. Meyendorff, *Byzantine Views...*, p. 119; A.Th. Khoury, *Polémique byzantine...*, p. 278; A. Abou-Seada, *Byzantium...*, p. 90; T.M. Muhammad, *The Concept...*, p. 81.

[114] Bartholomew of Edessa, 5, col. 1385; A.Th. Khoury, *Polémique byzantine...*, p. 278; *Vizantijskie sočinenija ob islame*, ed. Ju.V. Maksimov, Moskva 2012, p. 90; T.M. Muhammad, *The Concept...*, p. 95.

[115] Bartholomew of Edessa, 58, col. 1436.

sin. Scholars stress that the description of the ritual is textually dependent on Byzantine polemical texts from the eight–ninth centuries, including *On Heresies* by John of Damascus, the works by Nicetas of Byzantium and the chronicle by George the Monk[116]. In view of what has already been said here it is worth noting that in performing the ritual a person to be converted from Islam to Christianity was required to curse the temple in Mecca, along with the Stone found in it, and to renounce the cult of the Morning Star, as well as that of the goddess called *Habar* (Χαβὰρ), that is, the Great[117].

The assertion that the Muslims worshipped Aphrodite came to form something of a *topos* in later Byzantine literature. In an anonymous polemical text from the turn of the tenth and eleventh centuries, *Contra Muhammad*, whose author drew on the writings of John of Damascus, Theophanes and George the Monk, one finds information that Saracens remained idolaters until the reign of Emperor Heraclius, still considering Aphrodite, whom they called *Habar* (Χαβὰρ) – the Great, to be their goddess[118]. Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, in the pages of his famous work *On the Governance of the Empire*, also presents the Arabs as worshiping the "Star of Aphrodite". Furthermore, just like George the Monk, he attempts to explain the meaning of the Muslim formula *Allāhu akbar*. In his opinion it needs to be translated as "God and Aphrodite"[119].

Along these lines the Arab religious beliefs are described in the chronicle of George Cedrenus, the Byzantine historian living at the turn of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. He states that Saracens worshiped idols, the Morning Star and Aphrodite, whom they called *Kubar* (Κουβὰρ), that is, the Great. Like the other authors, Cedrenus also tries to explain for his readers the etymology of the words *Allāhu akbar*. It is worth noting that his translation of the *takbir* "God is great" is closest to the meaning it is supposed to convey for the Muslims. However, he adds that this phrase can also pertain to Aphrodite, which leads him to the conclusion that Muslims are unable to distinguish between God and the goddess Aphrodite[120].

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[116] A.Th. K h o u r y, *Les théologiens byzantins et l'islam. Textes et auteurs (VIII^e–XIII^e s.)*, Louvain–Paris 1969, pp. 187–188; i d e m, *Polémique byzantine...*, p. 278; N.N. Š a p o r e v, *K voprosu ob otnošenii "Čina prinjatija ot saracin" k "Oproverženiju Korana" Nikity Vizantijskogo*, [in:] *Sbornik studenčeskich naučnych rabot*, Moskva 2009, pp. 69, 76.

[117] *Ordo*, col. 132; A.Th. K h o u r y, *Les théologiens...*, p. 192; N.N. Š a p o r e v, *K voprosu...*, p. 74; T.M. M u h a m m a d , *The Concept...*, p. 81.

[118] *Contra Muhammed*, col. 1448; A.Th. K h o u r y, *Les théologiens...*, pp. 194–195; i d e m, *Polémique byzantine...*, p. 278; T.M. M u h a m m a d , *The Concept...*, p. 82.

[119] C o n s t a n t i n e V I I P o r p h y r o g e n i t u s , *De administrando*, 14.31–36; J. M e y e n d o r f f, *Byzantine Views...*, p. 118; A. A b o u - S e a d a, *Byzantium...*, p. 90; T.M. M u h a m m a d, *The Concept...*, p. 82.

[120] G e o r g e C e d r e n u s, 744, cols. 813–816; T.M. M u h a m m a d, *The Concept...*, pp. 82–83.

This motif also appears in an extensive treatise by Euthymius Zygabenus, entitled the *Arsenal of Dogmas*. In preparing the section devoted to a polemic on Islam, he certainly drew on some of the earlier Byzantine texts that addressed the issue dealt with here, including the writings of John of Damascus, Nicetas of Byzantium and George the Monk. He also relied on an anonymous work *Contra Muhammad*[121]. His account of Saracens' beliefs starts with an assertion that they remained idolaters until the reign of Emperor Heraclius, worshiping the Morning Star and Aphrodite whom they called Habar (Χαβὰρ), that is, the Great[122]. Euthymius also touched on the question of the Meccan sanctuary, remarking that the Black Stone found in it is actually a representation of the head of Aphrodite whom the Arabs worshipped prior to the advent of Islam. He also claimed that there was the outline of an image of the goddess to be discerned on the *Ḥadjar*[123].

In line with the opinions presented above was that expressed by Anna Comnena, who was Euthymius' pupil. In her *Alexiad*, in describing the Muslims' customs, the authoress "born in purple" states that these people are particularly attached to the worship of Ashtarte (the goddess whom Anna most probably equated with Aphrodite) and the gold *Hobar* (Χοβὰρ)[124]. However, unlike the earlier Byzantine authors she does not explain the meaning of the term.

In conclusion, the Arabs' attachment to the female deity is reported by a number of Byzantine authors. From this it does not follow that any of the old Arab goddesses were worshiped in the area of Al-Ḥidjāz after 630. A repeatedly expressed opinion that Saracens worship Aphrodite, the Morning Star, and that the Meccan Al-Kaʿba serves as her most important cult centre is nothing but a literary *topos* – especially with regard to the sources that appeared in the tenth to twelfth centuries. On the other hand one cannot fail to see that the sources discussed above draw on the texts which, in addition to originating in the area of the Byzantine Empire, were created earlier, in the third to sixth centuries, and which, as such, actually offer descriptions of some specific phenomena characterizing the Arab life prior to the advent of Islam. It is already from works by ancient authors that we learn about high regard in which the Arabs held Aphrodite, identified with the Morning Star. There is

[121] A.Th. Khoury, *Les théologiens...*, p. 194; idem, *Polémique byzantine...*, p. 278; *Vizantijskie...*, p. 167.

[122] Euthymius Zygabenus, *Panoplia*, 28, 1, col. 1333.

[123] Euthymius Zygabenus, *Panoplia*, 28, 8, col. 1340.

[124] Anna Comnena, X, 5, 7; A. Abou-Seada, *Byzantium...*, p. 90.

also no denying that the temple in Mecca served as an important cult centre long before the advent of Islam. One can also hold no doubt as to the link between the Al-Kaʿba temple and three goddesses: Al-Lāt, Al-ʻUzzā and Manāt. One more thing that appears to be particularly interesting is that Byzantine sources, in referring to the goddess allegedly worshipped by the Arabs, used the name "The Great", which is exactly what Al-ʻUzzā – probably the most powerful female deity of the old Arab world – means.



Paweł Filipczak

5. Irfan Shahîd's Theme System or John Haldon's Myth of Themes. A Short Review of the Two Main Ideas of Themes in Syria*

A general overview of the evolution of the administrative division of Syro-Palestine is strictly linked to the study of the emergence of the system of themes (themes, as we remember, were large militarized administrative units established in the seventh century). There is a huge body of literature devoted to this issue, which has attracted scholarly attention since the nineteenth century[1].

* This article constitutes one of the chapters of the full-length monograph, also in English, entitled *An Introduction to Byzantine Administration in Syro-Palestine on the Eve of the Arab Conquest* (Łódź 2015). In spite of the fact that this text appears in published elsewhere, we have decided to include it in this volume, for we wish to provide the Reader with the work offering a comprehensive insight into the Byzantine-Arab relations, including the issue of the Theme system in Syro-Palestine, to which this paper is devoted. Having in mind the work's thematic balance, we have found it advisable to complement the chapter on the administration of the Umayyad state, included in this volume, with a parallel text discussing the issue of the Byzantine administration in the region of Syro-Palestine. In order to avoid depriving the Readers of an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the literature on the subject of Byzantine administration within the Syro-Palestine, we decided it was appropriate to include in the present book's bibliography a complete overview of works on the subject.

1 See for example: H. Gelzer, *Die Genesis der byzantinischen Themenverfassung*, Leipzig 1899 [=Amsterdam 1966]; E.W. Brooks, *Arabic Lists of Byzantine Themes*, JHS 121, 1901, pp. 67–77; E. Stein, *Studien zur Geschichte des Byzantinischen Reiches vornehmlich unter den Kaisern Justinus und Tiberius Konstantinus*, Stuttgart 1919, pp. 117–140; N.H. Baynes, *The Emperor Heraclius and the Military Theme System*, EHR 67, 1952, pp. 380–381; W. Ensslin, *Der Kaiser Herakleios und die Themenverfassung*, BZ 46, 1953, pp. 362–368; G. Ostrogorski, *Sur la date de composition du livre des thèmes et l'epoque de la constitution des premiers thèmes d'Asie Mineur*, B 23, 1953, pp. 31–63; A. Pertusi, *Nuova ipotesi sull'origine dei "temi" bizantini*, Ae 28, 1954, pp. 126–150; J. Karayannopoulos, *Contribution au probléme des "Themes"*, HeC 10, 1956, pp. 455–502; H.-W. Haussig, *Anfange der Themenordnung*, [in:]

Controversy surrounds, in the main, the question of the origin of the theme System, that is, the time and circumstances of its creation, the way it functioned and the etymology and meaning of the word theme itself.

With regard to the Syro-Palestine region, the discussion centers around the views of an American scholar, Irfan Shahîd, which were first presented in 1983 during the symposium on the history of Byzantine Syria[2]. The paper delivered by Shahîd served as the point of departure for further research which yielded three other contributions published in "Byzantion" in the period between 1987 and 1994.

Shahîd proposed a thesis that in the Syro-Palestine region emperor Heraclius established four large military districts, known as themes. The changes to the old administrative system (in the ten provinces of Syro-Palestine and in Mesopotamia and Oshroene) were to be enacted right after the withdrawal of the Persian troops in 628 and before the Arab invasion in around 636. Evidence for this claim comes from Al-Ṭabarī who, in the *History of the Kings and Prophets*, refers to the division of Syria into four military districts shortly before the Arab conquest. Shahîd is of the opinion that the Umayyads' division of Syro-Palestine into four large units, known as the *jund* (plur. *ajnād*), was inherited from the Byzantines, that is, it was patterned after the four themes. This opinion can be supported by a number of arguments. The etymology of both words, Greek and Arabic, is the same. Both are meant to convey the meaning of an "army unit". The Arab names of the two junds Filasṭīn and Urdunn are derived from two Greek words (that is, the names of the Themes): Παλαιστινή and Ἰορδάνης. By attacking Syria,

Finanzgeschichte der Spätantike, eds. F. Altheim, R. Stiehl, Frankfurt am Main 1957, pp. 82–114; A. Pertusi, *La formation des thèmes byzantins*, [in:] *Berichte zum XI Internazionalen Byzantinisten-Kongress*, München 1958, pp. 1–40; G. Ostrogorski, *Korrefat zu A. Pertusi. La formation des thèmes byzantins*, [in:] *ibidem*, pp. 1–8; J. Karayannopoulos, *Die Entstehung der byzantinischen Themenordnung*, München 1959, *passim*; W.E. Kaegi, *Some Reconsiderations on the Themes (Seventh–Ninth)*, JÖB 16, 1967, pp. 39–53; N. Oikonomidés, *Les premiers menions des thèmes dans la chronique de Théophane*, ZRVI 16, 1975, pp. 1–8; J. Howard-Johnston, *Theme*, [in:] *Maistor. Classical, Byzantine and Renaissance Studies for R. Browning*, ed. A. Moffat, Canberra 1984, pp. 189–197; E.P. Glušanin, *Voenno-gosudarstvennoe zemlevladenie v rannej Vizantii (k voprosu o genezise femnogo stroja)*, VV 50, 1989, pp. 14–25. See also: G. Ostrogorski, *Dzieje Bizancjum*, ed., transl. H. Evert-Kappesowa et al., Warszawa 1967, p. 128, footnote 26 (who comments on older literature); M.J. Leszka, *Uzurpacje w cesarstwie bizantyńskim w okresie od IV do połowy IX w.*, Łódź 1999, p. 63, footnote 54; T. Wolińska, *Sycylia w polityce cesarstwa bizantyńskiego w VI–IX w.*, Łódź 2005, pp. 52, 124 (including commentaries on recent studies).

[2] I. Shahîd, *Heraclius and the Theme System*, [in:] *Proceedings of the Symposium on Bilād al-Shām during the Byzantine Period*, eds. M.A. Bakhit, M. Asfour, vol. II, Amman 1986, pp. 45–52.

the Arabs were executing military operations in four different directions, organizing themselves into four corps led by four commanders. Further, the junds abutted the sea, stretching inland from the coast in parallel lines, and each jund had its own harbor. This seems to indicate that the administrative units in question were created not by the Arabs – who did not have their own fleet during the conquest of Syria and the years immediately following – but by the Byzantines, for whom strategic contact with Syria was maintained also through a sea route. In the period which followed the capture of Syria, the Arabs did not attempt, Shahîd claims, to build any cities that could assume the role of a new centres of administration because they relied on those built by the Byzantines, especially on the capitals of particular provinces. Byzantine influences, according to the American scholar, can also be seen in the system of administering the revenues of the Umayyad state, which was based on the Byzantine administrative division and a cadre of the officials that had once worked for the Byzantine Empire[3].

Shahîd placed particular emphasis on the period of five years, between 629 and 634 – to which he often refers as *quinquennium* – after the region was abandoned by the Persians and before it was seized by the Arabs. The establishment of the theme dates, in his opinion, from this period. This epoch is poorly reflected in Byzantine sources – the establishment of the theme during the reign of Heraclius is mentioned in the *Chronographia* by Theophanes, and in *On the Themes* by Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus; however, neither offers the exact date these new administrative units' creation – and this is why the Arab sources merit special attention. Their reliability, quite remarkable in this case – clearly stressed by Shahîd – results from two facts: that these texts were written not long after the events to which they pertain and that their focus is on the key region of the Umayyad state. For a long time these Arab sources received no attention from scholars, although they testify to the existence of post-Byzantine administrative units in the early Muslim Syria[4].

The Theme of Emesa, with its capital in Emesa (later jund Ḥimṣ/Emesa), was the largest of all four Themes, replacing the old provinces of *Syria Prima*, *Syria Secunda*, *Euphratesia*, Oshroene and Mesopotamia. The Theme of Damascus replaced the province of *Phoenicia Lebanese*. Shahîd emphasises the fact that the division of this province into two military districts shows the increasing militarization of the region during the reign of Justinian I. This process found its fullest expression in the establishment of the theme of Damascus in the reign of

[3] I. Shahîd, *Heraclius and the Theme System: New Light from the Arabic*, B 57, 1987, pp. 391–403.

[4] Idem, *Heraclius and the Theme System: Further Observations*, B 59, 1989, pp. 208–243.

Heraclius. Several factors underlay the establishment of the Theme of Jordan; the least of these: the mountainous nature of the region; others, its peculiar ethnic structure (Galilee being mostly Jewish, Decapolis mostly Greek and the Arabs forming most of the population of Gualanitis) with the Jews – followers of the Persians during their recent occupation – constituting its most precarious element, and the Ghassānids most reliable. The latter formed something of a counterweight against the Jews: a tool relied on for controlling them. What was also of great import was its strategic position. The Theme of Jordan was to play the role of the fourth and last safeguard zone against the invasion of the Holy Land by the Persians. According to Shahîd, the establishment of the theme was also the result of the defeat inflicted on the Byzantines by the Persians at the battle of Aḏriʿāt (one hundred kilometres south of Damascus, in the boundaries of the later jund known as Urdunn), at the turn of 613/614. This victory opened the Persians' way to Jerusalem. After that, the Byzantines, following the advice of their followers, the Ghassānid leaders, decided to reinforce the region by creating therein a separate military district. Ghassānid troops were supposed to play a leading role in it.

The names of the themes, while clearly linked to their geographical location, also carried, as Shahîd claims, some religious connotations (as opposed to the themes established later in Asia Minor and named after the large corps of the Byzantine army). The Theme of Palestine was in truth that of the Holy Land, as "Palestine" from the fourth century onwards was equated with the idea of the Holy Land as a region. The religiously charged name was particularly meaningful in the period following the Persian occupation which had proved so harmful for the Christians. In establishing the Theme of Holy Land/Palestine, Heraclius drew inspiration from the religious policy of Constantine the Great, a ruler he greatly admired. The name of the Theme of Jordan appeals to the Christians' sacred river – the Jordan. Constantine the Great wanted to be baptised in it, and Heraclius was the first Christian emperor to reside in its vicinity (in Galilee and Tyberiad). Tinged with Christian symbolism, the name was also designed to demonstrate the strength of Christianity in a region with a high Jewish population (whose anti-Byzantine and anti-Christian attitudes have been mentioned above). The two Themes lying further to the North, those of Edessa and Damascus, were named after their main cities. However, the name of the former also carried some Christian connotations, in connection with the Abgars.

The *thematisation* of Oriens also had to do with the implementation of the concepts that were to underpin the reign of Emperor Heraclius. It remained in line with the notion of the emperor-soldier and the emperor-crusader, the first ruler after Theodosius I (379–395) who fought in the field. The themes were

the work of an emperor who was familiar with the Syro-Palestine region; one who drew on Christian symbolism in waging his wars, including those waged for the lands occupied by the Persians; and one who tried to create an image of the emperor-pilgrim arriving in Jerusalem with the wood of the Holy Cross, reclaimed from the Persians. According to Shahîd, the militarization of the territorial administration by Heraclius was a result of the political experience he gained during his stay in the Carthaginian Exarchy, a militarised administrative unit in northern Africa, where his father served as an exarch.

In developing his line of reasoning, Shahîd highlights the importance of the themes' maritime location, writing about the *maritimisation of Themes*. This feature of the new administrative order also originated in Heraclius' past. The emperor must have been aware of the importance of naval forces, to which he owed the recovery of Constantinople from Phocas. Each of the newly established themes had at least one harbour – the Theme of Emesa commanded the harbour of *Syria Prima*, the Theme of Damascus that of *Phoenicia Lebanese*, the Theme of Jordan seized the harbours of *Phoenicia Maritime* and, in part, *Palaestina Prima*. The remaining harbours of the last province went to the Theme of Palestine. That the Themes' maritime location was informed by a specific administrative idea seems to be confirmed by the operations of the Byzantine fleet against the Arabs at the end of the 630s.

Shahîd's articles have elicited a wide response from other scholars, provoking a lively discussion in the course of which the views put forward by two historians, a German, Ralf Johannes Lilie, and an American, John Haldon, came to the fore. Lilie sent Shahîd a letter on 30 May 1988 in which he expressed serious doubts as to the establishment of Themes in Syria on the eve of the Arab invasion[5]. Shahîd's response came in an article of 1988. Appended to the article were Lilie's counterarguments which Shahîd addressed one by one, trying to dispell the doubts raised by the German author. According to Lilie, the fact that the collection of taxes in Syria in Heraclius' days was still organised within the old provincial system is evidence of its continuous existence[6]. Shahîd admitted that, as

[5] See also: R.-J. L i l i e, *Die zweihundertjahrige Reform: zu den Anfangen der Themenorganisation im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert*, Bsl 45, 1984, pp. 27–39; i d e m, *Araber und Themen. Zum Einfluss der Arabischen Expansion auf die byzantinische Militärorganisation*, [in:] *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, vol. III, *States, Resources and Armies*, ed. A. C a m e r o n, Princeton–New Jersey 1995, pp. 425–460.

[6] C.-P. H a a s e, *Untersuchungen zur Landschaftsgechichte Nordsyriens in der Umayyadenzeit*, Hamburg 1972; F. W i n k e l m a n n, *Byzantinische Rang- und Ämterstrukturim 8. und 9. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 1985.

Keagi proved some time ago[7], some elements of the order established by Diocletian and Constantine the Great continued during the reign of Heraclius, not only in the fiscal sphere but also in the military supply system as well. Inherited from the prior rulers' era were also the names of some of the army units. Yet as a whole the old administrative divisions were certainly replaced with the themes. Shahîd also holds no doubt as to the semantics of the Arab term *jund* which in his formulation is an Arab translation of one of the aforementioned Greek terms which were used for a Theme. This opinion went counter to the views held by Lilie and Haas for whom the word *jund* was not a Greek borrowing but a distinctly Arab term denoting military districts from which the Arab troops launched their campaigns against the territories of their enemies. As Shahîd remarks, in sources from the period, the word *jund* is not used with regard to Egypt and Mesopotamia (conquered soon after the seizure of Syro-Palestine) whence the Arabs continued their territorial expansion. He also claims that the *thematisation* of Syro-Palestine was not necessarily followed by the implementation of the same administrative order in Asia Minor (although he does not rule this out). Just as in Anatolia, the names of Themes did not have to be connected to military districts but were linked to their geographical location (as presented above). Relying on the information derived from the Arab historian Masʿūdī, Lilie argues that the Arab system of junds could not have developed from the system of themes as the latter were much larger than the administrative units created by the Arabs. Shahîd rejects this argument claiming that Masʿūdī, working in the first half of the tenth century, had no knowledge of the period of *quinquennium*. Finally, Shahîd disagrees with Lilie's opinion that the system of junds was purely Arab in origin, having its roots in the horizontal arrangement of trade routes which were used by the Arabs and which ran from the west to the east, from the coast to the interior of the Arabian Peninsula, in parallel to the later junds. The establishment of the junds along these routes aimed at facilitating trading interactions in the Umayyad state. For Shahîd, there can be no doubt that once the capital of the caliphate was transferred to Damascus, the trade routes which ran vertically, from the north to the south of Syro-Palestine, rose in importance, while the economic role of the interior regions of the Arabian Peninsula clearly diminished.

According to Haldon, the Arab junds actually arose as a result of the metamorphosis of the structures of the Byzantine administration. However, it was not

[7] W.E. K a e g i, *Notes on Hagiographical Sources for Some Institutional Changes and Continuities in the Early Seventh Century*, Byz 7, 1975, pp. 63–70; i d e m, *Two Studies in the Continuity of Late Roman and Byzantine Military Institutions*, BF 8, 1982, pp. 87–113; i d e m, *The "Annona Militaris" in the Seventh Century*, Byz 13, 1985, pp. 591–596.

the themes but the ducats (*ducatus*), that is, military districts remaining under the jurisdiction of military commanders, that underwent the metamorphosis. Haldon assumes that the junds formed an element inherited from the old Roman conception of the defence of the borderlands by the frontier units known as *limitanei*[8]. Haldon deals only with the southern regions of Syro-Palestine, that is, *Phoenicia Lebanese* (which, as we stated, was divided into two military zones), Palestine and Arabia, which, as Shahîd claims, cannot be taken to correspond to the ducats, that is, militarised districts, but to provinces (referred to in the sources from the period as *provinciae* or *eparchai*) which were subject to the jurisdiction of both civil and military authorities. It seems obvious to Shahîd that the term *ducatus* does not refer to a military district or to any other territorial unit. Instead, it was used to denote the function exercised by military commanders known as duxes. In addition, as Shahîd stresses, the junds' boundaries do not fully correspond, and sometimes did not correspond at all, to the military districts of the Roman army (especially so in the case of the junds of Ḥimṣ/Emesa).

In trying to offer a more historically convincing justification for the establishment of Syrian Themes at the time of Heraclius, Shahîd distinguished three stages in Rome and Byzantium's military presence in the East (the first stage covering the period from Diocletian to Jovian, the second from the mid-fourth over the whole of the fifth century, and the third stage lasting from the reign of Anastasius to that of Maurice). Shahîd discerned that the military activity intensified – which seems quite natural – when the Roman Empire faced a threat of invasion from Persia: the greater the threat, the greater the activity. His analysis of the decisions of successive emperors provided him with no evidence for existence of four military districts. For this reason Shahîd believes that their establishment should be attributed to emperor Heraclius. The third article he wrote on this issue is mostly devoted to a polemic in which he engages with Haldon's arguments. Published in 1994, it is his last paper devoted to the problem[9].

This, Shahîd's "final word" on the themes, did not close the debate. In a comprehensive study, published one year later, Haldon stated that the answer to the question of the origin of the Theme system was not to be found in a *mythical reform carried out by Emperor Heraclius*[10]. According to this scholar, the jund

[8] J. H a l d o n, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, Cambridge 1990, p. 215.

[9] I. S h a h î d, *Heraclius and the Unfinished Themes of Oriens: Some Final Observations*, B 64, 1994, pp. 352–376.

[10] J. H a l d o n, *Seventh-Century Continuities: the Ajnād and the "Thematic Myth"*, [in:] *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, vol. III, *States, Resources and Armies...*, pp. 379–423 [=*The Formation of the Classical Islamic World*, vol. VIII, *Arab-Byzantine Relations in Early Islamic Times*, ed. M. B o n n e r, Ashgate 2004 [=2009], pp. 95–139].

system already existed at the outset of Muslim rule in Syria. However, doubts concern the number of these regions. While some Arab sources indicate that there were three administrative districts of this kind, others suggest that there were four of them (Al-Balādhurī, 166, 167, 178, 202 and Al-Ṭabarī, II, 651, III, 391). The belief in the existence of military districts, known as themes and established by Heraclius, is based on two weak premises: first, on an analogy with the system of the junds, the internal structure of which, in fact, remains unknown and, second, that a general specificity may be drawn from the Byzantine theme system, which was indeed connected with the establishment of military districts but in a later period. The English scholar stresses the fact that in theory it is also possible to assume that the establishment of the Muslim junds was the result of some Persian influences. Such a possibility, he claims, although highly unlikely, cannot be entirely ruled out.

Drawing on some Arab chronicles and geographical works from the ninth to eleventh centuries, Haldon also tries to reconstruct the territorial shape of particular junds. His analysis supports the opinion that the arrangement of the junds generally did not resemble the network of Byzantine provinces. In his opinion the territories of particular junds clearly correspond, although not always fully, to the military regions governed by military commanders known as duxes: the jund of Damascus encompassed the former territory of the dux of Phoenicia and, in part, the dux of Arabia; the jund of Hims encompassed the district of the dux of Emesa in *Phoenicia Lebanese*. The jund of Filasṭīn was an exception. It covered almost exactly the former area of the province of *Palaestina Secunda*, plus two cities, Tyre and Acre, from *Phoenicia Maritime*.

Haldon also differs from Shahîd in his evaluation of the reliability of Arab sources. The information about the division of Syria into four regions and about the strike of four armies led by four commanders is to be regarded, according to this scholar, as reflecting some earlier accounts, both written and oral, that are difficult to reconcile. The Umayyad and Abbasid tradition sought to highlight the role of particular individuals; hence we have information about a number of commanders who led the Arab forces. Thus, the sending of four distinct corps to fight against Byzantium is open to doubt. It is more likely that the Empire was attacked by small Arab groups that, as the invasion progressed, were joined by other Arab units.

In recently published literature on the subject – for example, in the eighth volume of the series entitled the *Formation of Classical Islamic World* edited by Michael Bonner – Haldon's argumentation is considered conclusive and, as such, sufficient to reject the views presented by Shahîd[11]. In the monograph

[11] M. Bonner, *Introduction*, [in:] *The Formation of the Classical Islamic World...*, vol. VIII, pp. XXIII–XXIV.

devoted to Emperor Heraclius, published one year earlier than the volume mentioned above, Kaegi, in dealing with the years 629–633, fails to mention the issue of the establishment of the themes in Syro-Palestine. Kaegi claims that the central government had no time to establish structures of local administration in the area left by the Persians. Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that the imperial administration began to disappear from the region of the Jordan river[12]. Recently, the discussion of the theme system in Syro-Palestine seems to have lost momentum, little is said either for or against the view crediting Heraclius with the creation in Syro-Palestine of the administrative units in question, and no new hypotheses have been put forward concerning this issue[13]. This may indicate that primary sources provide no incentives for further investigations, and the whole debate is likely to assume a more historiographic dimension. Perhaps, it is by analysing the method employed by scholars involved in the debate that we will be able to identify the most probable solution to the issue under discussion.

[12] W.E. K a e g i, *Heraclius, Emperor of Byzantium*, Cambridge 2003, pp. 192–227 and pp. 218–219 in particular.

[13] See a number of articles published in: *Proceedings of the International Symposium – Byzantium and the Arab World. Encounter of Civilizations (Thessaloniki, 16–18 December 2011)*, eds. A. K r a l i d e s, A. G k o u t z i o u k o s t a s, Thessaloniki 2013.

Sławomir Bralewski

6. Byzantine Church before the Arab Conquest Historical-Theological Aspects of Divisions in Churches of the East

The events of the seventh century, during which the Arabs conquered eastern provinces of the Byzantine Empire, turned out to have very far reaching consequences for the entirety of the Church, its eastern part in particular. *Pars orientis* of the Church has already been a witness to extremely fierce and inconclusive struggles against Persia. As a result, the eastern regions of *Imperium Romanum*: Syria, Palestine, Armenia, Asia Minor and eventually also Egypt were captured by the Persians[1] during 611–619, and the capture and pillage, under Khusraw' command, of Jerusalem[2], burning down of the basilica of the Holy Sepulchre and looting of the Passion relics – the holy spear, sponge and the True Cross – in 614, was a genuine disaster that echoed throughout the Empire[3]. In consequence, the war took the shape of a religious confrontation, and the clergy made the material possessions of the Church available to the state in need[4].

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[1] N.H. Baynes, *The First Campaign of Heraclius against Persia*, EHR 19, 1904, pp. 694–702; A. Stratos, *La première champagne de l'Empereur Héraclius contre les Perses*, JÖB 28, 1979, pp. 63–74; W. Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*, Stanford 1997, pp. 287–293.

[2] The number of casualties among the inhabitants of Jerusalem is estimated between seventeen and ninety thousand, while a similar number is considered to have been deported. W.E. Kaegi, *Heraclius, Emperor of Byzantium*, Cambridge 2003, p. 78; C. Morrisson, *Les événements/perspective chronologique*, [in:] *Le monde byzantin*, vol. I, *Empire romain d'Orient (330–641)*, ed. C. Morrisson, Paris 2006, pp. 41–42.

[3] Strategius, *passim*; W.E. Kaegi, *Heraclius...*, pp. 79–80; C. Morrisson, *Les événements...*, pp. 41–42.

[4] G. Ostrogorski, *Dzieje Bizancjum*, transl. H. Evert-Kappesowa et al., Warszawa 1968, p. 104.

At the same time and in cooperation with Persians, the Avars and Slavs were attacking the Empire in the Balkans, making the situation of the Byzantines a particularly difficult one[5]. The threat reached its peak in 626 when, in July, Constantinople found itself between the Persian and Avar forces (with allied Slavs, Bulgars and Gepids)[6]. The capital's situation was made worse by the absence of the emperor Heraclius, who was leading at the time a campaign against the Persians in the Armenian borderlands[7]. Because of this, the burden of mobilising the defenders to fight with the invaders fell on the shoulders of the Patriarch of Constantinople, Sergius, who displayed extraordinary energy, ordering numerous services and perpetual prayers in the churches, preaching sermons full of hope for victory and leading solemn processions on the city's walls in which, alongside of the icon of Christ, the icon of Our Lady of Blachernae was carried. The siege ended with a defeat of the attackers, who were forced to retreat. Supposedly, the Avar khan talked about a woman in a splendid dress who was seen on the walls. The inhabitants of Constantinople guessed that it was the Mother of God herself, repulsing the enemy's attacks alongside the soldiers. The capital's salvation was commonly attributed to Divine protection and the intervention of Mary. Furthermore, to the citizens' joy, it turned out that the Blachernae church, located beyond the city's walls, was spared – fate shared by few structures on that side of the defences. Patriarch Sergius organised there the prayers of thanksgiving. Meanwhile, the offensive undertaken by the emperor Heraclius in the years 622–628 eventually led to not only recovery of the lost relics, but also to the defeat of the Persian armies[8]. The relic of the True Cross[9] was first

[5] *Ibidem*, pp. 99–101.

[6] F. Barišić, *Le siège de Constantinople par le Avares et les Slaves*, B 24, 1954, pp. 371–396; J. Howard-Johnston, *The Siege of Constantinople in 626*, [in:] *Constantinople and its Hinterland: Papers from the Twenty-seventh Spring Symposium on Byzantine Studies, Oxford, April 1993*, eds. C. Mango, G. Dagron, G. Greatrex, Aldershot 1995, pp. 131–142.

[7] J. Howard-Johnston, *Heraclius' Persian Campaigns and the Revival of the East Roman Empire, 622–630*, WH 6, 1999, pp. 1–44.

[8] N.H. Baynes, *The Restoration of the Cross at Jerusalem*, EHR 27, 1912, pp. 287–299; A. Frolow, *La Vraie Croix et les expeditions d'Héraclius en Perse*, REB 11, 1953, pp. 88–105; B. Flussin, *Saint Anastase le Perse et l'histoire de la Palestine au début du VII^e siècle*, vol. II, Paris 1992, pp. 70–300; L. Wojciechowski, *Drzewo przenajszlachetniejsze. Problematyka Drzewa Krzyża w chrześcijaństwie zachodnim (IV–połowa XVII w): od legend do kontrowersji wyznaniowych i piśmiennictwa specjalistycznego*, Lublin 2003, pp. 16–20.

[9] It remains unknown whether it was the same relic that was taken by the Persians. A. Frolow, *La Vraie Croix...*, p. 98sq; G. Dagron, *Kościół bizantyński i chrześcijaństwo bizantyńskie między najazdami a ikonoklazmem (VII w.–początek VIII w.)*, [in:] *Historia chrześcijaństwa*, vol. IV, *Biskupi, mnisi i cesarze 610–1054*, eds. G. Dagron, P. Riché, A. Vauchez, J. Kłoczowski, transl. M. Żurowska et al., Warszawa 1999, p. 29.

brought to Constantinople, where it was first placed on the imperial throne in one of the halls of the imperial palace (Chrysotriklinos), and subsequently displayed for several days in the church of Hagia Sophia for adoration. It is likely that it was only in 630 that it was returned to Jerusalem, where it was ceremoniously enshrined by the emperor Heraclius and his wife Martina in the basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. Recovering of the Cross from the Persian hands had an almost eschatological significance for the Byzantines, and so it was commemorated annually. It could appear that the war against Persia united the Church around the state and the emperor. Had that truly been the case, it would have been incredibly important on the eve of the Arab invasion. In reality, however, Christians in the Roman Empire were deeply divided. Why, then, were external threats, including the Arabic one, not sufficient to unify the Church? What had caused these enduring divisions?

6.1. Christological Controversies and Ideological Divisions in the Church of Late Antiquity

The complex situation within the Church of the first half of the seventh century was primarily a result of the fierce Christological debates, which by that time had been conducted for over two centuries and which played an important role in the shaping of the Christian doctrine. They began largely after the resolution of the Arian controversy, which dominated the history of the Church in the fourth century, and which related to the question of Christ's divinity, and to the nature of his relations as Logos/Son of God with God the Father on the other. The controversy was referred to as the Trinitarian debate, as the polemics eventually involved debating the question of Holy Spirit as well, and thus the entirety of the Holy Trinity[10]. This time the disagreement concerned the economy of the Incarnation, the way in which Christ, the Word Incarnate, the divine nature was united with human nature. This question was raised already by Arius' pupils, and later by anomoeans. Accepting Plato's anthropology, they perceived man as a dichotomous entity, comprised of flesh and a soul, endowed with grace, or a trichotomous, comprised of flesh, an animate (or vegetative) soul, and of a rational soul – the mind, and expressed conviction that Christ accepted in-

[10] The literature on the subject of Arianism is very abundant, see: R.P.C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God. The Arian Controversy 318–381*, Edinburgh 1988; L. Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy. An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology*, Oxford 2009.

complete humanity, since in the first of the cases the Divine Logos was to have taken the place of the human soul, and in the second, of the rational soul. Similar Christological views were later expressed by Apollinaris of Laodicea, a well-known erudite and exegete. However, while the Arians attempted to use their formulation of the anthropology of incarnation to demonstrate the inferiority of the Logos, susceptible to human weaknesses, and thus changeable, to the Father, whom they alone believed to be immutable, Apollinaris attempted to prove the union of the Man-God and the ontological commonality of the divine and human nature within it (*communication idiomatum*). For it is in Christ that God and man became mixed together, in a way excluding any form of duality. Within him the Logos and flesh were joined into a human form. Discussing the nature of this union Apollinaris used the phrase *one nature of the Divine Word incarnate*, which indicated, according to Apollinaris, the dominance of the divine element in conjunction with the human element in Christ that was, in his idea, the God incarnate. Thus in Apollinaris' view, there was a single nature in Christ, consisting of the divinity immune to suffering and flesh that was susceptible to it, but without a human mind and will. In this way Christ was free of sin and able to save mankind. Had the Word, being the Divine Mind, also accepted human mind during incarnation, then, according to Apollinaris, within Christ there would have been two hypostases, and so two subjects, two independent, self-moving beings. The bishop of Laodicea considered a hypostasis to be synonymous with a being, nature or person. A human, according to him, was a hypostasis because of his mind, which was treated by Apollinaris as the life-principle. Therefore if Logos became conjoined exclusively with flesh and animate soul, Christ was only a single hypostasis, since the aforementioned human elements had their hypostasis in the Divine Word[11].

The teachings of Apollinaris had numerous adherents, who included some bishops, among them Vitalis, who was particularly active in making claims to the bishopric of Antioch[12]. Based on Apollinaris' teachings, one Polemon was

[11] H. L i e t z m a n n, *Apollinaris von Laodicea und seine Schule*, Tübingen 1905; E. M u e h l e n b e r g, *Apollinaris von Laodicea*, Göttingen 1969; C. K a n n e n g i e s s e r, *Une nouvelle interprétation de la christologie d'Apollinaire*, RSR 59, 1971, pp. 27–36; J.N.D. K e l l y, *Początki doktryny chrześcijańskiej*, transl. J. M r u k ó w n a, Warszawa 1988, pp. 217–226; P. G e m e i n h a r d t, *Apollinaris of Laodicea: A Neglected Link of Trinitarian Theology between East and West?*, ZAC 10, 2007, pp. 286–301.

[12] Vitalis, a student of Apollinaris, competed for the bishopric of Antioch with Meletius and Paulinus. Jerome (*Ep.* 16) signalled to the Pope Damasus in a letter that all three of them, each styling himself "the bishop of Antioch", were taking steps to prove their unity with the bishop of Rome. They also brought up their adherence to the Nicene Creed (H.I. M a r r o u, *L'Église*

even attempting to demonstrate a perfect consubstantiality of Logos with his deified flesh (synousiasm). Apollinaris' theological views were met with strong criticism. Their opponents expressed the view that his teachings denied mankind's salvation, for if the Christ was not fully human, then he could not have saved mankind, either. In their opinion only this could be saved in man what was accepted by Christ. Apollinaris' views were condemned at successive councils in Rome (377), Alexandria (378), Antioch (379) and finally at the Council of Constantinople (381), and were subsequently attacked in the edicts of the emperor Theodosius I. This forced supporters of Apollinaris to clandestine activity and impersonating people who were greatly respected by the Church, such as Gregory the Wonderworker, Julius, the bishop of Rome, or finally Athanasius of Alexandria. The authorship of works containing Apollinarian ideas was attributed to them, which allowed their survival until the second decade of the fifth century[13].

A Christology referred to as Antiochene (due to its association with the local theological milieu) developed in Syria in opposition to Apollinarianism. Its chief representatives were: Diodorus, an Antiochene priest and the bishop of Tarsus in Cilicia in 378–394[14], who may be seen as the founder of the theological school[15], and his student, Theodore, the bishop of Mopsuestia in Cilicia in 392–428[16]. Diodorus, a great erudite, was likened by one of his other students, John Chrysostom, to John the Baptist[17]. He defended both the complete Divinity of the Word and the completeness of humanity in Christ, distinguishing in him two Sons (that of God and that of Mary). At the same time, however, he pointed to their union, stressing that they cannot be treated separately, and that

de l'Antiquité tardive 303–604, Paris 1985, pp. 127–128). Vitalis, before he became a bishop, even managed in 375, during his stay in Rome, to obtain a confirmation of his orthodoxy, which was however quickly withdrawn by the Pope when Vitalis refused to put his signature under the Nicene Creed and a papal letter. See: Ch. P i e t r i, *Roma Christiana, Recherches sur l'Église de Rome, son organisation, sa politique, son idéologie de Miltiade à Sixte III (311–440)*, Paris–Rome 1976, pp. 811–818.

[13] E. W i p s z y c k a, *Kościół w świecie późnego antyku*, Warszawa 1994, p. 205.

[14] R.A. G r e e r, *The Antiochene Christology of Diodore of Tarsus*, JTS 17, 1966, pp. 327–341; J.N.D. K e l l y, *Początki doktryny...*, pp. 226–227.

[15] On the Antiochene school: R.V. S e l l e r s, *Two Ancient Christologies. A Study in the Christological Thought of the Schools of Alexandria and Antioch in the Early History of Christian Doctrine*, London 1954, *passim*; A. L o u t h, *John Chrysostom and Antiochene School to Theodoret of Cyrrhus*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature*, eds. F. Y o u n g, L. A y r e s, A. L o u t h, Cambridge 2006, pp. 342–352.

[16] F.G. M c L e o d, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, London 2009, *passim*; D.L. S c h w a r t z, *Paideia and Cult. Christian Initiation in Theodore of Mopsuestia*, Washington 2013, pp. 27–46.

[17] J o h n C h r y s o s t o m, *Laus Diodori*, cols. 761–766.

there are no two Sons in Christ. Similar thought was expressed by Theodore of Mopsuestia, who negated the existence of two Lords or two Sons after the incarnation, although he did distinguish in Christ two natures and simultaneously stressed their union, which he called the union of love, based on the agreement of the wills or perfect alikeness, using to describe it the term *synapheia*, which meant joining, but used in relation to separate entities. It would appear that Theodore, defending the complete humanity of Christ, focused on it more than on his divinity[18].

Attempts to develop Theodore's theological thought were made by one of his most famous students – Nestorius[19]. This clergyman – associated with the Antiochene milieu, a monk and subsequently a priest of the Church there, a well-known preacher[20] and an uncompromising defender of orthodoxy, began, as soon as he was elevated by the emperor Theodosius II to the episcopal see of Constantinople in 428, to use great energy to eradicate heretics, gaining numerous enemies in the process[21]. Writing to John, the bishop of Antioch, he described how in an attempt to conciliate the quarrelling Constantinopolitan groups, which were arguing about whether the Holy Virgin Mary ought to be called *Theotokos* – "the Mother of God", or *Anthropotokos* – "the Mother of Man", he suggested referring to her as *Christotokos*, "the Mother of Christ"[22]. He himself, however, was inclined to refer to her with the term *Theodochos* ("Receiver of God")[23], one that reflected the dual nature of Christ: the divine, immortal, eternal, not subject to suffering, and the human, created, mortal, capable of suffering. Both the natures remained unmixed and separate after the incarnation, and neither of them dominated the other one. The Word retained its divine characteristics – immutability and perfection, and so it could not have suffered on the cross, nor could it yield to human weaknesses. Thus, according to Nestorius,

[18] F.A. Sullivan, *The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia*, Romae 1956, pp. 197–284.

[19] A. de Halleux, *Nestorius, histoire et doctrine*, Ir 66, 1993, pp. 38–51, 161–178; L. Abramowski, *Histoire de la recherche sur Nestorius et le nestorianisme*, Istn 40, 1995, pp. 44–55; R. Kosiński, *The Life of Nestorius as seen in Greek and Oriental sources*, [in:] *Continuity and Change. Studies in Late Antique Historiography*, eds. D. Brodka, M. Stachura, Ele 13, 2007, pp. 155–170; idem, *Dzieje Nestoriusza, biskupa Konstantynopola w latach 428–431*, USS 7, 2008, pp. 30–63.

[20] Some of his sermons had had been attributed to his predecessor on the Constantinopolitan episcopal see.

[21] Socrates, VII, 29.

[22] *ACO* I, 1, 4, pp. 4–6. Nestorius similarly explained the beginnings of the dispute in the *Book of Heracleides* (p. 99).

[23] M. Redies, *Kyrill und Nestorius: Eine Neuinterpretation des Theotokos-Streits*, K 80, 1998, pp. 195–208; R.M. Price, *Marian Piety and the Nestorian Controversy*, SCH 39, 2004, pp. 31–38.

it cannot be said to have been born in a human manner. He therefore considered the title of Mother of God or God-bearer (*Theotokos*) as theologically inappropriate as, as he stressed, God could not have had a mother, and that which was created, regardless of anything else, could not have given birth to God. Nestorius was afraid that those who used the title *Theotokos* could be hiding their Apollinarianism, or even Arianism. He did not, however, take into account the rapidly growing cult of Mary and the attachment of the wide ranks of believers to the title "God-bearer". The Constantinopolitan bishop also had a clear problem in defining the union of natures in Christ. On the one hand, he spoke of Christ as of one subject, person, on the other – he ascribed subjectivity to each of his constituent natures. This created an impression that he saw in Christ not only two natures, but also two persons, while in reality he clearly rejected the doctrine of "two Sons"[24]. Nestorius' enemies attributed to him views that he did not proclaim[25]: if he claimed that Mary could not have given birth to God, she only gave birth to a human. He was therefore accused of dividing Christ into two separate persons, or of spreading views similar to Paul of Samosata's adoptionism[26], or to the Sabellian teachings of Photinus of Sirmium[27]. The Constantinopolitan bishop denied these accusations in the *Book of Heracleides*, written in exile.

Nestorius' teachings were opposed by Cyril, the bishop of Alexandria[28]. While the local Church superiors rivalled with the episcopal see in Constantinople[29], in intervening in this matter they were, it may be surmised, acting on their theological beliefs, rooted in Alexandrian Christology[30]. Rejection of the title

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[24] R.C. Chesnut, *The Two Prosopa in Nestorius' Bazaar of Heracleides*, JTS 29, 1978, pp. 392–409.

[25] M. Anastos, *Nestorius was Orthodox*, DOP 16, 1962, pp. 119–140.

[26] Such conclusions were reached by, for example, Eusebius of Dorylaeum, cf. *ACO* I, 1, 1, p. 101.

[27] Socrates, VII, 32. See: M. Starowieyski, *Sobory Kościoła niepodzielonego*, vol. I, *Dzieje*, Tarnów 1994, p. 52; A. Hołasek, *Rola pontyfikatu Cyryla (412–444) w procesie umacniania potęgi patriarchy aleksandryjskiego w Kościele wczesnobizantyńskim*, VP 58, 2012, p. 120.

[28] S. Wessel, *Cyril of Alexandria and the Nestorian Controversy: The Making of a Saint and of a Heretic*, Oxford 2004, *passim*; A. Hołasek, *Rola pontyfikatu Cyryla...*, pp. 116–131.

[29] F. Loofs, *Nestorius and his Place in the History of Christian Doctrine*, Cambridge 1914, pp. 36–41; E. Schwartz, *Cyrill und der Mönch Viktor*, Wien–Leipzig 1928, pp. 3–5; N.H. Baynes, *Alexandria and Constantinople: a Study in Ecclesiastical Diplomacy*, [in:] *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays*, London 1955, pp. 107–109.

[30] R.A. Norris, *Christological Models in Cyril of Alexandria*, SPB 13, 1975, pp. 255–268; J.A. McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria. The Christological Controversy. Its History, Theology, and Texts*, VC 23, 1994 (Supplements), *passim*; E. Wipszycka, *Kościół w świecie...*,

Theotokos was, for Cyril, unequivocal with accepting that the incarnation merely appeared to be real, and negating of salvation. In the Egyptian's mind, Nestorius' arguments on the subject of Christ's Passion which, according to the Constantinopolitan bishop, was experienced only by Jesus' human nature, led to an erroneous assertion about redemption of man by man. According to Cyril, incarnation should be understood as real and close union of Logos with flesh, which for the bishop meant completeness of humanity. He called it a hypostatic union[31]. The Word after the incarnation, however, remained the same as it was before, retaining in full its Godhood. Cyril was therefore arguing that Christ was God in human body. He also pointed out that *the one who existed beyond flesh became incarnate*[32]. Similarly the human side of Christ remained intact, although – contrary to Logos – the humanity that was linked to it never existed separately on its own. Nonetheless the union was so close, that the Alexandrian pointed to the single nature of the Word incarnate, using Apollinarist formula *one nature of the Divine Word incarnate*, mistakenly thinking that it was coined by Athanasius of Alexandria. At the same time he stressed that there is one Christ, but made of two natures. He also dealt with the issue of the Son's suffering, noting that the Word of God is by its nature impassible – while, incarnate, it suffered in the flesh[33].

Reaching an understanding by Nestorius and Cyril[34] was made more difficult by a lack of precisely defined terminology. They hailed from two different theological schools – Antiochene and Alexandrian, in which such terms as "person", "hypostasis" or "nature" were understood differently. In Syria, the former two were given similar meanings, and were used in relation to an individual being, while the latter was used in relation to nature as an internal property of an entity. In Egypt, however, the term "nature" was also used in relation to an independent being, a person. Cyril also criticised Nestorius' and Antiochene schools'

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pp. 204–218; B. Meunier, *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie. L'humanite, le salut et la question monophysite*, Paris 1997, *passim*; J.N.D. Kelly, *Początki doktryny...*, pp. 232–245; S.J. Davis, *Coptic Christology in Practice. Incarnation and Divine Participation in Late Antique and Medieval Egypt*, Oxford 2008, pp. 1–49.

[31] Cyril of Alexandria, *Apologia*, col. 401.

[32] Cyril of Alexandria, *Explicatio duodecim capitum*, 2.

[33] R.A. Norris, *Christological Models...*, pp. 255–268; A. de Halleux, *Le dyophysisme christologique de Cyrille d'Alexandrie*, [in:] *Logos*, ed. H.C. Brennecke, BZNW 67, 1993, pp. 411–428; J.M. Hallman, *The Seed of Fire: Divine Suffering in the Christology of Cyril of Alexandria and Nestorius of Constantinople*, JECS 5.3, 1997, pp. 369–391.

[34] On the subject of Nestorius' opinions on the theological views of Cyril, see: P. Gavrilyuk, *Theopatheia: Nestorius's Main Charge against Cyril of Alexandria*, SJT 56.2, 2003, pp. 190–207.

approach to the life-giving Eucharist which, according to the Alexandrian bishop, granted salvation thanks to the Divine nature that filled it. His Antiochene adversaries were arguing instead that it grants salvation because by the will of Christ it is flesh and blood, identical in substance to human ones, which for Cyril deprived Eucharist of its essence and reduced Holy Communion to an act of cannibalism.

Having learned of the rejection of the title *Theotokos* by Nestorius, Cyril was already bringing forward a stern criticism of his teachings during the Easter of 429[35], and informed monks[36] in letters about the heresy that appeared in Constantinople, and subsequently exchanged letters with Nestorius, in which neither spared the other harsh words. In the middle of 430, the bishop of Alexandria intervened about the issue of Nestorius with Pope Celestine, sending the latter a large *dossier* of the case, translated from Greek to Latin[37]. While Nestorius also attempted to gain support of the bishop of Rome, he did it later, and sent only a text in Greek. A council in Rome, convened during the first decade of September of 430, together with the Pope came to defend the title of "Mother of God", accusing Nestorius of denying the birth of God[38]. The bishop of Constantinople was given ten days, from the day of learning of the council's decision, to reject the erroneous teachings under the threat of excommunication, and it was the bishop of Alexandria, Cyril, who was to be the executor of this sentence. The latter, in turn, sent to Nestorius another, third, letter, with provocatively formulated and uncompromising twelve anathemas, which the Constantinopolitan bishop was to accept in order to avoid excommunication[39].

The bishop of Alexandria, aware of the support that Nestorius, as the bishop of the capital city, had at the imperial court, attempted to bring to his cause Theodosius II and his entourage[40]. He attempted to convince them to his ar-

[35] Cyril of Alexandria, *Homilia paschalis XVII*, 3, col. 777; N. Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, London 2000, p. 35; R. Kosiński, *Dzieje Nestoriusza...*, pp. 48–49.

[36] Cyril of Alexandria, *Epistula ad monachos Aegypti*, pp. 10–23.

[37] Cyril of Alexandria, *Epistula ad Caelestinum papam*, p. 12.

[38] Celestine, p. 78.

[39] Cyril of Alexandria, *Epistula ad Nestorium*, pp. 33–42.

[40] *ACO* I, 1, 5, pp. 62–118; *ACO* I, 1, 5, pp. 26–61. See: *Histoire des conciles d'après les documents originaux*, ed. C.J. Hefele, transl. H. Leclerq, vol. II/I, Paris 1908, pp. 255–256. Cyril is thought to have written three letters in which he defended his theological views: one to the emperor, another to his sisters, Arcadia and Marina, and the third one to Pulcheria and Eudocia. See: C. Luibheid, *Theodosius II and Heresy*, JEH 16, 1965, p. 14; K. Ilski, *Sobory w polityce religijnej Teodozjusza II*, Poznań 1992, p. 11. The emperor's sister, Pulcheria, was at odds with Nestorius, and thus supported Cyril. See: K. Chew, *Virgins and Eunuchs: Pulcheria, Politics and the Death of Emperor Theodosius II*, Hi 55.2, 2006, pp. 217–220. The bishop of

guments through correspondence. It also appears that by using the material resources of the Alexandrian patriarchate he was pursuing creation of a kind of a lobby in the eastern capital of the *Imperium Romanum* that would support his policies[41]. These actions of Cyril did not go unnoticed, and Theodosius severely punished him, considering Cyril's actions to be an intrigue aimed at sowing discord at the court[42]. The ruler, supporting the capital city's bishop, blamed Cyril for the conflict[43]. He also decided, likely on Nestorius' advice, to entrust solving the dispute to a council, which he convened in a letter dated to 19 November 430 to Ephesus, to take place at Pentecost (7 June 431)[44].

In the letter convening the council, Theodosius expressed a belief about the existence of a close relation between the temporal and heavenly reality[45]. The former was represented by the state, the latter by the Church, which ensured power and wellbeing to the empire, to which it was in turn indebted. God, according to Theodosius, was the maker of them all. From Him came the imperial power, and He made the ruler an intermediary between Himself and the people. The emperor was to care not only for the temporal happiness of his subjects, but also for their eternal happiness. God listened to the Church's supplications and blessed the Empire, but for the prayers of believers to be effective, the community of the faithful had to be united, in agreement and at peace with itself. Therefore one of the chief duties of the emperor, one who believed that serving Divine Providence safeguarded the state's welfare, was guarding the Church's unity[46].

Thus when the conflict in the matter of *Theotokos* came to be, the emperor could not remain idle. He convened a council according to the tradition reaching

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Alexandria also gained support of Eudocia, after the death of the latter's daughter, Flacilla. E. S t e i n, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, vol. I, *De l'État Romain à l'État Byzantin (284–476)*, Paris 1959, pp. 301, 304; H. C h a d w i c k, *The Early Church*, London 1967, p. 196.

[41] On the matter of the various forms of bribery employed by Cyril: P. B a t i f f o l, *Les présents de St. Cyrille à la cour de Constantinople*, BALAC 1, 1911, pp. 247–264; K. H o l u m, *Theodosian Empress: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity*, Los Angeles 1982, p. 159; K. I l s k i, *Łapówka czy dobrodziejstwo. Niefortunne środki dyplomatyczne w czasach Teodozjusza II*, E 83.2, 1995, pp. 359–365.

[42] *ACO* I, 1, 1, pp. 73–74.

[43] L.I. S c i p i o n i, *Nestorio e il concilia di Efeso*, Milano 1974, pp. 180–181.

[44] I have also discussed the religious policy of the emperor Theodosius II in an article: S. B r a l e w s k i, *Postawa cesarza Teodozjusza II wobec biskupów*, AUL.FH 48, 1993, pp. 39–60.

[45] *ACO* I, 1, 1, pp. 114–116; P.Th. C a m e l o t, *Les Conciles oecumèniques de IV^e et V^e siècles*, [in:] *Le Concile et les Conciles. Contribution à l'histoire de la vie conciliaire de l'Eglise*, Chevetogne 1960, p. 51; W. d e V r i e s, *Orient et Occident*, Paris 1974, p. 86.

[46] Nestorius was perfectly aware of this, and promised the emperor eternal salvation and military victories over the enemies of the empire, in return for aid in combating heretics. S o c r a t e s, VII, 29.

back to times of Constantine I the Great. The decisions that were made in relation to the assembly seem to indicate that the ruler expected the conflict, which for him was purely theological in nature, to be resolved by the bishops themselves[47]. Choosing Ephesus, a city far removed from the imperial court in Constantinople, for the site of the council[48], while depriving Theodosius of influence on the course of the debates[49], also gave hope that state officials will not get involved in it, either – and, what is more, that the same will be true about the people closest to the emperor. The ruler, knowing of Cyril's actions aimed at building his own, powerful lobby at the court, may well have been wary of this. For this reason Theodosius ordered his special envoy to make it impossible for the gathered bishops to travel to the court (or anywhere else) before the proceedings were concluded[50].

Theodosius, while he did not intend to get involved in the theological dispute[51], did not hide he favoured Nestorius[52]. Not only did he allow the patriarch of Constantinople to be accompanied by his friend, *comes* Irenaeus[53], but also arranged for the proceedings to be conducted in such a way as to neutralise Cyril[54]. From a letter of the latter it appears that the ruler sent the letters convoking

[47] It would seem that the emperor's deference to the Church's shepherds played here a no small part; the emperor's great piety was well-known. Socrates, VII, 22; Theodoret, *HE*, V, 36; Evagrius Scholasticus, I, 12 (he wrote about Theodosius' great religious zeal); Theophanes, AM 5901; Nicephorus Callistus, XII, 3, cols. 1061–1065. See: P.Th. Camelot, *Ephèse et Chalcédoine*, Paris 1963, p. 42; W. Ensslin, *Pulcheria*, [in:] *RE*, vol. XXIII, 2, Stuttgart 1959, cols. 1955–1956. Sozomen (IX, 1) attributed a significant role to the emperor's devotional education by his older sister, Pulcheria, who was credited with instilling in him not only a deep piety, but also respect for men of the cloth. E. Stein, *Histoire...*, pp. 275–276; P. Goubert, *Le rôle de Sainte Pulchérie et de l'eunuque Chrysaphios*, [in:] *Das Konzil von Chalkedon, Geschichte und Gegenwart*, vol. I, *Der Glaube von Chalkedon*, Würzburg 1951, pp. 303–321.

[48] *ACO* I, 1, 3, p. 31. Ephesus' convenient location made it easier for the bishops to reach the council's site, and the prosperous area allowed fulfilling all of the needs of the delegates, which had the additional advantage of depriving bishops of any excuses for leaving the city before the council was officially concluded. *Histoire des conciles...*, pp. 288–291; S. Bralewski, *Le choix du lieu pour la délibération des conciles convoqués par les empereurs du bas-empire romain*, AUL.FH 56, 1996, pp. 63–64.

[49] Cf. S. Bralewski, *Postawa...*, pp. 43–44.

[50] *ACO* I, 1, 1, pp. 120–121; *Histoire des conciles...*, pp. 288, 291.

[51] *ACO* I, 1, 1, p. 120. See also: *Histoire des conciles...*, p. 291; L.I. Scipioni, *Nestorio...*, p. 206.

[52] This can be clearly seen in the letters sent to the gathered bishops. *ACO* I, 1, 1, p. 121; *PLRE* II, pp. 624–625; L.I. Scipioni, *Nestorio...*, p. 231.

[53] *ACO* I, 1, 1, p. 121; *PLRE* II, pp. 624–625; L.I. Scipioni, *Nestorio...*, p. 231.

[54] S. Bralewski, *Imperatorzy późnego cesarstwa rzymskiego wobec zgromadzeń biskupów*, Łódź 1997, pp. 106–109.

the council to metropolitan bishops[55] and, it seems, to ones that were specifically picked[56]. In a letter to the clergymen gathered in Ephesus, the emperor listed bishops who were allowed to take part in the proceedings, and excluded any possibility of anyone not on it to influence the discussed substantive issues. Metropolitan bishops were treated as equal with bishops who had power beyond metropolitan – ones that in near future would be titled patriarchs. Meanwhile in Egypt, over which Cyril had jurisdiction, metropolitan sees had not formed, as the highly dominant position of the Alexandrian bishop in those territories did not allow it[57]. In the areas subject to Cyril, the only Church metropolises were present in Libya. According to the imperial order, Cyril was to come to Ephesus himself, with only a few accompanying bishops[58]. It would therefore appear that the ruler based the council's organisation on metropolitan bishops to weaken Cyril's position during the proceedings. After all, at this stage of the dispute Theodosius not only blamed him for the disturbances in the Church, but also supported Nestorius – of which the Alexandrian bishop was aware, and all the more eagerly attempted to gain Pope Celestine's backing[59]. Cyril also had behind him the long tradition of the well-organised Alexandrian patriarchate, while the patriarchate of Constantinople was still only taking form. While the emperor Theodosius II made numerous efforts to consolidate the capital bishop's jurisdiction over the dioceses of Pontus, Asia and Thrace[60], the position of the Constantinopolitan patriarch could not match that of his Egyptian counterpart. Had the emperor called the bishops together through the patriarch, he would have put Nestorius in a very difficult position and given advantage to Cyril. Making the gathering based on metropolitan bishops was to improve the position of the bishop of Constantinople – among the several dozen bishops at least twenty-four had their sees in the dioceses of Pontus, Asia and Thrace, while Egypt was to provide only Cyril, and a few accompanying prelates.

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[55] *ACO* I, 1, 1, pp. 114–116.

[56] Cf. *ACO* I, 1, 1, 14–15, p. 129. In another letter written to the council, already in session (*ACO* I, 1, 3, p. 31), addressees who were not metropolitan bishops were listed in detail. For more on this subject, cf. A. C r a b b e, *The Invitation List to the Council of Ephesus and Metropolitan Hierarchy in the Fifth Century*, JTS 32.2, 1981, pp. 369–400.

[57] On this subject: E. W i p s z y c k a, *Patriarcha aleksandryjski i jego biskupi (IV–VII w.)*, PH 73, 1982, pp. 176–194; e a d e m, *La Chiesa nell'Egitto del IV secolo: le strutture ecclesiastiche*, MHE 6, 1983, pp. 182–201.

[58] *ACO* I, 1, 1, p. 115.

[59] According to W. d e V r i e s (*Orient...*, pp. 69–70): *Cyrille ne s'est tourné vers le pape que parce qu'il n'avait pas réussi à gagner l'empereur à la lutte contre Nestorius. Cyrille cherche donc appui à Rome contre l'empereur qui soutient Nestorius*.

[60] G. D a g r o n, *Naissance d'une Capitale. Constantinople et ses Institutions de 330 à 451*, Paris 1974, pp. 470–472.

Intending on strengthening his position at the council, the patriarch of Alexandria did not respect the ruler's will and brought along several dozen bishops[61], further assisted by numerous clergymen and monks. Cyril's insubordination foreshadowed serious perturbations. Nestorius protested, and demanded that each of the provinces was to be represented at council, aside from the metropolitan bishop, by only two other bishops, and that the proceedings were to be closed to the monks and lower-ranking clergymen[62]. The beginning of the debates was delayed, as the gathering was waiting for the arrival of the Syrian bishops led by John of Antioch, and for the papal legates[63]. Cyril, supported by Memnon, bishop of Ephesus, resorted to the method of *faits accomplis*, and despite the protestations of the imperial representative, Candidian, and unauthorised by the ruler, he began the proceedings on 22 June, in a church dedicated to Mary[64], usurping for himself chairman's position[65]. Nestorius was called three times to participate in the proceedings, which he deemed illegal. He was then deposed and excommunicated. Triumphant, Cyril proclaimed overthrowing of an enemy of the faith[66]. When on 26 June John of Antioch arrived, along with the Syrian bishops[67], he opened a new session, and together with Nestorius, deposed both Cyril and Memnon, and excommunicated those who participated in the proceedings the two have organised earlier[68].

The events at Ephesus were a great surprise to the emperor. It seems that he was initially convinced that the decision to depose Nestorius was made by the whole gathering. However, when he learned of the true course of events, he annulled

[61] Scholars estimate their number at forty to fifty. *Histoire des conciles...*, p. 292, P.Th. C a m e l o t, *Éphèse...*, p. 47; M. S t a r o w i e y s k i, *Sobory...*, p. 55.

[62] *ACO* I, 4, p. 31. Nestorius demanded from the emperor enforcing this.

[63] According to Kazimierz Ilski (*Sobory...*, pp. 31–32), sending legates to the general council by Pope Leo was *an expression of limited trust in Cyril*, who, after all, was originally supposed to have represented the bishop of Rome.

[64] A. d e H a l l e u x, *La première session du concile d'Éphèse (22 Juin 431)*, ETL 69, 1993, pp. 48–87; J.A. M c G u c k i n, *St. Cyril...*, pp. 1–125; H.J. V o g t, *Unterschiedliches Konzilsverständnis der Cyrillianer und der Orientalen beim Konzil von Ephesus 431*, [in:] *Logos...*, pp. 429–451. On the subject of Candidian, cf. *PLRE* II, pp. 257–258 [*Fl. Candidianus 6*].

[65] It is not known who was designated by the emperor to fulfil this role, but it certainly had not been entrusted to Cyril. It is likely that, by ruler's will, it was performed by John of Antioch. K. I l s k i, *Sobory...*, p. 32; S. B r a l e w s k i, *Le retard de l'évêque Jean d'Antioche sur le concile d'Ephèse en 431: accident ou choix délibéré?*, [in:] *Mélanges d'histoire byzantine offerts à Oktawiusz Jurewicz à l'occasion de son soixante-dixième anniversaire*, ed. W. C e r a n, Łódź 1998, pp. 52–55.

[66] *ACO* I, 1, 1, pp. 29–64.

[67] Delay in John's arrival to the proceedings at Ephesus was likely deliberate. S. B r a l e w s k i, *Le retard...*, pp. 43–55.

[68] *ACO* I, 1, 5, pp. 119–124.

the resolutions made by Cyril's council[69]. In a letter, he reprimanded the clergymen gathered in Ephesus, deploring the divisions between them, particularly because he considered that their source lay in insignificant misunderstandings and rivalry between clergymen. Announcing an investigation into the events at Ephesus, Theodosius demanded from the bishops a joint debate – which, he deemed, would be according to God's will. The council was to reach the truth in the matter of dogma, and not judge Nestorius, or any other bishop. Only under these circumstances would the emperor confirm the council's decisions. The ruler reminded the gathered clergymen of the ban on leaving Ephesus, whether to travel to the court or to their respective Churches, and warned against breaking imperial orders. He also informed them about the order he had issued to the provincial governors, in which they were instructed to prevent any of the bishops from returning home without the emperor's permission[70]. Theodosius, however, did not remain firm in isolating the gathered bishops from the court. Under the pressure of several thousand monks, led by the famed for his holiness ascetic Dalmatius[71], who intervened on Cyril's behalf, the emperor allowed representatives of the council to arrive in Constantinople, and as a result, from that point onwards, both sides of the conflict officially began to seek support at the court. The quarrelling sides confronted each other even in the presence of Theodosius and of senior government officials[72]. Finally, the ruler decided to send John[73], the *magister officiorum*, to Ephesus with a mission to reconcile the dissenters and, at the same time, ordered arrests of those most involved in the dispute: Nestorius, Cyril and Memnon[74], to make conciliatory efforts easier.

In another letter, addressed to the council, the emperor once again expressed his disapproval of the bishops' attitudes, so much different from the ones exhibited by their predecessors who, gathered for a debate by the emperor Constantine, unanimously proclaimed the orthodox creed. Theodosius also referred to the authority of the famous for his holiness bishop Acacius of Beroea, who sent him a confession of faith that was to aid in reconciling the quarrelling bishops[75].

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[69] *ACO* I, 1, 3, pp. 9–10. See: *Histoire des conciles...*, p. 319; W. de Vries, *Orient...*, p. 87.

[70] *ACO* I, 1, 3, p. 10.

[71] Cf. *ACO* I, 1, 2, pp. 65, 68–69; *ACO* I, 1, 3, p. 51. On Dalmatius' intervention: *Histoire des conciles...*, p. 343; G. Dagron, *Les moines et la ville: le monachisme à Constantinople jusqu'au concile de Chalcédoine (451)*, TM 4, 1970, pp. 266–268; C. Luibheid, *Theodosius II...*, p. 19.

[72] *ACO* I, 1, 5, p. 135.

[73] *PLRE* II, p. 596.

[74] *ACO* I, 1, 3, pp. 31–32; L.I. Scipioni, *Nestorio...*, pp. 232–235.

[75] G. Bardy, *Acace de Bérée et son rôle dans la controverse nestorienne*, RSR 18, 1938, pp. 20–44. The creed proposed by Acacius is identified as *Confessio fidei*. *ACO* I, 4, pp. 243–245;

The emperor's efforts, however, had little effect. Joint proceedings did not take place. *Magister officiorum* John kept sending back to Constantinople reports full of concern about disturbances, quarrels and even scuffles between the bishops[76]. In light of this, the emperor called to him representatives of both of the sides to Chalcedon, where he himself resided, counting on his presence to force the bishops to engage in substantive debates, agree their views on doctrinal matters and – as a consequence – forgive one another[77]. At the same time, the emperor approved the request of Nestorius, who wished to avoid causing a split in the church, to allow him to return to a monastery near Antioch[78].

Once again the ruler's efforts were in vain, despite multiple meetings with the delegations of bishops and with individual clergymen. This was because representatives of both sides were limited by instructions given to them by the bishops who remained in Ephesus[79]. Thus substantial concessions were out of the question. Theodosius, disheartened by the fruitless negotiations, eventually gave up on participating in them. The ruler undoubtedly faced a serious conundrum, as the situation required an immediate solution, while any sort of compromise between the bishops was unattainable. After some hesitation[80], faced with a prolonged conflict and no hope of its quick resolution in sight, Theodosius – aware of the threat to the state resulting from such situation – decided to depose and banish Nestorius[81] and free Cyril[82], who was supported by the majority. He did it

C. Fraisse-Coué, *Le débat théologique au temps de Théodose II: Nestorius*, [in:] *Histoire du christianisme des origins à nos jours*, eds. J.-M. Mayeur, Ch. Pietri, L. Pietri, A. Vauchez, M. Venard, vol. II, *Naissance d'une chrétienté* (250–430), ed. L. Pietri, Paris 1995, p. 538, note 212.

[76] *ACO* I, 1, 7, p. 67.

[77] The negotiations were to take place in Constantinople, but they were eventually held in Chalcedon, after 11 November 431. C. Fraisse-Coué, *Le débat théologique...*, p. 540.

[78] *ACO* I, 1, 7, p. 71; Evagrius Scholasticus, I, 7.

[79] *ACO* I, 1, 3, pp. 33–39.

[80] Thedosius was supposed to have been supportive of Cyril's faction, which was reflected in, among others, selection of Nestorius' successor to the episcopal see in Constantinople. Later, however, he intended to allow the bishops to conclude the proceedings and return to their sees, while Cyril and Memnon's depositions were sustained and proclaimed once more. *ACO* I, 4, pp. 68–69.

[81] *ACO* I, 4, p. 64; *ACO* I, 1, 3, p. 67. Nestorius was to live in exile for twenty two more years and die around 453. R. Kosiński, *The Fate of Nestorius, after the Council of Ephesus in 431*, SUFED 10, 2008, pp. 33–43.

[82] *ACO* I, 1, 7, p. 8. Supporters of the patriarch of Alexandria had an overwhelming preponderance in the emperor's entourage, all the more so because Cyril himself put considerable effort, backed with a steady stream of bribes, in convincing court officials to his views. When defending his stance in Ephesus, he compared his fight to the one previously waged by the famed

with a heavy heart, however, while blaming the bishops for disrupting the unity of the Church, and warning them about God's punishment[83].

Despite being disappointed by the bishops' attitude, he did not relent on efforts to bring peace back to the Church[84]. After consulting the *endimousa* council, gathered in 432 under the chairmanship of the new bishop of Constantinople, Maximian[85], the emperor decided to exert pressure on the leaders of the dissenting sides – John of Antioch and Cyril of Alexandria. From the former, he demanded consent to the deposition of Nestorius, and condemnation of his teachings. He insisted that both of them appear, accompanied by only a handful of priests[86], in Nicomedia, so that after meeting in person they could resolve any misunderstandings and reconcile. The clergymen were forbidden to appear before the monarch until that happened[87].

The emperor entrusted the responsibility for reconciling John and Cyril to tribune Aristolaus[88], in co-operation with *magister militum* Plinta[89]. At first the Antiochene bishop attempted to stall, under the pretext of poor health that prevented him from traveling to Nicomedia, but he did formulate conditions necessary for reconciliation, which Aristolaus had taken promptly to Alexandria[90]. The decisive action taken by the two imperial officials finally brought success[91]. The two greatest rivals – after Nestorius' exile – Cyril of Alexandria and John of Antioch – reached agreement, sealed by an act of unity in 433[92]. It

Athanasius (one of his predecessors on the episcopal see in Alexandria) against the Arians. *ACO* I, 1, 3, pp. 75–90; C. Fraisse-Coué, *Le débat théologique...*, p. 541.

[83] *ACO* I, 1, 7, p. 142; *ACO* I, 1, 4, pp. 73–74.

[84] In his letter to John of Antioch (*ACO* I, 4, pp. 3–5), the emperor considered it his duty to eliminate divisions within the Church.

[85] Enthroned on 25 October 431. *ACO* I, 3, p. 179; Socrates, VII, 35. *Endimousa* council (permanent council) is a gathering of bishops present at the time in Constantinople, headed by the patriarch.

[86] The ban on bringing along any bishops shows to the ruler's disaffection toward gatherings of clergy.

[87] In a letter sent on this occasion to John (*ACO* I, 4, pp. 3–5) the emperor once again lamented that the clergy, who because of their calling were obliged to promote peace, had to be beseeched to restore it among themselves.

[88] *ACO* I, 4, pp. 91–92; *PLRE* II, pp. 146–147.

[89] *PLRE* II, pp. 892–893.

[90] *ACO* I, 4, pp. 92–140.

[91] Aristolaus assiduously travelled between Antioch and Alexandria (*ACO* I, 4, pp. 225–226), but the conciliation between John and Cyril was ultimately accomplished thanks to Paul of Emesa's embassy (*ACO* I, 1, 4, p. 6). C. Fraisse-Coué, *Le débat théologique...*, pp. 545–547.

[92] *Formula unionis*, [in:] *DSP* I, pp. 176–178; *ACO* I, 1, 4, p. 8; Cyril of Alexandria, *Epistula ad Iohannem Antiochenum*, pp. 15–20; John of Antioch, *Ep.*, pp. 151–152; H.I. Marrou, *L'Église...*, pp. 138–139; J.N.D. Kelly, *Początki doktryny...*, pp. 244–246;

was based on mutual concessions. John was forced to condemn Nestorius and to completely reject, without any reservations, his teachings, and to accept Maximian as the new bishop of Constantinople[93]. At the same time Cyril not only gave up on promoting the theological ideas listed in the anathemas[94], but also accepted the formulation of faith prepared by Paul of Emesa, who at the time was mediating between Alexandria and Antioch[95]. This formula, *nota bene*, repeated the wording of the *credo* drawn up in Ephesus in 431 by the bishops gathered around John of Antioch. It is difficult, then, not to see a certain paradox – the compromise was based on the creed prepared by one of the sides of the conflict, which at the same time was condemned for the theological views proclaimed by one of its chief representatives[96].

Unfortunately, as later events had shown, many were dissatisfied with the compromise. The majority of these were to be found among Cyril's supporters. For this reason the emperor categorically demanded that all bishops, under the threat of deposition, were to enter the ecclesial communion with John of Antioch[97]. Fifteen bishops refused, and paid for their insubordination with exile. Such a decisive attitude of the emperor attested to his determination. The emperor was prepared to bring peace to the Church using the means of coercion that were at his disposal[98]. In 435 he issued a decree whereby Nestorians would face severe punishments if they did not desist from preaching erroneous teachings[99]. This legislation soon spurred many of Cyril's followers, who wanted to use his twelve anathemas as a touchstone of orthodoxy[100]. From that point onwards

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A. Grillmeier, *Le Christ dans la tradition chrétienne. De l'âge apostolique à Chalcédoine (451)*, Paris 1973, pp. 496–498; L.I. Scipioni, *Nestorio...*, pp. 246–262; K. Ilski, *Sobory...*, pp. 56–59; E. Wipszycka, *Kościół...*, pp. 217–218; N. Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria...*, pp. 52–56; S. Wessel, *Cyril of Alexandria...*, pp. 268–283.

[93] It was very difficult for the Antiochenes to simultaneously condemn Nestorius and acknowledge as the basis of the compromise the creed that reflected his theological views. L. Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Église*, vol. III, Paris 1911, p. 380.

[94] A. de Halleux, *Les douze chapitres cyrilliens au concile d'Ephèse (430–433)*, RTL 23, 1992, pp. 425–458.

[95] G. Gould, *Cyril of Alexandria and the Formula of Reunion*, DR 106, 1988, pp. 235–252.

[96] C. Fraisse-Coué, *Le débat théologique...*, p. 548.

[97] The emperor's will was being executed here by the *magister militum* Dionysius. *ACO* I, 4, pp. 168–169, 196, 198–199. *PLRE* II, p. 366 [*Fl. Dionysius 13*]; C. Luibheid, *Theodosius II...*, pp. 26–27.

[98] J. Gaudemet, *L'Église dans l'Empire romain (IV–V siècles)*, Paris 1958, p. 611.

[99] *ACO* I, 1, 3, p. 68; *Theodosian Code*, XVI, 5, 66, pp. 879–880; *CIC*, *Codex*, 1, 5, 5, p. 51; G. Bardy, P. de Labriolle, G. de Plinval, L. Brehier, *De la mort de Théodose à l'élection de Grégoire le Grand*, [in:] *Histoire de L'Église*, eds. A. Fliche, V. Martin, vol. IV, Paris 1935, pp. 202–203.

[100] P.Th. Camelot, *Éphèse...*, pp. 84–89; H. Chadwick, *The Early Church...*, p. 200.

they redoubled their efforts in tracking down Nestorians, perceiving their presence everywhere – and in particular among Nestorius' former friends. Hence accusations of heresy levied against Theodoret of Cyrus, Domnus of Antioch, and even Eusebius of Dorylaeum, who showed merit in uncovering Nestorius' errors. All who did not accept the entirety of Cyril's teachings were accused of Nestorianism; this was true even of those who professed the same creed, but used different wording[101].

At the forefront of the zealots in this campaign were: Dioscur, Cyril's successor on the patriarchal see and the archimandrite Eutyches[102]. Such course of action taken by the Cyrillians energised their opponents[103]. Theodosius, concerned by this turn of events, issued another edict, in which he announced destruction of all of the books inconsistent with the interpretation of the Nicene and Ephesian councils and with Cyril's teachings. At the same time he warned about serious penalties for Nestorians, and to show that these were not vain threats, he deposed Irenaeus, the bishop of Tyre, who was accused of Nestorianism. The emperor thus unambiguously strove to finally eliminate seeds of the dispute. For the same reason he proclaimed Cyril's teachings, along with the decisions of the aforementioned councils, to be a touchstone of orthodoxy and, at the same time, omitted in silence the act of union from 433, reducing it in practice to a meaningless writing. It is likely that he decided that it did not meet the expectations put in it, and that it did not become a foundation of a lasting peace within the Church. Hence, wanting to bring peace with the backing of the majority, he decisively supported Cyrillians, simultaneously shielding their patron from any criticism.

By that time the emperor became very vexed by the lack of unity within the Church, more so as the state was becoming weakened by constant military defeats, which peaked during the 440s when the deadly Hunnic threat appeared[104]. For the pious emperor such events must have strengthened his belief that he was being punished by God for the loss of unity within the Church, and made him aware of the need to take even more vigorous action in restoring it.

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[101] G. D o w n e y, *History of Antioch in Syria; from Seleucos to the Arab Conquest*, Princeton 1961, pp. 466–470.

[102] R. D r a g u e t, *La christologie d'Eutychès d'après les Actes du synode de Flavien*, B 6, 1931, pp. 441–457.

[103] Theodoret of Cyrus opposed Eutyches in three of the books of his work *Eranistes*, published in 447. The title of the work itself implied that the archimandrite based his ideas on an amalgam of earlier heresies. H. C h a d w i c k, *The Early Church...*, p. 200; H.I. M a r r o u, *L'Église...*, p. 139.

[104] K. D ą b r o w s k i, *Hunowie europejscy*, [in:] K. D ą b r o w s k i, T. N a g r o d z k a - M a j c h r z y k, E. T r y j a r s k i, *Hunowie Europejscy, Protobułgarzy, Chazarowie, Pieczyngowie*, Wrocław 1975, p. 50; L.A. T y s z k i e w i c z, *Hunowie w Europie. Ich wpływ na Cesarstwo Wschodnie i Zachodnie oraz na ludy barbarzyńskie*, Wrocław 2004, pp. 119–128.

The teachings of archimandrite Eutyches, one of the spiritual leaders of Constantinopolitan monks, became the seed of a new conflict. The man was famed for his holiness and was considered to be a pillar of the orthodoxy[105], and when he was accused of Apollinarianism[106], the ruler decided to cut the nascent conflict short. He therefore sent to the *endimousa* council, where the accusations against Eutyches were to be considered, his representative – patrician Florentius[107] who, as a wealthy, very pious, orthodox and universally respected man, was to guarantee impartiality of the proceedings and acceptance of their outcome by all. By Theodosius' order, the legate was to not only preside over the assembled dignitaries, investigate the matters of faith, but also to give the final verdict, as if that was not a matter to be decided exclusively by the bishops. Florentius, according to his instructions, examined Eutyches' beliefs in detail during a session held on 22 November and concluded that they were not orthodox[108]. The archimandrite was excommunicated by the council, deposed and sentenced to exile.

The emperor, however, was apparently not pleased by this turn of events, as he tried to convince Flavian, the patriarch of Constantinople, to waive the sentence and withdraw the accusation of heresy, and instead to settle for Eutyches accepting the Nicene Creed confirmed in Ephesus (in 431). In return, Eutyches was to cease accusing the patriarch of heterodoxy. As Flavian refused to comply[109], Theodosius felt it necessary to bring the matter before a general council[110]. He decided, however, to arrange it in such a way as to prevent any surprises. Hence, he ordered a new bishops' council to interrogate Flavian's clerks, who were accused by Eutyches of falsifying the records of the previous *endimousa* council (held in November 448)[111]. On 13 April, the bishops gathered to examine the complaint made by the archimandrite[112]. After the investigation, despite

[105] Eutyches was also the godfather of *spatharios* Chrysaphius, who was greatly trusted by the emperor at the time. Priscus of Panium, p. 300; Evagrius Scholasticus, I, 10; P. Goubert, *Le rôle...*, pp. 303–321.

[106] E. Schwartz, *Der Prozess des Eutyches*, München 1929; G. May, *Das Lehrverfahren gegen Eutyches im November des Jahres 448: Zur Vorgeschichte des Konzils von Chalkedon*, AHC 21, 1989, pp. 1–61.

[107] *ACO* II, 1, 1, p. 138; *PLRE* II, pp. 478–480 [*Fl. Florentius 7*]; *Histoire des conciles...*, p. 533.

[108] *ACO* II, 1, 1, pp. 131–144; *Histoire des conciles...*, p. 533–538; A. Grillmeier, *Le Christ...*, pp. 525–528.

[109] *ACO* II, I, 1, p. 73; *Histoire des conciles...*, p. 565. Theodosius blamed Flavian for disturbances within the Church (*ACO* II, 1, 1, p. 73).

[110] *ACO* II, 1, 1, p. 68.

[111] *ACO* II, 3, 1, pp. 133–134.

[112] *ACO* II, 1, 1, pp. 148–149. Among those gathered were fifteen clergymen who participated in the council that condemned Eutyches a year before, patrician Florentius, as well as two

evidence of some inconsistencies in the records of the council, Flavian's clerks were cleared of the charges of wrongdoing made by Eutyches[113].

A new investigation into the matter, which the emperor this time entrusted to a committee comprised exclusively of state officials, shows that Theodosius was displeased with the verdict. The new committee was, without a doubt, entirely subservient to the ruler, unlike the previously assembled bishops. It gathered on 27 April and was presided over by *magister officiorum* Flavius Areobindus Marcialis[114]. It was to examine the accusations levied by Eutyches against Flavian. The archimandrite claimed that the patriarch knowingly made the charges up and issued the verdict even before the investigation took place. He furthermore claimed that Flavian, knowing that the archimandrite was forbidden to leave the monastery, demanded him to be interrogated in front of the council, which would have allowed him to be punished for refusing to participate in the proceedings. When this failed, Flavian was to have maliciously led the hearing in a way that made it impossible for the monk to defend himself. To this end he arranged for the assembly to be in such uproar and disorder that neither the questions nor answers could be heard. Therefore, according to Eutyches, the investigation performed in his matter was a great fraud. It is difficult to say what conclusions were reached by the committee, but one may only guess that they did not meet the emperor's expectations. On the ruler's orders, the *endimousa* council from November 448 was subject to a detailed scrutiny which, one might think, was to result in finding irregularities sufficient to invalidate its decisions. All of this was aimed at facilitating Eutyches' victory at the upcoming general council.

6.2. The "Robber Council" of Ephesus (449)

Theodosius issued a letter, dated 30 March 449, in which he ordered bishops to convene in Ephesus[115] later that year, on 1 August. All metropolitan bishops were obliged to participate, and unjustified absence was to be severely punished. Theodoret of Cyrus, deemed to be secretly harbouring Nestorian views, was in a special order forbidden by the emperor to appear at Ephesus, unless summoned

of the imperial officials: *comes* Mamas (*PLRE* II, p. 704, [*Mamas 2*]) and tribune Macedonius (*PLRE* II, p. 698, [*Macedonius 5*]).

[113] *ACO* II, 1, 1, pp. 175–177.

[114] *ACO* II, 1, 1, pp. 176–179. It also included *comes* Flavius Carterius, tribune Macedonius and *silentiarius* Magnus.

[115] *ACO* II, 1, 1, pp. 68–69, 77. On the course of the aforementioned gathering: W. de Vries, *Das Konzil von Ephesus 449, eine "Räubersynode?"*, OCP 41, 1975, pp. 357–398.

there by the council[116]. The bishops who participated in the council that condemned Eutyches were forbidden to take the floor under the pretext that it was their verdict that was being reviewed.

Since monks were expressing concern over pro-Nestorian attitudes of some of the bishops, Theodosius, in order to alleviate their fears, invited to the proceedings a Syrian archimandrite Barsauma, who was to represent them on the council[117]. This dignitary arrived in Ephesus accompanied by numerous monks, which, considering their unwavering fanaticism provided Eutyches' supporters with a powerful backing.

In response to the invitation to the council, the bishop of Rome Leo wrote to the emperor Theodosius II; in it, he praised the ruler's involvement in matters of God, but simultaneously criticised him for convening a general council without consulting the matter with the Pope[118]. He also promised that he will send a comprehensive presentation of the faith to Flavian, bishop of Constantinople – which he did in a letter to the patriarch[119]. Having presented and rejected Eutyches' views[120], Leo provided his own point of view on the incarnation of Christ, focusing on the duality of his natures – the immaculate divine one and the subject to suffering human nature, both united without mixing or melting together in one person, and both retaining their independence. In the incarna-

[116] *ACO* II, 1, 1, pp. 69, 74.

[117] *ACO* II, 1, 1, p. 71; H. Bacht, *Die Rolle des orientalischen Mönchtums in den kirchenpolitischen Auseinandersetzungen um Chalkedon (431–519)*, [in:] *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, vol. II, *Entscheidung um Chalkedon*, eds. A. Grillmeier, H. Bacht, Würzburg 1951, pp. 225–226; K.G. Holum, *Theodosian Empresses...*, pp. 186–187; A. Palmer, *A Tale of Two Synods. The Archimandrite Barsumas at Ephesus in 449 and at Chalcedon in 451*, JECS 66, 2014, pp. 40–41. Timothy E. Gregory (*Vox populi: Popular Opinion and Violence in the Religious Controversies of the Fifth Century AD*, Columbus 1979, p. 143) stated: *the real motive for Barsumas' invitation must have been clear to all, for he was already known throughout the East as leader of a band of terrorist monks who roamed Syria and Palestine burning synagogues and violently opposing all they thought guilty of corrupting the faith with pagan or judaizing tendencies. Barsumas could not have been expected to contribute to the theological discussion: he had not been trained in the subtleties of current religious thought and he could not even speak Greek. But he and his monks would surely provide an intimidating force to the opponents of Eutyches*.

[118] Leo I, *Epistula ad Theodosium*, pp. 3–4; *ACO* II, 1, 1, p. 45.

[119] Leo I, *Epistula ad Flavianum*, pp. 24–33; *ACO* IV, 1, pp. 167–172; *ACO* II, 1, 1, pp. 10–20; *DSP* I, pp. 196–213.

[120] As Christiane Fraisse-Coué rightly noted (*D'Éphèse à Chalcédoine: "la paix trompeuse" (433–451)*, [in:] *Histoire du christianisme des origins à nos jours*, eds. J.-M. Mayeur, Ch. Pietri, L. Pietri, A. Vauchez, M. Venard, vol. III, *Les Églises d'Orient et d'Occident*, ed. L. Pietri, Paris 1998, p. 51): *pour le pape Léon, le concile se réunissait afin de juger Eutychès. Pour Théodose II et les partisans de l'archimandrite, il s'agissait d'en finir avec les "nestoriens"*.

tion, as the bishop argued, *majesty accepted lowliness, power accepted weakness, eternity – mortality*[121], which in no way diminished the omnipotence of the divine Word. In this way Jesus Christ, God-man, a true God and true human, the divine Logos, became an intermediary between God and men, subject to death because of his humanity and being free of it in his Godhood. Thanks to this, he caused the man to be redeemed[122].

By the ruler's decision, the congregation gathered in Ephesus was to be presided over by Dioscur, Cyril's successor on the patriarchal see of Alexandria[123], who shared Eutyches' beliefs in matters of faith. He was to be assisted by Juvenal, bishop of Jerusalem[124] and Talasius, bishop of Caesarea. Theodosius expected them not to allow any of those who would want to add or subtract anything from the Nicene Creed to speak up. On his own part, the ruler entrusted custody over the proceedings to two officials: to *comes sacri consistorii* Helpidius, and to a tribune and notarius – Eulogius[125]. Their task was to ensure that the debates were taking place in peace, and that all of the emperor's commands were obeyed[126].

The council began on 8 August, with a few days' delay. Over one hundred and thirty bishops gathered in a basilica devoted to St. Mary, the same in which the council of 431 was convened[127]. The proceedings opened with reading out the letters from Theodosius, addressed to the assembly and to the imperial officials[128]. Before reading them out, Helpidius, basileus' envoy, announced to the gathering that it is the will of the Logos that the bishops gathered that day proclaimed truth about him – if they do it, Logos will admit them before the Father. If they do not tell the truth, they will be doubly punished – by God,

[121] *DSP* I, p. 200.

[122] J.N.D. K e l l y, *Początki doktryny...*, p. 251; M. S t a r o w i e y s k i, *Sobory...*, pp. 66–67; P.L. B a r c l i f t, *The Shifting Tones of Pope Leo the Great's Christological Vocabulary*, ChH 66.2, 1997, pp. 221–239.

[123] *ACO* II, 1, 1, p. 74; *ACO* II, 3, 1, p. 49. Demands to this effect were supposedly made by Chrysaphius. K. C h e w, *Virgins...*, p. 224.

[124] E. H o n i g m a n n, *Juvenal of Jerusalem*, DOP 5, 1950, pp. 225–240.

[125] *ACO* II, 1, 1, pp. 72–73; E v a g r i u s S c h o l a s t i c u s, I, 10; *PLRE* II, p. 536 [*Helpidius 5*], 419 [*Eulogius 3*].

[126] Proculus, proconsul for Asia, was said to have aided them. *ACO* II, 1, 1, p. 73. In the Syriac version of the council documents, the discussed imperial letter is dated to 6 August 449. *Ephesus 449*, p. 5.

[127] Based on the records of the council of Ephesus of 449, we can count it had one hundred and fifty two participants. E. H o n i g m a n n, *The Original Lists of the Members of the Councils of Nicaea, the Robber-Synod and the Council of Chalcedoine*, B 16, 1942/1943, pp. 34–37.

[128] *ACO* II, 1, 1, pp. 72–74.

and by the emperor. It was a clear threat for all those who would want to defy the emperor's will – in the words of his representative, it was the emperor who would ultimately decide whether the decisions made by the bishops gathered in Ephesus were according to the will of Logos, and if they reflect the truth.

After Eutyches proclaimed his faith, Flavian demanded a hearing of Eusebius of Dorylaeum, the chief accuser of the monk at the *endimousa* council. Helpidius categorically opposed this, deeming it contrary to the emperor's will, who demanded a judgement over the participants of that particular council[129]. In this way, on Theodosius' orders, one of the sides of the dispute was deprived of the right to present its arguments, and even the right to defend itself, while their opponents gained full initiative. The emperor thus openly and decisively used his authority to once again back Eutyches and his supporters. It is not surprising, then, that Dioscur did not allow reading out of the aforementioned papal letter addressed to Flavian[130] during the debate, and that Eutyches was rehabilitated[131]. Furthermore, the patriarch of Alexandria considered the letter's addressee[132] and Eusebius of Dorylaeum[133] to be guilty of passing an unjust sentence on Eutyches, and demanded that they should be condemned and deposed[134]. When, however, he encountered resistance from some of the bishops, he did not hesitate to call for help the imperial representatives, on whose orders the proconsul for Asia, Proculus[135], entered the church in the assistance of armed soldiers[136]. One may imagine what effect this must have had on the assembly, especially since demonstration of force did not conclude the matter – opposing bishops were beaten up. Here, the soldiers were assisted by Barsauma's monks[137]. Intimidated and fearing for their life clergymen approved everything that Dioscur demanded of them: Flavian was condemned

[129] The aforementioned intervention by an imperial official was deemed contrary to the Church canons at the general council of Chalcedon. *ACO* II, 1, 1, pp. 96–97.

[130] Pope Leo was represented at the council by his legates: Julius, bishop of Puteoli, presbyter Renatus, and deacon Hilarius. *PCBE* II [*Julius 27*, *Hilarius 2*, *Renatus 3*].

[131] *ACO* II, 1, 1, pp. 90–92, 94–96, 182–186.

[132] Flavian was also accused of falsifying the records of the *endimousa* council of 448. *ACO* II, 1, 1, pp. 182–186.

[133] Eusebius even faced serious threats from the assembled. *ACO* II, 1, 1, p. 140.

[134] *ACO* II, 1, 1, p. 191.

[135] *PLRE* II, p. 923 [*Proculus 3*].

[136] *ACO* II, 1, 1, p. 180; *ACO* II, 3, 1, p. 171.

[137] *ACO* II, 1, 1, p. 179; W.H.C. F r e n d, *The Rise of Monophisite Movement*, Cambridge 1972, p. 136; A. P a l m e r, *A Tale...*, pp. 37–61.

and deposed[138], along with, among others, Domnus of Antioch[139], Ibas of Edessa[140], Irenaeus of Tyre[141] and Theodoret of Cyrus[142].

The events of Ephesus (499) were sharply condemned by the Pope Leo, who went as far as to call them *latrocinium* (brigandage)[143]. Leo considered the decisions made there by the bishops to be invalid and demanded from Theodosius their annulment, as well as convening a new council in Italy with the purpose of examining the matter once more. The Pope gained the backing of the emperor in the West, Valentinian III. Theodosius, however, was of the opinion that the general council in Ephesus had examined the matter impartially and justly, and the deposed bishops were unworthy of their offices. According to him, the re-established peace between all of the Churches spoke in favour of the decisions made in Ephesus. The bishops who complained about coercion used in Ephesus were given ruler's reply that there is no threat so great as to force a Christian bishop to accept a dogmatic error. Despite the protestations, Theodosius approved the council's resolutions, thus giving them status of state law. Soon, however, he died in an unfortunate accident, and the power passed to his older sister, Pulcheria, who was given the title of Augusta while her brother was still alive[144]. As a result of an agreement with Aspar, who held a dominant position at the court at the time as *magister militum praesentalis*, she married Marcian, who was among his closest and most trusted people[145].

The new emperor (450–457), while setting the state matters, also took care to organise the situation within the Church, as lack of religious unity created a risk of serious unrest within the empire. He therefore turned against the supporters of eunuch Chrysaphius[146], all-powerful under Theodosius and overthrown after

[138] *ACO* II, 1, 1, pp. 192–194; *ACO* II, 3,1, pp. 239–252.

[139] *Ephesus 449*, pp. 112–157.

[140] *Ephesus 449*, pp. 54–69; C. Rammelt, *Ibas von Edessa. Rekonstruktion einer Biographie und dogmatischen Position zwischen den Fronten*, Berlin–New York 2008.

[141] *Ephesus 449*, pp. 72–77.

[142] *Ephesus 449*, pp. 109–113.

[143] Leo I, *Epistula ad Pulcheriam*, p. 51. The Pope wrote: *in illo Epheseno, non iudicio sed latrocinio*.

[144] During the final years of Theodosius' reign, however, she fell out of favour.

[145] K.G. Holum, *Theodosian Empresses...*, pp. 208–209; R.W. Burgess, *The Accession of Marcian in the Light of Chalcedonian Apologetic and Monophysite Polemic*, BZ 86/87, 1993/1994, pp. 47–68; K. Chew, *Virgins...*, pp. 225–226; M. Jankowiak, *L'accesion au trône de Marcien vue de l'Occident : une usurpation l'égalisée*, [in:] *Euergesias Charin: Studies Presented to Benedetto Bravo and Ewa Wipszycka by their Disciples*, eds. T. Derda, J. Urbanik, M. Węcowski, Warszawa 2002, pp. 87–129.

[146] K.G. Holum, *Theodosian Empresses...*, pp. 205–208; P. Goubert, *Le rôle...*,

the emperor's death, which was welcomed by the majority of Church officials, who well remembered the violence which, along with Dioscur, they had perpetrated a year before in Ephesus[147].

At the beginning of his reign Marcian assured Pope Leo of his plans to convene a new general council that would return peace to the Church[148]. Already in November of 450 an *endimousa* council was gathered in Constantinople, attended by all of the priests from the capital, monks, and a great number of bishops. During the proceedings Anatol, Flavian' successor to the patriarchal see and presiding over the assembly, accepted and undersigned *Epistle from Leo to Flavian* and excommunicated Eutyches, Nestorius and their supporters. All those present followed his example[149]. It cannot be ruled out that in such a way Anatol, formerly an apocrisiarius of the bishop of Alexandria, was pursuing a strategy his own aimed at becoming independent from Dioscur[150], although it would seem more likely that he was fulfilling the ruler's will, who was enacting a fundamental shift in the policy toward the Church, expressed in, among others, allowing the return from exile of bishops deposed in Ephesus in 449.

6.3. Council of Chalcedon (451). The New Credo and Promotion of Constantinople in Ecclesiastic Hierarchy

In a letter from 451, dated 23 May, the emperor summoned bishops to Nicea, to assemble later that year, on 1 September[151]. It appears that the choice of the place was not accidental, as the ruler expected that the general council was to define the true faith in an unambiguous manner, clear to all, excluding any

pp. 303–321; K. C h e w, *Virgins...*, pp. 224–227.

[147] I examined emperor Marcian's involvement in the general council of Chalcedon in the following article: S. B r a l e w s k i, *Sobór w Chalcedonie w polityce wewnętrznej cesarza Marcjana*, AUL.FH 44, 1992, pp. 53–74.

[148] *ACO* II, 3, 1, pp. 17–18. The Pope initially opposed it, but accepted the proposal after the Hunnic invasion of Gaul. M. J a n k o w i a k, *L'accesion...*, pp. 104–109.

[149] *ACO* II, 1, 1, pp. 124–144.

[150] H. C h a d w i c k, *The Exile and Death of Flavian of Constantinople: a Prologue to the Council of Chalcedon*, JTS 6, 1955, pp. 26–28; P.Th. Camelot *(Ephèse...*, p. 116) observed: *Anatole abandonnait son protecteur Dioscore, qui l'avait élevé au siège de Constantinople*. E. Stein (*Histoire...*, p. 312) thought that Anatolius did all this *afin d'obtenir la reconaissance pontificale qui lui était refusée jusque-là*.

[151] *ACO* II, 1, 1, p. 28. Pope Leo previously demanded from Theodosius II convening a general council in Italy. *ACO* II, 4, pp. 19–21; *ACO* II, 1, 1, pp. 25–27; M. J a n k o w i a k, *L'accesion...*, p. 104.

possibility of misunderstanding and preventing disputes. Formulation of a new *credo* was, the emperor was convinced, necessary, even though taking such a step carried a serious risk, resulting from the prohibition proclaimed in Ephesus in 431 that forbade creation of any new creed. Defying it was equivocal with undermining the Nicene Creed, considered at the time to be foundation of the Catholic faith[152]. The emperor Marcian, calling the bishops to gather in Nicea, was thus establishing a link to the first general council which took place there in 325. In such way he was showing that his expectations are supported by the tradition of the Fathers, and his intentions have a precedent in actions of the emperor Constantine I the Great, who also sought from the council he convened a definition of the faith. Marcian, then, referred to three incredibly powerful at the time symbols: the first oecumenical council, the Nicene Creed, and the figure of the ruler who dramatically changed the situation of Christians[153].

Urgent matters of state forced the emperor, however, to move the council from Nicaea to Chalcedon[154], located closer to the ruler's seat in Constantinople, which undoubtedly disrupted the transparency of the imperial propaganda. The convocation letter shows that initially Marcian, likely following in the footsteps of his great predecessor, wanted to personally participate in the proceedings. When it turned out, however, that basileus' personal participation in the assembly was impossible[155], he had to be replaced by representatives, picked from among the highest state officials[156]. Their presence was to guarantee the lack of any disturbance for bishops during the deliberation. They were tasked with preventing interference from the numerous supporters of Eutyches[157], present in Constantinople, in the debate. In reality, remaining in continuous contact with

[152] A. de Halleux, *La réception du symbole oecuménique de Nicée à Chalcédoine*, ETL 61, 1985, pp. 5–47.

[153] M.J. van Parys, *The Council of Chalcedon as Historical Event*, ERev 22.4, 1970, p. 318; R. Haacke, *Die kaiserliche Politik in den Auseinandersetzungen um Chalkedon (451–553)*, [in:] *Das Konzil von Chalkedon...*, vol. II, pp. 103–107.

[154] *ACO* II, 1, 1, p. 28.

[155] At the time the Huns remained a very serious threat to the eastern part of the Empire, particularly in the eastern part of Illyria. E.A. Thompson, *A History of Attila and the Huns*, Oxford 1948, p. 143.

[156] On the role of imperial representatives at the general council of Chalcedon: P. Batiffol, *Le catholicisme de origines à saint Léon*, vol. IV, *Le siège apostolique (359–451)*, Paris 1924, p. 537; F.X. Murphy, *Peter speaks through Leo. The Council of Chalcedon AD 451*, Washington 1952, p. 26; P.T. Camelot, *Les Conciles...*, pp. 57–58; M.J. van Parys, *The Council of Chalcedon...*, p. 311; R. Delmaire, *Les dignitaires laïcs au concile de Chalcédoine: notes sur la hiérarchie et les préséances au milieu du V^e siècle*, B 54, 1984, pp. 141–175; S. Bralewski, *Imperatorzy...*, p. 137–139.

[157] There were worries about possible riots, especially after Dioscur instigated them in Nicea. H. Chadwick, *The Exile...*, p. 26.

the emperor, they were to ensure that the council was proceeding appropriately, in accordance with the ruler's will.

This is clear from the protocols of the proceedings, beginning already with the first sessions, during which the imperial commissioners demanded from all of the assembled a written confession of faith that would acknowledge the ruler's position on the matter, who recognized not only the resolutions of Nicene and Constantinopolitan oecumenical councils[158], but also writings of the holy Fathers: Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil the Great, Athanasius, Hilarius, Ambrose and Cyril[159]. The bishops were also to take into account the *Letter of Leo to Flavian*, in which the Pope condemned Eutyches' errors[160]. Thus, expecting the gathered participants of the council to put down in writing their views on the complex dogmatic matter, the imperial commissioners wanted to begin discussion on the new creed. Simultaneously, they provided the assembly with only an apparent freedom of speech, having made it mandatory to take into account the emperor's point of view. At the beginning of the following session the representatives of basileus, now firmly and openly, demanded formulation of a new definition of faith that would allow those who were lost to return to the bosom of the Church[161]. They were met, however, with a firm opposition from the congregation. The bishops argued that no-one can lay down a new creed, that it is necessary to settle for what has already been defined by the Father, more so because Pope Leo has already sufficiently repudiated Eutyches' errors, and no further explanations in this matter were needed[162]. The commissioners, unable to control the congregation as whole, attempted to use the patriarchal Church structures, imposing on patriarch the duty of working out a new dogmatic formula that would have been subsequently approved by the council. Defining the faith anew was to prevent any new controversies from arising – and if such were to appear nonetheless, they would have been easier to identify[163]. The assembled bishops were once again opposed to formulating a new definition of faith, considering it illegal[164].

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[158] E. Schwartz, *Das Nicaenum und das Constantinopolitanum auf der Synode von Chalkedon*, ZNW 25, 1926, pp. 38–88.

[159] Commissioners were referring to the *Letter of Cyril to Nestorius (second)*, which was deemed orthodox by the council of Ephesus in 431 (V.C. Samuel, *Proceedings of the Council of Chalcedon and its Historical Problems*, ERev 22.4, 1970, p. 343; J.N.D. Kelly, *Początki doktryny...*, p. 244).

[160] *ACO* II, 1, 1, pp. 195–196.

[161] *ACO* II, 1, 2, p. 78.

[162] *ACO* II, 1, 2, p. 78.

[163] *ACO* II, 1, 2, p. 78.

[164] *ACO* II, 1, 2, p. 78. It was likely related to the prohibition of composing new creeds

Unable to break their opposition, the commissioners, at the request of Cecropius of Sebastopolis, allowed reading out a series of documents, which according to common opinion correctly defined faith. During the reading Illyrian and Palestinian bishops expressed certain concerns related to some of the phrasing included in the *Letter of Leo to Flavius* and asked for some time to think them through[165]. Thus, from the perspective of basileus' representatives, the situation started to become dangerously complicated. Not only the congregation firmly opposed formulating a new *credo*, but some of its members were questioning the orthodoxy of the principal document by Pope Leo. In these circumstances, the imperial commissioners decreed a five-day adjournment of the proceedings. Since the previous appeal to all of the patriarchs did not bring desired results, the ruler's representatives commanded the patriarch of Constantinople alone to create a special committee comprised of bishops who previously undersigned the *Letter of Leo* and who could be useful in convincing the doubters[166]. It is likely that the same clergymen were given an additional task of composing a new creed[167].

As it turned out, the aforementioned committee was able to fulfil its tasks only partially, by having the orthodoxy of the *Letter of Leo* recognized during the fourth session, during which each of the 160 bishops confirmed its accordance with the teachings of the Nicene and Constantinopolitan Creeds by swearing an oath on the Gospel[168]. The efforts of the committee regarding the new creed, however, failed. Furthermore, the congregation, in order to derail the ruler's plan to redefine the dogma, appealed to papal authority. When at the beginning of the fourth session the representatives of the emperor asked the assembled

made at the general council in Ephesus in 431. On the role of this prohibition in Chalcedon: M. Jugie, *Le décret du concile d'Ephèse sur les formules de foi et la polémique anticatholique en Orient*, EO 30, 1931, pp. 263–265.

[165] *ACO* II, 1, 2, p. 82.

[166] *ACO* II, 1, 2, p. 83.

[167] P.Th. Camelot, *Ephèse*..., p. 132.

[168] P.T.R. Gray, *The Defence of Chalcedon in the East*, Leiden 1979, p. 10; cf. also i.a: P. Gallier, *Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie et saint Léon le Grand à Chalcédoine*, [in:] *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*..., vol. I, pp. 345–387; P.Th. Camelot, *Éphèse*..., p. 131; H.I. Marrou, *L'Église de l'Antiquité*..., p. 263; J.N.D. Kelly, *Początki doktryny*..., pp. 253–255; J. Meyendorff, *Teologia bizantyjska. Historia i doktryna*, transl. J. Prokopiuk, Warszawa 1984, p. 43; W. Kania, J. Misiurek, *Cyryl Aleksandryjski*, [in:] *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. III, Lublin 1979, pp. 702–703; M.J. van Parys, *The Council of Chalcedon*..., pp. 316–317. Some of the scholars, in turn, think that Cyril's doctrine was basically rejected in Chalcedon in favour of Leo's: H. Grégoire, *Kościół bizantyński*, [in:] *Bizancjum. Wstęp do cywilizacji wschodniorzymskiej*, eds. N.H. Baynes, H.S.L.B. Moss, transl. E. Zwolski, Warszawa 1964, p. 97; J. Keller, *Sobory wczesnego średniowiecza*, [in:] *Katolicyzm wczesnośredniowieczny*, ed. idem, Warszawa 1973, p. 114.

about their decision on the matter of holy faith, the papal legate Paschasius took the floor. He notified the commissioners that the holy and blessed council upholds the intact Nicene faith, confirmed in Constantinople. It also accepts the explanations, made by Cyril in Ephesus, where Nestorius was condemned, as well as the *Letter of Leo to Flavian*, which rejected Nestorius' and Eutyches' views and clearly expressed true faith. Paschasius stressed that the holy council stands on guard of the orthodox interpretation of faith and will not allow for anything to be added or subtracted from it[169]. In this way he spoke clearly and emphatically in the name of all of the gathered bishops against the plans of redefining the creed. The reaction to the papal legate's statement by those gathered was full of approval, and once again demonstrated the bishops' objection to a new creed. Cries could be heard from each side: we all believe in this way, we were baptised in this faith and we baptise in it, this is our faith[170]. Despite such determined opposition of the council the imperial representatives, when closing the fourth session[171], still demanded from the assembly formulating their own creed[172].

It is likely that within the next few days the bishops finally agreed to prepare a new creed, as on 20 October Eustathius of Berytus, at the beginning of debate, asked the gathered to postpone examining the matters that put him at odds with Photius of Tyre until the adoption of a new creed[173]. The bishops, then, agreed to formulate a new *credo*, succumbing to the pressure put on them by the emperor and his officials[174]. As it turned out, however, the real trouble for Marcian started with the beginning of work on the contents of the new creed.

Anatol, the patriarch of Constantinople, played an essential role in developing the council's creed. On 21 October, during one of the meetings of bishops he chose for the task, a creed was presented, its authorship attributed to the patriarch himself, and it was met with approval of those present[175]. When it was presented a day later, however, at the beginning of the fifth session, it sparked objections. Unfortunately, it was not included in the council's records, so we may only guess that it included the phrase *out of two natures*. This wording, used

[169] *ACO* II, 1, 2, p. 93.

[170] *ACO* II, 1, 2, p. 93.

[171] It has taken place on 17 October.

[172] *ACO* II, l, 2, p. 121.

[173] *Histoire des conciles...*, p. 716.

[174] According to H. Leclercq, most of the bishops were counting on settling various matters to the advantage of their dioceses in return for their agreement to a new creed. H. Leclercq's hypothesis (*Histoire des conciles...*, p. 716) seems very plausible. Either way, the emperor finally enforced his will on the matter and overcame the reluctance of the assembled bishops to formulating a new creed.

[175] *Histoire des conciles...*, p. 717; P.Th. C a m e l o t, *Éphèse...*, p. 132.

by Cyril in his *First letter to Succensus*, bishop of Diocaesarea[176], was later approved by Flavian, patriarch of Constantinople, in *credo* which he wrote down for the emperor Theodosius II[177]. During the *endimousa* council in 448 it was used again, in defence of the faith against the error of Eutyches[178], even though Eutyches himself, condemned by Flavian on 22 November 448, was also made to accept it[179]. It was also approved by Dioscur, although the latter did it only in Chalcedon[180]. It is likely that the voices of dissent that were raised during fifth session after reading out of the creed penned by Anatol were caused by that specific phrase[181].

At first John, the bishop of Germanicea, demanded that it was corrected. The council's records show that this was met with loud cries of bishops asserting that the wording was perfect. They shouted: *Down with Nestorians! Out with the enemies of God!*[182]. During later debates papal legates spoke against accepting such creed, considering it to be inconsistent with the teaching of bishop of Rome. They likely insisted that the wording *out of two natures* was replaced with *in two natures*. They threatened to return to Rome and with convoking a new council in the West if their demands were not met[183]. The proceedings arrived at an impasse, and its outcome was difficult to predict. The imperial commissioners were quick to realize this. They tried to avert the crisis by proposing to create a committee that would include themselves, representatives of the bishops of the Orient, Asia, Illyria, Pontus and Thrace, as well as papal legates and the patriarch of Constantinople. The committee was to work out a new creed[184]. Since the bishops rejected this proposal, the commissioners pointed out that the phrase *out of two natures* had been used by the, universally condemned, Dioscur, while the wording *in two natures* – which the legates insisted on – was used by the universally respected Flavian. On the other hand, they were pointing out that the phrasing so fiercely defended by the assembled bishops was also close

[176] *ACO* I, 1, 6, p. 153.

[177] *ACO* II, 1, 1, p. 114; *ACO* II, 3, 1, p. 5.

[178] *ACO* II, 1, 1, pp. 100–147.

[179] *ACO* II, 1, 1, p. 140.

[180] *ACO* II, 1, 1, p. 120.

[181] William H.C. Frend (*The Rise...*, p. 5) was convinced that: *if Anatolius had been able to gain his point and include both "Theotokos" and "out of two natures" in the definition of faith he would probably have averted schism in the east*.

[182] *ACO* II, 1, 2, p. 123.

[183] *ACO* II, 1, 2, p. 123; *Histoire des conciles...*, p. 718.

[184] *ACO* II, 1, 2, p. 123.

to the views of Eutyches[185]. The imperial representatives were thus attempting to show that the bishops were contradicting themselves – they first condemned Eutyches and Dioscur, and then defended their views[186].

Having seen that the majority, among them Eusebius of Dorylaeum, well-known for his zeal in defending orthodoxy, supported the creed, the commissioners decided to officially approach the emperor regarding future course of action. Beroniscianus, the secretary of the council's chancery, was sent to the palace, and quickly returned with the ruler's reply. Marcian commanded the creation of a commission that was to create an unambiguous creed. Should the bishops be unwilling to accept it, a general council was to be convened in the West[187]. The emperor was thus clearly demanding that the point of view of the papal legates be taken into account during the work on the new creed. He wanted to avoid a split among the clergy which would have undoubtedly occurred due to the firmness with which the papal emissaries announced their departure from proceedings. It also appears that he may have been convinced of the correctness of the wording *in two natures*[188]. He may also considered it to be unambiguous, and so better suited for defining the true faith, and for defending it from Eutyches' error. However, even now, despite the imperial order, some still protested against changing the creed. Faced with the issue, the commissioners once again reminded of Dioscur's *out of two natures*, contrasting it with the wording of Leo, who recognized the existence of two natures in Christ, without their mixing, transformation or division, in one and the same Son. Subsequently, the emperor's representatives told the gathered to choose whom they wish to follow: the most saintly Leo, or Dioscur?[189]

Associating the aforementioned phrases with Leo and Dioscur was a very skilful move, as behind it there was a threat that the emperor could eventually be driven by the constant opposition from the assembled to restore the latter to favour. In this situation, the cowed clergymen chose Leo[190]. The council's acceptance of the phrase *in two natures* allowed the commissioners to put the very difficult situation under control: the bishops agreed to create a committee

[185] *ACO* II, 1, 2, pp. 123–124.

[186] P.Th. C a m e l o t, *Éphèse...*, p. 133; P.T.R. G r a y, *The Defence of Chalcedon...*, p. 13.

[187] *ACO* II, 1, 2, p. 124.

[188] J.N.D. K e l l y, *Początki doktryny...*, p. 252.

[189] *ACO* II, 1, 2, p. 125.

[190] The bishops' support of Leo, and thus of the phrase *in two natures*, attests, according to P.T.R. Gray (*The Defence of Chalcedon...*, p. 13), that the Cyrillian majority of those gathered perceived the necessity of defining their dyophysitism in a more precise manner than Cyril's *out of two natures*. J. M e y e n d o r f f, *Teologia bizantyjska...*, p. 43.

tasked with formulating a new *credo*, against which they were previously firmly opposed. The committee gathered in the chapel of St. Euphemia, composed and that very same day presented the new creed to the congregation which, having listened to it in silence, accepted it with enthusiasm[191]. The accepted formula was provided with a lengthy preamble in which the Nicene (325) and Constantinopolitan (381) creeds were confirmed, along with the provisions and all decisions made in Ephesus (431). By condemning Nestorius and Eutyches the gathered at Chalcedon also accepted the orthodoxy of the letters of Cyril and the *Letter of Leo to Flavian*. Concerning Cyril's correspondence, his letters to Nestorius and other bishops in the East were mentioned only in general terms, without specifying which ones in particular were being referred to, which allows guessing that the council spoke in favour of also the third letter of Cyril to Nestorius, which included the twelve anathemas. Perhaps this was a compromise that allowed even the zealous supporters of Cyril's teachings to accept the creed. This new definition proper of faith was based on the formula from 433, the second letter of Cyril to Nestorius, *Letter of Leo to Flavian* and Flavian's declaration of faith presented at the *endimousa* council in 448. The general council's creed of 451 stressed that Christ is the Word Incarnate, existing in two natures, each of which is complete; is perfect in both Godhood and humanity; is co-substantial (*homoousios*) with Father in Godhood, and with mankind in humanity. His both natures, while remaining unmixed, incommutable, inseparable and indissociable, kept their properties, forming one person and one hypostasis[192].

During the sixth session[193], on 25 October, with the emperor Marcian and his wife Pulcheria present[194], the bishops signed the dogmatic decree. Asked by the emperor if they accept the agreed creed, they replied: *we all thus believe.* (...) *Glory to Marcian.* (...) *Long years for the empress* (...) *Marcian is the new Constantine, Pulcheria the new Helena*. Undoubtedly the council decided to compose a new definition of faith as a result of the outstanding pressure from the emperor, which was exerted on both the gathering as whole, and, quite likely,

[191] *ACO* II, 1, 2. p. 125; H. Chadwick, *The Chalcedonian Definition*, [in:] *Actes du Concile de Chalcédoine: Sessions III–VI*, ed. A.J. Festugière, Genève 1983, pp. 7–15; A. de Halleux, *La définition christologique à Chalcédoine*, RTL 7, 1976, pp. 3–23, 155–170.

[192] *DSP* I, pp. 214–225; J.N.D. Kelly, *Początki doktryny...*, pp. 252–254; A. de Halleux, *La définition...*, pp. 3–23, 155–70.

[193] *ACO* II, 1, 2, pp. 140–155.

[194] E. Schwartz, *Die Kaiserin Pulcheria auf der Synode von Chalkedon*, [in:] *Festgabe für Adolf Jülicher*, Tübingen 1927, pp. 203–212.

on particular bishops as well. Basileus' representatives also forced the bishops to collectively agree on contents of the creed. The influence of the emperor on the events surrounding composition of the new creed was immense. It was visibly present from the beginning of the proceedings all the way through until the sixth session, during which Marcian accomplished his goal.

The matter of Dioscur, the patriarch of Alexandria blamed by the ruler for perturbations within the Church before the gathering at Chalcedon, played an important role in the proceedings. The concerns of the emperor, who was worried about the excessive influence of this powerful dignitary over the course of both Church and state affairs[195], were likely further exacerbated by awareness that Alexandrian bishops, with their leading position in the East, had already been causing conflicts within the Church during preceding decades[196]. At one time, Athanasius had instigated much trouble for Marcian's predecessors[197]. The patriarch's successor, Peter, was getting involved in the internal affairs of the Church in Antioch, as well as in Constantinople[198], plotting against Gregory of Nazianzus[199]. Following that, considerable turmoil within the Church was caused by Theophile, Cyril and Dioscur, who fought against the subsequent bishops of Constantinople: John Chrysostom[200],

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[195] J.B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire*, New York 1958, p. 356. It is likely that Marcian was attempting to reach a compromise with Dioscur, indicative of which would be an audience the patriarch of Alexandria had with the emperor prior to the commencement of the general council in Chalcedon. On this subject, also see: W. Ensslin, *Marcianus*, [in:] *RE*, vol. XIV, 2, Stuttgart 1930, col. 1521; N.H. Baynes, *Aleksandria and Constantinopole...*, p. 114.

[196] E.R. Hardy, *The Patriarchate of Alexandria: A Study in National Christianity*, ChH 15.2, 1946, p. 88; N.H. Baynes, *Alexandria and Constantinople...*, pp. 97–115; F. Dvornik, *Bizancjum a prymat Rzymu*, Warszawa 1985, pp. 36–38; H.S.L.B. Moss, *The Formation of the East Roman Empire, 330–717*, [in:] *The Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. IV, *The Byzantine Empire*, p. I, *Byzantium and its Neighbours*, Cambridge 1966, pp. 19–20; E. Wipszycka, *Patriarcha aleksandryjski...*, pp. 176–194.

[197] The literature on this subject is most plenteous. See: W.H.C. Frend, *Athanasius as an Egyptian Christian Leader in the Fourth Century*, NCB 8.1, 1974, pp. 20–37; T.D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius. Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire*, London 1993; A. Martin, *Athanase d'Alexandrie et l'Église d'Égypte au IV^e siècle (328–373)*, Rome 1996.

[198] M.B. Leszka, *Rola duchowieństwa na dworze cesarzy wczesnobizantyńskich*, Łódź 2000, p. 28.

[199] J. Torres, R. Teja, *A Dispute of Episcopal Legitimacy: Gregory of Nazianzen and Maximus in Constantinople*, [in:] A. Fear, J. Fernández Urbiña, M. Marcos, *The Role of the Bishop in Late Antiquity: Conflict and Compromise*, London–New Delhi–New York–Sydney 2013, pp. 13–30; J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops. Army, Church, and State in the Age of Arcadius and Chrysostom*, Oxford 1992, pp. 161–163.

[200] T.E. Gregory, *Vox populi...*, pp. 31–79; J.H.W.G Liebeschuetz, *The Fall of John Chrysostom*, [in:] *La romanité chrétienne en Orient*, London 1984, pp. 1–31; idem, *Friends and*

Nestorius[201] and Flavian[202]. For the emperor, Dioscur's excessive ambitions were a threat not only to the peace within the Church, but also to the state, considering the co-operation of the patriarch with Chrysaphius, which alone could have been a sufficient cause for the ruler to eliminate him from the Church hierarchy. Similar aspirations of bishops of Alexandria to leading the Church in the East may have been seen by Marcian as the root cause of the unrest they incited. This prompted the emperor to take action aimed at reducing the importance of the Alexandrian patriarch.

As early as the first session of the council in Chalcedon – due to the intervention of the papal legates and Eusebius of Dorylaeum – Dioscur, commanded by the imperial commissioners, had to move from the area intended for judges to the one for the accused[203]. During the same session the imperial representatives suggested that, if the ruler were to agree, the people responsible for the "brigandage of Ephesus" should be subject to the same punishment that was unjustly meted out on Flavian. Aside from Dioscur, others were to be deposed as well: Juvenal of Jerusalem, Talasius of Caesarea, Eusebius of Ancyra, Eustathius of Berytus and Basil of Seleucia[204].

On bishops' own initiative, the third session of the council was devoted in its entirety to criticising Dioscur[205]. Its goal was to supplement decisions made during the first session: *there, Dioscur's case was examined from legal and political sides, here, it was mainly about the dogmatic side*[206]. Dioscur was accused of very numerous transgressions, including accepting into the communion the previously condemned Eutyches, and subsequently – stubbornly persisting in this decision, of preventing the reading out in front of the council in Ephesus the *Letter of Leo to Flavian* and of excommunicating the Pope[207]. He was deposed for not

Enemies of John Chrysostom, [in:] *Maistor: Classical, Byzantine and Renaissance Studies for Robert Browning*, ed. A. M o f f at, Canberra 1984, pp. 87–109; Ch. B a u r, *John Chrysostomos and his Time*, transl. M. G o n z a g a, Vadur 1988, *passim*; J.N.D. K e l l y, *Złote usta. Jan Chryzostom – asceta, kaznodzieja, biskup*, transl. K. K r a k o w c z y k, Bydgoszcz 2001, *passim*.

[201] T.E. G r e g o r y, *Vox populi...*, pp. 81–127.

[202] *Ibidem*, pp. 143–161. Dioscur was also stirring up unrest in Nicea, where the bishops awaited the beginning of the proceedings. It was also there that he anathematised Pope Leo. H. C h a d w i c k, *The Exile...*, p. 26.

[203] *ACO* II, 1, 1, pp. 65–67.

[204] *ACO* II, 1, 1, p. 195.

[205] *ACO* II, 1, 2, pp. 3–42; *ACO* II, 3, 2, pp. 17–87.

[206] S. W ł o d a r s k i, *Siedem soborów ekumenicznych*, Warszawa 1969, p. 128.

[207] *ACO* II, 1, 2, pp. 25–29; E v a g r i u s S c h o l a s t i c u s, II, 4, p. 46. Accusations levelled against Dioscur were numerous and rather strange. Ewa Wipszycka (*Kościół w świecie...*, p. 237) called them *a stereotypical list of possible crimes*.

appearing before the council during the third session, despite being called in front of it[208]. The debates were not attended by the imperial commissioners or senators[209]. There is no doubt, however, that even though it was the bishops who called for Dioscur's deposition, the decision was not theirs, but Marcian's[210].

Undoubtedly, then, the emperor achieved his goal, but he did not foresee its full consequences. He did not appreciate the strong position held in Egypt by the patriarchs of Alexandria. Dioscur's humiliation must have been particularly painful for the Egyptian monks, who so closely connected with their patriarch. This created a threat of widespread action against the resolutions of Chalcedon council. Outraged by the way their bishop was treated, Egyptians were easily convinced that the council upheld views of Nestorius[211]. Emperor Marcian could have taken a more thoughtful course of action and, for example, used the fact that Dioscur persecuted Cyril's family, all the more so because for this reason he had numerous enemies in Alexandria[212]. Rather than using such arguments, the emperor made the patriarch into a martyr, one venerable in the eyes of Egyptians[213].

On 1 November the council of Chalcedon enacted canon 28, conferring on the bishop of Constantinople – the New Rome – the same honours and privileg-

[208] See also: M.J. van Parys, *The Council of Chalcedon...*, pp. 312–313; V.C. Samuel, *Proceedings of the Council of Chalcedon...*, pp. 335–338; J. Lebon, *Autour du cas de Dioscore d'Alexandrie*, Mu 59, 1946, pp. 515–528.

[209] According to P. Batiffol (*Le catholicisme...*, pp. 541), in a situation where a bishop was being accused, the presence of laypeople would have been awkward.

[210] E.R. Hardy (*The Patriarchate of Alexandria...*, pp. 90–91) points to a wide coalition that formed itself against Dioscur in Chalcedon, which included the emperor, the Pope, the bishops of Antioch and Constantinople, and the entirety of the eastern episcopacy.

[211] See also: A.H.M. Jones, *Were Ancient Heresies National or Social Movements in Disguise*, [in:] *The Roman Economy, Studies in Ancient Economic and Administrative History*, Oxford 1974, p. 320; F.X. Murphy, *Peter...*, p. 104. Charles Diehl (Ch. Diehl, G. Marçais, *Le monde oriental de 395 à 1081*, Paris 1944, p. 31) stresses that the general council in Chalcedon was *au sentiment des monophysites, la revanche de Nestorius, dont on canonisait la doctrine, tout en anathématisant*. Patrick T.R. Gray (*The Defence of Chalcedon...*, p. 20) indicated that the belief that Nestorius' teachings prevailed in Chalcedon created an almost automatic threat to the well-established, simple biblical faith in the Word that became flesh. According to William H.C. Frend (*The Rise...*, p. 148) it was commonly assumed that *Chalcedon had vindicated Nestorius "two natures" and was not scriptural: it taught that he who was crucified was not God but man*.

[212] On Dioscur's antipathy towards Cyril: L. Duchesne, *Histoire...*, p. 391; H. Chadwick, *The Exile...*, pp. 19–20; F.X. Murphy, *Peter...*, pp. 58–60; E. Stein, *Le développement du pouvoir du siège de Constantinople jusqu'au concile de Chalcédoine*, Msla 4, 1926, p. 99; P. Goubert, *Le rôle...*, pp. 309–310.

[213] A.S. Atiya, *Historia Kościołów wschodnich*, Warszawa 1978, pp. 49–50.

es as enjoyed by the bishop of the Old Rome. The city honoured by the presence of the emperor and the senate, having the same privileges as the old imperial Rome, ought to be equally elevated, and should take its place in the Church matters right behind it[214]. At the same time the patriarch of Constantinople was given jurisdiction in the dioceses of Pontus, Asia, Thrace, and in such bishoprics that were to be created outside of the Empire's borders[215]. It would seem that this canon was inspired by the emperor Marcian[216], although his representatives were not present during the session on which it was approved[217]. Considering the aspirations of the Alexandrian bishops to lead the Byzantine Church, it should be recognized that the edge of the adopted legal regulations was directed against them[218]. Elevating the capital's bishop, in the spirit of canons adopted previously in 381 by the council in Constantinople, not only strengthened the position of the capital city's patriarch, but ensured that the emperor, through the patriarch's agency, gained increased influence within the Eastern Church, and even throughout the universal Church.

The papal legates, absent during the session on which canon 28 was adopted, raised an objection near the end of the council's proceedings: this was, however, rejected by the emperor's representatives[219]. Acceptance of the canon must have been very important to Marcian if he did not hesitate to enter into a conflict with the Pope, contrary to his previous policy[220]. Perhaps the emperor was hoping that the bishop of Rome will see the true purpose of the canon, creation of a counterweight to the might of the Alexandrian patriarchate in the Eastern church, and that he will approve it, all the more so because the council of Chalcedon treated Pope Leo with great respect.

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[214] *ACO* II, 3, 3, p. 113; *DSP* I, pp. 250–253; Evagrius Scholasticus, II, 4, p. 50; M. Salamon, *Rozwój idei Rzymu–Konstantynopola od IV do pierwszej połowy VI w.*, Katowice 1975, pp. 117–119; T.O. Martin, *The Twenty-Eighth Canon of Chalcedon: A Background Note*, [in:] *Das Konzil von Chalkedon...*, vol. II, pp. 433–458; A. de Halleux, *Le décret chalcédonien sur les prérogatives de la Nouvelle Rome*, ETL 64, 1988, pp. 288–323; idem, *Le vingt-huitième canon de Chalcédoine*, SPB 19, 1989, pp. 28–36.

[215] In canons 9 and 17. P.Th. Camelot, *Éphèse...*, pp. 161–162.

[216] *Histoire des conciles...*, pp. 768, 829; F. Dvornik, *The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium*, Cambridge 1958, pp. 90–95.

[217] Hefele (*Histoire des conciles...*, pp. 768–769) thinks that it was a diplomatic move by the ruler, who expected opposition to the aforementioned canon from the papal legates, and did not wish for his representatives to be on one of the sides in this conflict, as he intended them to be the judges.

[218] F. Dvornik, *Bizancjum...*, p. 38.

[219] *ACO* II, 3, 3, p. 109.

[220] E. Wipszycka, *Kościół w świecie...*, pp. 242–246.

The authority of the Egyptian church undoubtedly suffered a serious blow in Chalcedon. Egyptians became convinced that the chief purpose of the council was to humiliate Dioscur and the Alexandrian bishopric in revenge for Cyril's successes and the support his successor enjoyed from Theodosius II[221]. No wonder then that the believers of the Egyptian Church came to hate everything that was associated with the council of Chalcedon. Such reaction was expected by the thirteen Egyptian bishops who were refusing to condemn Eutyches during the proceedings, and to take a stance on the matter of the *Letter of Leo to Flavian*. They did not wish to act against the tradition of the Alexandrian Church, in which all bishops were obliged to support the faith of their patriarch. Otherwise, they could have been facing death upon return to Egypt. They therefore sought help from the emperor's representatives. Marcian commanded them to remain in Constantinople until the consecration of the new patriarch of Alexandria[222].

Of no small importance was the council's attitude to Theodoret of Cyrus and Ibas of Edessa, both suspected of harbouring Nestorian views. When Theodoret appeared among the assembled in Chalcedon, he was welcomed by cries of opposition from the bishops from Egypt, Palestine and Illyria. He was reproached for his close relations with Nestorius, heresy, and opposing Cyril[223]. It seems that the emperor from the start was interested in clearing the bishop of Cyrus from accusations of heresy. Firstly, this action had already been taken by the Pope and – as is known – Marcian cared about maintaining good relations with the bishop of Rome. Secondly, Theodoret, who was speaking out against Eutyches' errors, was deposed by Dioscur, co-operating with the eunuch Chrysaphius, which alone may have been a sufficient reason to support him[224]. One may guess that the emperor was similarly motivated in regard to Ibas of Edessa, who was rehabilitated on 26–27 October[225].

Emperor Marcian's will had a major impact on the course of events at the Chalcedon council. The ruler was consistently pursuing a very specific plan, likely developed with his spouse, empress Pulcheria, whose involvement in religious matters was well known. Because the imperial couple came to pow-

[221] H.I. Marrou, *L'Église...*, p. 262–263; A.S. Atiya, *Historia...*, pp. 49–50.

[222] *Histoire des conciles...*, p. 704; E. Wipszycka, *Patriarcha...*, pp. 191–192.

[223] *ACO* II, 3, 3, pp. 13–14. Cf. also: P.T.R. Gray, *The Defence of Chalcedon...*, p. 8; G. Bardy, P. de Labriolle, G. de Plinval, L. Brehier, *De la mort de Thèodose...*, p. 274.

[224] It was also most likely demanded by Marcian's patron, Aspar. As Theodoret's correspondence indicates (*Ep.*, pp. 231–232), his return from exile in 450 was mainly thanks to the vigorous efforts of Aspar in securing Marcian's consent to it.

[225] *ACO* II, 3, 3, pp. 16–52. On rehabilitation of Theodoret of Cyrus and Ibas of Edessa: G. Bardy, P. de Labriolle, G. de Plinval, L. Brehier, *De la mort de Thèodose...*, pp. 236–237; F.X. Murphy, *Peter...*, pp. 84–87.

er as a result of a kind of a coup, carried out by the military after emperor Theodosius II's death, their principal aim was to overthrow Chrysaphius' clique, which had great influence not only within the state, but also the Church. In ecclesiastical affairs, the priority went to returning into communion, broken by Chrysaphius' supporters in Ephesus in 449, with Pope Leo. During an *endimousa* council in 450 the teachings of the bishop of Rome were recognized as orthodox, and at the same time Eutyches and Nestorius, to whom Pulcheria was very poorly disposed, were condemned. The imperial couple was not content to resolve only the current matters, but decided to thoroughly organise matters within the Church so that any future conflicts could be prevented. Thus a general council was convened, which – as the emperor and his spouse intended – was to compose a new and unambiguous creed, limit the excessive influence of patriarchs of Alexandria, elevate the bishop of the capital on Bosphorus to the first position in the East, and to include monks into the ecclesiastical structures[226]. Carrying out his plan, the emperor overcame the resistance of the bishops, who were opposing the development of a new *credo*, forbidden by the general council of Ephesus (431), during which the Nicene Creed was sanctified as the essence of Christological orthodoxy. This had far-reaching consequences. The believers could have received the council in Chalcedon as disparaging the holy Fathers from Nicaea and Ephesus. Considering the great attachment and devotion of the empire's inhabitants to the first oecumenical council[227], it is easy to understand why so many of them were averse to the Chalcedonian assembly. Furthermore, the emperor was forced to take a position in the dispute surrounding the expression *out of two natures/ in two natures*, which created new opponents for both him and the council. The ruler, wanting to prevent a split with the Roman church, forced the clergymen to accept the wording *in two natures*. Since this expression was associated in the East with Nestorius' teachings, the emperor gave those dissatisfied with the proceedings a prime and catchy argument for the propaganda claiming that Nestorius' teachings, with which the question of Mother of God was closely associated, prevailed at Chalcedon[228]. The cries of the bishops gathered

[226] The general council in Chalcedon was also supposed to eliminate the painful disruptions within the Church, particularly associated with monks, by issuing new resolutions (canons). G. D a g r o n, *Les moines et la ville...*, pp. 261–276; H. B a c h t, *Die Rolle...*, pp. 193–314; E. W i p s z y c k a, *Kościół w świecie...*, pp. 241–242.

[227] J.N.D. K e l l y, *Początki doktryny...*, p. 244; W.H.C. F r e n d, *The Rise...*, pp. 137–139.

[228] M. S t a r o w i e y s k i, *Tytuł Theotokos w świadectwach przedefeskich*, ACr 16, 1984, p. 447. On the cult of Mary in Egypt, which led to the largest protests against the general council in Chalcedon: G. G i a m b e r a r d i n i, *Il culto mariano in Egitto*, vol. I, *sec. I–VI*, Jerusalem 1975, pp. 241–265. The scarcity of traces of devotion to Mary among the monks is surprising,

at Chalcedon were noteworthy; they were heard, for example, after bishop John of Germanicea (incidentally, a friend of Theodoret of Cyrus[229]) spoke for the formula associated with the teachings of Nestorius. He was immediately accused of Nestorianism and denying Mary the title *Theotokos*[230]. If this was done by the contemporary elite of the Church, how much easier it had to be for the ordinary believers, much less knowledgeable in the matters of faith. For this reason the opposition to the resolutions of the council of Chalcedon may also be, it seems, associated with the strength of the cult of Mary[231]. The clumsy solution to the issue of Dioscur, and returning Nestorius' friends to communion with the Church was the last straw.

Even while the council of Chalcedon proceeded, its resolutions on Eutyches and the *Letter of Leo to Flavian* were met with protests from a group of several dozen monks, among whom were the most zealous supporters of Dioscur from the times of the "brigandage of Ephesus", led by Barsauma. They appealed to the emperor, but all they received was thirty days to accept the council's decisions[232]. This protest by monks, as well as the fears of the thirteen Egyptian bishops, foreshadowed strong opposition to the resolutions made by the Chalcedonian assembly[233]. It would seem that the greatest mistake of Marcian's policy was attempting to solve too many matters in one go. Such course of action created many enemies for the emperor and the Chalcedonian council, and they all desired the cancellation of the bishops' resolutions. They utilised without mercy any false step or moment of clumsiness on Marcian's part, as the bishops could not have taken any decisions without his knowledge. Officially, the emperor put the council's authority above his own and, for this reason, after assembling the bishops in Chalcedon he acquiesced to its decisions. He explained his presence during the debates with desire to strengthen the faith and follow Constantine the Great's example, rather than with intention of exerting any influence on those present[234].

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even though, it seems, the cult itself was a major factor in the development of Egyptian monasticism. On this subject: M. Starowieyski, *Mariologia św. Atanazego Wielkiego*, RTK 23.4, 1976, pp. 127–129; R.M. Price, *Marian Piety...*, pp. 31–38.

[229] Theodoret, *Ep.*, p. 209.

[230] *ACO* II, 1, 2, p. 123.

[231] P. Clément, *Le sens chrétien et la maternité divine de Marie avant le conflit Nestorien*, ETL 5, 1928, p. 613. According to Marek Starowieyski (*Maryja w pierwszych wiekach Kościoła*, Dr 7, 1988, p. 11), rejecting Mary's motherhood of God was considered a blasphemy in Egypt. In Syria, even before the general council in Ephesus (431) devotion to Mary was particularly deep (J.N.D. Kelly, *Początki doktryny chrześcijańskiej...*, p. 366).

[232] *Histoire des conciles...*, pp. 710–711.

[233] F.X. Murphy, P. Sherwood, *Constantinople II et Constantinople III*, Paris 1974, p. 36; H. Bacht, *Die Rolle...*, pp. 193–314.

[234] *ACO* II, 1, 2, p. 140; *Histoire des conciles...*, p. 733.

Further edicts by the emperor, which forbade additional Christological disputes and threatening with severe punishment to all those who would not accept the council's decisions, did not help[235]. The first of these is dated 7 February 452, the next one was promulgated by the ruler the following month, on 13 March, and in it the ruler pointed to the accordance between the resolutions made at Chalcedon and the provisions of the councils in Nicaea, Constantinople and Ephesus. On 18 July he issued an edict, directed against Eutyches, which struck hard against the monastery headed by the archimandrite[236]. The aforementioned edicts did not meet expectations put on them. The situation was made considerably worse by the lack of acceptance for the council's decisions from Pope Leo, who was unwilling to recognize canon 28, as having a negative impact on the privileged position of the bishop of Rome. Only on 15 February 453, in reply to a letter by emperor Marcian[237], who was concerned by the Pope's attitude, Leo approved the council's decisions – but only those that pertained to faith and condemnation of heretics[238]. *Once news that Rome did not sign something spreads, we will readily spread gossip that nothing was signed, therefore, it is sympathetic not to Chalcedon, but its opponents*[239]. All this caused serious disturbances, directed against the council, in Palestine, Syria and Egypt. Only the emperor's armed intervention brought peace back, but as the following events show, it was not to last[240].

6.4. Byzantine Emperors and Ecclesiastic Doctrinal Arguments (450–527)

Neither emperor Marcian, nor his successors, were able to return lasting peace to the Church on the basis of resolutions of Chalcedon council. Not only were they met with very strong objections, but it was also in opposition to them that Monophysitism developed[241]. In this manner, the council caused a crisis that

[235] *ACO* II, 1, 3, pp. 119–121; *ACO* II, 2, 2, pp. 21–24.

[236] *ACO*, II, 1, 3, pp. 122–124; *ACO* II, 2, pp. 190–193.

[237] *ACO* II, 1, 2, p. 16.

[238] *ACO* II, 4, p. 68.

[239] S. Włodarski, *Siedem soborów...*, p. 142; W. Ensslin, *Marcianus...*, cols. 1523–1524.

[240] Pseudo-Zachariah, III, 2; G. Bardy, P. de Labriolle, G. de Plinval, L. Brehier, *De la mort de Thèodose...*, pp. 276–281; F.X. Murphy, P. Sherwood, *Constantinople...*, p. 37.

[241] The term itself is rather imprecise. It was coined by the Melchites (from Syriac *malkaya* – imperial), members of the Chalcedonian Church in Syria and Egypt, who indiscriminately con-

dominated the history of the Church during the following centuries, and led to creation of separate Monophysite Churches. Since these Churches used local languages, there was suspicion that doctrinal questions would additionally overlap with nationalist antagonisms. Scholars, however, have not found sufficient evidence for this[242]. The sharp conflict that surrounded council of Chalcedon was not put to rest even by the Arab conquests[243]. The belligerent sides fought each other with great intensity all the way until the seventh century, when as a result of the Arab invasion the empire finally lost the provinces in which the opponents of the Chalcedon council resolutions were particularly strong. The consequences of these divisions can be seen even in modern times[244]. The Church in Egypt was a particularly strong focus of resistance against the Chalcedonian resolutions. In order to enthrone Dioscur's successor, Proterius, on the bishop's see[245], emperor Marcian had to resort to military force[246]. When the backing of the ruler, who died in February 457, ended, Dioscur's supporters made Timothy Ailuros (the Weasel)[247] the new patriarch, while Proterius himself was murdered during Easter less than two weeks later in a baptistery, sparking riots in Alexandria[248]. Following the council in Chalcedon, Juvenal, the bishop of Jerusalem, was unable to return home. A group of Palestinian monks, led by one Theodosius, returned

sidered all those who rejected Chalcedonian Creed to be Monophysites. P.Th. Camelot, *De Nestorius à Eutychès. L'opposition de deux christologies*, [in:] *Das Konzil von Chalkedon...*, vol. I, p. 242; A.S. Atiya, *Historia...*, p. 51; H.I. Marrou, *L'Église...*, pp. 143–149.

[242] A.H.M. Jones, *Were Ancient Heresies...*, pp. 308–329; E. Wipszycka, *Czy u schyłku starożytności istniały ruchy narodowe*?, KH 3, 1977, pp. 551–563; eadem, *Tysiąc lat greckiego panowania w Egipcie. Trudne dzieje stosunków między dwiema cywilizacjami*, M 37.4–5, 1982, pp. 181–198.

[243] A.A. Vasiliev, *Histoire de l'Empire Byzantin*, vol. I, *324–1081*, Paris 1932, p. 135. It does not, however, mean that, as J. Moorhead (*The Monophysite Response to the Arab Invasion*, B 51, 1981, pp. 579–591) and F. Winkelmann (*Ägypten und Byzanz vor der arabischen Eroberung*, Bsl 40, 1979, pp. 161–182) have shown, that the local populace co-operated with the invaders.

[244] J. Misiurek, *Sobór Chalcedoński w aspekcie ekumenizmu*, RTK 21, 1974, pp. 91–104.

[245] Dioscur remained in exile until his death in 454.

[246] Evagrius Scholasticus, II, 5; Pseudo-Zachariah, III, 2.

[247] Timothy's consecration was uncanonical, as the rite was performed by only two bishops, Eusebius of Pelusium and Peter the Iberian, bishop of Maiuma. J. Lebon, *La christologie de Timothée Aelure*, REB 9, 1908, pp. 677–702; P. Blaudeau, *Timothée Aelure et la direction ecclésiale de l'Empire postchalcédonien*, REB 54, 1996, pp. 107–133; R.Y. Ebied, L.R. Wickham, *Timothy Aelurus: Against the Definition of the Council of Chalcedon*, [in:] *After Chalcedon: Studies in Theology and Church History*, eds. C. Laga, J.A. Munitiz, L. van Rompay, Leuven 1985, pp. 115–166.

[248] Evagrius Scholasticus, II, 8; Pseudo-Zachariah, IV, 1–2.

there first, and spread news about council's acceptance of a Nestorian creed[249]. When Juvenal arrived at Palestinian Caesarea, he was confronted by an angry mob, led by the aforementioned monk Theodosius. The bishop's appeals to obey the emperor's decisions had little effect. Feeling under threat, the dignitary went to Constantinople to seek aid. Meanwhile, his opponents gained support of empress Eudocia, Theodosius II's widow, and consecrated the monk Theodosius to be bishop of Jerusalem, and then – ineffectually – attempted to gain support for their actions from the imperial couple, Pulcheria[250] and Marcian[251]. The ruler deemed it illogical to repudiate Eutyches while simultaneously backing his student, Dioscur. Losing patience, he issued a decree in February 453 in which he announced sanctions against all of those who participated in the rebellion and simultaneously allowing Juvenal, accompanied by a military escort, return to Jerusalem[252]. The imperial couple did not, however, abandon the propaganda campaign, and sent letters to inhabitants of Palestine in which they encouraged allegiance to the council of Chalcedon[253]. With no little effort, empress Eudocia was also convinced to back the council's decisions, even though she later continued to support anti-Chalcedon opposition[254].

After hearing the news of the events in Egypt and the murder of the bishop Proterius of Alexandria, Leo I (457–474), Marcian's successor on the imperial throne, intended to convene a new general council, but faced with strong opposition from the Pope, he abandoned this idea[255]. Instead, expressing his wish to return peace to the Church and in the cities of *Imperium Romanum*, he conducted a kind of plebiscite. He issued a circular letter to metropolitan bishops, in which he commanded that they were to, after consulting provincial councils, comment on Timothy's consecration and to the council of Chalcedon his followers rejected. The imperial letter was accompanied by letters with complaints directed to the ruler by Timothy's opponents, and by letters of his supporters, so that based on them the clergy could make their minds more easily[256]. From

[249] P. Mouterde, *Le concile de Chalcédoine d'après les historiens monophysites de langue syriaque*, [in:] *Das Konzil von Chalkedon...*, vol. I, pp. 581–602.

[250] *ACO* II, 1, 3, p. 128–129.

[251] *ACO* II, 1, 3, p. 124–127.

[252] P. Maraval, *La réception de Chalcédoine dans l'empire d'Orient*, [in:] *Histoire du Christianisme des origines à nos jours*, vol. III, *Les Églises d'Orient et d'Occident*, ed. L. Pietri et al., Paris 1998, p. 110.

[253] *ACO* II, 1, 3, pp. 133–135.

[254] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Life of Euthymius*, 30, pp. 47–49 (ed. R.M. Price, J. Binns).

[255] *ACO* II, 4, pp. 97–100.

[256] The circular letter was sent, in all, to approximately sixty-seven addressees. We know of its contents only from the version sent to the patriarch of Constantinople, Anatolius. *ACO* II,

among the replies gathered by the imperial chancery in the *Codex Encyclicus*, only thirty-seven remain. They did, however, include signatures of nearly five hundred bishops[257]. Among them, only a single voice was against the decisions made at Chalcedon. Such stance was taken by Amphilochius, bishop of Side; yet even he spoke against Timothy's election, along with all the others who were polled[258], both bishops, and representatives of monks, with Symeon the Stylite in the lead[259]. According to Evagrius Scholasticus, the first to respond to the emperor's circular was Leo, bishop of Rome, who defended the Chalcedon Council and spoke against Timothy, denying him the right to episcopal consecration[260]. The emperor sent the papal letter to Timothy, hoping that it would change his mind and make him accept the Chalcedon council. Because of the Monophysite Alexandrian bishop's determined refusal, at the turn of 459–460, on emperor's orders, Timothy was condemned and exiled, first to Gangra (Çankırı, central Turkey), and then in 464 to Chersonesus in Crimea[261]. Once again there was bloodshed in Alexandria, and this time the number of casualties was said to have exceeded ten thousand dead[262]. Timothy Ailuros was replaced on the episcopal throne by monk Timothy Salophakiolos who, despite a conciliatory attitude, was unable to reconcile the feuding parties[263].

During the usurpation of Basiliscus (475–476)[264], who rose against emperor Zeno (474–491), Timothy Ailuros was recalled from exile, much like another opponent of the Chalcedon council, the patriarch of Antioch, Peter the Fuller[265]. Before returning to Alexandria, Timothy spent some time in Constantinople, and inspired the usurper to issue a circular (encyclical), in which he recognized as

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5, p. 11; Evagrius Scholasticus, II, 9. See: J. Lebon, *Le monophysisme sévérien. Étude historique, littéraire et théologique de la résistance monophysite au concile de Chalcédoine jusqu'à la constitution de l'Église jacobite*, Louvain 1909, pp. 21–24; R. Kosiński, *The Emperor Zeno. Religion and Politics*, Kraków 2010, pp. 47–51.

[257] *ACO* II, 5, pp. 9–98. See: T. Schnitzler, *Im Kampfe um Chalcedon Geschichte und Inhalt des Codex Encyclius von 458*, Rome 1938.

[258] Evagrius Scholasticus, II, 10; Pseudo-Zachariah, IV, 7; Michael the Syrian, IX, 5, pp. 145–148.

[259] Evagrius Scholasticus, II, 9–10.

[260] Letter of Pope Leo from 17 August 458. *ACO* II, 5, pp. 113–129.

[261] Evagrius Scholasticus, II, 11; Pseudo-Zachariah, IV, 9 (ed. E.W. Brooks, p. 126).

[262] As estimated by Pseudo-Zachariah (9, p. 126).

[263] Pseudo-Zachariah, IV, 9, p. 127.

[264] M. Redies, *Die Usurpation des Basiliskos (475–476) im Kontext der aufsteigenden monophysitischen Kirche*, ATa 5, 1997, pp. 211–221; R. Kosiński, *The Emperor Zeno...*, pp. 79–81.

[265] R. Kosiński, *Dzieje Akacjusza, patriarchy Konstantynopola w latach 472–489*, USS 9, 2010, pp. 63–97.

fundamental the creed defined in Nicea, composed by *three hundred and eighteen holy Fathers, in union with the Holy Spirit*. Only that formula, free from errors, sufficient to oust all heresies, was to have the force of law binding all Churches[266]. Furthermore, this document recognized the resolutions of the councils of Constantinople (381), made *against the blasphemers insulting the Holy Spirit*, and of Ephesus (431), directed *against the godless Nestorius* and those repeating his errors[267]. At the same time the encyclical rejected both *Letter of Leo to Flavian* and all of the decisions and statements made in Chalcedon in matters of faith as introducing changes to the Nicene Creed and disturbing the peace throughout the oecumene and ruining the unity and order of the Churches[268]. They were to be condemned by all bishops, who were obliged to sign the imperial circular, and all of the material versions of the aforementioned documents were to be destroyed in fire. Those clergy who would refuse to accept the *Encyclical of Basiliscus* were to be deposed; laypeople who so refused were stripped of their property and exiled, along with those monks who opposed the encyclical[269]. Issuing this ordinance, the usurper created an important precedence whereby the ruler arbitrarily defined orthodoxy through the power of his authority. In Evagrius' account, in which he referred to Pseudo-Zachariah, about five hundred bishops condemned Chalcedonian resolutions and the *Letter of Leo to Flavian*[270]. Pseudo-Zachariah, in fact, pointed to seven hundred bishops who rejected the council's decisions[271]; it is possible then that Evagrius himself corrected their number, thinking it too great. The *Encyclical* was met with determined opposition from Acacius, patriarch of Constantinople[272], who was additionally concerned by undermining of the position of his episcopal see by Timothy Ailuros. Acacius incited monks and people of the capital against Basiliscus, proclaiming him to be a heretic[273]. When the rightful emperor Zeno was nearing the capital with an army, the usurper, wishing to secure popular support, proclaimed a new document in which he withdrew his previous anti-Chalcedon decrees[274]; but this did not protect him from downfall.

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[266] A. Grillmeier, *Le Christ...*, pp. 336–344.

[267] Evagrius Scholasticus, III, 4; Pseudo-Zachariah, V, 2.

[268] Evagrius Scholasticus, III, 4; Pseudo-Zachariah, V, 2.

[269] Evagrius Scholasticus, III, 4; Pseudo-Zachariah, V, 2; R. Kosiński, *The Emperor Zeno...*, pp. 82–90.

[270] Evagrius Scholasticus, III, 5.

[271] Pseudo-Zachariah, V, 2.

[272] R. Kosiński, *Dzieje Akacjusza...*, pp. 63–97.

[273] Evagrius Scholasticus, III, 7. See also: M.B. Leszka, *Patriarcha Akacjusz wobec uzurpacji Bazyliskosa 475–476 r.*, AUL.FH 48, 1993, pp. 71–78.

[274] Evagrius Scholasticus, III, 7.

Victorious Zeno overturned Basiliscus' decrees with scant delay in 476, and those bishops who were enthroned by the usurper's decisions were removed from their episcopal sees[275]. The Monophysite bishop of Antioch, Peter the Fuller, was exiled, while Timothy Ailuros, whose death (in 477) prevented his exile[276], was replaced again by Timothy Salophakiolos. The strong backing that the opponents of Chalcedon council received during the brief reign of Basiliscus considerably strengthened and invigorated the Monophysites. Because of this, emperor Zeno made an attempt to win them to his cause. An opportunity appeared in the form of a request made by Alexandrian monks, who demanded from the ruler an acceptance of the episcopacy of Peter Mongus, chosen by the anti-Chalcedon opposition[277], despite the earlier election of John Talaia[278] by the Alexandrian council[279]. Zeno accepted the request, on the condition that Peter Mongus

[275] J. L e b o n, *Le monophysisme sévérien...*, pp. 25–38.

[276] According to L i b e r a t u s (XVI, p. 106) he was poisoned.

[277] E v a g r i u s S c h o l a s t i c u s (III, 17) presented Peter Mongus in the worst possible light. He accused him of lacking an opinion on even the most crucial for the Church dogmatic matters, as at one time he condemned, at another supported the general council of Chalcedon. He also called him a prevaricator, one who constantly changes to adapt to the current situation. Evagrius also quoted opinion of Calandius, bishop of Antioch, who in letters to Acacius and emperor Zeno supposedly called Peter an adulterer and refused him the right to an episcopal see. E v a g r i u s S c h o l a s t i c u s (III, 16) at the same time stressed that Peter had little support in his own Church. Having anathematised the *Letter* of Leo and the resolutions of the general council of Chalcedon, he only managed to win over, according to the historian, "some" of the bishops and archimandrites. He removed most of the monks opposing him from their monasteries, causing a great division.

[278] John Talaia, who supported the general council of Chalcedon, after being deposed from the see of Alexandria sought assistance in Rome from Pope Felix. E v a g r i u s S c h o l a s t i c u s (III, 18) mentioned a written accusation, directed against Acacius, bishop of Constantinople, which John Talaia presented to Pope Felix. It contained accusations of maintaining, against the law of the Church, ecclesiastical communion with Peter Mongus, bishop of Alexandria, and of taking action contrary to the canons of the Church. See also: T h e o p h a n e s, AM 5978; T h e o d o r e L e c t o r, 431, p. 119. In Rome, John was considered to be a new Athanasius. See: Ch. P i e t r i, *D'Alexandrie à Rome: Jean Talaïa, émule d'Athanase au V^e siècle*, [in:] *ALEXANDRINA, Hellénisme, judaïsme et christianisme à Alexandrie. Mélanges offerts au P. Claude Mondésert*, ed. C. M o n d é s e r t, Paris 1987, pp. 277–295; C. F r a i s s e - C o u é, *L'incompréhension croissante entre l'Orient et l'Occident (451–518)*, [in:] *Histoire du christianisme...*, vol. III, p. 168.

[279] In a letter sent later to Pope Felix (E v a g r i u s S c h o l a s t i c u s, III, 20), representatives of the Egyptian clergy argued for John Talaia's orthodoxy and canonical legality of his election, and accused Peter Mongus of heresy and of having been appointed for bishopric by only two bishops (and heretical ones at that), as well as of persecuting orthodox believers. According to the letter's author, Acacius, patriarch of Constantinople, kept supporting Peter in full, despite being aware of all the accusations.

accepted a – specially prepared for this occasion by Acacius, patriarch of Constantinople[280] – "document of unification" (*Henotikon*)[281] and accepting into ecclesiastical communion supporters of the council of Chalcedon[282]. *Henotikon* considered Nicene Creed, confirmed in Constantinople (381) and Ephesus (431), to be the foundation of orthodoxy, however it also used additional wording, taken from the act of union from 433, which stressed, for example, not only co-substantiality of Christ with Father in Godhood, but also with mankind in humanity. At the same time it omitted the Chalcedonian *credo* and *Letter of Pope Leo to Flavian*. In condemning Nestorius, Eutyches and their followers, references were made to the twelve anathemas of Cyril. It also anathematised all those who thought differently, whether in Chalcedon or any other council. *Henotikon*, then, did not directly reject Chalcedonian Creed, but one might get an impression that it was done implicitly[283]. It needs to be remembered that the Nicene Creed was also considered to be the foundation of orthodoxy at the council of Chalcedon, and there, too, references were made to the decisions made at Constantinopolitan and Ephesian councils. Emperor Zeno himself stressed in a letter to Pope Felix that the council of Chalcedon had spoken for the creed established at the Council of Nicaea[284]. He also did not agree to anathematising the council of Chalcedon[285]. It is clear from analysing the text of *Henotikon* that it merely allowed the possibility that not all of those present at Chalcedon accepted the Nicene Creed, and they were the ones to be condemned. Such approach was aimed at putting at ease those opponents of the council of Chalcedon who were convinced that Nestorius' teachings prevailed there. Emperor Zeno assured Pope Felix that Peter Mongus was accepted on the episcopal see of Alexandria only after undersigning the Nicene Creed. At the same time the ruler stressed that both he himself, as well as the aforementioned Peter and all of the Churches *accept and revere the most holy Chalcedonian Synod*[286]. For Zeno, *Henotikon* was

[280] In preparing *Henotikon*, Acacius supposedly followed the example of Martyrius, bishop of Jerusalem, who, based on similar principles, managed to win over a group of anti-Chalcedonian monks led by Marcian of Bethlehem. See: Pseudo-Zachariah, V, 6, p. 153.

[281] W. Myszor, *Henotikon*, [in:] *EKB*, p. 200; W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise...*, pp. 180–181; A. Grillmeier, *Le Christ...*, pp. 351–362; R. Kosiński, *The Emperor Zeno...*, pp. 137–139.

[282] Peter was said not only to have signed the *Henotikon*, but also to accept to the Church communion supporters of Proterius (Evagrius Scholasticus, III, 13).

[283] Ernest Stein (*Histoire du Bas-Empire*, vol. II, *De la disparition de l'Empire d'Occident à la mort de Justinien (476–565)*, Paris–Bruxelles–Amsterdam 1949, p. 31) considered *Henotikon* to be a victory of Monophysitism.

[284] *Epistula Zenonis imperatorem ad Felicem papam*, Evagrius Scholasticus, III, 20.

[285] Evagrius Scholasticus, III, 22.

[286] Evagrius Scholasticus, III, 20 (transl. M. Whitby).

based on a compromise that was supposed to unite in one communion all believers, both adherents and opponents of the fourth general council.

Henotikon was composed in connection to a particular situation in Egypt, but the document also found application in other Churches: in Jerusalem (where it was signed by patriarch Martyrius) and in Antioch, where disturbances associated with rivalry between the pro- and anti-Chalcedonian parties had been frequent. In 479 or 481, the patriarch of Antioch, Stephen II, was murdered. When Stephen's successor Calandion was removed in 485[287], on emperor's orders, for supporting Illus' rebellion (despite Calandion's pro-Chalcedonian views)[288], the ruler agreed to a compromise whereby he would accept episcopacy of Peter the Fuller on the condition that the latter would accept *Henotikon* as well. In this manner all four patriarchs of the East – in Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem – supported *Henotikon*, along with nearly seven hundred eastern bishops[289]. It would have appeared, then, that emperor Zeno succeeded in his religious policy. It soon turned out, however, that he was still being opposed by both some of those who strongly supported the council's decisions, as well as by its enemies. On both sides the resistance was further fomented by monks. The council of Chalcedon was supported by some of the monastic circles (so-called *acoemeti*) in Constantinople, monastic communities in Bithynia, monks inhabiting Judaean Desert led by Sabbas and Theodosius, and some of the Pachomian communities in Egypt. Those who demanded condemning decisions made by the aforementioned assembly and of the *Letter of Leo* included monks from monasteries centred around Gaza and Eleutheropolis in Palestine, led by Peter the Iberian and Isaias. The strongest resistance against the religious policy of emperor Zeno was mounted by the monks in Egypt, who gathered in great number – supposedly thirty thousand – around the martyrium of St. Euphemia near Alexandria, where they were to confront ruler's special envoy, Cosmas, and patriarch Peter Mongus, who previously conducted purges among the clergy and monks who were at odds with him. Under the pressure from such a great crowd of ascetics, the patriarch anathematised not only the decisions made at the council of Chalcedon, but also the *Letter of Leo to Flavian*. The intervention ordered by Zeno and performed by Arsenius, prefect of Egypt and army commander, and the negotiations and theological disputes conducted in

[287] Pseudo-Zachariah (V, 9) wrote about close ties between Calandion and Nestorius. The bishop of Antioch even supposedly called Cyril, the bishop of Alexandria, a fool. Calandion rejected *Henotikon*, defending the resolutions from Chalcedon. W. Myszor, *Henotikon...*, p. 200; W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise...*, pp. 180–181; A. Grillmeier, *Le Christ...*, pp. 351–362.

[288] R. Kosiński, *The Emperor Zeno...*, pp. 147–166.

[289] P. Maraval, *La reception...*, p. 120.

Constantinople in the ruler's presence with representatives of the protesters had little effect. The agreement was not reached due to fundamentally different views on the council of Chalcedon[290]. Because, officially at least, Peter Mongus was renouncing the condemnation of Chalcedonian decisions in his correspondence with the patriarch Acacius, the communion between the Churches of Constantinople and Alexandria was maintained[291]. However, the anti-Chalcedonian attitude adopted by Peter, the patriarch of Alexandria, deepened the divide with the Church in Rome. Pope Felix blamed for this situation the patriarch of Constantinople Acacius, author of the forced compromise (*Henotikon*), who had been excommunicated by a council in Rome in 484[292].

Thus the so-called Acacian schism began, and lasted until 519[293], even though patriarch Euphemius, the successor of Acacius who died in 489, despite signing *Henotikon*, was a convinced supporter of the council of Chalcedon[294], and for this reason not only refused communion with Peter Mongus, but forced Zeno's successor Anastasius, before the latter became an emperor, to swear that as a ruler he will keep the faith in its full purity and he will not introduce any novelties into the Church[295], which – considering Euphemius' views – was tantamount to protecting Chalcedonian resolutions. The emperor did not intend to tolerate the patriarch's cumbersome independence, and had him deprived of episcopal dignity at a council in Constantinople in 496[296]. The following patriarch of the capital city, Macedonius, was also pro-Chalcedonian, though at the same time he also signed *Henotikon*, for which Anastasius was steadfastly gathering support. In 499 the ruler convened a council in Constantinople, and expected it to gain the support of monks, who remained opposed to the council

[290] Evagrius Scholasticus, III, 22; Pseudo-Zachariah, V, 9; VI, 1–4.

[291] Evagrius Scholasticus, III, 17.

[292] Thus the communion between the Churches of Rome and Constantinople was broken. R. Kosiński, *The Emperor Zeno...*, pp. 179–183.

[293] J. Lebon, *Le monophysisme sévérien...*, pp. 501–526.

[294] Evagrius Scholasticus, III, 23.

[295] Evagrius Scholasticus, III, 32. According to this author, Euphemius' fears stemmed from a popular opinion that Anastasius was a supporter of Manicheism. According to Theodore Lector (441, p. 123), Euphemius' opinion was that Anastasius was a heretic and shared Eutyches' views.

[296] Theodore Lector, 454–455, p. 128; Victor of Tunnuna, AD 496, p. 192. See also: P. Charanis, *Church and State in the Later Roman Empire. The Religious Policy of Anastasius the First, 491–518*, Thessalonique 1974, pp. 54–56; J. Dijkstra, G. Greatrex, *Patriarchs and Politics in Constantinople in the Reign of Anastasius (with a Reedition of O. Mon. Epiph. 59)*, Mil 6, 2009 pp. 227–230. Gerhard Wirth (*Anastasius, Christen und Perser. Zum Problem des Verhältnisses zwischen Staat und Kirche um die Wende zum 6. Jh.*, JAC 33, 1990, p. 114) dated the deposition of Euphemius, apparently with nothing to support it, to 498.

of Chalcedon, for *Henotikon*[297]. At the beginning of the sixth century a marked anti-Chalcedonian offensive began, bolstered by influx of Monophysite refugees, who suffered from intensified persecutions in Persia as a result of war between Rome and Persia during 502–505. No small part in it was also played by the Palestinian Monophysite monks, who promoted their views with commitment in Constantinople in the years 508–511, as a result of which *Henotikon* gained an anti-Chalcedonian interpretation. Considerable activity and effectiveness in doing so was demonstrated by Philoxenus, also called Xenaias, the bishop of Syrian Hierapolis (Mabbug)[298], and Severus[299], who a few years later, in 512, became a bishop of Antioch. The former arrived in Constantinople in 507, accusing Flavian, the bishop of Antioch, of Nestorianism; the latter appeared in the capital the following year along with a great number of Palestinian monks, wishing to complain to the emperor about being banished from monasteries and persecutions that they suffered in the areas under the jurisdiction of Elias, the patriarch of Jerusalem[300]. Severus, gaining the ruler's trust, authored for him a document known as *Typos of Anastasius* which – despite not gaining the status of an imperial edict – now became the official interpretation of *Henotikon*[301]. According to *Typos*' author, *Henotikon* condemned the *Letter of Leo to Flavian* and all those who professed in Christ two natures after the union. The Council of Chalcedon itself was deemed to have been a Nestorian assembly. Soon afterward, in 511, the emperor convened two councils – in Sidon, where the bishops were to accept the interpretation of *Henotikon* proposed by Severus, which was intended to become the basis for the unity of the Church in the East[302], and another one

[297] Victor of Tunnuna, AD 499; Theophanes, AM 5991. Some of the scholars date this council to 507. See: A. Grillmeier, *Le Christ dans la tradition chrétienne. Le Concile de Chalcédoine (451)*, vol. II/I, *Réception et opposition*, Paris 1990, p. 379, note 121.

[298] E. Tisserant, *Philoxene de Mabboug*, [in:] *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, vol. XII, Paris 1935, pp. 1509–1532; A. de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabbog: Sa vie, ses écrits, sa théologie*, Louvain 1963; D.A. Michelson, *A Bibliographic Clavis to the Works of Philoxenos of Mabbug*, JSyS 13.2, 2010, pp. 273–338.

[299] *Life of Severus*, pp. 7–115. See: W.H.C. Frend, *Severus of Antioch and the Origins of the Monophysite Hierarchy*, [in:] *The Heritage of the Early Church. Essays in Honor of G.V. Florovsky*, eds. D. Neiman, M. Schatkin, Rome 1973, pp. 261–275; P. Allen, *Severus of Antioch as Pastoral Carer*, SPB 35, 2001, pp. 353–368; P. Allen, C.T.R. Hayward, *Severus of Antioch*, London–New York 2004, pp. 3–29.

[300] Evagrius Scholasticus, III, 32.

[301] Ch. Moeller, *Un fragment du Type de l'empereur Anastase Ier*, StPatr 3.1, 1961, pp. 240–247.

[302] A. Grillmeier, *Le Christ dans la tradition chrétienne. Le Concile de Chalcédoine (451)...*, pp. 392–393.

in Claudiopolis, where Macedonius, patriarch of Constantinople, was deposed for refusing to accept the *Typos*[303]. The following year, however, violent riots erupted in the capital when Anastasius allowed introducing the Monophysite acclamation of the *Trisagion*[304] in Constantinople. It was the formula-invocation, uttered three times by all participants of a liturgical celebration: *Holy God, Holy Strong* [*Omnipotent*], *Holy Immortal* [*Eternal*], *have mercy on us*, to which adherents of Apollinarianism, and after them Monophysites, added before the plea for mercy the phrase *who was crucified for us*. According to the defenders of the council of Chalcedon the addition suggested that the Divine nature was subject to suffering, which they considered blasphemous and denying God perfection, all the more so that in their view *Trisagion* referred to the whole Trinity, and not just Christ[305]. The resulting disturbances nearly led to Anastasius' downfall, which he managed to prevent by humbling himself before the people in the hippodrome[306]. During the following years (513–515) the ruler had to deal with the rebellion of Vitalian, who was the *magister militum per Thraciam*, and who has risen up in defence of the council of Chalcedon[307]. As a result of negotiations with Vitalian, the emperor pledged to convene a council in 515 in Thracian Heraclea, where the leading role was to be given to Pope Hormisdas. Ultimately, however, the council did not meet[308]. Anastasius, then, also referred to *Henotikon* in his religious policy but, unlike his imperial predecessor, he gave it a decidedly anti-Chalcedon edge, and demanded from the clergy a clear condemnation of said council[309].

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[303] Athanasius I, pp. 635–636; Liberatus, XIX, p. 127. See also: W.H.C. Frend, *The Fall of Macedonius in 511 – a Suggestion*, [in:] *Kerygma und Logos. Beiträge zu den geistesgeschichtlichen Beziehungen zwischen Antike und Christentum. Festschrift für Carl Andresen*, ed. A.M. Ritter, Göttingen 1979, pp. 183–195; P. Charanis, *Church and State...*, pp. 70–71; J. Dijkstra, G. Greatrex, *Patriarchs and Politics...*, pp. 230–239.

[304] Evagrius Scholasticus, III, 44. See: F.K. Haarer, *Anastasius I: Politics and Empire in the Late Roman World*, Cambridge 2006, p. 156.

[305] H. Chadwick, *The Early Church...*, p. 207.

[306] Evagrius Scholasticus, III, 44.

[307] C. Capizzi, *L'imperatore Anastasio I (491–518): studio sulla sua vita, la sua opera e la sua personalità*, Roma 1969, pp. 123–127; F.K. Haarer, *Anastasius I...*, pp. 164–179; D. Rusc u, *The Revolt of Vitalianus and the "Scythian Controversy"*, BZ 101, 2008, pp. 773–785.

[308] Victor of Tunnuna, AD 514, p. 195; Theophanes, AM 6006; John Malalas, XVI, 16; *Collectio Avellana*, 109, pp. 501–502. See also: J. Speigl, *Die Synode von Heraklea 515*, AHC 12, 1980, pp. 47–61; J. Wojda, *Communion et foi. Les trois premiers voyages des papes de Rome à Constantinople (484–555). Études historique et téologique*, Siedlce 2006, pp. 68–82.

[309] J. Lebon, *Le monophysisme sévérien...*, pp. 39–65.

After Anastasius' death (9 July 518) the supporters of the Chalcedon Council gained advantage at the imperial court, and on the very next day they chose Justin I (518–521), the nearly seventy year old commander of the imperial palace guard, to be Anastasius' successor[310]. A few days later, on the Sunday of 15 July, the believers gathered for a mass in the church of Hagia Sophia demanded from the patriarch John II, who had been chosen for this position during the previous emperor's life, to support the Chalcedonian Creed. The following day, under pressure from the mob and in accordance with the new ruler's expectations, John announced the convening of an *endimousa* council that was to take appropriate decisions on the matter[311]. The forty bishops assembled in Constantinople on 20 July declared the resolutions made at the four general councils (including Chalcedon) as valid, and ordered the names of Euphemius and Macedonius, patriarchs of Constantinople, to be re-entered into the diptychs, from which they were removed during Anastasius' reign, and also commanded the inclusion of the name of Pope Leo, who was to enjoy the same honours as Cyril of Alexandria. It was also decided that the bishop of Antioch, Severus, was to be deposed and excommunicated[312]; hearing of this, the former bishop fled to Egypt. The decisions of the council were approved by the emperor, who informed of them the Pope, Hormisdas. This allowed for the Acacian schism to be finally concluded on 25 March 519, when the papal legates arrived in Constantinople[313]. Monophysites were now being persecuted, and bishops who refused to acknowledge Chalcedonian resolutions were removed from their sees[314].

Justin I's nephew and successor, Justinian I (527–565) continued the policy of his predecessor, but did not cease attempts at reconciliation with the Mono-

[310] Evagrius Scholasticus, IV, 1–2; John Malalas, XVII, 1–6; Pseudo-Zachariah, VIII, 1; *Paschal Chronicle*, AD 518. According to some scholars, Justin, before he became an emperor, was known for his pro-Chalcedonian sympathies. See: A.A. Vasiliev, *Justin the First. An Introduction to the Epoch of Justinian the Great*, Cambridge 1950, p. 135; A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284–602. A Social, Economic, and Administrative Survey*, vol. I, Oxford 1964, p. 268; M.V. Anastos, *The Emperor Justin I's role in the restoration of Chalcedonian doctrine, 518–519*, Byz 13, 1985, pp. 127–128. Volker L. Menze (*Justinian and the Making of the Syrian Orthodox Church*, Oxford 2008, pp. 18–22), however, doubts that, arguing that if he had been publicly displaying such views he would not have been able to make a career at the court of emperor Anastasius, who was actively fighting against supporters of the council of Chalcedon.

[311] *ACO* III, pp. 71–76.

[312] *ACO* III, pp. 62–66.

[313] *Collectio Avellana*, 167 and 213, pp. 618–621, 671–673. See: M.V. Anastos, *The Emperor...*, pp. 134–138; J. Wojda, *Communion et foi...*, pp. 88–98.

[314] J. Lebon, *Le monophysisme sévérien...*, pp. 66–72.

physites, in which he was supported by his young spouse, empress Theodora[315]. The ruler became involved in rebuilding of the *Imperium Romanum* in the West, and faced with the pro-Chalcedonian attitude of the Church there, he could not withdraw from backing its supporters in the East. During the first years of Justinian's reign a skilful policy toward the Monophysites – persecutions interspersed with concessions – weakened them very seriously. Outside of Egypt, where the emperor did not wish to intervene directly so as not to disrupt the shipments of cheap grain to the capital, Monophysitism appeared to have been weakening. The imperial couple managed to isolate many of the Monophysite leaders from their Churches. This was done by gathering them at the imperial palace, where Theodora founded a monastery, allowing her to exert some control over them. At the same time the empress gained their trust through providing them with assistance, and thus played an important role during the difficult talks between Monophysites and the orthodox clergymen.

Despite the Chalcedonian views of the urban elites, the Monophysites' position was strong enough to keep the emperor, who was perhaps hoping for their greater submissiveness from them, searching for a compromise and understanding. A major role in keeping up Monophysite resistance was played by Severus of Antioch. Deprived of his episcopal dignity during the reign of Justin I, he spent ten years in exile in Egypt (518–528) where he conducted very active theological and organisational activity and providing Monophysitism with an essential doctrinal shape[316]. Henri Irené Marrou rightly stated that historical Monophysitism, which persists to this day, is Severian[317]. Severus, whose views were close to orthodox, condemned both Nestorius and Eutyches. Accepting in full the teachings of Cyril of Alexandria, and using his terminology, he looked for Nestorianism in both Chalcedonian Creed and in the *Letter of Leo*. In Christology, he focused on the unity of natures in Christ, distinguishing them in a more intellectual manner. Severus' toned down views, less distant from orthodoxy, gave hope for a possibility of working out a bottom-up compromise and resolving the divisions within the Church. As a result, a new approach – views referred to as neo-Chalcedonian – appeared among the orthodox believers, who wanted to reach out to Severians through renewed analysis of Chalcedonian resolutions and decisively shunning Nestorianism.

[315] J.A. Evans, *The Empress Theodora. Partner of Justinian*, Austin 2002, pp. 67–84.

[316] J. George, *Severus of Antioch's Response to Heresy and Religious Promiscuity*, StPatr 42, 2006, pp. 133–137.

[317] H.I. Marrou, *L'Église de l'Antiquité tardive...*, p. 150.

6.5. Emperor-Theologian on the Throne
The Failure of Church Unity Restoration under Justinian I

Emperor Justinian I attempted to use this attitude, and in 531 summoned a delegation of Severian bishops for negotiations. They presented the ruler with a creed in which they rejected the errors of Apollinaris, Mani, Eutyches, but also Diodorus of Tarsus[318], Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus, as well as the *Letter of Leo* and the council of Chalcedon. At the same time they manifested their loyalty to the emperor, assuring him of their prayers in his intention[319]. Justinian planned a public confrontation of Severians with a delegation of Chalcedonian bishops, which was to take the form of a conference, but it was eventually organised in Constantinople, in Hormisdas' palace, most likely in the spring of 532 after a delay caused by the *Nika* riots[320]. The ruler was hoping that during a free exchange of opinion both sides would be able to work out an understanding that would allow the return of unity to the Church[321]. The emperor designated six bishops from each side to take part in the debate[322], which was to be attended by a large number of priests and numerous delegations of monks. During the debate the Severians – despite agreeing with Flavian, the patriarch of Constantinople, in condemning Eutyches and declaring the actions of Dioscur, patriarch of Alexandria, toward the archimandrite to have been erroneous – decidedly rejected the council of Chalcedon nonetheless. They took the expression *in two natures* to have been an introduction of novelties to the faith, and considered Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodore of Cyrus and Ibas of Edessa, cleared during the general council from charges of heresy, to be Nestorian, all the more so because the council did not accept at the time the twelve anathemas of Cyril. During the third session, the ruler appeared among those gathered in person, and having delivered a speech, attempted to bring the bishops closer in matters of doctrine and to achieve acceptance for the resolutions of the Chalcedon Council. The emperor was

[318] Diodorus of Tarsus was being condemned by opponents of Chalcedon since at least 507. L. A b r a m o w s k i, *La prétendue condamnation de Diodore de Tarse en 499*, RHE 40, 1965, pp. 64–65; F.K. H a a r e r, *Anastasius I...*, pp. 140–142.

[319] P s e u d o - Z a c h a r i a h, IX, 15, pp. 79–84.

[320] J.A. E v a n s, *The "Nika" Rebellion and the Empress Theodora*, B 54, 1984, pp. 380–382.

[321] S. B r o c k, *The Conversations with the Syrian Orthodox under Justinian (532)*, OCP 47, 1981, pp. 87–121.

[322] In reality, only five bishops represented the orthodox side. S. B r o c k, *The Conversations...*, pp. 117–118; S. B r a l e w s k i, *Imperatorzy...*, p. 116.

very active, participating in the discussions, asking questions, and extended particular patience towards the Severians, but eventually became vexed and threatened them with exile[323].

Despite the ultimate fiasco of the conference, Justinian I did not lose hope of uniting the feuding parties. He decided however to enforce the compromise, using a legal decree. In mid-March of 533 he proclaimed a creed in an imperial edict, one without any reference to the council of Chalcedon, nor even to two natures. Defining the Christological dogma the emperor used a theopaschite formula: *One of the Trinity suffered for us in flesh*[324], which was promoted in the capital over a decade earlier by Scythian monks, and for which he even managed to secure the acceptance of Pope John II[325]. The ruler was not, however, able to win over the Monophysites, despite the favour shown to them when he agreed for the episcopal sees of Constantinople and Alexandria to be occupied by Anthimus and Theodosius, whose views were not far from those promoted by Severians. The arrival in Constantinople of Pope Agapetus, sent on a peace mission by Theodahad, king of the Goths, led Justinian to a temporary change of his policy toward the Monophysites[326]. The bishop of Rome, actively engaged in defence of the Chalcedon Council, contributed to the expulsion of Severus and his supporters from the capital city, and to deposing patriarch Anthimus, which was ultimately confirmed, after the Pope's death, by an *endimousa* council in 536, which at the same time confirmed the resolutions of the four general councils, along with the *Letter of Leo*[327]. Since the emperor wished to regain Italy, where a military campaign with that express purpose was underway, the ruler was seeking the Pope's backing[328]. This led to imperial repression of Monophysites. In 537 Theodosius was removed from the episcopal see in Alexandria and, after his initial imprisonment, soon found shelter in the palace of Hormisdas in Constantinople, the place where many other Monophysites resided under empress

[323] On the subject of the debates also see: *Epistula Innocenti Maronitae ad Thomam Thessalonicensem de collatione cum Seuerianis habita*, *ACO* IV, 2, pp. 169–184.

[324] *CIC*, *Codex*, I, 1, 6 and 7. The emperor in fact proclaimed two edicts: one addressed to the inhabitants of Constantinople and of twelve other important cities, the other – to Epiphanius, the capital's patriarch.

[325] *CIC*, *Codex*, I, 1, 8. Justinian treated the Pope with great honours. See: J. M e y e n d o r f f, *Justinian, the Empire and the Church*, DOP 22, 1968, p. 48. On the subject of Justinian's relations with the papacy, see: W.H.C. F r e n d, *Old and New Rome in the Age of Justinian*, [in:] *Religion Popular and Unpopular in the Early Christian Centuries*, London 1976, art. XX, pp. 11–28.

[326] J. W o j d a, *Communion et foi...*, pp. 204–244.

[327] *Ibidem*, pp. 245–270.

[328] P. K r u p c z y ń s k i, *Trudności zachodnich wypraw Belizariusza*, Łódź 1981, *passim*.

Theodora's protection. When, however, Justinian I's general Belisarius captured Rome, and Vigilius – supported by Theodora who was hoping he would be more open to Monophysites – became the new Pope[329], the ruler returned to his plans of restoring religious unity in the *Imperium Romanum*.

In 543, under the influence of Theodore Askidas, the bishop of Cappadocian Caesarea and imperial advisor in church matters, Justinian made an attempt to bring the Monophysites and orthodox faithful closer by using their shared antipathy toward Nestorianism. At the turn of 543 and 544 he proclaimed an edict, in the form of a theological treatise, condemning the so-called *Three Chapters*, a collection of writings attributed to three authors. Thus were condemned the works and person of Theodore of Mopsuestia, the teacher and precursor of Nestorius[330]; some of the anti-Cyrillian works of Theodoret of Cyrus, who argued primarily against Cyril's anathemas (*Reprehensio XII capitum*)[331]; and a text by Ibas of Edessa, who in a letter to the Persian bishop Maris disagreed with Cyril of Alexandria, accusing the latter of Apollinarianism, and who furthermore considered Theodore of Mopsuestia to be a doctor of the Church[332]. Proclaiming the edict was not sufficient – it needed to be accepted by the divided Church, and acceptance was denied even by Pope Vigilius[333]. Ultimately, the Pope succumbed to imperial pressure after being abducted from Rome to Constantinople[334], but the declaration he signed condemning the *Three Chapters* was temporarily kept secret due to the aversion of Western bishops, who suspected it to be a covert assault on the Chalcedonian resolutions. Realising that Vigilius needed support of other dignitaries of the Western Church, Justinian organised in 547 a council in the capital, attended by many. When during its third session Facundus, bishop of

[329] Vigilius supposedly promised her that he will accept Severian Monophysitism as orthodox and return Anthimus to the episcopal see of Constantinople. J. W o j d a, *Communion et foi...*, pp. 279–278.

[330] It was mentioned by John of Antioch in a letter to Nestorius (*ACO* I, 1, 1, pp. 94–95), as well as by other sources. M.V. A n a s t o s, *The Imutability of Christ and Justinian's Condemnation of Theodore of Mopsuestia*, DOP 6, 1951, pp. 123–160; R. K o s i ń s k i, *Dzieje Nestoriusza...*, p. 36.

[331] *ACO* I, 1, 6, pp. 107–146. Furthermore, Theodoret's writings in which he criticised Cyril and the council in Ephesus, and praised Diodorus of Tarsus and the aforementioned Theodore, were also rejected. Like Nestorius, Theodoret was associated with the monks living in the vicinity of Antioch. The stories of familial ties between Theodoret and Nestorius are merely that. F. N a u, *La naissance de Nestorius*, ROC 14, 1909, p. 425; R. K o s i ń s k i, *The Life of Nestorius...*, p. 165.

[332] *ACO* II, 3, 3, pp. 16–52.

[333] On relations between Vigilius and Justinian see: E. S c h w a r t z, *Vigiliusbriefe. Zur Kirchenpolitik Justinians*, München 1940, pp. 1–33.

[334] J. W o j d a, *Communion et foi...*, pp. 299–318.

Hermiana, was attempting to convince the gathering that condemning the *Three Chapters* was contrary to decisions made in Chalcedon, the proceedings were hastily interrupted, and all of the participants were ordered to state their opinion on the matter in writing[335]. According to the testimony of the aforementioned Facundus, those who participated in the debates were under strong pressure to condemn the *Three Chapters*[336]. Even though the council did not meet expectations of the emperor, on 11 February 548 Vigilius officially condemned the *Three Chapters* in *Judicatum*[337]. This was met with a strong reaction and protests in the West as a result of which the Pope was given the document back in 550. Nonetheless, the ruler soon decided to convene a general council to discuss the matter.

In preparation for it, Justinian made an attempt to force the African bishops, summoned to the capital in 551 for this specific purpose, to condemn *Three Chapters*. Reparatus, the bishop of Carthage, along with his three colleagues were, by the emperor's orders subjected to strong pressure. Reparatus himself was even subject to a political trial, after which he was deposed and exiled. In July 551 Justinian, in a new edict that was practically an imperial creed, once again condemned the *Three Chapters*[338]. Unexpectedly, Pope Vigilius once again resisted, seeking shelter from the imperial wrath in Constantinopolitan churches. The emperor, disregarding attitude of the bishop of Rome, commanded in a letter addressed to the general council (which lasted from 5 May until 2 June 553) to examine the orthodoxy of specified writings of Theodore, Theodoret and Ibas, pointing out that Nestorians, creating confusion within the Church, sought support for their views in the legacy of the aforementioned theologians. The ruler assured the bishops of his fidelity to the decisions made at the four Councils[339]. The assembly, having condemned the *Three Chapters*, deposed and excommunicated Vigilius, who kept resisting imperial pressure until 23 February 554[340]. His successor, Pelagius (555–561), having accepted decisions of the Council of Constantinople, found taking the position of the bishop of Rome difficult and had to

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335 Facundus Hermianensis, *Contra Mocianum*, cols. 680, 859; *Pro defensione*, col. 527.

336 Facundus Hermianensis, *Pro defensione*, col. 528.

337 J. Wojda, *Communion et foi...*, pp. 326–339.

338 Justinian I, cols. 225–267.

339 *ACO* IV, 1, pp. 9–11.

340 G. Every, *Was Vigilius a Victim or an Ally of Justinian?*, HeyJ 20, 1979, pp. 257–266; J. Moorhead, *Justinian*, London–New York 1994, pp. 134–140; J. Meyendorff, *Unité de l'Empire et divisions des Chrétiens, L'Église de 450 à 688*, transl. F. L hoest, Paris 1993, pp. 255–264; V.L. Menze, *Justinian...*, pp. 265–270; J. Wojda, *Communion et foi...*, pp. 341–419.

resort to military assistance. Despite the emperor's efforts, many opponents remained on both sides of the conflict. The desired unification was not achieved[341].

Effectiveness of the imperial actions aimed at weakening of the Monophysites was largely negated by Jacob of Tella, called Baradaeus (meaning "Rags" or "Tatters")[342], a Mesopotamian monk who spoke Syriac, and who was consecrated, with the empress Theodora's knowledge, bishop of Edessa in 543, by Theodosius, patriarch of Alexandria, who at the time resided in exile in Constantinople. Jacob had no chance of assuming position in his see due to the very strong position of the local Chalcedonian bishop. This, however, allowed him to serve many Monophysite communities, and at that time Monophysite bishops were sought by one of the Arab rulers, Al-Ḥārith ibn Djabala of the Jafnid dynasty, who was a valuable ally of the empire. Theodore, another Monophysite clergyman, was consecrated bishop of Bostra, and thus became a spiritual leader of the Ghassānid people. Jacob's extremely austere lifestyle (which gained him his moniker), along with his great activity and mobility, gained him extraordinary authority and obedience of the Monophysite masses in the areas he visited – in Syria, Egypt and Asia Minor. Over the course of his activity Jacob consecrated twenty seven bishops and several thousand priests and deacons[343]. He performed episcopal consecrations even in Constantinople. Thanks to Jacob the Monophysites created their own hierarchical organisational structures, creating an autonomous Monophysite Church, which in time adopted the name of Jacobite Church, in recognition of Jacob's contributions[344]. The organisation of Monophysites in Egypt was strengthened thanks to him as well, giving rise to the Cop-

[341] Near the end of his life Justinian was leaning towards aphtardocetism, a radical strand of Monophysitism stating that after Christ's death his body did not disintegrate, and the suffering he experienced was illusory.

[342] J.J. van Ginkel, *Jacob von Edessa in der Chronographie des Michael Syrus*, [in:] *Syriaca. Zur Geschichte, Theologie, Liturgie und Gegenwartslage der syrischen Kirchen*, ed. M. Tamke, Münster 2002, pp. 115–124; R.G. Hoyland, *Jacob and Early Islamic Edessa*, [in:] *Jacob of Edessa and the Syriac Culture of His Day*, ed. R.B. ter Haar Romeny, Leiden–Boston 2008, pp. 11–24; D. Kruisheer, *A Bibliographical Clavis to the Works of Jacob of Edessa (Revised and Expanded)*, [in:] *ibidem*, pp. 265–294; A. Salvesen, *Jacob of Edessa's Life and Work: A Biographical Sketch*, [in:] *ibidem*, pp. 1–10; W. Witakowski, *The Chronicle of Jacob of Edessa*, [in:] *ibidem*, pp. 25–48.

[343] There is a tradition stating that he consecrated one hundred thousand priests.

[344] R. Devreesse, *Le patriarcat d'Antioche depuis la paix de l'Église jusqu'à la conquête arabe*, Paris 1945, pp. 77–94; J. J. van Ginkel, *History and Community: Jacob of Edessa and the West Syrian Identity*, [in:] *Redefining Christian Identity. Cultural Interaction in the Middle East since the Rise of Islam*, eds. J.J. van Ginkel, H.L. Murre-van den Berg, T.M. van Lint, Louvain 2005, pp. 67–75.

tic Church[345]. After emperor Zeno closed the school in Edessa in 489[346], which was dominated by Nestorians[347], and ordered all of the adherents of Nestorian teachings to leave the borders of the *Imperium Romanum*, these created the organisational structures of Nestorian Church in Persia[348]. Thus, divisions between Christians were very deep[349], and the separate administration led to their permanence. Even an outside threat, whether Persian or Arab, could not change it.



[345] Very strongly attached to its Christology. S.J. D a v i s, *Coptic Christology in Practice...*, pp. 59–200. See also: S.J. D a v i s, *The Early Coptic Papacy. The Egyptian Church and its Leadership in Late Antiquity*, vol. I, Cairo–New York 2004, pp. 112–132, 138–140.

[346] This dating was accepted by J.B. C h a b o t (*L'École de Nisibe, son histoire, ses statuts*, JA 8, 1896, p. 46), and many other scholars after him, i.e. A. B e c k e r (*Fear of God and the Beginning of Wisdom. The School of Nisibis and Christian Scholastic Culture in Late Antique Mesopotamia)*, Philadelphia 2006, pp. 41, 77. Other dates also appear in the literature of the subject: 457, and even 450. A. V ö ö b u s, *History of the School of Nisibis*, Louvain 1965, pp. 33–34.

[347] He has done it inspired by Cyrus, bishop of Edessa. J.B. C h a b o t, *L'École de Nisibe...*, pp. 45–46. On the school of Edessa itself see: A. V ö ö b u s, *History...*, pp. 7–32; J.B. S e g a l, *Edessa, the Blessed City*, Oxford 1970, pp. 150–151; H.J.W. D r i j v e r s, *The School of Edessa*: *Greek Learning and Local Culture*, [in:] *Centres of Learning: Learning and Location in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near East*, Leiden–New York 1995, pp. 49–59; A. B e c k e r, *Fear...*, pp. 41–76.

[348] Teachers and student from Edessa moved to Nisibis, on the border with Persia, where they continued traditions of their school. J.B. C h a b o t, *L'École de Nisibe...*, pp. 46–93; A. B e c k e r, *Fear...*, pp. 77–154.

[349] W. W i t a k o w s k i, *Syrian Monophysite Propaganda in the Fifth to Seventh Centuries*, [in:] *Aspects of Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium. Papers Read at a Colloquium Held at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, 31 V–5 VI 1992*, eds. L. R y d é n, J.O. R o s e n q v i s t, Upssala 1993, pp. 57–66.

Teresa Wolińska

7. Difficult Neighbours. Enemies, Partners, Allies

At the beginning of the Middle Ages the Arabian Peninsula was, much like today, a key region in both strategic and economic terms. The influences and interests of the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) and Persian Empires, the two mighty powers of the day, clashed there. The importance of the region was even greater because of the vicinity of two important provinces, Syria and Palestine. The Byzantine rulers were intent to keep control of the trade routes, the significance of which grew at the time of war with Persia, and to ensure the safety of the southern flank of the Empire, in particular to preclude a surprise attack on Syria and Palestine by the Persians. Guaranteeing peace in these regions was particularly important for the local farmers. Ensuring safety was not an easy task, not least because of the very complex ethnic situation in the region, which made F. E. Peters use the label *a nation of tribes* to refer to the Arabs of the time[1]. He stressed the fact that before the advent of Islam Arabs identified themselves with a tribe, a group descended from a common ancestor. There was no identity with a broader basis, the "Arabs" as a whole[2]. According to Strabo, they were divided into small polities[3]. Lifestyles among the Arabs varied. Scholars write about two Arabias, or two types of societies in the pre-Islamic Arabia: the nomads and the sedentary peoples[4]. From the fourth century onwards larger confederacies of Arabic tribes started to form in the Arabian Peninsula[5].

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[1] F.E. Peters, *Introduction*, [in:] *The Arabs and Arabia on the Eve of Islam*, ed. F.E. Peters, Aldershot 1999, p. XIII.

[2] F. Millar, *The Roman Near East 31 BC–AD 337*, Cambridge 1993, pp. 511–523; B. de Vries, *On the Way to Bostra: Arab Settlement in South Syria Before Islam – the Evidence from Written Sources*, [in:] *Hereux qui comme Ulisses a fait un beau voyage: Movements of People in Time and Space*, eds. N. Naguib, B. de Vries, Bergen 2010, p. 73.

[3] Strabo, XVI, 3, 1; XVI, 4, 27.

[4] Ch. Décobert, *The Conquest*, [in:] *The Expansion of the Early Islamic State*, ed. F.M. Donner, Aldershot 2008, pp. 93–94.

[5] N. Lenski, *Captivity and Slavery among the Saracens in Late Antiquity (ca. 250–630 CE)*, ATa 19, 2011, p. 244.

7.1. Arab Attacks on the Lands of the Byzantine Empire

Because of the important location of Arabia, the great powers of the time, Persia and the Roman Empire, tried to forge alliances with some of the tribes and encouraged their Arab allies to attack the lands of the other empire, to plunder and abduct people.

The Byzantine Empire was a direct continuation of the Roman Empire and inherited its predecessor's problems with the neighbours in the east, including the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula. In the following centuries it was forced to cope with numerous incursions of these peoples, which were described by Byzantine chroniclers[6]. It should be stressed, though, that only greater raids attracted their attention. Smaller attacks were an everyday thing in the life of the region[7]. Although it is impossible to present a full catalogue here, it is worth to discuss at least some of the attacks.

The first description of the problems that the Arabs caused the Eastern Roman Empire comes from Ammianus Marcellinus, a Greek man writing in Latin. In the chronicle entry for the year 354 he noted a devastating attack by the Saracens on the Roman provinces[8]. The chronicler used the occasion to provide a description of these nomads, whose belligerence he appreciated but whom he would not have as either friends or enemies[9]. In the course of the Persian campaign of the emperor Julian, his troops happened to face those of Podozakis (Malechus Podosaces), the phylarch of the Asanites, a Saracen tribe in Persian service, who had long wrought havoc in the lands belonging to Byzantium by plundering the borderlands[10]. Now Podozakis, still cooperating with the Persians, laid an ambush for the Romans[11]. During the retreat of the Roman troops under Jovian, the Saracens captured soldiers who had moved too far away from the main forces in order to kill them or sell as slaves[12].

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[6] M. Miotto, *Bisanzio e la difesa della Siria: Arabi foederati, incursioni arabe e conquista islamica (IV–VII saec.)*, Por 4.10, 2007, p. 5.

[7] N. Lenski, *Captivity...*, p. 237.

[8] Ammianus Marcellinus, XIV, 4, 1.

[9] Ammianus Marcellinus, XIV, 4, 3–7.

[10] Ammianus Marcellinus, XXV, 2, 4. The chronicler calls him *latro* – "a bandit". I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century*, Washington 1984, pp. 239–250. N. Lenski (*Captivity...*, pp. 244–245) believes the name Asanites (*Assanitae*) refers to Ghassānids, in Persian service at the time.

[11] Ammianus Marcellinus, XXIV, 2, 4.

[12] Ammianus Marcellinus, XXV, 8, 1. This happened as the Romans were crossing the Tigris.

Monasteries and anchorites who lived away from settlements were particularly at risk. Around 390 the ascetic Malchus of Syria was captured and enslaved by Saracens while traversing Syria to Nisibis. This happened between Beroea and Edessa. The monk had been aware of danger and joined a larger group of travellers[13]. In 373 the hermits living in Sinai were attacked[14]. Soon afterwards monks living in the vicinity of Bethlehem fell victim to the Saracens[15]. The communities of Scetis and Nitria were under threat too, and were attacked in the years 407–408, 434, 444[16]. The monks near Bostra were similarly threatened[17]. Cyril of Scythopolis notes a number of similar events[18]. The attacks by Al-Mundhir, an ally of the Persians, are mentioned in the life of St. Sabbas[19] and in the life of John[20]. Sabbas asked the emperor Anastasius to build a *kastron* for the protection of the monks[21]. Although his request was fulfilled, the attacks did not cease[22]. John Moschus complained about them in his writings[23], and Hilarion was assaulted[24]. Daniel of Scetis was captured three times by the Berbers[25]. Anthony

[13] Jerome, *Vita Malchi*, 3–4, col. 55; P.J. Botha, J.P.K. Kritzinger, *Rhetoric and Argument in Chapter VI of Jerome's Vita Malchi Monachi Captivi*, EPh 95, n.s. 24, 2013, pp. 283–293; N. Lenski, *Captivity...*, pp. 237–238. As a captive Malchus was forced to work for his Saracen master, e.g. he tended his herds. However, when he was going to be forced into a marriage with a woman captured with him, they both ran away. They made their way to the Roman territory and were received by the Roman dux of Palestine (Jerome, *Vita Malchi*, 5–9).

[14] Nilus, IV, col. 625sqq; N. Lenski, *Captivity...*, p. 252. The latter quotes also yet another source, *Relatio Arranonii*, which I was not able to consult.

[15] John Cassian, VI, 1, 1, p. 153; Jerome, *In Hieremiam*, I, 50, p. 40; N. Lenski, *Captivity...*, p. 252.

[16] N. Lenski (*Captivity...*, p. 253) believes the attackers were Berbers rather than Arabs.

[17] Theodore of Petra, p. 83.

[18] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymi*, 46, pp. 67–68 (the attack of barbarians); *Vita Sabae*, 14, p. 97; *Vita Abramii*, 1, p. 244.

[19] F. Nau, *Les Arabes chrétiens de Mésopotamie et de Syrie du VII^e au VIII^e siècle*, Paris 1933, p. 37.

[20] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Joannis*, 13–14, pp. 211–212.

[21] B. Isaac, *Bandits in Judea and Arabia*, HSCP 88, 1984, p. 194; F. Nau, *Les Arabes...*, p. 37; A.A. Vasiliev, *Notes on Some Episodes Concerning the Relations between the Arabs and the Byzantine Empire from the Fourth to the Sixth Century*, DOP 9, 1956, p. 310 (about converting Saracens).

[22] B. Isaac, *Bandits in Judea...*, p. 194; N. Lenski, *Captivity...*, p. 253 and 114 (further examples of attacks on monks).

[23] John Moschus, 21, 99, 133, 136, 155, cols. 2168, 2951–3116; F. Nau, *Les Arabes...*, p. 37.

[24] Jerome, *Vita Hilarionis*, 12, col. 34; I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth...*, pp. 293–295.

[25] Daniel of Scetis, 8, pp. 27–29.

the Chozibites noted an attack by the Saracens on the monastery of Choziba and the killing of several monks[26]. *The Life of Nilus* tells us about an attack by the nomads on the monasteries in Sinai which ended in deaths of many of the ascetics[27]. In the times of emperor Maurice Al-Nuʿmān invaded Jordan. A young man from Tyre was captured and the Arab chief wanted to sacrifice him to a pagan deity[28]. In 619 Sophronius transported the body of John Moschus from Rome to Palestine and his journey to Ascalon was endangered by the attacks of the Agareni[29].

At times monastic communities could count on protection by the troops stationed nearby[30]. In order to defend against the attacks by Saracens numerous fortifications were built[31]. Especially numerous initiatives of this kind were documented in the times of emperor Justinian I. New fortresses to protect and defend the monks were constructed during his reign, and monasteries were also fortified[32]. The monks of Mount Sinai complained to the emperor about being attacked by the Arabs, Ishmaelites, who disturbed the holy services. The emperor gave orders to fortify the monastery of St. Catherine with walls and settled some people responsible for its protection in the vicinity[33]. Pseudo-Zachariah claims that the fortifications of Dara were also aimed to protect Byzantine territories not only from the Persians but also from the Saracens (called *Tayyāyē* by the source)[34]. The attacks of the latter were the reason for the construction of the fortress of Tannuris[35] and for the fortification of Sergiopolis (Al-Ruṣāfah)[36].

It should be emphasised, however, that the relations of the monks and anchorites with the Arabs were not always inimical. The former cared for their security

[26] *Life of George of Choziba*, 7, 31, pp. 129–130; D.J. Constantelos, *The Moslem Conquest of Near East as Revealed in Greek Sources of the VII^th^ and the VIII^th^ Century*, B 42, 1972, p. 332. Constantelos believes that Anthony could have confused Arabs and Persians, when he wrote about an invasion of the latter on Palestine.

[27] Similar information can be found in the work of Ammonius. V. Christides, *Once again the "Narrations" of Nilus Sinaiticus*, B 43, 1973, pp. 44–45. Cf. also: E. Wipszycka, *Pustynia i mnisi. Zagrożenia pustynnych wspólnot monastycznych*, USS 7, 2008, pp. 199–245.

[28] John Moschus, 155, col. 3024. The young man was saved by the intervention of St. Nicholas. F. Nau, *Les Arabes...*, p. 37; P. Goubert, *Byzance avant l'Islam*, vol. I, *Byzance et l'Orient sous les successeurs de Justinien. L'empereur Maurice*, Paris 1951, pp. 261–262.

[29] *Elogium*, cols. 121–122; Ph. Mayerson, *The First Muslim Attacks on Southern Palestine (AD 633–634)*, TPAPA 95, 1964, p. 191.

[30] Anonimus Piacentinus, (ch. 40) describes such a case in Pharan in Sinai.

[31] Ammianus Marcellinus, XXV, 6, 8; *Life of Alexander*, 33, p. 683.

[32] Eutychius, cols. 1071–1072; Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae*, 72, p. 175.

[33] Eutychius, cols. 1071–1072; Procopius, *De aedificiis*, V, 8, 9.

[34] Pseudo-Zachariah, VII, 6.

[35] Pseudo-Zachariah, IX, 2; Procopius, *De aedificiis*, II, 6, 15–16.

[36] Procopius, *De aedificiis*, II, 9, 3–4.

and so they maintained contacts with Saracen tribes. The monks living in the territories between Arabia and the Red Sea made various pacts with the Arabs and paid them tribute to ensure peace. There is evidence that local Arabs protected the monasteries[37]. Cyril of Scythopolis notes that they were warned about impending attacks by Arab phylarchs in Byzantine service[38]. Nilus of Sinai's *Narrationes* contains mentions of Arabian tribes of the Pharan valley who defended the monks against fellow Arabs of Elusa[39]. They were converted to Christianity by Moses of Pharan[40], but Nilus presents them as pagans, so his testimony must refer to an earlier period, the first half of the fourth century. The Arabs also benefited from the peaceful relations with the monks. One of the most evident gains was the availability of the medical knowledge of the holy men[41].

Two extreme examples below attest to the very different character the relations between the monks and Arab nomads could have. Shortly before the capture of Jerusalem by the Persians in 614, numerous monks of a nearby monastery were murdered by the Saracens[42]. During the Muslim invasion in 634, Arab warriors of the Pharan region fought valiantly to defend them[43].

It was not only the monasteries that were subject to attacks. Around 410 a whole series of Arab raids on Phoenicia, Egypt and Palestine took place[44]. The Arabs, allied with the Persians as well as those allied with the Byzantines, took advantage of the changes on the Imperial throne. The former saw this as an occasion for attacks, the latter for improving the terms of the alliance with the Eastern Roman Empire[45]. This was the case in the first year of Zeno's reign (474–491), when several attacks on the Byzantine Mesopotamia (Lower Mes-

[37] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Johannis*, 13–14, pp. 211–212.

[38] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Johannis*, 13–14, pp. 211–212.

[39] V. Christides, *Once again...*, p. 42. Although the source is mostly a fantastic tale, it does present some historical realities. There are a number of manuscripts of Nilus' text, yet there is no critical edition. The only available edition is in *PG* 79, cols. 583–694. An abbreviated version of *The Life of Nilus* can be found in: *Basilii imp. Menologium*, ed. J.-P. Migne, [in:] *PG* 117, cols. 256–257.

[40] Ammonius makes a mention of his mission. It took place around 375. (V. Christides, *Once again...*, p. 45). Sozomen (VI, 38) calls him the bishop of the Saracens.

[41] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii*, 10, p. 52; 51–53, pp. 75–76.

[42] Antiochus the Monk, col. 1424. Some of the monks were tortured so that they would show the places where the treasures had been hidden.

[43] Anastasius of Sinai, *Holy Fathers*, pp. 87–89.

[44] Jerome, *Ep. 126*, col. 1086; *In Hezechielem*, III, 79–80, col. 75; N. Lenski, *Captivity...*, p. 245.

[45] M. Miotto, *Bisanzio...*, p. 11.

opotamia) occurred[46]. Similarly, at the time Anastasius (491–518) took power, the province of *Phoenicia Libanensis* fell victim to an attack (491)[47].

Several years later, during Anastasius' reign, a group of Skenites ("tent dwellers") invaded the Roman territories, pillaging, among others, Phoenicia and Palestine[48]. Similar events were recorded a shortly afterwards by Barsauma of Nisibis[49]. The Arabs, called by the name *Tayy'*, most likely allies of Persia, took advantage of a difficult period caused by drought, attacked Roman territories and rode off with livestock. The Romans demanded compensation from the Persians, but while the talks were in progress, the Arabs undertook another attack during the absence of a Persian marzban[50]. In 497, Romanus, the chief of imperial troops in Palestine, repulsed an attack of a group commanded by Gabalas (Djabala) and captured one of the attackers, Ogaros (Ḥudjr), the son of Arethas. Four years later, a brother of the latter attacked Phoenicia, Syria, and Palestine, and retreated safely with the booty[51]. I will return to these events and discuss them in more detail later.

Further attacks happened in the years 499[52] and 502[53]. Around 506 another attack was launched by Al-Mundhir, a Lakhmid of Al-Ḥīra, on Arabia and Palestine. On that occasion the Arabs captured Amida[54]. At the beginning of the reign of Justin I, in 519, the Persian king Kavadh persuaded Al-Mundhir to launch an-

[46] The attack took place in 474 (Theophanes, AM 5966, p. 120; Evagrius Scholasticus, III, 2). Possibly the same attack and capture of many prisoners is the topic of homilies by Isaac of Antioch (hom. 11–12, pp. 207–249). G. Greatrex, *Isaac of Antioch and the Sack of Beth Hur*, Mu 111, 1998, pp. 287–291; G. Greatrex, S.N.C. Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars*, vol. II, *AD 363–630*, London–New York 2002, p. 47.

[47] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Abraami*, 1, p. 244.

[48] Evagrius Scholasticus, III, 36; Eustathius, p. 142. The invasion might have taken place in 497–498.

[49] Barsauma of Nisibis, pp. 526–527.

[50] A broader account is given by: N. Lenski, *Captivity...*, p. 245. See also: G. Greatrex, S.N.C. Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier...*, pp. 49–50.

[51] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 18, 3; Theophanes, AM 5990, p. 141; S. Smith, *Events in Arabia in the 6th Century AD*, BSOS 16.3, 1954, pp. 443, 447; U. Avner, L. Nehmé, Ch. Robin, *A Rock Inscription Mentioning Tha'laba, an Arab King from Ghassān*, AAE 24, 2013, p. 247.

[52] Theophanes, AM 5990, p. 141; Evagrius Scholasticus, III, 36; Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Abraami*, 1, p. 224 (the attack of Saracens); LXXXIX, 33, p. 125.

[53] This time Palestine was under attack (Theophanes, AM 5994; Nonnosus, p. 179; Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii*, 46, pp. 67–68 (the text mentions barbarians who destroyed the tents of baptized Saracens – in all probability they were other Arabs).

[54] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Joannis*, 13–14, pp. 311–312. The monks were warned about the attack by the phylarchs in Byzantine service.

other attack, in which the Lakhmid took numerous prisoners[55]. Some of them were freed only in 527, when the forces of the duces of Palestine, Mesopotamia and Arabia captured Al-Mundhir's camp[56]. In retaliation, the latter arrived with his forces as far as Antioch (528/529)[57]. In the early 530s the Lakhmids continued their attacks on the Empire, possibly with Persian instigation[58].

The purpose behind Saracens' attacks was first of all to appropriate herds and abduct people, who would become slaves[59]. The sources mention captured and abducted people in the descriptions of almost all of the attacks[60]. Their subsequent fates varied. The majority of them were sold as slaves. Some could be ransomed and return to their homes by way of exchange of captives[61]. Beautiful young captives of both sexes often faced a particularly miserable fate. At times they were sacrificed to Arabian deities, most often to Al-'Uzzā[62].

7.2. Trade

The available sources have a particular character in that they concentrate on the descriptions of dramatic events. As a consequence, we know much less about peaceful relations than about the attacks. However, the Arabs and the Empire maintained trade relations with each other at all times. This is attested both by narrative source and by various documents, e.g. papyri[63]. As Patricia Crone demonstrated, the Arabs provided the Byzantine army in the East with very many products, among which livestock and leather were of primary importance[64]. She

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[55] Pseudo-Zachariah, VIII, 5; *Chronicle up to 724*, p. 111; Michael the Syrian, IX, 16, vol. II, p. 178.

[56] Theophanes, AM 6021, p. 179.

[57] John Malalas, XVIII, 32; XVIII, 59; Pseudo-Zachariah, VIII, 5; Michael the Syrian, IX, 16, vol. II, pp. 178–179.

[58] Choricius of Gaza, *Laudatio Summi*, 12; Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 17, 40–45.

[59] The issue is analyzed extensively by: N. Lenski, *Captivity...*, *passim*.

[60] *Chronicle up to 724*, pp. 101, 111; Theophanes, AM 5828, p. 33; Ammianus Marcellinus, XXV, 8, 1 (here the reference is made to Roman soldiers); Pseudo-Zachariah, VIII, 5; Michael the Syrian, IX, 16, vol. II, p. 178; John Malalas, XVIII, 32; XVIII, 59.

[61] N. Lenski, *Captivity...*, pp. 256–260.

[62] Procopius, *De bellis*, II, 28, 13–14; John Moschus, 155, col. 3024; Pseudo-Zachariah, VIII, 5; Michael the Syrian, IX, 16, vol. II, pp. 177–179; Nilus, IV, 1–3; V, 5–9, cols. 626–656; N. Lenski, *Captivity...*, p. 257.

[63] These are discussed by: N. Lenski, *Captivity...*, pp. 262–263.

[64] P. Crone, *Quraysh and the Roman Army Making sense of the Meccan Leather Trade*, BSOAS 70.1, 2007, pp. 63–89. Among the goods that were exchanged the author also mentions clarified butter.

formulates an interesting hypothesis that thanks to this activity the Ḳuraysh obtained both the financial means and abilities which were later essential for the success of their expansion. The Muslim tradition as passed on in, e.g., the stories of Muḥammad's life sees Hāshim, the great-grandfather of the Prophet, as one of the organisers of this trade[65]. It must also be borne in mind that Arabs had been intermediaries in the trade exchange with India since Roman times.

7.3. The Arab Allies of the Byzantine Empire

Although the attacks by the Arab tribes described above were harmful to Byzantium, certainly it was not the Arabs who were the Empire's main enemy in the East. This position was occupied by the Persians whom the Eastern Roman Empire fought since its beginnings.

In order to ensure the safety of their eastern provinces, the Byzantine rulers strived to create a buffer zone between their lands and those of Persia. This was the motivation for maintaining permanent alliances with certain Arab tribes. Making coalitions of this kind was not a novelty of the sixth century, but a continuation of an old Roman practice[66]. It was as early as in the times of Constantine I the Great that the Romans realised the possibility of using Arabs for their own military purposes. *Notitia Dignitatum* mentions one Saracen unit on the border of Egypt and two in Phoenicia[67].

The practice of hiring Arab forces was to an extent a response to the alliance of the Sassanids with the Lakhmids[68]. While the latter were bound by a long-lasting

[65] P. C r o n e, *Quraysh and the Roman Army...*, p. 76.

[66] The question of Roman alliances with Arab tribes in pre-Byzantine times is extensively discussed by: U. S c h a r r e r (*The Problem of Nomadic Allies in the Roman East*, [in:] *Kingdoms and Principalities in the Roman Near East*, eds. T. K a i s e r, M. F e c e l l a, Stuttgart 2010, pp. 241–335, particularly pp. 314–324).

[67] *Notitia*, Or. XXVIII, 17; XXXIV, 22, pp. 59, 68; I. S h a h î d, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century*, Washington 1989, pp. 459–472.

[68] The Lakhmids lived in what is today southern Iraq. Their capital was Al-Ḥīra, and the ruling family were the Naṣrids. (I. S h a h î d, *Lachmids*, [in:] *EI*, vol. V, pp. 632–634; G. F i s h e r, *Between Empires. Arabs, Romans and Sasanians in Late Antiquity*, Oxford 2011, pp. 90–95; i d e m, *Kingdoms or Dynasties? Arabs, History, and Identity before Islam*, JLA 4.2, 2011, pp. 258–261). There was a considerable number of Nestorian Christians in the area, also among the Lakhmids (G. F i s h e r, *Between Empires...*, pp. 65–70; F.E. P e t e r s, *Introduction...*, p. XXVI; F. N a u, *Les Arabes...*, pp. 39–47). Yet, the first Lakhmid ruler to be baptized according to the Nestorian rite was Al-Nuʿmān (F. N a u, *Les Arabes...*, pp. 46–47; P. G o u b e r t, *Byzance...*, p. 264). For the chronology of the rulers of Al-Ḥīra see: S. S m i t h, *Events in Arabia...*,

(about three centuries) coalition with the Persians, the Byzantines co-operated with various tribes at different times[69]. Within their sphere of influence were, among others, the Tanūkhids, the Salīḥids, the Kindites and the Ghassānids[70]. Justinian tried to extend the Byzantine influence to the tribe of Ma'add. The Arab allies of Byzantium were expected to take part in the fighting against the Lakhmids as well as in the operations directly against the Sassanian Persia. In the sixth century their task was to protect the border from the Euphrates to the Red Sea. Since the beginning of the fourth century their troops had been the basis of the Empire's system of defence against the attacks from the Arabian Peninsula[71]. The reason for this was the crisis of the *limitanei* units whose military worth diminished severely at the time[72]. Marco Miotto stresses that these allies must not be confused with assimilated Arabs, who had long inhabited the Roman territories[73].

In order to provide formalised defence of this section of the border, the institution of phylarchate was established. The title of phylarch was initially equivalent to that of ethnarch, a tribal chief, but later came to denote a type of an imperial official. The rank of the position is attested by the high titles – *endoxatos* and *gloriossimos*[74]. The phylarchs were leaders of groups referred to in the sources as "Roman Arabs" and "Persian Arabs". The relations between the phylarchs and the lesser tribal chiefs are compared by Marco Miotto to those between *magistri militum* and *duces*[75].

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pp. 430, 441–448.

[69] G. G r e a t r e x, *Rome and Persia at War, 502–532*, Leeds 1998, pp. 27, 56.

[70] According to I. Shahîd (*Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century...*, p. 475) the first of the tribes mentioned were the most important Arab allies of the Empire in the fourth century, the Salīḥids in the fifth century, whereas in the sixth century their role was taken over by the Ghassānids. See also: N.V. P i g u l e v s k a j a, *Araby u granic Vizantii i Irana v IV–VI vv.*, Moskva–Leningrad 1964, pp. 180–181; F.M. D o n n e r, *The Role of the Nomads in the Near East in Late Antiquity (400–800 CE)*, [in:] *Tradition and Innovation in Late Antiquity*, eds. F.M. C l o v e r, R.S. H u m p h r e y s, Madison–London 1989, p. 75; I. S h a h î d, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, vol. I/I, *Political and Military History*, Washington 1995, pp. 19–24, 39–42; G. G r e a t r e x, *Rome and Persia at War...*, p. 28; F.E. P e t e r s, *Introduction...*, p. XIX; G. F i s h e r, *The Political Development of the Ghassan between Rome and Iran*, JLA 1/2, 2008, pp. 316–318; M. P a n d u r a, *Perceiving Otherness, Creating Resemblance – the Byzantinization of Nomads in the Age of Justinian I: the Arabs*, AEu 1, 2013, p. 45. In this way the Byzantines continued an old Roman tradition (G. F i s h e r, *Between Empires...*, pp. 75–78; D.F. G r a f, *The Saracens and the Defence of the Arabian Frontier*, BASOR 229, 1978, pp. 1–26, particularly pp. 15–19).

[71] M. M i o t t o, *Bisanzio...*, pp. 5–6.

[72] *Ibidem*, pp. 7, 16.

[73] *Ibidem*, p. 6.

[74] N. L e n s k i, *Captivity...*, pp. 240–241.

[75] M. M i o t t o, *Bisanzio...*, p. 7.

The Arab allies of the Byzantine Empire were Christians. It might be the case that acceptance of this faith had been a prerequisite for the permission to inhabit Roman territories since the fourth century[76]. By settling in the region they filled a void resulting from the destruction of local cultures, including Arabic ones, which had been caused by Roman policy[77].

The Arabian model of life in the discussed period is a subject of debate among scholars. The Byzantine authors typically presented them as nomads[78]. Some researchers follow the point of view of the sources and treat the Arab tribes allied with Byzantium as nomadic pastoralists moving with their herds[79]. Others, however, believe them to have been a sedentary people[80]. Quite probably, the situation was not straightforward. The leaders had their permanent seats, but this was not a feature of the lifestyle of the whole people[81], which also changed over the centuries. Close contacts with the Byzantine Empire and the gradual spread of Christianity among the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula were factors conducive to the adoption of sedentary lifestyle[82].

While discussing the alliances of Byzantium and individual tribes, we must make a reservation that it is sometimes impossible to establish the details of

[76] The author believes that the adoption of Christianity by the Arabs was made possible by the evolution of the concept of God in this religion – from a meek and loving one to the one giving victory. M. M i o t t o, *Bisanzio...*, p. 8.

[77] B. d e V r i e s, *On the Way to Bostra...*, p. 78.

[78] M. P a n d u r a, *Perceiving Otherness...*, p. 44.

[79] F.E. P e t e r s, *Byzantium and the Arabs of Syria*, AAAS 27/28, 1977/1978, pp. 100–107; G. F i s h e r, *Between Empires...*, p. 43 (the author points to the lack of evidence for the adoption of sedentary lifestyle by the Ghassānids). See also: G. F i s h e r, *Between Empires...*, pp. 109–112.

[80] I. S h a h î d (*Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, p. 100; i d e m, *Ghassānid and Umayyad Structures: a Case of Byzance après Byzance*, [in:] *La Syrie de Byzance a l'islam VII^e–VIII^e siècles. Actes du Colloque International. Lyon–Maison de l'Orient Mediterranéen, Paris–Institut du monde Arabe. 11–15 IX 1990*, eds. P. C a n i v e t, J.-P. R e y - C o q u a i s, Damas 1992, p. 299) emphasizes this point very strongly with reference to the Ghassānids, pointing out that one must not confuse nomadic lifestyle with the mobility of Arab forces in the Byzantine army. He stresses that they already had sedentary lifestyle while living in southern Arabia (I. S h a h î d, *Ghassānid and Umayyad Structures...*, p. 299). For an alternative perspective see: N. L e n s k i, *Captivity...*, p. 250.

[81] E.K. F o w d e n (*The Barbarian Plain: Saint Sergius between Rome and Iran*, Berkeley 1999, pp. 60–100, 141–149) showed that the renowned *praetorium* outside the walls of Resafa was built not only because the grave of St. Sergius was there, but also because it was a place for a nomad camp.

[82] G. F i s h e r, *Between Empires...*, pp. 38, 42–43. Settling in one place might have been a side effect of conversion to Christianity, but it also happened that the missionaries encouraged the Arabs to move from the steppes to "sedentary" regions. Bishop Ahoudemmeh was involved in one such case, see: *History of Ahoudemmeh*, 4, pp. 26–27.

the agreements. The lability of relations on the Arabian Peninsula is also a problem. Federations of tribes formed and fell apart; various tribes changed locations, allied alternately with Persia and Byzantium, accepted or rejected the empires' overlordship[83]. Moreover, it is not always possible to make a connection between the tribe and the ruling dynasty[84].

7.3.1. The Tanūkhids (Banū Tanūkh)

The first tribe allied with Byzantium we will be interested in are the Tanūkhids. In the fourth century Banū Tanūkh gained a dominant position in Syria. The Tanūkhids initially inhabited the north-eastern parts of the Arabian Peninsula. At the time of the fall of the Parthian Empire they headed a powerful confederacy of tribes and moved to what is now Iraq. They fought the tribes that had settled there earlier and made raids on neighbouring peoples (among others the Ḥimyarites), mainly to capture herds. Their leader at the time was Djadhīma[85]. He married a woman of Banū Lakhm and had a son by her, ʿAmr[86]. This meant that there was a connection between the Tanūkhids and the Lakhmids. The course of events after the death of Djadhīma is not entirely clear. The tribe divided into two groups then, one of them was headed by a Lakhmid, ʿAmr ibn ʿAdī.

After the Sassanian conquest of Iraq, a part of the tribe (the Ḳuḍāʿa clan) moved to Syria and joined another group, which had settled there earlier[87]. In the early fourth century the Tanūkhids adopted Christianity and settled in northern Syria, in the area of Aleppo and Chalcis, a strategically important region[88]. Yet, their relations with the Romans were not ideal. According to F.E. Peters they were not allies of Byzantium in the sense that some other tribes were later. There is no evidence that they received subsidies in gold or that they fought for Roman interests[89]. I do not fully share this view. Firstly, the Tanūkhids must have received permission to settle in the Roman territory, and they would not have received it for nothing. Moreover, although their relations with the Eastern Roman Empire might not have been strictly regulated in the beginning, at some point they doubt-

[83] N. L e n s k i, *Captivity...*, p. 243.

[84] Ch. R o b i n, *Le royaume hujride, dit "royaume de Kinda", entre Himyar et Byzance*, CRAIBL 140.2, 1996, pp. 665–675; N. L e n s k i, *Captivity...*, p. 242.

[85] U. S c h a r r e r, *The Problem of Nomadic...*, p. 284.

[86] *Ibidem*, p. 290.

[87] *Ibidem*, pp. 257–258. The scholar draws this conclusion on the basis of the writings of Al-Ṭabarī. He notes that not all the Tanūkhids migrated.

[88] M. M i o t t o, *Bisanzio...*, p. 8. The Tanūkhids were of the Orthodox faith (I. S h a h i d, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century...*, p. 337).

[89] F.E. P e t e r s, *Romans and Beduins in Southern Syria*, JNES 37.1, 1978, pp. 315–326.

lessly took the shape of a formal alliance. It is very probable that during the reign of Aurelian they fought on the Roman side against Zenobia of Palmyra[90]. The queen had some Arab allies on her side too[91], but they left her and possibly joined in with Banū Tanūkh. This happened when the tribe was ruled by ʿAmr ibn ʿAdī. His son and successor, the renowned Imru al-Ḳays, was a leader of at least several tribes[92]. He was buried in the Roman territory, so we can infer that there had been a formal alliance with the Empire, although the epitaph does not mention it.

The religious policy of Constantius (337–361) caused discontent and rebellion of the Arab *foederati* (337–338)[93]. The emperor managed to calm the situation, but during the reign of Valens (364–378) a new rebellion broke out. Its leader was queen Mavia (Māwiyya) (376)[94]. The rebellion proved how dangerous the tribes of the desert could be. The forces of the Arab queen attacked Phoenicia, Syria, Palestine and Egypt; they defeated the imperial army of the East and forced Valens to make concessions[95]. Mavia demanded an Orthodox bishop be sent to the region and this was fulfilled[96]. An anti-Arian bishop Moses was ordained for her people and the alliance was forged again[97]. This reconciliation led to the conversion of

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[90] *Historia Augusta*, *Aurelian*, XXVIII, 2; U. Scharrer, *The Problem of Nomadic...*, pp. 262, 310–313, 329.

[91] *Historia Augusta*, *Aurelian*, XXVII, 4.

[92] In the famous inscription of Nāmara, dated 328, he is called the king of all the Arabs. U. Scharrer, *The Problem of Nomadic...*, pp. 265, 330–334; J.A. Bellamy, *A new Reading of the Namārah Inscription*, JAOS 105.1, 1985, pp. 31–51; G.W. Bowersock, *King of all the Arabs*, [in:] idem, *Roman Arabia*, Cambridge–London 1994, pp. 138–147.

[93] This is mentioned by the emperor Julian. M. Miotto, *Bisanzio...*, p. 9.

[94] Sozomen, VI, 38, 1–9; Socrates, IV, 36; Theodoret, *HE*, IV, 22, pp. 261–262; Theodore Lector, 185–186, p. 69; Theophanes, AM 5869, p. 64; I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century...*, pp. 140–197; G.W. Bowersock, *Mavia, Queen of the Saracens*, [in:] *Studien zur antiken Sozialgeschichte. Festschrift F. Vittinghoff*, eds. W. Eck, H. Galsterer, H. Wolff, Vienna 1980, pp. 477–495; Ph. Mayerson, *First Muslim Attacks...*, p. 178; O. Schmitt, *Mavia, die Königin der Sarazenen*, [in:] *Nomaden und Sesshafte – Fragen, Methoden*, eds. Th. Herzog, W. Holzwarth, vol. I, Halle 2003, pp. 163–179; B. Isaac, *Bandits in Judea...*, pp. 174, 192.

[95] Sozomen, VI, 38, 9–10. Cf. D.D. Gratton, *"The Arabs" in the Ecclesiastical Historians of the 4th/5th Centuries: Effects on Contemporary Christian-Muslim Relations*, HTS 64.1, 2008, p. 185; M. Miotto, *Bisanzio...*, p. 9. The lattermost author points to the fact that the sources mention war and not just raids, which testifies to the seriousness of the situation.

[96] The bishop was Moses, who had led a life of a hermit (Ph. Mayerson, *First Muslim Attacks...*, p. 178).

[97] Sozomen, VI, 38, 19–43; Socrates, IV, 36; Theodoret, *HE*, V, 22, pp. 261–262; Theophanes, AM 5869, p. 65. D.D. Gratton (*"The Arabs"...*, p. 185) draws the conclusion that the Tanūkhids were Orthodox Christians and that Mavia's rebellion might have

the tribe led by Zokomos to Christianity. Another result was that Mavia sent out her forces, which fought to defend Constantinople from the Goths after Valens' defeat at Adrianople (378)[98]. The Arab warriors showed bravery and knowledge of psychology in the fight. The ostentatious drinking of blood from the defeated enemy's neck[99] must have been terrifying not only for the Goths.

Although the Tanūkhids appeared powerful enough to dominate among the tribes allied with Byzantium, they were deprived of this position by another closely related tribe, the Salīḥids[100]. Nonetheless, they did not disappear from the borderlands of northern Syria. They stayed loyal to the Eastern Roman Empire until the Muslim conquest[101].

7.3.2. The Salīḥids (Banū Salīḥ)

The Salīḥids defeated the Tanūkhids and settled in what is today central Jordan[102]. They belonged to the large tribal group of Ḳuḍā'a[103]. They were ruled by the Zokomid dynasty[104]. During the reign of Arcadius (395–408) they participated in the actions of the Byzantine army against the Persians and their Arab allies[105]. They played an important role in securing peace on the eastern border of the Empire, although one must admit that attacks by Hephthalite Huns on Persia also contributed to that because they engaged the Persians throughout the fifth century. The Salīḥids collected taxes in the region of their settlement on behalf of the Eastern Roman Empire, also from other Arab tribes[106]. According to the Muslim sources, the Ṣāliḥid leaders were granted the title of kings[107].

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had religious background. More on bishop Moses: I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century...*, pp. 150–151, 185–188.

[98] Ammianus Marcellinus, XXXI, 16, 5–7; Socrates, V, 1; Sozomen, VII, 1–2; Theodore Lector, 219, p. 75.

[99] Ammianus Marcellinus, XXXI, 16, 6–7.

[100] M. Miotto, *Bisanzio...*, p. 10 (the Italian scholar refers to Masʿūdī); I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century...*, pp. 203–215.

[101] W.E. Kaegi, *Heraklios and the Arabs*, GOTR 27, 1982, p. 113.

[102] For the time of their settlement in the Byzantine lands see: I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century...*, pp. 242–252.

[103] *Ibidem*, p. 244.

[104] I. Shahîd undertook the task of recreating the list of rulers (*ibidem*, pp. 252–271).

[105] Sozomen, VI, 38, 14; M. Miotto, *Bisanzio...*, p. 10.

[106] U. Avner, L. Nehmé, Ch. Robin, *A Rock Inscription...*, p. 243. On the privileges the Empire guaranteed to its *foederati* see: I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century...*, pp. 497–502.

[107] U. Avner, L. Nehmé, Ch. Robin, *A Rock Inscription...*, p. 243. The list of Ṣāliḥid rulers was recreated by I. Shahîd (*Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century...*, pp. 252–271).

In the peace treaty of 422 both empires, Byzantium and Persia, guaranteed they would not accept deserters from each other's forces. In the course of the long reign of Theodosius II (408–450) the fighting with the Persians was resumed only twice (421/422 and 441). The hostilities happening rarely, the activity of the allies of both empires naturally diminished. Priscus of Panium mentions the victory over the Saracens of the Damascus region by the son of Aspar. He also mentions the negotiations after the conclusion of the fighting[108]. Nicephorus Callistus refers to a military operation against "barbarians" raiding the Moab region, who were doubtlessly Arab tribes[109]. Governor Stephen was troubled by Saracen attacks from Egypt[110]. *Foederati* are also mentioned in Theodosius' novel *De ambitu et locis limitaneis inibi redhibendis*[111].

In 473 the emperor Leo I acted against the treaty of 422 and accepted the service of a man called Amorcesus (Imru al-Ḳays) who had defected from the Persians[112]. The Arab proved to be a cunning man, as he managed to obtain the island of Iotabe, thereby removing it from the Roman rule[113], and afterwards started negotiations to gain favourable conditions from the Byzantines. Not only did he obtain the title of the phylarch and protopatrician as well as the permission to settle in *Palaestina III*, but he was also received with honours in the imperial capital[114]. The island mentioned above lies at the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba and is thus strategically very important. The Byzantines recovered the island at the beginning of the sixth century[115]. It was lost again to the Arabs professing Judaism and was regained by the Byzantine Empire in 534 thanks to Aratius Kamsarakan[116].

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[108] Priscus of Panium, fr. 26, p. 323.

[109] Nicephorus Callistus, XV, 9, col. 31.

[110] Choricius of Gaza, *Laudatio Arati*, 33–49, 57–58; Ph. Mayerson, *First Muslim Attacks...*, p. 181.

[111] *Theodosian Code*, nov. XXIV, pp. 61–63. According to the text Arab allies were not treated as Roman citizens, which is a difference between them and the Arabs that had long inhabited the lands of the Empire (M. Miotto, *Bisanzio...*, p. 10).

[112] Malchus, fr. 1, pp. 404–406. S. Smith (*Events in Arabia...*, p. 444) believes he was a descendant of another Imru al-Ḳays, a Lakhmid mentioned above.

[113] S. Smith, *Events in Arabia...*, pp. 443–444. He also took over the reveues which had so far supplied the Roman treasury. B. Isaac (*Bandits in Judea...*, p. 198) calls Amorcesus *Persian bandit of Arab origin*.

[114] Malchus, fr. 1. See: B. Isaac, *Bandits in Judea...*, p. 198. He was the guest of Leo I (457–474), who made him a phylarch of *Arabia Petraea*.

[115] B. Isaac, *Bandits in Judea...*, p. 198; I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century...*, pp. 61–91.

[116] Choricius of Gaza, *Laudatio Arati*, 66–67, pp. 65–66.

A greater activity of the Arabs in 498 must be noted. A group called Skenites (who were in fact warriors of the Lakhmid king Al-Nuʿmān) attacked the province of Euphratesia. They were defeated near Bithrapsa[117] by the *magister militum* Eugenius. At the same time another group under Gabalas entered Palestine, where they were faced by *dux* Romanus[118]. The third unit, led by Ogaros, son of Arethas (Al-Ḥarīth), was defeated by *dux* Romanus, who captured many Arabs[119], who were the people of Banū Kinda, Byzantine allies in the times to come. In 502 they raided Syria, Phoenicia and Palestine under the leadership of Maʿdīkarib (referred to as Badicharimos in the Byzantine sources) and retreated with considerable booty[120]. There is no evidence of any resistance to the attacks from the Arab tribes in the service of the Byzantine Empire, which means that by that time the Salīḥids were unable to actually fulfil the task of defending the Byzantine territories and so the Empire was forced to search for new allies[121].

7.3.3. The Kindites (Banū Kinda)

In the fifth and sixth century the Kindites created a strong state in the central part of the Arabian Peninsula, although it would be imprecise to call it a kingdom[122]. In fact this was a coalition of tribes under the command of the house of Banū Ḥudjr, whose founder was Ḥudjr Ākil al-Murār[123]. The tribe of Maʿadd also fell under the rule of the Kindites[124]. They inhabited both the Arabian Peninsula (the western part of it) and probably also Palestine[125]. The tribe is mentioned in

[117] M. M i o t t o (*Bisanzio...*, p. 11) believes the place is Sergiopolis (Resafa).

[118] T h e o p h a n e s, AM 5990, p. 141. M. Miotto (*Bisanzio...*, p. 12) thinks these two attacks might have been connected because of the close relations between the Ghassānids and the Kindites.

[119] M. M i o t t o, *Bisanzio...*, p. 12; S. S m i t h, *Events in Arabia...*, p. 445.

[120] T h e o p h a n e s, AM 5994, p. 143.

[121] The later history of the Salīḥids is related by I. S h a h î d (*Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century...*, pp. 301–306).

[122] Ch. R o b i n, *Le royaume hujride...*, pp. 665–667.

[123] *Ibidem*, p. 694; i d e m, *Les rois de Kinda*, [in:] *Arabia, Greece and Byzantium. Cultural Contacts in Ancient and Medieval Times*, vol. II, eds. A. A l - H e l a b i, D.G. L e t z i o s, M. A l - M o r a e k h i, A. A l - A b d u l j a b b a r, Riyadh 2012, pp. 70–72; J. R e t s ö, *In the Shade of Himyar and Sasan. The Political History of Pre-Islamic Arabia According to the Ayyām al-arab-Literature*, Arb 2, 2004, pp. 115–118. On behalf of the Ḥimyarites he ruled the Maʿadd tribe. G. O l i n d e r, *Kings of Kinda of the family of Ākil al-Murār*, Lund 1927, pp. 42–43; Ch. R o b i n, *Le royaume hujride...*, p. 667.

[124] Ch. R o b i n, *Le royaume hujride...*, p. 695.

[125] J o h n M a l a l a s, XVIII, 16, p. 434 (the Kindite Arethas was in conflict with the *dux* of Palestine).

the Ḥimyarite inscriptions[126], which provide evidence that a Ḥimyarite protectorate had been established in the central Arabia[127].

The Byzantines signed a treaty with the Kindites in 502[128]. It is not sure whether they took part in the war with Persia in the early sixth century, but it might be the case that Theophanes' mention of the phylarch Asoudos (Al-Aswad), who fought under Areobindus, refers to a leader of the Kindites[129].

At some point the alliance between the tribe and Byzantium was broken for a short time[130]. Al-Ḥarīth (Arethas) ibn ʻAmr ibn Ḥudjr[131] was an important figure in the history of the tribe. Hind, his daughter, married the Lakhmid ruler, Al-Mundhir III[132]. This did not, however, make the relations between the Kindites and the Lakhmids closer in the long run. Arethas occupied Al-Ḥīra for some time (c. 525–528)[133]. He likely took advantage of a temporary break between the Lakhmids and the Persians, and the deposition of Al-Mundhir III by Kavadh, and attempted to take his place[134]. This did not last long, however, and after the death of Justin I he returned to the alliance with the Byzantines. At that point he appears in the sources as the phylarch of Palestine[135]. Having fallen out with the *dux* of the province he was forced to flee. His Lakhmid rival seized

[126] Ry 509 and 510 – G. R y c k m a n s, *Inscriptions Sud-Arabes (deuxième serie)*, Mu 66, 1953, pp. 307–310; Ch. R o b i n, *Le royaume hujride...*, pp. 675–677, 686 (texts), 677–691 (commentary).

[127] P r o c o p i u s, *De bellis*, I, 19, 14; Ch. R o b i n, *Le royaume hujride...*, pp. 692–694. In his opinion the protectorate was established when the Ḥimyarites imposed Maʻdīkarib, mentioned in the inscription Ry 510, as the ruler, see: G. R y c k m a n s, *Inscriptions Sud-Arabes...*, pp. 307–310; Ch. R o b i n, *Le royaume hujride...*, p. 686 (text), 686–691 (commentary).

[128] I. S h a h î d, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, pp. 19, 21–22; i d e m, *Byzantium and Kinda*, BZ 53, 1960, pp. 57–73.

[129] T h e o p h a n e s, AM 5997, p. 146.

[130] I. S h a h î d, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, p. 39.

[131] Concerning his identity see: Ch. R o b i n, *Le royaume hujride...*, p. 674.

[132] Hind was a Christian. She founded a monastery in Al-Ḥīra, which is attested by the inscription by her son, ʻAmr (Ch. R o b i n, *Le royaume hujride...*, p. 669; F. N a u, *Les Arabes...*, pp. 45–46; S. S m i t h, *Events in Arabia...*, p. 445). ʻAmr, who ruled in 554–569, was also a Christian, but his successors turned back to pagan faith.

[133] I. S h a h î d, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, p. 39; G. G r e a t r e x, *Rome and Persia at War...*, p. 152; Ch. R o b i n, *Le royaume hujride...*, p. 669.

[134] I. S h a h î d, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, p. 46. S. Smith is of different opinion (*Events in Arabia...*, p. 447) and claims that Al-Ḥarīth acted on behalf of his son-in-law.

[135] J o h n M a l a l a s, XVIII, 16, p. 434; I. S h a h î d, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, pp. 39, 69–71. The term *phylarch* could initially mean simply a tribal chief. Later on it started to be understood as a formal Roman title granted to the leaders of the tribes allied with the Romans (U. S c h a r r e r, *The Problem of Nomadic...*, p. 324).

the opportunity and killed him[136]. The Byzantines sent out troops to take vengeance for his death (528)[137]. However, their successful campaign did not manage to intimidate the Lakhmid, who made a devastating raid on the Byzantine territories just a year later, reaching as far as Antioch[138].

Kaisos, whom the Byzantines tried to restore to the power over the tribe of Maʿadd, at the same time trying to persuade him to take action against the Persians, was possibly a grandson of Al-Ḥarīth the Kindite[139]. Fighting the Persians was one of the tasks of Nonnosus as he was sent to the Ḥimyarites. Kaisos was a leader (phylarch) of two tribes, Maʿadd and Chinden[140]. The latter name refers to the Kindites. According to Procopius, Kaisos killed a member of the family of the sheikhs ruling the latter tribes and was forced to flee[141]. The whole situation demonstrated that Banū Ḥudjr were dependent on the Ḥimyarites of the southern Arabia[142]. Little is known about the religion of the Banū Ḥudjr, but since they were allies of Byzantium, they could not have been hostile towards Christianity.

7.3.4. The Ghassānids (Banū Ghassān)[143]

Throughout the sixth century maintaining the alliance with the Ghassānids was of critical importance for Byzantium. The tribe had been chosen as the chief supporter of the Eastern Empire[144]. Ghassānids (Banū Ghassān)[145] were an Ara-

[136] G. Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War...*, p. 152. It must be admitted though that there is no certainty if it is this Arethas that is referred to here or rather one of his many namesakes.

[137] John Malalas, XVIII, 16, p. 435.

[138] John Malalas, XVIII, 32, p. 445; Theophanes, AM 6021; Pseudo-Zachariah, VIII, 5; John of Nikiu, XC, 79–80; G. Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War...*, p. 152.

[139] Photius, cod. 3, vol. I. Cf. Ch. Robin, *Le royaume hujride...*, pp. 669–670; idem, *Les rois de Kinda...*, pp. 77–80 (on various possible identifications of this figure). Some researchers are inclined to identify him with the poet Imru al-Ḳays (Ch. Robin, *Le royaume hujride...*, pp. 672–673).

[140] Photius, cod. 3. Al-Ḥarīth also led both of the tribes.

[141] Other possible motives for Kaisos' flight are discussed by S. Smith (*Events in Arabia...*, pp. 435–436, 446).

[142] Ch. Robin, *Les rois de Kinda...*, pp. 89–93.

[143] Ghassānids are the topic of a separate article by myself: T. Wolińska, *Ghassanidzi w polityce Bizancjum w czasach Justyniana I Wielkiego*, [in:] *W kręgu zagadnień świata arabskiego*, eds. A. Abbasi, A. Maśko, Poznań 2015, pp. 223–244.

[144] M. Pandura, *Perceiving Otherness...*, p. 45. See also: G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, pp. 95–99.

[145] The name of the tribe is derived from a spring or lake in Yemen or Syria by which they lived. N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby...*, p. 181.

bic people of southern Arabia, belonging to the tribal confederacy Al-Azd[146]. In the third century, after the destruction of the dam in Ma'rib (today in Yemen), they moved from the territories they initially occupied to lands in the north of Arabia and southern Syria. By late fifth century they lived in the Byzantine territories[147].

It is not easy to exactly determine at which point the Ghassānids became the allies of the Empire because in this early period it is not always possible to differentiate the particular Arab clans and tribes. I previously mentioned a raid by Arabs referred to as Skenites ("tent-dwellers") in the source text. They were defeated and then made a lasting peace with the Byzantines[148]. The sources also mention a group known as Tha'labites who fought on the side of the Eastern Roman Empire[149]. Joshua the Stylite described their attack on Al-Ḥīra, the capital of the Lakhmids, who were Persian allies[150]. N.V. Pigulevska connects the former mention with the information from Theophanes, according to which in 502 peace was made with Arethas, also called Thalabane, a leader of the Ghassānids[151].

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[146] I. Shahîd, *Ghassānid and Umayyad Structures...*, p. 304.

[147] I. Shahîd, *The Last Days of Salīḥ*, Ara 5.2, 1958, p. 150; N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby...*, pp. 181–182; I. Shahîd, *Ghassan*, [in:] *EI*, vol. II, p. 1020; M. Pandura, *Perceiving Otherness...*, p. 45; K. Kościelniak, *XX wieków chrześcijaństwa w kulturze arabskiej*, vol. I, *Arabia starożytna. Chrześcijaństwo w Arabii do Mahometa (†632)*, Kraków 2000, p. 51.

[148] See: footnote 47.

[149] Joshua the Stylite, 57, pp. 70–71; G. Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War...*, p. 99. However, other researchers believe it is the Kindites that are being referred to here (G. Olinder, *Kings of Kinda...*, pp. 52–53; B. Rubin, *Das Zeitalter Justinians*, vol. I, Berlin 1960, p. 272). Banū Tha'laba are also mentioned in the inscription Ry 510 of Ma'sal al-Jumh (now Wādī Ma'sal) – G. Ryckmans, *Inscriptions Sud-Arabes...*, pp. 307–310; Ch. Robin, *Le royaume hujride...*, p. 686 (text), pp. 686–691 (commentary).

[150] Joshua the Stylite, 55–56, pp. 69–70; I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, pp. 12–13, 18 (he identifies Tha'labites [Banū Tha'laba] and Ghassānids); I. Kawar (Shahîd), *Ghassân and Byzantium: new terminus a quo*, Isl 33, 1958, pp. 251–255.

[151] Theophanes, AM 5995, p. 144. The editor of the English translation of Theophanes, C. Mango, amends the text, giving the translation "son of Thalabane" (*The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284–813*, eds. C. Mango, R. Scott, G. Greatrex, Oxford 1997, p. 223). In earlier passages Theophanes writes about the victories of Eugenius and Romanus over Ogaros, the son of Arethas, known as son of Taalabana and over another Arab leader Gabalas (Theophanes, AM 5990, p. 141). The latter is Gabalas, the father of the Ghassānid Al-Ḥarīth (Arethas). According to Theophanes, the Ghassānids acted independently of the Kindites. It is worth noting that the Byzantine chronicler makes use of the feminine form – Tha'laba is the mother of Arethas. Ch. Robin (*Le royaume hujride...*, p. 690) emphasizes that it was not impossible for the Arabs to supplant a patronymic with a matronymic. Tha'laba was not the mother of Al-Ḥarīth, but the mother of the tribe (*la tribu d'origine de cette mère* – p. 696).

This would suggest that Thalabane or Thalab (Tha'laba) led the tribe in question to Syria[152]. According to the Russian scholar it is the Ghassānids who are being referred to by the name Skenites[153]. It is not certain, however, whether Thalabane mentioned by Theophanes can be connected with the Tha'labites or whether he was a Ghassānid. The supporters of the identification of the Tha'labites (Banū Tha'laba) and the Ghassānids assume he was the leader of the tribe[154] and the predecessor of Al-Ḥarīth and Tapharas Djabala[155]. This identification is not generally accepted, however, as some scholars believe Tha'lab to have been a Kindite[156]. Ch. Robin points to the fact that in the inscription Ry 510 the Tha'labites are named together with the Muḍar tribe, while there is no mention of the Djafnids[157]. This leads to the conclusion that the Tha'labites and the Djafnids belonged to the same confederacy of tribes and that they were two great families of phylarchs allied with Byzantium, like the Banū Ḥudjr. At first the Tha'labites played the key role, and then the Djafnids took over[158]. Talaba would then have been a Ghassānid from outside of the Jafnid clans. His sons were Arethas and 'Adī, who is mentioned in the inscription referred to above[159].

The popularity of the name Al-Ḥarīth among the Arabs leads to mistaking the individual bearers of the name. It is thus uncertain whether Arethas, the descendant of Thalabane, who made the treaty with the Byzantines in 502, and Arethas the Ḥudjr are the same person. Ch. Robin demonstrates they cannot be

[152] U. Avner, L. Nehmé, Ch. Robin, *A Rock Inscription...*, p. 243. The difficulties with identification result, among others, from the fact that we know of five men named Tha'laba of different branches of the Ghassānid clan (p. 247, see also the table on p. 245).

[153] N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby...*, pp. 183–184; I. Kawar, *Ghassân and Byzantium...*, pp. 254–255.

[154] I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, pp. 12–13, 18, 25; Ch. Robin, *Le royaume hujride...*, p. 697; U. Avner, L. Nehmé, Ch. Robin, *A Rock Inscription...*, pp. 244–245.

[155] I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, pp. 48–49, 664. The father of Arethas, Gabalas, was also known as Abū Shamir (*ibidem*, p. 69; Th. Nöldeke, *Ghassanischen Fürsten aus dem Hause Gafna's*, Berlin 1887, pp. 21, 53–54). His wife was Mariya of the Kindites (*ibidem*, p. 23; I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, p. 69).

[156] Th. Nöldeke, *Die Ghassanischen Fürsten...*, p. 10; N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby...*, p. 183; G. Olinder, *Kings of Kinda...*, pp. 48, 51–52. The line of argument of the lattermost is rejected by Christian Robin on the basis of the Himyarite inscription Ry 510 (U. Avner, L. Nehmé, Ch. Robin, *A Rock Inscription...*, p. 248).

[157] Ch. Robin, *Le royaume hujride...*, p. 698.

[158] *Ibidem*, pp. 698–699 (starting in the year 531); U. Avner, L. Nehmé, Ch. Robin, *A Rock Inscription...*, p. 248 (here we find a slightly different date: the death of Tha'laba, the father of Arethas, 521, and the replacement of the Tha'labites by the Djafnids).

[159] U. Avner, L. Nehmé, Ch. Robin, *A Rock Inscription...*, p. 249.

identified. Both of them were allies of the Byzantines and both made alliances with Anastasius I. However, the regions of activity of their tribes were different. The circumstances of their deaths described by the sources also differed[160]. Yet, we can state that the former Al-Ḥarīth was a leader of Banū Tha'laba and it is this group that Joshua the Stylite referred to[161].

Having entered lands under the Byzantine rule, the Ghassānids occupied the lands in the region of Ḥawrān (the vicinity of modern-day As-Suwaydā')[162]. This was the final point of the caravan route from Ma'rib to Damascus. They did not enter uninhabited lands. These territories had earlier been settled by the related tribe of the Salīḥids[163], who converted to Christianity and paid tribute to the Byzantines[164]. Apparently, it was through the mediation of the Salīḥids that the Ghassānids applied to the emperor for the permission to stay in the area[165]. At first they were tributaries of the Salīḥids who had defeated them, but quite soon they rose to become their rivals, and the gained the upper hand[166]. The Ghassānids owed their advantageous position in part to their ability as imperial allies against the Lakhmids of Al-Ḥīra[167].

[160] Ch. R o b i n, *Le royaume hujride...*, pp. 697–698. There are numerous version of Al-Ḥarīth's death: of natural causes, during a hunt, or at the hands of the Kalbids (*ibidem*, p. 669; G. O l i n d e r, *Kings of Kinda...*, p. 68).

[161] Ch. R o b i n, *Le royaume hujride...*, p. 697. The scholar linked Arethas to the Muḍar tribe, which is mentioned in the inscription Ry 510. The Muḍar and the Banū Tha'laba are named there separately from the allies of the Ḥimyarites, among whom we find the Kindites. The Muḍar were a tribal confederacy of western Arabia, but according to Ch. R o b i n the inscription refers rather to the tribes on the Byzantine borders (U. A v n e r, L. N e h m é, Ch. R o b i n, *A Rock Inscription...*, p. 246). This does not provide decisive evidence to determine which of the two Al-Ḥarīths mentioned above was killed by Al-Mudhir III, the Lakhmid.

[162] M. M i o t t o, *Bisanzio...*, p. 12.

[163] I. S h a h î d, *Salih*, [in:] *EI*, vol. VIII, pp. 981–982; i d e m, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century...*, pp. 233–237, 242–305.

[164] M. S a r t r e, *Trois études sur l'Arabie romaine et byzantine*, Bruxelles 1982, p. 148; G. F i s h e r (*Between Empires...*, p. 79) points to the lack of evidence that the Tanūkh and the Salīḥ were allies of the Romans.

[165] The leader of the Ghassānids at the time was most probably Tha'laba ibn Amr ibn Al-Mudjālod ibn Amr ibn 'Adī ibn 'Amr ibn Māzin ibn Al-Azd (K a l b ī, *Ǧamharat an-Nasab*, pp. 279, 326). N.V. Pigulevskaja (*Araby...*, p. 182) assumes the event happened at the time of the rebellion of Illus, during the reign of Zeno, when the usurper resided in Antioch (482–484). In the scholar's opinion it might have been the case that the Salīḥid leader did not apply to the emperor but to the *magister militum* in Antioch. In that case the event would have taken place in the times of Anastasius.

[166] N.V. P i g u l e v s k a j a, *Araby...*, pp. 180–183; I. S h a h î d, *Salih...*, p. 982; U. A v n e r, L. N e h m é, Ch. R o b i n, *A Rock Inscription...*, p. 243. The conflict broke out after the Ghassānids killed the tax collector sent by the Salīḥids.

[167] M. P a n d u r a, *Perceiving Otherness...*, p. 46. According to Ibn Ḥabīb the emperor feared the possibility of an alliance between the Ghassānids and the Persians and so he proposed

The Ghassānids became the clients of Byzantium as συμμαχοί (*foederati*) most probably in 502, accepting identical conditions of service to the Empire as the Salīḥids before them[168]. In the sixth century they adopted Monophysite Christianity and settled in Syria where they formed a state in the border region (*limes*). Their capital was Al-Djābiya. Traditionally it is assumed that the founder of the state was Jafna, the forefather of the Jafnid dynasty. Yet, the first leader who is definitely certain to have been allied to the Byzantines was Djabala ibn Al-Ḥārith[169].

In the times of the emperor Anastasius the Ghassānids fought on the Byzantine side. We have already mentioned the attack of the Arabs called the Tha'labites on the capital of the Lakhmids, Persian allies[170]. The ruler of the latter, Al-Nu'mān, participated in the Persian siege of Amida in October 502, and subsequently on the orders of the shahanshah he plundered the region of Carrhae[171]. In the following month the pro-Persian Arabs took part in a battle where the Byzantine army suffered defeat[172], and in a skirmish with the forces led by Patricius[173]. In late summer of the following year the Arab allies of the Persians first reached the Euphrates capturing prisoners and collecting booty and then they took part in the siege of Edessa[174]. The Arabs of the Roman side participated in the looting of the territories near Amida[175]. Analysing the above facts Irfan Shahîd came

to make a treaty with them (U. Avner, L. Nehmé, Ch. Robin, *A Rock Inscription...*, pp. 243–244 – with a translation of a fragment from the source text).

[168] I. Kawar (Shahîd), *The Last Days...*, p. 145; N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby...*, p. 182; I. Shahîd, *Ghassan...*, p. 1020; M. Miotto, *Bisanzio...*, p. 13. I. Kawar (Shahîd) (*Last Days...*, p. 149) thinks that the Ghassānids became military allies of the Empire already back in 484. G. Greatrex (*Rome and Persia at War...*, p. 26) points out that when the Arab allies were referred to the label *symmachoi* was used more often than *foederati*.

[169] G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, p. 96. He is mentioned by Symeon of Bēth Arshām (p. 63).

[170] Joshua the Stylite, 55–56, pp. 69–70; I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, pp. 12–13, 18 (he identifies the Tha'labites [Banū Tha'laba] and the Ghassānids); idem, *Ghassân and Byzantium...*, pp. 251–255.

[171] Joshua the Stylite, 50–51; I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, p. 13.

[172] Joshua the Stylite, 51; I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, p. 13.

[173] Al-Nu'mān was wounded in the fight and later died of the injuries. Joshua the Stylite, 57; I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, p. 13.

[174] Joshua the Stylite, 50; I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, p. 14. Interestingly enough, the Arab governor of Al-Ḥīra, a Christian, is reported to have advised against this move (Joshua the Stylite, 58).

[175] Joshua the Stylite, 79; I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, p. 14.

to the conclusion that in the times of Anastasius, the role of the Lakhmids in the Persian service was much more important than that of the Ghassānids or other allies on the Byzantine side[176]. The disproportions grew even larger when Al-Nuʿmān was succeeded by Al-Mundhir III (referred to as Alamundaros in the Byzantine sources).

During the reign of Justin I the cooperation of the Ghassānids and Byzantium was temporarily loosened, which is attested by the fact that the sources do not mention the Ghassānids among the forces fighting on the Byzantine side against the Persians[177]. One possible reason could have been the instrumental treatment of the allies by the Byzantines[178], and also the religious policy of Justin I (518–527), in particular the persecution of Monophysites which he started[179]. The edict of the emperor ordering all the soldiers to be faithful to the Chalcedonian Orthodoxy might have been of vital importance[180].

For about ten years the Ghassānids withdrew from the Byzantine service and retreated to the desert[181], however, at the end of the reign of Justin I, or at the beginning of that of Justinian I (527–565), they entered again into a close alliance with the Eastern Roman Empire[182]. The Arab forces were incorporated into the army of the East, in which they formed mobile contingents[183].

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[176] *Ibidem*, p. 15.

[177] *Ibidem*, pp. 32–39.

[178] When the Arab allies of Byzantium acted against the interests of the Empire and violated the peace with Persia, some of their commanders were executed. It is unclear whether there were any Ghassānids among them. The Persians punished "their" Arabs in the same way. Joshua the Stylite, 88, p. 89; G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, p. 119.

[179] This can be inferred from the letter by Symeon of Bēth Arshām, who came to the Ghassānid camp at Al-Djābiya in 519 to request of Gabala protection of the Arabs persecuted in Nadjrān and the Ḥimyarites of southern Arabia. Fragments of the letter are quoted in the English translation by I. Shahîd (*Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, p. 33 and *The Martyrs of Najran. New Documents*, Bruxelles 1971, pp. 62–63). See also: F. Nau, *Les Arabes...*, pp. 49–52.

[180] I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, p. 36. Still, A.A. Vasiliev (*Justin the First*, Harvard 1950, pp. 243–244) believes the edict did not apply to the *foederati*.

[181] I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, p. 37. The scholar thinks they might have been protecting their brothers in faith who were forced to flee from the persecution.

[182] *Ibidem*, p. 65. In the scholar's opinion this took place before April of 528, most probably even in the year 527, but while Justinian was already a co-emperor. The Ghassānids could have obtained the support of the empress Theodora. The religious policy of Justinian, who strived for reconciliation with the Monophysites, was also an important factor (pp. 67–68).

[183] I. Shahîd, *Ghassan...*, p. 1020.

The Arabs fought under their own commanders, the phylarchs. The reason why the emperor decided to renew the alliance were the actions of the Lakhmid ruler, Al-Mundhir III, who was successful in his attacks on the Byzantine territories[184]. In 524 he managed to capture two high-ranking Byzantine military leaders[185]. The Empire was in need of an ally who could contain him.

In his description of the initial stage of the fighting between the Ghassānids and the Lakhmids (until 531) Procopius pointed to the inefficiency of consecutive phylarchs, who were defeated in the clashes with the Lakhmid king Al-Mundhir III[186]. This did not improve when, after the death of Djabala ibn Al-Ḥārith[187] in 528, the leadership of the Ghassānids passed to his son, Al-Ḥarīth II ibn Djabala al-Ghassāni[188]. The Byzantine authors rendered his name as Arethas[189], while Al-Ṭabarī provides the form Khālid ibn Djabala[190]. From modern perspective it is absolutely clear that his long reign (529–569)[191] was the heyday

[184] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Johannis*, 13, p. 211 (Cyril calls the Lakhmid the king of Saracens, describes his attack on Palestine and Arabia and the capture of Amida); *Chronicle up to 724*, p. 111; Michael the Syrian, vol. II, p. 178; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, p. 73; I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, pp. 17, 26–28, 42–48; G. Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War...*, pp. 107–108. Al-Mundhir continued the actions of his predecessor, Al-Nuʿmān. After the death of the latter the Lakhmids were briefly led by Abū Djaʿfar, but it is impossible to say anything about his policy towards Byzantium.

[185] The hostages taken were Timostratus, the brother of Rufinus, and John, the son of Lucas. Pseudo-Zachariah, VIII, 5; Evagrius Scholasticus, IV, 13 (apart from Al-Mundhir he mentions also another leader, Azarethes); Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 17, 43–45. The empire managed to get them freed by diplomatic means. I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, pp. 17, 40–42.

[186] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 17, 40–42.

[187] *PLRE* III, p. 112 [*Arethas (Al-Harith ibn Jabalah)*]; I. Shahîd, *The Martyrs of Najran...*, pp. 272–276.

[188] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 17, 47; Pseudo-Zachariah, IX, 6 (here: Bar Gabala). See: I. Kawar (Shahîd), *Arethas, son of Jabalah*, JAOS 75.4, 1955, p. 206; idem, *Procopius on the Ghassānids*, JAOS 77.2, 1957, pp. 83–85; N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby...*, p. 84; I. Shahîd, *Al-Ḥārith b. Djabala*, [in:] *EI*, vol. III, p. 222.

[189] It must be said that there were two figures by the name Arethas: the Ghassānid Al-Ḥarīth and his namesake of the Kindites, killed in the fighting against the Lakhmids in 527 or 528. (John Malalas, XVIII, 16; N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby...*, pp. 184–185; G. Fisher, *Kingdoms or Dynasties...*, p. 256). A short biography of Arethas the Djafnid with references to the source texts has been created by John Robert Martindale (*Arethas...*, pp. 111–113). See also: I. Shahîd, *Arethas...*, pp. 205–216; idem, *Procopius on Ghassānids...*, pp. 83–85.

[190] Th. Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden*, Leyden 1879, p. 238; N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby...*, p. 192.

[191] Sometimes his death is dated 578/9. Th. Nöldeke, *Ghassanischen Fürsten...*, p. 23; N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby...*, p. 184.

of the Ghassānid state, yet, at the beginning, it did not seem that he would be able to successfully oppose the leader of the Lakhmids, who was a demanding and fearful enemy – as we are told in *The Life of Symeon the Stylite the Younger*[192].

In spite of Arethas' initial lack of success the Byzantine emperor Justinian I did not intend to cease making use of his services. On the contrary, he took important decisions aiming at strengthening the position of the tribe and the ruling family, the Djafnids. In this way the kingdom of the Ghassānids was established. Even earlier, Djabala ibn Al-Ḥārith was referred to as king[193]. Yet, he was only the leader of his own tribe, who had no authority over other Byzantine *foederati*. His son was granted the title of phylarch at the beginning of his reign. Moreover, if we are to trust the relation of Procopius of Caesarea, the emperor Justinian I also acknowledged his royal title:

> For this reason the emperor Justinian put in command of as many clans as possible Arethas, the son of Gabalas, who ruled over the Saracens of Arabia, and bestowed upon him the dignity of king (ἀξίωμα βασιλέως), a thing which among the Romans had never before been done[194].

If we take the text of the Byzantine chronicler literally, it means that other Arab tribes allied with Byzantium were made subordinate to Arethas and that he was given the royal rank, expressed not by the Latin word *rex*, but the Greek equivalent *basileus*.

Whereas the fact that during the reign of Justinian I other *foederati* of the Byzantines (Banū Tanūkh and Banū Salīḥ) were subjected to the rule of the Djafnids is rather uncontested, the question of the royal title and rank of Arethas is the subject of a heated debate[195]. Some researchers think that the Arab could not have been given the title which was otherwise reserved for the emperor himself.

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[192] *Eldest Life of Symeon the Stylite the Younger*, 186, p. 164–165. Another life of the saint written in the tenth century by Nicephorus Uranus is also available – *Life of Symeon the Stylite the Younger*. The relevant fragment is chapter 193, col. 3164.

[193] Symeon of Bēth Arshām, p. 63; Pseudo-Zachariah, IX, 2; I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, p. 48. Recently an inscription discovered in 1979 by Ure Avner was published. In this inscription a certain 'Adiyū calls himself the son of *king Tha'laba* (U. Avner, L. Nehmé, Ch. Robin, *A Rock Inscription...*, pp. 237–243 (text of the inscription and paleographic analysis).

[194] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 17, 47.

[195] An extreme position is taken by Berthold Rubin (*Prokopios von Kaisarea*, [in:] *RE*, vol. XXIII/I, Stuttgart 1957, col. 372), who thinks Procopius rather irreverently describes the attempt by the emperor to strengthen the position of the Ghassānids, ascribing to the ruler such features as he also wrote about in the *Secret History*.

Vassilios Christides translates the term *basileus* as the *supreme phylarch*[196]. Alexandre G. Grouchevoy also thinks this might have merely been a precedence over other phylarchs assigned to Arethas[197]. The scholar points out that in the novel CII the Greek term *phylarch* is translated as *iudex gentium*[198]. The inscription of 559 which he quotes (after Daniel Schlumberger) confirms the year of Arethas' phylarchate, but does not mention his elevation to royal status[199]. On this basis the scholar concludes that Arethas was created a phylarch of the province, with special powers. Evangelos Chrysos is also highly sceptical as to the possibility of an Arab being assigned the title of basileus[200]. The issue is further complicated by an inscription (more precisely a *graffito*) from Djabal Says, in which Arethas is called *l'-mlk*, i.e. king[201]. Yet, the inscription is dated 528/529, which is before the Ghassānid supposedly received the title from Justinian I. It is therefore difficult to say what was the meaning of the term *mlk* – it might have been a title corresponding to that of Arethas' father[202].

Irfan Shahîd has a different opinion on the question of the royal title. He points to the fact that Procopius' text makes it clear that the Arabs were divided and they were under the rule of numerous phylarchs[203]. Justinian I made an attempt to unite his allies[204]. In the first year of his reign the emperor vested Arethas with the command of all Arab *foederati*. Thus, Arethas became the supreme phylarch (archphylarch)[205]. This was soon followed by giving the royal

[196] V. Christides, *Saracens' Prodosia in Byzantine Sources*, B 40, 1970, p. 6. G. Greatrex (*Rome and Persia at War...*, p. 30) takes a similar position.

[197] A.G. Grouchevoy, *Trois niveau de phylarques. Etude terminologique sur les relations de Rome de Byzance avec les arabes avant l'Islam*, Sy 72, 1995, pp. 126–127.

[198] *CIC*, *Novellae*, CII, *De moderatore Arabiae*, 1, p. 493; A.G. Grouchevoy, *Trois niveau...*, p. 127 (the author erroneously gives the form *iudex provinciae*).

[199] D.M. Schlumberger, *Les fouilles de Qasr-el-Heir el-Gharbi (1936–1938). Rapport préliminaire*, Sy 20.4, 1939, pp. 368–371.

[200] E. Chrysos, *The Title Basileus in Early Byzantine International Relations*, DOP 32, 1978, pp. 46–52.

[201] Quoted after: G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, p. 97. See: K. Brisch, *Das omayyadische Schloss in Usais*, MDAI.AK 19, 1963, pp. 141–187; Ch. Robin, M. Gorea, *Un réexamen de l'inscription arabe préislamique du Ǧabal Usays (528–529 è.Chr.)*, Ara 49.4, 2002, pp. 503–510; I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, pp. 117–123.

[202] Ch. Robin provides an interesting compilation of the royal titles of Arab rulers. U. Avner, L. Nehmé, Ch. Robin, *A Rock Inscription...*, pp. 249–253.

[203] This is confirmed also by Justinian's edict IV *De magistratu Phoeniciae Libanicae*. *CIC*, *Novellae*, ed. IV, 2, p. 762.

[204] This was noted earlier by N.V. Pigulevskaja (*Araby...*, p. 195).

[205] I. Shahîd (*On the Titulature of the Emperor Heraclius*, B 51, 1981, p. 292) dates this event to 529, whereas E.K. Chrysos (*The Title...*, p. 49, footnote 131) – to 530. For a wider cov-

title (*basileus*) to Arethas[206]. In the Syriac texts the corresponding term is *malka* (king)[207]. Other *foederati* of the Byzantines were now subject to Arethas, even those not belonging to his own tribe[208]. Only the Arabs ruled by his brother Abū Karib[209], who was made the phylarch of the province *Palaestina III*[210] by Justinian, were excluded from Arethas' power.

In his analysis of the creation of the Ghassānid kingdom Irfan Shahîd also discusses an evolution of the word *basileus*. He argues that until the times of Heraclius (610–641) it was indeed occasionally used to refer to the emperor, but this was not an official title. It was only during the reign of Heraclius that a radical differentiation between the titles *rex* and *basileus=imperator* developed[211]. At the same time the scholar stresses that Arethas was a king without a kingdom since his *basileia was not territorial*[212]. However, having received the title of a king Arethas, was now of a rank equal to that his opponent, the Lakhmid king, Al-Mundhir III[213].

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erage see: I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, pp. 52, 95–124; idem, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century...*, p. 302; idem, *Procopius on the Ghassānids...*, pp. 84–85. N.V. Pigulevskaja (*Araby...*, p. 195) assumes that in 529 Arethas was a phylarch of *Palaestina* I and II.

[206] I. Shahîd, *Arethas...*, pp. 211–216. The date is not certain. It must have happened before 531. *PLRE* III, p. 112 [*Arethas (Al-Harith ibn Jabalah)*]. I. Shahîd (*Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, p. 116) remarks that this was not exceptional. He even claims that neither the Byzantines nor the Persians hesitated to bequeath royal titles and *the autocrator was very active king maker*.

[207] John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 50, p. 153[499]; Michael the Syrian, IX, 29, p. 246; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, VI, 46–47, p. 219; N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby...*, p. 195; *PLRE* III, p. 111 [*Arethas (Al-Harith ibn Jabalah)*].

[208] I. Shahîd, *Ghassānid and Umayyad Structures...*, p. 302.

[209] M. Pandura, *Perceiving Otherness...*, 46; I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, pp. 95–98, 103–117; idem, *Procopius on the Ghassānids...*, pp. 85–86; S. Smith, *Events in Arabia...*, p. 443.

[210] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 19, 10. The time when Abū Karib was given this position is not certain, it was either in 528 (I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, p. 126), or in 529 (*PLRE* III, p. 112 [*Arethas (Al-Harith ibn Jabalah)*]). In an inscription from the town of Samma' he is mentioned as *enkoksatos phylarcha* (M. Sartre, *Deux phylarques arabes dans l'Arabie byzantine*, Mu 106, 1993, p. 151; A.G. Grouchevoy, *Trois niveau...*, p. 125). In one of the sources (a Syriac manuscript of Al-Nabek) Abū Karib is called king (Th. Nöldeke, *Die Ghassanischen Fürsten...*, p. 26; F. Millar, *A Syriac Codex from Palmyra and the "Ghassānid" Abokarib*, JSyS 16.1, 2013, pp. 22–23).

[211] I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, pp. 97–98, 109–117. Therefore, one should not translate the phrase ἀξίωμα βασιλέως as *царское достоинство* as is done by N.V. Pigulevskaja (*Araby...*, p. 195).

[212] I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, p. 112.

[213] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 17, 45; F.E. Peters, *Introduction...*, p. XXIV. S. Smith (*Events in Arabia...*, p. 443) thinks that Justinian basically followed the Persian practice in his dealings with the Arabs.

Granting titles and honours to tribal chiefs was one of the ways to ensure their loyalty, much like paying them subsidies and allowing them to keep some of the captured booty. The Djafnids were not only sheikhs, but also leaders of *foederati* with the title of phylarch (one of them was Abū Karib[214]), as well as *magistri militum* (*stretelatai*)[215]. The prestigious titles were a confirmation of their high rank. Arethas was a patrician[216], as was Al-Mundhir[217] and Djabala ibn Al-Ayham[218]. In the Byzantine sources they are referred to with a variety of epithets: *clarissimi*[219], *spectabiles*[220], *gloriosissimi*[221], *illustres*[222], and *famosissimi*[223]. This aimed not only to satisfy the yearning for titles on the part of the Arab allies; we must bear in mind that in the Byzantine administrative system possession of honours was related to actual remuneration.

The alliance of Byzantium and the Arabs was first and foremost military by nature. The tribes allied with the Empire took part in the fighting against its enemies a number of times, both against the Persians and their Arab allies. In

[214] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 19, 10.

[215] D.M. Schlumberger, *Les fouilles...*, p. 368; L. Jalambert, R. Mouterde, C. Mondesert, *Inscriptions greques et latines de la Syrie*, vol. V, *Emésène*, Paris 1959, no. 2553, pp. 240–241, 245; N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby...*, p. 201, footnotes 2–3; M. Sartre, *Trois études...*, p. 182; L.S.B. MacCoull, *Notes on Arab Allies as foederati in Inscriptions*, Ty 11, 1996, pp. 157–158; I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, vol. II/I, *Toponymy, Monuments, Historical Geography and Frontier Studies*, Washington 2002, pp. 6–27.

[216] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 18, 47; Theophanes, AM 6056, p. 240. This is also confirmed by the inscriptions of Ḳaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Sharḳī (D.M. Schlumberger, *Les fouilles...*, p. 371) and *Seleucia Pieria* (L. Jalambert, R. Mouterde, C. Mondesert, *Inscriptions greques...*, no 2553, pp. 240–241, 245). Cf. N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby...*, p. 201, footnotes 2–3; I. Kawar (Shahîd), *The Patriciate of Arethas*, BZ 52.2, 1959, pp. 329–332.

[217] John of Ephesus, *HE*, III, 4, 39; *Documenta ad origines Monophysitarum*, ep. XXXIX, p. 223 [155]. See also: *Inscriptions grecques et latines recueillies en Gréce et en Asie Mineure*, eds. P. Le Bas, W.H. Waddington, vol. III, Paris 1870, no. 2110; L. Jalambert, R. Mouterde, C. Mondesert, *Inscriptions greques...*, no 2553 b, d (the inscription of Ḳaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Sharḳī).

[218] I. Shahîd, *Sigillography in the Service of History. New Light*, [in:] *Novum Millenium. Studies on Byzantine History and Culture dedicated to Paul Speck*, eds. C. Sode, S. Takaćs, Aldershot 2001, pp. 371–372.

[219] This was the rank that the Arab phylarchs were entitled to. I. Kawar, *The Patriciate...*, p. 323.

[220] *CIC, Novellae*, CII, 1, p. 493; I. Kawar, *The Patriciate...*, pp. 324–326.

[221] This is confirmed by the inscription from the monastery of Ḳaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Sharḳī. D.M. Schlumberger, *Les fouilles...*, pp. 368, 371–372; I. Kawar, *The Patriciate...*, pp. 328–329.

[222] John of Ephesus, *HE*, III, 4, 39 (Al-Mundhir, son of Arethas). I. Kawar believes that Arethas was also assigned this rank (*The Patriciate...*, pp. 326–328).

[223] M. Pandura, *Perceiving Otherness...*, p. 52; I. Shahîd, *Ghassan...*, p. 1020; idem, *The Patriciate...*, *passim*.

the times of Anastasius the war with Persia was renewed in 502, i.e. in the same year that Byzantium signed a treaty with the Arabs. It is possible that the Ghassānids fought on the Byzantine side as early as then, but there is no evidence for that. In 527 Justinian I ordered the phylarchs of Phoenicia, Arabia and Mesopotamia and the *strategoi* of these provinces to take action against the Lakhmids[224]. The emperor also decided to build a refuge at Thannuris in the desert region of north-eastern Syria for the protection of the people from the attacks of the hostile (i.e. pro-Persian) Arab forces. The latter tried to disturb the construction works[225]. At the same time, other Arabs (whose tribal allegiance is not determined by the Byzantine source) fought for the Empire. One of them, the phylarch Aṭfar (*Tapharas*), was seriously wounded and died[226]. Pseudo-Zachariah gives a very favourable testimony about him, calling him wise, courageous and excellently skilled in warfare[227]. Irfan Shahîd concluded that the name Tapharas actually refers to Djabala, the father of Arethas[228]. In his opinion the form Aṭfar (Aṣfar) is the equivalent of the Latin name Flavius[229], which the Ghassānid might have adopted on the renewal of the alliances with the Byzantines. The death of Djabala was not an end of the alliance he had forged. A year later (528) his son Arethas and two other phylarchs took part in the action against the Lakhmids of Al-Ḥīra[230].

The participation of the Arabs in Belisarius' campaign against the Persians was much more serious. There is evidence of their presence in the battle of Dara in 530[231]. In any case they were in Belisarius' army during his march against the forces of Kavadh[232]. In the battle of Callinicum (531) which ended in the Byzantine defeat five thousand Arab warriors fought on the right flank[233].

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[224] John Malalas, XVIII, 16. The phylarchs mentioned are Arethas, Gnufas and Naaman.

[225] Pseudo-Zachariah, IX, 2.

[226] Ταφαράς (John Malalas, XVIII, 26). Quite probably this took place during the Persian invasion of Mesopotamia in 527 and 528 (Jacob of Edessa, p. 240 [319]).

[227] Pseudo-Zachariah, IX, 2. In the Latin version of the text the Arab is described as *vir bellicosus ac sapiens, et armis Romanorum multum exercitatus*. I. Shahîd (*Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, p. 64) explains this by religious sympathies.

[228] I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, pp. 63–69.

[229] *Ibidem*, p. 66. At the same time the Arabs referred to the Romans as *Banū al Aṣfar* (بنـــو الأصـــفر).

[230] John Malalas, XVIII, 16; I. Kawar, *The Patriciate...*, p. 339. A.G. Grouchevoy (*Trois niveau...*, p. 105) translates the title of *phylarch* simply as tribal leader.

[231] I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, pp. 131–133. Lack of any mention in Procopius' text is due to the prejudice of the ancient author against the Arab leader, claims the scholar (pp. 133–134).

[232] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 18, 7; John Malalas, XVIII, 60, p. 461.

[233] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 18, 7; I, 18, 26, 35–36.

After Belisarius was recalled from the post of the chief commander in the East and Sittas was made the new leader, the Arab forces stood by his side[234]. When the hostilities with Persia resumed and Belisarius regained his former position, the Ghassānids were once again under his command. It is not known whether they took part in the fighting in 536 when the Lakhmid king, Al-Mundhir III, sent an army of fifteen thousand Saracens under Chabus (Ka'b) and Hezidus (Yazīd) to the Roman territory[235]. In Al-Ṭabarī's account, around 540 Khālid ibn Djabala (that is, as we remember, Arethas) raided the territories of Al-Mundhir, who ruled with Persian support over the land between Oman, Bahrain and Yamāma[236]. Al-Ḥarīth's force captured considerable booty and killed many people. Al-Mundhir complained to the Persian shah Khusraw, who then wrote to Justinian. He wanted the Byzantine emperor to force Al-Ḥarīth to return the looted possessions and pay reparations for the people killed. The refusal was taken as a breach of the peace treaty[237].

Indeed, in 540 the Persians attacked Syria through the lands of Arabia. The attack ended with the fall of Antioch[238]. During the renewed hostilities the Ghassānids had an important role to play. In the campaign of 541 Arethas accompanied Belisarius with sizable forces[239]. As the chief commander besieged Sisaunon, the Arab was sent to loot the lands on the other bank of the Tigris. He was successful, but he did not return with the booty to the main forces, because he feared he would be deprived of the plunder[240].

The hostilities between the Ghassānids and the Lakhmids did not cease even when Byzantium and Persia were at peace[241], e.g. in the years 545–550/551[242]. In the course of the fighting the son of Arethas was murdered by the Lakhmid Al-Mundhir III (in 545 or 546). If we are to believe the source, he was sacrificed to "Aphrodite"[243]. According to Vassilios Christides and Nina V. Pigulevska, Procopius considered this tragic event to be a proof of Arethas' loyalty to the Byzan-

[234] Pseudo-Zachariah, IX, 6.

[235] Marcellinus, p. 46.

[236] Th. Nöldeke, *Ghassanischen Fürsten...*, pp. 17–18; idem, *Geschichte...*, pp. 238–239.

[237] *Ibidem*, pp. 238–239.

[238] John the Lydian, III, 54.

[239] Procopius, *De bellis*, II, 16, 5.

[240] Procopius, *De bellis*, II, 19, 26.

[241] Procopius, *De bellis*, II, 28, 12–14.

[242] Isdigousnas, the Persian envoy, accused Arethas of attacking Lakhmid lands in the time of peace. Procopius, *De bellis*, II, 28, 12–14.

[243] Procopius, *De bellis*, II, 28, 13. N.V. Pigulevskaja (*Araby...*, p. 193) and G. Fisher (*Between Empires...*, p. 68) think that this was the goddess Al-'Uzzā. The latter scholar points to the use of the event by the Byzantine authors in their propaganda. Interestingly enough, it is quite likely that the wife of Al-Mundhir was Hind, a Christian of Banū Kinda.

tine Empire[244], but in fact the chronicler more likely pointed to the future – from this moment on it was certain that Arethas would not forsake the Roman cause and cross to the Persian side.

Soon after the described event Arethas defeated the forces of the Lakhmids and was close to taking two sons of Al-Mundhir prisoners[245]. In 554 near Chalcis Arethas defeated and killed his greatest enemy, who had once again invaded Roman territory[246]. *The Life of St. Symeon the Stylite* depicts the initial prevalence of the Lakhmid very dramatically. It was only his sudden death caused by a blow to the head that changed the course of the battle[247]. In this fight Djabala, a son of Arethas, died, which only strengthened the Ghassānid ruler's desire to destroy the enemies of his tribe. In a short time, the capital of the Lakhmids, Al-Ḥīra, was captured and burned down. This success was the highlight of Arethas' career. It might have been then that he was elevated to the rank of *gloriosissimus*. By defeating the Lakhmids, the Ghassānids solved one of the most important strategic problems of the Eastern Roman Empire. Based in Arabia and *Palaestina III*, they kept the hostile nomads in check. They also undertook military operations against the Jews in Al-Ḥidjāz[248].

The importance of the Arab allies for both the Byzantine and Persian empires is evidenced by the fact that issues concerning them were discussed in the peace negotiations between the two powers, e.g. in 551 and 561/562[249]. On the latter occasion the Arabs were called συμμαχοί – allies[250]. Both sides agreed to prevent "their" Saracens from attacking the other side's lands. Both the Arabs serving the empires and the barbarian merchants had to follow the route through Nisibis and Dara and were not allowed to move without a special permission[251].

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[244] Procopius, *De bellis*, II, 28, 13; N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby...*, p. 193.

[245] Procopius, *De bellis*, II, 28, 14.

[246] Michael the Syrian, IX, 23, vol. II, p. 269 (it happened as an attack of Al-Ḥarīth on Roman territory was being opposed); *Eldest Life of Symeon the Stylite the Younger*, 186–187, pp. 164–166; *Life of Symeon the Stylite the Younger*, 193–194, col. 3164; I. Shahîd, *Ghassan...*, p. 1020; F. Nau, *Les Arabes...*, pp. 55–56.

[247] *Eldest Life of Symeon the Stylite the Younger*, 187, pp. 165–166; *Life of Symeon the Stylite the Younger*, 194, col. 3164. According to the author of the life of the saint, this was thanks to Symeon's prayers, who in a way he had taken part in the fight thanks to a vision.

[248] I. Shahîd, *Ghassan...*, p. 1021.

[249] Procopius, *De bellis*, VIII, 15, 1–7; Menander, fr. 6.1, p. 70.

[250] Menander, fr. 6.1, p. 70. G. Fisher (*Between Empires...*, pp. 120–121; *The Political Development...*, p. 328) believes the use of this term might indicate the growing power of the Ghassānids.

[251] I. Kawar (Shahîd), *The Arabs in the Peace Treaty of AD 561*, Ara 3, 1956, pp. 197–201; N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby...*, p. 199; G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, pp. 119–120.

During the wars the Arabs were not involved in besieging cities, as both the Romans and the Persians thought this kind of operations to be at odds with the nature of the Arabs. They were, however, used for plundering and intelligence. The Arabs' skills as fast riders, apt for intelligence operations as well as capturing warriors of the rival army, were admired and utilised by both the Byzantines and the Persians. Already back in the fourth century the emperor Julian who greatly pleased when the Saracen tribe leaders offered him their services during his Persian campaign[252], even more so because they handed over to him the captured enemy scouts[253]. He thought that they excelled in using deceitful tricks during the war. Belisarius also employed Arethas and his forces for such actions as described above. Al-Nuʿmān, the most talented of the sons of Al-Mundhir performed similar actions later[254]. During the reign of the emperor Maurice, Philippicus ordered his Saracen allies to sneak into the groups of soldiers captured by the Persians in order to gather necessary information[255]. Heraclius, on his part, sent them to capture prisoners in the vicinity of Ganjak[256].

Although the main task of the Ghassānids as Byzantine allies was to fight with the Persians and their allies, they were also used in some other circumstances, e.g. to provide internal safety. According to Malalas, Arethas took part in repressing the rebellion of the Samaritans, hand in hand with *dux* Theodore[257].

The Ghassānids were also intermediaries between the Byzantines and other tribes and sheikhs. In 543 (or 539 according to I. Kawar[258]) both Ghassānid leaders sent envoys to Abraha, the ruler of the Ḥimyarites, who ruled over Yemen[259].

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[252] Ammianus Marcellinus, XXIII, 3, 8; Julian the Apostate, *Ep.* 98; *Oratio I*, 15; N. Lenski, *Captivity...*, p. 244.

[253] Ammianus Marcellinus, XXIV, 1, 10.

[254] John of Ephesus, *HE*, III, 3, 42.

[255] Theophylact Simocatta, II, 2, 5–6.

[256] Theophanes, AM 6114, p. 307.

[257] John Malalas, XVIII, 35, p. 446; Pseudo-Zachariah, IX, 8; N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby...*, pp. 187–188; I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, pp. 82–95; idem, *Arethas...*, pp. 207–209; A.G. Grouchevoy, *Trois niveau...*, p. 123. John Malalas does not provide the name of the Arab leader, calling him the phylarch of Palestine. Yet, because in 529 Arethas was the phylarch of *Palaestina* I and II (Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 17), it is likely that the text refers to him. The Samaritan rebellion is mentioned in several sources: Procopius, *Anecdota*, XI, 24–29; Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *De insidiis*, 44, p. 171; Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae*, 70, pp. 171–173; Pseudo-Zachariah, IX, 8; Theophanes, AM 6021, p. 178.

[258] I. Kawar, *The Patriciate...*, p. 331. The same date is given by S. Smith (*Events in Arabia...*, p. 441).

[259] The Ḥimyarite tribe, also known as Ḳuḍāʿa, also left Yemen and started to live in the semi-desert regions on the border of modern-day Iraq, in *Arabia Felix* (I. Shahîd, *Ghas-*

This was an important diplomatic mission aimed at turning Abraha to the Byzantine side[260]. The Ghassānids were also in contact with the tribes and rulers of Nadjdjār and Yathrib[261].

In 539 the Lakhmids and the Ghassānids started a dispute concerning a region south of Palmyra, through which *Strata Diocletiana*, an important road connecting Damascus and Palmyra, ran[262]. Arethas occupied this strategically important territory and thus secured Byzantine influences in the area[263]. Nina V. Pigulevska points out that during the dispute both sides, the Ghassānids and the Lakhmids alike, invoked legal arguments, pointing to the fact that they were not mentioned in the peace treaty between Byzantium and Persia[264]. Elderly witnesses were also called upon to prove the rights to the disputed region[265]. The dispute was settled by the Byzantine envoys Summus and Strategius in favour of the Empire, but with the aim of mitigating the conflict[266]. Also the novel CII provides evidence for the emperor's attempts to maintain peace in the region[267]. These attempts proved futile, however, because Khusraw I considered the peace treaty to be broken because of the attempts to win the Lakhmids over to the Byzantine side[268].

The cooperation with the Ghassānids did not mean that the Byzantine rulers completely gave up on trying to win over other political forces in the Arabian

san..., p. 1021). Cosmas Indicopleustes (III, 66, vol. I, p. 505) stresses that there were Christian communities scattered among them. On Justinian I's policy towards southern Arabia see: G. Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War...*, pp. 225–239; V. Christides, *The Himyarite-Ethiopian War and the Ethiopian Occupation of South Arabia in the Acts of Gregentius (ca. 530 AD)*, AEt 9, 1972, pp. 115–146. On Abraha's protectorate over Yemen: Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 19, 14; Ch. Robin, *Le royaume hujride...*, pp. 693–694; S. Smith, *Events in Arabia...*, pp. 431–441.

[260] *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*, vol. IV, *Inscriptiones Himyariticas et Sabaeas Continen*s, II, Paris 1920, no 541, v. 87–92. G. Fisher (*Between Empires...*, pp. 90, 118) dates this mission 548. Apart from the Djafnid mission, in the same year Abraha received Byzantine, Sassanian and Lakhmid envoys. See: R.G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs from the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*, London–New York 2002, p. 55; G. Fisher, *Kingdoms or Dynasties...*, p. 257; S. Smith, *Events in Arabia...*, p. 441.

[261] M. Pandura, *Perceiving Otherness...*, p. 47.

[262] N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby...*, p. 191; *PLRE* III, p. 112 [*Arethas (Al-Harith ibn Jabalah)*]; G. Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War...*, p. 29.

[263] I. Kawar, *The Patriciate...*, p. 331.

[264] N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby...*, p. 191.

[265] Procopius, *De bellis*, II, 1, 7.

[266] Procopius, *De bellis*, II, 1, 9–11.

[267] *CIC, Novellae*, CII, 2, pp. 494–495.

[268] Procopius, *De bellis*, II, 1, 12–15.

Peninsula. The source texts confirm contacts with different tribes inhabiting the Byzantine lands, not only the Ghassānids[269]; the Ḥudjrites of Banū Kinda were still imperial allies[270]. In 530 two Byzantine envoys (Julian and Nonnosus) were sent to the Kindites and the Ḥimyarites to win the support of these tribes against the Persians[271]. Even negotiations with the Persian allies, the Lakhmids, were not out of the question. Their leader, Al-Mundhir III, requested the Romans in 531 to send a mission headed by the deacon Sergius – he intended to propose peace through his mediation[272]. This happened as the Byzantine forces were preparing for war. It is then possible that Al-Mundhir was basically playing for time, in an attempt to postpone the planned actions of the Byzantine army, and this is probably how the Byzantines interpreted the action of the Arab leader. When Sergius brought the letter to the emperor, the latter read it and took complex action. First of all, he sent a mission headed by Rufinus to Persia[273]. At the same time Sergius was sent back to Al-Mundhir with gifts[274]. This did not mean the war plans were cancelled – the military preparations were continued as the negotiations went on. The Persians considered the Byzantine actions to have broken the terms of the peace treaty. Khusraw believed that Byzantium tried win over the Lakhmids and its representative, Summus, who came to Al-Mundhir under the pretext of mediation in the conflict over *Strata Diocletiana*, also made promises of financial gains to persuade the Naṣrid to ally himself with the Byzantines[275].

Although the cooperation with the Arabs was evidently beneficial to the Eastern Roman Empire, it was not without problems. As has already been mentioned, Arethas (Al-Ḥarīth) was in conflict with the *dux* of Mesopotamia (or Palestine?)[276].

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[269] M. Pandura, *Perceiving Otherness...*, p. 47.

[270] Photius, cod. 3; G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, p. 90; I. Shahîd, *Kinda*, [in:] *EI,* vol. V, pp. 118–120.

[271] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 20, 9; II, 1, 10; I. Shahîd, *Kinda...*, p. 118; S. Smith, *Events in Arabia...*, pp. 448–451.

[272] John Malalas, XVIII, 61, p. 466; G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, p. 117. The latter mentions these negotiations as an example of the growing independence of the Arabs.

[273] Let us add that the mission brought not only gifts from the emperor for the shah, but also some from Theodora for the shah's consort.

[274] John Malalas, XVIII, 61, p. 466; Menander, fr. 6.1, p. 82 (at first, however, it was the emperor who received gifts from the Saracen). G. Fisher (*Between Empires...*, p. 123) wonders whether this was some form of subsidies or tribute.

[275] Procopius, *De bellis*, II, 1.

[276] John Malalas, XVIII, 16 (the Lakhmids used the occasion to launch an attack against the Romans); I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, pp. 70–71.

We do not know whether this involved the famous Ghassānid or his Kindite namesake, who died in 528 during an expedition against the Lakhmids[277]. There were also conflicts among the Arabs allied with the Byzantines. One of them is described by Cyril of Scythopolis, who writes about a dispute between two Roman phylarchs, by the names Arethas and Asouades, which led to armed raids and looting in the region of the Laura of Euthymius[278].

Other tensions occurred as well. The behaviour of Arethas and his men during the aforementioned battle of Callinicum raises the greatest controversies. Arethas' troops ran away during combat from the overwhelming Persian forces, which resulted in accusations of betrayal. These can be found in text by Procopius of Caesarea, in the first book of *History of Wars*[279]. Irfan Shahîd believes this charge is Procopius' own invention aimed to explain Belisarius' loss. In the scholar's opinion, these claims are to be viewed in the context of *Kaiserkritik*[280]. The issue is seen differently by Vassilios Christides, according to whom Procopius did not take a particularly unfriendly position towards the Arab[281]. Let us then examine the testimony of the Byzantine chronicler.

While discussing the early failures of Arethas in the fight against Al-Mundhir[282], Procopius did not definitely state their causes. He saw two possibilities: they could result either from betrayal or from bad luck[283]. According to his testimony, at Callinicum Arethas retreated when facing the main Persian forces, the elite of their army[284]. This is somewhat surprising because initially the forces of the Arab allies of Byzantium were positioned on the right flank, opposing other Arab units, the Lakhmids in the Persian service, in a place where the ground

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[277] *Ibidem*, p. 71; S. Smith, *Events in Arabia...*, p. 446. His namesake of Banū Ghassān participated in the punitive expedition against the Lakhmids. John Malalas, XVIII, 16, p. 434–435; I. Shahîd, *Arethas...*, p. 207.

[278] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii*, 51, p. 75; *PLRE* III, p. 112 [*Arethas (Al-Harith ibn Jabalah)*].

[279] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 18, 30–50. It is an exaggeration to say that Procopius presents Arethas as a traitor responsible for the defeats in the years 531 and 541, as is claimed by: J. Beaucamp, *Le rôle de Byzance en Mer Rouge sous le règne de Justin: mythe ou réalité*, [in:] *Juifs et chrétiens en Arabie aux V^e^ et VI^e^ siècles. Regards croises sur les sources*, eds. J. Beaucamp, F. Briquel-Chatonnet, Ch.J. Robin, Paris 2010, p. 198.

[280] I. Shahîd, *Procopius and Arethas*, BZ 50, 1957, *passim*; idem, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, pp. 134–136; N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby...*, p. 198. At the same time I. Shahîd admits that Procopius' work allows us to see the actual role of the Ghassānids in the policy of the Empire (*Procopius on the Ghassānids...*, p. 81).

[281] V. Christides, *Saracens'...*, pp. 8–9.

[282] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 17, 48.

[283] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 17, 48.

[284] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 18, 35.

rose steeply[285]. In any case the retreat of the Ghassānids without offering any resistance to the enemy forces gave rise to suspicions. Procopius writes about the Arabs' bad reputation[286]. Their flight enabled the Persians to move behind the Roman main forces.

The course of events is depicted differently by John Malalas, who blames the Phrygians for initiating the retreat. They were allegedly followed by some of the Saracens, and as a result the latter were then accused of betrayal. At the same time the chronicler emphasises that Arethas himself fought valiantly[287]. The above accounts make it clear that only two facts are certain: the retreat of the Arabs and the accusations of betrayal mounted against them. There is, however, no evidence that the Arabs really did betray the Byzantine army. Vassilios Christides sees the remarks on Arethas as a reflection of Procopius' general opinion of the Saracens. Indeed, many Byzantine authors complained that the Arabs were unreliable[288]. Procopius also shared these suspicions about the nature of the Arab allies[289]. This does not of course mean that he lied when writing that they retreated from the battle. According to Vassilios Christides, the Ghassānid ruler was a man with a strong will to survive in difficult circumstances, a man who bravely faced the enemies, but who was not a Spartan hero – he had no intention of dying in a hopeless fight. To flee from the overwhelming forces of the enemy was the Saracens' *modus vivendi* – concludes the Greek scholar[290]. I am inclined to agree with his position. One should also note that for the Byzantine commanders this attitude of the Arabs was not a surprise. To lose in a bat-

[285] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 18, 26 and 35; G. Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War...*, pp. 200–207.

[286] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 18, 36. We may add that the allies of the Persians, the Lakhmids under the command of Al-Mundhir (Alamundaros) and Azarethes, retreated at the very news of the enemy's approach. Cf. Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 18, 9.

[287] John Malalas, XVIII, 61, p. 464. Pseudo-Zachariah on his part writes about the flight of the Byzantine army, without naming any particular troops as being the ones to blame (IX, 4).

[288] Theophylact Simocatta, III, 17, 7. For a different account see: Theodoret, *De natura*, col. 949.

[289] V. Christides, *Saracens'...*, pp. 12–13.

[290] V. Christides, *Saracens'...*, p. 12. In his opinion *Eldest Life of Symeon the Stylite the Younger* presents Arethas in a better light, although it confirms that the Saracens despaired, panicked and retreated in the face of the advance of the Persian forces. Yet, the fragment of the source quoted by the Greek scholar (*Eldest Life of Symeon the Stylite the Younger*, 187, p. 165; *Life of Symeon the Stylite the Younger*, 194, col. 3164) does not refer to the battle of Callinicum, but to the battle of Chalcis in 553, in which Arethas defeated and killed Al-Mundhir. According to the source, he owed the success to the saint's intervention, as his troops were initially forced to retreat. See: I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, pp. 244–248.

tle is never pleasant, but for the professional soldiers efficiency in minimalising the casualties is of greater importance than the quest for fame on the battlefield. When there is no chance of victory, it is better to retreat, reorganise one's forces and attack again than to stand and fight to the end, at the same time risking utter destruction. It is certain that Belisarius understood this very well. Besides, the commander-in-chief did not want to wage the battle against the Persians at Callinicum[291]. It is worth emphasising that he had relatively weak forces (eight thousand warriors, including five thousand under Arethas' command) at his disposal since a large portion of his army had stayed in Dara[292]. His position came under strong criticism from the other officers, who accused him of cowardice and, if we are to believe Procopius, actually forced the talented but young and inexperienced commander to engage in battle[293].

One thing is certain – the Byzantine Empire did not give up on the services of Arethas as his later career testifies; in the campaign of 541 Arethas was sent to plunder the lands on the other bank of the Tigris and had under his command two Byzantine leaders and 120 soldiers chosen from the *bucellarii* of the commander-in-chief[294]. The two leaders were Traian and John the Glutton. Procopius claims that Belisarius ordered them to obey all of Arethas' orders, yet it is difficult not to suspect they were actually sent to monitor his actions. This certainly was what the Ghassānid ruler thought, which is confirmed by later events. Arethas gathered large booty, but decided not to return with it to Belisarius as he feared the Romans would take it from him[295]. He got rid of the Byzantine officers in a deceitful manner. He informed them that a large enemy army was approaching and urged them to return by a different route[296], while he himself made his way to Theodosiopolis[297]. Agapius provides a slightly different account. According to him, Arethas initially destroyed many towns and took many prisoners. Later, however, a marzban, a high-ranking Persian leader, attacked his unit and retook the prisoners[298]. We must bear in mind that Procopius was closer to the described events and could have gained information directly from Belisarius.

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[291] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 18, 11. He tried to dissuade others from engaging in the fight (I, 18, 16–23).

[292] John Malalas, XVIII, 60, p. 461; G. Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War...*, p. 197.

[293] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 18, 12; I, 18, 24–25.

[294] Procopius, *De bellis*, II, 19, 15–16.

[295] Procopius, *De bellis*, II, 19, 26.

[296] Procopius, *De bellis*, II, 19, 28.

[297] Procopius, *De bellis*, II, 19, 29.

[298] Agapius, p. 171 [431].

If, however, Agapius' version were true, one could interpret the behaviour of the Ghassānid differently. He might have been ashamed of the defeat and chosen not to present himself before the commander-in-chief.

Procopius blames Arethas for the retreat of the Byzantine army, as Belisarius, not knowing where they were, was unnecessarily worried about the fate of the Saracens[299]. We must, however, admit there were other reasons for the retreat – the troublesome climate, diseases plaguing the army, fears that Lebanon might be endangered by the Lakhmids, and finally personal problems of the commander-in-chief[300].

It is worth considering what the consequences of the cooperation with Byzantium were for the Ghassānids. Some benefits were straightforward: Arethas enlarged the area of his kingdom and gained considerable booty during his reign. According to Pseudo-Zachariah, thanks to the participation in the suppression of the Samaritan rebellion, the Arab phylarch Abū Karib captured as many as 20 thousand young men and women, whom he later sold in Ἰνδικοῖς μέρεσι[301], which is most likely in the south of the Arabian Peninsula. The profits gained in this way enabled the Djafnids to strengthen their position in the Peninsula and to found a number of establishments. The extant inscriptions and buildings attest to this kind of activity[302]. The phylarchs also had some administrative duties[303]. It is possible that the Djafnids also collected taxes in some form (the Naṣrids had a permission from the Sassanian rulers to do so)[304].

The Djafnid elites made close ties with the Empire. The Arab leaders were incorporated into the Roman state administrative system. It was not accidental that they chose to be commemorated in inscriptions written in Greek[305]. Their position in their homeland was strengthened – they gained prestige and power, and also started diplomatic activity[306]. One favourable condition was that Byzantium did not intend to annex the territories inhabited by the Ghassānids into the Empire[307].

Numerous Arab leaders had an opportunity to make personal contact with the emperors and high Byzantine officials. Some of them personally visited Con-

[299] P r o c o p i u s, *De bellis*, II, 19, 30. He learned what had happened to the Arabs only after the return to Byzantine lands. Arethas preferred not to face Belisarius (II, 19, 45).

[300] P r o c o p i u s, *De bellis*, II, 19, 31–34; *Anecdota*, II, 23, 28; A g a p i u s, p. 171 [431].

[301] P s e u d o - Z a c h a r i a h, IX, 8.

[302] G. F i s h e r, *The Political Development...*, pp. 322–323.

[303] G. F i s h e r, *Between Empires...*, p. 103.

[304] *Ibidem*, p. 104.

[305] *Ibidem*, p. 116; G. F i s h e r, *Kingdoms or Dynasties...*, pp. 262–263.

[306] I d e m, *The Political Development...*, pp. 326–327.

[307] I d e m, *Between Empires...*, p. 125.

stantinople. Arethas probably paid a visit to the capital of the Empire twice. First time he appeared there in 542 or 543 with regard to Monophysitism, the second time in 563[308]. During one of the visits he might have been accompanied by his wife[309]. During the second visit the main topic of the talks was the question of succession to the Ghassānid throne, the support for Monophysitism and the problem of the raids by the Lakhmid ruler Ambros (ʿAmr), the successor of Al-Mundhir[310]. In 580 Al-Mundhir, the son of Arethas[311], came to Constantinople to receive the crown from emperor Tiberius[312]. He was accompanied by two of his sons. He also made an appeal for the confirmation of the privileges of the Monophysite church. The visits involved a customary exchange of gifts[313].

Personal contacts were not confined only to the ruling families. The Arabs made contact with Byzantine soldiers and military leaders in the course of the actions against the Persians. John of Ephesus mentions the friendship of Al-Mundhir ibn al-Ḥarīth and Magnus the Syrian[314].

Staying in the Byzantine sphere of influence, the Arabs were to a certain degree subject to "Byzantinisation". However, the degree of influence of Eastern Roman state ideology, symbolism, religion, visual arts or music on the Arab tribes remains highly debatable. The adoption of some elements of the Byzantine political ideology is the easiest to notice. One sign of this was the use of the name Flavius by the Djafnids[315]. The Arabs attached a great importance to the transfer

[308] I. Kawar, *The Patriciate...*, p. 334; N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby...*, pp. 199–200; F. Nau, *Les Arabes...*, p. 56.

[309] I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, vol. II/II, *Economic, Social and Cultural History*, Washington 1995, p. 25.

[310] Michael the Syrian, IX, 30, p. 256; N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby...*, p. 200. The successor of Arethas was Al-Mundhir. He is mentioned as the Ghassānid ruler for the first time in 570. *Chronicle up to 724*, p. 143 [111].

[311] John of Ephesus, *HE*, III, 4, 39; P. Goubert, *Byzance...*, pp. 250–251. John of Ephesus stresses the honors with which the guests were received and the generous gifts they were given. Perhaps Tiberius tried to amend the relations with the Ghassānids, which were strained during the reign of Justin II. In any case, the way Al-Mundhir was received was clearly different from the dealing of Amorkeos, who was called to the capital by Leo I and then sent to a distant province. G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, p. 122.

[312] We do not know what crown it was (G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, p. 122). Al-Mundhir's regalia were kept in the arsenal in Bostra (F.E. Peters, *Introduction...*, p. XXII).

[313] The emperor bestowed generous gifts upon Al-Mundhir during his visit in Constantinople (John of Ephesus, *HE*, III, 4, 39). Earlier the Byzantine ruler received an oasis as a present from Abū Karib (Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 19, 10; I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, p. 125).

[314] John of Ephesus, *HE*, III, 3, 40–41.

[315] Flavius Arethas is mentioned in the inscription of Ḳaṣr al-Ḥayr (L. Jalabert, R. Mouterde, C. Mondesert, *Inscriptions greques...*, no. 2553 b, d). Similarly, in another

of Byzantine symbols of power, especially the crown[316]. Still, Greg Fisher points to the fact that none of the Djafnids managed to enter the elite of the Empire, none made a career in Constantinople[317]. As the scholar sums up, the Arabs were not in the mainstream[318]. This might have been in part due to their religious sympathies, different from those preferred in Constantinople, although it does not seem these were any problem in the contacts with the imperial court during Justinian I's reign.

A tangible result of the adoption of Byzantine models was the creation of several centres, the ruler's seats, in the realm of the Ghassānids. The first to be mentioned is Al-Djābiya to the north of the city of Nawā, in north-western Syria[319]. It was in character a large camp with a few permanent buildings[320] and thus resembled the Lakhmid capital of Al-Ḥīra. The second of the Ghassānid centres was Djilliḳ, lying probably near modern Al-Kiswa, to the south of Damascus[321]. Another centre of the Arab *foederati* was the camp near Chalcis ad Belum. In their settlements the Ghassānids built cisterns (e.g. in Sergiopolis), castles (e.g. the one founded by Al-Mundhir in Ḍumayr) and other public buildings[322]. Although the centres just mentioned could not be called cities in the full sense of the word, their formation was an important step towards urbanisation of the Peninsula[323].

An essential role was played by the Christianisation of the tribes allied with the Empire, although the Ghassānids adopted the faith in the unorthodox,

inscription Arethas' son is mentioned (no. 2110). See: D.M. S c h l u m b e r g e r, *Les fouilles...*, pp. 366–372; G. F i s h e r, *Between Empires...*, pp. 57–58.

316 P. S c h r e i n e r, *Die Byzantinisierung der bulgarischen Kultur*, [in:] *Kulturelle Traditionen Bericht über das Kolloquium der Südosteuropa-Kommision, 16–18 Juni 1987*, eds. R. L a u e r, P. S c h r e i n e r, Götingen 1989, pp. 54–55.

317 G. F i s h e r, *Between Empires...*, p. 81.

318 *Ibidem*, pp. 181–184. The scholar is rather critical of the political abilities of the Ghassānid leaders.

319 S y m e o n o f B ē t h A r s h ā m, p. 63; Th. N ö l d e k e, *Zur Topographie und Geschichte des Damascenischen Gebietes und der Haurangegend*, ZMG 29, 1875, p. 430; G. F i s h e r, *Between Empires...*, p. 99.

320 M. P a n d u r a, *Perceiving Otherness...*, p. 48.

321 In the vicinity of this place Khālid ibn al-Walīd defeated the Ghassānids at Easter of 634.

322 I. S h a h î d, *Ghassan...*, p. 1021; i d e m, *Ghassānid and Umayyad Structures...*, p. 300. Unfortunately Procopius' work *Buildings of Justinian* does not cover the territories inhabited by the Ghassānids.

323 Even Al-Djābiya was a permanent camp rather than a city (M. M i o t t o, *Bisanzio...*, p. 12). When J. Ż e b r o w s k i (*Dzieje Syrii*, Warszawa 2006, p. 87) writes about basalt cities built by the Ghassānids using the Roman model, this is somewhat exaggerated.

Monophysite form[324]. Some of them (among others the house of the Djafnids) accepted Christianity in the times of Anastasius. During Justinian I's reign the influence of Christianity among the Ghassānids grew considerably. At Arethas' request, who had sent envoys to Constantinople about the matter, two bishops were ordained for the Arabs: Jacob Baradaeus and Theodore[325]. It was in no way accidental that the envoys got the support of the empress Theodora for their cause since her pro-Monophysite sympathies were widely known[326].

The Ghassānid leaders were devout followers of Monophysitism[327]. They actively participated in solving the problems of the followers of the faith, one sign of which is Arethas' engagement in supporting the candidacy of bishop Paul whom Jacob Baradaeus ordained as bishop of Alexandria[328]. The Djafnids rejected the entreaties of the bishop of Antioch, who attempted to convert them to the Chalcedonian faith[329]. They also strived hard for the preservation of the unity of their church. Arethas took active part in religious debates[330] and corresponded with Jacob Baradaeus[331]. His brother was a mediator in various conflicts[332]. It is

[324] For more information see: G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, pp. 34–71; F. Nau, *Les Arabes...*, pp. 52–53. It is worth adding that the Lakhmid allies of Persia were also Christians, but unlike the Ghassānids they were followers of Nestorianism.

[325] According to John of Ephesus, this was in 542 (John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 50, pp. 153–154 [499–500]); cf. E. Honigmann, *Evêqués et évêchés monophysites d'Asie antérieure au VIe s.*, Louvain 1951, pp. 158–163. The relations of Arethas and Jacob Baradaeus are described by F. Nau (*Les Arabes...*, pp. 53–54).

[326] V. Menze, *Justinian and the Making of the Syrian Orthodox Church*, Oxford 2008, pp. 222–223; G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, pp. 56–57.

[327] For more on this topic see: G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, p. 56sqq. (the scholar makes a point that our perception of the Djafnids is influenced by the authors of the source texts, who were not impartial); Ph. Wood, *Christianity and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, [in:] *Inside and Out: Interactions Between Rome and the Peoples on the Arabian and Egyptian Frontiers in Late Antiquity*, eds. G. Fisher, J. Djikstra, Leuven 2014, pp. 358–362. For more on chrystianisation of the Arabs see: K. Kościelniak, *XX wieków chrześcijaństwa...*, pp. 82–100.

[328] Michael the Syrian, X, 1, p. 285; E. Honigmann, *Evêqués...*, pp. 198–200; N.V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby...*, pp. 201–202; J. Maspero, *Histoire des patriarches d'Alexandrie*, Paris 1923, pp. 226–229. Arethas is also reported to have asked bishop Jacob to cure ill Arabs (John of Ephesus, *Lives*, p. 233 [579]).

[329] Michael the Syrian, IX, 29.

[330] I. Kawar, *The Patriciate...*, p. 335; Ph. Wood, *Christianity and the Arabs...*, pp. 356–363.

[331] A letter was sent from Constantinople in 563 – *Documenta ad origines Monophysitarum*, ep. XXII, pp. 143–144 [100]. See: E. Honigmann, *Evêqués...*, p. 163; G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, p. 148; F. Nau, *Les Arabes...*, pp. 53–54. On the respect of Arethas for Jacob Baradaeus see: John of Ephesus, *Lives*, p. 332–334.

[332] M. Kaimio, *P.Petra inv. 83: a settlement of dispute*, [in:] *Atti del XXII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia, Firenze, 23–29 agosto 1998*, vol. II, eds. I. Andorlini, G. Bastiani

possible that this kind of policy was modelled on that of Justinian I[333]. A similar role was later played by Arethas' successor, Al-Mundhir[334]. The Ghassānid leaders were addressed as lovers of God, the believers[335], which confirmed their inclusion in the Christian ecumene. According to Irfan Shahîd[336], the Ghassānids were greatly influenced by the persecutions of Christians in Nadjrān, where closely related people of the tribal group Azd of southern Arabia were involved[337].

Greg Fisher noted that preventing divisions among the Monophysites was of crucial importance for the Djafnids: *divisions* (...) *threatened* (...) *the power base of the Djafnids*[338], whereas preservation of the unity could contribute to the rise of the prestige of the clan. The Djafnids' piety also found its expression in religious establishments they founded. They ordered construction of churches and martyria[339]. Possibly the martyrium of St. John the Baptist was one of them. The presence of the Djafnids is also attested by the inscriptions in the church in Nitl[340]. The Djafnids also initiated the construction of other objects, both of political and religious character. One of them was *praetorium extra muros* in Sergiopolis, which was a church placed above the grave of St. Sergius, but also possibly functioning as an audience chamber[341]. The cult of St. Sergius in Sergiopolis was a unifying factor not only for the Ghassānids, the religious centre was important also for other Christians of Syria and Mesopotamia[342]. The extensive foundations

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et al., Firenze 2001, pp. 719–720; J. Hengstl, *Die byzantinischen Papyri aus Petra: Stand der Bearbeitung und Bitte um Unterstützung*, RIDA 49, 2002, pp. 341–357; G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, p. 148.

[333] F. Nau, *Les Arabes...*, p. 56.

[334] F.E. Peters, *Introduction...*, p. XXII.

[335] *Documenta ad origines Monophysitarum*, p. 223 [155] (a letter of the abbots of Arabian monasteries to Jacob Baradaeus). See also: G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, p. 59.

[336] I. Shahîd, *Ghassānid and Umayyad Structures...*, p. 301.

[337] This is evident from the list of the victims of the persecution, both men and women. *Book of the Ḥimyarites*, 19–20.

[338] G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, p. 62.

[339] A.G. Grouchevoy, *Trois niveau...*, p. 125; J. Żebrowski, *Dzieje Syrii...*, p. 87; G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, pp. 105–108; idem, *The Political Development...*, pp. 323–225.

[340] M. Piccirillo, *The Church of Saint Sergius at Nitl: a Centre of the Christian Arabs in the Steppe at the Gates of Madaba*', LAn 51, 2001, pp. 281–282; G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, pp. 50–51; U. Avner, L. Nehmé, Ch. Robin, *A Rock Inscription...*, p. 247.

[341] J. Sauveget, *Les Ghassānides et Sergiopolis*, B 14, 1939, pp. 115–130; I. Shahîd, *Ghassānid and Umayyad Structures...*, pp. 303–304; G. Brands, *Die sogenannte Audienzsaal des al-Mundhir in Resāfa*, DM 10, 1998, pp. 237–241; E.K. Fowden, *An Arab Building at al-Rusāfa-Sergiopolis*, DM 12, 2000, pp. 303–327; eadem, *Barbarian Plain...*, pp. 153–160, 167–170. On the city of Sergiopolis: Procopius, *De bellis*, II, 5, 29.

[342] Evagrius Scholasticus, VI, 21; M. Pandura, *Perceiving Otherness...*, pp. 54–

of the Ghassānids, enabled by the financial means they gained from the cooperation with the Byzantine Empire, made them an important force in the economic development of the region.

The results of the Byzantine-Arabian cooperation were visible in culture as well. The Djafnids accepted Greek and Syriac – their inscriptions were written in these languages[343]. Yet, the Ghassānid monks did not translate the ecclesiastical works from Syriac into Arabic (in any case such translations are not known to us). On the other hand, the influence of the Aramaic language was strong among the Ghassānids, to the point that it had become their second language, next to Arabic[344].

The Arab rulers tried to emulate the customs of the court at Constantinople. In the entourage of the Djafnids there were poets, but it is impossible to prove Byzantine influences in poetry or art, or music. The cultural level of the Ghassānid court is generally assessed rather highly, they are believed to have formed a civilisation that combined Arab, Greek-Roman and Syrian elements[345]. We know relatively little about the culture since the sources usually mention the Ghassānids in the context of war or religion, but Arab poetic works present them as lovers of wine, singing and hunting (also with falcons)[346].

The Byzantine Empire also profited from the alliance with the Ghassānids. Justinian I succeeded in creating a buffer state which protected the Empire against the danger posed by its Persian neighbour. Sometimes the policy of this emperor towards the Ghassānids is seen as a reform of the system of defence, which was aimed at saving money – the emperor stopped relying on the inefficient *limitanei* forces[347]. The Arab allies were much more successful as guardians of the Roman border. The territories occupied by the Ghassānids were relatively peaceful[348]. This was favourable to the development of economy, in particular agriculture[349]. Thanks

55; G. F i s h e r, *Between Empires...*, pp. 47, 52 (the author points out that the presentation of Sergius as a rider was close to the nomads); E.K. F o w d e n, *The Barbarian Plain...*, pp. 38–39; G. T a t e, *La Syrie-Palestine*, [in:] *Le monde byzantin*, vol. I, *Empire romain d'Orient (330–641)*, ed. C. M o r r i s s o n, Paris 2006, p. 404. The inscription commemorating Al-Mundhir is also from Sergiopolis. *Supplementum epigraphicum graecum*, vol. VII, Leiden–Amsterdam 1934, p. 188.

343 M. P a n d u r a, *Perceiving Otherness...*, p. 56.

344 J. Ż e b r o w s k i, *Dzieje Syrii...*, p. 87.

345 Similar claims: I. S h a h î d, *Ghassānid and Umayyad Structures...*, pp. 300–301.

346 *Ibidem*, pp. 301–302.

347 P r o c o p i u s, *Anecdota*, XXIV, 12–14.

348 G. F i s h e r, *The Political Development...*, p. 322.

349 B. d e V r i e s, *On the Way to Bostra...*, p. 74; i d e m, *Paradox of Power. Between Local and Imperial at Umm AI-Jimal*, [in:] *Crossing Jordan. North American Contributions to the Archaeology of Jordan*, eds. Th.E. L e v y, P.M. M i c h e l e D a v i a u, R.W. Y o u n k e r, M. S h a e r, London 2007, p. 467.

to the cooperation with the Arabs, the intelligence operations in the Persian territories were also easier. Although the Byzantines did not want to depend on the help of one ally, the Ghassānids proved to be the strongest and most trustworthy one. With only a certain degree of exaggeration, François Nau claims that there was no battle in those times that was fought without Arab participation as they formed the light cavalry units in both Persian and Byzantine armies[350]. They fulfilled their duties effectively and formed a barrier that was difficult to overcome for the invaders. This picture is not changed by the fact that at times the Lakhmids and the Ghassānids themselves pulled Persia and Byzantium into a conflict or caused deterioration of the relations between both empires, as was the case in 537[351]. We must agree with Nina V. Pigulevska's position that the Arabs fulfilled their obligations as allies of the Empire and they cannot be blamed for pursuing their own interest at the same time[352].

In the times of Justinian I the religious policy of the emperor and his consort was conducive to the cooperation with the Arabs[353]. It also seems that Justinian I appreciated the role of the buffer state of the Ghassānids on the border with Persia, all the more so that securing peace in the eastern reaches of his state was essential for his attempts to rebuild the Empire in the west. On the other hand, the efforts on the part of the Empire were received positively by Arethas. The policy of the latter was continued by his son and successor, Al-Mundhir (569–581), who captured the Lakhmid capital of Al-Ḥīra again in 580 and burned the city[354]. His position was less fortunate because the successors of Justinian I were much more distrustful of their Arab allies. After this emperor's death the high position the Djafnids had enjoyed was not maintained. This was probably due to their aspirations and too great independence. The internal struggle for power after the death of Arethas might have spurred the Byzantine Empire's actions[355]. During the reign of Justin II the Ghassānids were accused of treason[356]. As we can remember such

[350] F. N a u, *Les Arabes...*, p. 34.

[351] G. F i s h e r, *Between Empires...*, p. 116. Procopius claims that Al-Mundhir III tried to strain the conditions of peace, acting on the orders of the shah Khusraw, who did not want to do this on his own. P r o c o p i u s, *De bellis*, II, 1, 1–2.

[352] N.V. P i g u l e v s k a j a, *Araby...*, pp. 198–199. At the same time the Russian scholar stresses that I. Kawar's attitude towards the figure of Arethas is too apologetic (pp. 196–197).

[353] G. F i s h e r, *Between Empires...*, pp. 61–62. The scholar points to the cessation of persecutions of the Monophysites, which took place during Justin I's reign.

[354] I. S h a h î d, *al-Hira*, [in:] *EI*, vol. III, p. 463; G. F i s h e r, *Between Empires...*, p. 118.

[355] Al-Mundhir had to confront the Naṣrid Ḳābūs. J o h n o f E p h e s u s, *HE*, VI, 3; N. L e n s k i, *Captivity...*, p. 247.

[356] J o h n o f E p h e s u s, *HE*, III, 6, 3. Allegedly the immediate reason was Al-Mundhir's demand to be paid for sending his forces.

accusations were rather commonplace, however this time the matter did not end with mere words. In 572 the Byzantines tried to assassinate Al-Mundhir[357]. Three years later (in 575) he agreed to meet the patrician Justinian in order to improve the Byzantine-Ghassānid relations[358]. The talks were held in Sergiopolis. The resulting reconciliation, however, proved short-lived.

Al-Mundhir's conflict with Maurice, the commander of the excubitors and future emperor, cast a shadow over the former's career[359]. According to John of Ephesus, after a failed campaign along the Ghassānid king, Maurice wanted to lay the blame for the lack of success on him. He accused the Ghassānid before the emperor Tiberius of handing over Roman plans to the Persians and refusing to cross the Euphrates[360]. In this situation the Arab leader was betrayed even by his friend, Magnus[361]. In 581 Al-Mundhir ibn Al-Ḥarīth was imprisoned on the orders of Tiberius I and exiled to Sicily[362]. According to some scholars, one reason for the conflict were the attempts to convert the Ghassānids to Orthodox Christianity[363]. What seems more significant, however, is that the Byzantines were disturbed by the growing power of their allies, who controlled the whole north-western portion of the Arabian Peninsula, a part of Syria and Palestine, as well as a part of Al-Ḥidjāz. Paul Goubert suspects that Al-Mundhir wanted to act as an arbiter in the Byzantine-Persian relations[364]. We might also add that by defeating the Lakhmids of Al-Ḥīra the Ghassānids solved one of the important problems of the Empire, but at the same time, unfortunately for them, they ceased to be indispensable[365] (or at least this is what the authorities in Constantinople thought). It is worth noting that soon afterwards the Persians had the leader of the Lakhmids, Al-Nuʿmān, executed[366]. The violation of the peace

[357] John of Ephesus, *HE*, III, 6, 4.

[358] John of Ephesus, *HE*, III, 6, 4; G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, p. 173. The scholar believes that the Arab ruler agreed to negotiate because of the successes of his rivals, the Lakhmids.

[359] G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, pp. 123–124.

[360] John of Ephesus, *HE*, III, 3, 40; III, 6, 15–16; Evagrius Scholasticus, V, 20; Theophylact Simocatta, III, 17, 7; P. Goubert, *Byzance...*, pp. 252–254.

[361] John of Ephesus, *HE*, III, 3, 40; P. Goubert, *Byzance...*, pp. 254–257.

[362] John of Ephesus, *HE*, III, 3, 41–42; III, 3, 54 (the latter fragment did not survive, we only know its title). His supporters were in Bostra (Evagrius Scholasticus, VI, 2). Together with the Ghassānid king, the queen and some of their children were also sent to exile.

[363] C. Zuckermann, *L'armée*, [in:] *Le monde byzantin...*, p. 166.

[364] P. Goubert, *Byzance...*, p. 253.

[365] M. Pandura, *Perceiving Otherness...*, p. 57.

[366] G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, pp. 70, 179–189; F. Nau, *Les Arabes...*, pp. 47–48; *Chronicle of Seert*, vol. II/ II, XC, p. 546; *Chronicle of Guidi*, p. 18. The supposed reason was lack

with Persia by the Arab allies of Byzantium might have also contributed to the imprisonment of Al-Mundhir[367].

The crushing of Djafnids' power did not mean Byzantium completely relinquished the Ghassānid buffer on the border with Persia. The emperor attempted to put Al-Mundhir's brother on his sibling's throne, but eventually the power went to the hands of the son of the imprisoned ruler, Al-Nu'mān[368], who tried in vain to have his father freed[369]. Not only did he fail to achieve his goals, but he became himself a victim of actions similar to those aimed at his father[370].

After the imprisonment and exile of Al-Mundhir, his supporters organised a series of rebellions, but the range of these was not extensive[371]. It appears that after the fall of the Djafnids, the Ghassānid political organisation disintegrated[372]. Some of the local Arab sheikhs started serving various lesser military or religious leaders[373], some turned to the Persian side[374]. Maurice decided to have numerous small tribes, each with its own phylarch, rather than one phylarchate[375]. This drastically reduced the efficiency of the Arab forces still in Byzantine service in defending the border. The Persians took advantage of this and in 611 they marched deep into Syria and Palestine[376].

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of military support during the rebellion of Bahram (N. Lenski, *Captivity...*, p. 247) or the way 'Adī, the favourite poet of the Sassanian shah was treated by the Lakhmid. In fact, however, Al-Nu'mān had grown too powerful for the Persians.

[367] Theophylact Simocatta, VIII, 1.

[368] John of Ephesus, *HE*, III, 3, 42–43. The mysterious death of Al-Mundhir's brother raised serious suspicions. P. Goubert, *Byzance...*, p. 257.

[369] John of Ephesus, *HE*, III, 3, 54, 56; Michael the Syrian, X, 19, 350 (it is said that Maurice set a condition that Al-Nu'mān would abandon Monophysitism and take part in the war against Persia, and the Arab leader refused to fulfill the former demand. Syriac chronicle states that in 602 Al-Mundhir finally regained freedom. Cf. *Chronicle up to 1234*, 83, p. 172.

[370] Michael the Syrian, X, 19, p. 350; Evagrius Scholasticus VI, 2; I. Shahîd, *Ghassan...*, p. 1021; F.E. Peters, *Introduction...*, p. XXIII; P. Goubert, *Byzance...*, pp. 258–259.

[371] In the face of the attack of the rebel forces, the inhabitants of Bostra took over the weapons and other property of Al-Mundhir (John of Ephesus, *HE*, III, 3, 41; G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, pp. 174–175). In spite of this some scholars write about an open war between the Empire and the Ghassānids (M. Miotto, *Bisanzio...*, p. 14).

[372] Michael the Syrian, X, 19, pp. 350–351 (the Arabs fell apart into numerous smaller groups). See: G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, p. 175; P. Goubert, *Byzance...*, p. 259.

[373] Theophylact Simocatta, II, 10, 6 (Andrew, a guide of *the tribe of Saracens*, served Heraclius the Elder). Armenian version of Michael the Syrian's chronicle, p. 213.

[374] I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, p. 543 (he refers to the translation of the Armenian version of Michael the Syrian's chronicle by E. Dulaurier, to which I have no access).

[375] F.E. Peters, *Introduction...*, p. XXIII.

[376] M. Miotto, *Bisanzio...*, p. 15.

It is likely that Byzantium quickly understood the negative consequences of the fall of the allied Arab state and attempted to restore the phylarchate[377]. Irfan Shahîd thinks that some part of the Ghassānid tribe still served the Empire at the beginning of the seventh century[378]. Emperor Heraclius undertook a failed attempt to rebuild the Ghassānid kingdom in the seventh century[379]. Yet in all probability the Ghassānid state did not regain the royal rank before the Persian invasion of 614, nor before the Muslim attack. About 636 Djabala ibn Al-Ayham became the ruler of the Ghassānids. This last king of the tribe did not join the Muslim forces, but came over to the Byzantine camp[380]. The faithful to Byzantium Ghassānid forces were eventually defeated in the battle of Yarmūk by the Muslim armies under the command of Khālid ibn Al-Walīd. After Yarmūk many of the Ghassānid tribe, especially those who remained faithful to Monophysite Christianity, fled to Anatolia[381]. Yet even in the times of the Umayyad Caliphate the Ghassānids still played an active part in the history of the region[382].

7.4. Would-be Allies in the South of the Arabian Peninsula

Because of the Persian danger, and for economic reasons, the Byzantine Empire tried to forge an alliance with the Arabs of the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula, and Ethiopia. These two regions must be considered jointly as the rulers of Ethiopia managed to extend their overlordship to southern Arabia[383]. The Byzantine sphere of interest thus included the lands united under the rule of

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377 I. Shahîd, *The Restoration of the Ghassānid Dynasty, AD 587: Dionysius of Tell-Mahre*, ARAM 5, 1993, pp. 491–503; F.E. Peters, *Introduction...*, p. XXIII.

378 M. Miotto (*Bisanzio...*, p. 15) goes even further and claims that after the rebellion of 581 was put down by the Empire, the Ghassānids were still in its service, taking part in the military operations of the emperors Maurice, Phocas and Heraclius.

379 I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, p. 116; M. Miotto, *Bisanzio...*, p. 25.

380 E.W. Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquest*, Cambridge 1992, p. 171. Other tribal leaders did so too.

381 I. Shahîd, *Sigillography...*, p. 372; idem, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, pp. 636–637, 646–647.

382 Idem, *Ghassānid and Umayyad Structures...*, pp. 305–306; idem, *Ghāssan post Ghāssan*, [in:] *The Islamic World from Classical to Modern Times: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lewis*, ed. C.E. Bosworth, Princeton 1989, pp. 328–331.

383 Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 19, 1 (the intention to win over the Ethiopians and the Homerites). See: J. Beaucamp, *Le rôle de Byzance....*, pp. 197–218; V. Christides, *The Himyarite-Ethiopian War...*, pp. 115–146.

the Ḥimyarites[384], whom the Byzantine sources call Homerites[385]. The relations with them were significant for the Eastern Roman Empire also because the Arabs of the central part of the Arabian Peninsula were under their protectorate[386].

The religious situation in the region was very complicated. In the fourth century ancient cults were still alive there, although the number of their followers gradually shrank in favour of the monotheist religions – Christianity and Judaism, which were not always professed in the pure, orthodox form, either[387]. Theophilos the Indian, who was sent on a mission to spread Christianity by Constantius, encountered, apart from numerous Jews, people practicing circumcision, worshippers of the Sun and the Moon, and those of local deities[388]. Many Arab authors attest that As'ad Abū Karib, who ruled in the fourth century, adopted Judaism and this religion became the official creed of the Ḥimyarites[389]. His successors did not always remain followers of that religion, but this was the case with Yūsuf Dhū Nuwās in the sixth century.

As has been mentioned previously, the Ḥimyarites were subordinate to the rulers of Ethiopia. In 518 or 519 the first Ethiopian intervention in the Arabian Peninsula took place. A Christian ruler, Ma'dīkarib Dja'far, was imposed over the Ḥimyarites[390] and decided to ally himself with the Byzantine Empire. In this way, a coalition of Ḥimyarites, Banū Ḥudjr and other pro-Byzantine Arabs was created. The Jewish population reacted with a revolt, which brought Yūsuf Dhū Nuwās to power[391]. Consequently, the ties with Byzantium were broken and the Abyssinian forces in Ẓafār were massacred[392].

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[384] I. G a j d a, *Quel monothéism en Arabie du Sud ancienne?*, [in:] *Juifs et chrétiens en Arabie aux V^e et VI^e siècles. Regards croises sur les sources*, eds. J. B e a u c a m p, F. B r i q u e l - C h a t o n n e t, Ch.J. R o b i n, Paris 2010, p. 107.

[385] P r o c o p i u s, *De bellis*, I, 19, 1; 20, 1. This is a Hellenized form of the name Ḥimyarites. V. C h r i s t i d e s, *The Himyarite-Ethiopian War...*, p. 121.

[386] They attempted to break free from this dependence, which resulted in wars. Ch. R o b i n, *Le royaume hujride...*, p. 701. See also: K. K o ś c i e l n i a k, *XX wieków chrześcijaństwa...*, pp. 55–62.

[387] I. G a j d a, *Quel monothéism...*, pp. 107–113. The author calls the phenomenon *monothéisme judaïsant* (p. 117). On the policy of the Byzantine Empire towards Himyar in the fifth and early sixth century: I. S h a h î d, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century...*, pp. 376–382.

[388] P h i l o s t o r g i u s, III, 4–6; Ch. R o b i n, *Le royaume hujride...*, pp. 699–700. The basis of the ecclesiastical structure in the region was created in the times of Anastasius.

[389] I. G a j d a, *Quel monothéism...*, p. 114; F.E. P e t e r s, *Introduction...*, p. XLIV (he is said to have been converted by two rabbis of Medina); S. S m i t h, *Events in Arabia...*, p. 462.

[390] Ch. R o b i n, *Le royaume hujride...*, p. 702; F.E. P e t e r s, *Introduction...*, pp. XLIV–XLV.

[391] I. G a j d a, *Quel monothéism...*, p. 114; K. K o ś c i e l n i a k, *XX wieków chrześcijaństwa...*, pp. 114–116.

[392] Ch. R o b i n, *Le royaume hujride...*, p. 702.

The aforementioned Yūsuf is directly referred to as a Jew in the sources and is held responsible for the persecution of Christians, the culminating point of which was the massacre of the inhabitants of Nadjrān in 523–524[393]. Yūsuf began to seek allies. Quite naturally, he turned to the Persian shahanshah and his ally, the Lakhmid king Al-Mundhir III[394]. However, the latter was not eager to support Yūsuf because among his subjects there were Christians, who were outraged at the news of the massacre[395].

According to the author of the *Martyrdom of St. Arethas*, the messengers of Dhū Nuwās met the Byzantine envoys, who had been sent by Justin I (518–527) to negotiate peace between Al-Mundhir and the Arabs allied to the Empire in the camp of the Lakhmid[396]. In this way the news of the events in Nadjrān reached both Byzantium and Ethiopia.

The Christian ruler of Ethiopia, Kālēb (Ella Atsbeha or Ella Asbeha)[397] was the first to react. He gathered a fleet and moved to Arabia, where he defeated Yūsuf and installed a different ruler in his place, a Christian[398]. At the same time, Kālēb forced the Ḥimyarites to pay tribute to Ethiopia[399]. Soon after his forces retreated, a rebellion broke out and the Ḥimyarites overthrew the foreign-imposed ruler and gave power to a man called Abram (Abraha)[400]. This did not mean a return

[393] *Book of Ḥimyarites*, 9–36; Philostorgius, III, 4a; Ch. Robin, *Le royaume hujride...*, p. 691; F.E. Peters, *Introduction...*, p. XLV; K. Kościelniak, *XX wieków chrześcijaństwa...*, pp. 116–118. On the policy of the Empire towards Nadjrān: I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century...*, pp. 360–376. This event was the subject of numerous studies, the full list of references is to be found in: I. Shahîd, *The Martyrs of Najran...*, *passim*.

[394] V. Christides, *Himyarite-Ethiopian War...*, p. 119.

[395] J. Beaucamp, *Le rôle de Byzance...*, p. 209; F.E. Peters, *Introduction...*, p. XLVI.

[396] The head of the mission was the priest Abram. His name is mentioned also by Symeon of Bēth Arshām (J. Beaucamp, *Le rôle de Byzance...*, pp. 209–210). Other sources only talk of envoys sent with a mission to seek peace (Michael the Syrian, IX, 18; Photius, cod. 3).

[397] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 20, 1; *Book of Ḥimyarites*, 41. Ella Atsbeha is Kālēb's throne name. S. Munro-Hay, *Aksum. An African Civilisation of Late Antiquity*, Edinburgh 1991, p. 173. Procopius distorted the name of the Ethiopian ruler – he calls him Hellestheaeus (Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 20, 1). Cf. V. Christides, *Himyarite-Ethiopian War...*, pp. 123–124. On his part, Malalas wrongly believed him to have been a pagan, who had converted only after his victory over the Ḥimyarites (John Malalas, XVIII, 15, p. 433).

[398] According to the Byzantine sources, his name was Esimphaios. It is likely that it was originally Śumu-yafa (S. Smith, *Events in Arabia...*, p. 433) or Sumyafa Aśwa (K. Kościelniak, *XX wieków chrześcijaństwa...*, p. 118). Yūsuf Dhū Nuwās is believed to have died in 525. S. Smith (*Events in Arabia...*, p. 431) thinks that it is mentioned in the inscription of Ḥiṣn al-Ghurāb .

[399] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 20, 1; *Book of Ḥimyarites*, 47.

[400] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 20, 2–3. The author of the *Martyrdom of St. Arethas* claims that after the departure of the Ethiopian king, the Ḥimyarite ruler resumed the persecution of

to the pre-war state of affairs as the new ruler was a Christian. Nevertheless, the Ethiopian negus decided to wage a war against him, but was repelled[401]. Later, a compromise was reached, according to which Abram (Abraha) recognised the overlordship of the Ethiopian king and agreed to pay tribute[402].

The news from the south of the Arabian Peninsula moved the Byzantine emperor too. Having heard of the massacre, he is said to have turned to the Patriarch of Alexandria, Timothy III (517–535), whom he asked to convince the Ethiopian ruler to intervene[403]. Because the Syriac sources do not confirm that such an important role was played by the emperor, Joël Beaucamp presents a hypothesis that the story is a creation of the Greek chroniclers with no actual basis in real events[404]. In any case, the general picture that emerged was that the Byzantines were allied with the Christians of Ethiopia and the Ḥimyarites, whereas the Jews and the pagans with the Persian allies[405].

Justinian the Great decided to get involved in this region, which Procopius unambiguously links with the persecution of Christians by the Ḥimyarite ruler professing Judaism. Although the chronicler does not provide his name[406], we know from other sources that this was Yūsuf Dhū Nuwās[407]. Justinian decided to take advantage of the moment when the Ḥimyarite ruler was a Christian subject to Ethiopia and sent envoys to him, proposing an alliance against the Persians. This allows us to date the mission to spring or early summer 531[408]. It is not accidental that this action was undertaken by the Byzantines after the defeat at Callinicum earlier the same year[409].

Christians (V. Christides, *Himyarite-Ethiopian War...*, p. 118). On the figure of Abraha: Ch. Robin, *Les rois de Kinda...*, pp. 96–97.

[401] Procopius claims that many of the Ethiopian soldiers preferred to remain in the fertile regions of southern Arabia and simply switched to Abraha's side. Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 20, 6–7.

[402] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 20, 8. This was after the death of Ella Asbeha, which happened between 535 and 540. S. Smith, *Events in Arabia...*, p. 431.

[403] J. Beaucamp, *Le rôle de Byzance...*, pp. 210–212. The things look somewhat different in the light of the letter of Symeon of Bēth Arshām. According to his account, it was the bishops who had fled to Egypt who informed the patriarch of the tragic events.

[404] J. Beaucamp, *Le rôle de Byzance...*, p. 215.

[405] V. Christides, *Himyarite-Ethiopian War...*, p. 119.

[406] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 20, 1.

[407] In the *Book of the Ḥimyarites* he is called *Masruq* (*Book of Ḥimyarites*, 7–9, 39–41, 45–49). This source says that this was not the first Ethiopian intervention in the south of the Arabian Peninsula (7–9). Quite probably John Malalas (XVII, 15, p. 423; XVIII, 15, pp. 433–434); Theophanes (AM 6147, p. 346) and Dionysius of Tell Mahre also write about Yūsuf Dhū Nuwās. Cf. V. Christides, *Himyarite-Ethiopian War...*, pp. 123–124; S. Smith, *Events in Arabia...*, pp. 456–462.

[408] J. Beaucamp, *Le rôle de Byzance...*, p. 200.

[409] *Ibidem*, p. 199.

According to Procopius, the mission was headed by Julian and it was sent to Esimiphaeus, the ruler of the Homerites installed by the negus[410]. Julian's task was to persuade the Ḥimyarites to invade the Persian territory with the Ma'add tribe[411]. Interestingly enough, the objective was not only (or not primarily) to gain military support, but to exert economic pressure on the eastern neighbour. Justinian wanted the Ethiopians to be intermediaries in the silk trade, who would thus supplant the Persians in this role[412].

Procopius was close to the described events, but we know a relation of a participant of the mission to the Ḥimyarites, Nonnosus, albeit an indirect version of it. A summary of the relation survived in Photius' *Bibliotheca*[413]. Nonnosus was Justinian's envoy to the Ethiopians, the Amerites [Homerites/Ḥimyarites] and the Saracens. Diplomatic missions were a tradition in his family. His father Abram had been sent to Al-Mundhir III to negotiate the release of two commanders captured by the Lakhmid[414]. His grandfather, in the service of Anastasius, made an agreement with Kaisos, a descendant of the phylarch Arethas, confirmed later by Nonnosus' father, who brought Kaisos' son to Constantinople. At the time Nonnosus made his way to the Arabs, Kaisos was still the head of the tribes of Ma'add and Chinden (Kindites)[415]. The imperial envoy's task was to persuade Kaisos to come to Constantinople. The envoy was then to go and pay a visit to the ruler of Ethiopia, Elesbaas [Ella Asbeha], and to the Amerites[416]. Kaisos was finally made to go to Constantinople and leave his land under the rule of his brothers, Ambros ('Amr) and Jezidas (Yazīd). It seems, however, that this success was not achieved by Nonnosus, but by his father, who had once again come to the Arabs on a diplomatic mission[417]. Kaisos was granted

[410] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 20, 9. Theophanes also writes about the diplomatic mission of Julian, but places it in the times of Justin II (Theophanes, AM 6064, pp. 244–245).

[411] The envoy was also supposed to cause the power over the Ma'add to be returned to Kaisos, who was believed to be a magnificent military leader and who had had to flee after killing a relative of a Homerite ruler (Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 20, 9–10; S. Smith, *Events in Arabia...*, p. 435). The Ma'add tribe, who lived to the north of the Homerites, were subordinate to them. An inscription discovered by G. Ryckmans (Ry 506), quoted by S. Smith (*Events in Arabia...*, p. 435) mentions the circumstances in which the Homerite overlordship started. Earlier the Ma'add had accepted rulers of Al-Ḥīra as overlords. Kaisos might have been a relative of the famous Imru al-Ḳays (U. Scharrer, *The Problem of Nomadic...*, p. 263).

[412] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 20, 9. The author stresses that the Persians made enormous profits from this trade.

[413] Photius, cod. 3; S. Smith, *Events in Arabia...*, p. 435.

[414] Nonnosus, pp. 4–7.

[415] Nonnosus, pp. 4–7.

[416] Nonnosus, pp. 4–7.

[417] Nonnosus, pp. 4–7.

by the emperor *the authority over Palestine* and many of his people moved to the region following him.

Byzantine diplomatic missions to the south of Arabia and Ethiopia are also mentioned by other sources. Malalas writes about envoys sent to Elesboas [Ella Asbeha], the king of Axum [Ethiopia]. The chronicler mentions his campaign against the king of the Ἀμεριτῶν Ἰνδῶν [i.e. Ḥimyarites], writes about the subduing of the latter and installing a ruler over them. He is said to have been a relative of the negus, called Anganes[418]. Although the name of the new ruler of the Ḥimyarites is different than the one given by Procopius, the course of events is in line with the latter's relation. The date of the mission which we can infer from Malalas' text (between April and September 531)[419], is also congruent with what we know from Procopius.

However, the quoted sources are only partially consistent with one another. Particularly large discrepancies are to be found between the relations of Procopius and Nonnosus (a different envoy, a different position of Kaisos – either a fugitive or a sheikh, different things expected of Kaisos). This allows us to doubt if we are dealing with one diplomatic mission or two separate ones[420]. The second option seems more plausible. While Julian made his way to the Ḥimyarites in 531, it is more difficult to date Nonnosus' mission. It might be the case that it took place after peace had been made with Persia, which would explain why Kaisos was called to imperial capital – he was no longer needed on the front[421].

The question cannot be settled definitely by reference to other sources, among others the mentioned above the *Book of the Ḥimyarites*, the *Martyrdom of St. Arethas* and the *Letter of Symeon of Bēth Arshām*[422]. A fragment of one of these, *Acts of Gregentios*, was published in an English translation by Vassilios Christides[423]. It follows from it that at the news of the massacre at Nadjrān

[418] John Malalas, XVIII, 56, p. 457.

[419] J. Beaucamp, *Le rôle de Byzance...*, p. 202.

[420] I. Shahîd (*Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, pp. 144–149) supports the idea of a single mission. The opposite view is held by scholars like: N.V. Pigulevska, *Byzanz auf den Wegen nach Indien*, Berlin 1969, pp. 197–198; G. Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War...*, pp. 236–38. Ch. Robin (*Le royaume hujride...*, p. 672) imagines a possibility of coordinated missions of Julian and Nonnosus – the latter would be assumed to have joined Julian after the talks with the Arabs and gone with him to Abyssinia. See: S. Smith, *Events in Arabia...*, pp. 448–451.

[421] J. Beaucamp, *Le rôle de Byzance...*, p. 206; Ch. Robin, *Le royaume hujride...*, p. 672.

[422] It survives in several chronicles e.g. Pseudo-Zachariah, VIII, 3; Michael the Syrian, IX, 17. See: J. Beaucamp, *Le rôle de Byzance...*, p. 213; S. Smith, *Events in Arabia...*, p. 452.

[423] *Life of Gregentius*, pp. 136–139.

the emperor turned to the Ethiopian ruler called Elesboas [Ella Asbeha] to ask for punishing Douan [Dhū Nuwās], the king of the Homerites, for the massacre[424]. As a result of the Ethiopian intervention, in which the negus participated personally, the land of the Homerites was conquered, the capital was plundered and the royal palace was looted. Elesboas related the events to Proterius, the patriarch of Alexandria[425]. When he decided to return home, he left Abraha, who ruled Yemen until his death, on the throne of the lands of the Homerites[426].

The emperor Justinian I tried, as we remember, to forge an alliance with Abraha. Having secured his power in Yemen and having gained the Ethiopian acceptance of his rule, Abraha led an expedition of the Kindites and their allies against the Maʿadd federation, which is considered by F.E. Peters to be a partial realisation of Justinian's expectations[427]. The Al-Ḥidjāz campaign is said to have happened in the Year of the Elephant, the same year prophet Muḥammad was born. Yet, its dating is uncertain. The commonly accepted date is around 570[428], 552, however, seems to be a more plausible date[429]. S. Smith dates it to 544 and believes that the Maʿadd, subordinated by Abraha, were led by Kaisos on this occasion[430].

While Byzantine attempts to build an alliance with the confederacy of Arab tribes from the south of the Arabian Peninsula had only limited success, the long-lasting cooperation with the Ghassānids was very beneficial to both sides. However, the allies of Byzantium needed to be subordinate to the Empire. Once their aspirations grew too high, they were quickly suppressed. From today's perspective, the policy of the successors of Justinian I, which led to the weakening of the Ghassānids, was erroneous. After the Djafnids were eliminated, there was no strong group among the Arabs on which the Byzantine Empire could rely. One must bear in mind, however, that in 565 it was impossible to predict a new factor, which was the emergence of Islam.

It is necessary to stress that the Arabs were generally reliable. Although they had their own vital interests, about which they did not forget, they were good

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[424] *Life of Gregentius*, p. 137. Among the victims of the persecution was Arethas, a respected grey-haired tribal leader (etnarch).

[425] *Life of Gregentius*, p. 137. The name of the patriarch in the source is wrong; it was the time of Timothy. Gregentius was sent by him to the land of the Homerites to rebuild the churches.

[426] *Life of Gregentius*, p. 139.

[427] F.E. Peters, *Introduction...*, p. XLVII; S. Smith, *Events in Arabia...*, pp. 435–437; K. Kościelniak, *XX wieków chrześcijaństwa...*, pp. 122–129.

[428] K. Kościelniak, *XX wieków chrześcijaństwa...*, pp. 122–124; idem, *Czas i historia w islamie. Kalendarz i podstawy chronologii muzułmańskiej*, Kraków 2013, p. 27.

[429] L.I. Conrad, *Abraha and Muhammad: Some observation a propos of Chronology and Literary "topoi" in the Early Arabic Historical Tradition*, BSOAS 50.2, 1987, pp. 225–240, esp. 237.

[430] S. Smith, *Events in Arabia...*, pp. 437, 465.

allies and on the whole fulfilled the assigned tasks well. This general evaluation cannot be altered by the fact that some Arabs happened to change sides and served sometimes Persia and sometimes Byzantium. This was the case with Imru al-Ḳays (Amorcesus), Aspebetos, ʿĀdid[431]. The most famous of the Lakhmids, Imru al-Ḳays, called *the king of all Arabs* in the inscription of Namāra, abandoned the Persian service in favour of the Byzantines as well[432].

Many Arabs among the *symmachoi* stayed loyal to Byzantium also at the time of the Muslim invasion. Arabs of the tribes of Kalb, Tanūkh, Ghassān, Lakhmid and Iyād fought on the side of emperor Heraclius[433]. In the battle of Yarmūk the units of the Byzantine allies were led by Djabala ibn al-Ayham, the last ruler of the Ghassānids[434]. Heraclius did in fact try to enlarge the group of his Arab allies. In 622 he released a captured leader of the Saracens in Persian service on the condition the latter would join the Byzantine side[435].

The Arabs received payment for their services, one form of which was annona[436]. However, their major source of profit was war booty, in particular the captured prisoners, who could later be released in return for a considerable ransom, or sold as slaves[437]. The most evident example of this was the fate of Saracen rebels who were treated as booty and abducted by Abū Karib, the brother of Arethas.

The loyalty of the Arabs depended on whether the Byzantines fulfilled their obligations towards the allies. When the emperor Julian the Apostate refused to pay remuneration to the Saracens and to give them extra gifts, they attacked his retreating army (which happened already after the emperor's death)[438]. In 573 the Ghassānid Al-Mundhir refused to fight for Justin II after an attempt on his life inspired by the very same emperor[439]. This resulted in the devastating raid of

[431] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii*, 10, pp. 18–19; Joshua the Stylite, 75, p. 91; N. Lenski, *Captivity...*, p. 243.

[432] U. Avner, L. Nehmé, Ch. Robin, *A Rock Inscription...*, p. 253; B. de Vries, *On the Way to Bostra...*, p. 79; F. Millar, *The Roman Near East...,* p. 434; I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and Arabs in the Fourth Century...*, pp. 357–358; N. Lenski, *Captivity...*, p. 242.

[433] Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, vol. XI, p. 58 [=2065]; E.W. Kaegi, *Heraklios and the Arabs...*, pp. 117–118. Abū-Bakr sent a separate unit to fight the Christian Arabs. Agapius, p. 465 [208].

[434] E.W. Kaegi, *Heraklios and the Arabs...*, p. 118. Al-Ṭabarī (vol. XI, p. 115 [=2114]) names Al-Ḥarīth ibn Al-Ayham here, which is either a mistake or a mention of Djabala's otherwise unknown brother.

[435] George of Pisidia, *De expeditione persica*, II 217–248; E.W. Kaegi, *Heraclius, emperor of Byzantium*, Cambridge 2003, p. 114; N. Lenski, *Captivity...*, p. 243.

[436] *Theodosian Code*, nov. XXIV, 2.

[437] N. Lenski, *Captivity...*, pp. 248–249; 556–560.

[438] Ammianus Marcellinus, XXV, 6, 9–10.

[439] John of Ephesus, *HE*, VI, 4; N. Lenski, *Captivity...*, p. 248.

the Naṣrids, the rulers of the Lakhmid state, on the Roman territory. Only after the reconciliation with the emperor did the Ghassānids avenge the attack by taking Al-Ḥīra[440]. In 582, after the Ghassānid Al-Mundhir was exiled, his son started plundering Phoenicia and Palestine[441].

Despite the fact that the Byzantine *foederati* were united under the rule of the Djafnids, the tribal divisions did not disappear[442]. At the time of the Muslim conquest there were still separate tribes of the Lakhmids of Syria, the Tanūkhids, the Salīḥids, and others. Their leaders had not evolved into an aristocracy, however; a class of administrative officials had developed instead[443].



[440] John of Ephesus, *HE*, VI, 4; VI, 18.

[441] Evagrius Scholasticus, VI, 2; John of Ephesus, *HE*, III, 42–43; John Moschus, 155, col. 3024; N. Lenski, *Captivity...*, p. 247.

[442] P. Schreiner, *Die Byzantinisierung...*, pp. 48–49.

[443] E.g. Flavius Seos mentioned in the inscription of 578, which says that Seos and his son built the house in the times of the patrician Al-Mundhir. *Inscriptions grecques...*, no. 2110; G. Fisher, *Between Empires...*, p. 100.

PART
II

Błażej Cecota, Teresa Wolińska

The Conquest



Teresa Wolińska

1. Byzantium on the Eve of the Arab Expansion Some Aspects of Government during the Reign of Heraclius I (610–641)

In 622 Byzantine Emperor Heraclius I (610–641) made a bold and far-reaching decision. Having left Constantinople under the supervision of patriarch Sergius, he set off with his army to counteract the Persian invasion. He was not aware that in the same year a certain man from the tribe of Ḳuraysh, named Muḥammad, left Mecca, where he had spent a few decades and headed to the city of Yathrib, where he had sent some of his followers. A new era in the history of the Arabs just began.

Neither the emperor, nor the elites of Constantinople saw a reason to worry about the events which were taking place in the Arabian Peninsula. The empire had other, much more serious problems. To understand its policy, we must go back to mid-sixth century. It was then that one could see the first cracks on the mighty structure of the empire which under Justinian I (527–565) enjoyed the peak of development.

In the second half of the sixth century Byzantium had to face numerous challenges. In the east there was its long-time enemy – the powerful Sassanid Persia, with which it waged regular wars for dominion in the Caucasus, Mesopotamia, and Arabian Peninsula. In the Balkans it was constantly threatened by Avars and Slavs, who regularly attacked the Byzantine territory, especially Thessalonica, and came as far as the Peloponnesus. In Italy, retaken by Justinian, the exarchate had to be defended from the Lombards, who had entered the Apennine Peninsula only three years following the death of that ruler.

The most tense relations were with Persia. Emperor Justin II (565–578) broke a peace treaty signed by Justinian in 561[1]. In 572 there broke out a war which would last for nearly twenty years and be waged by Justin II and his successors, Tiberius (578–582) and Maurice (582–602). It was officially due to the refusal to pay a tribute that Byzantium was to pay following the treaty of 561[2]. In the course of war the Byzantines lost an important fortress of Dara in north-eastern Syria and only with a great effort they managed to push off a raid on Armenia. In 578 they came to a successful counteroffensive. The revolt of Vahram in Persia (590) allowed them not only to conclude a peace on most favourable conditions, but also – thanks to the support they offered to the young Persian ruler, Khusraw – to guarantee friendly relations with the neighbour – at least for some time. Dara and most of Armenia[3] came back to the empire.

[1] Theophanes, AM 6064, p. 244; John of Biclar, p. 211; A.A. Vasiliev, *Histoire de l'Empire byzantin*, vol. I, *324–1081*, Paris 1932, p. 221; Ch. Diehl, G. Marçais, *Le monde oriental de 395 à 1081*, Paris 1944, pp. 126–127; G. Ostrogorsky, *Dzieje Bizancjum*, transl. H. Evert-Kappesowa et al., Warszawa 1967, p. 88; A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 282–602. A Social, Economic and Administrative Survey*, vol. I, London 1986, p. 304.

[2] Menander, fr. 9, 1–3, pp. 96–110. The tribute was intended for the Arab allies of Persia. When they did not receive it, they complained to the shah. The imperial envoy maintained that they had received the money as a gift and token of imperial generosity and not as a due tribute.

[3] John of Biclar, p. 219; Theophanes, AM 6081, p. 267; Evagrius Scholasticus, VI, 16–19; Ch. Diehl, G. Marçais, *Le monde oriental...*, pp. 129–130; G. Ostrogorsky, *Dzieje...*, p. 89; Ju. Kulakovskij, *Istorija Vizantii*, vol. II, Kiev 1912, pp. 389–394, 425–447; W. Treadgold, *Bizancjum i jego armia, 284–1081*, transl. M. Grab-

Of course it did not mean the end of the trouble – another serious danger was coming from the north. Following a defeat in the conflict with the Avars and Slavs, in 571 the Byzantines had to agree to a tribute, which Justin II had refused to pay. Its amount was raised after another, three-year long war which erupted in 579 after Bayan, the khan of Avars demanded Sirmium (now Šremska Mitrovica)[4]. At the same time the raids by Slavs struck Thrace and Illyricum (580), and then Moesia (587) as well. Over their course the Byzantium's enemies reached as far as Adrianople. After a small interval military operations against Avars and Slavs were resumed in 591[5] and continued until 602. Certain of success, emperor Maurice made a mistake of having his army winter north of the Danube[6], which ended up in a mutiny of a centurion named Phocas. The rebellion of Danubian forces brought about the fall of Maurice, and the throne was taken by Phocas[7]. Supported by the army, he obtained acceptance of the senate and people

ska-Rylska, Wodzisław Śląski 2011. On the rebellion in Persia: Agapius, pp. 441–446 [181–186]; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, vol. I, p. 85; Nicephorus Callistus, XVIII, 19–20; Theophylact Simocatta, IV, 1–15; V, 1–15; Theophanes, AM 6080, pp. 262–267; Sebeos, 2–10, pp. 10–39; John Zonaras, XIV, 12.

[4] George Cedrenus, cols. 756–757, 761; Menander, fr. 12, 1–8, pp. 128–144; Theophanes, AM 6084, p. 269; Ch. Diehl, G. Marçais, *Le monde oriental...*, pp. 131–132. Further on that: J.V. Fine, *The Early Medieval Balkans. A Critical Survey from the Sixth to the Late Twelfth Centuries*, Ann Arbor 1983; F. Curta, *The Making of the History of the Slavs: History and Archaeology of the Lower Danube Region, c. 500–700*, Cambridge 2001; W. Pohl, *Die Awaren*, München 2002. There sources and further reading.

[5] A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman...*, p. 315; G. Ostrogorsky, *Dzieje...*, p. 90 (the author dates the resumption of struggle on the year 592); W. Treadgold, *Bizancjum i jego armia...*, p. 35; C. Morrisson, *Les événements/perspective chronologique*, [in:] *Le monde byzantin*, vol. I, *Empire romain d'Orient (330–641)*, ed. C. Morrisson, Paris 2006, pp. 36–38.

[6] On Justinian's reign, see: P. Schreiner, *Theophylaktes Simokates: Geschichte*, Stuttgart 1985; M. Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice and his Historian, Theophylact Simocatta on Persian and Balkan Warfare*, Oxford 1988; F.E. Shlosser, *The Reign of the Emperor Maurikios (582–602). A Reassessment*, Athens 1994.

[7] On Phocas' rebellion, see: Agapius, p. 447 [187]; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, p. 86; George Cedrenus, cols. 765, 769–773; *Chronicle up to 724*, p. 113; Isidore, col. 1056; George the Monk, pp. 660–662 (ed. de Boor); *Legend of Abraham*, pp. 776–777; Jacob of Edessa, p. 248; Nicephorus Callistus, XVIII, 38–42; Paul the Deacon, IV, 26; Sebeos, 21, p. 55; Theophanes, AM 6094–6095, pp. 286–292; Theophylact Simocatta, VIII, 6–13; *Doctrina Iacobi*, III, 12; John the Deacon, IV, 17–19. For more on Phocas' usurpation, see: J. Jarry, *Hérésies et factions dans l'empire byzantin du IV^e au VII^e siècle*, Le Caire 1968, pp. 471–475; A. Cameron, *Circus Factions. Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium*, Oxford 1976, pp. 280–282; A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman...*, p. 315; V.V. Kučma, *K voprosu o social'noj suščnosti "revoljucii" Foki*, [in:] *Vizantijskie očerki*, Moskva 1977, pp. 182–194; A. Stratos, *Byzance au VII^e siècle. Les premiers Héraclides*

of the capital, thus meeting the formal requirements to become emperor. He was crowned by patriarch Cyriacus[8].

Pope Gregory the Great was probably the only person who enthusiastically welcomed Phocas' accession[9]. The new emperor belongs among those of the rulers who enjoy particularly bad reputation. It may partly result from the fact that for the aristocracy of Constantinople that relatively low-ranking officer (captain) was perceived as a nouveau riche and a boor. He was accused of drunkenness and seducing women. It was also hard to accept legality of his actions.

Although in the empire the throne was not hereditary, Phocas was the first man since Constantine I who dared to seize the throne by force[10]. The brutality he demonstrated during reign was also difficult to accept. Not only had he executed Maurice himself, but his five sons and many collaborators of the deposed emperor as well[11]. Even more unwelcomed was the execution of empress Constantina and her three daughters, and the burning – despite the promises – of Narses, Maurice's general, who refused to recognise the usurper[12]. The persecution of Jews and Monophysites did not meet with acceptance, either. Although some scholars recently attempted to rehabilitate Phocas in a way[13], there

et la lutte contre les Arabes, vol. I, transl. A. Lambert, Paris 1980, pp. 45–59; D.M. Olster, *The Politics of Usurpation in the Seventh Century: Rhetoric and Revolution in Byzantium*, Amsterdam 1993, pp. 49–65, 165–185.

[8] On legality of usurpations, see: M.J. Leszka, *Uzurpacje w cesarstwie bizantyńskim w okresie od IV do połowy IX w.*, Łódź 1999, pp. 112–126; idem, *Legalizacja władzy uzurpatorów we wczesnym Bizancjum*, AUL.FH 48, 1993, pp. 79–93.

[9] When on 25 May 603 the portraits of the new imperial couple reached Rome, he ordered to put them in the oratory of martyr Caesarius in the Lateran palace (Gregory the Great, XIII, 1). Then he wrote a letter to the new ruler, in which he welcomed him as a saviour (XIII, 34; cf. John the Deacon, IV, 21–22). On the reception of portraits, see: John the Deacon, IV, 20; G.B. Hicks, *St. Gregory and the Emperor Phocas*, DR 4, 1904, p. 63; L.W. Barnard, *The Emperor Cult and the Origins of the Iconoclastic Controversy*, B 43, 1973, p. 25 (the author emphasises that Gregory personally conducted the reception ceremony); T. Wolińska, *Stosunki papieża Grzegorza Wielkiego z dworem i administracją cesarską*, Piotrków Trybunalski 1998, pp. 106–111.

[10] R.-J. Lilie, *Bisanzio. La seconda Roma. La storia dell'Impero Romano d'Oriente, dalla sua nascita nel 330 d.C. alla sua caduta definitiva nel 1453*, transl. G. Montinari, Roma 2005, p. 72.

[11] Theophanes, AM 6095, pp. 291–292. Among the executed there were some high-ranking officials of Maurice: Peter, Comentiolus, Praesentius, Gregory and Constantine Lardis).

[12] Theophanes, AM 6097–6098, pp. 292–293; AM 6100, pp. 195–196; *Paschal Chronicle*, pp. 696–697.

[13] M.J. Leszka, *Zbrodnie cesarza Fokasa*, AUL.FH 67, 2000, pp. 45–58; D.M. Olster, *The Politics of Usurpation*..., pp. 49–80.

is no doubt that from the political point of view his usurpation was disastrous. In 590 Maurice succeeded – partly due to talents and determination, partly to a lucky coincidence – in terminating a war with Persia, on conditions favourable for the empire. He was also close to pushing Slavs and Avars to the other side of the Danube and restoring full control over the Balkans. Phocas' mutiny eliminated the possibility of the latter and negated the earlier success on the eastern front. Khusraw had paid a high price for assistance given by Maurice, agreeing to the conditions dictated by the empire. Phocas' revolt and execution of Maurice and his sons gave the opportunity for revenge. The shah had no difficulty with presented himself as avenging the killed ruler and his benefactor and began a war with the empire, whose real objective was recovery of the lost territories voiding the treaty of 509. Khusraw' decision was reinforced by a rumour that Maurice's eldest son, Theodosius, had survived and left for Persia to seek help[14]. In 603 the Persian army entered the territory of the empire. The inhabitants of both countries were not aware that the last of the Persian-Byzantine wars had just begun – the war which would be disastrous to Persia and which would bring a Pyrrhic victory to Byzantium.

Facing all that events, after six years of Phocas' rule, Constantinopolitan senators resolved that the faster he would be deposed the better. Looking for someone who could efficiently fight him, they turned their eyes to North Africa. The exarchate of Africa[15] was administered by Heraclius, a distinguished soldier, experienced in wars with Persia, whose career developed under Maurice. It was him that the senators decided to ask for help[16]. His son, Heraclius the Younger, was by with him, gaining experience in the military art and administration.

The year 608 witnessed a rebellion which two years later would replace one usurper with another. The course of rebellion was reported in detail by John of Nikiu[17]. At the beginning, Heraclius wanted to take control over Africa and

[14] There was even a man pretending to be Tiberius. He was recognised by Narses, one of Maurice's generals. (Theophylact Simocatta, VIII, 13–15; W. Treadgold, *Bizancjum i jego armia...*, p. 35; C. Morrisson, *Les événements...*, p. 40).

[15] Facing the growing danger from barbaric people and difficulties in administering faraway provinces, Maurice established two exarchates: of Ravenna and Carthage, in which military and civilian administration were put in the hands of one person – the exarch appointed by the emperor.

[16] Theophanes, AM 6101, p. 297. According to John of Antioch, the letter was sent after the outbreak of rebellion against Phocas (John of Antioch, *Fragmenta*, 319, p. 550). For more on Phocas' downfall, see: D.M. Olster, *The Politics of Usurpation...*, pp. 117–138; W. Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*, Stanford 1997, pp. 238–241.

[17] John of Nikiu, CVII, 1–49; CVIII, 1–15; CIX, 1–29; CX, 1–13 (ed. R.H. Charles, D. Litt; all references to this chapter are after that edition)

Egypt (to cut off food supplies to Constantinople) while his father started organizing an army, whose command was given to Nicetas, the son of Gregoras, Heraclius the Elder's nephew. Heraclius the Younger took command of the navy. Taking advantage of the fact that Egypt was embroiled in factional struggle[18], Heraclius and his men attempted to organise a rebellion against Phocas, in which at first they did not succeed. Some African leaders supported Heraclius, while others remained loyal to Phocas. For example: the governor of Tripolitania and many of the tribal chiefs were on the side of Heraclius, but most Byzantine generals supported the emperor. Heraclius ordered Nicetas to go to Libya, where the latter had both estates and a considerable influence. Nicetas contacted Leontius, the administrator of Mareotis, in the vicinity of Alexandria and began recruitment to army.

When Phocas was informed of the course of events by Theodore, the patriarch of Alexandria, he sent troops to suppress the rebellion. In the meantime Nicetas arrived under the walls of Alexandria and defeated the troops that defended it. When the information spread around the city, unrest began – citizens started burning public buildings and attacking officials, who had to seek shelter in local churches. The patriarch of Alexandria was killed by an angry mob. It was the turning point of the rebellion. Practically all Egypt supported Nicetas, and Tripolitania soon followed. Having defeated the forces sent by Phocas and pacified the factions, the rebels controlled Egypt and withheld supplies to Constantinople, causing discontent among its inhabitants. Heraclius the Elder sent his son against Phocas. The future emperor set off to Constantinople by sea, while Nicetas' forces followed by land[19].

Heraclius enjoyed the support of at least some of the ecclesiastic circles – coming to Constantinople he had with him an image of Our Lady (probably a token of support from African clergy). The bishop of Kyzikos, Stephen, handed him a wreath which had adorned the picture of Our Lady at a local church; this became seen as an indication that Heraclius was worthy of the imperial diadem. During the final stage of the rebellion he also obtained the support of the Green faction (previously Phocas' allies), who set fire in the harbour of *Caesarius*, thus enabling Heraclius' ships to enter (3 October 610); this sealed taking over the city. Heraclius was proclaimed emperor by the cheering crowds. Phocas

[18] Factions were organised groups of chariot race fans. Although they were generally apolitical and non-religious, they happened to play an important role in critical moments, thanks to their good organization. There were four factions, called the Blues, Greens, Whites and Reds, following the colours of chariot drivers' clothes.

[19] The story of the alleged agreement between Heraclius and Nicetas, which says that the one who was first to reach Constantinople would become emperor, is certainly not true.

was captured and executed, and his effigy at the Hippodrome was cast down as a sign of *damnatio memoriae*. After Phocas' execution on the 5 October 610, patriarch Sergius put a crown on Heraclius' head, most probably at Hagia Sophia.

Phocas' downfall occurred after two years of civil war. The empire thus endured simultaneous wars, as at the same time it waged the war with Persia and was dealing with an unrest in the Balkans. Phocas had sent to Egypt his commander from Palestine, named Bonosus, which certainly weakened the forces on the eastern border. It was not accidental that the most significant Persian successes (occupation of Armenia, Amida and Theodosiopolis) took place in 609, at the peak of the war between Phocas and Heraclius[20]. At that time the Persians managed to reach Chalcedon. And although in 609/610 they had to withdraw their forces from the Byzantine territories in Asia Minor, they kept occupying Armenia, Mesopotamia, and a part of Syria.

Heraclius' victory in the war with Phocas did not mean the end of problems for the empire. At the moment of his coronation the situation could be called dramatic[21]. The Lombards in Italy were a serious danger for the Exarchate of Ravenna. Even Phocas had not been able to execute any effective policy in that area, as he had to concentrate on defending those provinces, which were vitally important for the existence of the country. Heraclius' policy could not be much different. The Balkans, where Byzantine influence had been substantially limited, were in a similarly difficult position[22]. Heraclius had no choice but to sign a peace treaty with the Avars (who had restored their power during Phocas' reign) on most unfavourable conditions and agree to pay them a large tribute[23].

The goal of the new ruler was to buy time and concentrate military power of the empire in the East. Although Phocas had been overthrown, Khusraw was not going to stop the offensive, which clearly shows that the argument of avenging Maurice was nothing but a pretext to resume military operation. Even the change on the imperial throne did not bring improvement on the eastern front. At the beginning of Heraclius' reign, his army was defeated in a battle near Antioch. Another Persian assault in 613 resulted in the occupation of Antioch itself, as well as of Damascus and Jerusalem[24], from where the Persians stole

[20] Sebeos, 22–23, pp. 57–64; W.E. Kaegi, *Heraclius. Emperor of Byzantium*, Cambridge 2003, pp. 67–69.

[21] W. Treadgold, *Bizancjum i jego armia...*, p. 35 – called it be greatest military crisis since Diocletian.

[22] T.E. Gregory, *Historia Bizancjum*, transl. J. Hunia, Kraków 2005, pp. 158–162.

[23] The negotiations nearly ended up in capturing Heraclius, due to the treacherous conduct of the Avars. Patriarch Nicephorus, 10, pp. 50–53.

[24] N.H. Baynes, *The First Campaign of Heraclius against Persia*, EHR 19, 1904, pp. 694–702; A. Stratos, *La première campagne de l'Empereur Héraclius contre les Perses*, JÖB 28, 1979,

the relics of the Holy Rood (614)[25]. In 616 the territory of the Empire shrank to Anatolia, Africa, Egypt, and parts of Thrace, Greece and Italy[26]. Soon afterwards the Persians entered even Egypt, the most important place for the food supply of Constantinople.

Heraclius was too weak to start a counteroffensive, as financial reserves of the country were drastically limited. Ralph Lilie stresses that during the first decade of his reign, the emperor was unable not counteract Persian advancement. The scholar explains it by the weak position of the emperor in the capital city, which he could not leave, fearing another usurpation[27]. He must have been aware that he himself was a usurper, and his claims to the throne were not any better than those of his predecessor.

The new ruler turned out to be a talented master of propaganda. He succeeded in convincing his subjects that the sole reason for his action was the good of the country. He kept emphasising that he had not came to power on his own initiative, but had been called upon by the senate, and managed to get the country out of the hands of a bloody tyrant. He announced that his victory was thanks to God's help and he had initially intended to come back to Africa and only resolved to accept the crown at his subjects' request. Such approach proved successful. Unlike Phocas, Heraclius enjoys a good reputation among most contemporary historians (albeit not all of them): a talented soldier, diligent ruler, trusted by both people and army[28].

The necessity to reinforce his position in the capital city was not the only reason of the delay in the operations against Persia. The emperor needed time to organise and train an army, as well as to find money to pay his soldiers. Constantin Zuckerman has noted that even back under Maurice the military policy depended very much on *gérer la pénurie* because *les moyens de l'Empire ne sont plus à la hauteur de ses besoins militaires*[29]. The problem escalated rapidly when the Persians captured the eastern provinces of the empire.

To rescue the country's finances a new taxation system had to be introduced. The dues were divided into a poll tax, to be paid by all citizens, and land tax, only for those who owned land (even if it was not cultivated). Still, the means ob-

pp. 63–74; W. Treadgold, *A History...*, pp. 287–293; W.E. Kaegi, *Heraclius...*, pp. 75–88.

[25] Strategius, 22–23; *Paschal Chronicle*, p. 704; *Chronicle of Guidi*, 22; A. Couret, *La Prise de Jérusalem par les Perses*, ROCh, ser. 1, 2, 1887, pp. 125–164.

[26] W. Treadgold, *Bizancjum i jego armia...*, p. 36.

[27] R.-J. Lilie, *Bisanzio...*, p. 81.

[28] Historians as different as Theophanes, the author of the *Chronicle up to 1234*, John of Antioch and Sebeos, all speak in favour of him.

[29] C. Zuckerman, *L'armée*, [in:] *Le monde byzantin...*, p. 179.

tained in this way proved to be insufficient. Fortunately for the emperor, the ruler obtained financial aid from patriarch Sergius, who agreed to use resources of the Church for war purposes. Even liturgical vessels of precious metals were melted down to strike coins[30]. But when Nicetas asked the patriarch of Alexandria for the same, the latter he refused. Despite the extraordinary measures, reduction of payment of soldiers and civil officials proved necessary (their salaries were halved 616)[31]. Putting a new silver hexagram coin in circulation (615), thus breaking the monopoly of gold solidus in internal clearing, was a symptom of the crisis of the public finances[32].

Heraclius had obtained military and administrative experience at his father's side, first during wars in the East, and then in Africa[33]. Now came the time to pass on his knowledge and experience to others. Despite objections of his collaborators, he was instructing his troops personally, trying to rebuild efficiency, discipline and confidence in success. He paid particular attention to the mounted light archers. The loan from Sergius allowed organizing a corps of light cavalry which, although not large, proved effective in the operations against the Persians[34]. In 621 Heraclius deployed the remaining part of the army of Thrace to Asia Minor and combined them with his eastern troops[35].

The emperor also made important decisions regarding home affairs, thus commencing – as some researchers believe – a military and administrative reform, known as the *thematic reform*[36]. Scholars still argue about its dating[37].

[30] Theophanes, AM 6113, pp. 302–303. W.E. Kaegi (*Heraclius...*, p. 111) suggests that the emperor took advantage of a kind of extortion – he said he would come back to Africa unless he obtained reinforcement. Other sources inform that even copper items were melted for coinage as well.

[31] C. Morrisson, *Les événements...*, p. 43.

[32] W.E. Kaegi, *Heraclius...*, p. 90.

[33] *Ibidem*, pp. 19–57.

[34] C. Zuckerman, *L'armée...*, p. 211.

[35] W. Treadgold, *A History...*, p. 294.

[36] Most scholars used to believe that the origins of thematic organization should be attributed to Heraclius (H. Gelzer, H. Antoniadis-Bibicou, P. Charanis, N. Oikonomidès, A. Pertusi, E. Stein). According to the current opinion, themes were established by his successors. J. Karayannopoulos emphasises that it was a process rather than a one-time event. He considers the *terminus ante quem* of the final establishment of system for 771 (J. Karayannopoulos, *Contribution au probléme des "themes" byzantins*, HeC 10, 1956, pp. 472, 501). For more on that, see the chapter by Paweł Filipczak.

[37] Among the works devoted to this problem we will point out only a few most important ones: E.W. Brooks, *Arabic Lists of the Byzantine Themes*, JHS 121, 1901, pp. 67–77; E. Stein, *Studien zur Geschichte des Byzantinischen Reiches vornehmlich unter den Kaisern Justinus II und Tiberius Konstantinus*, Stuttgart 1919, pp. 117–140; N.H. Baynes, *The Emperor Heraclius and*

Without going too much into details, we can say that it was aimed at making a home army, without having to depend on foreign mercenaries. The soldiers were to build closer relations with the area they would defend. The term *theme* initially denoted a large military unit, stationing in a particular area. The servicemen were to obtain land which could be inherited[38]. Later on, civil administration on those areas was gradually losing it prerogatives in favour of military commanders of particular *themes*[39]. Heraclius probably introduced the system of *themes* in some parts of Asia Minor and Syria. It is likely that he was following the way of his predecessors who had combined military and civil authority in the threatened areas. It is difficult to estimate to what extent the reforms were implemented when Syria and Palestine fell to the Arab invasion, given that they had come back under Byzantine administration only five years earlier.

The emperor tried to restore religious peace after the intolerant government of Maurice and Phocas. Persecutions of Monophysites and Jews, who made up a significant percentage of the population of Syria and Egypt, i.e. the areas

the Military Theme System, EHR 67, 1952, pp. 380–381; H. Gelzer, *Der Kaiser Herakleios und die Themenverfassung*, BZ 46, 1953, pp. 362–368; G. Ostrogorsky, *Sur la date de composition du livre des thèmes et sur l'epoque de la constitution des premiers thèmes d'Asie Mineure*, B 23, 1953, pp. 31–63; H.-W. Haussig, *Anfange der Themenordnung*, [in:] F. Altheim, R. Stiehl, *Finanzgeschhichte der Spätantike*, Frankfurt am Main 1957, pp. 82–114; G. Ostrogorsky, *Korreferat zu A. Petrusi, La formation des thèmes byzantins*, [in:] *Berichte zum XI Internazionalen Byzantinisten-Kongress*, München 1958, pp. 1–8; J. Karayannopoulos, *Contribution...*, pp. 455–502; idem, *Die Entstehung der byzantinischen Themenordnung*, München 1959, *passim*; H. Gelzer, *Die Genesis der byzantinischen Themenverfassung*, Amsterdam 1966, *passim*; N. Oikonomidès, *Les premiers mentions des thèmes dans la chronique de Théophane*, ZRVI 16, 1975, pp. 1–8; idem, *Une liste arabe des stratèges byzantines du VII^e siècle et les origines du thème de Sicile*, [in:] idem, *Documents et recherches sur l'institutions de Byzance (VII–XV^e siècle)*, London 1976, pp. 121–130; R.-J. Lilie, *Araber und Themen. Zum Einfluß der Arabischen Expansion auf die byzantinische Militärorganisation*, [in:] *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, vol. III, *States, Resources and Armies*, ed. A. Cameron, Princeton–New Jersey 1995, pp. 425–460; A.G.C. Savvides, *The Importance of Moslem Sources Concerning the History of Byzantine Asia Minor and the Thematic System*, MeMe 2, 1998, pp. 115–126. See also: J.B. Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century with the Revised Text of the Kletorologion of Philotheos*, London 1911, *passim*; L. Bréhier, *Les institutions de l'empire byzantin*, Paris 1949, pp. 118–136, 352–366 (thematic army); J.D. Geanakoplos, *Byzantium, Church, Society and Civilization seen through Contemporary Eyes*, Chicago 1984, p. 65 (earliest information about themes); J.D. Howard-Johnston, *Theme*, [in:] *Maistor. Classical, Byzantine and Renaissance Studies for R. Browning*, ed. A. Moffatt, Canberra 1984, pp. 189–197 (the author pays particular attention to the origin and evolution of the term *theme*); P. Krupczyński, *Temy*, [in:] *EKB*, pp. 454–456. We have not included publications regarding later time and the area of Italy and Sicily.

[38] F. Maurici, *Castelli medievali in Sicilia. Dai Bizantini ai Normani*, Palermo 1987, p. 16.

[39] S. Borsari, *L'Amministrazione del tema di Sicilia*, RIS 66, 1954, p. 143.

of Persian invasion, were hazardous to state security. A dialogue with Monophysites was of particular importance[40]. With Sergius' support, Heraclius was seeking a compromise between the Chalcedonian orthodoxy and the Monophysites. Unfortunately, instead of the expected reconciliation, two new heresies appeared: Monotheletism and Monoenergism[41].

All those political, economic and religious problems delayed the reaching of the most important objective. It was only in the 620s that the emperor could begin an offensive against Persia. He resolved to command the army himself, and the force set off from the capital on 4 April 622 after a solemnly celebrated Easter[42]. He left his son, Heraclius -Constantine (Constantine III) crowned as the co-ruler as a child in 612 in Constantinople. The actual power found itself in the trusted hands of Sergius and patrician Bonus – the two men whom Heraclius believed he could trust[43].

The expedition was given a crusade-like setting. Before the troops marched out of the city, solemn services were celebrated in Hagia Sophia in the intention of victory. On his way to the harbour the emperor was carrying an icon of Christ, believed to be of supernatural origin (not made by human hand)[44]. In the emperor's address to his soldiers there were numerous references to king David[45].

To avoid a war on two fronts, Heraclius agreed to pay a high tribute to the Avars, who however only two years later, in 624, broke the agreement and attacked Thrace, which made the emperor come back to the capital and resume the negotiations. Having another agreement ready, he set off again to the East on 25 March 624, accompanied by his second wife, empress Martina[46], married to him against canonical law, as she was his close relative (a niece)[47]. It seems worthwhile to devote some attention to the strategy of the emperor. It was unusual that he dared to leave the capital city for so long. It shows his determination but also proves that after twelve years on the throne his position was strong enough to do so[48]. At first Heraclius sought neither a decisive battle with the Persians, nor

[40] W. Treadgold, *A History*..., p. 300.

[41] For more on that, see the chapter by Sławomir Bralewski.

[42] W.E. Kaegi, *Heraclius*..., p. 112.

[43] Bonus was *magister militum praesentalis* and *topoteretes*. W.E. Kaegi, *Heraclius*..., p. 112.

[44] The description of emperor's march out of Constantinople can be found in: George of Pisidia, *De expeditione persica*, I, 111–125. On the icon: II, 8–11.

[45] George of Pisidia, *De expeditione persica*, II, 88–115.

[46] *PLRE* III, pp. 837–838 [*Martina 1*]; M.J. Leszka, *Cesarzowa Martyna, żona Heraklusza*, M 58.5/6, 2003, pp. 447–458. Heraclius' two children from the first marriage initially went along with him, but they were sent back to Constantinople later on.

[47] Patriarch Nicephorus, 11; W.E. Kaegi, *Heraclius*..., p. 103.

[48] George of Pisidia (*De expeditione persica*, I, 111–125) maintains that his advisors were against that decision.

gradual regaining of the lost provinces. Instead, he planned a strike from the rear on the centre of Persian power in order to force withdrawal of the invaders and a peace treaty on favourable terms[49]. He broke through to Armenia, from where he was making raids to the south, attacking the enemy in Mesopotamia and pushing his forces out of Anatolia[50]. In 625 he defeated the shah's armies. Even an alliance between the Persians and Avars, who once again broke the treaty with Heraclius, did not make the emperor change his strategy. In 626 Constantinople had to repel the combined attack of Persians and Avars[51]. The emperor did not decide to come back – he sent reinforcements and continued the campaign in the East. The city, and consequently the state, were saved by the imperial navy, which triumphed over the combined Slavic-Avar fleet. Patriarch Sergius inspired the citizens to fight the enemy and convinced them that God was helping the imperilled city.

At the same time Heraclius was gradually recapturing the lost cities (e.g. Ganjak) and succeeded in subordinating the Caucasus (627)[52]. He built up a system of alliances with local tribes and the mighty kingdom of Khazars[53]. Later on some Turkish tribes joined the alliance as well[54].

Alongside with the struggle in the East, the empire had to face the threat from the Balkans[55]. Unable to fight on two fronts simultaneously, it is possible that the emperor inspired Slavs to rebel against the Avars, which excluded the lat-

[49] The course of campaign can be found in many sources: Theophanes, AM 6113, p. 439; George of Pisidia, *Heraclias*, II, 162–166; Sebeos, 30. Among secondary sources we can mention: J.D. Howard-Johnston, *Heraclius' Persian Campaign and the Revival of the East Roman Empire, 622–630*, WH 6, 1999, pp. 1–44; W.E. Kaegi, *Heraclius*..., pp. 124–191; T.E. Gregory, *Historia Bizancjum*..., p. 295.

[50] T.E. Gregory, *Historia Bizancjum*..., p. 163; C. Morrisson, *Les événements*..., pp. 43–44.

[51] Theophanes, 6117, p. 315; George of Pisidia, *De bello avarico*, 197–203; *Paschal Chronicle*, pp. 719–726; F. Barišić, *Le siège de Constantinople par le Avares et les Slaves*, B 24, 1954, pp. 371–396; J. Howard-Johnston, *The Siege of Constantinople in 626*, [in:] *Constantinople and its Hinterland: Papers from the Twenty-seventh Spring Symposium on Byzantine Studies, Oxford, April 1993*, eds. C. Mango, G. Dagron, G. Greatrex, Aldershot 1995, pp. 131–142; J. Herrin, *Bizancjum. Niezwykłe dziedzictwo średniowiecznego imperium*, transl. N. Radomski, Poznań 2009, p. 36; W.E. Kaegi, *Heraclius*..., pp. 132–141. C. Morrisson (*Les événements*..., p. 43–44) sees the repetition of Heraclius' strategy in Khusrow' operations.

[52] T.E. Gregory, *Historia Bizancjum*..., p. 163.

[53] W.E. Kaegi, *Heraclius*..., pp. 126–129.

[54] *Ibidem*, pp. 142–145.

[55] *Ibidem*, pp. 95–96; J.V. Fine, *The Early Medieval*..., pp. 33–43. Sources and further reading can be found there.

ter from the war. Creation of Samo's state was another blow to their power[56].

To make the Avar domination weaker, the empire decided on an alliance with the Bulgars. Despite those efforts, much of the Balkans remained outside of Byzantine rule – not only the north, but the Greek Peninsula as well. Although many of the fortresses were still under the control of the empire, it could not prevent enemy raids inside its territory. Thrace, separated by a cordon of huge fortresses (Develt, Adrianople, Philippopolis) was fairly safe. At the same time Slavic settlement of the Balkans continued[57].

While the situation in the European part of the country could be called critical, in the East the long awaited breakthrough was finally about to come. After the long preparations Heraclius set off into Mesopotamia[58]. In December of 627, in the battle of Nineveh, his troops crushed the Persian army. In the months that followed, he achieved further successes, burning down Dastakert and occupying the Persian capital – Ctesiphon (628)[59]. A *coup d'etat* overthrew Khosrow and Heraclius was made guardian of his underage son. The empire took control of all the previously lost territories.

According to an old custom, the triumphant emperor solemnly entered Constantinople. He was carrying the regained relics of the Holy Rood[60]. The procession headed toward Hagia Sophia. The victorious monarch was greeted by patriarch Sergius – they both prayed before the icon of Our Lady. Then the procession, with the emperor on a white horse, accompanied by elephants captured from the Persians, went to the Hippodrome[61]. In the spring of 630 the most sacred Christian relics were returned to Jerusalem[62]. It was certainly the moment of Heraclius' greatest triumph. By a strange coincidence exactly in the same year a man named Muḥammad came back to Mecca, which he had left eight years earlier, heading the forces recruited in Medina (*Madīnah al-Nabī* – the City of the Prophet), as they renamed the old city of Yathrib.

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[56] On political changes on that area, see: K. P o l e k, *Frankowie a ziemie nad środkowym Dunajem. Przemiany polityczne i etniczne w okresie merowińskim i wczesnokarolińskim (do początku IX w.)*, Kraków 2007, pp. 162–213.

[57] C. M o r r i s s o n, *Les événements*..., pp. 44–45. For more on that, see: W. P o h l, *Die Awaren*...; F. C u r t a, *The Making*..., *passim*.

[58] T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6117–6118, pp. 317–318; A g a t h i a s, II, 23, 9; S e b e o s, 27–28. Detailed discussion of the campaign can be found in: W.E. K a e g i, *Heraclius*..., pp. 156–191.

[59] J. H e r r i n, *Bizancjum*..., p. 113; W. T r e a d g o l d, *A History*..., p. 299.

[60] P a t r i a r c h N i c e p h o r u s (18–19) maintains that the emperor had first sent the relics to the patriarch and then arrived in Constantinople himself.

[61] T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6119, p. 338. The ceremony lasted for nine days and nine nights.

[62] W. T r e a d g o l d, *A History*..., pp. 205–210; C. M o r r i s s o n, *Les événements*..., p. 45.

At the time when the two superpowers were waging a war for their very survival, in the Arabian Peninsula an entirely new political and religious entity was being born. The expelled Prophet had succeeded in collecting significant forces. In 630–632 most of inhabitants of Arabian Peninsula accepted Islam (at least formally)[63]. The rulers of Constantinople and Ctesiphon completely ignored the events that were taking place in the Peninsula. Both Byzantium and Persia used Arabian tribes, making more or less permanent alliances with them. Loot raids of "Persian" Arabs on the Byzantine territory used to happen almost every day, just like the retaliatory operations of "Roman" Arabs on the other bank of the Tigris River[64]. For that reason, the first raid of Muḥammad's people came unnoticed by the emperor and his entourage, more so because the aggressors were easily defeated by the Byzantine forces[65]. The actual decomposition of unity among Arabs following the death of the Prophet may have justified the conviction that nothing serious occurred. The Byzantines did not realise on time that during the reign of Abū Bakr (632–634), the first of the orthodox caliphs, that the unity was restored[66].

The failure to notice the danger was certainly one of the main reasons of Heraclius' loss in the confrontation with the Arabs, but not the only one. The twenty-six-year-long war with Persia, the campaigns against Avars and Slavs, finally the civil war between Phocas and Heraclius, seriously impaired the strength of the empire, whose incomes radically decreased. John Haldon has estimated that at the beginning of seventh century the income dropped to a quarter of what it was during the good times of the sixth century[67]. The wars also resulted in significant losses in population, not only those who were killed in action, but also large groups of abducted people. The situation in Syria and Palestine was especially difficult, as those territories experienced the wars waged by the empire with its eastern neighbour back during the reign of Justinian I and his successors. As

[63] More on that in: Ph.K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, London 1970, pp. 111–122; M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu*, transl. H. Olędzka, Warszawa 1988, pp. 142–165; M. Rodinson, *Mahomet*, transl. E. Michalska-Novák, Warszawa 1991, pp. 148–209; M. Tillier, Th. Bianquis, *De Muhammad à l'assasinat d'Ali*, [in:] *Les débuts du monde musulman (VII^e–X^e siécle), de Muhammad aux dynasties autonomes*, eds. Th. Bianquis, P. Guichard, M. Tillier, Paris 2012, pp. 82–85.

[64] For more on that, see the chapter: *Difficult Neighbours. Enemies, Partners, Allies*.

[65] H. Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests. How the Spread of Islam Changed the World We Live in*, London 2007, p. 76.

[66] More on that in: Ph.K. Hitti, *History*..., pp. 139–146; M. Tillier, Th. Bianquis, *De Muhammad*..., pp. 85–86.

[67] J. Haldon, *Bizancjum, Zarys dziejów*, transl. Z. Simbierowicz, Warszawa 2006, p. 62.

a result of the last of those wars, the one which erupted in 603, Syria had found itself under Persian administration for twenty five years[68]. The crisis was deepened by a series of epidemics, commenced by a great pandemic during Justinian's reign[69]. The cities of Syria, Antioch included, were strongly affected, which was a side-effect of their well-developed trade relations. Another wave of the disease took place during the reign of Heraclius, in 619, probably in connection with the war; the outbreaks of diseases were caused by migrations (of the army and civilians)[70]. From 540s Syria also suffered from recurring famine, due to the lack of grain[71].

The region's defences were seriously weakened as well. Heraclius' army was well-trained and experienced in battle, but also tired after lengthy campaigns. The reduced role of *limitanei* was combined with entrusting border defence to allied Arab tribes[72]. However, it was already under Maurice that the conflict with the Ghassānids, the traditional ally of the empire, resulted in the division of their country into smaller states, which were much less effective as a buffer protecting the Byzantine border[73]. As the thematic administration was not yet well organised, and it is difficult to estimate how developed it was then in Syria, we can

[68] G. T a t e, *La Syrie-Palestine*, [in:] *Le monde byzantin...*, p. 396.

[69] Recurrences of epidemics took place in 558, 560–561, 573–574, 592, 599. There is considerable bibliography on the subject. We shall name only the most basic works, where the reader can find references for further reading: P. A l l e n, *The Justinianic Plague*, B 49, 1979, pp. 5–20; W. R o s e n, *Justinian's Flea. The First Great Plague and the End of the Roman Empire*, New York 1987, pp. 222–223; J.-N. B i r a b e n, *La peste du VI^e siècle dans l'Empire Byzantin*, [in:] *Hommes et richesses dans l'empire byzantin IV^e–VII^e siècle*, eds. V. K r a v a r i, C. M o r r i s o n, J. L e f o r t, vol. I, *IV^e–VII^e siècle*, Paris 1989; J. D u r l i a t, *La peste du VI^e siècle: pour un nouvel examen des sources byzantines*, [in:] *Hommes et richesses...*, pp. 107–119; L.I. C o n r a d, *Epidemic Disease in Central Syria in the Last Sixth Century: Some New Insights from the Verse of Hassān ibn Thābit*, BMGS 18, 1994, pp. 12–58; D. S t a t h a k o p o u l o s, *Famine and Pestilence in the Late and Early Byzantine Empire. A Systematic Survey of Subsistence Crises and Epidemics*, Ashgate 2004, p. 288; P. H o r d e n, *Mediterranean Plague in the Age of Justinian*, [in:] *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian*, ed. M. M a a s, Cambridge 2006, pp. 134–160; *Plague and the End of Antiquity. The Pandemic of 542–750*, ed. L.K. L i t t l e, Cambridge 2007; K. P o l e k, *Pandemia, epidemie i katastrofy naturalne a przemiany gospodarcze w strefie śródziemnomorskiej w VI w.*, [in:] *Homo qui sentit. Ból i przyjemność w średniowiecznej kulturze Wschodu i Zachodu*, eds. J. B a n a s z k i e w i c z, K. I l s k i, Poznań 2013, pp. 85–126. On Byzantine historiography regarding the epidemics, see: M. M e i e r, *Prokop, Agathias, die Peste und das "Ende" der antiken Historiographie*, HZ 278, 2004, pp. 281–310.

[70] W.E. K a e g i, *Heraclius...*, pp. 102–103.

[71] G. Tate (*La Syrie-Palestine...*, p. 396) calls them *crises frumentaires*.

[72] M. M i o t t o, *Bisanzio e la difesa della Siria: Arabi foederati, incursioni arabe e conquista islamica (IV–VII saec.)*, Por 4.10, 2007, pp. 7, 16.

[73] For more on that, see the chapter *Difficult Neighbours. Enemies, Partners, Allies*.

say that at the moment of the Arab invasion the country did not have a good system of defence[74]. The situation in Egypt looked slightly different, as it was not a "frontline" province, although it used to happen to be exposed to the attacks of nomadic people from the Libyan Desert[75]. Egypt did not keep significant forces and the ones that stationed there were mostly concentrated in the south[76].

The lack of financial resources continued to be a major challenge. Under Heraclius the empire had to make an enormous financial effort to cope with the requirements of the wars in the East and the Balkans. Although the spoils from the Persians were fairly significant, they were still not sufficient, and the loans from the Church had to be returned. Additionally, Heraclius had an ambitious plan to rebuild the infrastructure in the territories ravaged by war. When peace began anew, it seemed natural that military expenditures, including subsidies for allied Arab troops, should be reduced. Although it was not decisive for the attitude of traditional allies of the empire, it may have encouraged some nomadic groups to join the Muslims. After all, they were accused by Theophanes of showing the Muslims the way to Gaza and Sinai[77]. According to the historian, after the battle of Mu'ta the tribes were not paid for guarding the routes across the desert, which made them terminate service for the Byzantines[78].

Not without significance was the conduct of Heraclius himself. The emperor, who had shown energy and determination during the war with Persia, was not able to a counterattack when the Muslim danger appeared. He was sixty years old and the long campaigns had certainly worsened his health. His mental state had worsened as well – he was suffering from hydrophobia. Walter E. Kaegi may have been correct to say that he had symptoms of what we now call post-traumatic stress[79]. We should remember that during the Persian campaign he had lost his four children, which was perceived by some of his enemies as God's punishment for his incestuous relation with empress Martina[80].

Heraclius, one of the longest-reigning Byzantine rulers, left a difficult legacy to his successors. During the final stage of his reign the empire lost the eastern

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[74] C. Zuckerman, *L'armée...*, p. 211.

[75] J. Gascou, *L'Égypte byzantine (284–641)*, [in:] *Le monde byzantin...*, pp. 403–404.

[76] *Ibidem*, pp. 484–486. Further on that, see: J. Maspero, *Organisation militaire de l'Égypte byzantine*, Paris 1912.

[77] Theophanes, AM 6123, pp. 335–336; Patriarch Nicephorus, 20, p. 68 (they would receive 30 pounds of gold). That issue has been analyzed by: Ph. Mayerson, *The First Muslim Attacks on Southern Palestine (AD 633–634)*, TPAPA 95, 1964, pp. 155–199.

[78] Theophanes, AM 6123, p. 336. Ph. Mayerson *(The First Muslim Attacks...*, pp. 161, 198–199) thinks that it is about Bedouins from southern Palestine or Sinai.

[79] *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder* – W.E. Kaegi, *Heraclius...*, p. 183.

[80] Patriarch Nicephorus, 18.

provinces, the richest and best developed parts of the country, including Egypt – the "granary of the empire's capital". Arab raiders were plundering Asia Minor. Free distribution of grain in Constantinople had to be suspended. There were problems with supplies for the army.

It was obvious already to Heraclius' contemporaries that when he died in 641, he left a country different to than that in which he had begun his reign in 610. Gregory Bar Hebraeus, the thirteenth century writer, starts counting years of the *second Greek empire* from his reign[81]. Indeed, after the loss of Syria, Palestine and Egypt, with a great number of people whose mother tongue was not Greek, but Coptic or Syriac, the empire became more "Greek" indeed, although the inflow of Slavic population in the Balkans made its evolution to a single-ethnic country impossible. An external sign of Hellenisation of the country was the acceptance of the title of *basileus* by Heraclius and making Greek the language of law and military service. The gap between the eastern part of the empire and remains of the territories held by Justinian I in the West became more evident. The exarchs of Ravenna and Carthage were left on their own, facing the growing pressure from the Lombards and Saracens.

Heraclius' religious policy was a failure. He tried in vain, pursuant to Ἔκθεσις, an edict of 638, to make Monotheletism the official religious doctrine[82]. He did not come to any agreement with Monophysites and his attempts after the Persian campaign to convert Jews by force[83] were unwelcome even by Church authorities[84] and gained him new enemies in the East. While religious conflicts were not the deciding factor for the ease with which the Muslims subjugated the eastern provinces of the empire[85], they were certainly an additional cause which made efficient work of imperial administration even more difficult.

Heraclius' personal life also added to the trouble of his successors. He left two children from the relationship with Fabia Eudocia, one of whom was his son Constantine III. The marriage to Martina, concluded despite canonical

[81] Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, p. 81.

[82] T.E. Gregory, *Historia Bizancjum*..., pp. 164–165.

[83] *Doctrina Iacobi*, I, 2, pp. 70–71. It may have been caused by collaboration of Jews with the Persians during the invasion. The order of forced Christianisation resulted in the emigration of Jewish population (Michael the Syrian, XI, 4, vol. II, p. 414). Agapius says that the emperor ordered to stop a massacre of Jews in Edessa (Agapius, p. 466 [206]).

[84] W.E. Kaegi, *Heraclius*..., p. 217.

[85] R.O. Khoury, *Heresies in the Early Byzantine Empire: Imperial Policies and the Arab Conquest of the Near East*, CChO 4, 2007, pp. 115–116. The scholar is quite right, saying that the struggle between factions was of bigger importance. For more on that, see chapter *Resistance, Passivity or Collaboration? Christians in Syria and Egypt Facing the Arab Conquest.*

obstacles, not only caused a scandal at the court and within the Church, but made the succession to the throne complicated. Heraclius called upon both Constantine III and Martina's son, Heracleonas, to be his co-rulers. After his eldest son died of consumption, the power made its way to the hands of the empress-widow, who ruled on behalf of the underage Heracleonas[86]. Her regency was unpopular, though, and she was soon forced to accept Constans, the son of Constantine III, as co-ruler. At the end of 641, following a *coup d'etat*, Heracleonas and his mother were deposed and mutilated, and the power was handed over to Constans II[87].

The turmoil described above certainly facilitated the success of the new political power which appeared in the Arabian Peninsula. Luckily for the empire, a civil war which erupted between ʿAlī, the last of the orthodox caliphs and Muʿāwiya, let the empire take a breath and assemble forces before the new attack[88].



[86] Patriarch Nicephorus, 29.

[87] Patriarch Nicephorus, 30–31.

[88] Ph. Hitti, *History*..., pp. 183–158; M. Tillier, Th. Bianquis, *De Muhammad*..., pp. 89–92.

Błażej Cecota

2. Arab Expansion on Byzantine Territory, 632–718 AD

The first armed clashes between the followers of Islam and the Byzantines in the Arabian Peninsula took place at the moment when Muḥammad and Abū Bakr were trying to unite and subordinate all Arab tribes. Historians generally agree that during the life of the Prophet there was only one raid on the territory which belonged to the empire. The raid most likely took place in 629 near Mu'ta (by Al-Karak, Jordan)[1]. The Arab troops, about 3 000 men strong, were commanded by Muḥammad Zayd ibn Hārith, who was killed during the battle[2]. It is difficult to say today, what was the actual reason for the raid, in which the Arabs were defeated. According to some sources, Zayd had been ordered to get quality armour for war against Mecca[3], according to others – it was to punish the Ghassānids, who had killed Muḥammad's envoy[4]. Anyway, the campaign was meant to unite the territories inhabited by Arab people[5]. For the Byzantines it was just another act of plunder, fairly frequent there, after the buffer zone guarded by the Ghassānids had been dismantled, following a conflict between that

[1] Theophanes dates the battle to 6123 AM, i.e. 630/631 AD, suggesting that it took place already after Muḥammad's death, to whom, however, he attributes the order to organize the raid. Most scholars agree that the battle took place earlier. Cf. M.V. K r i v o v, *Sraženie pri Mu'te po arabskim istočnikam i Feofanu*, VV 40, 1979, p. 98; W.E. K a e g i, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquest*, Cambridge 1992, p. 72; M. M i o t t o, *Ē islamikē kataktēsē tēs Syrias. Pōs to Bydzantio echase tēn Anatolē tou*, Athens 2007, p. 62 (with most accurate dating: from 27 August and 25 September 629).

[2] Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, I, 1610 (ed. M.J. d e G o e j e; all references after that edition).

[3] M.J. d e G o e j e, *Memoire sur la conquête de la Syrie*, Leiden 1900, p. 5sqq.

[4] Ph.K. H i t t i, *Dzieje Arabów*, transl. W. D e m b s k i, M. S k u r a t o w i c z, E. S z y m a ń s k i, Warszawa 1969, p. 125.

[5] On Islamic pretences to Palestine: M.V. K r i v o v, *Pritjazanija arabov na Palestinu pri Muchammede*, VV 60, 2001, pp. 56–58.

tribe and emperor Maurice during the war with Persia[6]. According to Theophanes, the emperor was trying to solve the problem by offering Arab tribes a kind of remuneration for guarding the border[7].

2.1. Conquest of Syria and Palestine

The raids on Syria and Iraq in 633 can be regarded as a continuation of Muslim operations commenced at the end of the *ridda* (apostasy) wars, which began after Muḥammad's death, when some tribes refused to recognize his successor[8]. The Muslims began to advance northwards in the autumn of 633. Three armies under the command of ʿAmr ibn Al-Āṣ, Yazīd ibn Abū Sufyān and Shuraḥbīl Ibn Ḥasana invaded southern Syria[9]. Yazīd was the brother of Muʿāwiya, the future founder of the Umayyad dynasty. Yazīd saw his first victories at Wādī al-ʿAraba and Dāthin (in Gaza in February 634), where he defeated patrician Sergios[10]. The military success had a significant propaganda dimension – a rumour that a Byzantine leader had been killed at Dāthin spread among the local population[11]. Despite initial success and occupation of the main communication routes, the raid was nearly a failure due to Heraclius' quick reaction – he sent an army there under the command of his brother Theodore[12]. Luckily for the Arabs, their troops obtained reinforcements from Khālid ibn Al-Walīd, who after several days of a deadly march through the desert from the recently captured Lakhmidian Al-Ḥīra[13], struck the rear of the Byzantine forces and cut off their supply routes. During one such raid he defeated a Ghassānid unit at Mardj Rāhiṭ near

[6] More on that battle: M.V. K r i v o v, *Sraženie pri Mu'te...*, pp. 96–103; W.E. K a e g i, *Byzantium...*, p. 71sqq.

[7] T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6123, pp. 335–336.

[8] For more on that: E. S h o u f a n i, *Al-Riddah and the Muslim conquest of Arabia*, Toronto 1973; M.J. K i s t e r, *The Struggle against Musaylima and the Conquest of Yamāma*, JSAI 27, 2002, pp. 1–56.

[9] B a ṣ r ī, p. 40sqq. According to Theophanes there were four Arab leaders; the chronographer names Khālid ibn Al-Walīd as one of them. He records the seizure of Al-Hīra, the capital of the country of Lakhmids, a Persian vassal. (T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6124, p. 336). Similarly the Syriac sources, cf. F.M. D o n n e r, *The Early Islamic Conquests*, Princeton 1981, p. 113sqq.

[10] T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6124, p. 336.

[11] *Doctrina Iacobi*, V, 16, pp. 208–209. See: H. K e n n e d y, *Wielkie arabskie podboje. Jak ekspansja islamu zmieniła świat*, transl. M. W i l k, Warszawa 2011, p. 70sqq.

[12] Ph.K. H i t t i, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 126.

[13] For more on Khālid ibn al-Walīd's route: A. M u s i l, *Arabia Deserta*, New York 1927, p. 553sqq. Description of the campaign see: F.M. D o n n e r, *The Early Islamic Conquests...*, p. 119sqq.

Damascus[14]. Then he successfully rejoined the remaining forces and won a battle with the Byzantines at Ajnādayn[15]. The victory opened up a way to the north. In a short time the Arabs captured Tiberias and Emesa (now Homs), practically without a shot. By September 635 they seized Damascus[16] after a six-month long siege[17].

In response to Arab advancement, Heraclius, who was stationed in Antioch, prepared a counteroffensive. Two Byzantine armies set off to the south. One, under the command of Baanes[18] (most probably Armenian chief Vahan[19]), included a contingent of Christianized Arabs, commanded by the Ghassānid prince Djabala ibn Al-Ayham. The other army was entrusted to *sakellarios* Theodore, Heraclius' brother. According to Theophanes, they were about forty thousand men strong[20]. Al-Ṭabarī says that the army of the empire counted one hundred thousand soldiers[21]. Some other sources speak of as many as two hundred forty thousand[22]. These numbers are certainly overestimated. Philip Hitti maintains that Byzantine forces could not be stronger than fifty thousand men[23]. Hugh Kennedy goes even further, limiting their number from fifteen to twenty thousand[24]. The imperial troops pushed the Arabs off to the south and managed to recapture Damascus[25]. Abū 'Ubayda ibn al-Jarāḥ, who took over the command from Khālid ibn Al-Walīd (the new caliph, 'Umar ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb did not value Khālid very much[26]), collected his troops in the valley of the Al-Yarmūk river[27]. The Arab army, composed of the corps of Abū 'Ubayda, Khālid, 'Amr ibn Al-Āṣ and Yazīd ibn Abu Sufyān, may have counted up to 24 000[28]–25 000 warriors[29].

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[14] There are also other versions of that campaign, cf. *ibidem*, p. 128–139.

[15] Ph.K. H i t t i, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 128.

[16] *Ibidem*, pp. 128–129; D. M a d e y s k a, *Historia świata arabskiego. Okres klasyczny: od starożytności do końca epoki Umajjadów (750)*, Warszawa 1999, p. 122sqq.

[17] According to another version, it may have lasted even for fourteen months. Cf. H. K e n n e d y, *Wielkie arabskie podboje...*, p. 75sqq.

[18] T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6125, p. 337.

[19] D. M a d e y s k a, *Historia świata arabskiego...*, p. 123.

[20] T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6125, p. 337.

[21] Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, I, 2099.

[22] Ph.K. H i t t i, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 129, footnote 18.

[23] *Ibidem*, p. 129.

[24] H. K e n n e d y, *Wielkie arabskie podboje...*, p. 78.

[25] *Ibidem*.

[26] *Ibidem*, p. 77.

[27] The detailed description of the battlefield can be found in: L. C a e t a n i, *Annali dell'Islam*, vol. III, Milan 1910, pp. 491–613.

[28] H. K e n n e d y, *Wielkie arabskie podboje...*, p. 79.

[29] Ph.K. H i t t i, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 129.

The battle that took place in the valley was in fact a series of lesser clashes, which lasted for about a month[30]. The final encounter took place on the 20[31] or 21 August 636[32]. According to Theophanes, dissension in the Byzantine camp (some soldiers proclaimed Vahan emperor) and a "southern wind" (most likely a sand storm[33]) certainly helped the Arabs. Arab sources emphasize a splendid trick by Khālid ibn Al-Walīd. He began to retreat, which provoked the Byzantines to chase him. When the imperial cavalry was separated from the infantry, the Arabs massacred the latter. The rumours about betrayal of Arab Christians, who would join the Muslims, may have contributed to losing the battle as well[34].

The victory at Al-Yarmūk opened up a way to the north of Syria. The new stage of conquest began with a long-lasting siege of Emesa. The siege ended with a negotiated settlement that allowed the Christians to keep their estates and places of worship upon paying a tribute[35]. The next place to fall victim to the Muslim advance was Chalcis, where the invaders met with the biggest difficulties in comparison to other cities of the Syrian interior[36]. Antioch practically surrendered without a fight[37]. Weak resistance in these places was partly due to the decision of Heraclius to withdraw from Syria, taking his troops and part of the administration, along with their families and estates. This action created a strip of no-man's land on the border between Syria and Asia Minor[38]. Some later Syriac sources recorded acts of plundering and destruction, characteristic of a classic scorched earth policy[39].

The events on the coast of Syria, whose cities had for centuries been under the strong influence of Greek culture and whose population was much closer to imperial authority, took a different course. They could count, albeit not always, on support and supplies from the Byzantine fleet. And while the cities of Beirut, Sidon and Tyre failed to demonstrate much resistance, the inhabitants of Caesarea and Latakia showed a diametrically different attitude. They showed that a well prepared defence was able to stop the Arabs at Caesarea for at least seven years. The city ultimately collapsed, not because of the military superiority of the Muslims, but due to the betrayal by one of its Jewish inhabitants, who let Muʿāwiya's

[30] The detailed description of the battle: W.E. Kaegi, *Byzantium...*, pp. 119–123.

[31] Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 129.

[32] F.M. Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests...*, p. 133; W.E. Kaegi, *Byzantium...*, p. 121.

[33] Theophanes, AM 6126, pp. 337–338.

[34] Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, I, 2099–2100.

[35] Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, I, 2390–2393; Balādhurī, *Liber*, 131.

[36] Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 130.

[37] H. Kennedy, *Wielkie arabskie podboje...*, p. 83.

[38] Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, I, 2396.

[39] Michael the Syrian, vol. II, p. 424.

troops in through a secret canal[40]. The Arabs used trickery to capture Latakia. They pretended to withdraw and when the citizens opened up the gates again to let their herds out, the attack began[41]. The city of Tripoli surrendered to the Arabs, after a siege that lasted until 644. To avoid the fate of the people of Caesarea, who had been sold to Al-Ḥidjāz[42], the citizens of Tripoli were evacuated with the help of the imperial navy. The Arabs entered a deserted city[43].

The conquest of Syria opened up a way to further Byzantine territories. The region called Al-Jazeera by the Arabs[44], comprised of North-eastern Syria and upper Mesopotamia, was the first to be their victim. The expedition was led by ʿIyād ibn Ghanm al-Fihrī. Despite relatively small forces of only five thousand men, the Arab leader managed to capture Amida, Edessa, Dara and Al-Raḳḳa[45]. It should be said that most cities surrendered without a fight. According to Theophanes, John Cataias, the governor of Osroene, tried to negotiate an agreement on behalf of Heraclius prior to the invasion. Cataias offered the Arabs a yearly tribute of a hundred thousand solids in exchange for peace. The emperor did not approve and punished his official with expulsion for not consulting with him[46].

2.2. Convenant of ʻUmar

The conquest of Syria and Palestine was sealed by the negotiations regarding the surrender of Jerusalem. Information about the negotiations can be found in the works of Byzantine chronicler, Theophanes[47]. He wrote that Sophronius, the patriarch of Jerusalem *obtained a promise of inviolability for the whole of Palestine*[48]. The term ἡ ἀσφάλεια has a few meanings, such as "promise" or "guarantee"[49],

[40] B a l ā d h u r ī, *Liber*, 142.

[41] B a l ā d h u r ī, *Liber*, 132.

[42] B a l ā d h u r ī, *Liber*, 142.

[43] B a l ā d h u r ī, *Liber*, 127.

[44] For more on the military operations in Upper Mesopotamia, see: C.F. R o b i n s o n, *Empire and Elites after the Muslim Conquest. The Transformation of Northern Mezopotamia*, Cambridge 2000, pp. 1–34.

[45] B a l ā d h u r ī, *Liber*, 172–173; H. K e n n e d y, *Wielkie arabskie podboje...*, p. 89.

[46] T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6128, p. 340.

[47] The considerations regarding the Convenant of ʻUmar have been based on my M.A. thesis: B. C e c o t a, *Stosunki arabsko-bizantyńskie w latach 660–750 na podstawie Chronografii Theophanesa Wyznawcy*.

[48] T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6127, p. 339.

[49] *Słownik grecko-polski*, ed. O. J u r e w i c z, vol. I, Warszawa 2000, p. 122. It seems that the words "guarantee" or "protection" will be the most suitable, as they best reflect the meaning of the Arabic *amān*, used in the agreements with Christians and literally meaning "security" or

so it does not have to be translated as "inviolability". Another word we should pay attention to is λόγος, which we can translate either as "promise", "word", or even "law". The words used by Theophanes, did not point out any formal agreement. It is possible that Theophanes did not want to attribute to Sophronius, a patriarch meritorious to the Orthodox Church, any arrangements with the ruler of the unfaithful. On the other hand, he could not fail to mention 'Umar's promise, in order to put him in a bad light. When 'Umar entered the Holy City, he demanded a mosque be built on the Temple Mount, as Theophanes said, *to make it a place of worship for his own blasphemous religion*[50]. In that way 'Umar would break the promise he had made to the inhabitants of Palestine. Let's try to find out what that promise could actually be about. According to an account by Sayf ibn 'Umar, repeated by Al-Ṭabarī[51], the agreement between 'Umar and the people of Jerusalem included some obligations from the Muslims:

– personal immunity for all inhabitants of Jerusalem;
– it included their estates as well;
– safety of places of worship, their property and accessories;
– freedom of worship;
– personal safety for Byzantine soldiers and other armed men in the city and for any citizen who would decide to leave the city;
– permission for the members of the Byzantine garrison and Byzantine officials to remain in the city, provided that the taxes imposed on the citizens would be duly paid by them;
– safety for the refugees remaining in Jerusalem, if they decided to leave the city with the Byzantine army or to return to their home towns.

The Muslim chronicler says that only two things were demanded in return: inhabitants of Jerusalem were bound to pay taxes imposed by the Muslims and Jews were forbidden to stay in Jerusalem[52]. The last provision was most doubtful. Because of it Shelomo Dov Goitein, the author of the multi-volume *Mediterranean Society*[53], has questioned the reliability of the whole account. We must note, however, that a single doubtful record should not void the whole source. Moshe Gil has compared the covenant with the letters which Muḥammad was supposed to have sent to several Christian and Jewish communities on the Palestine border, i.e. to Ayla (Eilat), Maḳnā, Yarba and Adhruḥ[54]. His analysis reveals

"safety". Cf. J. D a n e c k i, J. K o z ł o w s k a, *Słownik arabsko-polski*, Warszawa 1996, p. 96.

[50] T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6127, p. 339.

[51] Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, I, 2405–2406.

[52] M. G i l, *A History of Palestine 634–1099*, Cambridge 1997, pp. 53–54.

[53] More on that, see: *ibidem*, pp. 55–56.

[54] *Ibidem*, pp. 28–32, 54.

that the agreement with the people of Jerusalem contained provisions almost identical to ones found in similar agreements, except those regarding soldiers and officials.

The information about the conditions which Muḥammad offered Christians can also be found in some Nestorian sources, including the *Chronicle of Seert*[55]. Its message is put in question, as there is a suspicion that the Nestorians may have faked it in order to seek their rights before caliphs or their officials[56]. Nevertheless, it seems worthy to learn its foundations. Michael G. Morony has analysed it and made the following conclusions:

- Christians were protected against acts of hostility;
- Christians were exempt from military service;
- Muslims committed themselves to rebuild destroyed churches;
- priests and monks were exempt from paying taxes;
- poor Christians could count on reduced taxes;
- Christian wives of Muslim husbands would have freedom of religion[57].

As various sources provide similar information, it is possible that there indeed existed a formal agreement between Christians, represented by patriarch Sophronius, and ʻUmar himself.

2.3. The Conquest of Egypt

After the loss of Palestine and particularly of Jerusalem, Byzantium was cut off from much of its Christian heritage. Also the conquest of Syria was painful for economic and strategic reasons, i.e. the loss of Mediterranean ports. Also Al-Jazeera was an important strategic centre: its capture gave the Arabs a good starting point for invading Asia Minor and Armenia. Another important factor was the occupation of Egypt – a supply centre for the Empire. The invading forces were commanded by ʻAmr ibn Al-Āṣ[58]. A citizen of Mecca from the house of Ḳuraysh and a merchant before Muḥammad came to power. According to Arab sources, he was well-acquainted with Egypt, as he had been there several times on

[55] *Chronicle of Seert*, vol. II/II, pp. 602–624.

[56] Such a view has been expressed by: M.G. M o r o n y, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, Princeton 1984, p. 344.

[57] *Ibidem*, p. 343. An interesting version of that document has been quoted by George David Malech. It is a traditional account preserved in the Nestorian Church: G.D. M a l e c h, *History of the Syrian Nation and the Old Evangelical-Apostolic Church of the East: from Remote Antiquity to the Present Time*, transl. N.G. M a l e c h, A.H. G j e v r e, Piscataway 2006, pp. 221–230.

[58] More about him, see: Ph.K. H i t t i, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 136.

business[59]. After the Al-Yarmūk victory he was ordered to capture western Palestine and Gaza, the places with close economic relations with Egypt[60]. The leader must have been aware of the importance of the province for the empire and of benefits that its conquest would bring. That was probably the main reason for the raid on Egypt, which at least during its first stage looked like a kind of private enterprise rather than a caliph's expedition. Since 'Umar had not agreed to the expedition, it should be perceived as 'Amr's insubordination[61].

In the opinion of Robert G. Hoyland, the expedition was not caused by a wish to conquer Egypt, as it already was dependent on the caliphate. Hoyland says, relying on the account of patriarch Nicephorus, that from ca. 636 the Arabs refrained from aggression in return for a yearly tribute. This was due to the efforts of Cyrus, the patriarch of Alexandria. Cyrus tried to tie 'Amr to Byzantium by arranging his marriage with the daughter of the emperor. The plan failed because Heraclius called Cyrus away, first to Cyprus (probably in 639) and then to Constantinople, and entrusted the administration of Egypt directly to his own officials. Refusal to pay the tribute resulted in a raid by 'Amr[62].

Travelling through the Sinai Peninsula along the coast[63], an army of about four thousand men[64] reached the Egyptian border in December of 639[65]. The first encounter with the Byzantine troops took place at Pelusium, which the Arabs besieged in January of 640[66]. The city was captured after a month-long siege[67]. The city, called "the key to eastern Egypt", was razed to the ground[68]. The city of Bilbays, another goal of 'Amr's forces, also fell after a month-long defence[69]. A heavy battle took place along the Nile in the vicinity of today's Cairo[70]. The key to completely subjugating Egypt was the capture of the well-fortified fortress of Babylon, but 'Amr failed to collect sufficiently strong forces. As the promised supplies did not ar-

[59] Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, p. 53.

[60] H. Kennedy, *Wielkie arabskie podboje...*, p. 83sqq.

[61] Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, pp. 56–57; Balādhurī, *Liber*, 213.

[62] R.G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw it. A Survey and Analysis of the Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Islam*, Princeton 1997, p. 574sqq. According to Ph.K. Hitti, the negotiations and exile took place only after the first Arab successes: Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 137.

[63] A.J. Butler, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt*, ed. P.M. Fraser, Oxford 1978, p. 209sqq.

[64] H. Kennedy, *Wielkie arabskie podboje...*, p. 134.

[65] Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, p. 58 (ed. C.C. Torrey; all references after that edition).

[66] Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, p. 58.

[67] There is no detailed account on that siege: Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 137; H. Kennedy, *Wielkie arabskie podboje...*, p. 135.

[68] Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 137.

[69] H. Kennedy, *Wielkie arabskie podboje...*, p. 135.

[70] Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, p. 59.

rive, he decided on a daring manoeuvre. He set off with his small forces to the south and destroyed the area of the oasis of Fayyūm on the other side of the Nile[71]. On the way back, he joined the army of Zubayr ibn Al-'Awwām. We have no information how numerous Zubayr's army was; the sources quoted by Alfred J. Butler say of between four and fifteen and half thousand[72]. Philip Hitti assumes that there were about ten thousand men, including 'Amr's forces[73]. Hugh Kennedy, following the account by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam[74], estimates their strength at twelve thousand in Zubayr's army alone[75]. It seems worthy to quote Butler's opinion: *there is no sort of confusion not found among Arab historians*[76]. We can add that John of Nikiu mentions reinforcements of four thousand men[77].

In July 640 the Muslims clashed with the Byzantine army commanded by Theodore, who came to relieve the fortress at Babylon. The confrontation took place in the vicinity of the ancient Heliopolis. The twenty thousand men strong[78] Byzantine forces were completely shattered[79]. After that victory the Arabs began a regular siege of Babylon, a huge fortress on the Nile Delta that was originally erected by Roman Emperor Traian[80]. The operation began in September 640[81]. Two different accounts exist regarding the surrender of the fortress, which took place in April 641. According to John of Nikiu, the Byzantine crew agreed to leave the fortress after negotiating a promise that their lives and property would be spared[82]. However, according to the Arab account, the surrender followed a successful attack commanded by Zubayr[83].

The downfall of Babylon opened up a way down the Delta, toward Alexandria. In May the armies of 'Amr, reinforced by new contingents from Arabia, captured Nikiu[84], plundered it and murdered the inhabitants[85]. According

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[71] H. Kennedy, *Wielkie arabskie podboje...*, p. 136.

[72] A.J. Butler, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt...*, p. 226.

[73] Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 137.

[74] Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, p. 61.

[75] H. Kennedy, *Wielkie arabskie podboje...*, p. 137.

[76] A.J. Butler, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt...*, p. 226.

[77] John of Nikiu, CXII, 6 (ed. R.H. Charles, D. Litt; all references to that source after that edition).

[78] Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 137.

[79] John of Nikiu, CXII, 7–9; Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, p. 59. The most detailed analysis of that battle has been demonstrated by: A.J. Butler, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt...*, p. 228sqq.

[80] *Ibidem*, p. 238sqq.; H. Kennedy, *Wielkie arabskie podboje...*, p. 137sqq.

[81] *Ibidem*, p. 138.

[82] John of Nikiu, CXVII, 2–3.

[83] Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, p. 63.

[84] Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, p. 63.

[85] John of Nikiu, CXVIII, 8.

to Hitti, the forces of the invaders reached the strength of twenty thousand men[86]. The Muslim army chased the withdrawing forces of Theodore and caught them at Karyun. The ensuing battle was one of the most difficult for the Arabs in the history of the Egyptian conquest. The Byzantines and Copts fought side by side against the confessors of Allah and brought ʻAmr to the brink of disaster. The difficulties for the Arabs is exemplified by the fact that even the son of the Muslim leader was wounded in the battle. In the end, the Muslims managed to hold off Theodore's troops and make their way back to Alexandria[87]. The capital city of Egypt, with a garrison of a few thousand soldiers and a powerful navy, was strong enough to defend itself for months if not years[88]. Ironically, it surrendered as a result of a conflict in Constantinople (after Heraclius' death) and in Alexandria – between two Byzantine leaders, Domentianus and Menas. Without going into details, the patriarch Cyrus, who had come back from expulsion shortly before, played a major role in the negotiations with the Arabs. Cyrus went to central Egypt, where ʻAmr had been operating from 641 after an unsuccessful attempt to capture Alexandria[89]. The treaty, which delivered the whole of Egypt and its capital city into the hands of the Muslims, was probably signed in Babylon in November 641[90]. Upon hearing of the conditions of the armistice, the citizens of Alexandria wanted to stone Cyrus. However, he ultimately managed to persuade them to approve the document. Accordingly, the Byzantine forces had to leave the city, and the remaining inhabitants had to pay a tribute. The last of the Byzantines left Alexandria by sea in mid-September 642. ʻAmr's army entered the city at the end of the same month[91].

Three years later the inhabitants of Alexandria mutinied. They swept away the Arab garrison in the city and sought help from Constantinople. Emperor Constans sent a fleet to Egypt under the command of Manuel. The Byzantine army went up the Nile Delta, but ʻAmr destroyed it at Nikiu. At the beginning of 646 Alexandria fell for the second time, and ʻAmr ordered its walls to be torn down to prevent further resistance[92].

Just like in Jerusalem, the Arabs signed an agreement with the local Egyptian population known as the *Treaty of Miṣr* (Egypt). It guaranteed freedom of

[86] Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 138.
[87] Balādhurī, *Liber*, 220; Ibn ʻAbd al-Ḥakam, p. 74.
[88] Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 138.
[89] *Ibidem*, p. 138.
[90] *Ibidem*, p. 138sqq.; H. Kennedy, *Wielkie arabskie podboje...*, p. 143sqq.
[91] Ibn ʻAbd al-Ḥakam, p. 82; John of Nikiu, CXX.
[92] Balādhurī, *Liber*, 221. See: Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 140.

religion and immunity of property, provided that the people would pay a tribute. The amount of the tribute depended on the value of their crops, determined by flushes of the Nile[93].

2.4. Muslim Armed Forces – from Militia to a Professional Army

The Muslim forces of the early conquests and the first civil war (*fitna*) were a blend of tribal militias, rather than a regular army with a defined unit system and chain of command. Often the caliph had to negotiate individually with each local chief to obtain a sufficient number of men for a campaign. While it was not that difficult in the case of raids on the Byzantine or Persian territories, taking part in a civil war was less profitable and implied having to be on either side of the conflict. A good example of how difficult it was to obtain military support and how autonomous particular chiefs were, was a meeting between ʻĀlī and some *tribal chiefs and influential men* after the battle of Ṣiffīn (in the vicinity of Al-Raḳḳa, Syria). ʻĀlī was planning a campaign against Khārijites. During that meeting the representatives of particular tribes resisted the caliph's demands for warriors and argued that *not all members of the tribe are warriors but some do other useful things*[94]. This shows not only the power of tribal chiefs, but also the fact that in the era of orthodox caliphs the Muslim ruler did not have a list of warriors and officials responsible for conscription. The number of soldiers depended on his personal negotiating skills[95].

It seems that at the beginning of the Umayyad rule, the situation did not change dramatically. Despite limited sources we know that Muʿāwiya preferred a system in which the armies of particular provinces were responsible for the outer borders of the territories on which they were stationed (in the case of Syria and Upper Mesopotamia – the Byzantine border). They lived on the taxes collected in the province and enjoyed a broad autonomy regarding military operations outside the province. Muʿāwiya perceived the Syrian troops as kind of life guards for the new dynasty. The caliph feared that if they moved to other provinces, their positive attitude toward the Umayyads could be affected[96]. The reign of

[93] Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, I, 2588–2589. Discussed in: A.J. B u t l e r, *Treaty of Misr*, [in:] i d e m, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt...*, pp. 1–64 [separate pagination].

[94] Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, I, 3371–2. Detailed analysis of that fragment can be found in: H. K e n n e d y, *The Armies of the Caliphs. Military and Society in the Early Islamic State*, London–New York 2001, p. 8.

[95] *Ibidem*, pp. 8–9.

[96] Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, II, 197.

the first Umayyad ruler was marked, therefore, by a mixture of autonomous forces commanded by local chiefs, instead of a single central army[97]. If there were any reform attempts at all, they were taken up by local chiefs only.

The caliph himself conducted a large-scale program of fortifying the major cities on the Syrian coast; he made the Persian population move there for better protection against a potential Byzantine invasion from the sea[98]. The first Umayyad caliph also took steps to develop and strengthen the forces, which had initially been a kind of "voluntary army", and transform them into police and security forces (*shurṭa*), operating alongside the caliph's life guards (*ḥaras*). What is important is that the first information about the former comes from Al-Kūfa, Iraq, in the area of 'Alī's followers[99], but Muʿāwiya decided to adapt it for his needs[100]. *Shurṭa* and *ḥaras*, which would fulfil similar functions, had a different composition. It is known that the former was commanded by a representative of one of the major Arab tribes, while the *ḥaras* remained under the command of a non-Arabic *mawālī*[101]. Muʿāwiya raised the importance of both services. By the end of his reign they were included in government offices, and their leaders (*ṣāḥib al-shurṭa* and *ṣāḥib al-ḥaras*) became important state officers[102]. That gave an impulse for the foundations of a regular army for the sole service to the dynasty. Following the caliphs, local leaders (some of whom were members of the dynasty, too) also formed their own *shurṭa* in the areas controlled by them[103]. It should be emphasized that the relative autonomy which the leaders enjoyed may have resulted in some cases from the limited expenses on the army. That was the case in Egypt where the forces did not operate outside the province, except for some low-expense expeditions inside North Africa. They gradually turned into a small group of privileged power-keepers, unable to put down an open internal mutiny[104]. That situation would change when the Marwānid branch of the dynasty seized power.

Decisive for the Ummayad army was the time of the second *fitna*, in 680–692, during the reign of 'Abd Al-Mālik. Responding to the needs of warfare against internal enemies, the caliph called up professional military units recruit-

[97] H. K e n n e d y, *The Armies...*, p. 12.

[98] *Ibidem*.

[99] Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, I, 2916.

[100] Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, I, 3365 and 3392.

[101] Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, II, 197, 205.

[102] H. K e n n e d y, *The Armies...*, p. 13.

[103] *Ibidem*, p. 14.

[104] H. K e n n e d y, *Egypt as a Province in the Islamic Caliphate*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, ed. C.F. P e t r y, Cambridge 1998, pp. 62–85.

ed from Syrians and used all over the land for internal and external purposes alike[105]. The son of Marwān I broke off from Muʿāwiya's system of autonomy.

The Syrian troops constituted a natural support for Al-Mālik's professional army. Firstly, according to the accounts of the Arab sources, by the end of the seventh century Syrian troops identified themselves with the place of their origin rather than with a particular tribe[106]. That process had already started during Muʿāwiya's reign. Secondly, their system of military districts (*ajnād*; sing. *jund*) was better developed there than in any other part of the caliphate[107]. In Egypt, for example, there was only one district like that, compared to four in Syria (in Palestine, Jordan, Damascus and Homs)[108]. Without going into details, whether or not the *ajnād* were borrowed from the Byzantine system of military districts (*ducates*[109] or *themes*[110]), it must be said that they were the foundations for further reforms aimed at developing a professional army. Thanks to the *ajnād*, whose shape was ultimately formed during the reign of Yazīd I, the army of Syria was partly a registered army[111].

Thirdly, as Peter von Sievers has remarked, due to the vicinity of Byzantium and the necessity to protect the borders, military activities in that territory had to be more professional than elsewhere. The army needed a complex system of new fortresses and military settlements on the border, which would allow efficient operations against the empire[112].

Fourthly, the raids against Byzantium made most experienced soldiers arrive to the border. Those soldiers wanted to serve directly under the command of the caliph himself or his son[113]. The tradition of sending a successor to campaigns against the empire was first practiced by Muʿāwiya. Other Umayyad rulers fol-

[105] I d e m, *The Armies...*, p. 18.

[106] Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, II, 430–432.

[107] H. K e n n e d y, *The Armies...*, p. 31.

[108] P. v o n S i e v e r s, *Military, Merchants and Nomads: The Social Evolution of the Syrian Cites and Countryside During the Classical Period*, Isl 56, 1979, p. 217.

[109] J. H a l d o n, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century. The Transformation of a Culture*, Cambridge 1990, p. 215; i d e m, *Seventh-Century Continuities: the Ajnād and the "Thematic Myth"*, [in:] *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, vol. III, *States, Resources and Armies. Papers of the Third Workshop on Late Antiquity and Early Islam*, ed. A. C a m e r o n, Princeton 1995, pp. 379–423.

[110] I. S h a h î d, *Heraclius and the Theme System: New Light from the Arabic*, B 57, 1987, pp. 208–243; i d e m, *Heraclius and the Theme System: Further Observations*, B 59, 1989, pp. 391–406.

[111] P. v o n S i e v e r s, *Military, Merchants and Nomads...*, pp. 217–218.

[112] *Ibidem*, p. 218.

[113] *Ibidem*.

lowed that example. In the times of Al-Walīd I almost all expeditions were commanded by members of the ruling house.

The fifth and really important reason for making a professional army in Syria was the dedication of Syrian *mawālī* to the Umayyads. The groups of non-Arab converts began to play a more and more important role in military operations[114]. Hugh Kennedy maintains that their participation was essential for the Umayyad victory during the second *fitna*[115]. Their loyalty was not to overestimate in building up a regular army, whose creation was not always welcomed by the chiefs of the old Arab tribes (regarding their privileges and the caliph-equal status during the negotiations described above). *Mawālī* frequently came from far-away countries, with no ties to Arab tribes (except for formal assignment to one of them). The forces in Syria, for example, included Ethiopians that had converted to Islam during the reign of Abū Bakr[116], whereas the main forces of the army sent to Medina by Yazīd I to suppress a mutiny were made up of the "Sudanese" (Nubians)[117]. If we accept the hypothesis of Patricia Crone that *mawālī* were not paid for their service, contrary to the soldiers of Arab origin, and could count only on some stipends in particular cases (e.g. during expeditions against the empire)[118], we can understand how valuable their troops must have been.

The above reasons let ʿAbd Al-Mālik rely on the well-tested Syrian troops during the second civil war and make a kind of "internal conquest" of the caliphate. After the victory in the second *fitna*, the significance of those troops increased. They were stationed in Iraq (their garrison was located in Wāsit by Al-Kūt). At the beginning of the eighth century they found themselves in Tabaristan and Sind, and then some of them were relocated to the area of today's Dagestan, to keep guard on the Khazar border[119].

When estimating the number of armed soldiers under the command of the caliph, it should be taken into account that the Arab chroniclers, upon whose works the research of contemporary scholars is based, most probably had

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[114] I. H a s s o n, *Les mawālī dans l'armée musulmane sous les premiers Umayyades*, JSAI 14, 1991, pp. 176–213.

[115] H. K e n n e d y, *The Armies...*, p. 31. According to Patricia Crone, the *mawālī* who supported the Umayyads were not a group of Islamic converts, but rather belonged to the family and proponents. P. C r o n e, *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity*, Cambridge 2003, pp. 197–200.

[116] J. J u d a, *Die Sozialen und Wirtschaftlichen Aspekte der Mawāli in frühislamischer Zeit*, Tübingen 1985 p. 148 sqq. [PhD thesis].

[117] Kh. A t h a m i n a, *Non-Arab Regiments and Private Militias during the Umayyad Period*, Ara 45, 1998, p. 367sqq.

[118] P. C r o n e, *The Pay of Client Soldiers in the Umayyad Period*, Isl 80, 2003, pp. 287–290.

[119] H. K e n n e d y, *The Armies...*, p. 34.

registers of soldiers paid a yearly payment (*ʿaṭāʾ*) or monthly benefit (*rizḳ*)[120]. The registers included all soldiers, not only those who were currently at arms. That is why Hugh Kennedy, who has analysed that issue in his book devoted to the caliph's army, does not consider the figure of 250–300 thousand soldiers exaggerated[121]. Philip K. Hitti, on the other hand, who has based his research on the information on the expenses spent on the army, maintains that in the times of the first Umayyad caliphs the army may have amounted to ca. 60 thousand men[122]. It should be noted, however, that he has related the data to the rulers of the Sufyānid branch, who did not yet have a professional army. Numerous issues were left to the discretion of local leaders, and it is possible that the data did not include the units stationed in local garrisons. So if we also count the data regarding the other parts of the country presented by Kennedy[123], i.e. at least 80 thousand soldiers in Iraq, 50 thousand in the eastern provinces and 40 thousand in Egypt[124], plus the Syrian troops about which Hitti writes, we obtain ca. 230 thousand men available for military service. Another factor that may also have contributed to the growth of the Islamic forces was the policy to allow a bigger number of non-free men to be eligible for immediate military service, which took place after the Marwānid branch of the Umayyads[125] seized power.

Because of the common opinion about the similarity of Arab and Byzantine armour[126] the research on Arab armament has not developed well enough to present it without substantial errors. Such research would demand knowledge of both archaeology and the history of armament, and to some degree also the history of art, as much of the evidence showing differences between Arab and Byzantine forces is in the form of preserved fragments of paintings. This gap has been partially filled by the works of David Nicolle, who for many years has been collecting all available information about Arab armament of the Umayyad era[127].

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[120] P. Crone, *The Pay of Client Soldiers...*, p. 284.

[121] H. Kennedy, *The Armies...*, p. 20sqq.

[122] Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 191sqq.

[123] H. Kennedy, *The Armies...*, p. 19.

[124] K. Morimoto, *The Dīwāns as Registers of the Arabic Stipendaries in Early Islamic Egypt*, [in:] *Itinéraires d'Orient: Hommages à Claude Cahen*, eds. R. Curiel, R. Gyselen, Bures-sur-Yvette 1994, p. 353–354.

[125] D. Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam. The Genesis of a Military System*, New Haven–London 1981, p. 117sqq.

[126] Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 191sqq.

[127] Fundamental here is: D. Nicolle, *Arms of the Umayyad Era: Military Technology in a Time of Change*, [in:] *War and Society in the Eastern Mediterranean: 7th– 15th Centuries*, ed. Y. Lev, Leiden–New York–Köln 1997, pp. 9–100.

Up to now only popular analysis of comparative material is known[128]. From the *ordre de bataille* it is known that Arab troops were mostly mounted, but they often stood to do battle in foot array. The commander was usually in the centre[129]; the army was divided into the part subordinated directly to the commander, left and right wing, and the fore and hinter-guard[130].

2.5. Continuation of Expansion against Byzantium – Arab Expeditions in Asia Minor

Hélène Ahrweiler has emphasized that *rien de plus monotone que le récit des invasions arabes en Asie Mineure*[131]. The expeditions were organized most often in the spring or autumn, when weather conditions were favourable. It is difficult to determine detailed dates and the duration of particular expeditions and their routes. All Arab and Byzantine accounts regarding campaigns have a repeating structure: the beginning of the campaign, characteristics of the leader, raiding particular areas, return to Syria and upper Mesopotamia with spoils and captives and selling the latter. Arab operations were of a predatory rather than strictly military nature and seldom ended up in an extended occupation of any part of Asia Minor[132]. Those raids were already described fairly well in the nineteenth century[133]. Therefore, we shall confine ourselves to a brief outline of Arab invasions on the said areas. Our considerations are based on the chronicles by Al-Yaʿḳūbī, Al-Ṭabarī, *Kitāb al-ʿUyūn*, Ibn al-Athīr, as well as on the basic Byzantine (Theophanes the Confessor) and Syriac (Elias of Nisibis) sources.

Initial information about the Arab expedition to Asia Minor dates from the times of ʿUmar I. According to Ibn al-Athīr, the expedition began in 20 AH (December 640–December 641 AD) under the command of Abū Bakhriyya ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ḳays. At another place the same chronicler says that the com-

[128] I d e m, *Armies of the Muslim Conquest*, London 1993, p. 14sqq.

[129] H. K e n n e d y, *The Armies...*, p. 23sqq.

[130] Ph.K. H i t t i, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 191.

[131] H. A h r w e i l e r, *L'Asie Mineure et les invasions arabes (VII^e–IX^e siècles)*, RH 227, 1962, p. 7.

[132] *Ibidem*, p. 8.

[133] E.W. B r o o k s, *The Arabs in Asia Minor (641–750). From Arabic Sources*, JHS 18, 1898, pp. 182–208; W.M. R a m s a y, *The War of Moslem and Christian for the Possession of Asia Minor*, [in:] i d e m, *Studies of the Eastern Roman Provinces*, Aberdeen 1906, pp. 281–301; J. W e l l h a u s e n, *Arab Wars with the Byzantines in the Umayyad Period*, [in:] *Arab-Byzantine Relations in Early Islamic Times*, ed. M. B o n n e r, Aldershot–Burlington 2004, pp. 31–64.

mand was held by Maisr ibn Masrūḳ. It is important to note that both men used the title of *that who first entered Asia Minor*). The expedition resulted in taking spoils and captives. Another expedition, also described by Ibn al-Athīr took place five years later (from October 645 to October 646[134]) under command of Muʿāwiya himself[135]. The future caliph reached Amorium in central Asia Minor. In the summer of the same year Muʿāwiya sent another unit, led by Al-Ḥurr ibn Yazīd, down as far as Antioch in Pisidia. In the account dated three years later, Al-Athīr mentions a raid by Ḥabīb ibn Maslama most probably to Isauria. A campaign against Isauria at that time is confirmed by Theophanes the Confessor, who said however that it was led by a man named Bousour (most probably Busr ibn Abī Arṭāt). The Byzantine chronographer tells about the scale of Arab operations: during the raid on small Isauria they would take as many as five thousand prisoners[136]. Still another expedition, the account of which has been left to us like the previous ones by Ibn al-Athīr, took place only four years after Ḥabīb's raid. In 32 AH (from August 652 to August 653) Muʿāwiya undertook an expedition which would reach the area of Constantinople. The following year he showed up again in Asia Minor, in the vicinity of Melitene[137]. As we can see, in the era of orthodox caliphs Arab raids in Asia Minor happened occasionally. When Muʿāwiya made arrangements regarding internal issues of the caliphate and took over authority of the whole of *umma*, the raids on Asia Minor became more regular – they happened practically every year.

The first information about such raids can be found in Al-Yaʿḳūbī, in 41 AH (May 661–April 662), i.e. already after Muʿāwiya had seized power. The expedition was led by Ḥabīb ibn Maslama, and it ended up in an armistice[138]. Theophanes does not mention any armistice, but rather of *a number of captives and destroyed villages*[139]. A year later (April 662–April 663), as Al-Ṭabarī has recorded, Muslim troops began another campaign, during which *many patricians were killed*[140]. The following year (April 663–April 664) an expedition against Byzantium was led by Busr ibn Abī Arṭāt. Al-Yaʿḳūbī maintains that Arab troops wintered

[134] Or in 644. W.E. K a e g i, *The First Arab Expedition against Amorium*, BMGS 3, 1977, pp. 19–22.

[135] According to another version, the expedition was led by one of Mu'āwiya's most trusted generals, 'Amr ibn Sufyān Al-Sulamī. I b n ʿ A b d a l - Ḥ a k a m, 108.

[136] T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6142.

[137] E.W. B r o o k s, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 184.

[138] *Ibidem*.

[139] T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6154. It is not clear which of the expeditions is meant by the chronographer. His description may concern the events of 662/663 or even of 663/664.

[140] E.W. B r o o k s, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 184.

over in Asia Minor. It is not unlikely, considering, as Al-Ṭabarī has written, that Busr could reach the area of Constantinople. On the other hand, Al-Wāḳidī says that Busr returned to Syria before winter[141]. The scale of the expedition of 663/664 can be deduced from the account by Theophanes, who however links the events to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Khālid. According to Theophanes, the Arabs destroyed *numerous countries* and expelled five thousand Slavs, who had been settled in Asia Minor by emperor Constans[142].

In 664–666 there was another expedition, led by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Khālid. During the first stage of it, according to the account of Al-Yaʿḳūbī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān reached Colonea, i.e. the vicinity of the Arab-Byzantine frontier (in northern Asia Minor). It is difficult to say what deterred the Arab leader. The story seems fairly interesting, because at the same time the Arabs were supposed to undertake a sea expedition under the command of Busr ibn Abī Arṭāt[143]. In Theophanes' work the latter has been pointed out as the leader of two expeditions on the Byzantine territories in 664–666. In the first account the Byzantine chronographer simply says that Busr entered the territory of the empire[144]. The other passage is more detailed – the Muslim army under Busr was to go up to Hexapolis in Cappadocia and loot it. An Arab unit under command of Faḍāla ibn ʿUbayd was to winter over at Hexapolis[145]. That expedition could have been part of a later campaign (669–670), as reported by Elias of Nisibis[146]. The same leader appears in a later account by Theophanes, about the help given by Muʿāwiya to Saborius, *strategos* of Armenia, who had rebelled against Constans and Constantine. At Hexapolis Faḍāla was supposed to meet with Saborius, to conspire against the empire. The campaign of Faḍāla and Yazīd, who joined Muʿāwiya some time later, is regarded by some historians as the first (or second after that of 654/655) Arab raid on Constantinople. Such an opinion can be found in Elias of Nisibis[147]. Coming back to the expedition of 664–666, it is worth saying that also Al-Yaʿḳūbī writes of wintering over in his account about the second campaign or about the extension of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's expedition commenced in 664, during which the Muslim army would get to Antioch in Pisidia, where they spent the winter.

[141] *Ibidem*.

[142] Theophanes, AM 6156. E.W. Brooks associates that account with two expeditions of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Khālid of 664/665 and 665/666, while that of 663/664 – with Theophanes's account, dated AM 6157.

[143] E.W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 184.

[144] Theophanes, AM 6157.

[145] Theophanes, AM 6158.

[146] Elias of Nisibis, 69.

[147] Elias of Nisibis, 69.

The information about wintering over, albeit without naming the place which ʿAbd al-Raḥmān reached, has been repeated by Al-Ṭabarī as well[148].

The following three years (666–669) were, according to Arab sources, the time of the operations of Mālik ibn Ḥubārā, who led or took part in as many as three expeditions in Asia Minor. Both Al-Yaʿḳūbī and Al-Ṭabarī name some other Arab leaders who undertook expeditions on Byzantine areas: they were Mālik ibn ʿAbd Allāh, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ḳays and the already mentioned ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Khālid[149]. The account of Arab chroniclers has been confirmed by Elias of Nisibis[150]. Al-Ṭabarī maintains that during one of those expeditions the Arabs reached Antioch[151] where they decided to winter over. Army operations were supported by the Egyptian navy under the command of ʿUḳba ibn Amīr[152]. Intensified activity of Arab troops was be observed in 49 AH (January 669–January 670). There were expeditions by Faḍāla ibn ʿUbayd[153] and Yazīd[154]. Ibn al-Athīr claims that Sufyān ibn ʿAwf, Muʿāwiya's son, was Yazīd's companion[155]. In addition, Arab chroniclers mention military operations conducted by Mālik ibn Hubayra (in winter) and ʿAbd Allāh ibn Khurz (in summer). They write of two fleets: one was Syrian, commanded by Yazīd ibn Saghāra, and the other was Egyptian, commanded by ʿUḳba ibn Nāfiʿ[156]. The years 671–672 witnessed still another expedition by Busr ibn Abī Arṭāt. Theophanes informs of one[157], while Al-Ṭabarī speaks of two expeditions commanded by that leader at that time[158]. Parallel operations at sea were supposed to be undertaken by the already known to us Faḍāla ibn ʿUbayd[159]. It is possible that in 672 there was a third expedition by Busr – at least this is what Al-Ṭabarī says. According to his report, a campaign by Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh took place at the same time, which can be found in Byzantine sources as well[160]. Al-Yaʿḳūbī and Al-Wāḳidī mention Sufyān

[148] E.W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, pp. 184–185.

[149] *Ibidem*, p. 185.

[150] Elias of Nisibis, 46–47.

[151] In the accounts by Al-Yaʿḳūbī and Al-Ṭabarī, Antioch was mentioned three times in 667–669.

[152] E.W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 185.

[153] Elias of Nisibis, 49; Theophanes, AM 6159.

[154] Elias of Nisibis, 51; Theophanes, AM 6159.

[155] E.W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 186.

[156] *Ibidem*, pp. 185–186.

[157] Theophanes, AM 6163.

[158] E.W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 186.

[159] *Ibidem*.

[160] Theophanes, AM 6164.

ibn ʿAwf[161], who allegedly died while wintering over, and left command to ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿada[162].

Leaving aside the events regarding the first siege of Constantinople, which will be discussed later in this chapter, let us concentrate on the expeditions of 674–678, related to the operations by the walls of the capital city of the empire. According to Al-Yaʿḳūbī, in 53 AH (December 672–December 673) Muḥammad ibn Mālik was operating near Tarsus in Cilicia. His presence on the *land of the Romans* has been confirmed by Al-Ṭabarī, who writes that he was there in the winter of 673/674. In the summer of 674 a campaign against the Byzantines in Asia Minor was conducted by Mʿan ibn Yazīd[163]. The following year brought an event described as a land expedition[164] in some sources and as a sea expedition in some others[165]. The accounts tell us of some alleged leaders of that expedition: Al-Yaʿḳūbī names Mālik ibn ʿAbd Allāh[166]. Elias of Nisibis[167] and Al-Ṭabarī share his opinion. The latter says however that it may have been commanded by Sufyān ibn ʿAwf as well. The historian quotes the opinion of Al-Wāḳidī, who attributed its command to ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ḳays[168], who was mentioned by Theophanes as well[169]. On the other hand, in the accounts of Al-Yaʿḳūbī and Al-Ṭabarī, the raid of ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ḳays can be found among the events of the year 57 AH (November 676–November 677)[170]. The following year (November 677–November 678) we read about the expeditions of Mālik ibn ʿAbd Allāh and ʿAmir ibn Yazīd (the expedition is described by Al-Yaʿḳūbī, Al-Ṭabarī and Ibn al-Athīr, and confirmed by Elias of Nisibis[171]). 679 is the year of the campaign of ʿAmr ibn Murra (accounts of Al-Yaʿḳūbī, Al-Ṭabarī[172] and Elias of Nisibis[173]). In 680 and 681 the expeditions to Isauria were conducted by Mālik ibn ʿAbd Allāh. After that there was a break in Muslim raids to Asia Minor, due to the second *fitna* (civil war) in the caliphate and the peace treaty, which had originally been signed in the times of Muʿāwiya, was renewed. The new agreement raised the tribute to

[161] Similarly: Elias of Nisibis, 53.
[162] E.W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, pp. 186–187.
[163] *Ibidem*, p. 187.
[164] Elias of Nisibis, 56; E.W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 188.
[165] Theophanes, AM 6166.
[166] E.W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 188.
[167] Elias of Nisibis, 56.
[168] E.W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 188.
[169] Theophanes, AM 6166.
[170] E.W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 188.
[171] Elias of Nisibis, 56.
[172] E.W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 189.
[173] Elias of Nisibis, 58.

three hundred sixty thousand dinars, one hundred sixty slaves and as many horses a year[174]. A quasi-condominium was established in the disputed areas of Cyprus, Armenia and Iberia[175]. In Theophanes' opinion the pact was signed by ʿAbd Al-Mālik[176]. According to *Continuatio Hispana*[177] and Syriac sources[178], it was concluded by Marwān ʿAbd al-Ḥakam – the first representative of the Marwānid branch of the Umayyads. That inaccuracy may be a result of the change of the Byzantine ruler. According to Theophanes, ʿAbd Al-Mālik had to confirm the treaty when Constantine was replaced on the throne by Justinian II[179]. It should be added that Arab historians move the date of signing the treaty by at least four years, locating the event in 688/9[180]. A year later, according to Theophane's, Justinian broke it off *in a most stupid way*[181], which ended up in the defeat of the Byzantines in a battle with Arab forces, under the command of Muḥammad ibn Marwān[182] at Sebastopolis[183] in 692. The following year Muḥammad suppressed an uprising in Armenia[184]. In 694 ʿAbd Al-Mālik's brother went on an expedition to Asia Minor. The expedition must have been quite significant, as it was mentioned by both Al-Yaʿḳūbī and A-Ṭabarī[185] as well as by Theophanes, who added that Muḥammad took many captives[186]. The Arab sources tell of a Byzantine expedition which reached the region between Antioch and Germanicea. The expedition was smashed by an Arab army commanded by Ābān ibn Al-Walīd[187]. Even if a Byzantine reaction like that really took place, Muḥammad's campaign of 694 began a new series of annual Arab expeditions to Asia Minor.

In 76 AH (April 695–April 696) there were probably another two expeditions – a summer raid by Yaḥyā ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, operating between Melitene

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[174] J. W e l l h a u s e n, *Arab Wars with the Byzantines...*, p. 46sqq.

[175] *Ibidem*, p. 45. Yazīd I was to give up Cyprus and withdraw his garrisons from there and from Rhodes, cf. Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, II, 157; B a l ā d h u r ī, *Liber*, 153.

[176] T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6176.

[177] *Continuatio Hispana*, 29, pp. 110–160.

[178] *Chronicle up to 846*, p. 380sqq.

[179] T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6178.

[180] Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, II, 796; B a l ā d h u r ī, *Liber*, 160.

[181] T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6183.

[182] The brother of ʿAbd Al-Mālik, commander in the war against Muṣʿab ibn al-Zubayr, which ended a year earlier, and governor of Upper Mesopotamia and Armenia. J. W e l l h a u s e n, *Arab Wars with the Byzantines...*, p. 49sqq.

[183] T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6184.

[184] B a l ā d h u r ī, *Liber*, 206. According to Theophanes, Armenian leaders recognized the Arab rule upon hearing of the defeat of the Byzantines. T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6185.

[185] E.W. B r o o k s, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 189.

[186] T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6186.

[187] E.W. B r o o k s, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 189.

(now Malatya, Turkey) and Mopsuestia (Yakapınar, south-east Turkey)[188] and raids by Muḥammad ibn Marwān to Melitene[189], noted by Theophanes as well[190]. The following year brought a continuation of operations in that area. At that time the expedition was led by Al-Walīd, the heir to the throne[191]. According to some interpretations, it was the first campaign of ʻAbd al-Mālik's son. Therefore, through his command he fulfilled the duty of participating in the Djhād[192], just like other Muslims. Evidence of Al-Walīd's command can be found in Byzantine[193] and Syriac[194] sources. In 78 AH (March 697–March 698) an expedition to Asia Minor was conducted by Yaḥyā ʻAbd al-Ḥakam and in 79 AH, according to Theophanes[195] and Michael the Syrian[196], it met with a Byzantine counteroffensive. The imperial troops went up to Samosata in Syria (by the border between the two countries). *Having killed many Arabs* (Theophanes speaks of two hundred thousand, Michael the Syrian of five) and having taken prisoners, the Byzantines returned home. Information about that operation can be found in Al-Ṭabarī, Al-Athīr[197] and Elias of Nisibis[198] as well, but according to them the counteroffensive was unsuccessful.

The response by the empire did not have serious consequences, because the following year ʻAbd Al-Mālik sent a unit commanded by his son Al-Walīd to Asia Minor[199]. Another campaign conducted by another son of the caliph, ʻAbd Allāh took place in 700 or 701. According to Al-Ṭabarī, the city of Theodosiopolis (now Erzurum, Turkey)[200] was captured then. Contrary to that, Theophanes maintains that ʻAbd Allāh was unsuccessful in besieging Taranton (Darende in central Turkey), and upon his way home he fortified the city of Mopsuestia and left a garrison there[201]. The chronographer shifts an expedition against the Armenian provinces of Byzantine Asia Minor to the following year and admits that it was successful for the Muslims[202]. It is worth saying that the capture of

[188] *Ibidem*, p. 190.
[189] *Ibidem*, p. 189.
[190] Theophanes, AM 6187.
[191] E.W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 190.
[192] J. Wellhausen, *Arab Wars with the Byzantines...*, p. 50.
[193] Theophanes, AM 6189.
[194] Elias of Nisibis, 77.
[195] Theophanes, AM 6192.
[196] Michael the Syrian, vol. II, 473–474.
[197] E.W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 190.
[198] Elias of Nisibis, 79.
[199] Al-Ṭabarī's message: E.W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 190.
[200] *Ibidem*.
[201] Theophanes, AM 6193.
[202] Theophanes, AM 6194. He says that it was led by *Baanes Heptadaimon*. Alas, we

Mopsuestia by ʿAbd Allāh has also been recorded by Al-Yaʿḳūbī, who dates it to 83 AH (February 702–January 703)[203]. His account has been confirmed by Elias of Nisibis[204], whereas Al-Wāḳidī, quoted by Al-Ṭabarī, dates the capture of Mopsuestia to 84 AH (January 703–January 704)[205]. It is possible that there were two expeditions conducted by another caliph's son. Both were concluded by a capture of Byzantine cities: Theodosiopolis (701) and Mopsuestia (703). We may add that at the same time, i.e. in 701–703, a rebellion in Armenia was suppressed by the caliph's brother, Muḥammad ibn Marwān[206]. The first of ʿAbd Allāh's expeditions may have had something to do with the Armenian uprising. The second brought a counteraction by the Byzantines. In 703 and 704[207] near Sision (Susana) in Cilicia there was a battle between the Arab forces (commanded by a fairly unknown Azar or Yazīd ibn Ḥunain) and the Byzantine army, led by Heraclius, brother of Tiberius II. According to Theophanes, the Byzantines crushed the enemy. The Arab losses would amount to about twelve thousand men. The events can be found in Al-Ṭabarī as well, who maintains however that the Arab forces were commanded by ʿAbd Al-Mālik and Yazīd ibn Zubayr. The historiographer remains silent about the result of the battle, negative for the Muslims. The side-effect of the battle could be the fact that the following year, as reported by Ibn Al-ʿĀṣim, the Muslims did not decide to raid Asia Minor, but went to rebellious Armenia instead[208].

The pressure from the Arabs increased after Al-Walīd I became caliph and left the issues of Asia Minor in the hands of his brother, Maslama. Already in 705, the first year of the reign of the new caliph, Maslama successfully raided two Byzantine fortresses of unknown names[209]. In 708/9[210] Maslama along with ʿAbbas, Al-Walīd's son, invaded Tyana in Cappadocia and began a regular siege. Justinian II sent Theodore Carteroukas and Theophylact Salibas with reinforcements, but their troops of freshly conscripted soldiers were unprepared to fight with a regular army and were defeated. The citizens, having lost hope for rescue, agreed to negotiate with Maslama, who promised immunity to them. But when

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have no information which of the Arab leaders was so demonic.

[203] E.W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 191.

[204] Elias of Nisibis, 83–84.

[205] E.W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 191.

[206] It is reported by Ibn al-Athīr (p. 190) and Theophanes (AM 6195).

[207] Theophanes reports the events twice (AM 6195; AM 6196).

[208] The expedition was under leadership of Muḥammad ibn Marwān: E.W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 191.

[209] The capture of the two fortresses has been reported by Al-Yaʿḳūbī as well.

[210] Theophanes, AM 6201. According to Al-Ṭabarī the events took place in 706 or 707. E.W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, pp. 191–192.

the gate was opened, the Muslims broke their vows and enslaved the inhabitants[211]. Al-Ṭabarī adds that during the campaign (in which Hishām ibn ʻAbd al-Mālik, the caliph from 723 took part instead of ʻAbbas) some lesser Byzantine fortresses: Bulak, Al-Akhrim, Bulas and Kamkim[212] were captured as well. According to Al-Wāḳidī, the fortresses included Kustantin, Ghazāla (Gazelon) and Al-Akhrim, and a thousand enemies were killed[213]. In the *Kitāb al ʻUyūn* the number of Byzantines killed amounted to fifty thousand[214].

The Arabs increased their prevalence the following year when ʻAbbas ibn Al-Walīd made another raid, again *taking numerous captives*[215]. The evidence can be found in both Syriac[216] and Arab sources: Al-Yaʻḳūbī has stated that in addition to ʻAbbas, Maslama also participated in the expedition. The Arab army was divided into two units. The first, commanded by Maslama, captured the fortress of Sūriya. The other, under command of ʻAbbas, took a fairly unknown Ardaluniya[217]. Al-Ṭabarī tells of two independent armies, adding that ʻAbbas led his men to Azraena, a territory on the border of Armenia and Asia Minor. He claims Maslama captured five fortresses in Sūriya (there is not a single fortress with that name)[218]. The term Sūriya may well refer to Isauria, which would confirm the main direction of Arab raids at that time. According to Al-Wāḳidī, the expedition had a bigger scope. Maslama was to get to Amorion and then occupy Heraklea and Nicomedia. At the same time ʻAbbas would operate near Podandos in southern Cappadocia[219].

The year 710 and 711 saw at least two other expeditions. According to Al-Yaʻḳūbī, both of them were conducted by ʻAbd Al-ʻAzīz ibn Al-Walīd. Al-Ṭabarī says that during the second campaign he was accompanied by Maslama ibn ʻAbd al-Mālik[220]. The information about the first expedition has been confirmed by Elias of Nisibis[221], and Theophanes mentions an expedition by ʻUthmān, the son of Al-Walīd in 6203 AM (710/711 AD). Contrary to the Arab and Syriac sources, the Byzantine account points out Cilicia as the place of operations.

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[211] Theophanes, AM 6201; Patriarch Nicephorus, 44.
[212] E.W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 191.
[213] *Ibidem*, p. 192.
[214] *Ibidem*.
[215] Theophanes, AM 6202.
[216] Elias of Nisibis, 89.
[217] E.W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 192.
[218] *Ibidem*, p. 193.
[219] *Ibidem*.
[220] *Ibidem*, p. 193.
[221] Elias of Nisibis, 90.

The chronographer says that ʻUthmān captured *many fortresses*[222]. The Cilician route of Arab campaigns can be found in Al-Ṭabarī, who in reporting the events of 92 AH (September 710–September 711) mentions the army of Maslama and ʻUmar, son of Al-Walīd, which seized three Byzantine fortresses. The historian adds that the operation forced the inhabitants of Susana escape to the Byzantine territory[223]. Al-Yaʻḳūbī writes that in the same year the already mentioned Muḥammad ibn Marwān also set off to Asia Minor[224].

It is difficult overlook the fact that expeditions to the Armenian border zone and the Mediterranean shores of Asia Minor – mostly Isauria and Cilicia – were the main targets during the initial years of reign of Al-Walīd I. The next stage, dated 712–714, was marked by three big expeditions inside the Asia Minor interior: in Pisidia, Cappadocia and Galatia. All of them seem like preparatory operations before the main campaign against Constantinople in 715/716 AD. In 712 the Arabs struck the territory of northern Cappadocia and looted Amasia. The Muslim success can be found by Theopanes, who attributes it to Maslama ibn ʻAbd Al-Mālik[225]. Al-Yaʻḳūbī adds a fortress named Al-Ḥadīd to Arab trophies. He says that, the operation was led by ʻAbbas ibn Al-Walīd and Marwān ibn Al-Walīd, who commanded it along with Maslama[226]. Al-Ṭabarī gives a more detailed description. Following his account, Arab forces were divided into three groups. The first, under command of ʻAbbas ibn Al-Walīd, occupied Sebasteia (now Sivas, Turkey), the former capital of the Byzantine province of *Armenia II*, located in the centre of the peninsula. The second, under Marwān ibn Al-Walīd, reached the little known city of Khangara. The third group, led by Maslama, made a deeper advancement into Byzantine territory. They reached Amasia and captured some less important fortresses, called Al-Ḥadīd, Ghazāla and Tarkhamakh (near Melitene)[227].

The expedition of 713 ended up with the seizure of Antioch in Pisidia. Theophanes reports that ʻAbbas ibn Al-Walīd came back to Syria having taken numerous slaves[228]. Al-Yaʻḳūbī complements the account, saying that the leader was accompanied by his brother ʻUmar[229]. As usual, the most detailed account of the campaign was given by Al-Ṭabarī, who writes that some smaller Muslim units operated in Asia Minor.

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[222] Theophanes, AM 6203.
[223] E.W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 193.
[224] *Ibidem*.
[225] Theophanes, AM 6204; Elias of Nisibis, 92.
[226] E.W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 193.
[227] *Ibidem*, pp. 193–194.
[228] Theophanes, AM 6205; Elias of Nisibis, 94.
[229] E.W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 194.

According to his account Antioch was captured by ʻAbbas and his army. At the same time his brother, ʻAbd al-'Azīz made a raid on Gazala, while Al-Walīd ibn Hishām reached a place whose Arabic name was Burdj Al-Ḥamām. In addition, Yazīd ibn Abu Khabsha raided Sūriya once more[230]. According to Theophanes, in 714 Maslama commenced another expedition against the Byzantines. He went as far as Galatia and brought back a lot of loot and many captives[231]. Al-Ṭabarī ignores Maslama, instead, according to him, the raid was headed by ʻAbbas, who captured several cities and fortresses, including Heraklea-Kybistra in Capadoccia. Al-Ṭabarī also says – and such a statement is seldom found in his narration – that the Arabs suffered substantial losses: about one thousand men were killed[232]. In the other Arab sources (Al-Yaʿḳūbī and Al- Wāḳidī) we can find two other pieces of information regarding military operations of the Muslims before Maslama's expedition to Constantinople between 715 and 718. Both of them tell about an operation conducted by still another son of Al-Walīd – Bishr. Al-Wāḳidī emphasizes that the expedition of the caliph's son took place in winter (from 714 to 715), and when he returned to Syria, his father was already dead. Unfortunately, we do not know any details of that campaign, but the time when it was undertaken suggests some disorder and haste, which is characteristic of Arab commanders' actions before the great military effort of the campaign against the capital city of the empire[233].

We can tell of the two stages of the Arab expansion in Asia Minor in the early era of the caliphate. The first was that of 650–678, connected with Muʿāwiya, the founder of the Umayyad dynasty. That stage was characterized by a growing number of raids until its culmination with the first siege of Constantinople. The expeditions often set off to the territory of south-eastern Asia Minor, sometimes operating fairly close to the capital city. The second stage, from the mid-reign of ʻAbd Al-Mālik, was characterized by the focus on the less distant targets in Asia Minor, like the Armenian border, Cilicia and Isauria. Only before the attempt to capture the capital of the empire did the Arab leaders start regular raids inside the interior of Asia Minor, reaching Cappadocia and Galatia.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from the Arab invasions on Asia Minor is the already quoted statement by H. Ahrweiler[234]: they had no desire

[230] *Ibidem*.

[231] Theophanes, AM 6206.

[232] E.W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 194. See also: Elias of Nisibis, 95.

[233] E.W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 194.

[234] H. Ahrweiler, *L'Asie Mineure et les invasions arabes...*, p. 8.

to establish permanent settlements in the occupied territories. Although the Arabs happened to winter over in the Peninsula and happened to seize cities or fortresses of strategic importance, they preferred looting rather than keeping regular forces there. That is understandable considering their poor supply lines and the hostility of the local population. It should be noted, though, that during that second stage the Arabs tried to establish some bridge-heads for further expansion, both in the Armenian border area and on the seashore of Cilicia and Isauria. It is easy to notice, particularly in the works of Al-Ṭabari, the growing sophistication in organizing campaigns into Asia Minor. The final expeditions were fairly complex military operations comprised of several units that assaulted from multiple directions and later converged at a central point and time.

Based on the analysis of Arab expeditions done by H. Ahrweiler, we can draw the routes along which Muslim forces were moving. The Umayyad armies usually entered the peninsula through the gorge of Podanos (the Cilician Gate). Then they moved on, either to Cappadocia or Lycaonia. Next their route lead to Galatia or Paphlagonia and through the Halys River valley, down to the shores of Pontus. From Lycaonia the Arabs could travel to Phrygia or Bithynia and from there, along the Sangarios River valley, either to Pontus or Propontis. From Phrygia and Pisidia, through the Lycus, Meander and Hermos river valleys, they could hurry to the Aegean shore[235]. There were other routes as well – alternatively, they could cross the Taurus through the gorge of Adata to enter Cappadocia in the vicinity of Caesarea. There they could meet the units which came through the Cilician Gates. The invaders could enter Asia Minor via the Isaurian coast as well. The way from the north looked like this: from the valley of the Euphrates either southbound via Germanicea or northbound via the former province of *Armenia IV* and then to Pontus and Paphlagonia. Ahrweiler has drawn several routes used by the Arabs in Asia Minor. The first of them is denoted by the axis of cities of Tyana–Caesarea–Charsianon–Ancyra–Gangra–Synopa. The second included the cities of Haeraklea (in Lycaonia)–Iconium–Laodicea–Amorion–Medeia–Doryleum–Nicea–Nicomedia–Chrysopolis.

The third route commenced on the Isaurian shore and led through Pisidia, Synnada and Akronion, up to Amorion and then followed the same way as the route above. The fourth route was from Germanicea and Melitene up to Amaseia via Sebasteia and Neocaesarea[236].

[235] *Ibidem*, pp. 8–9.
[236] *Ibidem*, pp. 9–10.

2.6. The Arab Navy in the Mediterranean

In the times of Arab expansion the Muslims occupied some strategically important places in the Mediterranean. Certainly Cyprus was the most important of them all. We can say that they owed that success to Muʿāwiya. The first raid on the island under the command of the future caliph took place in 649/650[237]. Muʿāwiya captured its capital city – Salamis. After negotiations with the local elites they agreed that he could keep it for a few years[238], but in 654 he sent another expedition there. As a result, Cyprus remained under Muslim control for an extended period of time, which allowed the Arabs to undertake new expeditions on the Aegean Sea.

The first of those expeditions took place in the same year of 654. A raid on the Isle of Rhodes in 653/4 can be considered preparatory[239]. Seizing the island opened up a way for the Muslims on the Aegean Sea[240], which they used to their advantage in the same year when they plundered Ephesus and Smyrna[241]. Muʿāwiya and his army set off to Cappadocia, and the campaign got the strong naval support of a fleet commanded by ʿAbdullāh ibn Saʿad ibn Abī as-Sarḥ. The campaign ended up in a sea battle near the Port of Phoenix.

Ekkehard Eickhoff[242] supposes that at about the same time the build-up of another Arab fleet in Egypt commenced when two local shipyards resumed work in Alexandria and in Clysma. Clysma, in the north-eastern part of the country not far from today's Suez Canal, was on an important trade route between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea[243]. Due to the Byzantine arsenals captured in

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[237] A. B e i h a m m e r, *The First Naval Campaigns of the Arabs against Cyprus (649–653)*, GA 9/10, 2004, pp. 47–68.

[238] The navy continued the raid on the Byzantine coast but imperial ships stopped it by she shores of Lycia. This version is reported by Armenian historian Sebeos (pp. 111–112).

[239] For more on that, see: C.E. B o s w o r t h, *Arab Attacks on Rhodes in the Pre-Ottoman Perios*, JRAS 6, 1996, pp. 157–164. There is a legend connected with Muʿāwiya's expedition to Rhodes, which says of the ordered to demolish the famous colossus, whose remains were allegedly sold to Jewish merchants. Cf. T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6145, p. 345.

[240] The expedition to the island of Kos in the same year seems to be the best evidence, see: A.M. F a h m y, *Muslim Sea-Power in the Eastern Mediterranean from the Seventh to the Tenth Century AD*, Cairo 1966, pp. 84–85. Soon the Arabs captured the island of Chios, thus opening up a way to Constantinople, see: E. E i c k h o f f, *Seekrieg und Seepolitik zwischen Islam und Abendland. Das Mittlemeer unter byzantinischer und arabischer Hegemonie (650–1040)*, Berlin 1966, p. 22.

[241] *Ibidem*.

[242] *Ibidem*, p. 14sqq.

[243] Ph. M a y e r s o n, *The Port of Clysma (Suez) in Transition from Roman to Arab Rule*, JNES 55, 1996, pp. 119–126.

those cities (two less important ones were in Babylon and Damietta)[244] as well as the skills of Christian specialists and workers, the Egyptian administration was able to build a fleet of ca. 200–250 ships as early as 700 AD[245].

The second strategic point in the Mediterranean which found itself in the orbit of Muslim interest was Crete. The first raid of Arab ships on Crete took place in 653/654 and another in 674/675[246], i.e. at the same time as when the fleet of the caliphate showed up at Constantinople. Still, the Arabs were not able to capture the island at that time. A Muslim naval base was established in Crete as late as during the reign of Al-Walīd (705–715)[247]. Contrary to Cyprus, Crete was not totally subordinated to the caliphate[248].

The naval superiority of the Arabs in the 650s gave fruit in further expansion, not only in the eastern part of the Mediterranean but around Italy and Sicily as well[249]. Theophanes suggests that the earliest Arab raid on Sicily took place in 662/663[250]. Older literature assumes, however, that the first one occurred ten years before that[251]. This hypothesis, based upon not too credible Latin and Arabic sources[252], has been questioned by other scholars, who proposed their own years: 662[253], 664[254], 666[255], 669/670[256]. Without going into details, we can say that no matter which date we accept (we cannot entirely exclude that the Arabs had already reached the Sicilian shores in the early 650s[257]), the Muslims could not have appeared in the Italian vicinity earlier than during Muʿāwiya's reign.

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[244] E. Eickhoff, *Seekrieg und Seepolitik...*, p. 15.

[245] A.M. Fahmy, *Muslim Sea-Power...*, p. 95sqq.

[246] Theophanes informs about the incursion of ʿAbdallah ibn Ḳays I and Faḍāla ibn ʿUbayd in 673/4. Theophanes, AM 6166, p. 354. See also: W.T. Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*, Stanford 1997, p. 313sqq.

[247] M. Canard, *Iḳrīṭish*, [in:] *EI*, vol. III, pp. 1082–1086.

[248] G.C. Miles, *Byzantium and the Arabs: Relations in Crete and the Aegean Area*, DOP 18, 1964, pp. 1–32.

[249] The presented reconstruction has been based upon the conclusions of: T. Wolińska, *Sycylia w polityce Cesarstwa Bizantyńskiego w VI–IX w.*, Łódź 2005, p. 195sqq.

[250] Theophanes, AM 6155, p. 348.

[251] E. Eickhoff, *Seekrieg und Seepolitik...*, p. 16sqq; Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, p. 506.

[252] T. Wolińska, *Sycylia w polityce...*, p. 195, footnote 28.

[253] D. Motta, *Politica dinastica e tensioni sociali nella Sicilia bizantina: da Constante II a Constantino IV*, Man 1/2, 1998, p. 673sqq.

[254] A.M. Fahmy, *Muslim Sea-Power...*, p. 116.

[255] P. Sebag, *Les expéditions maritimes arabes du VIII siècle*, CTu 9(31), 1960, p. 73.

[256] A. Stratos, *Byzance au VII^e siècle*, vol. II, transl. A. Lambert, Lausanne 1985, p. 218sqq.

[257] T. Wolińska, *Sycylia w polityce...*, p. 197.

Even if they were only looting raids[258] (which is not certain[259]), we can be amazed by the scale and range of Arab operations just a few years after building up their first Mediterranean fleet. Very soon after they attempted to capture the small island of Pantelleria, close to Sicily. They successfully captured the island ca. 700, but were ousted a short time later[260].

The Sicilian expansion was probably connected with the Arab interest in North Africa. The first Muslim expedition against that Byzantine province occurred in 646/647 according to Theophanes[261]. Only two years earlier the governor of Egypt, supported by the army, had suppressed a rebellion in Alexandria. The regular conquest of North Africa began in the mid-660s[262]. About 670 ʻUḳba ibn Nāfiʿ founded Kairuan (now in Tunisia), the first city-camp in that part of the empire[263]. ʻUḳba ibn Nāfiʿ commanded an army which operated in Africa until his death in 683[264]. The conquest was completed by Mūsa ibn Nuṣayr in 698. It was also then that the Arabs commenced building up another fleet in that area, after which the isles of Ibiza, Majorca and Menorca were captured[265]. We should remember that the conquest of North Africa was done by the army rather than the navy. But because the Byzantines possessed their navy, Mūsa had no choice but to build his own ships too.

Fortunately for Byzantium, the Arab domination on the sea, achieved by Al-Sarḥ in the mid-seventh century[266] was over by the first civil war (*fitna*) in the caliphate[267]. Because of it, no further Arab sea raids on Byzantine territories

[258] *Ibidem*, p. 198.

[259] There are accounts saying of 200 Arab ships sent to Sicily during the first expedition, see: E. Eickhoff, *Seekrieg und Seepolitik...*, p. 16.

[260] T. Wolińska, *Sycylia w polityce...*, p. 198.

[261] Theophanes, AM 6139, p. 343.

[262] E. Eickhoff, *Seekrieg und Seepolitik...*, p. 24; Ch. Diehl, *L'Afrique Byzantine*, Paris 1896, p. 566sqq.

[263] G. Marçais, *La Berbérie musulmane et l'Orient au Moyen Age*, Paris 1946, p. 29sqq.

[264] J. Conant, *Staying Roman. Conquest and Identity in Africa and the Mediterranean 439–700*, Cambridge– New York 2012, p. 280sqq.

[265] On the conquest of Africa: R. Brunchvig, *Ibn Abd al-Hakam et la conquète de l'Afrique du Nord par les Arabes*, And 40, 1975, pp. 129–179; A. Benabbés, *Les premiers raids arabes en Numidie byzantine: questions toponymiques*, [in:] *Identités et Cultures dans l'Algérie Antique*, ed. C. Briand-Ponsart, Rouen–Hâvre 2005, p. 459–492; Y. Modéran, *Kusayla, l'Afrique et les Arabes*, [in:] *ibidem*, pp. 423–457; W.E. Kaegi, *Muslim Expansion and Byzantine Collapse in North Africa*, Cambridge 2010.

[266] V. Christides, *The Naval Engagement of Dhat as-Sawari AH 34/AD 655–656*, Byz 13, 1985, pp. 1331–1345. The scholar maintains that also from the point of view of technology the Battle of the Masts was a milestone which drew a line between antiquity and the Middle Ages.

[267] G.R. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam. The Umayyad Caliphate AD 661–750*, Carbondale–Edwardsville 1987, pp. 24–33; Ph.K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów...*, pp. 152–155;

were recorded in the decade following the Battle of the Masts (*Dhāt Al-Ṣawāri*) near the city of Phoenix in Lycia. That gave Emperor Constans II time for his vital reforms.

The first of the expeditions following the *fitna* was that of 664–665, led by Busra ibn Abī Arṭāt to an unnamed place on the coast of Asia Minor[268]. The next operations of the Arab navy took place during the first siege of Constantinople.

Now seems the right moment to discuss the issue of the differences and similarities between the Arab navy and the Byzantine navy. Alas, the information regarding their ships is fragmentary and highly incomplete. Still, it is possible to say on the basis of some tenth century sources that the Byzantine *dromon* ship had its close Muslim counterpart named *shine*. Some Arab historians emphasize that both types of ships looked like twins[269]. Similarly, a variant of the *dromon* used for transporting horses, known as *cheladion* and produced for the first time in the eighth century, was promptly copied by the Arabs and called *shalandī*[270]. The similarities were not just in the construction, but also the way in which they were used in battle[271] and navigation[272].

It is not astonishing, considering that Arab ships were made by Christians from Egypt and Syria. In regards to the former, we have partial information only. We know that caliph ʻAbd al-Mālik ibn Marwān ordered ʻAbd al-ʼAzīz, his brother and governor of Egypt, to invite about a thousand Copts to Tunis in order to help Hasān ibn al-Nuʻmān build a local fleet[273]. The information

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H. K e n n e d y, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates. The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century*, London–New York 2004, pp. 75–81; D. M a d e y s k a, *Historia świata arabskiego...*, pp. 147–152; J.J. S a u n d e r s, *A History of Medieval Islam*, London 1965, pp. 59–67.

[268] L. C a e t a n i, *Chronographia Islamica...*, p. 493; R.-J. L i l i e, *Die byzantinische Reaktion auf die Ausbreitung der Araber. Studien zur Strukturwandlung des byzantinischen Staates im 7. und 8. Jahrhunderts*, München 1976, p. 69.

[269] V. C h r i s t i d e s, *Byzantine Dromon and Arab Shini: The Development of the Average Byzantine and Arab Warships and the Problem of the Number and Function of the Oarsmen*, [in:] *Tropis III, 3rd International Symposium on Ship Construction in Antiquity, Athens 1989 Proceedings*, ed. H. T z a l a s, Athens 1995, p. 114sqq.

[270] J.H. P r y o r, E.M. J e f f r e y s, *The Age of the Dromon. The Byzantine Navy ca. 500–1204*, Leiden 2011, p. 168sqq.

[271] V. C h r i s t i d e s, *Two Parallel Naval Guides of the Tenth Century: 'Qudarna's' Document and Leo VI's Naumachica. A Study on Byzantine and Moslem Naval Preparedness*, GA 1, 1982, pp. 51–103.

[272] I d e m, *Arab-Byzantine Struggle in the Sea: Naval Tactics (7th–11th Centuries AD). Theory and Practice*, [in:] *Aspects of Arab Seafaring*, eds. Y.Y. a l - H i j j i, V. C h r i s t i d e s, Athens 2002, pp. 87–106.

[273] P. S e b a g, *Les travaux maritimes de Hasan Ibn Nu'man*, RIBLA 33, 1970, pp. 41–56.

is repeated in the Greek and Coptic papyri from the time when the Egyptian administration remained in the hands of Ḳurra ibn Sharīk (709–714). In a document numbered 1350[274] and dated in 710 AD, the governor demanded from a certain Basil, the pagarch of the city of Aphrodito, information about some Christian sailors who had participated in an expedition commanded by 'Aṭa' ibn Rāfiʿ (most probably against Sicily in 703 or 704). The said document contains an order for Basil to send sailors and shipbuilders to Alexandria. Other papyri inform of the orders for ships to be built by Coptic shipyard workers, mostly from Alexandria[275].

Christian workers and seamen used to build ships for the Arabs and were their crew until at least the ninth century. An interesting event took place about 853 when some Coptic shipbuilders were enrolled on board Muslim ships and had to serve as their crew in sea battles against the Byzantines. It does not seem that they were particularly willing to do so. The Coptic *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria* informs that they did not receive payment and served only for food. It is possible that they were forced to serve[276].

We must add that imitating Byzantine ships did not mean that the Arabs lacked their own sailing traditions. In pre-Muslim Arabia there existed several types of ships, such as *khalāyā*, *qādis* or *būṣī*[277]. Analyzing the sources regarding Muslim expansion in Persia, we find that naval operations took place there earlier than those against Byzantium[278]. One of the first was as early as 637 in the Sasanide province of Fars (Greek Persida)[279]. In the first half of the seventh century there were raids on the harbours of Daybul (on the coast of Sind)[280] and on Aksum in Africa[281]. Those first expeditions were merely looting raids rather than planned naval operations. Nevertheless caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb had

[274] *Appendix of Coptic Papyri*, ed. W.E. C r u m, [in:] *Greek Papyri in the British Museum. Catalogue, with Texts*, vol. IV, ed. H.I. B e l l, London 1910, p. 25.

[275] *Appendix of Coptic Papyri...*, p. 435sqq.

[276] Further discussion can be found in: A. A l l o u c h e, *Coptic Contribution to Umayyad Fleet*, [in:] *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, vol. VII, ed. A.S. A t i y a, New York 1991, p. 2286.

[277] D.A. A g i u s, *Classic Ships of Islam. From Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean*, Leiden–Boston 2008, p. 277sqq.

[278] For more on that, see: D.A. A g i u s, *Classic Ships of Islam...*, p. 246sqq; F. P i a c e n t i n i, *Arab Expeditions Overseas in the 7th century AD – Working Hypotheses on the Dissolution of the Sasanian State Apparatus along the Eastern Seaboard of the Arabian Peninsula*, PSAS 32, 2002, pp. 165–173.

[279] Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, V, 2545–6.

[280] F. P i a c e n t i n i, *Arab Expeditions Overseas...*, p. 165sqq.

[281] V. C h r i s t i d e s, *New Light on Navigation and Naval Warfare in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean (6th–14th centuries AD)*, Nu 3, 1993, p. 3–12.

a plan to establish a naval base on the island of Bahrain that could be used for sea campaigns against India or even China[282]. The necessity to have a fleet that would operate on the seas of the Persian Gulf was a response to the actions of Sassanid warships[283].

2.7. The Sieges of Constantinople

The campaigns in Asia Minor and the continuing expansion in the Mediterranean had still another objective in mind: the desire to capture and conquer the capital city of the Byzantine Empire – Constantinople. Apart from the two well-known campaigns in 674–678 and 717–718, there were several other expeditions against the imperial city undertaken at different stages of rivalry between the Umayyads and Byzantium.

2.7.1. Alleged Siege of 654/655

The first of those expeditions took place in 654. The invasion on Rhodes in 653/654 was probably part of the preparations for it. Muʿāwiya and his army set off for Cappadocia[284] supported from the sea by a huge fleet of ships built in the shipyards of Tripoli[285]. The fleet was commanded by ʻAbdullāh ibn Saʻad ibn Abī Al-Sarḥ, probably holding the post of the governor of Egypt[286]. Muʿāwiya must have been unsure about the strength of the Byzantine naval forces and the number of soldiers they were able to deploy. That is why he decided to take some precautions. He was right, as Constans II had collected a fleet twice as big as the Arab one. Estimates for the number of Byzantine vessels range from five hundred[287] to even one thousand[288]. The Byzantine and Muslim ships met near Phoenix Hills, not far from a harbour of the same name (in the vicinity of today's Antalya, Turkey). Despite having stronger forces, the Byzantines lost the battle, and Constans fled the battlefield. The fight went down in history as *Dhāt Al-Ṣawāri*, or the Battle of the Masts[289]. According to a later legend conveyed by

[282] Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, I, 2016.

[283] D.A. A g i u s, *Classic Ships of Islam...*, p. 248; F. P i a c e n t i n i, *Arab Expeditions Overseas...*, p. 167sqq.

[284] T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6146, p. 345.

[285] T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6146, p. 345.

[286] Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, I, 2867–1868.

[287] Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, I, 2867–1868.

[288] *Continuatio Hispana*, 38.

[289] More on the battle, see: Y.A. H a s h m i, *Dhatu' S-sawari. A Naval Engagement between the Arabs and Byzantines*, IQ 6, 1961, pp. 55–64; A. S t r a t o s, *The Naval Engagement of Phoenix*,

Al-Wāḳidī (whose testimony has been preserved by Al-Ṭabarī[290]), the ships of both fighting sides came so close that their masts hit one another and broke. Julius Wellhausen[291] has tried to refute that version based upon Theophanes' account: the battlefield was famous for growing cypresses, whose timber was ideal for making masts[292]. He has insisted, therefore, that the Arabic expression should rather be translated as *the battle at a mast-making place*. We can add that finding the location of the battle was not an easy task to do, and some scholars initially located it somewhere in Egypt[293].

Some scholars believe that the first raid on Constantinople may have taken place at the same time as the above battle. James Howard-Johnston[294], as well as S. O'Sullivan[295] and C. Zuckerman[296], who follow Howard-Johnston's analysis, have put forward a hypothesis based mostly on the account of Sebeos[297], who says that in 654 the Arab ships were pushed off from the capital of Byzantium[298]. The scholars differ, however, in dating the potential confrontation at Constantinople. The first says that it took place before the Battle of the Masts, while the other goes even further, maintaining that it had preceded the battle on the shores of Lycia[299]. Other researchers believe that despite the victory, the Arab fleet did not continue the course to Constantinople because of the lack of progress of the Muslim army[300]. We must remember that Muʿāwiya himself did not

[in:] *Charanis Studies. Essays in Honor of Peter Charanis*, ed. A.E. Laiou-Thomadakis, New Jersey 1980, pp. 229–247; V. Christides, *The Naval Engagement...*, pp. 1331–1345.

[290] Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, I, 2867–1868.

[291] J. Wellhausen, *Arab Wars with the Byzantines...*, p. 37sqq.

[292] Theophanes, AM 6207, p. 385.

[293] G. Weil, *Geschichte der Chalifen*, vol. I, Mannheim 1846, p. 162. The author must have been suggested by the fact that most of the Arab fleet came from Egypt.

[294] J. Howard-Johnston, *Commentary*, [in:] *The Armenian History attributed to Sebeos*, transl. R.W. Thomson, Liverpool 1999, pp. 274–276.

[295] S. O'Sullivan, *Sebeos' Account of an Arab Attack on Constantinople in 654*, BMGS 28, 2004, pp. 67–88.

[296] C. Zuckerman, *Learning from the Enemy and More: Studies in "Dark Centuries" Byzantium*, Mil 2, 2005, pp. 79–135.

[297] The planned expedition to Constantinople in 650s has been mentioned also by Theophanes (AM 6146, p. 345).

[298] Leone Caetani (*Chronographia Islamica I*, Roma 1912, p. 338) has put together the account of Sebeos and those of Al-Wāḳidī and Al-Yaʿḳūbī, in which there is information about an expedition conducted by Muʿāwiya himself, which reached the Bosphorus and clashed with Byzantine ships. Both authors date the battle on 652/653.

[299] Information about the attack on Constantinople can probably be found also in *David's Pseudo-Apocalypsis*, see: S. Cosetino, *Constans II and the Byzantine Navy*, BZ 100, 2007, pp. 591–592.

[300] J. Wellhausen, *Arab Wars with the Byzantines...*, p. 38.

participate in the operation at sea, as he commanded the expedition in Cappadocian Caesarea. The lack of any other written record, except that of Theophanes, allows us to suppose that the expedition was not fully successful[301]. We can suspect, therefore, that even if the Arab ships approached Constantinople, their task was for reconnaissance only. Yet, even a cautious hypothesis like that may be fairly risky, considering the size of the Byzantine fleet, which was at least twice as big as that of the Arabs.

2.7.2. Alleged Siege of the 660s

According to Theophanes[302], a mutiny by Saborius, the *strategos* of Armenia and an official of Persian origin (Michael the Syrian calls him Sabur Aprasit'gan[303]), took place against Constans at the end of 666. Saborius, seeking allies against the empire, sent one of his officers, named Sergios, to Muʿāwiya. Theophanes maintains that Saborius promised the caliph to subordinate Byzantium to the caliphate, provided that the caliph supported his pretences to the throne[304]. When Constantine, who was staying at Constantinople *in lieu* of his absent father (Constans II was in Sicily then), learned of Sergios' mission, he promptly sent his own envoy, *cubicularius* Andrew to Muʿāwiya. The confrontation of both envoys sounds fairly interesting as the caliph did not try to make the character of the negotiations a secret. *Both of you are my enemies*, he would say, *So I will support the one who will give me more*. Saborius won the confrontation, and Muʿāwiya dispatched an army commanded by Faḍāla ibn ʻUbayd. However, before Faḍāla reached Hexapolis, Saborius died from falling off his horse.

When Faḍāla arrived in the city and learned of Saborius' death, he sent to Muʿāwiya for further orders. The caliph sent back his son, Yazīd, with extra troops. According to Theophanes, they started a march on Chalcedon. On their way they took numerous prisoners, but most likely did not achieve any significant military success. Still, on their way back they captured Amorion, an important city in Phrygia, and left there a garrison of five thousand men. The very fact that they left soldiers in a non-destroyed city in large numbers suggests that the Muslims were planning to continue the campaign in Asia Minor the following year. The Byzantines must have been aware of the danger of losing an important city located on the main trade route in Asia Minor. That is why in the winter the emperor ordered *cubicularius* Andrew to recapture the fortress, an order he

[301] Theophanes, AM 6146, pp. 345–346.
[302] Theophanes, AM 6159, pp. 348–350.
[303] Michael the Syrian, vol. II, p. 451.
[304] Theophanes, AM 6159, pp. 348–349.

fulfilled in an excellent way. Theophanes says that all five thousand of the Arab soldiers were slaughtered.

This is all we can learn from the chronographer's account. Summing up, the expedition must have been a big one, as it succeeded in capturing Amorion (which Maslama could not do during the biggest of all expeditions against the Byzantine capital in 716). Yet it stopped at Chalcedon, and instead of continuing to march on Constantinople, the expedition took to plundering. This fact is emphasized by Theophanes, who tells of *numerous captives* as he typically does when describing other Arab raids that strictly involved looting.

The events of that expedition, in which caliph's son, Yazīd took part, have been presented differently in the sources of Arab or Syriac origin, as well as in the sources coming from Spain, which in the mid-eighth century was already under Arab rule. The *Continuatio Hispana*[305] tells of a campaign of a hundred thousand men under Yazīd's command whose goal was to conquer Constantinople. A part of this chronicle informs us that the Arabs stood *all spring* near the Byzantine capital, but they had to withdraw because of hunger and disease. Then, according to the same account, they went around plundering Asia Minor for another three years. Albeit Kenneth Baxter Wolf, the editor, suggests that the above pertains to the siege of 674–678, its author clearly points out that the siege lasted for only one season, and the events took place in some unidentified area between Constantinople and Damascus through which Yazīd's army was returning.

The capital of the empire was to be the target of that expedition also according to some Syriac[306] and Arabic sources. Al-Ṭabarī insists that the expedition finally reached Constantinople. He gives the names of some of its participants, including Ibn 'Abbas ibn 'Umar, Ibn Al-Zubayr and Abū Ayyūb Al-Ansārī, one of the most famous companions of the Prophet[307]. Ibn al-Athīr complements that account with some interesting details. According to him, Yazīd did not participate in the campaign from the beginning. The Arab army suffered want and hunger while at Chalcedon. The caliph's son would only later join the expedition, along with the representatives of the most prominent families of Medina.

A couple of words ought to be said regarding the problem of dating events. As we see in the title of this subchapter, there are three alternative dates of the discussed events, each of which is equally possible. The first comes from the works by Theodor Nöldeke, who on the basis of Syriac accounts has come

[305] *Continuatio Hispana*, 39.

[306] Th. N ö l d e k e, *Zur Geschichte der Araber im 1. Jahrh. d.H. aus Syrischen Quellen*, ZDMG 29, 1876, p. 96sqq.

[307] Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, II, 86.

to the conclusion that Yazīd's campaign against Constantinople may have taken place in 974 of the Syriac calendar, i.e. in 622/623 AD. Al-Ṭabarī informs us that the siege was likely to occur between 668 and 669 AD. The year 666/667, in turn, can be found in Theophanes, who indirectly suggests that the fight in Asia Minor extended until 668. Describing the mutiny of Saborius, the chronicler says that Andrew was sent to talk with Muʿāwiya by Constantine (on behalf of the emperor). But in telling of the efforts to recapture Amorion, Theophanes writes that it was Andrew's second mission. As we know, Constans was killed in Sicily. So it is difficult to believe that having entrusted the affairs of the East to Constantine, Constans would personally intervene in the problem of any fortress. We can suppose, therefore, that between the first and the second mission of Andrew there must have occurred a change on the imperial throne. When Constantine sent Andrew to regain the fortress, he was the emperor himself. It is interesting that Al-Balādhurī dates the attack of Byzantine navy on the coast of Syria for 668–669[308]. This would suggest an earlier termination of the campaign at Chalcedon or Constantinople. We can doubt that the Byzantines would deploy any forces to Syria when facing a real danger to their capital city. It is more likely that the naval expedition had something to do with Andrew's attempt to recapture Amorion. One thing speaks against such a hypothesis: the fact that Andrew captured the fortress at the turn of winter into spring, a season unsuitable for naval expeditions.

To close our discussion, we can mention the opinion of Julius Wellhausen, who says that we cannot find a single word about the operations of the Muslim navy in any of the above descriptions. It is difficult to believe that the Muslims would undertake a campaign against a city famous for its perfect sea location without any naval support[309]. The lack of evidence may suggest that Yazīd's expedition was a reconnaissance mission only.

2.7.3. The Siege of Constantinople of 674–678

The issue of the so-called first siege of Constantinople raises numerous questions. It is not clear if Arab land forces also participated in it. With regards to the caliphate's navy, the question remains if its operations can be called a "siege" at all. If, on the other hand, it was only a blockade, it seems worthwhile to think about its efficiency. The duration of the siege/blockade, as well as the officially accepted chronology of events[310] is also problematic.

[308] J. Wellhausen, *Arab Wars with the Byzantines...*, p. 41.

[309] *Ibidem*.

[310] R.-J. Lilie, *Die byzantinische Reaktion...*, p. 76, footnote 61.

The written records concerning the events which took place by the walls of Constantinople can be found in various Byzantine, Arabic and Syriac sources. The former are represented mostly by Theophanes' *Chronographia*, upon which later writers, such as George the Monk[311] or Zonaras[312] based their works. According to their accounts, the described events were in fact separate sea operations by particular Arab leaders. In 670/671, there was an expedition under the leadership of Faḍāla ibn 'Ubayd, who wintered over at Cyzikus[313]. The same date can be found in Al-Ṭabarī as well[314]. The following year[315] Theophanes records a land expedition of the already mentioned Busra Ibn Abī Arṭāt. Based on Byzantine records, the campaign which finally reached the capital city, commenced in 672–673[316]. A year earlier a fleet commanded by Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh was moving along the shores of Cilicia and wintered over near Smyrna, on the west coast of Asia Minor[317]. In the spring of 673 the Arab ships were anchored near Constantinople, somewhere between Hebdomon (seven miles from the city) and Kyklobion, a fortress east of Hebdomon[318]. Having established a base, the Arab fleet started raids in the direction of the Harbour of Theodosius[319], situated on the south coast of Constantinople. According to Theophanes, that harbour was the base for the imperial fleet that was built just a few years earlier[320]. It was also the place of a battle with Byzantine ships. Theophanes maintains that the struggle lasted from April to September. Then the Arabs withdrew to Kizikos on the Asian side of the strait and spent another winter there. The Byzantine chronographer insists that the struggle for Constantinople was seven years long. Only after that time did the Arabs decide to leave for good. And during the withdrawal their ships were destroyed by a storm.

The Arab sources are not as consistent as Theophanes' account. They look more like a group of separate records, which put together tell an inaccurate story of the siege. As it has been said before, Al-Ṭabarī has written of the expedition of Faḍāla ibn 'Ubayd in 670. Al-Balādhurī has recorded that in 676 the Arabs, un-

[311] George the Monk, pp. 727–728 (ed. C. de Boor).

[312] John Zonaras, pp. 317–351.

[313] Theophanes, AM 6162, p. 352.

[314] For more on that, see: E.W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor...*, p. 186.

[315] Theophanes, AM 6163, p. 353.

[316] Theophanes, AM 6165, p. 353.

[317] Theophanes, AM 6164, p. 353.

[318] R. Janin, *Constantinople Byzantine. Développement urbain et repertoire topographique*, Paris 1950, p. 139.

[319] K. Marinow, *Porty*, [in:] *Konstantynopol – Nowy Rzym. Miasto i ludzie w okresie wczesnobizantyńskim*, eds. M.J. Leszka, T. Wolińska, Warszawa 2011, pp. 151–157.

[320] Theophanes, AM 6164, p. 353.

der the leadership of Djunāda ibn Abī Umayya, occupied some place called *Arwad*, located opposite Constantinople[321]. That has been confirmed by Al-Ṭabarī, who relies on Al-Wāḳidī's account[322]. According to the narration of Al-Yaʿḳūbī, the expedition of Yazīd, son of Muʿāwiya, took place in 675/676[323]. Al-Ṭabarī supplements the above information by saying that Yazīd ibn Saghāra was responsible for the naval portion of the expedition[324]. As the invasion progressed, the Arabs came close to the capital city of the empire and Yazīd spent the winter in Byzantine territory[325]. According to Al-Yaʿḳūbī, he died at sea in 677/678, perhaps following an encounter with the Byzantine fleet[326].

Syriac writers, Agapius and Elias of Nisibis, also write about Busr's campaign against Byzantium[327]. The latter adds that there was a parallel army expedition of Muʿāwiya's son at the same time. Michael the Syrian has noted that the Arabs appeared on the shores of Lycia and Cilicia in 674. Exactly in the same year there would come to a battle between the navies of the caliphate and the empire[328]. He also informs us, along with Agapius, that the Byzantines used the Greek fire during the battle. Michael named a certain Callinicus of Baalbek as the developer of the formula. Importantly, Agapius and Michael both write that in 676/677 the Byzantines succeeded in organizing a sea expedition to the Syrian coast, namely to the area of Tyre and Sidon.

So far the most complete discussion about the first siege of Constantinople has been presented by Andreas Stratos. For this reason it is recommended to test the source material discussed above against the hypothesis of this scholar. Stratos proposes to classify the siege of Constantinople as a sea blockade. To support his thesis he quotes the information about city size. The Byzantine capital had an estimated population of five hundred thousand. However, that estimate may be inaccurate considering economic stagnation, the epidemics in the sixth century and continuous Persian and Arab raids. Taking into account the number of inhabitants in the city and the size of the Arab naval forces (up to five hundred ships with crews totalling 10 to 15 thousand), the scholar concludes that it was not possible to mount a successful siege with such small forces[329]. He emphasizes

[321] Balādhurī, *Liber*, p. 376.
[322] Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, II, p. 163.
[323] Yaʿḳūbī, p. 258 (ed. T. Houtsma).
[324] Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, II, p. 181.
[325] A. Stratos, *Siège ou blocus de Constantinople sous Constantin IV*, JÖB 33, 1983, p. 93.
[326] *Ibidem*, pp. 93–94.
[327] Agapius, p. 491; Elias of Nisibis, p. 70.
[328] Michael the Syrian, vol. II, p. 455.
[329] A. Stratos, *Siège ou blocus...*, pp. 95–96.

that very few sources tell about the participation of the army in the attack on Constantinople[330]. We should say, however, that the number of soldiers cited by Stratos is not certain. Firstly, Theophanes says that the Byzantines, commanded by Phloris, Petronas and Ciprianus were able to defeat thirty thousand Arabs of Sufyān ibn ʿAwf[331]. Secondly, the structure of *Chronographia*, in which we at first find information about the destruction of the Arab fleet and a hurricane at Syllaion in Pamphilia[332] and only subsequently about the battle with the Arab army, may suggest that there were strong land forces which besieged Constantinople. Interestingly, Stratos himself admits that it is difficult to call the siege of Constantinople a blockade, as the Arab ships managed to cut off only one of the Byzantine supply lines – that from the Aegean Sea. The routes to the northern coast of Asia Minor remained open all the time. It should also be admitted that the blockade would be a joke without collaborating land forces.

An interesting solution to the mystery of the siege of Constantinople has recently been put forward by Marek Jankowiak[333]. Relying on the research of Robert G. Hoyland regarding Theophile of Edessa[334] and of J. Howard-Johnston about Traian Patricius[335] and taking into account the works of Theophanes, the scholar, proposes an entirely different reconstruction of the Byzantine-Arab struggle by the walls of the empire's capital. According to him, Theophanes' description of the siege was a compilation of the works of Theophile and Traian. Putting together some selected passages from both earlier writers, Theophanes obtained a narration about the events at Constantinople. According to this hypothesis, Theophile described the operations of the Arab navy during 670–673, ending with the failure of Sufyān ibn ʿAwf's expedition. Traian's account reported the events which happened three or four years later. The campaign, which ended with the destruction of the Arab fleet at Syllaion, forced Muʿāwiya to seek peace, according to Jankowiak. The scholar thinks that the main siege should be associated with the raid of Muʿāwiya's son, Yazīd in the late 660s. Jankowiak dates the event, whose authenticity we cannot even be sure of, to the years 667–669. The researcher reminds us that in the papers of the third council of Constantinople, which proceeded in 680–681, we find information about fail-

[330] *Ibidem*, p. 95.

[331] Theophanes, AM 6165, p. 354.

[332] Theophanes, AM 6165, p. 354.

[333] M. Jankowiak, *The First Arab Siege of Constantinople*, TM 17, 2013, pp. 237–322.

[334] R.G. Hoyland, *Introduction*, [in:] *Theophilus of Edessa's Chronicle and the Circulation of Historical Knowledge in Late Antiquity and Early Islam*, ed. idem, Liverpool 2011, p. VIsqq.

[335] J. Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World Crisis. Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century*, Oxford 2010, p. 306.

ing communication between the patriarch of Constantinople, Thomas II, and pope Vitalian[336]. The documents tell us that Rome and the capital of the patriarchate could not communicate due to the *intrusion and proximity of ungodly Saracens*. Patriarch Thomas occupied the seat for two years, in 667–669, and for all that time he was unable to contact the pope. Jankowiak thinks that is evidence that a serious Muslim siege and sea blockade was taking place at that time. To buttress his hypothesis the scholar quotes a Spanish chronicle of 754, according to which Yazīd, son of Muʿāwiya, was to besiege Constantinople then. Accepting the fact that the narration could not concern the siege of 674–678 we must remark that Jankowiak ignores that the author of the source clearly points out how long Yazīd and his army remained near Constantinople: it was for a few months of spring. Then they had to withdraw because of hunger. Jankowiak tries to combine this information with the account of the council, according to which the author of the chronicle maintained that plundering around the city had lasted for two years. It is not certain though, if it was in the vicinity of Constantinople – Yazīd could organize raids to various parts of Asia Minor.

As we see, all attempts to make a consistent narrative about the events discussed above have failed. This cannot be surprising, considering the complexity of the source material. It seems that new theories can easily be refuted with the current state of knowledge. Perhaps, following the advice of Cyril Mango and Roger Scott, we should just keep writing about a few separate clashes near the imperial capital or perhaps even of a few separate attacks on Constantinople[337].

2.7.4. The Siege of Constantinople of 717–718[338]

The most comprehensive and detailed information about the siege of Constantinople of 717–718 has been left by Theophanes the Confessor, and it is his account that will be presented as the basic source in this part of the chapter. The Byzantine historian tells about the preparations for war by both parties in the conflict, as early as in 713/714[339]. He mentions a mission sent by emperor Anastasius II (Artemius) to caliph Al-Walīd. The mission was led by Daniel Sinopites, *patrikios* and city prefect. The reasons for sending the envoy were the ru-

[336] *ACO*, ser. II, vol. II, p. 612sqq.

[337] *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284–813*, eds. C. M a n g o, R. S c o t t, G. G r e a t r e x, Oxford 1997, p. 494, footnote 4.

[338] These considerations are based on: B. C e c o t a, *Wybrane zagadnienia arabskiej wyprawy na Konstantynopol w latach 717–718*, [in:] *Księga Pamiątkowa XV. Ogólnopolskiego Zjazdu Historyków Studentów*, vol. I, ed. J. W a l i c k i, Łódź 2008, pp. 37–50.

[339] T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6206, p. 383.

mours that *the Arabs reach for arms against Rome on land and sea*. Theophanes writes that peace negotiations were just a pretext, and Sinopites' main task was to collect information about the status of Arab preparations for war. When Sinopites returned with the information that the caliph was mobilizing substantial forces, Anastasius began to collect *as many as he was able to*, as well. The Byzantines began to reinforce the city walls and build *dromons* and other ships. They also amassed supplies for the city, turning private warehouses into imperial depots. R. Guilland thinks that the chains which blocked the entry to the Golden Horn were established during Anastasius' reign[340].

The caliph's army concentrated at Dābik near Aleppo. We have no information about its size. None of the data left by particular chroniclers seems reliable. Michel the Syrian writes about two hundred thousand warriors with twelve thousand pack animals. Bar Hebraeus adds information about thirty thousand experienced soldiers. Armenian historian Asolik of Taron tells of five hundred thousand men. According to Al-Ṭabarī, the Arab army counted a hundred and eighty thousand warriors[341]. Interestingly, the Islamic tradition of ḥadīth quotes exactly the same number, referring to the forces of ten Christian rulers (including Rome, Constantinople and Armenia) setting off to final war against the Muslims and Syria, which will precede the Apocalypse[342]. Although the above figures seem exaggerated, it is obvious that the forces must have been big, considering the goal of the campaign.

When Sulaymān, who was appointed Commander-in-Chief, fell ill in Dābik, he had to hand over the command to his half-brother, Maslama. Theophanes dates the beginning of campaign to 715/716; so the army must have left Dābik in September 715. We should pay attention to the route of Maslama's troops. Theophanes reports that the Arab forces were made up of two armies, each of which operated independently[343]. The first army was commanded by Sulaymān (most probably Sulaymān ibn Mu'ādh) and Baccharos, whose name can be associated with Baqtari ibn Al-Ḥassan. The second army remained under

[340] The author does not speak entirely for the fact that the chains were installed during the reign of that emperor. He says that it may have taken place already under Tiberius III, who reigned in 698–705. See: R. Guilland, *Chaine de la Corne 'Or*, [in:] idem, *Études Byzantines*, Paris 1959, p. 263.

[341] On the strength of the Arab army see: R. Guilland, *L'expédition de Maslama contre Constantinople (717–718)*, [in:] *ibidem*, p. 110; D. Madeyska, *Wojny arabsko-bizantyjskie*, POrient 103, 1977, p. 193.

[342] Ṭayālisī, 133; Ibn Ḥanbal, 5/278 (ed. Beirut–Rijad 1988). See: S. Bashear, *Apocalyptic and Other Materials on Early Muslim-Byzantine Wars: A Review of Arabic Sources*, [in:] *The Formation of the Classical Islamic World*, vol. VIII, *Arab-Byzantine Relations in Early Islamic Times*, ed. M. Bonner, Aldershot–Burlington 2004, p. 190sqq.

[343] Theophanes, AM 6208, p. 386.

the command of Maslama himself. It is likely that Sulaymān's troops entered Asia Minor through the Cilician Gates. His army, as suggested by J. Kulakovskij[344], may have been composed exclusively of cavalry units. They may have played only a supporting role, providing protection to the main Arab forces from the north. Maslama collaborated with the navy, which participated in the expedition as well. The fleet was commanded by 'Umar, called *Oumaros* by Theophanes. It was probably 'Umar ibn Hubayra, recorded also by Al-Ya'ḳūbī (as an admiral), by Al-Ṭabarī (as commanding the siege of Amorion) and in the *Kitāb al-'Uyūn*[345].

Having arrived at Amorion, Sulaymān wrote a letter to the strategos of the theme of Anatolikon, Leo, and invited him to peace negotiations[346]. Leo joined in the game and sat down at the table. In this way he bought the time necessary for reinforcements and preparations to defend the city. However, it is doubtful that he ever really intended to sign any permanent agreement with the invaders. The negotiations eventually failed, and Sulaymān committed suicide after being accused of collaborating with the Byzantines[347].

We must emphasize that the accounts in both the Arab sources and *Chronographia* do not provide details about the agreement between Leo and the Muslims. On the one hand we have a twisted and inaccurate narration, and on the other most Arabic accounts simply suggest that Leo promised to give authority over Constantinople to the Muslims. Most important, however, is the fact that the agreement between Leo and the Arabs cannot be questioned. The course of events, free of Byzantine and Muslim interpretations, clearly points that out.

After the failed negotiations with Maslama, Leo set off to Nicomedia, where he imprisoned Theodosius' son. Then he moved to Chrysopolis and through patriarch Germanus began negotiations to take over the throne[348]. The question that arises is how that was possible with the Arab army behind him. The Arabs, however, for some reason did not take the shortest way to Constantinople like Leo did. From a strategic point of view they wasted their time and set off to the west, to Sardes and Pergamon[349]. The negotiations were

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[344] Ju. Kulakovskij, *Istorija Vizantii*, vol. III, London 1973, p. 326.

[345] R. Guilland, *L'expédition de Maslama...*, p. 111.

[346] Theophanes, AM 6208, p. 387.

[347] R. Guilland, *L'expédition de Maslama...*, p. 126.

[348] M.J. Leszka, *Uzurpacje w cesarstwie bizantyńskim w okresie od IV do połowy IX w.*, Łódź 1999, pp. 102–103; W. Treadgold, *Seven Byzantine Revolutions and the Chronology of Theophanes*, GRBS 31, 1990, pp. 222–223.

[349] *Chronicles up to 819/846*, AG 1028, p. 80. See: W. Brandes, *Apokalyptisches in Pergamon*, Bsl 48, 1987, pp. 1–11; B. Cecota, *Wybrane zagadnienia...*, p. 46; M.G. Varvounis, *Une pratique de magie byzantine et la Preis de Pergame par les Arabes*, B 68, 1998, pp. 148–156.

successful for Leo and in March 717, he became emperor after Theodosius' abdication[350].

Michael the Syrian insists that breaking the promise which Leo had made to the Arabs, was the reason for their attack on Constantinople. It does not mean that the capital city would go into the hands of the Muslims[351]. Maslama may have just wanted Leo to seize power in Byzantium. As a representative of the Umayyads, Maslama was certainly interested in the news from the Damascene court, which indeed was not good. Sulaymān was not a popular figure there[352]. For that reason Maslama intended to terminate the campaign as quickly as possible: he wanted to take control of the situation inside the caliphate. Moreover, negotiations like that were not unusual in Arab policy in the conquered areas. The Muslims were not only in contact with the local elite (e.g. in Alexandria and Jerusalem), but also with various rulers and pretenders, like in Persia, Armenia[353] and the Nubian kingdoms[354].

As it has been said before, when the Arabs were advancing in Asia Minor, the situation in the capital of the empire changed. The power was taken over by Leo, who was crowned by patriarch Germanus. Theophanes says that Maslama, having spent winter in Asia, expected the new ruler to keep his promise. But when none of Leo's envoys arrived, Maslama resolved to attack Constantinople[355]. Having crossed the strait in a place fairly distant from the city, he moved on, destroyed an unnamed fortress on his way and stopped right under the Theodosian walls[356]. The siege began on the 15 August. Maslama's camp was surrounded by a wall of stone and soil[357].

Sulaymān arrived by sea on the 1 September. He probably took over the command from 'Umar. After the mention of him wintering in Cilicia, 'Umar

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[350] W. Treadgold, *Seven Byzantine Revolutions...*, pp. 223–227.

[351] On the Arab accounts of that, see: M. Canard, *Les expeditions des Arabes contre Constaninople dans l'histoire et dans la legende*, JA 208, 1926, pp. 94–105; R. Guilland, *L'expédition de Maslama...*, pp. 130–133.

[352] On the reign of Sulaymān, see: G.R. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam...*, pp. 73–75; D. Madeyska, *Historia świata arabskiego...*, pp. 180–181.

[353] On the history of Armenia under Arab rule, see: W.E. Kaegi, *Byzantium...*, pp. 181–204; M.V. Krivov, *Vizantija i araby v rannem srednevekov'e*, Sankt-Peterburg 2002, pp. 87–129; V.M. Kurkjian, *A History of Armenia*, New York 1958, pp. 173–185; M. Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *Historia Armenii*, Wrocław 1977, pp. 58–61.

[354] V. Christides, *Sudanese at the Time of the Arab Conquest of Egypt*, BZ 75, 1982, pp. 6–13.

[355] Theophanes, AM 6209, p. 395.

[356] E. Eickhoff, *Seekrieg und Seepolitik...*, p. 33.

[357] Theophanes, AM 6209, p. 395.

does not appear any more in the sources[358]. Theophanes maintains that the Arab fleet was 800 ships strong. That figure may be exaggerated. We must remember, though, that Theophanes does not state precisely what kind of ships they were. That number may have included auxiliary vessels as well as very small ones.

Sulaymān dropped anchor somewhere between Magnaura and Kyklobion[359], waiting for favourable winds. He moved on after two days. Some of his ships anchored in the Strait of Bosphorus, while the remaining ships anchored near Chalcedon, by the Harbour of Eutropius. The operation was intended to block up the Bosphorus. Having noticed operating Arab ships, Leo ordered his dromons to attack. The attack inflicted heavy losses on the Arab fleet. Some Muslim vessels ended up in shallow waters by the islands of Oxia and Plateia. Theophanes says that the victory did not bring about substantial advantages to the city, as the Arabs continued to anchor their ships in the Bosphorus, in the Bay of Sosthenios.

Having presented the operations at sea, *Chronographia* describes the winter. The weather conditions in Thracia were fairly harsh that year. Theophanes maintains that the ground under the snow could not be seen for a hundred days. As a result the Arabs sustained big losses in horses, camels and other animals. The cold weather also brought hunger to the invaders.

In the spring of 718 Maslama received reinforcements of two new fleets. The first, led by Sufyān, came from Egypt and was 400 ships strong. We have no information about the size of the other fleet, under the commanded of Yazīd. Fearing the Greek fire[360], both fleets anchored some distance from the city: Sufyān in Kalos Agros and Yazīd on the Sea of Marmara, by Kartalimen, Bryas and Satyros. Theophanes reports that some Christian sailors from the fleets decided to flee to Constantinople as they did not intend to fight against their brothers in faith[361]. Having learnt of the new ships, Leo again sent dromons against them. The battle ended up in an overwhelming victory for the Byzantines.

At the same time on land the Byzantines defeated a troop commanded by Mardasan[362], whose goal was most probably to obtain food and supplies for the Muslim forces[363]. It must be emphasized that Mardasan's raid started from

[358] R. Guilland, *L'expédition de Maslama...*, p. 111.

[359] The places named in that part of work can be found on the maps in: R. Janin, *Constantinople Byzantine...*, pl. VIII, IX, XI, XIII, XV.

[360] A unique and quite mysterious Byzantine weapon, supposed to be invented by Callinicus. It was a flammable material whose components are still not precisely known. Cf. E. McGeer, *Grek Fire*, [in:] *ODB*, vol. II, p. 873.

[361] Theophanes, AM 6209, p. 397.

[362] Theophanes, AM 6209, p. 397.

[363] R. Guilland, *L'expédition de Maslama...*, p. 122.

the city of Pylai in Bithynia on the Asiatic coast. Is seems that another, smaller Arab camp was situated there. The Byzantine unit which defeated Mardasan could not have belonged to the forces defending the city. This clearly shows that there were Byzantine troops operating outside the city walls, whose task was to prevent enemy military actions, or at least make them difficult to accomplish.

As a result of those operations and of the destruction the two auxiliary fleets, the invaders faced hunger[364]. Colourful descriptions by Theophanes, Dionysius of Tel Mahre and Michael the Syrian clearly point out its scale. Despite that, it is difficult to say if their hunger was the deciding factor for quitting the siege. Theophanes writes that when 'Umar II (son of 'Abd Al-'Azīz) became caliph, he ordered Maslama to withdraw. The order was carried out on the 15 August. According to Theophanes, 'Umar had already taken power on the 8 October of the previous year. That information implies that the new caliph did not issue the order to withdraw as quickly as it is presented in the Arab sources. Instead, he had initially been trying to assist the invaders as long as the seizure of Constantinople seemed possible. The supposition of Dionysius of Tel Mahre that it was only 'Umar's order that saved Constantinople does not sound convincing[365]. It is hard to believe that the besiegers could go on without food supplies, which they used up in the spring of 718 or even earlier. 'Umar's decision may have been caused by the general situation: the attacks of Khazars and the military failures in Asia Minor[366].

Another issue that should be pointed out here is the storm which, according to Theophanes, was sent by God to punish the Arabs. As a result only five ships returned safely to Syria. E. Eickhoff maintains that this information should not be ignored. He reminds us of a record, dated 726, about the eruption of a volcano between the islands of Thera (Santorini) and Therasia[367]. According to Eickhoff, the eruption could explain the description by Theophanes of a *rain of fire* that would fall on the invaders. Still, it is equally possible that the chronicler was simply taking advantage of the motive of *God's punishment*, which would fall on the unfaithful. A similar description of the destruction of the Arab navy by a natural calamity can also be found in the narrations regarding the first siege of Constantinople.

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[364] Theophanes, AM 6209, p. 397. On famine in the Arab camp: R. Guilland, *L'expédition de Maslama...*, p. 122; P.A. Yannopoulos, *Le rôle des Bulgares dans la guerre Arabo-Byzantine 717–718*, B 67, 1997, p. 506.

[365] M. Canard, *Les expeditions des Arabes...*, pp. 99–100.

[366] B. Cecota, *Stosunki kalifatu umajjadzkiego z Chazarami oraz dynastią Tang a oblężenie Konstantynopola w latach 717–718*, [in:] *Nie tylko Śródziemnomorze. Problemy polityczne i społeczne świata islamu*, ed. M. Woźniak, Łódź 2012, pp. 19–26.

[367] E. Eickhoff, *Seekrieg und Seepolitik...*, pp. 34–35.



The Muslim invasion of the territory of the Byzantine Empire was one of the most difficult tests for the statehood of the *Romaioi* in their thousand year long history. Despite enormous territorial losses and the necessity to drop imperial ambitions for at least two centuries, Byzantine rulers passed the test. They made reforms which safeguarded the country's core land, i.e. Anatolia. The thematic reform was without any doubt the most important of them all. Although these issues are out of the scope of this book, we must not fail to say that the Byzantine efforts helped defeat the Arabs in the second half of the tenth century. It should be emphasized that although the conquest of the most important provinces (Egypt and Syria) took just a little longer than a decade, the process of attaining power by the Arabs was evolutionary rather than revolutionary. And it was divided into the stages of Arabization and Islamization. It is also notable that the Muslims took much from the imperial governance. Their administrative solutions were frequently exact copies of the model used by the Byzantines.

Teresa Wolińska

3. The Character of the Invasion. A Discussion of the Causes and Immediate Effects of the Muslim Expansion

The causes of the Arab invasion and the scale of destruction it brought have been the subject of a heated debate for centuries and there seems to be no conclusion to it. Generally speaking, we can distinguish two extreme positions on the topic. According to the first one, it was Islam that spurred the Arabs' expansion aimed at spreading the religion. As G.H. Bousquet put it, the Muslims had long been seen as fanatics *with the Qur'ān in one hand and a sword in the other*[1]. To a large extent this results from adopting the perspective of the Muslim sources, the authors of which deny that the invaders yearned profit, which they were accused of. The Muslim chroniclers explain that the objective was to spread Islam, as had been ordered by Muḥammad[2].

The proponents of the other position point to the key role of economic factors as the main motive of the expansion. In their opinion, the droughts and famine that plague the Arabian Peninsula urged its inhabitants to seek better places to live[3]. The Arab invaders are also believed to have been driven by the desire to plunder and gain booty. Sometimes the Arab expansion was viewed as the last great migration from the Arabian Peninsula[4].

Leone Caetani strongly supports the economic factors as the major cause for the Muslim conquests. In his opinion it was not the religion that moti-

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[1] G.H. Bousquet, *Some Critical and Sociological Remarks on the Arab Conquest and the Theories Proposed on this*, [in:] *The Expansion of the Early Islamic State*, ed. F.M. Donner, Aldershot 2008, p. 15.

[2] M. Canard, *Arab Expansion: The Military Problem*, [in:] *The Expansion of the Early Islamic State...*, p. 67.

[3] G.H. Bousquet, *Some Critical....*, p. 17; A. Sharf, *Heraclius and Mahomet*, PP 9, 1956, p. 9.

[4] G.H. Bousquet, *Some Critical...*, p. 16; Ph.K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, [10]London 1970, p. 144.

vated the Arabs to expand[5]. The scholar stresses that the Ḳur'ān does not lay particular emphasis on the concept of martyrdom in the form of death for the faith in a battle[6]. While not excluding the existence among the Arabs of people experiencing strong religious feelings, he emphasizes their poverty and desire to loot[7]. He stresses that the teachings of Muḥammad in fact were accepted by relatively few of his compatriots. He also recalls that after the death of the Prophet the majority of the tribes wanted to free themselves from the obligations imposed by Islam[8]. Leone Caetani also points to the fact that the majority of the troops of the invading Arab forces were members of tribes that had been brutally subdued by the Caliphate and most of the warriors fighting in Syria and Egypt were Bedouins who knew Islam just by its name[9]. A similar view is held by Philip K. Hitti, who claims that one can find proof even in the Ḳur'ān that what the Arabs craved most was levy[10]. He wrote: *Not fanaticism but economic necessity drove the Beduin hordes*[11]. The Bedouins were not blinded by faith and did not really want to die for its sake. They also did not want to convert anyone to it[12]. The latter fact was already noted in the nineteenth century. Also Danuta Madeyska believes the economic factors to have been of greatest significance. In her opinion, religion might have been an important unifying factor, but during the expansion the hope for booty prevailed[13].

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[5] L. C a e t a n i, *The Art of War of the Arabs and the Supposed Religious Fervour of the Arab Conquerors*, [in:] *The Expansion of the Early Islamic State...*, p. 8.

[6] L. C a e t a n i, *The Art of War...*, p. 10; D. C o o k, *Męczeństwo w islamie*, transl. Ł. M ü l l e r, Kraków 2009, pp. 65–86. According to L. Caetani, the concept of martyrdom for the faith was actually taken over from Christianity. It is difficult to agree with this opinion when we remember the negative attitude of the Church to war. M. Canard stresses that the Byzantines underestimated the power of religious feelings and only Nicephorus Phokas tried (in vain) to convince the Church to accept the Muslim concept of a martyr's death in the battlefield. M. C a n a r d, *Arab Expansion...*, p. 67.

[7] L. C a e t a n i, *Art of War...*, pp. 9–10.

[8] *Ibidem*, p. 9.

[9] *Ibidem*, pp. 9–10.

[10] Ph.K. H i t t i, *History of the Arabs...*, p. 144. The scholar quotes verse 29 of Sūra 9: *Fight those* (...) *even if they are of the People of the Book, until they pay the djizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.*

[11] Ph.K. H i t t i, *History of the Arabs...*, p. 144.

[12] M. Canard (*Arab Expansion...*, p. 66) is of the same opinion.

[13] D. M a d e y s k a, *Historia świata arabskiego. Okres klasyczny od starożytności do końca epoki Umajjadów (750)*, Warszawa 1999, p. 133. At a different point, while describing the first campaigns against the Byzantine Empire during the reign of Abū Bakr, the author says that from the Arab ruler's perspective these were regular looting raids (p. 121).

The religious character of the invasion was defended by Carl Heinrich Becker[14]. Nowadays, a scholar stressing the role of the religious factor in the Arab expansion is G.H. Bousquet[15], who differentiates the nature of Arab conquests and their causes, the reasons for the invasions and the reasons for successes[16]. Although he admits that the Arabs were not missionaries[17], in his opinion the conquest could be religious in character despite the lack of the intention of converting[18]. He advances the thesis that military expansion can be explained by religious fanaticism even if the conquerors do not attempt to impose their faith on the conquered people[19]. D.J. Constantelos also claims that the "holy war" drove numerous caliphs and was a decisive factor in their conquests[20]. In his opinion, it was related to the desire to spread Islam in the lands taken. This claim is difficult to accept, at least in the case of the Umayyads, who did not carry out planned Islamization. Furthermore, some caliphs were indeed adverse to it for fiscal reasons.

Marius Canard also made a contribution to the debate, trying to present a more balanced position. He stressed that while the religious factor should not be underestimated, one must not overestimate its role either[21]. In his opinion, there was much confessional zeal in the Arabs' action, the desire to go to paradise (*paradise is in the shadow of the swords*[22]), yet the Bedouin masses were driven by lust for profit. The latter motivation was successfully combined with religious fervour, thanks to which looting raids developed into regular conquest[23]. As the scholar writes, not without irony, the combination of these two factors guaranteed gain to a Muslim fighter, whether he returned victoriously or died in the battlefield. In the former case the profit was the looted riches, in the latter – the paradise[24]. In Canard's opinion, one proof that the booty was not the main

[14] C.H. B e c k e r, *Der Islam als Problem*, Isl 1, 1910, pp. 1–21; i d e m, *Islambericht*, ARw 15, 1912, p. 532; G.H. B o u s q u e t, *Some Critical...*, p. 16.

[15] G.H. B o u s q u e t, *Observations on the Nature and Causes of the Arab Conquest*, [in:] *The Expansion of the Early Islamic State...*, pp. 27–31; i d e m, *Some Critical....*, p. 21. See also: D. G ó r s k i, *Sytuacja chrześcijaństwa na terenach północnej Afryki od podbojów muzułmańskich do XII w.*, Kraków 2004, pp. 37–44.

[16] G.H. B o u s q u e t, *Observation on the Nature...*, p. 25; i d e m, *Some Critical...*, pp. 18, 27.

[17] I d e m, *Observation on the Nature...*, p. 29.

[18] *Ibidem*, pp. 30–31; i d e m, *Some Critical...*, p. 16.

[19] *Ibidem*.

[20] D.J. C o n s t a n t e l o s, *The Moslem Conquest of Near East as Revealed in Greek Sources of the VIIth and the VIIIth Century*, B 42, 1972, p. 345.

[21] M. C a n a r d, *Arab Expansion...*, pp. 66–67.

[22] *Ibidem*, p. 66.

[23] *Ibidem*, p. 67.

[24] *Ibidem*, p. 68.

motive of expansion is the fact that the Arabs did not stop having seized Syria and Mesopotamia, which could satisfy them economically[25]. I cannot agree with this claim. First of all, it is difficult to stop expansion once it has been started. People simply get used to constant gains of financial means. Moreover, in the course of the conquests the Arabs were joined by further nomadic tribes, also eager to get rich like their Meccan kinsmen.

In my opinion, there can be no doubt that the expansion was motivated chiefly by economic factors, the lust for riches: money, slaves, movable property. It is true that around the year 500 the economic situation of Arabia was not bad[26], but this cannot preclude the will to grow rich at the expense of the neighboring peoples, who enjoyed even greater welfare. It is not accidental that it was wealthy territories well known to the Arabs thanks to earlier trade contacts that fell victim to the conquest. Syria was the source of olive oil, grains and wine. The Arab texts devote great attention to the issue of dividing the spoils in a fair way[27]. It is worth recalling the claim of Al-Balādhurī that when Abū Bakr called all Arabs for the holy war, he aroused their desire for raids and booty, which they could gain form the Byzantines[28]. Muʿāwiya on his part is said to have encouraged his warriors to fight by drawing their attention to the riches in *the land of the Jews*[29]. After the capture of Euchaita its inhabitants were tortured to let the conquerors know the place where the treasures were hidden[30]. Ph.K. Hitti quotes a poem by Abū Tammām (ninth century), who accused the Arabs that they had forsaken nomadic life not for the sake of paradise, but because of lust for bread and dates[31]. It is worth emphasizing that the economic-political aspects of the Muslim conquests dominate in the accounts of the Greek sources. Their authors pay little attention to the conquerors' faith, whereas the describe at length the lootings they had fallen victim to. We will discuss this in greater detail later on. The Persians had a similar opinion of the Arab invaders which is attested by what Rustam is reported to have said to an Arab envoy: the Arabs were forced to conquer by the lack of means to support themselves and general poverty[32].

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[25] *Ibidem*, p. 68.

[26] S. Smith, *Events in Arabia in the 6th Century AD*, BSOS 16.3, 1954, p. 429.

[27] H. Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests. How the Spread of Islam Changed the World We Live In*, London 2007, p. 70.

[28] Balādhurī, *Book of the Conquests*, p. 165. See: Ph.K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs...*, pp. 144–145.

[29] Michael the Syrian, XI, 8, vol. II, p. 431.

[30] Michael the Syrian, XI, 8, vol. II, p. 431.

[31] Ph.K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs...*, p. 144.

[32] Balādhurī, *Book of the Conquests*, p. 441. See: Ph.K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs...*, p. 145.

Islam was initially of secondary importance, although arguments based on religion appeared at the level of declarations. The problem is that the Muslim sources in which we find information of this kind are much later. Thus, they must be treated with care and all the time one must bear in mind that Muslim chroniclers could project their own convictions on the past. To give an example, already in the description of the battle of Badr (624) the fallen followers of Islam are referred to as martyrs (*shuhadā*) even though the terms "martyrdom" and "martyrs" appear first in the writings of Al-Ṭabarī (840–923)[33]. The case is similar with the records of talks the Muslims had with the inhabitants of the attacked regions (e.g. with the Persians), in which it is stressed that the vision of paradise they would enter in case of death in the battlefield motivated the fighters. On the other hand, there are examples showing that not all Muslim were always eager to go to fight, and women sometimes prevented their husbands from going[34]. We must emphasize that while we can find descriptions of warriors seeking martyrdom in the Arab sources, these are first of all rare, and also sometimes ambiguous. For example, a certain Sawād of the Tamīm tribe attacked the enemy *courting martyrdom*, but at the same time he was defending his kin[35]. It is impossible to tell which motivation was stronger – the family ties or the religious feelings.

One thing is certain – in the early period the Muslims did not aim to spread the new religion (which does not preclude the belief in its superiority). The will to convert was rarely a cause of war in those times. Jihad was a thing yet to come. Gustave E. von Grunebaum points to another factor here: the "religious" Islam barely preceded the "political" Islam, which led to the identification of the Arabs and Muslims and the lack of inclusion of other peoples in the community of the believers of the faith[36]. For the expansionist tendencies, the pride for the tribe and the clan was of greater importance[37]. This does not mean that Islam did not contribute to the Arab invasion on Persia and Byzantium. The ban on internal fighting among the Muslims made it absolutely important to channel

[33] Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, vol. XI, pp. 99, 109, 129, 210, 211 (transl. K. Bl a n k i n s h i p).

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[35] The description of the event is given by H. Kennedy (*The Great...*, p. 69). Interestingly enough, several centuries later emperor Leo VI, while pointing to the motives of the Arab invasions, emphasized that the rich among them deemed dying for their nation (*ethnos*) to be their reward, while the poor wanted riches (L e o VI, XVIII, 122).

[36] G.E. v o n G r u n e b a u m, *The First Expansion of Islam: Factors of Thrust and Containment*, [in:] *The Expansion of the Early Islamic State...*, p. 84; M. C a n a r d, *Arab Expansion...*, p. 66.

[37] H. K e n n e d y, *The Great...*, pp. 69–70. M. Canard (*Arab Expansion...*, p. 66) writes about *enthusiasm which could be described as national*, which made Islam and Arabness synonymous.

the energy and aggression of the tribes, who had fought one another. Islam also made the consolidation of the Arab army easier and faster[38]. Military cooperation of Arab tribes was not a complete novelty and its rise did not result from the spread of the new religion among Arabs, but doubtlessly Islam played its role in this process. The invaders were now not mere hordes of bandits, but well organized fighters. The conquest was a product of a war machine and not accidental skirmishes, as Christian Décobert puts it[39]. The new religion opened the way to self-realization for the Arabs[40].

Among the invaders there were both fighters of the holy war and warriors interested in material gains. In Syria the Arabs used a double strategy. The nomads subordinated themselves to the leadership from Medina and were anxious to receive as much booty as possible. The leaders' objective was to maintain the army's will to fight in every possible way[41]. To this end they used ideological arguments, but also more mundane economic ones. It cannot be proven though that the religious motives inspired the military leaders while lust for booty drove regular soldiers. Both motives coexisted in both groups[42], albeit to different extents.

One should also remember that the situation evolved and the motivations changed over time. Different periods in the conquest must be differentiated. Undoubtedly, the attitude towards Muslims was heavily influenced by their successes. The Arabs saw them as a proof of divine grace bestowed on Muḥammad, while the conquered treated them as a punishment for sins[43].

Scholars have also considered whether the conquest was planned or was more a series of spontaneous uncoordinated attacks, a side effect of the consolidation of Arab tribes. The support for the idea of planned expansion at least in part resulted from the reading of the Arab sources, which according to Christian Décobert present the conquest as a realization of a political project[44]. A similar view is taken by Marius Canard, who writes that the Umayyads strived to destroy Byzantium, *which they both admired and detested*[45]. We must bear in mind though that the majority of invasions on the Byzantine territories took place before the Umayyads took over the power in the Caliphate, and the quoted opinion

[38] Ph.K. H i t t i, *History of the Arabs...*, pp. 145–146.

[39] Ch. D é c o b e r t, *The Conquest*, [in:] *The Expansion of the Early Islamic State...*, p. 93.

[40] G.E. v o n G r u n e b a u m, *The First Expansion...*, p. 86.

[41] Ch. D é c o b e r t, *The Conquest...*, p. 96.

[42] G.H. B o u s q u e t, *Observation on the Nature...*, pp. 26–27.

[43] The Arabs probably perceived the successes as a proof of the truthfulness of Muḥammad's teachings and the authenticity of his mission. G.H. B o u s q u e t, *Observation on the Nature...*, p. 27.

[44] Ch. D é c o b e r t, *The Conquest...*, p. 93.

[45] M. C a n a r d, *Arab Expansion...*, p. 66.

of M. Canard does not fully match the realities of the times of the rightly guided caliphs. The doubts about the planned character of the conquest were voiced already by Fred M. Donner[46]. It seems that Ph.K. Hitti is closer to the truth when he writes that the campaigns were not an effect of thought-out cold calculation, but started out as raids with an aim to release the belligerent mood of the newly united tribes and only gradually developed into actions whose goal was to build an empire[47]. Similarly, agreeing with Ch. Décobert's position on the organization of the Arab army[48], one must remember that the war machine the scholar writes about did not exist in Muḥammad's lifetime and formed only in the course of the conquest.

What can shed some light on this subject of debate is the Arabs' behavior in the course of the conquest and immediately after it and, what is related to it, the extent of damage they caused. However, this important issue is yet another point of controversy among scholars. For example Hugh Kennedy writes that the cases of violence were only incidental[49]. The scholar's opinion is probably based on Arab sources. According to Al-Balādhurī account of the capture of Damascus by the Arabs, the conquerors were gentle and merciful, and Khālid ibn Al-Walīd guaranteed the conquered their personal safety, possessions and the sanctity of the churches. He promised that the walls of the city would not be torn down, and even that Muslims would not station in the houses of Christians. The only obligation of the defeated people was allegedly to pay taxes[50]. It should be borne in mind, however, that this relation is not objective and the author was not contemporary with the described events. Other Arab chroniclers e.g. Al-Ṭabarī are similarly problematic[51].

A closer look at the source texts makes us see Hugh Kennedy's opinion as too optimistic. In fact, there were numerous acts of violence in the course of the conquest. In many territories, looting was an everyday thing. For example, the whole region was plundered after the Arabs' victory at Dāthin near Gaza in 634 where 'Amr defeated Sergius[52]. Numerous towns were devastated and their inhabitants either killed or taken as slaves. Seven thousand people were killed

[46] F.M. Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquest*, Princeton 1981, p. 271.

[47] Ph.K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*..., p. 145.

[48] Ch. Décobert, *The Conquest*..., p. 93.

[49] H. Kennedy, *The Great*..., p. 95.

[50] Balādhurī, *Book of the Conquests*, p. 187.

[51] On the capture of Damascus see: Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, vol. XI, pp. 128, 160–161 (transl. K.Y. Blankinship).

[52] *Chronicle up to 724*, p. 144; A. Guillou, *Prise de Gaza par les Arabes au VII^e s.*, BCH 81, 1957, p. 402; F. Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquest*..., pp. 152–153.

when the Palestinian city of Caesarea was captured in 643 after a seven-year-long siege[53]. Various cities and regions faced a similar fate: Euchaita in Cilicia[54], Constantia in Cyprus[55], the island of Kos[56]. After Šušter was captured, its inhabitants were murdered, including the bishop, deacons, priests and teachers[57]. Many inhabitants of Dara, taken by storm in 640, were killed[58]. Anthony the Chozebite in the life of St. George the Chozebite mentions an attack by the Saracens on the Laura of Chozeba and the killing of several monks[59].

It is possible to give more examples of that kind. Many are to be found in the writings of Theophanes. Already the first Muslim attack, dated 634, led to looting[60]. In 650 Cyprus was looted[61]. After Arados, a town located on the island off the Syrian coast called the same name, was taken, the conquerors burned it down (651) and demolished the town walls. The surviving inhabitants were deported by force[62]. Other captured towns also became deserted. According to Theophanes, the Arabs' fury grew with the consecutive conquests. In the attack on Isauria in 650 the Arabs killed many people and took five thousand prisoners to Damascus[63]. Soon Armenia was to face a similar fate[64].

The chronicle by John of Nikiu provides numerous examples of violence on the part of the invaders. The chronicler was a direct witness of the events and he believed the conquest to be enslavement of Egypt by Satan[65]. According to his account, the Arabs were generally feared[66]. He mentions great massacres

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[53] Michael the Syrian, XI, 8, vol. II, p. 430; XI, 10, vol. II, p. 441 (both the city and its vicinity were looted); Theophanes, AM 6133, p. 341.

[54] Michael the Syrian, XI, 8, vol. II, p. 431.

[55] Michael the Syrian, XI, 10, vol. II, p. 442.

[56] Michael the Syrian, XI, 10, vol. II, p. 442.

[57] *Chronicle of Guidi*, p. 30. See: S. Gerö, *Only a Change of Masters? The Christians of Iran and the Muslim Conquest*, [in:] *The Expansion of the Early Islamic State...*, p. 127.

[58] Theophanes, AM 6130, p. 340; Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando*, 20.

[59] Anthony had a sense of an impending catastrophe. *Life of George of Choziba*, 7, 31, pp. 129–130. D.J. Constantelos (*The Moslem Conquest...*, p. 332) believes Anthony could have confused Arabs and Persians, as he describes the invasion of the latter on Palestine.

[60] Theophanes, AM 6224, p. 336.

[61] Theophanes, AM 6141, p. 344.

[62] Theophanes, AM 6140–6141, p. 344. They were allowed to go where they wanted.

[63] Theophanes, AM 6142, p. 344.

[64] Theophanes, AM 6245, p. 345.

[65] John of Nikiu, CXIX, 1 (ed. R.H. Charles, D. Litt; all the references to the source in the present chapter are given according to this edition); F. Winkelmann, *Položenie Egipta v Vostočnorimskoj (Vizantijskoj) imperii*, VV 46, 1986, p. 79.

[66] John of Nikiu, CXIII, 4–6, p. 182.

perpetrated in Tendunias[67], in the town (region) of Kopros[68] as well as in Kilūnās, where *thousands of inhabitants* were killed, great booty was taken and the captured people, including women and children, were divided between the conquerors[69]. Nikiu and the surrounding lands also fell to the Muslims (13 May 641)[70]. In the city, which was the episcopal seat of John, nobody was spared regardless of age and gender, although as is strongly emphasized by the chronicler there were no soldiers to offer resistance[71]. John compares the destruction in Nikiu to the fate of Palestinian Caesarea and calls it *impossible to recount*[72]. The inhabitants of the region of Fayyūm faced similar tragic fate. Having defeated a unit under the command of a leader whose name is not known, the Arabs did not only kill him and his men, but also went on to pillage the vicinity, not sparing anyone, even women, children and the elderly[73]. After the capture of Fayyūm much blood was shed[74]. When the town of Bahnasā was captured, the conquerors killed the Byzantine commander and all the captured prisoners, including those who had surrendered[75]. 'Amr is believed to have strived for bloodshed in the towns of Sakā (Xois?) and Tūkū Damsis in northern Egypt[76]. The planta-

[67] John of Nikiu, CXII, 10. Only 300 soldiers in the garrison survived. From the fortress they could observe the slaughter of the inhabitants.

[68] John of Nikiu, CXVIII, 13.

[69] John of Nikiu, CXVIII, 11–12.

[70] John of Nikiu, CXVIII, 10; K. Kościelniak, *Grecy i Arabowie. Historia Kościoła melkickiego (katolickiego) na ziemiach zdobytych przez muzułmanów (634–1516)*, Kraków 2004, p. 64.

[71] John of Nikiu, CXVIII, 8.

[72] John of Nikiu, CXVIII, 8–10.

[73] John of Nikiu, CXI, 10. According to the translation of R.H. Charles, the town opened the gates to the Ishmailites and its inhabitants were all killed. Phil Booth, preparing a new translation of the chronicle (to be published in CSCO, *Series Aethiopica*, entitled *The Chronicle of John of Nikiu: Ethiopic Text with Translation and Commentary*), renders the fragment in question differently. In his opinion, it was the region (*hagar*) that was looted. Fragments of the new translation (in possesion of the present author) were made available by Booth to the audience of the lecture *New Light on the Muslim Conquest of Egypt (Re-reading John of Nikiou)* in Warsaw on the 11 October 2012, during a seminar at the Department of Ancient History of the University of Warsaw. The working version of the translation makes the divisions only at the level of chapters, which is still different from the edition by Zotenberg.

[74] John of Nikiu, 111 – cf. the new translation of John's chronicle, in preparation by Phil Booth from the Faculty of Theology and Religion at the University of Oxford. Fragments are in possession of the present author.

[75] John of Nikiu, CXI, 5–10, p. 179.

[76] In the translation by R.H. Charles, 'Amr only wanted to subjugate the towns mentioned (John of Nikiu, CXV, 2). Ph. Booth proposes a different reading: *being impatient to kill the Egyptians* (John of Nikiu, 115). The identification of both places is uncertain.

tions around Damietta, which refused to surrender, were burned[77]. All the above examples show that it is rather impossible to talk of a bloodless conquest[78].

John's relation makes it clear that the goal of the attackers was to loot. In many captured towns the Muslims collected immense booty, the most precious of which were prisoners[79]. The conquerors also took the possessions left by the fleeing inhabitants[80], destroyed deserted houses[81], confiscated animals, especially horses[82]. They gained great booty in the region of Alexandria. The houses of the inhabitants who had fled were burned down[83]. Subsequently the *region of two rivers* fell victim to looting, which the Byzantine commanders were unable to prevent[84]. All this made the chronicler call the commander of the Muslim forces, 'Amr ibn Al-Āṣ, *the robber chief*[85]. As John of Nikiu saw it, the Muslim leader had no mercy for the inhabitants of Egypt[86]. The actions of 'Amr were a disappointment for patriarch Cyrus, who accused him of breaking the deal he had made with the Egyptians[87]. However, at another place of his work, the bishop of Nikiu admitted that 'Amr refrained from plundering churches[88].

The situation in Armenia, which was the next land to be invaded and looted, resembled that in Syria and Egypt. In the first Arab campaign numerous prisoners were abducted from the country[89]. The invaders did not spare churches nor monasteries[90]. From the captured city of Karin they took gold, silver and other riches as well as hostages[91], who were later murdered in revenge for a rebellion of

[77] John of Nikiu, CXV, 3.

[78] K. Kościelniak, *Grecy i Arabowie...*, p. 64.

[79] John of Nikiu, CXVIII, 8; CXX, 34.

[80] John of Nikiu, CXIV, 1.

[81] John of Nikiu, CXV, 5–7.

[82] John of Nikiu, CXI, 10.

[83] John of Nikiu, CXV, 4–5. The appropriated timber and metals were used to build a road to Babylon.

[84] John of Nikiu, CXV, 5–8. If we believe John's account, 'Amr employed scorched earth policy.

[85] John of Nikiu, 111. The label comes from the new translation. The quoted fragment is missing from the Zotenberg version.

[86] John of Nikiu, CXX, 36.

[87] John of Nikiu, CXX, 36.

[88] John of Nikiu, CXXI, 3.

[89] 35 thousand (Sebeos, 35, p. 101).

[90] Sebeos, 38, p. 146.

[91] Sebeos, 38, p. 146. The looting of Armenia is also mentioned by Michael the Syrian (XI, 10, vol. II, p. 441) and Theophanes (AM 6140, p. 345).

Armenians[92]. In 705 Muslims attacked Armenia again. Having captured the local leaders, they burned them alive[93].

Muslim sources also repeatedly relate acts of violence in the course of the fight with Christians. The mentions of the booty gained (usually described as enormous or inconceivable) and abducted inhabitants recur in relation after relation. Let us just mention the account of the conquest of Africa by Al-Mālikī. In the text there are numerous references to looting borderlands, taking booty, killing the locals, appropriating livestock and abducting people[94]. The spoils were so huge that each horseman received 3000 dinars and each infantryman 1000[95]. Another source of profit for Muslims was money paid by cities at risk of being attacked[96].

One must note that even the authors critical of the oppressive[97] Byzantine authorities provide numerous descriptions of acts of violence during the conquest. The best example of this is Michael the Syrian. He was undoubtedly happy that the pro-Chalcedonian patriarch escaped Edessa after the fall of the city, and the "orthodox" (i.e. Monophysite) clergymen who had been banished earlier could return to their thrones[98], but this did not mean he had a good opinion of the Arabs, whose advent was augured by ominous signs[99]. Having captured Bostra, the Arabs looted and destroyed other cities[100]. They did so after the defeat over emperor Heraclius' brother as well[101]. The description of the devastation in the region of Aleppo and Antioch is particularly dramatic[102]. In the latter case the victims of the Arabs were Christians who had come to a feast in the monastery of Symeon the Stylite. Many of them were taken as slaves[103]. The negative

[92] Sebeos, 38, p. 148. The chronicler provides the figure of 1775 people. Only about 20 are said to have survived.

[93] Ghewond, 10.

[94] Mālikī, 16, 20, 22, 24, 33, 35.

[95] Mālikī, 24.

[96] Mālikī, 21 (the inhabitants of Sufetula (Sbeitla) paid one hundred thousand libras of gold).

[97] The examples were the persecution of Monophysites (Michael the Syrian, XI, 3, vol. II, p. 412) and Jews, who were ordered to accept Christianity (Michael the Syrian, XI, 4, vol. II, p. 414).

[98] Michael the Syrian, XI, 5, vol. II, p. 419.

[99] Michael the Syrian, XI, 4, vol. II, p. 414. Muḥammad was reproached by Michael for the robberies during the time in Yathrib (XI, 2, vol. II, pp. 403–404).

[100] Michael the Syrian, XI, 5, vol. II, p. 417.

[101] Michael the Syrian, XI, 5, vol. II, p. 418.

[102] Michael the Syrian, XI, 6, vol. II, p. 421. For Michael the Arabs were a tool of God's wrath.

[103] Michael the Syrian, XI, 6, vol. II, pp. 422–423.

opinion of the Arabs is not changed by the fact that Michael ascribes similar destruction to the retreating Byzantine troops, who were ordered to use scorched earth tactics[104].

That people could not count on the conquerors' mercy is attested by the fact that panicked inhabitants of various towns and regions of Egypt fled to Alexandria, hoping to be safe there[105]. The title of the partially surviving chapter CXII (CXIII) of the chronicle by John of Nikiu suggests that not only Christians did so. Jews initially concentrated in Manūf for fear of the Muslim and then they left this town for Alexandria[106]. After the fall of the city all their property was taken over by 'Amr[107].

Having seized Syria, Palestine and Egypt the Muslims organized further raids on the Byzantine territories. The effect of these were lootings and capture of local people as slaves. *Chronographia* of Theophanes allows us to create a catalogue of the raids[108]. Because it is impossible to list all of them here, let us just mention a few as examples. It is reported that in 662 the Arabs attacked Sicily for the first time and took the captured people to Damascus[109]. Three years later the region of Hexapolis in Cappadocia was devastated[110]. A short time later the Arabs captured Amorion and took numerous prisoners there[111]. Tyana capitulated to the Muslims so a pact was made with its inhabitants. However, the Saracens did not honour it and abducted many people from the city[112]. The inhabitants of Antioch in Pisidia[113] and Amasia[114] faced a similar fate.

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[104] Michael the Syrian, XI, 6, vol. II, p. 424.

[105] John of Nikiu, CXIII, 6 [=113].

[106] John of Nikiu, *Contents of the CXXII Chapters*, p. 13.

[107] John of Nikiu, 113.

[108] Theophanes, AM 6154, p. 348; AM 6155, p. 348; AM 6156, p. 348; AM 6158, p. 348; AM 6159, p. 351; AM 6286, p. 367; AM 6201, p. 377; AM 6202, p. 377; AM 6205, p. 383; 6204, p. 382.

[109] Theophanes, AM 6155, p. 348; Balādhurī, *Book of the Conquests*, p. 375. The Western sources on their part mention a raid during the reign of emperor Constantine (most likely Constantine IV), son of Constantine (that is Constans II). The Arabs left *cum spoliis multis* (*Cronica Tiburtina*, p. 247; *Cronica Basileensia*, pp. 283–284). The date of the event is debatable. A broader discussion of the first raids on Sicily and references to source text and literature can be found in: T. Wolińska, *Rola Sycylii w polityce cesarstwa bizantyńskiego w VI–IX w.*, Łódź 2005, pp. 195–202.

[110] Theophanes, AM 6158, p. 348.

[111] Theophanes, AM 6159, p. 351.

[112] Theophanes, AM 6201, p. 377.

[113] Theophanes, AM 6205, p. 383.

[114] Theophanes, AM 6204, p. 382.

In the annexed lands the Muslims used the captured prisoners as slaves working on farms[115]. The scale of this phenomenon is shown by an inscription from Cyprus which notes the abduction of a tremendous number of people in two consecutive raids (120 thousand in the first one and 15 thousand in the second one)[116]. Anastasius of Sinai also mentions the captured prisoners[117]. Abba Matthew gave them the Holy Communion in the desert[118]. Many of the Cypriots worked in the region of the Dead Sea[119].

The fact that the Muslim invaders looted the attacked regions should not be surprising in any way. This is exactly what "Roman" and "Persian" Saracens did before the adoption of Islam when they were used by the rivaling empires to devastate the territories of the enemy. It is also worth recalling the behavior of the followers of Muḥammad during his stay in Medina[120]. The attacks on caravans heading for Mecca were an important way of supporting themselves. To be fair, we must note that when Byzantine forces invaded the Arab-held Syria in 699/700, their forces acted basically the same way, they looted, destroyed and took prisoners[121].

While the inhabitants of the conquered lands had reasons to fear for their property, their religion was not at stake. Although there was no planned Islamization, acts of violence against Christians happened at times. A description of one of such events is provided in the *60 Martyrs of Gaza and the Martyrdom of Bishop Sophronius of Jerusalem*[122]. According to this source, when the Arabs lay siege to the city, the inhabitants agreed to negotiate and capitulate. The Muslims guaranteed their safety, with the exception of the local garrison. The soldiers were given the choice – either to convert to Islam or die[123]. When they refused to convert, ʿAmr ibn Al-Āṣ ordered them to be separated from their families and put in prison. After 30 days they were moved to Eleutheropolis, and after further

[115] B. Flussin, *Démons et Sarrasins. L'auteur et le propos des Diègémata stèriktika d'Anastase le Sinaïte*, TM 11, 1991, p. 400.

[116] The inscription (no. 532) was published by D. Feissel (*Builletin épigraphique. Inscriptions chrétiennes et byzantines*, REG 100, 1987, pp. 380–381). A fragment of it is provided by B. Flussin (*Démons et Sarrasins...*, p. 401, footnote 88).

[117] Anastasius of Sinai, *Diègémata stèriktika*, B 9, C 5, C 12, C 13.

[118] Anastasius of Sinai, *Diègémata stèriktika*, XXX, p. 401.

[119] Anastasius of Sinai, *Quaestiones*, 96, col. 745.

[120] M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu*, transl. H. Olędzka, Warszawa 1988, pp. 89–91, 95–98, 100–101.

[121] Theophanes, AM 6192, p. 371.

[122] *Passion of the 60 Martyrs*, 1, pp. 300–303 [=ed. D. Woods, pp. 144–145]. See: J. Pargoire, *Les LX soldats martyrs de Gaza*, EO 8, 1905, pp. 40–43.

[123] *Passion of the 60 Martyrs*, 1, p. 301.

two months to Nicopolis (or Diospolis) where they spent three more months[124]. Then ʻAmr took them to Jerusalem, where the patriarch Sophronius became interested in their fate[125]. Having received orders from ʻUmar, ʻAmr again demanded them to reject Christianity. Since the soldiers refused to do so, he ordered 10 of them to be executed first (together with the commander, Callinicus), and then the rest[126]. We do not know what was the reason for such harsh treatment of the soldiers of the Gaza garrison. Eutychius provides the information that the commander of the garrison did not want to capitulate to ʻAmr and later plotted to kill him[127]. This could be an explanation of the actions of the Arab leader.

In a different version of the *60 Martyrs of Gaza and the Martyrdom of Bishop Sophronius of Jerusalem*, the protagonist, St. Florian[128] was killed after a mosque under construction in Jerusalem collapsed[129]. The cross from the church on the Mount of Olives was removed then, and general removal of crosses from various buildings started[130]. Also Anastasius of Sinai attests that the Arabs undertook hostile actions towards Christian symbols (the cross) and various forms of Christian cult (e.g. icons)[131].

D.J. Constantelos thinks the religious freedom was guaranteed only in theory[132]. In fact, the persecution of Christians is confirmed also by Arab sources.

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[124] The route the imprisoned soldiers made varies depending on the version of the text, for more information see: D. Woods, *The 60 Martyrs of Gaza and the Martyrdom of Bishop Sophronius of Jerusalem*, [in:] *Arab-Byzantine Relations in Early Islamic Times*, ed. M. Bonner, Furnham–Burlington 2009, pp. 429–450 [=ARAM 15, 2003, pp. 129–150].

[125] *Passion of the 60 Martyrs*, 2, p. 302.

[126] *Passion of the 60 Martyrs*, 1, 3, 4, pp. 301–303. See: A. Guillou, *Prise de Gaza...*, pp. 399–400. On the date of the capitulation of the city see: *ibidem*, pp. 403–404.

[127] Eutychius, cols. 1093–1094; Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, vol. XII, pp. 186–187 (transl. Y. Friedmann). See: D. Woods, *The 60 Martyrs...*, p. 142.

[128] *Legend of Saint Florian*, 6, pp. 306–307. Possibly he is to be identified with patriarch Sophronius. D. Woods (*The 60 Martyrs...*, pp. 137–139) suspects that Monophysites were not interested in commemorating the death of the patriarch.

[129] Theophanes, AM 6135, p. 342. According to Theophanes (AM 6127, p. 339) patriarch Sophronius died soon after ʻUmar entered Jerusalem and ordered a mosque to be built. It is possible that this happened on the 11 March 639. D. Woods, *The 60 Martyrs...*, p. 140.

[130] Theophanes, AM 6135, p. 342; *Chronicle up to 1234*, p. 204; Dionysius of Tel Mahre, p. 167; Agapius, p. 220; Michael the Syrian, XI, 8, vol. II, pp. 431–432; D. Woods, *The 60 Martyrs...*, pp. 135–136. We do not know why the building collapsed. It could be an earthquake not noted by the sources unlike those of 634 and 659.

[131] Anastasius of Sinai, *Diègémata stèriktika*, C 5 (here a certain Jew wanted to prohibit the celebration of the feast the Mother of God by Christians). See: B. Flussin, *Démons et Sarrasins...*, pp. 406–407. We can find similar accounts in the writings of Michael the Syrian (XI, 8, vol. II, p. 431).

[132] D.J. Constantelos, *The Moslem Conquest...*, p. 348.

Despite the agreement between ʻUmar and Sophronius the caliph forbade to employ Christians in administrative positions. Muslim warriors broke crosses during Christian processions[133]. Al-Balādhurī ascribes to ʻUmar deportations of Christians from Arabia, the ones who refused to convert to Islam, and the introduction of war rules in Islam. ʻUmar is supposed to have referred to the words of Muḥammad that there could not be two religions in Arabia[134]. Other accounts generally confirm what we know from Greek sources, which make it clear the Arabs' religious policy was not always that of tolerance[135]. At times, as was the case after the capture of Sinai, the Muslims forced people to convert[136]. The lack of tolerance resulted sometimes from the excessive zeal of individual Muslims. One Christian woman, a slave by the name Euphemia, was beaten by her Muslim mistress every time she attended the mass and took communion. Eventually she was bought by a Christian whose name we do not know[137]. Gregory the Black, captured by the Arabs as a child, became a Muslim, but he returned to the Christian faith in Damascus, where he was a slave. His master wanted to force him to a common prayer in a mosque, and when Gregory refused, he was killed as an apostate[138]. From time to time violence against Christians were initiated by the crowds – as when a Christian man was caught with an Arab prostitute. His story is told by Bar Hebraeus – he was captured and abused, his property was confiscated, and the church he had built was turned into a mosque[139]. Although the recounted events were incidental and resulted from the zeal of individual Muslims rather than from planned policy of the Caliphate, they certainly must have made Christians who were involved feel threatened.

In later times the situation was also ambiguous. Khālid ibn al-Walīd I (705–715) ordered the cathedral in Damascus to be demolished[140]. ʻUmar II (717–

[133] Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, pp. 94–96.

[134] Balādhurī, *Book of the Conquests*, pp. 103, 240. Jews faced the same fate (Balādhurī, p. 46).

[135] D.J. Constantelos, *The Moslem Conquest...*, pp. 354–356. In the cited scholar's opinion, converting people to Islam was the duty of the caliphs, and the idea of the holy war follows from the Ḳur'ān (Sūra 47). However, this seems to be an adequate description of the later times when the Arab rule over the conquered territories was stable, and not the period of the conquest.

[136] Anastasius of Sinai, *Diègémata stèriktika*, C 4.

[137] Anastasius of Sinai, *Diègémata stèriktika*, C 12; B. Flussin, *Démons et Sarrasins...*, pp. 387, 403.

[138] Local Christians burried him in a grave beyond the city – Anastasius of Sinai, *Diègémata stèriktika*, C 13; B. Flussin, *Démons et Sarrasins...*, pp. 387, 403–404.

[139] Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, I, 90, vol. II, pp. 562–564.

[140] Theophanes, AM 6199, p. 375. He also noted the caliph's decision to use Arabic for administrative purposes.

720), after a strong earthquake in Syria, forbade drinking wine and took action aimed to force Christians to convert to Islam. This caliph started the policy of systematic forced conversions, especially in Syria. Those who refused to convert were at risk of death. Christians were not allowed to testify against Muslims. Theophanes adds that many became martyrs at the time[141], but many broke down and accepted Islam. Theophanes' account is confirmed by Michael the Syrian and Bar Hebraeus. From their works it follows that 'Umar issued laws that favored the converts and made life harder for those remaining Christians[142]. He also ordered captured prisoners to be treated mildly to encourage them to convert. 'Umar's plans are also evident from his letters to rulers of other countries whom he tried to win for his faith[143]. At the same time, the use of brutal methods of levying taxes common during the reign of Sulayman was restricted[144]. The new caliph was more interested in propagating Islam than in collecting money[145].

Persecutions due to the professed religion also happened. The deterioration of the relations between the Byzantine Empire and the Caliphate in the first half of the eighth century contributed to the intensification of the persecutions – captured prisoners and the inhabitants of border regions were forces to abandon Christianity[146]. At the beginning of the eighth century of group of young pilgrims from Iconium on their way to Jerusalem was captured by the Arabs and taken before the governor of Caesarea. They were accused of espionage and sentenced to death, unless they convert to Islam. Seven of them broke down and the rest (63 altogether) were executed[147]. The pilgrims from the British Isles were also accused of espionage. In the times of Yazīd II, in 723, 60 pilgrims from Amorion were punished for taking the trip to Jerusalem and crucified in the city[148].

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[141] Theophanes, AM 6210, p. 399.

[142] Michael the Syrian, XI, 19, vol. II, pp. 488–489; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, vol. I, pp. 108–109.

[143] D.J. Constantelos, *The Moslem Conquest...*, p. 340.

[144] Caliph Sulayman ordered to brand taxpayers with hot iron and those who did not have the mark were severely punished (by cutting off hands or decapitation). This made many Christians convert to Islam. D.C. Dennett, *Conversion and the Poll Tax in Early Islam*, Cambridge 1950, pp. 3–5.

[145] Arab chroniclers credit him with a saying that Allāh sent his messenger as a prophet, not a tax collector.

[146] D.J. Constantelos, *The Moslem Conquest...*, pp. 341–342. It was then that Eustathius, a son of patrician Marianus died a martyr's death. Theophanes, AM 6232, p. 414.

[147] *Passion of the Glorious Martyrs*, pp. 151–163. The Arabs are called bestial, and driven by passions, and not logic. See: G. Huxley, *The Sixty Martyrs of Jerusalem*, BMGS 16, 1977, pp. 369–374.

[148] *AASS*, *October*, VIII, 360; *Passion of the 60 New Martyrs*, pp. 4–7. This story (originally written down in Syriac and translated into Greek) bears a strong similarity to that of the pilgrims

The persecution of Christians intensified during the reigns of al-Walīd (705–715) and his brother Sulayman (715–717). After the capture of Tyana (708) numerous inhabitants were killed and many others were forced to convert to Islam[149]. In Egypt the tolerance of the times of peace gave way to persecutions, destruction of churches and religious institutions. For example, in 704 the persecution of Orthodox Christians started in Alexandria on the orders of caliph ʿAbd al-Malik (685–705) and the governor of Egypt ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz. Crosses were removed from public places and Christians were forced to place the formula *Muḥammad is God's prophet* or *God neither gives birth nor is born* on the doors of churches. Monks were treated with particular severity[150].

The patriarchal thrones of Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria could remain vacant for years because new rulers did not allow the elections to be held[151]. There were only several patriarchs of Alexandria between 651 and 742[152]. The throne in Antioch was vacant in the years 702–742[153]. The situation in Jerusalem was not better. There was no patriarch after the death of Sophronius (638) until 705[154]. However, the situation was complex. Marwān II (744–750) not only allowed a new patriarch to be elected after the death of Stephen, but also ordered the Arabs to treat his successor Theophylact with due honours. The caliph also sentenced to death Abbas (i.e. ʾAbbās), a Muslim who had killed many Christians and imprisoned many[155].

To sum up, the conquest of Byzantine territories, Syria, Palestine and Egypt by the Arabs was in no way different from other events of that kind in those times. It can be readily compared to the Persian invasion just three decades earlier. The Muslims were not monsters, they did not use violence to terrorize the inhabitants of the attacked provinces the way e.g. the Mongols did. This does not mean that their actions were mild or that they refrained from any form of aggression. In general, they differentiated towns they had to take by force and those that surrendered, more or less freely. In the former case, there was no hope of mercy for the inhabitants, at best they became slaves. In the latter case, they

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of Iconium. It is possible that it is a different account of the same event (D.J. Constantelos, *The Moslem Conquest...*, p. 341, footnote 1).

[149] Theophanes, AM 6201, p. 377.

[150] D.J. Constantelos, *The Moslem Conquest...*, p. 336.

[151] *Ibidem*, pp. 345–346.

[152] V. Grumel, *Traité des études byzantines*, vol. I, *La Chronologie*, Paris 1958, p. 443.

[153] Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, I, 57, vol. I, p. 304; V. Grumel, *Traité...*, p. 447.

[154] V. Grumel, *Traité...*, p. 451.

[155] Theophanes, AM 6236, p. 431.

could negotiate preferable conditions. It comes then as no surprise that many towns capitulated without a fight. Those that did resist, paid for it. Still, everyone was given a choice either to pay *djizya* and tribute, accepting the status of *dhimmī*, or to convert to Islam and be free of taxation[156]. Whether the promises given were kept, depended on particular caliphs, local governors or even private individuals.



[156] S. Kaeting Toenies, *Defending the "People of the Truth" in the Early Islamic Period. The Christian Apologies of Abu Ra'itah*, Leiden–Boston 2006, p. 14.

Teresa Wolińska

4. Resistance, Passivity or Collaboration? Christians in Syria and Egypt Facing the Arab Conquest

The Arab expansion discussed in previous chapters shook the existing order, removed the Persian Empire from the political scene and seriously weakened its main adversary – the Byzantine Empire. For the inhabitants of the annexed territories subordination to the caliphate meant not only the change of political and administrative affiliation, but also confronting the new, expansive religion. It seems worthwhile to have a look at their attitudes in the face of those radical changes.

The amount of source material on this subject is vast but at the same time one-sided. Most of the sources have been written by Christian authors. They include historiographic works: chronicles of John of Nikiu, Dionysius of Tel Mahre (ninth century), anonymous Syriac chronicle from early eighth century, narrations of Theophanes and Gregory Bar Hebraeus. We can add some religious works, like those by Sophronius, patriarch of Jerusalem, written in 634[1], narration of the *Sixty Martyrs of Gaza* (before eleventh century)[2], or the account by Elias of Nisibis (Elia bar Shinaya).

Apocalyptic texts play an important role, too – ones such as a narration of a converted Jew (*Doctrina Iacobi*)[3], *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Ephraem*[4], *Apocalypse of*

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[1] Most important of them are the *Christmas Homily* of 634, *Easter Homily* of 637 and *Synodal Letter to Patriarch Sergios*.

[2] There are two versions of this text. In the first, the soldiers are supported by Patriarch Sophronius, in the other – by Florian (*Legend of Saint Florian*, pp. 303–307). More on that, see: D. W o o d s, *The Early Recension of the Passion of the 60 Martyrs of Gaza (BHL 5672m)*, [in:] *The 60 Martyrs of Gaza and the Martyrdom of Bishop Sophronius of Jerusalem*, ARAM 15, 2003, pp. 144–150.

[3] J. F l o r i, *L'Islam et la fin des temps. L'interpretation prophetique des invasions musulmanes dans la chrétienté médiévale*, Paris 2007, pp. 123–127.

[4] *Ibidem*, pp. 132–133.

Pseudo-Methodius, preserved in several versions[5], *Visions of Daniel*[6], *Apocalypse of Andrew the Fool*[7], *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Athanasius*[8] and writings of Arethas of Caesarea[9]. Sometime later they were supplemented by polemical texts. We can add that the latter are even more useful in the research on the knowledge of Byzantine Christians about Islam than a simple analysis of the attitudes of the inhabitants of the conquered territories[10]. Arab sources, on the contrary, are rare and usually written long after the events described therein. Most important of them are the chronicles by Al-Ṭabarī and Al-Balādhurī.

Our research carries with it serious methodological difficulties. In most cases the accounts have been written by the victims of the conquest, which makes it for them difficult to be objective. The Arabic texts, on the other hand, were written down much later; we may suspect therefore that they may contain views and attitudes typical of the times in which they were created. Yet another problem is

[5] The text is known in Syriac, Greek and Latin; there is also an Old Church Slavonic version of it. There are numerous variations of the work of Pseudo-Methodius. The Syriac and Greek versions have been published by F. Nau (*Révelation et légendes. Méthodius-Clément-Andronicus*, ed. F. Nau, JA 9.9, 1917, pp. 425–446 and 455–462). A new edition of the Syriac version with the German translation has been published by J.G. Reinink (*Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo Methodius*, ed. J.G. Reinink, Louvain 1993 [=*CSCO* 540–541, *Scriptores Syri*, 220–221]) and F.J. Martinez (*Apocalypse syriaque du Pseudo-Méthode*, ed., transl. F.J. Martinez, [in:] *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic in the Early Muslim Period: Pseudo-Methodius and Pseudo-Athanasius*, vol. I–II, Washington 1985 [Ann Arbor University Microfilms]). The Greek and Latin versions, along with the English translation can be found in: *Apocalipse Pseudo-Methodius*, ed. B. Garstad, London 2012, pp. 2–71 (Greek); pp. 74–141 (Latin). About the author and text dating, see: F. Starowieyski, A. Tronina, *Apokalipsa Pseudo-Metodego. Wstęp i bibliografia*, [in:] *Apokryfy syryjskie*, ed. M. Starowieyski, Kraków 2011, pp. 200–208; P. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, Berkeley–Los Angeles 1985, pp. 13–60; J. Flori, *L'Islam...*, pp. 133–141; G. Reinink, *Pseudo-Methodius: A Concept of History in Response to the Rise of Islam*, [in:] A. Cameron, L. Conrad, *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, vol. I, Princeton 1992, pp. 149–187. The *Apocalypse* was written in response to 'Abd al-Mālik's policy and conversions of Christians to Islam. A. Cameron, *The Eastern Provinces in the 7th Century AD. Hellenism and the Emergence of Islam*, [in:] eadem, *Changing Cultures in Early Byzantium*, vol. IV, Aldershot 1996, p. 298; G. Reinink, *Pseudo-Methodius und die Legende vom römischen Endkaiser*, [in:] *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages*, eds. W. Verbeke, D. Verhalst, A. Welkenhuysen, Leuven 1988, pp. 82–111.

[6] P. Alexander, *Byzantine Apocalyptic...*, pp. 61–122.

[7] *Ibidem*, p. 123sqq.

[8] J. Flori, *L'Islam...*, pp. 141–144.

[9] *Ibidem*, pp. 144–146.

[10] Polemics with Islam was initiated by John of Damascus, but it took place only in the eighth century. I have devoted a separate article to the reactions of Byzantine elite to Islam: T. Wolińska, *Elity chrześcijańskie wobec islamu (VII–X w.)*, VP 64, 2015 (forthcoming).

the difficulty of distinguishing between the emotions caused by the invasion and those resulting from the Islamic threat.

Examining the reactions of the inhabitants of Syria, Palestine or Egypt to the Arab intrusion, it is good to think of the factors which underlie them. These may include: religious conditions in the conquered territories; ethnic relations, cultural and religious foreignness of the conquerors; relations between the inhabitants of the conquered territories and their former masters and invaders' conduct during the conquest and thereafter.

Prior to the conquest, the invaded territories were ethnically, linguistically and religiously heterogeneous. The religious situation in Syria and Palestine was particularly complex, as the area was inhabited by representatives of numerous Christian confessions, as well as by the Jewish population. It was also the place of a strong influence of Monophysitism, whose development there was dynamic, also owing to the support from some of the rulers, like Anastasius I (491–518) or Empress Theodora (d. 548)[11]. The rivalry with the supporters of the Chalcedonian creed led to the existence of a separate ecclesiastic hierarchy, parallel to that of the Orthodox Church. It began with Jacob Baradaeus (ca. 490–578), consecrated in 543[12]. It was then that the Monophysite (Jacobite) Patriarchate of Syria was established. The Church of Alexandria, too, was in the grip of Christological disputes for the whole of the sixth century and experienced a series of schisms. Similarly, in the Church in Egypt there was a breakup, which resulted in the emergence of two competing patriarchates: Monophysite (Coptic) and Orthodox (Melkite)[13].

The rivalry did not run exclusively along the Chalcedonian versus Nestorian (Monophysite) line. In addition, two other heretic (from the point of view of Constantinople) Churches kept fighting with each other. Sebastian Brock noted the fact of Monophysite expansion towards northern Mesopotamia at the cost of the Nestorian Church during the seventh century[14]. We must emphasise that re-

[11] F. Nau, *Les Arabes chrétiens de Mésopotamie et de Syrie du VII^e au VIII^e siècle*, Paris 1933, pp. 53–54; W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, Cambridge 1972; V. Menze, *Justinian and the Making of the Syrian Orthodox Church*, Oxford 2008; G. Fisher, *Between Empires. Arabs, Romans and Sasanians in Late Antiquity*, Oxford 2011, pp. 56–57.

[12] For more on his activity, see: *Life of Jacob Baradeus*, pp. 364–385; R. Devreesse, *Le patriarcat d'Antioche depuis la paix de l'Eglise jusqu'à la conquête arabe*, Paris 1945, pp. 75–92; E. Honigmann, *Evêqués et évêchés monophysites d'Asie antérieure au VI^e siècle*, Louvain 1951, pp. 142–154; D.D. Bundy, *Jacob Baradaeus. The State of Research. A Reviev of Sources and a New Approach*, Mu 91, 1978, pp. 45–86. There we can find further bibliography.

[13] J. Maspero, *Histoire de patriarches d'Alexandrie (518–616)*, Paris 1923; K. Kościelniak, *Grecy i Arabowie. Historia Kościoła melkickiego (katolickiego) na ziemiach zdobytych przez muzułmanów (634–1516)*, Kraków 2004, pp. 48–50.

[14] S. Brock, *Syriac Views of Emergent Islam*, [in:] idem, *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiqu*ity, vol. VIII, London 1984, pp. 15–16. The scholar quotes the letter of Katholikos Yso'yahb

ligious divisions concerned also the Arabs, among whom there were many Christians, mostly Monophysites. That religion was professed by the Ghassānids, who were Byzantine allies. Among their kinsmen from the Arabian Peninsula there were quite a few Nestorians (e.g. the Lakhmids, long-time allies of Persia)[15], but also pagans and Jews. Judaism was particularly popular in the southern areas of the Peninsula, although there were many Christians there as well[16].

Summing up, on the territories conquered by the Muslims there were people of many different religions. Consequently, before asking questions about their attitudes towards the invasion, we decide which of them we mean in particular.

Let us now consider the issue of the cultural foreignness of the invaders. The Arabs had not been alien to Byzantines, particularly not to the population of the attacked provinces. The Byzantine elite took information mostly from geographic descriptions: among the people who wrote about Arabia there were Cosmas Indicopleustes[17] and an anonymous author of *Expositio totius mundi et gentium*[18]. Christians knew them through the characters from the Bible. Following that perception, the Arabs were the *Hagarenes* – sons of Hagar and descendants of Ham, Noah's son[19]. For the people from the borders of the empire they were better known than simply descendants of Biblical characters. They had had an opportunity to get to know them from their bad side during raids which continued with varying frequency through the entirety of the early Byzantine period[20]. There is no point in naming all the raids, we can just remind those of 373[21], 410[22], 499[23]

in which the latter argues with the Nestorians, who try to justify the losses by the fact that the Arabs favour Monophysites.

[15] F. Nau, *Les Arabes....*, *passim*.

[16] M. Lecker, *Judaism among Kinda and the Ridda of Kinda*, JAOS 115, 1995, pp. 635–650; A. Berger, *Christianity in South Arabia in the Sixth Century AD – Truth and Legend*, [in:] *Arabia, Greece and Byzantium. Cultural Contacts in Ancient and Medieval Times*, vol. II, eds. A. Al-Helabi, D.G. Letzios, M. Al-Moraekhi, A. Al-Abduljabbar, Riyadh 2012, pp. 155–162.

[17] Cosmas Indicopleustes, II, 26 (descendants of Ham), III, 66 (Christian communities are among them too), pp. 329–331, 305.

[18] *Expositio*, 20, 38.

[19] Cosmas Indicopleustes, II, 26.

[20] B. Isaac, *Bandits in Judea and Arabia*, HSCP 88, 1984, pp. 171–203; M. Miotto, *Bisanzio e la difesa della Siria: Arabi foederati, incursioni arabe e conquista islamica (IV–VII saec.)*, Por 4.10, 2007, pp. 5–28.

[21] Their victims were the hermits in Sinai (Nilus, IV, col. 625sqq).

[22] Jerome, *Ep. 126*, 2, col. 1086.

[23] Theophanes, AM 5990, p. 141; Evagrius Scholasticus, III, 36; Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Abraamii*, 1, p. 224 (further references to Cyril of Scythopolis in this chapter are after E. Schwartz edition); John of Nikiu, LXXXIX, 33, p. 125 (eds. R.H. Charles, D. Litt; all references in this chapter are after that edition).

and 502[24] as an example. John of Nikiu informs of a raid of barbarians from Arabia, who were supposed to eat human flesh and drink blood, on the cloisters of Raithou in Sinai[25]. The attacks of a Persian ally, Al-Mundhir, have been described in the *Life of St. Sabbas*[26], who requested a *kastron* from Emperor Anastasius in order to protect the monks[27]. John Moschus also complained about the Arab menace[28]; Hilarion became their victim as well[29]. In 619, Sophronius, transporting John Moschus' body from Rome to Palestine for burial, had a problem with travelling to Ashkelon because of Agarenes' raids[30].

However, one should not have always expected the worst from the Arabs. The relations between Syria or Egypt and the peoples of the Peninsula had a long tradition and were varied in nature. Many of them had inhabited not only Arabia, but the areas of Byzantine *limes arabicus*, in today's Syria and Jordan[31]. Some Arab families owned lands there (for example Abū Sufyān, father of Yāzid and Mu 'āwiya). The monks of Mount Sinai and Palestine had close contacts with their Arab neighbours, about which we can read in the writings of Anastasius of Sinai[32] or Cyril of Scythopolis[33].

As it has been said, many Arabs had accepted Christianity, which helped build cultural relations[34]. As it has been demonstrated earlier in this book, particular Arab tribes happened to be political partners of the Byzantine Empire,

[24] Palestine fell a victim of that raid. Theophanes, AM 5994; Nonnosus, p. 179; Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 46 (the text says of barbarians who destroyed the tents of baptized Saracens – probably Arabs, too), pp. 67–68.

[25] John of Nikiu, LXXXIX, 33, p. 125.

[26] F. Nau, *Les Arabes...*, p. 37.

[27] B. Isaac, *Bandits in Judea...*, p. 194; F. Nau, *Les Arabes...*, p. 37; A.A. Vasiliev, *Notes on Some Episodes concerning the Relations between the Arabs and the Byzantine Empire from the Fourth to the Sixth Century*, DOP 9, 1956, p. 310 (here about converting Saracens).

[28] John Moschus, 99, 133, 136, 155, cols. 2951–3116; F. Nau, *Les Arabes...*, p. 37.

[29] Jerome, *Vita Hilarionis*, 12, col. 33.

[30] *Elogium*, cols. 121–122; Ph. Mayerson, *The First Muslim Attacks on Southern Palestine (AD 633–634)*, TPAPA 95, 1964, p. 191.

[31] Further on *limes*, see: G.W. Bowersock, *Limes Arabicus*, HSCP 80, 1976, pp. 219–229.

[32] Anastasius of Sinai, *Holy Fathers*, 10, 12, 23–26, 41, 44.

[33] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae*, 70, pp. 171–173; *Vita Euthymii*, 10, pp. 139–144; 15, pp. 149–150; 51, p. 75; *Vita Abraamii*, 1, p. 244; *Vita Joannis*, 13, p. 211.

[34] The subject has a vast literature, beginning from the classic work by F. Nau (*Les Arabes...*), up to the newest elaborations. Among the latter, one is certainly worthwhile: G. Osman, *Pre-Islamic Arab Converts to Christianity in Mecca and Medina: An Investigation into the Arabic Sources*, MWo 95, 2005, pp. 67–80. Also I. Shahîd has paid much attention to this problem (I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century*, Washington 1989; idem, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, vol. I/II, *Ecclesiastical History*, Washington 1995.

with the inferior position, but still important in its relations with Persia and trade with the Far East. To provide security for the eastern provinces, Byzantine rulers had drawn up a buffer zone between the empire and Persia. In response to the alliance between the Sassanian Empire and the Lakhmids[35] they maintained permanent alliances with other Arab tribes: Tanūkhids, Salīḥids, Kinda and Ghassānids[36]. In the sixth century the alliance with the latter was of particular importance[37]. Arab troops in the Byzantine army successfuly fought against the Persians and their Lakhmid allies[38].

Arab merchants were frequent visitors in Syrian cities, particularly those on the border of the desert. It is difficult to agree with the opinion of Demetrios Constantoleos that the conquered territories were religiously and ethnically alien to the invaders[39]. Since Roman times the Arabs not only were middlemen in trade with India, but they also delivered goods, like leather, living animals or clarified butter to the Romans[40]. Hāshim ibn ʿAbd Manāf, Prophet Muḥammad's

[35] The Lakhimids inhabited the area of southern Iraq. Their capital was in Al-Hīra and the Nasrids the ruling Lachouse. I. S h a h î d, *Lachmids*, [in:] *EI*, vol. V, pp. 632–634; G. F i s h e r, *Between Empires...*, pp. 90–95; i d e m, *Kingdoms or Dynasties? Arabs, History, and Identity before Islam*, JLA 4.2, 2011, pp. 258–261.

[36] In the opinion of Irfan Shahîd (*Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century...*, p. 475) the former were the most important Arab allies of Byzantium in the fourth century, the Salikhids in the fifth and the Ghassānids in the sixth. See: N.V. P i g u l e v s k a j a, *Araby u granic Vizantii i Irana v IV–VI vv.*, Moskva–Leningrad 1964, pp. 180–181; F.M. D o n n e r, *The Role of the Nomads in the Near East in Late Antiquity (400–800 CE)*, [in:] *Tradition and Innovation in Late Antiquity*, eds. F.M. C l o v e r, R.S. H u m p h r e y s, Madison–London 1989, p. 75; I. S h a h î d, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, vol. I/I, *Political and Military History*, Washington 1995, pp. 19–24, 39–42; G. G r e a t r e x, *Rome and Persia at War, 502–532*, Leeds 1998, p. 28; M. M i o t t o, *Bisanzio...*, pp. 5–16; G. F i s h e r, *The Political Development of the Ghassan between Rome and Iran*, JLA 1/2, 2008, pp. 316–318; M. P a n d u r a, *Perceiving Otherness, Creating Resemblance – the Byzantinization of Nomads in the Age of Justinian I: the Arabs*, AEu 1, 2013, p. 45. The Byzantines were continuing here an old Roman tradition (G. F i s h e r, *Between Empires...*, pp. 75–78; D.F. G r a f, *The Saracens and the Defence of the Arabian Frontier*, BASOR 229, 1978, pp. 1–26, part. 15–19).

[37] M. P a n d u r a, *Perceiving otherness...*, p. 45. See also: G. F i s h e r, *Between Empires...*, pp. 95–99; G. G r e a t r e x, *Rome and Persia at War...*, pp. 27, 56.

[38] On this subject, see: T. W o l i ń s k a, *Ghassanidzi w polityce Bizancjum w czasach Justyniana I Wielkiego*, [in:] *W kręgu zagadnień świata arabskiego*, eds. A. A b b a s, A. M a ś k o, Poznań 2015, pp. 223–244.

[39] D.J. C o n s t a n t e l o s, *The Moslem Conquest of Near East as Revealed in Greek Sources of the VII^th^ and the VIII^th^ Century*, B 42, 1972, p. 326.

[40] For more on that, see: P. C r o n e, *Quraysh and the Roman Army Making Sense of the Meccan Leather Trade*, BSOAS 70.1, 2007, pp. 63–89. The main recipients of those goods were the Roman (and then Byzantine) army. This regards leather and living animals. The author

great grandfather was himself engaged in such trade[41]. Ibn Isḥāḳ (979–982) maintains that when Muḥammad was twelve years old, he went to Syria with his uncle, Abū Ṭālib, where they were hosted by a monk named Bahīrā who, when asked about the reason for such a hospitality, was to respond that he saw God's apostle in Muḥammad[42]. Al-Mas ʿūdī informs that the real name of Bahīrā was Jirjis (George) and he was coming from the tribe of Ḳays[43]. The figure of Bahīrā has become legendary and much has been written about him[44]. Here we would like to pay attention to some other aspects of the narration. It seems that Muḥammad and Bahīrā could speak in the same language (probably Arabic), and were not alien to each other[45]. The story about Bahīrā shows that there was free communication between Mecca and territories of the empire[46]. ʿAmr ibn Al-Āṣ, when he was still a pagan, paid a visit to Egypt as a merchant[47]. A visit of his allows us to perceive the relations between the inhabitants of "civilized areas" and the nomads in a different light. They may have been not perfect, but they were certainly not purely hostile – B. de Vries has defined them as *symbiotic mutualism*[48]. And the fact that the sources from fifth and sixth century describe Arab raids on Christian monasteries as *cruel and destructive*[49] should not nullify his opinion.

puts forward an interesting hypothesis that the trade gave the Ḳuraishites both the financial resources and skills which later helped in successful expansion.

[41] P. Crone, *Quraysh and the Roman Army*..., p. 76.

[42] Ibn Kathīr, *Life of the Prophet*, vol. I, pp. 175–183; B. de Vries, *On the Way to Bosra: Arab Settlement in South Syria Before Islam – the Evidence from Written Sources*, [in:] *Hereux qui comme Ulisses a fait un beau voyage: Movements of People in Time and Space*, eds. N. Naguib, B. de Vries, Bergen 2010, pp. 69–70.

[43] Ibn Kathīr, *Life of the Prophet*, vol. I, p. 179; B. de Vries, *On the Way to Bosra*..., p. 72.

[44] R.W. Thomson, *Armenian Variations on the Bahīrā Legend*, HUS 3/4, 1979–1980, p. II, *Eucharisterion: Essays presented to Omeljan Pritsak on his Sixtieth Birthday by his Colleagues and Students*, pp. 884–889; S. Gerö, *The Legend of the Monk Bahīrā, the Cult of the Cross and Iconoclasm*, [in:] *La Syrie de Byzance a l'Islam. VII^e–VIII^e siècles. Actes du Colloque international, Lyon–Maison de l'Orient Méditerranéen, Paris – Institut du Monde Arabe, 11–15 Septembre 1990*, eds. P. Canivet, J.-P. Rey-Coquais, Damascus 1992, pp. 47–57; A. Bahkou, *The Christian Legend of Monk Bahîrā. The Syriac Manuscript of Mardain 259/2: Study and English translation*, n.p. 2006; B. Roggema, *The Legend of Sergius Bahīrā. Eastern Christians Apologies and Apokalyptic in Response to Islam*, Leiden–Boston 2009.

[45] B. de Vries, *On the Way to Bosra*..., p. 74.

[46] *Ibidem*, p. 72.

[47] D.J. Sahas, *The Demonizing Force of the Arab Conquest. The Case of Maximus (ca 580–662) as a Political "Confessor"*, JÖB 53, 2003, p. 113.

[48] B. de Vries, *On the Way to Bosra*..., pp. 74–75.

[49] Nilus, II, col. 589. D.J. Constantelos emphasizes that they should be belieced even if they were just propaganda (D.J. Constantelos, *The Moslem Conquest*..., p. 327; V. Christides, *Pre-Islamic Arabs in Byzantine Illumination*, Mu 83, 1970, p. 173).

It might seem that the attitude of conquest victims to the invaders ought to have been determined by religion. It is striking, though, that in the Byzantine sources (Syrian, Greek and Egyptian) the conquerors are perceived in an ethnic rather than religious dimension. For their victims they were Arabs rather than Muslims. That may have been a result of the fact that during the first invasions little was known about Islam in the areas that were being conquered and the victims were not aware of the religion of their oppressors. According to Jean Flori: *la religion nouvelle est totalment ignorée*[50], which is not surprising. The degree of Islamisation was fairly low – technically, all Arabs who had subordinated to caliphs were Muslims, but in practice not all of them identified themselves with the new religion. Arab raids on Byzantine areas commenced at the moment when Islam had not yet really taken its final form; the Ḳur'ān had not been written down and numerous different stories about Muḥammad were circulating among the people of Middle East. We should not forget, either, that some inhabitants of the Byzantine Syria or Palestine had known pagan or Christian Arabs pretty well[51]. Even the first encounters did not add much to that image – the Muslims, whom the people of Syria, Egypt or Mesopotamia happened to meet, were mostly warriors, freshly converted to Islam, who may themselves have not understood Muḥammad's message well[52].

This may also explain why in Christian sources the Arabs are sometimes perceived as pagans, albeit more frequently as those who rejected polytheism. It was unclear, however, what they had in common with Jews and Christians. Even if it was known that their religion was different from both Christianity and Judaism, the character of those differences remained uncertain. The common points were sometimes noticed, but the differences were noted as well – discarding the divine nature of Christ must have been alien to Monophysites[53].

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[50] J. F l o r i, *L'Islam...*, pp. 114, 122. The Jew from Carthage quoted by him (*ibidem*, p. 116) already knew of the promised paradise for fallen warriors.

[51] Further on that, see: G. F i s h e r, *Between Empires...*, pp. 34–71; F. N a u, *Les Arabes...*, pp. 52–53. While the Ghassānids were Monophysite Christians, many of the the Persia-allied Lakhmids were Nestorian (G. F i s h e r, *Between Empires...*, pp. 65–70; F. N a u, *Les Arabes...*, pp. 39–47). Al-Nuʿmān was the first Lakhmid ruler baptized in Nestorian faith (F. N a u, *Les Arabes...*, pp. 46–47).

[52] W.E. K a e g i, *Initial Byzantine Reactions to the Arab Conquest*, [in:] *The Expansion of the Early Islamic State*, ed. F.M. D o n n e r, Aldershot 2008, p. 114. J. T o l a n (*Réactions chrétiennes aux conquêtes musulmanes. Étude comparée des auteurs chrétiens de Syrie et Espagne*, CCM 44, 2001, pp. 350–352) is of similar opinion. A. S t r a t o s (*Byzance au VII^e siècle*, vol. I, *Les premiers Héraclides et la lutte contre les Arabes*, transl. A. L a m b e r t, Lausanne 1985, pp. 333–334) thinks that the invaders were not even Muslims, as their army was composed of many Arab or demi-Arab troops, nomadic people from Syrian and Egyptian deserts.

[53] J. G n i l k a (*Die Nazarener und der Koran. Eine Spurensuche*, Freiburg 2007) is of a different opinion, but what he writes matches the Nestorians, of whom there were not many in the invaded Byzantine areas.

Perception of Muslims at the very beginning is well illustrated by the writings of Sophronius, patriarch of Jerusalem (634–638). Although he had personally met Muslims (to remind his famous conversation with ʿUmar ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb[54]), he mentioned neither Islam nor the name of Prophet in any of his works[55]. The Arabs for him were just ungodly Saracens (Σαρακηνῶν γὰρ ἀθέων)[56], which expression may refer to pagans as well. Very similar words were used by the author of the *Passion of the Sixty Martyrs of Gaza*, too[57].

The lack of any deeper knowledge about the new religion of the Arabs can be found in a conversation between patriarch John I (631–648) and a certain Muslim emir[58]. That early dialogue[59] only touches some basic issues, to be developed in later texts. At no point during the dispute did John quote any verses of the Ḳur'ān (conveyed only orally then), similarly quotations from the Bible were absent in ʿAmr's arguments. When ʿAmr discarded the *Book of Prophets* (although that book is mentioned in the Ḳur'ān), the patriarch confined himself to citing the *Torah*[60].

The first written text containing information about the prophet among the Arabs can be found in a dialogue *Doctrina Jacobi nuper baptizati*[61]. One of participants, Justus, cites a letter from his brother, Abraham, which informs of the appearance of a false prophet who has come along with the Saracens[62]. Abra-

[54] They were described by: E u t y c h i u s, cols. 1099–1100; T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6127, p. 339. See also: D.J. S a h a s, *The Face to Face Encounter Between Patriarch Sophronius of Jerusalem and the Caliph 'Umar Ibn Al-Khattab: Friends or Foes?*, [in:] *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam*, ed. E. G r y p e o u, M.N. S w a n s o n, D. T h o m a s, Leiden–Boston 2006, pp. 33–44; H. K e n n e d y, *The Great Arab Conquests: How the Spread of Islam Changed the World We Live in*, London 2007, p. 91. ʿUmar, the future caliph, was to refuse a common prayer with patriarch Sophronius in the Church of Holy Sepulchre. (E u t y c h i u s, col. 1099).

[55] It was emphasized by W.E. Kaegi (*Initial Byzantine Reactions...*, p. 114). See also: J. T o l a n, *Réactions chrétiennes...*, p. 351.

[56] S o p h r o n i u s, *Christmas homily*, p. 514.

[57] He called the Arabs ungodly (*impiis Saracenis*) – *Passion of the 60 Martyrs*, 1, p. 300.

[58] He was initially identified as ʿAmr ibn Al-Āṣ, but now other possibilities are taken into account. It could well have been Sa'īd ibn ʿAmīr or ʿUmar ibn Sa'd. Also the year 639 is put to doubt and 644 (May 9) is suggested instead. More on that, see: G. R e i n i n k, *The Beginning of Syriac Apologetic Literature in Response to Islam*, OCh 77, 1993, pp. 171–185.

[59] The dialogue between John and the Emir has been translated, edited and commented on by M.F. Nau: *Un colloque du patriarche Jean avec l'émir des Agaréens et faits divers des annés 712 à 716*, ed., transl. M.F. N a u, JA 11.5, 1915, pp. 225–279. There is a new translation: *The Early Christian-Muslim Dialogue. A Collection of Documents from the First Three Islamic Centuries (632–900 AD)*, ed. N.A. N e w m a n, Hatfield 1993. The text was written down *post factum* and sent to other bishops: M i c h a e l t h e S y r i a n, vol. II, pp. 431–432.

[60] *John and the Emir*, 6 (further references ed. F. N a u).

[61] A dialogue between convert Jacob and a group of Jews may have taken place on 13 June 634.

[62] *Doctrina Iacobi*, V, 16, p. 209; W.E. K a e g i, *Initial Byzantine Reactions*..., pp. 115–116.

ham has personally investigated his message, inquiring those who have listened to his words. Another early work with information about Islam is a letter by patriarch Germanus to Thomas of Claudiopolis, mocking religious practices of the Saracens, especially saying prayers facing Al-Ka'ba[63].

Perception of the invaders was influenced by their attitude to local population. An invasion, by definition cannot be painless, but the scale of pain may vary. It is obvious that perception of the enemy who limits his violence and does not treat the conquered territory exclusively as a source of plunder is going to differ from that of one who devastates it. In another point of this book we have examined a decades-long discussion about the reasons behind the Islamic expansion. In the opinion of the author of this chapter the invasion was motivated economically, by a desire to possess money, slaves, and movable property. That desire resulted in acts of violence in the course of conquest, which were documented in Greek, Syriac and Coptic sources. On the other hand, it should be emphasised that, although religiously motivated violence also happened, both during the invasion and shortly after, the Arabs did not have a consistent plan to impose their religion upon conquered peoples[64].

The above information is important in order to understand the attitudes that inhabitants of Byzantine areas demonstrated towards the invaders. On the one hand, limited desire to convert the locals to Islam may have resulted in limited resistance, on the other, welcoming the robbers with open arms would have been unlikely as well. A question that may arise is how to explain the lack of resistance from the people of raided areas against the advancing Muslim troops.

The reason for such an attitude has been sought in the religious and fiscal policy of the empire. It has been pointed out that the tax pressure and persecution of Monophysites and Nestorians made the local population enthusiastically welcome the Arabs, who cleverly made use of dissatisfaction from the Byzantine rule[65]. Until recently there was a strong belief among scholars (Georg Ostrogorski, Fyodor I. Uspienski, Alexandr A. Vasiliev, Marius Canard) of a sympathy to Arab conquerors because of religious harassment in Byzantium[66]. *Modern scholars generally accept that during Arab invasions* (...) *in the 630s and 640s the native*

[63] Germanus, IV, col. 168; D.J. Constantelos, *The Moslem Conquest*..., p. 352.

[64] More on this in the chapter on the reasons and character of the invasion.

[65] K. Kościelniak, *Grecy i Arabowie*..., p. 55.

[66] A.A. Vasiliev, *Histoire de l'Empire byzantin*, vol. I, Paris 1932, p. 275; G. Ostrogorski, *Dzieje Bizancjum*, transl. H. Evert-Kappesowa et al., Warszawa 1967, p. 115; F.I. Uspenskij, *Istorija Vizantijskoj imperii, VI–IX vv.*, Moskva 1999, pp. 532–533; M. Canard, *The Arab Expansion: The Military Problem*, [in:] *The Expansion of the Early Islamic State*..., p. 76.

peoples supported, or at least failed to oppose, the attackers – wrote John Moorhead (who distanced himself from the presented earlier opinion) in 1981[67]. Historians accused local people, mostly Monophysites, of collaboration with the invaders[68]. They also pointed out the lack of communication with Byzantium during Persian occupation. As an example, Marius Canard points to the support from Egyptian Copts to ʻAmr ibn Al-Āṣ[69].

The hypothesis of a cheerful welcome extended to the invaders in Syria and Egypt has been rejected by the research of Leone Caetani[70], John Moorhead[71] and Demetrios Constantelos[72]. Philip Mayerson wrote, already back in 1964, that there was no evidence that the inhabitants of attacked provinces *had given active or passive aid to the Muslims as early as 634*[73]. This opinion can be extended also to later times. What is important, it concerns both Orthodox and non-Orthodox ("heretic") currents of Christianity. Rashad O. Khoury has said that *worse than the religious antagonism between Monophysites and Chalcedonians was the struggle between "Greens" and "Blues" in the streets of Alexandria when the Arabs were before its gates*[74].

We would seek in vain in the early sources any joy of the coming of the Arabs, even though they may be critical about the Byzantine rule. Moreover, they are clearly anti-Arab. Only the later authors, writing in twelfth century (Bar Hebraeus, Michael the Syrian, the author of *Chronicle up to 1234*) express their criticism regarding Byzantine administration, which lets us conclude that that they are more apt to accept their new masters[75].

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[67] J. Moorhead, *The Monophysite Response to the Arab Invasion*, B 51, 1981, p. 579. The scholar has quoted a selection of texts whose authors maintained that Monophysites, disappointed with the religious policy of Constantinople, decided to collaborate with the Arabs (*ibidem*, p. 580), to enter into a polemical dispute with them.

[68] B. Cecota, *Teofanes Wyznawca o monofizytach w dobie najazdów arabskich*, StZHistUJ 17, 2013, pp. 31–37.

[69] M. Canard, *Arab Expansion...*, p. 74.

[70] L. Caetani, *The Art of War of the Arabs, and the Supposed Religious Ferveur of the Arab Conquerors*, [in:] *The Expansion of the Early Islamic State...*, pp. 1–13.

[71] J. Moorhead, *The Monophysite Response...*, pp. 579–591.

[72] D.J. Constantelos, *The Moslem Conquest...*, pp. 325–357.

[73] Ph. Mayerson, *The First Muslim Attacks...*, p. 160.

[74] R.O. Khoury, *Heresies in the Early Byzantine Empire: Imperial Policies and the Arab Conquest of the Near East*, CChO 4, 2007, pp. 109–117. The Blues and the Greens were the names of two of the four factions of chariot race fans.

[75] Michael maintained that the Egyptians decided to surrender Alexandria because of persecutions ordered by Cyrus. The man who allegedly promised to surrender was the Monophysite patriarch, Benjamin (Michael the Syrian, XI, 8, vol. II, pp. 432–433).

The success of Islam was shocking to many Byzantines. Such feelings were expressed for example by Maximus the Confessor. He did not speak of Islam by name but wrote about sufferings caused by the invasion of barbaric people of the desert, who treated the attacked territories like their own, and who despite looking like humans, behaved like beasts[76]. The tone of other works was similar. The invasion was perceived in apocalyptic categories, as an act of the devil[77]. The *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* seems to be the best example[78]. The author has drawn up a dramatic image of destruction, killing the clergy, tormenting the weak, overwhelming devastation of everything, even the nature by *the onagers of the desert*[79]. The image after the conquest is disastrous. Enslavement will be imposed upon all creatures on the earth, even upon birds and beasts[80]. All goods will be handed to the invaders who will demand contribution *from the dead who lie in the ground* and will take poll-tax *from the orphans and the widows and even from the holy men*[81].

They will have no mercy, nor justice to the oppressed. They will ridicule the wise and mock the knowledgeable. There will be torment that will fall even upon animals[82]. They will kill pregnant women and their children, priests and deacons. They will destroy and devastate graves of martyrs[83]. There will be no services at churches and priests will cease to enjoy respect and will be like laymen[84].

Particularly hard oppression would fall in the *tenth week (of years)*[85], i.e. as interpreted, seventy years after the invasion[86]. The invaders, flushed with success,

[76] Maximus the Confessor, cols. 537–541; D.J. Constantelos, *The Moslem Conquest...*, p. 332; D.J. Sahas, *The Demonizing Force...*, pp. 103–105. It should be noted that Maximus was accused of betrayal and handing over many cites into Saracen hands. (*Life of Maximus Confessor*, col. 89). He was to advise the commander of Numidia to neglect the imperial orders and to refrain from setting off with his army against the Arabs (*Relatio Motionis*, col. 109).

[77] They were called *barbarian people of the desert, and cruel beasts.* See the writings of Patriarch Sophronius of Jerusalem. Basic bibliography: C. von Schönborn, *Sophrone de Jérusalem, Vie monastique et confession dogmatique*, Paris 1972. See also: J. Flori, *L'Islam...*, p. 114.

[78] P. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition...*, pp. 13–60; J. Flori, *L'Islam...*, pp. 133–141; G. Reinink, *Pseudo-Methodius*: *A Concept of History...*, pp. 149–187.

[79] Pseudo-Methodius, XI, 3–18.

[80] Pseudo-Methodius, XI, 13.

[81] Pseudo-Methodius, XI, 14.

[82] Pseudo-Methodius, XI, 15–17.

[83] Pseudo-Methodius, XI, 18.

[84] Pseudo-Methodius, XIII, 1.

[85] Pseudo-Methodius, XIII, 2

[86] So think M. Starowieyski and A. Troina (*Apokryfy syryjskie...*, p. 232, footnote 1198). Hunger and fiscal oppression would reign, making many men and animals die and many other wretched people sell everything they possessed, even their children (Pseudo-Methodius, XIII, 2–4).

were to boast of their triumph and defy Christians[87]. All that happened supposedly because God called Ishmael *an ass of the desert*[88]. His descendants *are not humans but sons of destruction* so they appear as destroyers and devastators[89]. They are rebels and slayers[90].

What should be particularly emphasised, is the fact that although Pseudo-Methodius was writing from Monophysite perspective[91], he saw salvation in the Byzantine emperor who would arrive to destroy tyranny of the Muslims[92]. And although probably not a Melkite himself, he behaved like a loyal subject of the emperor, whom he idealised[93]. Preoccupied by danger of conversions to Islam, he demonstrated Christianity as a monolith[94]. Similarly, two other texts based upon the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, i.e. *Apocalypse of Edessa*[95] and *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*[96], represent a similar attitude to the Muslims. The former

[87] Pseudo-Methodius, XIII, 6.

[88] Pseudo-Methodius, XI, 17. Similarly: XI, 3. Pseudo-Methodius referred to *Genesis* (Gen. 16, 12): *He will be a wild donkey of a man* (*New American Standard Version*, 1995); *He will be like a wild donkey among men* (*World English Bible*); *And he will be a wilde man; his hand will be against every man, and every mans hand against him* (*King James Version*, 1611).

[89] Pseudo-Methodius, XI, 17.

[90] Pseudo-Methodius, XI, 18.

[91] The author's confession is not certain – some scholars believe he was Monophysite, others – Chalcedonian. More on that: G. Reinink, *Pseudo-Methodius: A Concept of History...*, pp. 156–168. This scholar points out attribution an important role in history to the Monophysite ruler of Ethiopia. Pseudo-Methodius juxtaposed the Monophysite Kingdom of Ethiopia with Byzantium through the Ethiopian Mother of Alexander the Great (Pseudo-Methodius, VIII, 2). G. Reinink (p. 165) pays attention to the fact of creating genealogy by Pseudo-Methodius, which links Alexander the Great to the Last Emperor. See also: G. Reinink, *Pseudo-Methodius und die Legende...*, pp. 82–111.

[92] Pseudo-Methodius, XIV, 2–6.

[93] G. Reinink, *Pseudo-Methodius: A Concept of History...*, pp. 159–160, 166–176; idem, *Early Christian Reactions to the Building of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem*, ChrV 2 (8), 2001, pp. 233–234; J. Tolan, *Réactions chrétiennes...*, p. 356.

[94] It has made G. Reinink (*Pseudo-Methodius: A Concept of History...*, pp. 182–185; idem, *Early Christian Reactions...*, pp. 230–233) to put forward an interesting hypothesis, regarding the dating of the text of *Apocalypse*. According to the scholar it was to be written as a response to building of the Dome on the Rock in Jerusalem. S. Brock (*Syriac Sources for Seventh-century History*, BMGS 2, 1976, p. 34) has dated the source to between 685 and 692. F. Winkelmann (*Položenie Egipta v Vostočnorimskoj (Vizantijskoj) imperii*, VV 46, 1986, p. 78) to the period before the conquest of Egypt by the Arabs.

[95] *Apocalypse of Edessa*, pp. 415–471 (ed. F. Nau); G. Reinink, *Der edessenische "Pseudo-Methodius"*, BZ 83, 1990, pp. 32–38. The translation has been quoted by: A. Palmer, *The Seventh Century...*, pp. 243–250.

[96] H.J.W. Drijvers, *The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles: Syriac Apocalypse from the Early Islamic Period*, [in:] *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, vol. I, *Problems in the Literary Source Material*, eds. A. Cameron, L.I. Conrad, Princeton 1992, pp. 189–213.

announced that after a consuming civil war between Muslims, the Byzantine emperor would miraculously be called upon to undertake actions against them[97]. The *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* prophesies a union of Christianity and imminent end of the power of Arabs, who would be defeated by the Byzantine emperor[98]. A *new Constantine* was to establish *pax Christiana*, oust the Muslims from Jerusalem and erect there a Christian temple[99].

The fact that Christians of various confessions felt threatened by the expansion of Islam and were ready to collaborate with each other has been confirmed in a dialogue between patriarch John I and a Muslim emir, in which Christians of many denominations participated, including Arabic Christians[100]. It is of little importance here whether dialogues like that really took place or were just a literary fiction aimed at Christians threatened with apostasy[101].

The one who perceived the Arabs as brutal invaders was Sophronius. In a synodal letter distributed after his election to the patriarchate in 634 he complained of a danger from the ungodly cruel barbarians, particularly the Saracens[102]. He described them as atrocious and filled with devilish savagery[103]. In a Christmas sermon, preached not in Bethlehem but in Jerusalem, he lamented that because of them the Christians could not celebrate in Christ's birthplace[104]. He used to call the Arabs barbarian people of the desert, cruel and blood-hungry beasts[105]. In another homily delivered in 637 at the Church of Our Lady of Jerusalem, to celebrate Christ's baptism, he reported the impact of Arab raids on the inhabitants, cities, and monasteries – all that Saracen God haters had left behind was chaos and destruction. He spoke about bodies of the victims, consumed by birds, devastated fields and towns, burnt down churches and assaulted monasteries[106]. He certainly considered the raiders barbaric. He was disgusted by 'Umar's modest robes and vulgarity[107]. The bishop believed, however, that the invaders would

[97] *Apocalypse of Edessa*, pp. 426–428 (text); 434–437 (translation).

[98] *The Gospel of Twelve Apostles*, pp. 20–21 (text); 38–39 (translation).

[99] *The Gospel of Twelve Apostles*, p. 15 (text); 34 (translation).

[100] *John and the Emir*, 7–9; G. Reinink, *The Beginning...*, p. 181.

[101] *Ibidem*, p. 186.

[102] Sophronius, *Ep.*, col. 3197.

[103] D.J. Constantelos, *The Moslem Conquest...*, p. 328.

[104] Sophronius, *Easter homily*, pp. 151–168; *Christmas homily*, p. 514.

[105] Sophronius, *Christmas homily*, pp. 514–515.

[106] Sophronius, *Easter homily*, pp. 166–167; D.J. Constantelos, *The Moslem Conquest...*, p. 330.

[107] Theophanes, AM 6127, p. 339; Michael the Syrian, XI, 7, vol. II, pp. 425–426 (Michael praised 'Umar's modesty); Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando*, 19. See: K. Kościelniak, *Grecy i Arabowie...*, p. 60.

soon be chased away, if only the Christians improved their lives and reconciled with God[108].

The sources (written mostly by clergy) focused on trying to understand the reasons behind the Arab successes, both military and religious. Explanations were usually of eschatological nature: the invasion was the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies and result of sins made by Christians[109].

Belief that God ruled history and the invasion is His punishment for sins was common[110]. If we are to believe Agapius, even emperor Heraclius concluded that the success of the Muslims was the effect of God's will, which could not be opposed[111]. Different opinions regarded mainly the assessment of whose fault it was. The author of the seventh century *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* understood the Arab expansion as the natural fulfilment of prophecies of Jeremiah and Daniel, and perceived the cause of their success in the sins of Romans and Byzantines[112]. The Muslim rule was to be a *furnace of trial* for Christians[113]. The author emphasised that God in fact did not love the Arabs but punished the Christians with their hands[114]. Sebeos, too, referred to the prophecy of Daniel when writing of the horrors of Ishmaelite invasion[115]. According to Theophanes, the earthquake of 635 AD and appearance of a comet was interpreted as a sign of the forthcoming Arab occupation of Palestine[116], and the fall of Jerusalem was perceived as the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy[117]. Patriarch Sophronios was another man who saw Biblical parallels in the invasion and perceived it as punishment for sins; still, he gave hope that when the Christians improved, the redemption would come[118]. Theodore the Georgian, the eyewitness of the capture

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[108] Sophronius, *Christmas homily*, pp. 508–509.

[109] W.E. Kaegi (*Initial Byzantine Reactions...*, p. 117) pais attention that the pagans perceived the fall of the empire in the West in a similar way.

[110] Pseudo-Joshua had no doubt that it was God's punishment. Joshua the Stylite, 51 (transl. A. Luther). Anthony Chozebites thought of it as a punishment for sins: superstition and debauchery (*Life of George of Choziba*, 18, 31; D.J. Constantelos, *The Moslem Conquest...*, p. 332). Constantelos thinks that Anthony may have mistaken the Arabs for Persians, about whose entry into Palestine he wrote.

[111] Agapius, p. 471 [211].

[112] Pseudo-Methodius, XI, 6–7.

[113] Pseudo-Methodius, XI, 18; XIII, 4.

[114] Pseudo-Methodius, XI, 5; W.E. Kaegi, *Initial Byzantine Reactions...*, p. 118.

[115] Dan. VII, 3–24; 72; Sebeos, 32, 34, pp. 104–105, 129–130. See: W.E. Kaegi, *Initial Byzantine Reactions...*, pp. 120–121.

[116] Theophanes, AM 6122–6124, pp. 333–336.

[117] Theophanes, AM 6124, p. 336.

[118] Sophronius, *Christmas homily*, pp. 506–507; J. Flori, *L'Islam...*, pp. 116–117; R.G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw it. A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish*

of Jerusalem believed that it had happened *with God's consent*[119]. John of Nikiu, a Monophysite from Egypt blamed the Chalcedonians[120], but he believed in the quick expulsion of the aggressors. Anastasius of Sinai blamed emperor Constans II, who had exiled Pope Martin I (the latter died in exile)[121]. The author of the *Life of Theodore of Edessa* saw the reason of Arab successes in a similar way; besides the above, he mentioned other sins of Constans: murder of his brother and mutilation of Maximus the Confessor[122]. Arethas, who wrote his works in the early tenth century, emphasized that the Arabs had done much wrong by killing people[123], consequently God could not love them. He hoped that their time would come to an end soon and he reminded of their recent defeats[124]. Other writers sought others to blame – Jews and heretics. The former were accused particularly strongly by Maximus the Confessor[125].

In pursuing the explanation to Arab successes, arational explanations were put forward as well. Anastasius of Sinai opposed the God-loving Christians to allied with daemons Saracens[126]. He maintained the latter owed their success to impure forces which supposedly accompanied them during the siege of Constantinople[127]. They also inspired the Saracens to destroy the martyrium of St. Theodore

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and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam, Princeton 1997, pp. 67–73; W.E. K a e g i, *Initial Byzantine Reactions...*, p. 113.

[119] His testimony has been published by B. Flusin: *L'Esplanade du Temple à l'arrivée des Arabes, d'après deux récits byzantins*, [in:] *Bayat al-maqdis. ʿAbd al-Malik's Jerusalem*, eds. J. R a b y, I. J o h n s, vol. I, Oxford 1992, pp. 25–26. See also: J. F l o r i, *L'Islam...*, p. 122.

[120] J o h n o f N i k i u, CXXII, 1; J. F l o r i, *L'Islam...*, pp. 117–118.

[121] A n a s t a s i u s o f S i n a i, *Sermo III*, col. 1156; R.G. H o y l a n d, *Seeing Islam...*, pp. 92–102; D.J. C o n s t a n t e l o s, *The Moslem Conquest...*, pp. 332–333; J. T o l a n, *Réactions chrétiennes...*, pp. 354–355. Anastase simply ignored the fact that some of the calamities took place during Heraclius' reign. At the same time he saw coincidence between the religious peace under Constantine IV and the outbreak of war between the Muslims (A n a s t a s i u s o f S i n a i, *Sermo III*, cols. 1156–1157).

[122] *Life of Theodore of Edessa*, pp. 264–265.

[123] A r e t h a s, p. 300.

[124] He mentioned the success of Andronicus and destroying the Arab navy by Himerius (A r e t h a s, p. 300).

[125] J. Fl o r i, *L'Islam...*, p. 121.

[126] B. F l u s i n, *Démons et Sarrasins. L'auteur et le propos des Diègémata stèriktika d'Anastase le Sinaïte*, TM 11, 1991, p. 408.

[127] A n a s t a s i u s o f S i n a i, *Diègémata stèriktika*, C1. Anastase would free a certain Sartabias from that daemon in Damascus (B. F l u s i n, *Démons et Sarrasins...*, p. 386). The Muslim raid reached Abydos. It regards most probably an expedition at the end of Muʿāwiya's reign and Anastase wrote his text after 678 (M. C a n a r d, *Les expédition des Arabes contre Constantinople dans l'histoire et la legende*, JA 208, 1926, pp. 61–121).

in Karsatas by Damascus[128]. The Christians reacted particularly dramatically to the building of the Dome of the Rock, in the place where the Temple of Jerusalem had been. Monk Anastasius, the author of a short text published by B. Flusin, attributed this idea to daemons[129].

Today we cannot accept the old view, resulting from too much confidence to Michael the Syrian, saying that the Syrian Monophysites greeted the Arabs as liberators from Byzantine rule[130]. A similar situation occurred in Egypt, which has been proven by Harald Suermann upon his analysis of some rarely examined Coptic writings[131]. Some researchers interpret the Coptic narration about Cambyses as a veiled warning against Islam[132]. While that text does not call Islam by name, the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Athansius* and a dialogue between Patriarch John, a Chalcedonian, and a Jew in front of ʻAbd Al-ʻAzīz do so[133]. During the conversation the Patriarch and the Muslim began a dispute. The *Life of Patriarch Isaac* accuses ʻAbd Al-ʻAzīz of doing wrong to Christians and attempting to influence the patriarchal see[134]. In the *Legend of the Three Holy Children of Babylon,* Saracens are referred to as oppressors[135]. The *History of Patriarchs of Alexandria* describes a friendly reunion of Patriarch Benjamin and ʻAmr ibn Al-Āṣ[136]. But Benjamin's successors had much trouble with the Arabs, to mention only the imprisonment of Patriarch John III (677–682) or disputes with followers of Islam during the pontificate of Simon (692–700)[137]. Even Benjamin was not too happy about being released from Byzantine hands.

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[128] Anastasius of Sinai, *Diègémata stèriktika*, B 2 [XLIV], pp. 64–65; B. Flusin, *Démons et Sarrasins...*, p. 406.

[129] Anastasius, p. 25 (text); 26 (translation); G. Reinink, *Early Christian Reactions...*, p. 227; B. Flusin, *Démons et Sarrasins...*, pp. 381–408.

[130] Michael the Syrian, IX, 3, vol. II, pp. 412–413; H. Suermann, *Copts and the Islam of the Seventh Century*, [in:] *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam*, eds. E. Grypeou, M.N. Swanson, D. Thomas, Leiden 2006, p. 96.

[131] *Ibidem*, p. 97.

[132] F. Winkelmann, *Położenie Egipta...*, p. 77; H. Suermann, *Copts and the Islam...*, p. 101.

[133] M.Ph. Penn, *John and the Emir: A New Edition, Introduction and Translation*, Mu 121.1–2, 2008, pp. 65–91; B. Roggema, *The Debate between Patriarch John and the Emir of Mhaggaye. A Reconsideration of Earliest Christian-Muslim Debate*, [in:] *Christians and Muslims in the Islamic Orient of the Middle Ages*, ed. M. Temeke, Beirut 2007, pp. 21–39; H. Suermann, *Copts and the Islam...*, pp. 104–106.

[134] *Coptic Homilies*, pp. 99–100.

[135] *Coptic Homilies*, pp. 60–64; H. Suermann, *Copts and the Islam...*, pp. 107–108.

[136] *History of the Patriarchs*, vol. II, pp. 496–497 [232–233]; Ł. Karczewski, *Życie i działalność patriarchy Beniamina I (622–661) w świetle przekazów Historii koptyjskich patriarchów Aleksandrii*, Sem 26, 2009, pp. 285–296.

[137] *History of the Patriarchs*, vol. III, pp. 4–5 [258–259], 25 [279].

Emigration is another important evidence, proving that the people of conquered territories were not enthusiastic about the arrival of Arabs. Fleeing the attacked areas was one of the reactions of Christian population. After the fall of Damascus a number of people escaped to Sicily and Constantinople, while Muslims settled in their place. In Egypt many Copts fled from the advancing Muslim troops[138].

General aversion to the invaders does not mean that there were no individual contented voices. Rabbi Simon maintained that the Ishmaelites had been sent to free Israel from Byzantine oppression[139]. Sebeos wrote about Jewish hopes to rebuild the Temple of Solomon under Arab rule and about the disappointment that followed[140]. John Penkāyē[141], just like other Christian writers, concluded that the success of the sons of Hagar was caused by God's will, but he was also convinced that He had prepared them to treat Christians with honour. Taking control of *both realms* (i.e. Persia and Byzantium) by the Arabs by peaceful means would be a proof of that[142]. Leaving aside the evident falsehood of the latter statement, we must remember that the description of magnificent flourishing of Christianity under Mu ʿāwiya (661–680) serves John to demonstrate internal decomposition of the Church as resulting from quarrels and heresies[143]. These resulted in plagues sent by God down on His people[144]. At the same time we read of a groups of Muslim raiders, sent every year to distant regions and islands and returning with captives, among whom there were also many Christians[145]. It hardly corresponds with the idyllic description of the reign of the first Umayyad caliph[146], although admittedly Christian communities were left in peace under

[138] John of Nikiu, CXIII, 6; CXV, 6, pp. 182, 184.

[139] Rabbi Simon, I, 2, p. 135.

[140] Sebeos, 31, pp. 102–103.

[141] G. Reinink, *The Beginning...*, p. 167.

[142] John Penkāyē, IV, 141, pp. 57–58. Similarly bad would be the situation of the Church in Persia before the Arab invasion (V, 144, p. 59). In the comment to the source the scholar quotes *Life of Gabriel of Qartmin*, in which we can read that he preferred Arab rule to Byzantine oppression.

[143] John Penkāyē, V, 144–153, pp. 59–62.

[144] John Penkāyē, V, 154, p. 63.

[145] John Penkāyē, V, 147, p. 61.

[146] John Penkāyē, V, 146–147, pp. 61–62. John issued a veritable letter of appreciation to the caliph, under whose rule justice flourished, peace reigned in all provinces and everyone could live the way he wished. His opinion about Yazīd was much worse (V, 155, pp. 63–64). It should be noted that also the history of Muslims were presended by John in the context of God's judgments. Thus the war between ʿAlī and Muʿāwiya was shown as a punishment for the sins of Hagar's children (V, 146), just like the later battles within the caliphate (V, 155–158, pp. 63–67), followed by natural disasters (V, 159–163, pp. 68–71).

his rule[147]. It should also be said that, in accordance with the spirit of the age, John anticipated the downfall of Arab dominion[148]. His positive assessment of Muḥammad is, too, easy to understand, as the Patriarch appreciated that thanks to their leader the Arabs had abandoned polytheism and had learned about Old Testament.

In Egypt only some decided to collaborate with the Muslims. Among them were, for example, the citizens of Antinoë, who agreed to pay tribute to the Arabs[149]. They were motivated by ill will towards the emperor and to Patriarch Cyrus[150], but most probably also by the simple desire to save their lives. We might add that initially they had wanted to fight, but prefect John decided it was a lost cause. Moreover, facing the approaching Muslims, he fled to Alexandria, to avoid the fate of the garrison of Fayyūm[151]. Patriarch Cyrus was blamed for the fall of Alexandria. Cyrus tried to convince the Alexandrians that the deal with the Arabs was the way to save the Alexandrians' families[152]. Both the Orthodox and the Copts were ready to oppose the Arabs, so the fall of the city must have been shocking to them[153]. The Copts prayed for liberating the country from *enemies of the Cross*, who were plundering its territory and took its people away as slaves. They compared the Arab conquest to Jewish enslavement by the pharaoh, and begged God to free them[154].

We should mention here that John of Nikiu blamed the Byzantine administration and military leaders for the fall of Egypt[155]. He pointed out readiness of local population to fight for their homes and opposed it to passivity of leaders. The case of prefect John has been discussed above. Desertions like that occurred, as the Coptic bishops reports, much more frequently. We can mention here the escape of Domentianus[156], one of generals, which resulted in a crushing

[147] A. S h a r f, *Heraclius and Mahomet*, PP 9, 1956, p. 11. The caliph employed a Christian physician.

[148] J o h n P e n k ā y ē, V, 167, p. 73.

[149] J o h n o f N i k i u, CXV, 11, p. 184.

[150] D.J. C o n s t a n t e l o s, *The Moslem Conquest...*, p. 337.

[151] J o h n o f N i k i u, CXV, 10, p. 184.

[152] J o h n o f N i k i u, CXX, 23–27.

[153] J o h n o f N i k i u, CX, 24, p. 194.

[154] J o h n o f N i k i u, CXX, 32–33, p. 195.

[155] More about John's opinion, see: K. P i l a w a, B. C e c o t a, *Jan z Nikiu wobec najazdu muzułmanów na Egipt*, [in:] *Vade Nobiscum. Materiały Studenckiego Koła Naukowego Historyków UŁ*, vol. V, *Podróże, pielgrzymki, peregrynacje. Religie świata*, Łódź 2013, pp. 51–58.

[156] Domentianus, Eudotian's younger brother, cousin of Cyrus of Alexandria, held the post of *dux et augustalis Arcadiae* in 640–641. He probably held the title of *patrikios.* See: *PLRE* III, pp. 408–409.

defeat of substantial Byzantine forces during their panicked retreat[157], the procrastination of Theodore[158], who left Kariun, the suburban area of Alexandria[159], the desertion of Pentapolis[160]. John went even so far as to say that the Byzantines were not capable of providing any help for the Egyptians in their resistance in the face of the Muslim invasion[161].

In a few instances we can speak of classic "wishful thinking". Patriarch Yso'yahb (649–659) drew a very positive image of the Arab rule and protection it provided to the Church and its estates[162]. He did it despite the fact that he himself left the plundered Ctesiphon after it had been occupied by the Arabs[163]. He wrote that Arabs did not support his religious opponents, the Monophysites, in which S. Gerö sees the proof that in the very early period different groups of Christians tried to obtain favours from the Arabs[164]. According to the sources which the scholar referred to as anachronistic, the patriarch obtained privileges for the church from Abū Bakr and 'Umar[165]. At the same time he called upon Christians to give half of their estate to the Muslims rather than to convert to Islam[166]. By a strange coincidence Yso'yahb himself became a victim of persecutions. He was imprisoned when he failed to pay a sum of money to emir Al-Madā'in (as a tribute or bribe)[167].

The Greek, Syriac and Coptic sources are critical of those who actually or even only theoretically decided to collaborate with the invaders. The one group that was commonly accused of betrayal were the Jews. There was nothing new about that – previously they had been accused of collaborating with the Persians. A few facts were brought up to demonstrate their friendly attitude to the Muslims. According to Sebeos, the Jews of Edessa were to summon the Arabs,

[157] John of Nikiu, CXVIII, 4–7.

[158] Theodore – one of the most important imperial military leaders during the first Arab invasion in Egypt. In 641–642 probably *dux et praefectus augustalis Aleksandriae*. See: *PLRE* III, pp. 1280–1282.

[159] John of Nikiu, CXIX, 3–4.

[160] John of Nikiu, CXX, 35.

[161] John of Nikiu, CXX, 69.

[162] Yso'yahb III, XIV, pp. 181–182; S. Gerö, *Only a Change of Masters? The Christians of Iran and the Muslim Conquest*, [in:] *The Expansion of the Early Islamic State...*, p. 126. The patriarch wrote a text about Christian martyrs, converts from Zoroastrianism in the final years of the Sassanid rule.

[163] *Chronicle of Guidi*, p. 31.

[164] S. Gerö, *Only a Change of Masters...*, p. 126.

[165] *Chronicle of Seert*, vol. II/II, p. 619; S. Gerö, *Only a Change of Masters...*, p. 128.

[166] *Ibidem*, p. 126.

[167] *Ibidem*, p. 126.

maintaining on the basis of Holy Scriptures that they were both offspring of Abraham[168]. After the Muslim victory at Dāthin, the local Jews were to cheer following the death of a Byzantine patrician, Sergios[169]. Another Jew supposedly showed the Muslims the way into Caesarea (the city fell after a five-year-long siege, and many of its inhabitants were enslaved). Yet another bought from the Arabs and took away from Rhodes the bronze statue of the Colossus[170].

There were a few reasons why the Jews were accused of allying themselves with the Arabs. Polemic literature against Islam included old accusations against the Jews and similarities between Islam and Judaism[171]. The fact that under the Umayyads the Arabs tried to make Jerusalem an important centre of Islam (which was exemplified by erecting the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqṣā Mosque there) could be of some significance as well[172].

In reality, when acts of collaboration actually happened, it is not certain which groups stood behind them. The case of Edessa is a good example. According to Theophanes (AM 6130) the inhabitants opened up the gates for the Arabs. Probably because of an agreement with Iyād ibn Ghanm al-Fihrī, they gave him the country, the commander of the garrison, and its soldiers[173]. Błażej Cecota noted that the division into Romans (Byzantines) and Edessans was clearly visible here[174]. The negotiations were initiated by the latter, not by the garrison. We do not know, however, if the idea came from Monophysites or Jews. Sebeos maintains that the Jews were guilty of joining the Arabs[175].

The chronicle of John of Nikiu reports that the Muslims learned of the weakness of the Byzantines and of reluctance of some groups to Heraclius (because of his religious policy) only when were already in Egypt[176]. But the citizens of Antinoë, about whom he wrote these words, wanted to fight the Arabs. It was the commander of the Byzantine forces there who recognized that he was not capable of offering any resistance; he then withdrew to Alexandria[177]. His decision

[168] Sebeos, 36, p. 139.

[169] *Doctrina Iacobi*, V, 16; H. Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests...*, p. 77.

[170] Theophanes, AM 6145.

[171] Patricia Crone and Michael Cook wrote a book devoted to the relations between the two religions: P. Crone, M. Cook, *Hagarism. The Making of the Islamic World*, Cambridge 1977.

[172] A. Cameron, *The Eastern Provinces...*, p. 297 (see footnote 35 with further bibliography); S. Gottein, *The Historical Background of the Erection of the Dome of the Rock*, JAOS 70, 1950, pp. 104–108; idem, *The Sanctity of Jerusalem and Palestine in Early Islam*, [in:] *Studies in Early Islamic and Institution*, Leiden 1966, pp. 135–148.

[173] Theophanes, AM 6130, p. 340; B. Cecota, *Theophanes...*, p. 33.

[174] *Ibidem*, p. 34.

[175] Sebeos, 30, p. 96.

[176] John of Nikiu, CXV, 9.

[177] John of Nikiu, CXV, 10.

may have been motivated by the fact that the Muslims had already subordinated local villages, which agreed to pay them tribute[178].

It sometimes happened that accusations of betrayal were unjust and motivated by other reasons. The case of Maximus the Confessor, blamed for giving away to the Saracens numerous cities, including Alexandria, Pentapolis and Tripoli[179]. He was also supposed to advise the commander of Numidia to ignore emperor's orders and refuse to set off against the Arabs[180].

An argument speaking for the theory of a conflict-free takeover of Byzantine provinces are the written down treaties concluded with the Arabs by particular cities. The treaty signed by the inhabitants of Edessa has been discussed above. Representatives of other cities also negotiated with the Arabs. Damascus, whose situation was exceptional, as it was inhabited by a number of Arab Christians, was one of such cities. In return for a tribute, the community was promised security[181]. Emesa (Homs) surrendered after a long siege, having been promised guarantees not only of preserving the peoples' lives, but inviolability of its walls, mills and churches, except for a part of the church of St. John, which was to become a mosque[182]. The process of taking over Byzantine cities by the Arabs accelerated after Heraclius had left Syria (after the defeat at Yarmūk) – mainly small towns surrendered, while bigger ones by the sea – Gaza, Caesarea, as well as Latakia and Tripoli, continued defending themselves. Jerusalem became famed for its defence, but after a while it had to capitulate to ʿUmar[183]. In Monophysite Armenia Theodore Rshtumi signed a treaty with the Arabs which guaranteed him power that he went on to wield on their behalf[184]. The treaty was condemned by Sebeos who named it a contract with hell, while Theodore himself was called an ally of

[178] John of Nikiu, CXV, 11.

[179] *Life of Maximus Confessor*, col. 89.

[180] *Relatio Motionis*, col. 109. D.J. Sahas (*Demonizing Force...*, pp. 115–116) ascribes the accusations to a psychosis that reigned at the imperial court and expessed itself in seeking everywhere betrayal.

[181] H. Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests...*, p. 82; M.V. Krivov, *Nekotorye voprosy arabskogo zavoevanija Sirii i Palestiny*, VV 46, 1986, pp. 96–97.

[182] H. Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests...*, p. 86.

[183] Eutychius, col. 1099; Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, vol. XII, p. 192 (ed. Y. Friedmann); W. Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests...*, pp. 89–90; M. Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Empire: From Surrender to Coexistence*, Cambridge 2011, pp. 52–53.

[184] Theophanes, AM 6143, p. 344; Sebeos, 35, pp. 132–133; B. Cecota, *Theophanes...*, 36. One of Mamikonians followed Theodor's way (Sebeos, 38, p. 145). The Armenians were divided about their attitude towards the Arabs – Sebeos wrote about Roman and Arab Armenians (36, p. 142). They also happened to change sides. Their mutiny ended up in the execution of prisoners taken by the Muslims after the capture of Karin (38, p. 148).

Antichrist who had renounced the union with God[185]. Giving away of Artabasdus Dimaksean by his jealous brother into Ḥabīb's hands was assessed similarly harshly[186]. The inhabitants of Alexandria protested against surrendering the city by Patriarch Cyrus[187].

In the light of the above, we should determine what motivation stood behind the decision to negotiate. It must be emphasized that such attitude was nothing new. The Roman tradition clearly distinguished between capturing a city by force (in such case it could be plundered) and capitulation. In the latter case advantageous conditions of surrender could be negotiated. Before the birth of Islam Roman cities surrended to a stronger foe many times. For example, during the Persian invasion some of the cities avoided being turned into ruins thanks to deals made with Khusraw I Anushirvan (*Immortal Soul*)[188]. That practice continued when the Arabs entered Syria, Palestine and Egypt[189]. Certainly neither the bishops nor secular mayors of the cities were driven by affection towards the invaders, whoever they were, but by fear of their city being plundered if taken by force. Agreeing to surrender in return for a tribute did not have to be seen as something wrong. In case of Jerusalem, the wish to protect sacred places from destruction could have been an important factor[190].

Individual cases of collaboration certainly did take place. Rare examples did not have to come from the local population. John of Nikiu accuses some of the Byzantine commanders of going over to the Arab side after the latter had taken Fayyūm[191]. One of the commanders, named George, was to build on 'Amr's demand a bridge to enable crossing a river by Kalub, not far from Babylon[192]. Although he did it well, something must have gone wrong. The Byzantines were

[185] Sebeos, 35, pp. 132–133.

[186] Sebeos, 38, p. 145.

[187] D.J. Sahas, *Demonizing Force...*, p. 115.

[188] M. Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims...*, p. 24–32.

[189] *Ibidem*, pp. 32–57.

[190] D.J. Sahas (*The Face to Face Encounter...*, pp. 36–37) pays attention to the fact that patriarch Sophronius was ready to surrender only to 'Umar himself, not to Abū 'Ubaydah.

[191] John of Nikiu, CXIII, 2. In Zotenberg's translation we can read that *people began to help the Muslims*. Phil Booth disagrees with such interpretation and maintains that the third person plural (*they*) may refer to George and Cyrus. The scholar is working on a new translation of John's chronicle, which will appear in *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium. Series Aethiopica*, entitled: *The Chronicle of John of Nikiu: Ethiopic Text with Translation and Commentary*. Part of the translation I have used was made available by the translator to participants of a seminar at the Institute of Ancient History, University of Warsaw, Poland on 11 October, 2012. That early translation was not yet divided into chapters. The quoted part is: John of Nikiu, 113.

[192] John of Nikiu, 113, transl. Ph. Booth [=CXIII, 3].

imprisoned, their estates confiscated and the inhabitants had to pay double tax and provide food for the horses[193]. The region sustained much other harm as well[194]. In spite of that, in the Lower Egypt there was a strong division into loyal citizens of the empire and Arab proponents[195]. It is difficult to say, though, whom John of Nikiu could mean when he was writing about people who had refused to fight with the Muslims when called upon to do so by Theodore[196].

Some of those who had supported the Arabs later returned to Byzantine service. That was the case of a certain Kalādiya, whose wife and daughter found shelter in Alexandria, which may have caused him to worry that they would pay for his treason. One night he fled the Muslim camp and rejoined the Byzantine forces at Nikiu[197]. Another Byzantine, Sebendis (Sabinus), did the same. Having escaped from the Muslims, he went to Damietta to a certain official, named John[198]. He explained his earlier treason by having been treated unjustly by John, a commander who had had no regard for his old age[199].

Those relatively few who backed the Muslims, e.g. by providing them with supplies, were assessed negatively by the bishop of Nikiu[200]. Those who had converted to Islam were judged even more severely – he wrote that they had accepted *faith of the beast*[201]. It is difficult to evaluate the scale of that phenomenon, but there is no doubt that the converts joined the invaders. It is possible that their motivation was to preserve their property – the goods of the Christians who escaped were confiscated[202]. Readiness to convert to Islam has been ascertained by Pseudo-Methodius[203]. Interestingly, many Christians abandoned their faith without being subject to violence; only a few persevered[204].

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[193] John of Nikiu, 113, transl. Ph. Booth [=CXIII, 4].

[194] John of Nikiu, 113, transl. Ph. Booth.

[195] John of Nikiu, CXIX, 1.

[196] It can be about circus factions (Ph. Booth, *Shades of Blues and Greens in the Chronicle of John of Nikiu*, BZ 104, 2011, pp. 555–601). In spite of the lack of collaboration from those *'ahzāb*, Theodor succeeded (John of Nikiu, CIV, 3). It took place at Sammud.

[197] John of Nikiu, CIV, 6.

[198] John of Nikiu, CIV, 9. John sent him to Alexandria. F. Winkelmann, *Położenie Egipta...*, pp. 83–84.

[199] John of Nikiu, CIV, 10.

[200] John of Nikiu, CXX, 29–30. He mentioned Menas, Philoxenus and Synodus by name.

[201] John of Nikiu, CXIII, 1, p. 182. C.J. Constantelos (*The Moslem Conquest...*, p. 338) thinks it was because of fear, and wonders how many of them remained crypto-Christians.

[202] John of Nikiu, CXIV, 1.

[203] Pseudo-Methodius, XII, 3.

[204] Pseudo-Methodius, XII, 1–8.

Summing up, we should emphasise that Arabs became victims of Muslim invasion as well – both those who had has inhabited the territory of the empire for a long time, and the ones who were Byzantine allies (σύμμαχοι). They were also the first who had to face their Muslim brethren. In 630 the Byzantine army in the East was multiethnic, with many Arabs serving therein[205]. As a result, Muslim Arabs often had to fight with the Arabs in imperial service. The first encounter of Muḥammad's followers with the Byzantines in Syria – a clash at Mu'ta in 629, was a fight with a Byzantine unit made up mostly of the soldiers of Arabic origin. A similar situation took place during the battle of Yarmūk, by the Golan Heights, traditional pastures of the Ghassānids[206]. We must remember, too, that the Arabs were the first victims of Muslim persecutions, right after the conquest. It was a consequence of the unwritten assumption that every Arab ought to be a Muslim[207].

It should be noted that despite tensions in the relations between the empire and Ghassānids during the reign of Tiberius, Maurice and Phocas, members of that tribe remained loyal to Byzantium during the Muslim invasion. The case was the same with the other allied tribes. Djabala Ibn Al-Ayham, the last leader of the Ghassānids, did not join the Muslims, but arrived at the camp of the Byzantines[208]. Loyal to the empire, the Ghassānids were finally defeated at the battle at River Yarmūk by Muslim forces of Khālid ibn Al-Walīd. Afterwards many of them, particularly those who were Monophysites, escaped to Anatolia[209].

Certainly, loyalty such as this was not common to all Arab subjects and imperial allies. Byzantine sources attribute to some tribes who had received subsidies from Byzantium (but were deprived of them by Heraclius' decision) show-

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[205] Al-Balādhurī knew about it, too (B a l ā d h u r ī, *Book of the Conquests*, I, 12, p. 92).

[206] 12 000 Ghassānids fought at Yarmūk (M.V. K r i v o v, *Nekotorye voprosy...*, p. 99). On the course of the expansion and its first battles, see: H. K e n n e d y, *The Great Arab Conquests...*, pp. 72–94 (conquest of Syria and Palestine); 126–147 (conquest of Egypt); F.M. D o n n e r, *The Early Islamic Conquest*, Princeton 1981, *passim*; M.V. K r i v o v, *Nekotorye voprosy...*, pp. 88–99.

[207] Anastasius of Sinai describes a case of an Arab who wanted to escape from under the Muslim rule to avoid conversion. He was ready to kill his wife and children to save their souls. (A n a s t a s i u s o f S i n a i, *Holy Fathers*, 41). Yet, most of his compatriots acted in a different way.

[208] W.E. K a e g i, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquest*, Cambridge 1992, p. 171. Other tribal chiefs did the same.

[209] I. S h a h î d, *Sigillography in the Service of History*, [in:] *Novum Millennium. Studies on Byzantine History and Culture Dedicated to Paul Speck*, eds. C. S o d e, S. T a k a ć s, Aldershot 2001, p. 372; i d e m, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century...*, vol. I/I, pp. 636–637, 646–647.

ing Muslims the way to Gaza and Sinai[210]. Thanks to that the Muslims would occupy *Haran*[211]. Theophanes maintains that after the battle of Mu'ta some of the neighbouring tribes that used to be paid for guarding crossings through the desert, did not receive any money[212]. Ph. Mayerson thinks that the Saracens mentioned by Theophanes were the Bedouins from southern Palestine or Sinai. When the empire ceased to pay them, they went to the Muslim side[213].

To sum up, we can say that the supposed joy with which the inhabitants of attacked territories were to welcome the invaders is nothing but a myth. The authors who were writing during the invasion were ill disposed toward the Arabs who had ruined their lives, homes, deprived them of freedom, burned cities and forced to changing their lifestyles[214]. The invasion of 632–637 must have been violent[215]. Churches remaining in communion with Constantinople, which the Arabs desired to conquer, suffered particular harm[216]. At the same time it must be said that neither Monophysites nor the Orthodox demonstrated homogenous attitudes in assessment of Muslim takeover of their territory.

John Moorhead has noticed that thinking of eastern provinces of the empire as purely Monophysite is a simplification, because although representatives of that faith were quite influential there, as for example in Egypt, the Orthodox were also fairly successful there during the sixth century[217].

The nature of our sources has much influence on the current perception of events. Most of the sources were written several decades after the conquest and consequently their authors did not personally experience the drama of invasion. What is equally important, the fact of existence of the caliphate, which seemed invincible, was obvious to them. Hence the conviction that it was necessary to

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[210] Theophanes, AM 6123, pp. 335–336; Patriarch Nicephorus, 20, p. 68 – they were to receive 30 pounds of gold. The issue has been the subject of Ph. Mayerson's research (*The First Muslim Attacks...*, pp. 155–199).

[211] Identification of that place is not certain. It seems that Ph. Mayerson may be right saying it could be Pharan, now Ferain). Ph. Mayerson, *First Muslim Attacks...*, p. 161.

[212] Theophanes, AM 6123, p. 336.

[213] Ph. Mayerson, *First Muslim Attacks...*, pp. 161, 198–199. Mayerson pays attention to the fact that Bedouin tribes had not been of any danger to the empire for a long time. The region was calm before 633 (*ibidem*, p. 178).

[214] D.J. Constantelos, *The Moslem Conquest...*, p. 328.

[215] *Ibidem*, p. 329.

[216] *Ibidem*, p. 328.

[217] It can be confirmed by the correspondence between pope Gregory the Great and patriarch Eulogius, or actions of patriarch John (611–619). See: Gregory the Great, VIII, 29; XIII, 45 (the Pope congratulates Eulogius on the conversion of some heretics); *Life of John the Almsgiver*, 5, p. 201 (increasing the number of Orthodox churches); 32, pp. 242–243 (building many churches and monasteries). See also: J. Moorhead, *Monophysite Responce...*, p. 581.

adjust to the situation. The task was facilitated by the conquerors' policy. If one obeyed imposed limitations, then one could live fairly well under the Arab rule.

The reputation of the Arabs on conquered territories was bad. Gustave E. von Grunebaum has written that during the first stage of expansion, they conquered the country rather than the souls of the inhabitants[218]. Even if there were instances of joy, they stemmed from the recognition that this was the end of days, and that one could not oppose God's will – and what was happening was a deserved punishment, which would end when the Christians improved their lives. Such an attitude may have been motivated by aversion to competitive religions or just by personal resentment. Saying that east Roman Christians were quite passive about Arab successes is closer to the truth[219].

Unrest in Byzantine provinces, caused by Heraclius' religious policy, fiscal oppression or personal aversion certainly acted in favour of the invaders, but it did not mean that the rebels wished to substitute the imperial authority with the Arab one. One of such unrests was described by John of Nikiu, according to whom Theodore, who commanded forces in Egypt, feared that they would help the Muslims[220]. Another problem lay in limited determination of Byzantine commanders who – afraid that would not be able to effectively face the enemy – kept withdrawing to big cities, or ultimately to Alexandria, taking with them the financial means, collected in the form of taxes.

Passive attitude and lack of resistance from local population is explained both by nonexistence of tradition of civilian resistance to the invasion, and by perceiving it in the categories of punishment for sins and agreeing to God's will. Even the joy initially expressed by a few groups was soon replaced by disappointment. At that point, however, the Christians had no choice left at all[221].

The fact that the Arab invasion was not the first that affected the Middle East, and consequently was not perceived as something unique, is also of some significance. Only a few years prior to it Syria and Egypt had been conquered by Persia, when Khusraw I Anusirvan took advantage of a *coup d'état* in the empire to attack it[222]. The Persian ruler had initiated the last of the Byzantine-Persian wars, thus greatly facilitating the expansion of Islam which was to come not long afterwards.

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[218] G.E. von Grunebaum, *The First Expansion of Islam: Factors of Thrust and Containment*, [in:] *The Expansion of the Early Islamic State...*, p. 83.

[219] S. Gerö, *Only a Change of Masters...*, p. 129.

[220] John of Nikiu, CXI, 2. He was right – John, the commander of forces and John, the commander of the garrison of Maros were both killed in battle (CXI, 3).

[221] S. Gerö, *Only a Change of Masters...*, p. 130.

[222] On the so-called "Phokas Revolution" of 602, see: G.B. Hicks, *St. Gregory and the Emperor Phocas*, DR 4, 1904, pp. 59–72; D.M. Olster, *The Politics of Usurpation in the Seventh Century: Rhetoric and Revolution in Byzantium*, Amsterdam 1993; M.J. Leszka, *Zbrodnie cesarza Fokasa*, AUL.FH 67, 2000, pp. 45–54.

PART
III

Hassan Badawy, Błażej Cecota, Marek M. Dziekan,
Teresa Wolińska, Marta Woźniak

After the Conquest

Hassan Badawy, Błażej Cecota

1. Administration of the Arabic World: from Tribalism to the Umayyad Caliphate

1.1. Pre-Muslim Power Structures in the Arabian Peninsula

The process that drove the creation of the Arab state was determined by the tough desert environment of the Arabian Peninsula[1]. The life of nomads in its central region was a struggle for survival. A slightly better situation was to

[1] I.A. Al-Adawi, *An-Nuzum al-islamyya*, Cairo 1972, pp. 65–69, 75–85.

be found with the inhabitants of South Arabia, living both in rural and urban areas with close proximity to ports: important centres of trade with the Far East[2]. It was the part of Arabia where, relatively early, state organisations emerged. What triggered this process was the need to organise cooperation in order to maintain the dam of Ma'rib. Another factor facilitating unification was the necessity of ensuring control over trade routes. However, the realisation of these objectives was difficult for the inhabitants of south Arabia, which is demonstrated by the destruction of the irrigation system, a result of insufficient maintenance. Following a huge flood, the great dam of Ma'rib was damaged[3] and a process of large-scale migration of the local population occurred. At the time when the state structures were weakened, this part of the Arabian Peninsula was under Ethiopian control. Even prior to this, communities of the region were subject to cultural infiltration from the older, well-developed cultures of Ethiopia and Persia. There were also religious reasons for the Abyssinian intervention in the area, which is described in detail in another chapter of this book[4].

On the remaining territories of the Arabian Peninsula the autonomy of particular tribes resulted not only in the lack of a single centre of power, but also a transience and impermanence of alliances between them. Because of this, the administrative institutions created by the Arabs in the pre-Muslim period were based on tribal and clan structures.

The principal leader – responsible for looking after a tribe's interests – was a phylarch (a Greek term is used in this context, since that is how Roman and later Byzantine authors wrote about tribal leaders)[5]. His duty was to prepare his tribe to take military actions as required by tradition and the economic situation.

The position of a phylarch was not hereditary: instead the leader was selected by the tribal council (*madjlis al-ḳabīla*), consisting of representatives of the families of the tribe. The title was awarded for life and could only be divested in the event

[2] More about the subject of rivalry between tribal groups form the North and South can be found in: R. M a r i n - G u z m á n, *Arab Tribes, the Umayyad Dynasty, and the 'Abasid Revolution*, AJISS 21.4, 2004, pp. 58–59.

[3] W.W. M ü l l e r, *Mārib*, [in:] *EI*, vol. VI, pp. 559–567.

[4] See the chapter *Difficult Neighbours. Enemies, Partners, Allies* by Teresa Wolińska.

[5] Cf. P. M a y e r s o n, *The Use of the Term Phylarchos in the Roman-Byzantine East*, ZPE 88, 1991, pp. 291–295. The scholar believes that the term *phylarch* was used in a very broad meaning, not only with reference to leaders of tribes allied with Byzantium. I. S h a h î d, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century*, Washington 1984, p. 516; i d e m, *Rome and the Arabs. A Prolegomenon to the Study of Byzantium and the Arabs*, Washington 1984, p. 31; Th. B r ü g g e m a n n, *Römische Verwaltung im nomadischen Umfeld. Ethnarchen, Phylarchen und Strategen in der Provinz Arabia vom 1. bis ins 3. Jahrhundert*, [in:] *Verwaltete Nomaden – Mobile Viehzüchter und Dienstleister zwischen Autonomie und staatlicher Anbindung*, ed. K. F r a n z, Halle 2007, pp. 45–77.

of a serious defeat. The duties of a phylarch were not limited to military action, but were also concerned with foreign policy (forming and breaking alliances), providing the tribe with suitable economic conditions and wielding judicial power. Such features as wisdom, pride, consequence, honesty, eloquence, courage, sense of justice, hospitability and generosity were expected of the leader. He had to distinguish himself as kind, caring, clever, diplomatic and clear-minded[6].

In some tribes the leader was called *emir*, which was supposed to stress his military capabilities. Other tribes preferred the title *sayyid* ("master"). Yet another group of tribes adopted the title *shayḥ* ("the elder"), pointing to the leader's wisdom, knowledge and experience. The word '*arrab* ("carer") highlighted his predisposition to provide safety to the whole tribe. To recapitulate, the tribal title of a leader was supposed to reflect ambition and temperament, both of the ruler and the tribe he lead[7].

The status of the head of a tribe was emphasised by certain external signs. The tent of the phylarch was different from the others. It was of red fabric, and pitched on the highest point of the terrain, while an ever-burning fire made it easy to find. In front of the phylarch's quarters, dogs were kept, in order to raise alarm whenever a stranger approached.

Although the majority of tribes were autonomous, in some areas tribes created supratribal unions as of a kind of federation, as exemplified by groups united under the leadership of the Kindites (Banū Kinda*)* in central Arabia[8]. Across various historical periods certain groups of Arabs – the Nabataeans, Palmyrenes, Ghassānids and the Lakhmids – gained control over lands situated on the border with Byzantium. Thus, they were under the influence of neighbouring foreign Empires: the Romans/Byzantines and others. None of these powers were eager to welcome a strong nation on the Arabian Peninsula. On the other hand, though, no one among them ever managed to dominate the Arabian Peninsula (this despite the existence of a land known as *Arabia Petraea* under Roman and Oman control, which accepted the authority of Persia for some time).

In the process of creating supratribal structures, cities were an important factor. The first were built on caravan trails – to be more precise, in places where caravans made an extended stop. An example of such a city was Mecca[9]. In the first

[6] I.A. Al-Adawi, *An-Nuzum...*, pp. 9–19; H. Badawy, *Eisagōgē stēn istoria toth islamikou kosmou*, vol. I, Thessalonikē 2003, pp. 92–93.

[7] M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Les institutions musulmanes*, Paris 1950, pp. 146–147.

[8] I.A. Al-Adawi, *An-Nuzum...*, pp. 25–27, 67; H. Badawy, *Eisagōgē...*, vol. II, Thessalonikē 2010, pp. 158–171.

[9] Ibn Hishām, pp. 96, 119, 131, 132, 133, 137, 138, 140 (ed. M.K. Harras); Mas'ūdī, vol. I, pp. 262–263, 264, 269; I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and Arabs in the Fifth Century*,

half of the fifth century the city became the residence of Ḳuṣayy, progenitor of the Ḳuraysh tribe. At first glance the choice was not obvious. Mecca was located in Al-Ḥidjāz, in a relatively infertile region at the base of a mountain. One motivation for Ḳuṣayy to settle there was, undoubtedly, the presence of an important caravan trail from Yemen to the Mediterranean Sea running through this area. Therefore the location of Mecca had a strategic character, from an economic perspective. From the first moments of its existence Mecca was in conflict with its neighbours from the north and from the south, which was caused, at least in part, by competition over trade. This left its mark on the relations between Mecca and the Jewish tribes of Yathrib (later Medina). This urban centre was a rival of Mecca but its importance gradually declined as Mecca developed, although its role in trade remained significant. Yathrib, inhabited by various Arab and Jewish tribes, was a place of coexistence for many regional ethnic groups[10].

It is worth devoting a passage of this chapter to the way in which Mecca was governed, as the models created then were employed later in the Caliphate. *Ḳuṣayy* ruled the city in an authoritarian manner with the assistance of a council called the *al-māla* (الملأ)[11]. It consisted of representatives of four districts, into which the city had been divided soon after the Ḳuraysh gained control over it[12]. Ḳuṣayy granted certain privileges to selected families, whose members would later monopolise trade[13]. Their descendants would become rulers of the Arab world. Among them we must list Hashimite (Hāshimites) Muḥammad (610–632), ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (656–661), Umayyad Muʿāwiya (660–661), Abbasid Abū al-ʿAbbās ʿAbdu'llāh Al-Saffāḥ (750–754) and Fatimid ʿAbdallāh al-Mahdī (909–934).

1.2. The Influence of Islam: from a Religious Community to the Muslim State

For the above-described approach to ruling a city, the birth of the new religion emerged as a challenge. Spiritual bonds were more important for believers gathered around Muḥammad than were their connections with Mecca. When

Washington 1989, pp. 332–350; G. Zidan, *Al-Arab kabl al-islam*, Cairo n.d., pp. 178–181, 275–280; W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad. Prophet and Statesman*, Oxford 1975, pp. 7–13; I.A. Al-Adawi, *Al-Nuzum...*, pp. 54–61.

[10] R.B. Winder, *Al-Madīna*, [in:] *EI*, vol. V, pp. 994–1007.

[11] Ibn Hishām, vol. I, pp. 99, 104, 107; Masʿūdī, vol. I, p. 269; I. A. Al-Adawi, *An-Nuzum...*, pp. 60–65.

[12] *Ibidem*, pp. 60–65.

[13] Ibn Hishām, vol. I, p. 99, 107; I. A. Al-Adawi, *An-Nuzum...*, pp. 63–65.

Muḥammad stayed in Mecca, the *umma* (أمّة) was a monoethnic (Arab) community, but it consisted of many tribes. Good relations between members of *umma,* the safety provided through mutual aid, and the sense of justice resulting from partial redistribution of goods seemed to be sufficient elements to encourage conversion to the new religion. Harmonious coexistence between the members of the community was viewed as a sign of God's blessing[14]. Initially, however, many citizens of Mecca were not interested in the teaching of Muḥammad. The Prophet's sermons attracted only a small part of the local community – about seventy families – mostly of little prominence. The religious prohibition on profiteering had no effect on the biggest merchants in the city; these, at the beginning, paid no attention to the new faith, which was spreading among less privileged classes of the society.

Rigorous criticism of economic and social customs led to the first open conflict between the Muslim community and Meccan elites in 616 AD[15]. This was seemingly connected to the sphere of doctrine, as Islam was alleged to insult the traditional faith of the Arabs. The real cause, however, was probably a perceived threat to businesses of the Ḳuraysh, who were apprehensive about the elements of the Prophet's teachings in which he criticised accumulating riches. One of their sources of income was the arrival or pilgrims at Al-Ka'ba. The conflict between followers of the new religion and supporters of the old order reached its climax when Abū al-Ḥakam, Abū Sufyān and Suhayl ibn 'Amr became heads of the latter group. Leaders of the Ḳuraysh noticed that Muḥammad's movement was not just one of many religious options emerging at that time, but that its aim was to take power.

The Ḳuraysh would not countenance abandoning their ancestors' faith and they did not want any change to the existing social system, which was working to their benefit. They thought that their relatives' conversion to the new faith undermined their position and, thereby, put Muḥammad in an important position in the society of Mecca[16]. They were similarly worried that Muḥammad, who proclaimed himself the Messenger of God (*Rasūl Allāh*)[17], would gain a significant political role and gain power[18]. Trying to defy the successes of Muḥammad's followers, Abū Sufyān declared a boycott of Muslims and their supporters in Mecca, where a lot of wealthy merchants still lived. This boycott also applied to

[14] M. A l i, *The Religion of Islam*, Lahore 1926, pp. 6–13.

[15] *Ḳur'ān*, 83; M. R o d i n s o n, *Islam et capitalisme*, Paris 1966, pp. 36–44, 113–138.

[16] I b n H i s h ā m, pp. 163, 173, 226, 248, 278, 317.

[17] *Ḳur'ān*, 25,1; 68,52; 82,27.

[18] N. S a d a w i, *Ad-Daula al-arabijja al-islamijja (1–132 h/622–750 m)*, Cairo 1967, pp. 36–46; W. M o n t g o m e r y W a t t, *Muhammad at Mecca*, Oxford 1953, p. 21.

members of the Hāshimites family, who were related to the Prophet but were not Muslims, and belonged to the ruling circle. The intention behind this decision was to force the Hāshimites to persuade Muḥammad to abandon preaching his teachings. Due to the boycott, Muslims and their relatives found themselves in a difficult situation, but this did not break the Prophet. The only choice this left was to leave Mecca. Muḥammad met with the representatives of Yathrib, who asked him for his intervention in a conflict between two tribes: Banū Aws and Banū al-Khazradj[19]. The religious environment of Yathrib seemed to be friendly to Muslims, due to the presence of adherents of monotheistic religions (Jewish tribes and Arabs professing Judaism), while local representatives promised Muḥammad fraternity and their protection against the mutual enemy[20].

When Muḥammad, together with a group of Arabs converted to Islam (called *Al-Muhādjirūn*), arrived at Yathrib, an agreement reached in Mecca between representatives of Banū Aws and Banū al-Khazradj was put to work. The deal covered issues such as providing accommodation, joint defence and brotherhood (*ta'ākhī*). It was also decided that the possessions of *Al-Muhādjirūn*, and those citizens of Medina who supported the Prophet (called *Al-Anṣār*) were to become their common property. In that way, Muḥammad replaced a tribal institution with a new one, not derived from the traditions of the tribe. Blood ties (*'aṣabīya*) were supplanted by religious bonds, which would later be regulated in the Ḳur'ān – *The Believers are but a single Brotherhood*[21]. The system of joint property was abolished later in the Prophet's time, when the economic situation of *Al-Muhādjirūn* improved.

The fact that Muḥammad had left Mecca had a significant influence on the *umma,* which was then in its formation. From the year 622, when Muslims arrived at Yathrib (later Medina*)* they were surrounded, on the one hand, by new citizens just converted to Islam, and on the other, by tribes who did not accept their faith. Thus, it turned out to be essential to determine a platform for relations between these groups. At that time, Muḥammad established a kind of alliance, joining the tribes of Medina with Meccan emigrants. This was codified in a document known as the *Card* or *Constitution of Medina* (*Ṣaḥīfat al-Madīna*; صحيفة المدينة) or simply *Al-Ṣaḥīfa* (الصحيفة)[22]. Unfortunately, we do not know

[19] Ibn Hishām, vol. II, pp. 33, 35.

[20] A. Al-Kasem, *Diblumasijjat Muhammad*, Chartum 1971, pp. 13–15; N. Sadawi, *Al-Daula...*, pp. 46–49.

[21] *Ḳur'ān*, 49,10: *The faithful are indeed brothers* (transl. A. Quli Qara'i); *The Believers are but a single Brotherhood* (transl. A. Yusuf Ali).

[22] There is a vast literature on the subject of the so-called *Constitution of Medina*. Among the most important works, see: R.B. Serjeant, *The "Constitution of Medina"*, IQ 7.1–2, 1964,

this document in its original version, since it is preserved only in accounts given by later chroniclers, among whom the most significant is Ibn Isḥāḳ[23].

If *umma* is to be widely understood as a cluster of city dwellers, subordinated to Muḥammad's orders, then it can be stated that the *Constitution of Medina* was a pillar of the new *umma*. In this particular period we must distinguish *umma* in the, above mentioned, broad meaning and in a narrow sense, meaning only a religious community of Muslims[24].

To be more precise, it must be emphasised that the *Constitution of Medina* applied to Muhādjirūns, Ansars (*al-Anṣār*) and the citizens of Medina of Jewish origin, Arabs of the Jewish or Christian faith, who immigrated there from the north and south, settlers from the whole Byzantine Empire, Persians, Ethiopians, Indians, Arab followers of Zarathustra, polytheists (*al-mushrikūn*), hypocrites (*al-munāfiḳūn*, i.e. those who pretended to be Muslims) and even disbelievers (*al-kāfirūn*). *Al-Ṣaḥīfa* enabled coexistence and exhorted mutual respect for different religions and tribes, which can even be shown in the Ḳur'ān in Sūra 109, *The Disbelievers* (*Al- Kāfirūn*)[25].

Since the Hidjra (622 AD) Muḥammad was not only a religious but also a political leader[26]. In Yathrib he could freely introduce rules of the new religion,

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pp. 3–16; M. Hamidullah, *The First Written Constitution in the World: An Important Document of the Time of the Holy Prophet*, Lahore 1975; R.B. Serjeant, *The Sunnah Jâmi'ah, Pacts with the Yathrib Jews, and the Tahrîm of Yathrib: Analysis and Translation of the Documents Comprised in the so called "Constitution of Medina"*, BSOAS 41, 1978, pp. 1–42; U. Rubin, *The "Constitution of Medina": some notes*, StI 62, 1985, pp. 5–23; G. Schaller, *Die "Gemeindeordnung von Medina" – Darstellung eines politischen Instruments. Ein Beitrag zur gegenwärtigen Fundamentalismus-Diskussion im Islam*, Augsburg 1985; A. Walker, *"Constitution of Medina"*, [in:] *Muhammad in History, Thought, and Culture: An Encyclopedia of the Prophet of God*, vol. I, eds. C. Fitzpatrick, A. Walker, Santa Barbara 2014, pp. 113–115.

[23] Ibn Isḥāḳ, vol. II, pp. 147–150 (ed. Cairo 1999).

[24] This chapter does not present the author's views on *umma* as a tribal or religious community; this discourse has been held for many years. Since the subject is unusually complicated, its full analysis cannot be included in the chapter, which is supposed to synthesise the organisation of the early Caliphate. The discussion has recently been elaborated on by M.J. Al-Faruqi (*Umma: The Orientalists and the Qur'ānic Concept of Identity*, JIS 16.1, 2005, pp. 1–34), in whose text further references can be found.

[25] *Ḳur'ān*, 109 (transl. A. Yusuf Ali): *Say: O ye that reject Faith!/ I worship not that which ye worship,/ Nor will ye worship that which I worship./ And I will not worship that which ye have been wont to worship/ Nor will ye worship that which I worship./ To you be your way, and to me mine*. In 'Ali Quli Qara'i's translation: *Say, O faithless ones!/ I do not worship what you worship,/ nor do you worship what I worship;/ nor will I worship what you have worshiped/ nor will you worship what I worship./ To you your religion, and to me my religion*.

[26] His contemporaries were aware of that and started dating the New Era from 622 AD. Ibn Hishām, vol. II, pp. 198–199; W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad in Mecca...*,

which led to an inevitable confrontation between the new *umma* and its allies with the Ḳuraysh[27], who realised they had lost control over the course of events. Ever since their position as regional leaders started diminishing. The existence of Muslim community in Yathrib posed a threat to the monopoly the Ḳuraysh had in controlling trade between the East and the West[28]. Their natural reaction was to try to destroy the *umma*.

After 629/630 AD, that is, after Muḥammad took over Mecca, the economic and organisational foundations of the Muslim community (the *umma* understood as a strictly religious grouping) began to develop. The tribal alliance that supported the Prophet and treaties made earlier with citizens of Mecca were invalidated and Arab tribes were forced to convert to Islam (often only formally) and to acknowledge the authority of Muḥammad[29].

The Prophet changed the relations between the tribes. The model of teaching about *umma*, organised along a system different from tribal was supposed to guarantee both internal and external peace[30]. This target was successfully achieved, to a large extent, providing safety on desert routes and suppresing conflicts, at least temporarily[31]. The rivalry between tribes from the north and from the south of the peninsula revived in the time of great conquests and moved to the areas conquered by the Arabs[32].

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pp. 89–93; i d e m, *Hidjra*, [in:] *EI*, vol. III, pp. 366–367; M. H o d g s o n, *The Venture of Islam. Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, vol. I, Chicago 1974, pp. 20–22 (giving a description of the interconversion of the Christian solar year and the Muslim lunar year); F.A. S h a m s i, *The Date of Hijrah*, IslSt 23, 1984, pp. 189–224, 289–323; K. K o ś c i e l n i a k, *Czas i historia w islamie. Kalendarz i podstawy chronologii muzułmańskiej*, Kraków 2013.

[27] W. M o n t g o m e r y W a t t, *Muhammad in Mecca*..., pp. 93, 102sqq; H. B a d a w y, *Eisagōgē*..., vol. I, pp. 134–147; A. A l - K a s e m, *Diblumasyat Muhammad*, Khartoum n.d., pp. 11, 16, 19, 23, 241–244.

[28] U. R u b i n, *Muhammad's Curse of Mudar and the Blockade of Mecca*, JESHO 31.3, 1988, pp. 249–264.

[29] The key source here is the Ḳur'ān, which references the events of this period, e.g. 9:1–129. See also: M. H a m i d u l l a h, *Documents diplomatiques sur la diplomatie musulmane à l'époque du Prophete et des khalifes orthodoxes*, Beyrouth 1985, pp. 66–92, 360–369; A.A. F u t a j h, *Al-Alakat al-charidżjja li-daulat al-islam bi-Al-Hijaz*, Cairo 2006, pp. 95–105.

[30] W. M o n t g o m e r y W a t t, *Muhammad in Mecca*..., pp. 82–83; A. A l - K a s e m, *Diblumasyat*..., pp. 11–16.

[31] It is definitely worth familiarising oneself with the full text of the *Constitution of Medina*. For the text, with its variations coming from different sources and corrections, which accompanied the creation of *umma,* see: I b n H i s h ā m, vol. II, p. 341; A b ū ʿ U b a y d, pp. 202–207; I b n K a t h ī r, *Tarikh*, vol. III, pp. 224, 226; M. H a m i d u l l a h, *Documents sur la diplomatic musulmane*..., I, pp. 4, 342; W. M o n t g o m e r y W a t t, *Muhammad in Mecca*..., p. 93; I.A. A l - A d a w i, *An-Nuzum*..., pp. 114, 117, 126; A. A l - K a s e m, *Diblumasijjat*..., pp. 241–244 – the latter work mentions *Sahif*. The final, fifty-second chapter merits particular attention.

[32] R. M a r i n - G u z m á n, *Arab Tribes*..., pp. 59–60.

The unification of the Arab tribes showed the inadequacy of tribal leadership to the emerging Arab statehood. It turned out to be essential to introduce a common economic, defensive and foreign policy on the Arabian Peninsula[33]. In order to achieve it a new governance model had to be implemented[34]. This introduction encountered two obstacles to be overcome. The first one was the lack of sufficient funds, which would cover the cost of development and operation of the new administrative structures. The other problem was with achieving the realisation of the centralised power structure. Local leaders were reluctant to obey orders from Medina. An additional issue resulted from the fact that the new state structures were "imposed" on the already existing community.

When a new administrative division of Arabia was to be made, it was especially important that it coincide with prior tribal organisation, so that no tribe would feel aggrieved by the loss of part of their territory.

It was also characteristic that after dividing Arabia into provinces, leaders were chosen from among young warriors, who were expected to be more loyal than old chiefs[35]. It is also worth mentioning that it is in the time of Muḥammad that the first activity of the new state on the international arena can be observed. Its manifestation was the expansion of the territory under Muslim rule. The territorial growth took place towards both the north and the south of the Arabian Peninsula. In the latter, the city of Aela (Aqaba) was conquered, which was synonymous with gaining control over shipping in the northern waters of the Red Sea[36].

Muḥammad died in Medina in 632 AD in the arms of his wife ʻĀ'isha[37]. Before his death he managed to unite within the new community many tribes of

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[33] See, for particular accounts, the text by *Al-Sahif*: Ibn Hishām, vol. III, p. 341; Abū ʻUbayd, vol. I, pp. 202–207. See also: A. Al-Kasem, *Diblumasijjat...*, pp. 11, 16–19, 241–244.

[34] *Ḳur'ān*, 105:1–5, 106:1–4; Ibn Hishām, pp. 37, 41, 43, 47–52; I. Shahîd, *Two Quranic Suras: al-Fīl and Qurys*, [in:] idem, *Byzantium and the Semitic Orient*, Ashgate 1988, art. XII, pp. 429–436; idem, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century*, Washington 1989, pp. 350, 360, 376; A. Nour, *The Quran*, n.p. n.d., pp. 15–19, 30–39.

[35] S.A.Q. Al-Husaini, *Arab Administration*, Cairo 1958, pp. 44–49; I.A. Al-Adawi, *An-Nuzum...*, pp. 128–131; H. I. Hassan, A. Hassan, *An-Nuzum al-Islamiyya*, Cairo 1970, pp. 17–18, 129–130, 168–169, 292–294.

[36] Balādhurī, *Fūtuḥ*, vol. I, pp. 71, 73, 128; Theophanes, AM 6123 (for information on the first Muslim attack on Byzantine territories). See also: Ch. Nomikos, *Ē machē tōn Mothōn kai o tafos tou Gkiafar El Tagiar*, EEBS 3, 1926, pp. 97–100; E. Vranousi, *Byzantinoarabica: Oi Prōtoi Arabobydzantinoi Polemoi stēn Palaistinē, Iordania kai Foinikē*, Sym 3, 1979, pp. 1sqq; F. Buhl, *Mu'ta*, [in:] *EI*, vol. VII, pp. 756–757; F. Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquest*, Princeton 1981, p. 101; W.E. Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquest*, Cambridge 1993, pp. 66, 72–74, 88; P. Brown, *O Kosmos tēs Ysterēs Archaiotētas 150–750 m. Ch.*, Athens 1998, pp. 201–206.

[37] N. Abbott, *Aishah. The Beloved of Muhammad*, Chicago 1942; W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad in Mecca...*, p. 227; idem, *ʻĀ'ishah bint Abī Bakr*, [in:] *EI*, vol. I, pp. 307–

the Arabian Peninsula, some of whom converted to Islam. In the ideological sphere, the Prophet gave the Arabs a new supratribal substance and a religious legitimacy. Due to these achievements, Muḥammad was regarded as perfect, although it must be stressed that his descendants never tried to make him a divine personage[38].

Muḥammad left neither successor nor political testament. As a consequence, after his death *umma* found itself in crisis. This situation forced the tribal leaders to work out a compromise solution by appointing as successor to the Prophet his loyal companion, Abū Bakr (632–634)[39], who was granted the title of caliph (*khalīfah Rasūl Allāh*), becoming the first of the so-called orthodox or rightly guided caliphs (*al-Khulafā' al-Rāshidūn*).

Abū Bakr belonged to the most faithful of the Prophet's followers[40]. He was a good merchant and proved also to be a ruthless leader. The task he faced was difficult, as the federation of tribes supporting Muḥammad did not guarantee stability or permanent peace. This resulted from the fact that the agreements reached by the Prophet with particular tribes were of a personal nature. These bound Muḥammad with particular tribal leaders for as long as the signatories lived. Moreover, these treaties were not always connected with converting to Islam. Leaders made agreements with Muḥammad with the aim of ensuring their economic and military safety, which participation in *umma* provided. After the Prophet's death the Arabs started to rethink the value of the community. The new leader of *umma* had to overcome difficulties resulting from the question of whether there was a need for the continued existence of the Arab tribes' alliance. Its stability was put to the test as the tribes' Islamisation was still superficial and they were reluctant to pay *zakāt* (charitable tax) to Medina, but also

308; A. Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an*, Austin 2002, pp. 125–126.

[38] *Ḳur'ān*, 47 (*Muhammad*); Ibn Hishām, vol. I, pp. 139, 178; W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad in Mecca*..., pp. 26–28, 236–240; F. Buhl, A.T. Welch, *Muḥammad, the Prophet of Islam*, [in:] *EI*, vol. VII, pp. 360–376. There is a huge body of literature on Muḥammad; here we restrict ourselves to mention of only the most important works: U. Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder: The Life of Muhammad as Viewed by the Early Muslims (A Textual Analysis)*, Princeton 1995; M. Hamidullah, *The Life and Work of the Prophet of Islam*, Islamabad 1998; T. Andrae, *Mohammed: The Man and His Faith*, Dover 2000; *The Biography of Muhammad: The Issue of the Sources*, ed. H. Motzki, Leiden 2000.

[39] H.I. Hassan, A. Hassan, *Islamic Institutions*, Cairo 1970, pp. 18, 20, 34–38.

[40] On Abū Bakr and his policy see in particular: M. Muranyi, *Ein neuer Bericht über die Wahl des ersten Kalifen Abū Bakr*, Ara 25, 1978, pp. 233–260; W. Madelung, *The Succession to Muḥammad. A Study of the Early Caliphate*, Cambridge 1997, pp. 28–57; K. Athamina, *The Pre-Islamic Roots of the Early Muslim Caliphate: the Emergence of Abū Bakr*, Isl 76, 1999, pp. 1–32.

due to the growing aversion to this central power. What is more, the ambitions of families and tribal leaders wanting full independence became more visible.

Abū Bakr 's first move was to send letters to the chiefs of the tribes, in which he appealed to them to remain in the alliance, as it had been in the time of Muḥammad. He supported his appeal with the statement that joint campaigns outside Arabia would bring them greater benefits than the spoils of intertribal wars[41]. This was an announcement of aggression of the Muslim state in the Mediterranean world. Abū Bakr's invitation did not, however, convince all tribes. The apostasy of Yemeni, Omani, Nadjdan and other tribes led to the first civil war among Arabs after the death of Muḥammad. The period of the so-called *ridda* wars[42] started. With the help of 'Umar ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb and the Muslim community, Abū Bakr pursued a policy of reunification by persuasion and the sword[43]. During his two-year reign he had to face numerous conflicts among the tribes in order to impose upon them a reintegration to the *umma*[44]. The victory of Abū Bakr ended with the slaughter of those who tried to break away from the Arab union, and undoubtedly changed the fate of the Arab world.

The conversion to the monotheistic faith proposed by Muḥammad to the citizens of Mecca and Medina was, simultaneously, an invitation to unification. The Arab world of the seventh century was just maturing to approve of such a unity and, although in the time of Muḥammad the Arabs' readiness to submit to a single centre of power was not yet visible, the unification of the tribes accomplished (not without violence) by his successor, Abū Bakr (632–634) proved to be long-lasting[45].

The fact that, on this occasion, the newly-created Arab state stood the test of time allows us to formulate one more hypothesis. The idea of joining forces and creating a supratribal community, driven by a simple survival instinct, had been put forward several times even before the birth of Islam. Thus, the common claim that it was the religion that led to the awakening of ethnic consciousness

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[41] M. Hamidullah, *Documents...*, pp. 332sqq, 371sqq.

[42] E.S. Shoufani, *Al-Riddah and the Muslim conquest of Arabia*, Toronto, 1973; E. Landau-Tasseron, *The Participation of Tayyi in the Ridda*, JSAI 5, 1984, pp. 53–71; M.J. Kister, *The Struggle against Musaylima and the Conquest of Yamama*, JSAI 27, 2002, pp. 1–56; M. Lecker, *Tribes in Pre- and Early Islamic Arabia*, [in:] idem, *Peoples, Tribes and Society in Arabia around the Time of Muhammad*, Farnham 2005, art. XI, pp. 3–15.

[43] Balādhurī, *Fūtuḥ*, vol. I, pp. 113–120; E.S. Shoufani, *Al-Riddah...*; E. Landau-Tasseron, *The Participation...*, pp. 53–71.

[44] Balādhurī, *Futuh*, vol. I, pp. 113, 120, 125; M. Lecker, *Al-Ridda*, [in:] *EI*, vol. XII, suppl., pp. 692–695; M.J. Kister, *The Struggle...*, pp. 1–56.

[45] N. Sadawi, *Al-Daula...*, pp. 92, 99–104; Ph.K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, Basingstoke–New York 2002, pp. 140–146.

of the Arabs can be reversed: perhaps the creation of Islam resulted from the need for unification of the Arab tribes. Undoubtedly, this view requires further research.

The short reign of Abū Bakr, which was full of wars, did not admit any opportunities to develop the administrative system introduced by Muḥammad. Changes were only introduced by the second of the caliphs – 'Umar ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb, who ruled for a whole decade, from 634 to 644 AD. His reign was an era of great Arab conquests[46]. The large scale of the expansion demanded changes in the management of the rapidly growing country. It was at this time that some of the mechanisms operating in Byzantium were employed[47]. 'Umar implemented an administrative reform in new circumstances, facing problems resulting from the need to unify the territories, which differed in terms of tradition, language and religion. A new, previously unknown challenge emerged: gathering and sharing numerous movable assets obtained as spoils from the conquered territories, apportioning lands on the new terrain and managing permanent incomes from tributes (taxes) exacted from the infidels. In particular, collecting and managing poll taxes (*djizya*) from non-Muslim inhabitants of the conquered lands were an issue not only of logistic but also of political and religious nature[48].

Apart from retaining the former Byzantine system of administration in Egypt and Syria, 'Umar made a number of novel measures, which were continued by his successors. He created *Dīwān*, that is an office of state administration, as we would say today, to handle the census of the Muslim population and determine their incomes[49]. Also among these innovations was *Bayt al-Māl,* a treasury aimed at collecting and storing the spoils of wars, and responsible for the financial aspects of the state's operation.

The whole series of reforms undertaken by the caliph is often referred to as *'Umar's Constitution*. The ruler declared that no religion other than Islam was legal on the Arabian Peninsula. Therefore, he ordered that Jews from Khaybar and

[46] I.A. A l - A d a w i, *An-Nuzum...*, pp. 246–253.

[47] To what extent the Muslim administrative system used previous Byzantine patterns is still debatable – compare: S. O ' S u l l i v a n, *Early Umayyad Syria. A Study of its Origins and early Development*, St. Andrews 2002 [unpublished PhD thesis], pp. 130–140.

[48] This topic is covered in greater detail in the chapter *Economic Institutions of Early Islam. The Creation of Bayt al-Māl (بيت المال). From Tribal Treasury to the "Ministry of Finance"*.

[49] B a l ā d h u r ī, *Fūtuḥ*, vol. II, pp. 454, 456, 458; Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, vol. IV, p. 210; vol. V, p. 23 (ed. Cairo 1970); A.A. D u r i, *Dīwān*, [in:] *EI*, vol. II, pp. 323–327. 'Umar included in this registry all members of the *umma*, taking into account, among other factors, their relation to the Prophet and the role they played in the stabilisation the new state (A b ū Y ū s u f, p. 46 – ed. Cairo 1968). The first censuses in the world of Islam were motivated by economic considerations. The list included all Muslims, regardless of origin, Arabic or otherwise. Compare e.g. Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, vol. IV, p. 210 (ed. Cairo 1970); B a l ā d h u r ī, *Fūtuḥ*, vol. II, pp. 550, 552.

Christians from Nadjrān be banished. According to Philip Hitti, ʻUmar's intention was to establish a *religious and military community* consisting of Arab Muslims. In order to achieve this, he forbade Arab conquerors to possess land outside the peninsula and commanded Arabs from the conquered territories to dwell in strictly defined places, maintaining their *racial purity*, as Hitti put it. The subjugated population was socially underprivileged in comparison to the conquerors (e.g. in administrative matters). However, after conversion to Islam, non-Arab subjects could be exempt from taxes (except *zakāt,* which was regarded as a religious duty). It is still a matter of significant dispute as to whether ʻUmar introduced the land tax (*kharāj*) and poll tax (*djizya*). Contrary to Muslim tradition, it is today supposed that the division into these two taxes did not yet exist in the time of ʻUmar and that both of these terms mean, generally speaking, a tribute. ʻUmar is credited with dividing the spoils into two categories: movable assets and prisoners (*ghanīma*), granted only to soldiers, and land and money (*fay'*), which belonged to the whole community[50]. These incomes were supposed to be collected in a single treasury, the *Bayt al-Māl*, which will be described in a separate chapter.

The succession of ʻUthmān ibn ʻAffān took place at the time when the Muslim state had become the most powerful in the region, its territory reaching central Asia. The greatest achievement of the third caliph, which left its mark on the history of the Muslim world, was the codification of the holy book of Islam – the Ḳur'ān[51] – and proclaiming Arabic its only language, which led to the Arabisation of the conquered tribes[52]. In the context of shaping the nation's governance, both of these facts were meaningful. After all, the Ḳur'ān was considered to be the basic source of law[53].

The death of ʻUthmān, his assasination in Medina in 656 AD[54], once again undermined the unity of the Arabs, and the appointment of his successor, ʿAlī, was questioned, and this in turn led to a civil war. This event must have shaken the foundations of the administrative system of the newly born Arab state. When describing the Arab administration of this period, the reader's attention must be drawn to one particular fact – as his residence ʿAlī chose Mesopotamian Al-Kūfa. The religious and political position of this city increased significantly.

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[50] Ph.K. Hitti, *History...*, pp. 169–172.

[51] A. Al-Gindi, *Atwar as-sakafa al-arabijja*, n.p. n.d., pp. 85–89, 176–177; W. Montgomery Watt, Al.T. Welch, *Der Islam*, vol. I, Mohammed und die Frühzeit, islamisches Recht, religiöses Leben, Stuttgart 1980, pp. 176, 178, 180.

[52] M. Ali, *The Religion of Islam...*, pp. 26, 28, 29.

[53] M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Les institutions...*, pp. 45–52.

[54] Ibn Ḳutayba, vol. I, pp. 37, 40.

The administrative centre of the state was, for the first time in history, moved outside the Arabian Peninsula[55].

An analysis of the achievements of the period following the death of Muḥammad shows how great the state-building effort of that time was. The new phenomena – the unification of the tribes, setting down the text of the Ḳur'ān and the territorial expansion of the country – generated a need to modify the extant forms of community governance. At first, due to the lack of experience in these matters, the Byzantine system of administration was adopted, along with its full potential. Further changes were made during the reign of the Umayyad dynasty.

1.3. Management of the Umayyad Caliphate

Under the reign of the Umayyad dynasty the period of great conquests ended. The territory intended to be governed by the administrative machine spread from the Pillars of Hercules, through Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, Egypt, the Arabian Peninsula, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Armenia, and Persia up to the Indus River[56]. The end of the era of conquest brought a certain stabilisation, though on the other hand, also an exhaustion of an important source of income – war spoils.

The foundation of the power of the Umayyad family is entwined with the name of Mu ʿāwiya, the first caliph of the dynasty. His final victory over ʿAlī and assumption of power over the whole *umma* meant breaking not only with the tradition of the so-called righteous (orthodox, rightly guided) caliphs, but also with the model of a state regarded as a conglomerate of tribes, governed by a ruler, who was chosen by their representatives[57]. Even before Mu ʿāwiya gained power over the whole country, he demonstrated that he would aim for a thorough modernisation of the caliphate, through introducing some well-tried administrative models of the Byzantine Empire and, to a smaller extent, Sassanid Persia. During his service as governor of Syria, Mu ʿāwiya surrounded himself with advisers and secretaries who had experience with Byzantine administration and who came from Christianised south-Arabian tribes that had arrived in

[55] Ibn Ḳutayba, vol. I, pp. 53, 62.

[56] S.N. Fisher, *The Middle East*, London–New York 1971, p. 69sqq; *The Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. I, Cambridge 1977, p. 74; I.M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, Cambridge 2002, pp. 37, 54; Ph.K. Hitti, *History...*, pp. 206–214.

[57] According to some interpretations, Muʿāwiya's aim was not to take the role of caliph, but rather to gain autonomy in his own province: M. Hinds, *The Siffin Arbitration Agreement*, JSS 17, 1972, pp. 93–113.

Syrian lands before the conquests of the righteous caliphs, such as Banū Kalb[58]. What is more, in order to protect his Syrian subjects, he limited the number of immigrants from the Arabian Peninsula that could settle and permitted such settlement only in the areas neighbouring Byzantium. This let him recruit soldiers to the army and continue to invade the territories of the Empire with the greatest possible reduction of costs[59]. It must also be added that despite the opposition of Mecca and Medina, he initiated the construction of a fleet, knowing that without it he would not be able to initiate a long-lasting war with Byzantium[60].

It would not have been possible to introduce these policies without the support of a part of the Arab ruling class. A good example of a person in whom the old world of Christianity and the new world of Islam are entwined is ʿAmr ibn Sufyān Abū l-Aʿwar al-Sulamī, who is connected with the followers of Abū Sufyān. In his earlier life he was probably a Christian (inheriting the faith from his mother); he converted to Islam only after the fall of Mecca. In the time of ʿUmar he played a definite role in the invasion of Syria. Later, in the years 653–654 he was one of the main proponents of creating an Arab navy and a commander of the first sea expedition to Cyprus, Crete and Rhodes[61].

During his caliphate, Mu ʾāwiya continued the policy of following Byzantine solutions. He kept rules drawn from Roman law and supported the system of *iḳṭā*, which was concerned with transferring state lands to the caliph's clients (*mawālā*), who then held it on the basis of a hereditary lease and had to pay a suitable tax (as *muḳṭaʿ* – beneficiaries). In this way it became possible to reclaim a number of wastelands, e.g. those of southern Iraq, taking advantage of the fact that the Ḳur'ān made no mention of this form of land transfer[62]. At the same time, he retained the right of Byzantine origin, to take over the inheritance of foreigners, which enabled seizing the estates of Byzantines who had emigrated from Syria after the Arab conquest. This let him create his personal domain, as the first caliph, which later became the basis for the dynastic might of

[58] D. M a d e y s k a, *Historia świata arabskiego. Okres klasyczny: od starożytności do końca epoki Umajjadów (750)*, Warszawa 1999, p. 157sqq.

[59] *Ibidem*, p. 160sqq.

[60] Ph.K. H i t t i, *History...*, p. 193sqq.

[61] Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, I, 2820–2826, V, 258–262. Cf. W.E. K a e g i, *Byzantium...*, p. 246sqq; L.I. C o n r a d, *The Conquest of Arwād: A Source-Critical Study in the Historiography of the Early Medieval Near East*, [in:] *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East: Problems in the Literary Source Material*, eds. A. C a m e r o n, L.I. C o n r a d, G.R.D. K i n g, London 1992, p. 362sqq; W. A l - Q ā d i, *Population Census and Land Surveys under the Umayyads (41–132/661–750)*, Isl 82, 2006, p. 354sqq.

[62] H. L a m m e n s, *Études sur le regne du calife omaiyade Mo'awia Ier*, Paris–Leipzig–London 1907, p. 236sqq.

the Umayyads[63]. *Iḳṭā* is also connected with the first censuses, thanks to which it became possible to suitably reorganise the fiscal system of the emerging country. As it can be concluded from the research of Wadād al-Qādi, representatives of the Sufyānid line of the Umayyad dynasty, which began with Mu ʿāwiya, based their census methodology upon Byzantine and Sasanian practices, drawing on the experience of former imperial officials. In Egypt they sought support from Coptic clergymen[64]. His research further states that the Sufyānids did not create a national model of making censuses at all, and that their policy in this matter consisted purely of incidental reactions to improprieties[65].

The original administrative division of the caliph's nation was also based on regulations borrowed from the Byzantines and the Sasanians. Thus, seemingly perforce, the country was initially divided into three main units governed by emirs. These were Syria and Mesopotamia, with its capital in Damascus; Iraq and the eastern provinces, with capital cities in Al-Kūfa and Basra; and Egypt and North Africa, whose administrative centre was first Miṣr al-Fusṭāṭ and later Cairo[66]. In the following period the country became divided into six provinces: Great Syria (Filasṭīn, Al-Urdunn, Dimashḳ, Ḥims and Ḳinnasrīn), Upper Mesopotamia, i.e. Al-Jazeera (also including Armenia, Azerbaijan and eastern edges of Asia Minor), Lower Mesopotamia with capitals in Basra and Wasica (this being Iraq, Khuzestan, Fars, Kerman, Makran, Sistan, Sind, Tabaristan, Khorasan, Mawarannahr), the Arabian Peninsula (Al-Ḥidjāz, Nadjd, Yemen, Al-Yamāma), Egypt, and Ifrīḳiya (covering, apart from the area of today's Tunisia, western Maghreb and Arabic Spain[67]). Through utilising the abilities of Christians – former Byzantine officials, who were entrusted with the government of Syria – Mu ʿāwiya managed to introduce a reform of the central offices of the Caliphate. From the ideas of Sardjūn ibn Mansūr (son of Sergius, financial administrator of Damascus, who had surrendered the city to the Arabs in 635) the caliph organised various offices, through which the state could function appropriately. The most important of them was *Dīwān al-Kharāj*, an office of taxation, which will be further described in another chapter of the book.

The military *Dīwān* (*Dīwān al-Jund*) was a "ministry of war", in charge of the recruitment of soldiers. This office held censuses on the basis of which

[63] *Ibidem*, p. 249sqq.

[64] W. A l - Q ā d i, *Population Census...*, p. 341sqq.

[65] *Ibidem*, p. 364.

[66] G.R. H a w t i n g, *The First Dynasty of Islam. The Umayyad Caliphate AD 661–750*, Carbondale–Edwardsville 1987, p. 35sqq.

[67] D. M a d e y s k a, *Historia świata arabskiego...*, p. 197sqq.

the army recruitment was carried out. It must be emphasised that Mu ʿāwiya appointed a supratribal army, one that can be called the army of the caliphate. This was a real blow for the tribal system. To a large degree, it was modelled on the Byzantine army (for example in weaponry and uniform). From the time of Marwānids, the commander-in-chief was the caliph himself: he lead the army recruited, to a large degree, from Syria, from the people whose loyalty was guaranteed to the Umayyads. The army was not only a tool of military policy but also an instrument which centralised the country[68].

The fleet (*al-usṭūl*) was organised during the same period, also on the basis of the Byzantine model. Since the Arabs had no sea-going experience, the caliph's fleet consisted, almost entirely, of non-Arab nations, mostly Egyptians, Syrians and Byzantines. With the fleet, the Arabs were set to become a seafaring power and the Byzantine Empire gained an enemy on the Mediterranean Sea. The military *Dīwān* was one of the earliest, as it is said to have been established as early as in the time of caliph ʿUmar[69].

The second office was *Dīwān al-Barīd,* the postal service, which was organised during the reign of the Marwānid line of the Umayyads and based on the Byzantine and Persian models. The post constituted a very important element of the state administration, which became particularly significant in the extensive country. It guaranteed effective communication within the caliphate and swift circulation of information between the government agencies, which systematically received news about any rebellions and unrests in provinces. The third of the offices, *Dīwān al-Rasāʾil,* the office of correspondence, was actually the central office (chancery) of the caliphate. The seal office (*Dīwān al-Khātam*) was, among other duties, responsible for confirming the validity of correspondence and the caliph's orders. The last of the offices, *Dīwān al-Kharāj* was in charge of introducing and collecting taxes.

Those who governed provinces had considerable scope of action, foremost from the fact that, in the event of war, they could call the army and command troops. They frequently appointed governors of smaller holdings or cities from among their own tribesmen. For example, the governor of Iraq (724–738), Khālid ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḳasrī, appointed his brother the governor of Khorasan. It must be pointed out that, in such situations, once-local tribes acquired

[68] R. M a r i n - G u z m á n, *Arab Tribes...*, p. 69.

[69] F. M c G r a w D o n n e r, *Centralized Authority and Military Autonomy in the Early Islamic Conquest*, [in:] *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, vol. III, *States, Resources and Armies. Papers of the Third Workshop on Late Antiquity and Early Islam*, ed. A. C a m e r o n, Princeton 1995, p. 355.

great influence across the country. Some – especially tribal leaders and those who were, at the same time, governors and local commanders – were influential enough to consider rebelling against the caliph, and in fact this did happen quite often. Therefore, caliphs sometimes dismissed governors who grew too independent and dangerous, or those who were embroiled in continuous tribal struggles and were not able to control their region. However, those who stayed loyal while, at the same time, belonging to the Umayyad family, could take advantage of the new system, e.g. becoming owners of some very attractive properties. Special favour was given to those governors who were appointed by the caliph himself (*'ummāl*), and whose duty was to lead new expeditions against foreign enemies. They had the right, at least in most cases, to divide the spoils freely[70].

The capstone of the administrative activity of Mu ʿāwiya was the establishment of a hereditary post of caliph. In 679 AD he appointed his son – Yazīd – his successor, which was legitimised by representatives of all the provinces of the caliphate, who swore an oath of allegiance to him[71]. There are many inaccurate accounts of the issue of supreme authority in the Muslim empire, which was caused mainly by the negative opinions about the Umayyad caliphs that were formulated in the Abbasid period. Supporters of latter dynasty accused the Umayyads of undermining the authority of the caliph and limiting his role to a purely civilian one, without any religious meaning. Recent research, conducted by, among others, Abedel Rahman Tayyara and Khalil Athamina, contradicts these interpretations. The former studied the prophetic functions[72] connected with exercising the post of caliph. According to this researcher, for the early Muslim period we can discuss an intense search for the foundations of Muḥammad's religion in the Christian and Jewish tradition, whose inseparable elements, according to A.E.-R. Tayyara, were the prophetic abilities of the ruler[73]. The caliph's dual function of *king and prophet* (*mulk wa-nubuwwa*) has been noted by many historians[74]. Tayyara precisely dates the emergence of this prerogative of a Muslim

[70] R. M a r i n - G u z m á n, *Arab Tribes...*, p. 66.

[71] Ph.K. H i t t i, *History...*, p. 196.

[72] On the subject of prophetism in early Islam see: A.H. S i d d i q u i, *Prophethood in Islam*, Karachi–Lahore–Dacca 1968, *passim*; J. A l - H a q q, *Epistemology of Prophethood in Islam*, Taw 4, 1987, pp. 53–71; L. M a r l o w, *Kings, Prophets and the ʿUlamā in Medieval Islamic Advice Literature*, StI 18, 1995, pp. 101–120; Ch. R o b i n s o n, *Prophecy and Holy Men in Early Islam*, [in:] *The Cult of the Saints in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown*, eds. J. H o w a r d - J o h n s t o n, P.A. H a y w a r d, Oxford 1999, pp. 241–262.

[73] A.E.-R. T a y y a r a, *Prophethood and Kingship in Early Islamic Historical Thought*, Isl 84, 2008, p. 101sqq; i d e m, *Prophethood and the Making of Islamic Historical Identity*, MLFP 116, 2013, pp. 1–28.

[74] A. A l - A z m e h, *Muslim Kingships: Power and the Sacred in Muslim, Christian and Pagan*, London–New York 2001, p. 41sqq; U. R u b i n, *Prophets and Caliphs*, [in:] *Methods and*

ruler to the late Umayyad period, the first quarter of the eighth century, probably to the reign of ʿUmar II, associating this phenomenon with the person of *cadi* ʿĀmir ibn Sharāḥīl ibn ʿAbd al-Shaʿbī. It was in this period, according to Tayyara, that Muslim accounts of Solomon, the "king and prophet" were created[75].

Khalil Athamina has made a detailed recapitulation of sources concerning the ways in which the post of a caliph was taken in the early Muslim period. First of all, it must be emphasised after this author that, in accordance with the tradition included both in Ḳur'ān and in ḥadīths, neither in the time of Muḥammad nor after his death any stable rules regarding the election of a successor were established[76]. Contrary to later interpretations, which would give exclusive right of inheritance for his legacy to the members of the Ḳuraysh family, the fact that the Prophet did not make a decision brought chaos, which the ruling class tried to overcome by reference to pre-Muslim customs. Athamina pointed out a custom well-rooted in the Arabic tradition, the role of *dhū al-tāj*, that is a "holder of the crown". This term (interchangeable with *malik*) was used with reference to the leaders of tribal "kingdoms"[77]. The researcher also stressed that in the Arabic tribal tradition, the term *ahl al-bayt* denoting a family did not embrace relatives but also people of similar interests, common aims etc. The ruler decided who would belong to a family in this meaning of the word[78]. The requirement of the unanimous agreement of all the interested parties as to the particular candidate derived from the pre-Muslim tradition, called *mashūra* – a deeply rooted tribal custom, which Muʿāwiya did not dare to change, appointing his son Yazīd the successor[79].

The role of Muʿāwiya in strengthening Arab power in the conquered areas cannot be overestimated. It is not easy to maintain brevity when presenting the achievements of this caliph in the process of laying the foundation of the Muslim state. One may say that he adjusted the young political organism to contemporary administrative and fiscal standards. He did not concern himself with the fact that the Byzantine and Persian patterns he emloyed were not always

Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins, ed. H. B e r g, Leiden–Boston 2003, pp. 73–99; P. C r o n e, *God's Rule: Government and Islam*, New York 2005, p. 115qq.

[75] A.E.-R. T a y y a r a, *Prophethood and Kingship...*, p. 91sqq. It should be noticed that it could have also been Sulaymān, the predecessor of ʿUmar II, who, according to some accounts, was fascinated with the figure of Solomon and was said to have been planning to move the capital of the Caliphate to Jerusalem.

[76] K. A t h a m i n a, *The Pre-Islamic Roots...*, pp. 1–3.

[77] I d e m, *The Tribal Kings in Pre-Islamic Arabia. A Study of the Epithet Malik or Dhū Al-Tāj in Early Arabic Tradition*, QREA 19, 1998, pp. 19–37.

[78] I d e m, *The Pre-Islamic Roots...*, pp. 9–15.

[79] *Ibidem*, p. 19sqq.

in accordance with the rules of Islam. Exemplary of this is his use of a *maḳṣūra*, a curtained bower within a mosque, where he was separated from the rest of the *umma* (in contrast to the simple customs of the orthodox caliphs). In this can be seen a certain aspiration for the sacralisation of the ruler[80]. It is worth stressing that Mu ʿāwiya chose Damascus for his capital city: a large urban centre, which was to aspire to be the Constantinople of the Arab world[81]. Once in Damascus, the position of caliph would acquire a dazzling allure when seen through the eyes of Byzantium and Persia. We can say that here, on the River Barada, did the time of the real Muslim monarchy start[82].

We should also mention that, in accordance with Arabic tradition, the son of Abū Sufyān belonged to the so-called *duhāt*: in literal translation, "geniuses", who were tasked with expanding the might and power of the caliphs' empire[83]. He was also said to possess the trait of *ḥilm* – attributed only to outstanding individuals – reason, wisdom, generosity, gentleness and understanding: the features of a real ruler[84]. It should be added that the depiction of this sovereign on Muslim sources is not so explicit. Authors who were critics of Mu ʿāwiya, such as Abū Mikhnaf or Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim, accuse him of indecision and a tendency to avoid confrontation. According to their narrative, Mu ʿāwiya simply did not merit the throne[85]. This criticism cannot however change the fact that his

[80] Some scholars claim that this was equivalent to transforming from the *republican* to a *monarchical* model of governance. It was noticed as early as the Middle Ages, see, e.g. Ibn Khaldūn, pp. 112–116 (particularly the chapter concerning the transformation of the Caliphate into a kingdom).

[81] A. von Kremer, *The Orient under the Caliphs*, Calcutta 1920, pp. 133, 186; M. Al-Khudari, *Tarikh al-Tashri al-Islami*, vol. I, Cairo 1934, pp. 503–505, 567, 630–634; A.M. Magued, *Apparition et chute des Fatimides en* Egypte. *Histoire politique*, Alexandrie 1968, pp. 14, 185–193; H. Badawy, *The Administrative Organization of Egypt after the Arab Conquest. Similarities and Differences to the Byzantine Model*, Thessaloniki 1994, pp. 54–68, 75sqq.

[82] A.M. Magued, *Apparition...*, pp. 14–15, 61–65.

[83] Although it is regarded as a controversial practice to call the caliph's country an "empire", especially due to the lack of a lexical equivalent in Arabic sources, some scholars, such as Hugh Kennedy, claim that the Caliphate had all the features of this kind of political entity and thus the use of this term is, by all means, justified. See: H. Kennedy, *The Decline and Fall of the First Muslim Empire*, Isl 81, 2004, p. 3sqq.

[84] H. Lammens, *Études sur le siècle des Ommayyades*, Beyrut 1930, pp. 27–163; J.J. Saunders, *A History of Medieval Islam*, London 1965, pp. 59–70; G.R. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam...*, pp. 24–45; D. Madeyska, *Historia świata arabskiego...*, pp. 155–170; Ph.K. Hitti, *History...*, pp. 189–198; H. Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates. The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century*, London–New York 2004, pp. 82–90.

[85] It is probable that F. Wilfred was influenced by these two Arabic authors when he was

name was respected even under the reign of the Abbasids, who fiercely opposed the preceding Umayyads[86]. The rule of Mu ʿāwiya was also positively described by Christian chroniclers, who appreciated the freedom he granted to religious organisations.

The second important stage of reforms of the caliphate, implemented by the Umayyads, occurred during the reigns of two of the Marwānid line of the dynasty – ʿAbd Al-Malik and Al-Walīd I. These reforms are commonly associated with the Arabisation of the country[87]. They were designed by Al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf, a man of humble origin, who gained a high position in the country through his military career[88]. The greatest element of this reform was the introduction of the Arabic language to public administration, replacing the previously used Greek. Implicit in this change was a need to replace a part of the clerical personnel. Analyses of Egyptian papyri, especially the work of Nikolaos Gonis and Petra M. Sijpesteijn, shed light on the composition of the staff in the early Muslim period. The later author mentions a case of Athanasius, a pagarch of Hermopolis[89]. His letter to his subordinate Shenoute, in which he informed that the *emir* had ordered the collection of taxes, survived. Athanasius was worried that his subordinate taxpayers would flee, so he commanded that any spotted fugitives be captured and sent to him. In the light of this document, it must be concluded that the pagarch was responsible for sending taxes to the Muslim treasury. He was also entitled to employ coercive measures against those who avoided this obligation. Athanasius was probably a Christian, who had also performed a clerical function in the Byzantine period[90]. Interestingly, in his text he used the term

writing: *The Succession to Muhammad*: *A Study of the Early Caliphate*, Cambridge 1997. We ourselves draw this opinion from: K. K e s h e, *When Did Mu'āwiya Become Caliph*, JNES 69, 2010, p. 32sqq.

[86] Ch. P e l l a t, *Le culte de Mu'āwiya au III^e siècle de l'hégire*, StI 6, 1956, pp. 53–66; T. E l - H i b r i, *The Redemption of Umayyad Memory by the ʿAbbāsids*, JNES 61, 2002, pp. 241–265.

[87] G.R. H a w t i n g, *The First Dynasty of Islam...*, p. 9sqq.

[88] R. M a r i n - G u z m á n, *Arab Tribes...*, pp. 69, 88–89 (footnote 57 therein).

[89] P.M. S i j p e s t e i j n, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt and the Beginning of Muslim Rule*, [in:] *Egypt in the Byzantine World 300–700*, ed. R.S. B a g n a l l, Cambridge–New York 2007, pp. 445–446. For a review of research conducted to date on the creation of the authority of the Arabic conquerors in Egypt: P.M. S i j p e s t e i j n, *Shaping a Muslim State. The World of a Mid-Eighth-Century Egyptian Official*, Oxford 2013, pp. 49–216.

[90] He could also be a newly-converted Muslim. John of Nikiu, a chronicler who wrote about the Arabic conquest of Egypt stated: *many of the Egyptians, who had been false Christians denied the holy orthodox faith* (...) *and embraced the religion of the Moslem, the enemies of God, and accepted the detestable of the beast, this is, Mohammed, and they erred together with those idolaters, and took arms in their hands and fought against the Christians* (J o h n o f N i k i u, CXXI, 10, p. 201).

andrismos, meaning tax, which had been collected in Egypt during the Byzantine reign. Similar nomenclature for tribute can be found in two documents from the first decades of the eighth century, which were analysed by N. Gonis[91]; these are dated according to the Roman system[92]. We will now make the statement that, although the method of tax collection had not changed significantly from the Byzantine times, the allegation of passivity levelled towards the first Umayyads[93] does not seem justified. We have information about numerous innovations introduced by Muslim governors, especially in Egypt. Administrative units were merged (e.g. Arcadia and the Thebaid*)*, while others were divided (Heracleopolis into Upper and Lower divisions for example)[94]. An increase in the number of documents issued is also apparent[95]. Moreover, the administrative system was centralised: pagarchs became direct subjects of an Arab governor[96].

Thanks to these reforms – attributed to ʿAbd Al-Malik and Al-Walīd I as their introduction lasted between ten and twenty years, leaving some uncertainty as to which was the initiator[97] – Arabic acquired the status of the language of the well-educated elite, replacing Greek in this role. The reforms opened the clerical occupation to the urban communities of the Arabs. This change of official language seems to be natural, if we consider the stage of the country's development and the time which had passed since the Arabic conquest of Syria and Egypt[98]. It must be admitted that Al-Walīd I tried to limit the number of officials of the Christian faith[99], though this command was not followed with enthusiasm, which is documented in Byzantine sources[100]. One element of the Ara-

[91] N. G o n i s, *Two Poll-Tax Receipts from Early Islamic Egypt*, ZPE 131, 2000, pp. 150–154.

[92] Different systems of measuring time existed contemporaneously in Egypt for a long time. For more detailed information on this topic, see: R.S. B a g n a l l, K.A. W o r p, *Chronological Systems of Byzantine Egypt*, Leiden–Boston 2004. This paper contains numerous useful appendices, which might be helpful for converting between dates given according to Diocletian's era and those dated in years after the Hidjra. See: *ibidem*, pp. 300–312.

[93] W. A l - Q ā d i, *Population Census...*, p. 364.

[94] It cannot be taken for granted that these changes were not introduced by the Byzantines as part of restoring their authority over Egypt from the Persians. Compare: P.M. S i j p e s t e i j n, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt...*, p. 445.

[95] *Ibidem*, p. 444.

[96] S.J. S t a f f a, *Conquest and Fusion. The Social Evolution of Cairo AD 642–1850*, Leiden 1977, p. 19.

[97] Ph.K. H i t t i, *History...*, pp. 221–222.

[98] G.R. H a w t i n g, *The First Dynasty of Islam...*, p. 64.

[99] C. B r o c k e l m a n n, *History of the Islamic Peoples*, London 1964, p. 84sqq.

[100] Theophanes, although he perceived the change of official language to Arabic as a form of persecution against Christians under Umayyad rule, did add that this command was not implemented too strictly; this as, up to his time (the beginning of the ninth century), it was possible to encounter Christian officials in the court of the caliph. T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6199, p. 376.

bisation was the unification of the monetary system – the replacement of *solidi* and Persian coins with gold dinars and silver dirhams. The first characteristically Arab money began to be minted at the end of the seventh century[101].

The third stage of the Umayyad's state reforms, not entirely successful, was an attempt to Islamise the empire. Although the tax exemption for Muslim neophytes introduced by 'Umar II was quickly cancelled by his successors due to a drastic depletion of state incomes, it did contribute to the conversion of Christians to Islam[102]. The reform greatly influenced the image of 'Umar II in Byzantine sources. Theophanes the Confessor depicted him as one of the most anti-Christian rulers in history. In one account, the author compiles a list of almost everything that could be considered an anti-Christian decision by the Umayyads, about whom he wrote[103].

In addition to detailing these slights, the historian also mentioned the tax exemption of Muslim converts[104]. Theophanes considered this move to be a further repressive action against Christians[105]. It is an understandable attitude, since the rescript had encouraged Christians to abandon their faith and convert to Islam. It is worth adding that, for the same reason, 'Umar II was perceived in an utterly different way to the other Umayyad caliphs in the, subsequent, Abbasid period. Characteristic of this retained respect is the fact that his grave was not profaned; as such his tomb was treated unlike those of the other Umayyad caliphs. Indeed, among the Abbasids his piety was so deeply respected that one caliph, Al-Muhtadī, took him took him to be the epitome of a model ruler[106].

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[101] In Poland, the subject of Byzantine and Arabic minting in this period was researched by: S. S k o w r o n e k, *Treść i temat monet bizantyńskich*, BNum 39, 1969, pp. 735–738; i d e m, *Wczesnoarabskie naśladownictwa monet bizantyńskich*, BNum 41, 1969, pp. 781–783.

[102] H.A.R. G i b b, *The Fiscal Rescript of 'Umar II*, Ara 2, 1955, pp. 2–7; D. M a d e y s k a, *Historia świata arabskiego...*, p. 179; G.R. H a w t i n g, *The First Dynasty of Islam...*, p. 76sqq.

[103] Theophanes described 'Umar II as a fanatical follower of Islam, one who even tried to convert the emperor himself, and at the same time a keen persecutor of Christians. It is worth mentioning that many eastern sources do not give such a negative portrayal of the Umayyad ruler. T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6210, p. 399. Cf. K. K o ś c i e l n i a k, *Polemika muzułmańsko-chrześcijańska na podstawie korespondencji przypisywanej kalifowi umajjadzkiemu 'Umarowi II († 720) i cesarzowi bizantyjskiemu Leonowi III († 741)*, FHC 8, 2002, pp. 97–105; B. C e c o t a, *Wybrane zagadnienia z korespondencji muzułmańsko-chrześcijańskiej na podstawie Historii kalifów Ghewonda*, [in:] *Per aspera ad astra. Materiały z XVI Ogólnopolskiego Zjazdu Historyków Studentów*, vol. XIV, Kraków 2008, pp. 27–44.

[104] T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6210, p. 399.

[105] The same image of the effect of 'Umar's rescript is conveyed by Coptic historiography. *History of the Patriarchs*, vol. III, p. 72.

[106] J. H a u z i ń s k i, *Burzliwe dzieje kalifatu bagdadzkiego*, Warszawa–Kraków 1993, p. 174.

Hassan Badawy

2. Economic Institutions of Early Islam The Creation of Bayt al-Māl (بيت المال) From Tribal Treasury to the "Ministry of Finance"

Before Islam became the dominant religion in the Arabian Peninsula, the economy of this region functioned within small, separate communities, both family and tribal. Social bonds and the needs of tribe members stemmed from an old tradition of common origin and common interests of a particular group[1]. Another factor affecting the development of social relations and governance mechanisms of the primitive economy was organically connected with the natural environment of the peninsula[2].

An important element in the evolution of the governance system of finance essential for the tribe's functioning and, sometimes, for conquests organised by its members was the institution of the "House of Money" (*Bayt al-Māl*; بيت المال) – which soon began to play role similar to today's of central bank or ministry of finance (we must remember that a comparison like this should not be treated literally, their only aim is to facilitate reading).

Analysing the development of *Bayt al-Māl* we can investigate into the process of evolution of economic administration of the early Muslim state. Such a research should be based on all available sources contemporary to the events described therein. Still, in the case of early Arab accounts, it is difficult to discuss the texts focused on economic issues due to their style and language[3], as they are purely literary texts.

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[1] H. Badawy, *Introduction to the History of Islamic World*, vol. I, [2]Thessalonikē 2013, pp. 99, 119, 133sqq, 174, 188, 204sqq, 209–211.

[2] Ibn Khaldūn (ed. A. Abd Wahid Wafi), pp. 77–80. See: I.A. Al-Adawi, *Al-Nuzum Al-Islamya*, Cairo 1972, pp. 3–7.

[3] There are sources and many tax consulting books referring strictly to the technical aspects of the Islamic economy – e.g. Abū ʿUbayd Al-Qāsim Ibn Sallām (d. 838

The present text is an attempt to systematise the knowledge about the economic structure of the initial stage of the caliphate. Our discourse will be based on the analysis of the work of newly-created institutions, such as *Bayt al-Māl* and *Bayt al Māl al-Muslimīn* (بيت مال المسلمين) later referred to "Public *Bayt al-Māl*". We have taken into account the circumstances in which these institutions were established and their evolution, assuming that they were created out of a deep need to share resources owned by local communities. To a large extent, the chapter is based on the analysis of sources from the Arabic cultural circle, which, hopefully, will fill the gaps in the contemporary scientific discourse devoted to the beginning of Islamic economy. Sholars point out that the principles of *Bayt al-Māl* have not been sufficiently analysed. E. Levi-Provencal has investigated the matter in detail, but only in the area of the Iberian Peninsula, while more general information has been prepared by C. Cahen in his irreplaceable *Encyclopaedia of Islam*[4].

2.1. Creation of the Muslim State and Its Major Economic Institutions

It is not an easy task to find traces of functioning of even one economic institution, or the activity of any economic system commonly accepted by all tribes of the Arabian Peninsula before the birth of Islam. Tribal relations, both in internal and intertribal aspect, were based on ephemeral historical iden-

AD, 224 AH), *The Book of Revenue: Kitāb al-amwāl (The Great Books of Islamic Civilization)*, transl. I.A.K. Nyazee, Reading 2005; Al-Māwardī (d. 1058 AD, 450 AH), *Al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya wa-al-wilāyāt al-dīnīyya*, London 1996; *Kitāb al-Kharāj* by Abū Yusuf (d. 798 AD, 182 AH); *Kitāb al-Kharāj* by Yaḥyā Ibn Ādam (d. 818 AD, 203 AH); *Kitāb al-kharāj wa-sināʿat al-kitāba* (*Book of the Land Tax*) by Ḳudāma ibn Djaʿfar (d. 948 AD, 337 AH) contains rich information in particular for *Bilād al-Shām*, Land Laws and economic policy during the reign of ʿUmar Ibn Abd al-ʿAzīz (the Pious), etc. The books of *Al-Fiḳh* – in general – offer very useful historical material of great importance in comparison to other sources. All the above-mentioned specialised *Fiḳh* (*Kutub Al-Fiḳh*) primary sources depend mainly, in selecting and interpreting their data, upon two earlier but categorically "official" documents, which can easily be characterized as the *Sources of the Sources* (*Masāder Al-Awwalīn*; *Masāder Al-Masāder*; مصادر الأولين أو مصادر المصادر), i. e. the Holy Bible of Islam – the Ḳur'ān (often called "First Book of the Arabs") and also: *Al-Ṣaḥīfa*, *Ṣaḥīfa al-Madīna* or *Dustūr Al-Umma*, i.e. the *Constitution of the Umma*. The former is dated 610 to 632, and the latter, probably, to 622–630.

[4] E. Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire de l'Espagne musulman*, vol. III, Paris 1947, pp. 1–54; R. Mantran, *L'expansion musulman, VII^e–XI^e siècle*, Paris 1995, p. 248; C. Cahen, *Bayt al Māl*, [in:] *EI*, vol. I, p. 1146. Cf. also A. Mez, *Islamic Civilization in the 4^th Century Hegira*, vol. I, Cairo 1957, pp. 191–192.

tity and more or less stable alliances, such as the tribal union of Ghassānids in the north-western part of the peninsula, Lakhmids in the north-east and Kinda in the central part[5]. Political organisations of this kind dominated the internal relations on the Arabian Peninsula as early as two centuries before the birth of Muḥammad[6]. The biggest social group in this area had always been a tribe – the centre of all forms of settlement, whose members obeyed the common, unwritten law.

The nature of a desert and landform features of the Arabian Peninsula prevented the emergence of big, densely populated centres, where stable social relations, crucial for the creation of a country, could be formed. In other words, it was the desert nature of the Arabian Peninsula that largely caused the preservation of the tribal lifestyle, way of thinking and acting[7].

After the triumph of Islam, when Muḥammad decided that his headquarters would be in Medina[8] (previously Yathrib), the process of building administration and financial organisation of the new country began. One of the first legal regulations was a document known as *The Charter of Medina* (وثيقة المدينة), which, in early Arabic sources, is quoted as the *Constitution of the Community* (*Dustūr al-Ummah*; دستور الأمة or *As-Ṣaḥīfa*; صحيفة المدينة)[9]. This document regulated the relations between Muslims and Jews[10], but, it also included parts concerning economic issues for the followers of Islam[11]. The text determined basic economic rules of the Muslim country. Within their scope, certain traditional norms, such as the system of ransom (*niẓām al-fadiya aw diya*; نظام الفدية أو الدية) or the rules of paying debts etc. were maintained[12].

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[5] For the tribe and the tribal system, see: I b n K h a l d ū n (ed. Tunis 1991), pp. 70, 74–75, 84; I.A. A l - A d a w i, *Nuzum...*, pp. 1–4, 9–11.

[6] H.I. H a s s a n, A.I. H a s s a n, *Islamic Institutions*, Cairo 1970, pp. 17–18, 167–168.

[7] I.A. A l - A d a w i, *Nuzum...*, pp. 1–4, 9–11.

[8] I b n H i s h ā m, vol. II, p. 119 (ed. Cairo 1937); H.I. H a s s a n, A.I. H a s s a n, *Islamic...*, pp. 168–169.

[9] On the *Constitution of Medina* see: M.S.Q. A l - H u s a i n i, *Arab Administration*, Cairo 1958; R.B. S e r j e a n t, *The "Constitution of Medina"*, IQ 7, 1964, pp. 3–16; M. H a m i d u l l a h, *The First Written Constitution in the World: An Important Document of the Time of the Holy Prophet*, Lahore 1975, *passim*; i d e m, *Documents sur la diplomatique musulmane a l'époque du Prophete et des khalifes orthodoxes*, Beirut 1985; G. S c h a l l e r, *Die "Gemeindeordnung von Medina" – Darstellung eines politischen Instruments. Ein Beitrag zur gegenwärtigen Fundamentalismus-Diskussion im Islam*, Augsburg 1985, *passim*; A. W a l k e r, *Constitution of Medina*, [in:] *Muḥammad in History, Thought, and Culture: An Encyclopedia of the Prophet of God*, vol. I, eds. C. F i t z p a t r i c k, A. W a l k e r, Santa Barbara 2014, pp. 113–115.

[10] I b n H i s h ā m, vol. II, p. 150; I.A. A l - A d a w i, *Nuzum...*, pp. 127–132.

[11] I b n H i s h ā m, vol. II, p. 119.

[12] I b n H i s h ā m, vol. II, pp. 119–123.

These earliest legal regulations were essential to solve the problem of war spoils (*al-ghanā'im*; الغنائم)[13]. Although, according to Ibn Hishām, the first plunder of Muslims consisted only of the Ḳuraysh camels with a consignment of raisins and a couple of prisoners, soon after that the followers of Muḥammad faced the need to divide the spoils obtained after the battle of Badr (624 AD, 2 AH), during which they captured the whole camp of the Ḳuraysh[14].

In order to avoid any disagreement, the first regulations concerning the division of loots were precisely outlined in Sūra 8 of the Ḳur'ān, entitled *The spoils of war* (*Al-Anfāl*; سورة الأنفال): *They ask you concerning the anfāl./ Say, "the anfāl belong to Allah and the Apostle"./ So be wary of Allah and settle your differences,/ and obey Allah and His Apostle,/ should you be faithful*[15]. Goods obtained as a result of wars enabled further conquests and helped to maintain the Muslim fighting spirit, which was important during expeditions against the enemies of the *umma*. Their significance can be proven by the fact that even the Prophet himself had an official called "the writer of spoils of God's Messenger" (*katib ghanā'im Rasūl Allāh*; كاتب غنائم رسول الله)[16]. However, in the time of Muḥammad, no budget surplus was being collected. The sources of income were limited to utilising natural resources of the peninsula and their management was based on fairly simple rules, designed for a particular tribes. At that stage, there was no need for creating an institution which would control the finances of the forming state. All political, administrative, economic and military functions were in the hands of the Prophet.

After the death of Muḥammad in 632 AD, his descendants entered the path of conquest[17]. The first caliph and successor was Abū Bakr, who ruled between 632 and 634 AD. His reign begen the era of the so-called "orthodox" or "right-guided" caliphs (*al-khulafā ar-rāshidūn*; الخلفاء الراشدون)[18], which lasted from 632 to 656 AD (or, depending on interpretation, to 660 AD). As a caliph, Abū

[13] For the war code of Islam and the institution of *Al-Ghanā'im* distribution among the State Central Treasury (*Bayt al-Māl*) and Muslim warriors, see: *Ḳur'ān*, Sūra *Al-Hashr* (59,7). Ibn Isḥāḳ, pp. 157–160, 239, 253sqq, 256–57 (ed. T.A. Saad, T. Badawy). See also: H.I. Hassan, A.I. Hassan, *Islamic...*. pp. 251–255.

[14] Ibn Hishām, vol. II, p. 283; Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, II, 457 (ed. Cairo 1961); Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghābah*, II, 130.

[15] *Ḳur'ān*, 8:1.

[16] Jahshīyārī, p. 12; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghābah*, III, p. 304.

[17] Ph.K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, New York–London 1970, p. 139sqq; F.M. Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*, Princeton 1981, pp. 91–220, 251–272; H. Badawy *Introduction...*, pp. 155sqq, 158–163; H. Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests: How the Spread of Islam Changed the World We Live in*, London 2007, *passim*; R.G. Hoyland, *In God's Path: The Arab Conquests and the Creation of an Islamic Empire*, Oxford 2015, *passim*.

[18] *Al-khulafā'u Ar-rāshidūn* or "the rightful successors of the Prophet Muḥammad".

Bakr took over all the functions performed earlier by Muḥammad. Thus, he continued the Prophet's activities, especially in the field of administration and economy, unlike his successor and the second caliph ʿUmar (643–644), referred to as "innovator" (*al-mubtadiʿ*; المبتدع). During the reign of Abū Bakr the country was economically weak, while in the time of ʿUmar, it entered a period of economic prosperity. According to the sources, in his speech on assuming the office of caliph, Abū Bakr said:

> I have been given the authority over you, and I am not the best of you. If I do well, help me; and if I do wrong, set me right. Sincere regard for truth is loyalty and disregard for truth is treachery. The weak amongst you shall be strong with me until I have secured his rights, if God wills; and the strong amongst you shall be weak with me until I have wrested from him the rights of others, if God wills. Obey me so long as I obey God and His Messenger. But if I disobey God and His Messenger, you owe me no obedience. Arise for your prayer, God have mercy upon you.[19]

The reign of Abū Bakr lasted about 27 months. Although it was short, it left its mark in history, especially due to the restoration of unity of the Arab tribes and the initiation of the invasion of two contemporary empires: the Byzantine Empire and the Sassanid lands. Having stabilised the situation on the peninsula and finished the so-called "Wars of Apostasy" (*hurūb al-ridda*; حروب الردة)[20], Abū Bakr (known to the Byzantines as Abubacharos)[21] sent troops against his powerful neighbours. Therefore, he initiated the actions which, within a century, led to the creation of one of the biggest empires in history. Thus, he did not have much time to manage the matters of the state, which meant that he had to depend on his advisors. One of them was ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, the subsequent caliph (634–644).

ʿUmar , the second caliph, continued the policy of conquest[22]. In 634 AD (13 AH) he conquered Syria[23], in 636 (15 AH) he took Palestine[24] and,

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[19] M. R i d a h, *Al-khulafā ar-rāshidūn*, ed. A l - S h e i k h Kh. M. S h i h a, Bajrut 2007, p. 25, f. 4:
"أأيها الناس قد وليت عليكم ,و لست بخيركم, فان أحسنت فأعينوني, و ان أسأت فقوموني, الصدق أمانة, و الكذب خيانة, و الضعيف فيكم قوي عندي حتى آخذ له حقه, و القوي عندي ضعيف حتى آخذ منه الحق ان شاء الله تعالى, لا يدع احد منكم الجهاد, فانه لايدعه قوم الا ضربهم الله بالذل, أطيعوني ما أطعت الله و رسوله فاذا عصيت الله و رسوله فلا طاعة لي عليكم, قوموا الى صلاتكم رحمكم الله."

[20] B a l ā d h u r ī, *Fūtuḥ*, pp. 113–120, 125–128. See also: Q.I. M u h a m m a d, *Al-Siyāsah al-mālīyah li-Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq*, Cairo 1990, pp. 99, 101, 123–131.

[21] T h e o p h a n e s, AM 6124, 6125, p. 336.

[22] The commendable acts and traits of ʿUmar were numerous, warranting the work of many scholars who authored chapters, books and volumes in praise of his great virtues and achievements. Many scholars wrote about ʿUmar to an extent that some scholars authored a whole book specifically about his virtues and deeds. Among them were Ibn al-Djawzī, who authored a bulky book compiling Umar's laudable deeds and Al-Suyūṭī.

[23] B a l ā d h u r ī, *Fūtuḥ*, p. 128.

[24] B a l ā d h u r ī, *Fūtuḥ*, p. 164.

after the battle of Al-Kadisiya, Iraq[25]. At the beginning of the fifth decade of the century his army entered Egypt and then the Byzantine Exarchate of Africa[26]. During the reign of the caliphs who followed the Arab expansion led to the enlargement of the territory of the country, which eventually embraced the eastern part of the Mediterranean, including Cyprus and the neighbouring lands[27] and most of the Sassanid Empire. The borders of the new country reached the Indus River in the East, the Oxus River (Amu Darya) in the North and the West African coast of the Atlantic Ocean (*Bilād Al-Maghrib*; بلاد المغرب). Early Arabic sources mention neither Muslim settlements nor any strongholds from the pre-Umayyad period on the Iberian Peninsula.

It is obvious that such a rapid expansion created of a totally new political and economical reality. The Muslim *umma* left its previous boundaries and formed a huge country. The grandeur of the treasures obtained by the Arabs in wars they fought can be exemplified by the conquest of Al-Madā'in (Ctesiphon, the capital city of the Sassanid state) in 637 AD. The Muslims are believed to have found there gold and silver tableware and *carpets of the length of 60 ells, embroidered with gold and jewels*[28]. In another place, known as Djalūlā ', the Arabs captured reportedly 30 million dinars, one fifth of which, i.e. 6 million, was, in accordance with the rules of Ḳur'ān, sent to the caliph[29]. He then distributed the money to the faithful[30]. After the conquest of the city of Nahāvand in 641 AD, the invaders would win the great treasures of king Khusraw[31].

The war spoils impressed the Muslims – caliph 'Umar is said to have had tears in his eyes when he saw the amount of riches, gold, silver and precious stones in the mosque awaiting distribution[32]. In this emergent situation, the ruler had to take certain measures which would enable him to control, organise and legislate the distribution of goods. Thanks to them – especially in the areas where state organisation, incorporating a financial system, was known – the territories previously belonging to Byzantium or Persia – the first Islamic institutions started to emerge[33].

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[25] B a l ā d h u r ī, *Fūtuḥ*, p. 295.

[26] B a l ā d h u r ī, *Fūtuḥ*, pp. 249–267.

[27] B a l ā d h u r ī, *Fūtuḥ*, pp. 128–131, 181–187.

[28] Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, IV, 17.

[29] Ph.K. H i t t i, *History of the Arabs...*, p. 157. The Ḳur'ān defines the detail for the distribution of the booty among the warriors and the Public Treasury – *Bayt al-Māl*.

[30] Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, IV, 29; Ph.K. H i t t i, *History of the Arabs...*, pp. 155–159.

[31] Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, IV, 116–117; Ph.K. H i t t i, *History of the Arabs...*, pp. 156–157.

[32] A b ū ' U b a y d, pp. 355–356.

[33] Primary Arabic sources, the multilingual papyri emphatically included, reveal the great influences of the former Byzantine administrative and financial system on the newborn Arab

Therefore, ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb is considered to be the founder of the organisation of the Muslim state. From the historical perspective, his policy contributed to ensuring the continuity of function of the formerly Byzantine administration, including the tax system in the area of Syria, Palestine and Egypt under the reign of new rulers. Texts written on papyruses, particularly those which are bilingual, prove the great influence of the Byzantine tradition on the organisation of the early Muslim country.

The result of the conquests was the multiplication of the Arabs' wealth[34]. Information about the fortunes of a couple of participants of the described events can attest to this statement. For example, one of Muḥammad's commanders, and his close associate at the same time, Al-Zubayr Ibn al-ʿAwwām died leaving 52 thousand dinars and 53 million dirhams. Similarly, ʿUthmān ibn Affan (644–656) left 150 thousand dinars and 1 million dirham in addition to an estate worth 100 thousand dinars[35].

Islamic Caliphate, from its very beginnings, especially in Egypt after its Arab conquest. Such intense presence of the former Byzantine administration is apparently noted not only in the scope of multidisciplinary use of Byzantine terminology, which is of great importance, but mainly in the use of the Greek language in their official correspondence. For more details see: A.J. B u t l e r, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt and the Last Thirty Years of Roman Dominion*, Oxford 1902, p. 391; H.I. B e l l, *The Administration of Egypt under the Umayyads*, BZ 28, 1928, pp. 278–286; A. G r o h m a n n, *Arabic Papyri in the Egyptian Library*, vol. I–VI, Cairo 1934; N. A b b o t t, *The Kurrah Papyri from Aphrodito in the Oriental Institute*, Chicago 1938; G. R o u i l l a r d, *L'Administration civile de l' Egypte Byzantine*, Paris 1949; A. G r o h m a n n, *From the World of Arabic Papyri*, vol. I–II, Cairo 1952; J. K a r a y a n n o p u l o s, *Die Entstechung der byzantinischen Themenordnung*, München 1959; E. A s h t o r, *A Social and Economic History of the Near East in the Middle Ages*, Berkeley 1976; H. B a d a w y, *The Administrative Organization of Egypt after the Arab Conquest. Similarities and Differences to the Byzantine Model*, Thessaloniki 1994, pp. 70–75; Y. H i l l o o w a l a, *The History of the Conquests of Egypt, Being a Partial Translation of Ibn Abd Al-Hakam's Futuh Misr and an Analysis of this Translation*, Tucson 1998 [unpublished PhD thesis]; E. D i m i t r i a d o u B a d a w y, *Command Route in Egypt According to Edictum XIII of Justinian and Umar Ibn Al-Khattab's Correspondence (527–634 AD),* [in:] *Historiography in Egypt 284–641AD. Historical, Ecclesiastical, Documentary, and Archaeological Evidence. The Second International Conference on Christian Egypt, Cairo 5–7 May 2015* (forthcoming); H. B a d a w y, *Byzantium post-Byzantium in Egypt after the Arab conquest. Continuity or discontinuity?*, [in:] *Life in Egypt during the Coptic Period. The First International Coptic Studies Conferrence* (forthcoming).

[34] See also: E. A s h t o r, *Social and Economic...*, pp. 22–26.

[35] M a s ʿ ū d ī, II, 341. It is worth mentioning that caliph ʿUthmān was very rich and great businessman of pre-Islamic Mecca–Makkah. After the rise of Islam he became also great sponsor of the Islamic movement.

2.2. Creation of Bayt al-Māl – a Central Financial Institution of the Country

It is supposed that the first caliph, Abū Bakr, established an institution whose role was to manage the common wealth of the forming Muslim country[36]. It is possible that it was a consequence of the increase in revenues of the administration of Medina, after the conquests of the territories of Syria and Mesopotamia. As Al-Suyūṭī wrote, Abū Bakr:

> possessed unguarded *Bayt al-Māl* in Sankh, a district of Medina, where he had his house. The caliph was asked: *why do you not appoint a guard?* And he answered: *Bayt al-Māl has got a lock and I will give all it contains to people, as long as it* [*the treasury* – ed.] *is not empty*. And when he moved to Medina, he also moved the *Bayt al-Māl* to his house.[37]

Al-Ḳalkashandī confirmed this fact, pointing out that the caliph-to-be governed the *Bayt al-Māl* during the reign of Abū Bakr. Therefore, this institution must have been created before the second caliph took power[38].

ʿUmar fostered the title of *Amīr al-Muʾminīn*, "Prince-Commander of the faithful" (أمير المؤمنين), willing to project his utterly different idea of the state[39]. Once the caliphate guaranteed itself regular income from taxes, which happened as a result of ʿUmar's decision to leave lands in the conquered territories in the hands of their previous owners[40], as long as they paid *kharāj* (الخراج) and poll tax, *djizya* (ضريبة الرأس- الجزية) – the *Bayt al-Māl* had to become an independent institution, the central treasury of the state[41]. Apart from the institutional meaning, the term "House of Money" could also be understood literally, denoting the building in which collected goods could be kept safely. Once a year the treasury was visited by the caliph, which was mentioned by Ibn al-Djawzī[42]. The headquarters of *Bayt al-Māl* acquired a new political significance when, after ʿUmar's death, the new caliph was chosen[43].

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[36] Q.I. Muhammad, *Al-Siyasah...*, pp. 9–11, 35sqq.

[37] Suyūṭī, 79; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghābah*, II, 422.

[38] Ḳalkashandī, I, 413.

[39] Ibn al-Djawzī, *Manakib*, pp. 43–48, 59–60; H. Badawy, *The Administrative Organization...*, pp. 54–65.

[40] Idem, *Introduction...*, pp. 163–168.

[41] Abū Yaʿla, 188; Abū Yūsuf, 24; Balādhurī, *Fūtuḥ*, 325; Ibn al-Djawzī, *Manakib*, 94; Abū ʿUbayd, 83; Yaḥyā Ibn Ādam, p. 27.

[42] Ibn al-Djawzī, *Akbar*, 106.

[43] Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, V, 21; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghābah*, III, 68.

ʿUmar believed to codify the rules of collecting *kharāj* (depending on harvest and the cost of irrigation) and *djizya,* paid by the People of the Book (*ʿAhl al-Kitāb*; *ʿAhl az-dhimma*; أهل الكتاب- أهل الذمة). The latter has ever since been paid depending on individual income. Today we could say that three income tax thresholds existed: the wealthiest paid 48 dirhams, the moderately rich 24, and the poorest 12 dirhams[44]. It must be emphasised, though, that during the reign of the first Umayyads, the terms *kharāj* and *djizya* were used interchangeably and meant simply tribute. Not until the end of this dynasty's reign were these two words distinguished and their meanings systematised.

The transition from tributes collected during a war to the duty paid in cash in the areas where military actions were over caused the need to create *Bayt al-Māl* and forced the authorities to investigate the way in which similar institutions functioned in neighbouring countries. On the conquered northern territories of Syria and Mesopotamia the first tribute in cash was collected in 640 AD (20 AH), after the end of military operations. It was not a coincidence that in the same year ʿUmar called upon an institution referred to as office or council (*al-dīwān*; الديوان)[45].

A novelty in the economic policy of ʿUmar was the diversification of remunerations paid from *Bayt al-Māl*[46] – during the reign of Abū Bakr the faithful had the right to equal shares[47]. Caliph ʿUmar carried out a census and created a kind of "property qualification", which divided those entitled to take advantage of *Bayt al-Māl* into several categories. As it was mentioned by Al-Ṭabarī[48], ʿUmar appointed three Ḳuraysh secretaries ordering them to make a record of all the people, starting from the family of the Prophet. The criteria determining the amount of received benefits depended on the following factors: faithfidelity to the principles of Islam, the period of affiliation to the *umma,* the level of wealth at the moment of converting to Islam and needs after the conversion. Each category had a proportional share in *Bayt al-Māl.* This practice was also continued by the third caliph, ʿUthmān Ibn ʿAffān, while his successor ʿĀlī re-established the rule of treating all Muslims equally, which was practised by Abū Bakr[49].

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[44] During his reign in Medina (622–632), Muḥammad established a tax at the level of 1 dinar per year per person.

[45] Māwardī, 199; Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, IV, 209; Ibn Ṭabāṭabā, 83; Ibn Khaldūn, II, 17; Balādhurī, *Fūtuḥ*, 550; Ibn al-Djawzī, *Manakib*, pp. 99–111.

[46] Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, IV, 210; Māwardī, 200; Abū Yaʿla, 221; Abū Yūsuf, 46; M. Ridah, *Al-Khulafaa Al-Rashidun...*, pp. 118–121sqq; H. Badawy, *Introduction...*, pp. 163–165, f. 342–343.

[47] Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghābah*, II, 422.

[48] Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, IV, 210; Māwardī, 200; Abū Yaʿla, 221; Abū Yūsuf, 46.

[49] Abū Yaʿla, 222.

"The House of Money" faced a serious trial during the reign of caliph ʿUthmān (644–656), and his policy of dividing the resources of *Bayt al-Māl* according to his own judgement – he is believed to have said: *This is the money of God. I can give it to anyone I want and take it away from anyone I please*[50] – led to the rise of opposition and resulted in a rebellion against the ruler[51]. Unlike ʿUthmān, ʿĀlī – the fourth of the caliphs (656–661) – tried to reinstate the rule of equal shares from the times of Muḥammad and Abū Bakr[52]. It was, however, an anachronistic solution in the context of the complex social system of the Muslim state. In comparison with the era of Muḥammad and his first successors, the administrative machine was already well developed. Therefore, the rules the *Bayt al-Māl*'s operation were distant from tribal laws. This institution managed both the private wealth of the caliph and public property.

Because of the lack of the Arabic model of economic policy, a Persian administrative system was employed on the ethnically and religiously homogenous Arabian Peninsula, while Syria and Egypt adopted the Byzantine system based on old imperial civil service. This situation continued until the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik Ibn Marwān, who replaced the Byzantine and Persian solutions with a new model based on Arab officials and so-called *mawālī* (Muslims non-Arab). This forced Arabisation of the administration[53]. The stabilisation of the monarchy by Umayyad caliphs, resulted in the transformation of *Bayt al-Māl* from a religiously-driven treasury (of the faithful), to a State Treasury[54].

2.3. Headquarters of Bayt al-Māl

Sources do not indicate explicitly where the headquarters of *Bayt al-Māl* were located. In the time of Abū Bakr, "The House of Money" was probably situated in his home in Medina[55]. However, after conquests and the territorial expansion of the country, the amount of revenues received by *Bayt al-Māl* convinced ʿUmar to move the headquarters to the great mosque

[50] Maḳdisī, V, 202.

[51] Yaʿḳūbī, II, 93; Ibn al-Djawzī, *Manakib*, 101; Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, IV, 226, 283; Maḳdisī, V, 202; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, V, 52–53; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghābah*, III, 114–115.

[52] Djāḥiẓ, 242; Iṣṭakhrī, 54.

[53] Ibn Khaldūn, II, 18; Māwardī, 202–203; Djahshiyārī, 38, Nuwayrī, VIII, 198. On the Islamization of the conquered communities see: I. Harakat, *Al-Siyasah wa Al-Mugtama' fi Al-'Asr Al-Amawi*, Marocco 1990, pp. 143–148, 151–153.

[54] I. Harakat, *Al-Siyasah*..., pp. 256–325; H. Badawy, *Introduction*..., pp. 190–193.

[55] Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghābah*, II, 422.

in Al-Kūfa[56]. The construction of the mosque was commissioned in 638 AD (17 AH) to one of his commanders (Sa'd ibn Abī Waḳḳāṣ). Opposite the building, within a distance of only 200 cubits, *Bayt al-Māl* and the house of Sa'd were located[57].

According to other sources the building was situated near *Dār al-Imāra* (دار الامارة), the headquarters of the administration, close to that mosque. From other accounts it can be concluded that it could have been located inside the temple. This seems likely, as in Islam the main mosque of a city (often called the Great Mosque or Friday Mosque) was a practical centre of lawmaking, exercising justice and finance management. It was also the teaching centre the meeting place of the local community and the authorities[58]. The *Bayt al-Māl*'s building acquired a separate importance when the seniors met therein to elect a new caliph after the death of 'Umar[59].

2.4. Management of Bayt al-Māl

The office in charge of *Bayt al-Māl* – the *Dīwān Bayt al-Māl* – was considered to be the most important part of administration[60]. It was managed by the caliph himself, who had full authority over the institution[61]. Thus he could, at least theoretically, allocate the gathered resources however he wanted. The Umayyads used the collected riches to demonstrate their power, generosity and luxury. Also the Abbasids were a rather high-spending dynasty[62]. The staff of the office of the *Bayt al-Māl* consisted of representatives of Islamised non-Arabic tribes ("clients", *mawālī*), especially those of a Persian origin, as well as Christians and Jews[63].

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[56] Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, IV, 135.

[57] Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghābah*, VII, 75; Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, IV, 45; M. Rida, *Al-khulafā...*, pp. 155–157, 187–188, 280–281.

[58] Maḳdisī, 157; Ibn Rusta, 116; A. Mez, *Islamic Civilization...*, pp. 220–221; E. Tyan, *Histoire de l'organization de pays d'Islam*, Lubnan 1960, p. 406.

[59] Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, vol. V, p. 21; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghābah*, III, p. 68.

[60] A. Mez, *Islamic Civilization...*, p. 131.

[61] A.S. Amir, *Muchtasar tarich Al-Arab wa-at-tamadun al-islami*, Cairo 1938, p. 349.

[62] Ibn Ḥudjdja al-Ḥamawī, 315; Masʿūdī, III, 344; Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, VIII, 252–253; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghābah*, VI, 433–434; L.A. Sidiju (Sedillot), *Tarikh Al-Arab al-aam*, Cairo 1948, p. 223.

[63] A. von Kremer, *The Islamic Civilization and the Extent to Which it Has Been Influenced by Foreign Ideas*, Cairo 1947, p. 78; J. Wellhausen, *Das arabische Reich und sein Sturz*, Cairo 1958, pp. 27–31.

As it has already been mentioned, under the reign of the first rules of the Umayyad dynasty, the administrative issues of many regions were still in the hands of the Byzantines and the Persians. During the reign of Mu ʿāwiya I, the founder of this dynasty, the governor of Iraq was accused of employing the Persians to collect *kharādj*. He defended himself by saying:

> When I employed the Arabs and they did not fulfil their duties, they claimed that I offended their tribe by lowering their wages and thus hurt them. If I leave them without supervision, it will mean that I do not care about the God's money (المال العام مال الله). Therefore, I concluded that the Persians are the best at collecting taxes, the most reliable.[64]

Using the services of non-Arabic Muslims, especially representatives of the People of the Book continued during the reign of the Abbasids. Abū Al- ʿAbbās as-Saffāḥ, the first caliph from the Abbasid dynasty, left Khālid Ibn Barmak, for whom he had great respect, in the office of the head of *Dīwān al-Kharāj* (ديوان الخراج) and *Dīwān Al-Jund* (military – ديوان الجند) until 752 AD (135 AH)[65]. It was probably prohibited, or at least looked upon with reluctance, to appoint representatives of the People of the Book to offices in Mecca. It is possible that the contemporary law which forbids non-Muslims to enter the city is a simple continuation of the steps taken in the times of the Abbasids. This issue is still awaiting a research.

2.5. Revenues of *Bayt al-Māl*

The main source of income for the caliphate was the tax called *fay'* (الفيئ), mentioned in Sūra 59 of the Ḳur'ān entitled *The Gathering*[66] (*Al-Ḥashr*; سورة الحشر), which described the conflict with the Banū Naḍīr tribe[67]. According to the definition, *fay'* consisted of all tributes collected in circumstances other than war with the infidels, such as income from tributes specified in international treaties, poll tax and revenues from *kharādj*[68], i.e.:

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[64] Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, IV, 109; Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, V, 522–523.

[65] Djahshiyārī, 89; Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, VII, 458, 460, 465, 467.

[66] *Ḳur'ān*, 59.

[67] Ibn Taymiyya, p. 38; Balādhurī, *Fūtuḥ*, vol. I. pp. 18–23, Ibn Hishām, pp. 121–136.

[68] Māwardī, 126; Abū Yaʿla, 120; Yaḥyā Ibn Ādam, 18; Abū ʿUbayd, 361; *Ḳur'ān*, *Al-Anfal*; Ibn Hishām, pp. 277–291; F. Lokkegaard, *Fay'*, [in:] *EI*, vol. II,

that which was obtained without force in a conquered city (mainly real estate) – unlike war spoils gained in battles, including movables and goods referred to as *ghanīma* (غنيمة);

– poll tax, paid by those who, in Ḳur'ān, were called the People of the Book[69];

– double *zakāt* paid by the tribe of Banū Taghlib, according to an agreement made with caliph ʿUmar[70];

– taxes on goods belonging to merchants who originated from the People of the Book;

– taxes on goods, paid by infidels who entered the territory of the Islamic country[71].

An important role in the system of *fay'* was played by *kharādj*, which was regarded as the oldest tax of the Islamic world, having been collected since the time of ʿUmar, in a scope that was proportional to the area of the land owned. *Kharāj* was probably defined by caliphs[72], as the Ḳur'ān did not mention it – in the time of the Prophet the needs of Islam were catered for by war spoils (*al-ghanā'im*). *Kharāj* was collected from three kinds of estates:

– lands abandoned by previous owners and cultivated by Muslims[73];

– lands obtained by force, which belonged to Islam (*waḳf*)[74];

– lands granted on the basis of an agreement or a treaty – in such a case the amount of the tax depended on the size of the area, location and the volume of production[75].

The poll tax, *djizya* (الجزية) also belonged to the *fay'* system. The etymology of the name is not certain. Some researchers claim that the word is of Persian origin, while others say that is comes from an Arabic term *djazā'* whose semantic scope was very wide and denoted either a punishment or a reward (literally "payback")[76]. *Djizya* was imposed on infidels inhabiting the territory of the caliphate, with the exception of women, children, the demented and monks. The exemption also applied to the blind, disabled, chronically ill, unable to work, the elderly, idolaters and apostates[77]. In the first years of Islam *djizya* did not apply to

pp. 869–870; Ph.K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs...*, pp. 170, 172; I.A. Al-Adawi, *Al-Nuzum...*, pp. 241–242.

[69] Ṣūlī, 198.

[70] Ṣūlī, 199; Balādhurī, *Fūtuḥ*, 217; Yaḥyā Ibn Ādam, 62.

[71] Ṣūlī, 199; Abū ʿUbayd, 25.

[72] Māwardī, 146; Abū Yaʿla, 146.

[73] Ṭabarī, *Ikhtilaf*, 224; Māwardī, 138; Abū Yaʿla, 132.

[74] Ṭabarī, *Ikhtilaf*, 224; Māwardī, 138; Abū Yaʿla, 132.

[75] Ṭabarī, *Ikhtilaf*, 218; Māwardī, 138; Abū Yaʿla, 130–131.

[76] Māwardī, 142; Abū Yaʿla, 137.

[77] Māwardī, 144; Abū Yaʿla, 138; Abū Yūsuf, 127; Balādhurī, *Fūtuḥ*, 76; Ṭabarī, *Ikhtilaf*, 207.

the Arabs who remained faithful to their polytheistic religion – they were faced with a choice: conversion to Islam or death[78]. Later, when the Muslim country was also inhabited by Jews and Christians, *djizya* applied to them too, since it was considered to be a fee which guaranteed the protection of Muḥammad himself[79]. The tax differed in amount for particular tribes and areas. During the reign of caliph ʿUmar, the inhabitants of Syria paid *djizya* in the amount of 4 dinars, while in the As-Sawād province (south Mesopotamia) it was at the level of 48, 24 or 12 dirhams respectively, depending on wealth[80].

There were many attempts to change the amount of *djizya.* Muʿāwiya wanted to increase it for the Copts. The governor of Iraq, Muḥammad al-Ḥajjaj ibn Yūsuf (641–714) imposed it on those who converted to Islam. His decisions were revoked by caliph ʿUmar II Ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, who ruled between 717 and 720 AD. In his letter to the governor of Egypt we can read that *the Prophet of God was not sent as a collector of tributes but as a proponent of faith in God*[81]. In 924 AD (312 AH) another attempt was made at extending the scope of the tax, by its imposition on monks and the sick. This initiative, however, was not successful[82]. In conjunction with the expansion of Islam, *djizya*, paid at the end of each year, lost its meaning as a source of state income[83]. *Zakāt* (الزكاة) was a form of obligatory charity collected from wealthy Muslims. In the religious sense it was supposed to cleanse the believers.

Zakāt in the tradition of Islam is more than just an ordinary tax. It plays a significant role both in the spiritual and social sense (*Dār al-Islām*; دار الاسلام). Rather than being treated as a source of state revenue, it is one of the pillars of religion, often mentioned in the Ḳur'ān[84] and in ḥadīths. According to its principles, *zakāt* is collected and distributed to the poor at a local level[85]. At the beginning of its existence it was probably a form of intertribal alms. For this reason caliph ʿUmar approved of collecting double *zakāt* (*ṣadaḳa*) from Arabic Christians of the Banū Taghlib tribe instead of *djizya*, when they threatened to leave *Dār al-Islām*[86].

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[78] Abū ʿUbayd, 27.

[79] *Ḳur'ān*, 29; Balādhurī, *Fūtuḥ*, 71.

[80] Abū ʿUbayd, 55, 56, 98, 198; Ṣūlī, 215; Abū Yūsuf, 124; Balādhurī, *Fūtuḥ*, 326.

[81] Ibn al-Djawzī, *Akbar*, p. 132.

[82] Ibn Biṭrīḳ, p. 83.

[83] Ḳudāma ibn Djaʿfar, p. 251.

[84] *Ḳur'ān*, 7,156; 19,31; 9,5; 21,72; 23,4; 27,3; 30,39; 31,3; 41,7.

[85] Māwardī, 120; Abū ʿUbayd, 595.

[86] Balādhurī, *Fūtuḥ*, 216–218; Abū ʿUbayd, 722–723.

Finally, the revenues of the Islamic state were supported by a tax called *'ushr* (العشر), i.e. fees for importing and exporting goods, amounting to one tenth of their value; thus it can be compared to the tithe, known from other ancient and medieval tax systems. 'Umar was the first to impose such fees[87]. Muslim lawyers opposed the caliph, indicating that this tax was borrowed from infidels and thus it originated from outside the *Dār al-Islām*.

There was also another type of this specific tithe, referred to as *'ushr al-arḍ* (عشر الأرض), which can be translated as "land tithe", imposed by Muḥammad himself. This fee was equivalent to one tenth of the value of the land, if the land was *watered with rain* and did not require irrigation, or one twentieth if it required artificial irrigation. This tax is sometimes perceived as a type of *zakāt*[88]. With the expansion of Islam, the tithe became the main source of income for the state.

Apart from the above-mentioned taxes, the state obtained revenues from baths, graveyards and inns. In subsequent periods, mills and public houses were also taxed[89]. During the reign of the Abbasids, the caliph started to take over properties of those who did not have any heirs. This source of income, however, was surely not of a regular nature[90]. Despite the existence of all of the above mentioned taxes there were moments in which the *Bayt al-Māl* was not able to face up to the financial needs of the state.

2.6. Public Spending

The earliest state expenditure was allocated for remuneration of Muslim soldiers. It was a kind of an irregular state benefit (*'aṭā'*, العطاء)[91], which was supposed to enable them to cater for their basic needs. The *'aṭā'* system lets us understand the economic situation of the Muslim state in its early period. In granting it, the orthodox caliphs acted in accordance with tribal reasoning[92]. The resources were divided evenly – during the reign of Abū Bakr and 'Ālī – or according to certain established norms, previously mentioned, under 'Umar's rule. These benefits were paid from the resources accrued in the *Bayt al-Māl* according to

[87] Abū 'Ubayd, 713.

[88] Balādhurī, *Fūtuḥ*, 85; Abū 'Ubayd, 644.

[89] Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, VII, 653; Ya'ḳūbī, III, 110.

[90] Ḳalkashandī, III, 460; Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, X, 44.

[91] C. Cahen, *'aṭā'*, [in:] *EI*, vol. I, pp. 729–730; M. Ridah, *Al-khulafā...*, pp. 118–120; I.A. Al-Adawi, *Al-Nuzum...*, pp. 248–252.

[92] Māwardī, p. 200; Abū Ya'la, p. 222; Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, vol. III, p. 614; Abū 'Ubayd, p. 335; Balādhurī, *Fūtuḥ*, p. 557; Maḳrīzi, p. 151.

the following rule: *pay emirs and warrant officers, who will pay scribes, representatives and secretaries and they will pay beneficiaries of their households*[93]. During the reign of the Umayyads and the Abbasids the division of revenues was utilised in the political struggle for keeping the power[94].

Under the rule of the Abbasids *'aṭā'* was replaced with *arzāḳ* (الارزاق) – a permanent salary for officials and soldiers[95]. *Arzāḳ* was also paid to all those who served at the caliph's court. The payment covered both the salary and a kind of debenture that could later be exchanged for its value in cash[96].

When the institution of state finances became fully established, the resources from the "House of Money" were used for the following purposes:

– the construction of public structures (mosques, canals, dams, etc.)[97];

– securing the needs of the population (providing food during droughts, for pilgrims and people during Ramadan, and accommodation for travellers)[98];

– funding the army and building military infrastructure (supplies, equipment, supporting units – needed for suppressing rebellions – and maintenance of frontier fortifications)[99];

– creating an intelligence network, which quickly (during the reign of 'Uthmān) became an important state institution, comparable to today's secret service[100].

It ought to be explained that in the entire discourse concerning the expenses of *Bayt al-Māl*, only the area of the Arabian Peninsula is taken into account, although taxes were collected from all the provinces of the country. The management of incomes and expenses of the treasury was decentralised. After covering the costs of the functioning of provinces, all the surplus was sent to the "House of Money"[101].

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[93] Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, IV, 49; Maḳrīzi, I, 150.

[94] Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, vol. VII, pp. 161, 426; Ṣūlī, p. 224; Maḳrīzi, p. 151; Ibn Al-Athīr, *Tarikh*, vol. V, p. 291; vol. VIII, p. 143 (ed. Beirut 1956).

[95] Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghābah*, VI, 221.

[96] Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, VIII, 95; III, 615; Sa'alibi, pp. 18, 22; Balādhurī, *Fūtuḥ*, pp. 210, 564; Māwardī, 202; Abū Ya'la, 223; Ṣābi', p. 289; Ibn Manẓūr, I, 457.

[97] Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, VII, 655; X, 711; Makkī, vol. III, p. 257; Maḳdisī, 121; Ibn Kathīr, *Tarikh*, XI, 68; Ṣābi', 280.

[98] Ibn Kathīr, *Tarikh*, VII, 90; Maḳrīzi, I, 151; Ya'ḳūbī, II, 29; Makkī, III, 202; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, V, 112; Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, VI, 327, 567; VIII, 142.

[99] Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, VIII, 44; IX, 57, 645; X, 410; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghābah*, VI, 57; Ibn Kathīr, *Tarikh*, X, 147, 287; XI, 150.

[100] Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, VIII, 96, 157, 158; Ibn Kathīr, *Tarikh*, X, 147–148.

[101] Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, X, 269; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, V, 220; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghābah*, V, 291; Ibn Ṭabāṭabā, 136.

Establishing the Muslim administration was a long-lasting and complex process. It led to the creation of a complicated administrative machine alongside the caliph and his direct advisors. The Arab expansion resulted in the need to create an organisational model, which, at least at the beginning of the nation's existence, was based on the structure of a military unit. In the early expansion period of Islam, the administration had to be autonomous and self-sufficient, in part because of the geographical dispersion of the country and the lack of means of transport, but also due to the character of the local soil and specific needs of Arab soldiers, which were different from the requirements of the local communities. On the conquered lands a representative of the caliph, a military commander, who also possessed civil power, organised the economic administration in a military way.

The stabilisation of the borders of the Muslim state in the Middle East and the limitation of war expenses resulted in a budgetary surplus, both from war spoils and taxes. These resources were transported to the capital of the caliphate and collected in *Bayt al-Māl*.

The basic question that emerged at the very beginning of existence of this institution concerned the distribution of the collected goods. Its later utilisation for the operations of the state (the army, public works, social policy, and administration) led to a deficit. However, this process occurred only after the division of resources into private (*Bayt al-Māl al-khāṣṣa*; بيت مال الخاصة) and public funds (*Bayt al-Māl al-ʿAmma*; بيت المال العامة), the latter similar to a state treasury; as has been mentioned, this took place during the reign of Mu ʿāwiya. The implications of the separation private and public funds became visible when the caliph demanded that abandoned areas on the conquered territories to be regarded as his own property.

The reign of the Umayyad dynasty (661–750) was crucial for shaping the administrative (and economic) system of the caliphate. At that time the model of a nation changed from religious-military to political. It was also then that the nomadic lifestyle of the people was replaced by a settled one, as the conquered tribes were subjected to Arabisation and Islamisation. Stabilisation of the monarchy led to transformation of the "House of Money" from a religious treasury to a state one. The evolution of *Bayt al-Māl* can be divided into three periods:

– *Bayt al-Māl* of wartime, providing a simple way of sharing spoils;
– *Bayt al-Māl* of budgetary surplus, in the time of intensified Islamisation;
– the *Bayt al-Māl* of a developed state, an institution independent of the caliph and possessing its own mechanisms of operation.

In the third period the "House of Money" did not differ much from today's

ministry of finances, in which the resources do not come from war spoils, but from taxes imposed on citizens. It did not, however, have the right to create economic policy or any tools which would empower it.

When studying the history of the *Bayt al-Māl,* we also investigate the causes of changes occurring in the economic institutions, both at the time of Islamic expansion and in the period of stabilisation. Similarly, while analysing the evolution of the operations of the "House of Money", we are able to learn about the development of the economic policy of the Muslim state.



Marta Woźniak

3. Christian Communities in the Territories Conquered by the Arabs (the Seventh–Eighth Centuries)

The expansion of Islam in the first two centuries of its existence was quite unprecedented. Accompanied by the establishment of a new political order, it seemed to occur irrespective of whether Muḥammad was initially considered to be a prophet sent down for all mankind or for the Arabs only[1]. The new religion spread rapidly not only because of military victories[2] – which it owed to the effort of all free, fit, and adult men who placed their trust in the Prophet[3] – but also due to an attraction exercised by its religious formula and tolerance with which its followers treated the conquered population. An individual was to find happiness within the *umma*, the Muslim community, where everyone, at least formally, was to enjoy equal rights.

In the Middle East and North Africa, Christianity, partly due to the collapse of its political and theological unity, grew increasingly weak[4]. The Arab invaders found it disintegrated and tormented by theological disputes concerning the nature of the Christ. These religious controversies undermined the strength of both the Byzantine orthodoxy and the imperial rule as well. The main religious movements that emerged out of these controversies came to be known as

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[1] S. B a s h e a r, *Arabs and Others in Early Islam*, Princeton 1997, pp. 1, 16 (where one can read the Prophet's words: *I shall be the head of all the seed of Adam*).

[2] The Arab viewpoint of the conquest is to be found in the selection of Arab chroniclers' accounts of the reigns of particular caliphs. E.W. B r o o k s, *The Arabs in Asia Minor (641–750) from Arabic Sources*, JHS 18, 1898, pp. 182–208.

[3] In theory, military service was mandatory, but in practice it was possible to provide a replacement (*badīl*). M. B o n n e r, *Aristocratic Violence and Holy War. Studies in the Jihad and the Arab-Byzantine Frontier*, New Haven 1996, p. 11.

[4] R. F l e t c h e r, *The Cross and the Crescent: The Dramatic Story of the Earliest Encounters between Christians and Muslims*, London 2004, p. 6.

Nestorianism and Monophysitism (the followers of the latter were often called the Jacobites)[5]. At the turn of the sixth and seventh centuries, the authorities' attempts to advance one more definition of the Christ, rather than healing religious divisions, resulted in the outbreak of further schisms[6].

Both the Byzantine Church and Roman emperors vehemently fought eastern heresies. In the Islamic state, the position of the Jacobites and the Nestorians, whom new rulers treated better than they did the members of other Christian groups, was not bad. The security brought by the victorious Arabs to the life of religious communities in Egypt and the Middle East was something of which these communities, refusing to accept the Chalcedonian creed, could not dream in Byzantium. Upon entering Jerusalem in 637, Caliph 'Umar, in undertaking to protect the Christians, uttered the following words: *I guarantee the safety of their life, their property, their children, their churches, their crosses and everything they have*[7]. It is worth noting that no Christian group was excluded from this pledge of protection. Of course, it was only the Jacobites and the Nestorians, persecuted in Byzantium, to whom the life under these guarantees was clearly an improvement on what they had experienced under Byzantine rule. For the orthodox Christians, who had previously enjoyed the support of the Byzantine authorities, the situation changed for the worse.

Regardless of what has been said above, it must be noted that the Muslims did not offer the Christians much that went beyond a relative safety – a general protection of life and property, and freedom of religion. Under Islamic law

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[5] R.M. H a d d a d, *Syrian Christians in Muslim Societies. An Interpretation*, Princeton 1970, p. 7. Today the Assyrian Church of the East and the Syrian Orthodox Church consider the names *Jacobites* and *Nestorians* to be derogative, preferring the use of two other terms: Assyrians and Arameans. However, in the first centuries after the advent of Islam the words in question did not carry pejorative connotations and were used by members of these groups themselves. And it is in this context that I use them in this chapter. At the same time the term Monophysites was coined by the Melkites in the eighth century and was designed to depreciate the opponents of the Chalcedon arrangements. In fact, the followers of some of the branches of the movement referred to as Monophysitism were Miaphysites (they did not deny Christ's human nature, as did the Monophysites, but believed that Jesus was one person with two natures, human and divine, which blended into one). J.A. E v a n s, *Justynian i imperium bizantyjskie*, transl. B. G o d z i ń s k a, Warszawa 2008, p. 172.

[6] There appeared, among others, the movement of the Monothelites. During the Crusades, it almost ceased to exist as his most important members, the Maronites, recognized the supreme authority of Rome. For more on the Maronites see: M. M o c h, *Swoi i obcy. Tożsamość Koptów i Maronitów w arabskich tekstach kultury*, Warszawa 2013, pp. 113–138.

[7] J. J o s e p h, *Muslim Christian Relations and Inter Christian Rivalries in the Middle East. The Case of the Jacobites in an Age of Transition*, Albany 1983, p. 10.

the Christians were granted the status of the *dhimmī* (the protected minority)[8]. The *dhimmī* made up the group of second-class citizens. In addition, it is also necessary to distinguish between the formal status enjoyed by the Christians and the way in which they were actually treated. These may have been consistent with one another, but may also have been significantly different[9]. The Muslims enjoyed a privileged position. The Christians formed a distinct community and, as such, were subject to discrimination. Sometimes they had to wear humiliating dress setting them apart from the rest of the Muslim society. Sometimes their churches and monasteries were plundered and their property robbed by jealous neighbours. However, such injustice was not something to which they were regularly subjected. Some Muslim rulers and lawyers tried to provide the Christians with legal protection. Judged by the standards of the time, the Muslim conquerors were quite fair and tolerant[10].

The purpose of this chapter is to present the life of Christian Churches in the seventh and eighth centuries in some of the areas conquered by the Arabs: the Levant, Mesopotamia, Egypt and the Caucasus. The paper is divided into two parts. The first aims to offer a general description of the life of all Christians remaining under Muslim rule, while the second, more analytical, deals with some specific Christian Churches existing in the Islamic state. Ḳur'ānic comments concerning Christians and the treatment they received from the Muslims, as well as the way in which they responded to it, are discussed in the first part. As the social problems discussed in this contribution were deeply interconnected with theological ones, I address them both, intertwined[11]. A separate discussion will be devoted to some language issues.

The second part deals with some Christian Churches that operated under Islamic rule: the West Syrian Church (the Jacobite Church), the East Syrian Church (the Nestorian Church), the Coptic Church, and the Armenian Church. I shall focus on the relations between the Arabs and the communities whose lands fell under Muslim domination, paying special attention to the Ar-

[8] The term is usually used to refer to a pact of unlimited duration, under which the Muslim community offered hospitality and protection to the followers of other revealed religions (the Jews, the Christians and the Sabeans) as long as the latter were prepared to accept the Muslims' domination. C. C a h e n, *Dhimma*, [in:] *EI*, vol. II, p. 227.

[9] B. Y e ' o r, *Islam and Dhimmitude: Where Civilizations Collide*, Madison 2002, p. 21.

[10] J. J o s e p h, *Muslim-Christian...*, p. 13. However, some scholars consider such a tolerant attitude to be nothing but a myth and, in trying to prove the opposite view, attempt to provide evidence of a great number of persecutions and humiliations suffered by both the Jews and the Christians alike. See: B. Y e ' o r, *Islam...*, pp. 89–102.

[11] M. L e w i c k a, *Od konfrontacji do dialogu – historia relacji pomiędzy chrześcijaństwem a islamem*, PR 2 (240), 2011, p. 138.

abs' relations with the Jacobites – the largest group living in the Syro-Palestine[12]. The Nestorians were based mainly in Persia and Mesopotamia, and were not in any significant way connected with the region of Syria. In Egypt, religious controversies led to the emergence of two Christian Churches – the Melkite Church and the Coptic Church. The latter played a leading role in the whole province. From the perspective of Constantinople, these were all unorthodox churches, as was the Armenian one, the last to which I am going to devote my attention here. Its development was halted by the Persians who in turn were forced out of the region by the Arabs.

3.1. Christians in the Ḳur'ān and in the Teachings of Muḥammad

Pronounced in Muslim tradition are the Prophet's interactions with Christians[13]. So too is the fact that his advent was foretold in the Gospel[14]. In *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* by Ibn Isḥāḳ, quoted by Goddard, there are five references to these encounters which took place on several occasions. These concerned:

– the Prophet's meeting with the Monk Baḥīrā[15];

– the Prophet's conversation with Waraḳa Ibn Nawfal, a cousin of his wife Khadīdja;

– the refuge offered to the Muslims by a ruler of Aksum (Ethiopia/Abyssinia);

– the visit of a delegation of Christians from Nadjrān to Medina;

– the Prophet's letters to Christian rulers whose states bordered the Arab lands.

It is difficult to say whether our sources provide us with reliable accounts of Muḥammad's encounters with Christians. It is also impossible to determine the impact these contacts had upon the Prophet's religious views[16]. However, it

[12] R.M. H a d d a d, *Syrian Christians...*, p. 7.

[13] *The Early Christian-Muslim Dialogue: A Collection of Documents from the First Three Islamic Centuries, 632–900 AD: Translations with Commentary*, ed. N.A. N e w m a n, Hatfield 1993, pp. 1–2.

[14] According to the Ḳur'ān (61:6), Jesus prophesied the coming of the Comforter (J 14,17; 16,12–14). The messenger was to be named Aḥmad (resemblance to the name Muḥammad). *Ḳur'ān*, p. 937. J. N o s o w s k i, *Problem uwierzytelnienia posłannictwa Mahometa w świetle Koranu*, STV 1/2, 1964, p. 374.

[15] In the tradition of Middle Eastern Christians this person is equated with Saint Sergius. For more on the figure see: B. R o g g e m a, *The Legend of Sergius Bahira: Eastern Christian Apologetics and Apocalyptic in Response to Islam, The History of Christian-Muslim Relations*, Leiden–Boston 2009.

[16] H. G o d d a r d, *Historia stosunków chrześcijańsko-muzułmańskich*, transl. S. Z a l e w s k i, Warszawa 2009, pp. 32–36.

is quite plausible that some of them actually took place – for example, those in Aksum and Medina.

The main reason why the Prophet decided to host a delegation of Christians from Nadjrān – of all his interactions with Christians the accounts of which are found in the sources this one is most likely to have actually occured – was to persuade them to convert to Islam. However, the visitors refused to accept the offer. References to this event can be found in the Ḳur'ān:

> Indeed the case of Jesus with Allah/ is like the case of Adam:/ He created him from dust,/ and said to him: *Be*, and he was./ This is the truth from your Lord,/ so do not be among the skeptics./ Should anyone argue with you concerning him,/ after the knowledge that has come to you/ say *Come!* Let us call our sons and your sons,/ our women and your women,/ our souls and your souls,/ then let us pray earnestly/ and call down Allah's curse upon the liars.[17]

The fragment quoted above can be considered to represent an exemplary way of presenting religious disputations in Muslim sources from the ninth and tenth centuries[18]. However, historical reality was not always fully consistent with the Ḳur'ānic tradition.

Some respect accorded to the People of the Book in the Ḳur'ān, as well as Muḥammad's private life, prove that the Prophet's attitude towards the Christians was not unambiguously negative. At the end of his life, he had a beautiful Coptic girl named Mary as his concubine[19]. The couple even had a son, Ibrāhīm. However, the boy died while still an infant, before reaching the age of two.

Although Christianity was present in the Arabian Peninsula long before the birth of Muḥammad, the Arab conquest entailed a significant change in the relations between the Muslims and the Christians. The provinces of the Byzantine Empire conquered by the Arabs were inhabited by the predominantly Christian population. In Persia the Christians, mostly Nestorians, formed a significant minority. The annexation of these territories obviously made it necessary for the Arabs to define anew their attitude towards the Christians.

The Ḳur'ān finds religious pluralism permissible. The point repeatedly made in it is that the Lord, had it been His wish, would have made all people into a sin-

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[17] *Ḳur'ān*, 17:1 (all Ḳur'ānic translations in this chapter by ʿAli Ḳuli Qara'i).

[18] M. S a d o w s k i, *Teologia arabskich chrześcijan. Novum czy déjà vu?*, KWT.UMK 26.2, 2014, p. 220.

[19] J. S h a f i, *Maria the Coptic*, [in:] i d e m, *Unmasking Muḥammad's Life, Behind the Veil*, vol. II, n.p. 2008, pp. 63–65. The Prophet also had a Jewish wife, Ṣāfiya. Sh. A l e e m, *Prophet Muḥammad(s) and His Family: A Sociological Perspective*, Bloomington 2007, p. 128.

gle nation. But He opted for the plurality of religions and nations[20]. The Holy Book of the Muslims calls on all religious communities to rival in performing good deeds, mentioning the Christians, the Jews and the Sabeans by name[21].

Remarks concerning the non-Muslims appear in the Ḳur'ān in different contexts[22]. Their analysis allows us to distinguish three phases reflecting changes in the relations between the *umma* and the non-Muslims and corresponding to the Prophet's meetings with the Polytheists in Mecca, with the Jews in Medina and with the Christians in northwest Arabia[23]. The Prophet believed that he was God's messenger, with his prophecy being only the last one in a series of prophecies that had previously been brought to the Jews and Christians by Abraham (called in Arabic Ibrāhīm), Moses (Mūsā) and Jesus (ʿĪsā)[24]. It was on this ground that he expected the followers of these religions to accept his teachings. The rejection of his ideas by the Jews filled him with resentment, but he still hoped that the Christians would prove more responsive to his message[25]. The greatest number of favourable comments on Jesus and his followers originated in this period of Muḥammad's career:

> Surely you will find/ the most hostile of all people towards the faithful/ to be the Jews and the polytheists,/ and surely you will find/ the nearest of them in affection to the faithful/ to be those who say *We are Christians*/ That is because/ there are priests and monks among them,/ and because they are not arrogant.[26]

In a detailed study of Muslim commentaries on the Ḳur'ān's verses devoted to Christians, Jane D. McAuliffe refers to a number of texts which betray a positive attitude towards, if not all, then at least some Christian groups[27]. However, says McAuliffe, the Muslims' approval of Christianity was always qualified – restricting itself exclusively to the Ḳur'ānic Christians', those who accepted Muḥammad's prophecy[28].

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[20] *Ḳur'ān*, 5:48; 11:118; 16:93; 42:8.

[21] I.J. B o u l l a t a, *Fa-stabiq 'l-khayrat: A Qur'anic Principle of Interfaith Relations*, [in:] *Christian-Muslim Encounters*, eds. Y.Y. H a d d a d, W.Z. H a d d a d, Gainesville 1995, pp. 43–44.

[22] H. G o d d a r d, *Historia...*, p. 37.

[23] J. W a a r d e n b u r g, *The Quran on Other Religions*, [in:] *Muslim Perceptions of Other Religions. A Historical Survey*, ed. i d e m, Oxford–New York 1999, p. 3.

[24] H. G o d d a r d, *Historia...*, p. 38.

[25] *Ibidem*, p. 39.

[26] *Ḳur'ān*, 5:85.

[27] *Ḳur'ān*, 3:55; 3:199; 5:66; 27:52–55; 57:27.

[28] J.D. M c A u l i f f e, *Qur'ānic Christians. An Analysis of Classical and Modern Exegesis*, Cambridge 1991, pp. 287–288.

With time, as the contacts between the followers of both religions became more frequent and the Christians' resistance to Islam more obvious, the tone of the Ḳur'ān grew harsher:

> Fight those who do not have faith in Allah/nor [believe] in the Last Day,/ nor forbid/ what Allah and His Apostle have forbidden,/ nor practice the true religion,/ from among those who were given the Book,/ until they paid the tribute out of hand,/ degraded[29].

The People of the Book are the Jews and the Christians, and this fragment must have been brought into being when the relations between the *umma* and these groups grew tense[30].

Although Christians are never explicitly referred to in the Ḳur'ān as *mushrikūn*[31] (those who are accused of *shirk*, that is, polytheism or idolatry) or *kāfirūn* (those who do not believe), some verses at least indirectly suggest that they are guilty of these sins:

> They are certainly faithless who say,/ *Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary*./ But the Messiah had said, *O Children of Israel!*/ *Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord*./ They are certainly faithless who say,/ *Allah is the third* [*person*] *of a trinity*,/ while there is no god except the One God./ If they do not relinquish what they say,/ there shall befall the faithless among them a painful punishment.[32]

Although Christians do not consider their God to be only one of the three, it can be assumed that the Muslims understood the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in such a simplified and distorted way, thus accusing the Christians of *shirk*[33]. And unbelievers were to be subject to judgment. The Ḳur'ānic verses revealed in the earlier, Meccan period, left the judgment to God, while those revealed later, in the Medinan period, turned it over to the earthly community of Muslims[34].

The Torah and the Gospel are amicably mentioned in the Holy Book of Islam which does not fail to do justice both to their anteriority and to their divine origin as well. *Yet before it the Book of Moses/ was a guide and a mercy,/ and this is*

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[29] *Ḳur'ān*, 9:29.

[30] H. G o d d a r d, *Historia...*, p. 40.

[31] The term was used to refer to polytheists from the Ḳuraysh tribe from which Muḥammad was descended. For more on the Prophet's conflict with *mushrikūn* in: B.B.H. A b u B a k a r, *Conflict Between the Prophet Muḥammad and the Mushrikun of Quraysh During the Meccan Period in Arabic Literature*, London 1977.

[32] *Ḳur'ān*, 5:75–76.

[33] H. G o d d a r d, *Historia...*, p. 42.

[34] D. M a r s h a l l, *God, Muḥammad and the Unbelievers*, London 1999, pp. 39, 157.

a Book which confirms it,/ in the Arabic language,/ to warn those who do wrong,/ and is a [*bearer of*] *good news for the virtuous*[35]. In the pages of the Ḳur'ān, God even instructs the Muslims to, when in doubt, turn their eyes to the People of the Book, the Christians and the Jews[36], to whom the Scripture – the Torah, the Psalms and the Gospel – was previously entrusted. *So if you are in doubt/ about what We have sent down to you,/ ask those who read the Book/* [*revealed*] *before you./ The truth has certainly come to you from your Lord;/ so do not be among the skeptics*[37]. The verse 46 of the Sūra 29 clearly offers a perspective of interreligious understanding:

> Do not dispute with the People of the Book/ except in a manner which is best,/ barring such of them as are wrongdoers,/ and say, *We believe/ in that which has been sent down to us/ and has been sent down to you;/ our God and your God is one* [*and the same*]*, and to Him do we submit.*

Later, the controversy surrounding this verse made it necessary for the followers of all three religions to put forward arguments lending credibility to their respective Scriptures: *And they say, "No one shall enter paradise/ except one who is a Jew or a Christian"./ Those are their* [*false*] *hopes!/ Say, "Produce your evidence,/ should you be truthful"*[38].

It is worth noting that it was not long before the Muslim scholars began to deploy the argument[39] that the Christians changed God's original message, and that some of their dogmas were not grounded in the Bible but in the decisions of church councils. The Muslims' doctrine on the falsification of the Bible (*taḥrīf*) applied, as Michał Sadowski reminds us, both to the Old and to the New Testament whose respective texts were believed to have been either distorted or falsified altogether[40]. The Muslims considered the fragmentation of the Church to be evidence of the Christians' departure from the truth.

> Also from those who say, *We are Christians*,/ We took their pledge;/ but they forgot a part of what they were reminded./ So We stirred up enmity and hatred among them/

[35] *Ḳur'ān*, 46:12.

[36] Later, the term was extended to include the Zoroastrians and even Hinduists. G. Vajda, *Ahl al-Kitāb*, [in:] *EI*, vol. I, p. 264.

[37] *Ḳur'ān*, 10:94.

[38] *Ḳur'ān*, 2:111.

[39] S.H. Griffith, *Gospel*, [in:] J.D. McAuliffe, *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, vol. II, Leiden 2002, pp. 342–343; R. Caspar, J.M. Gaudeul, *Textes sur le "tahrif"*, Islch 8, 1980, p. 62; *Muslim Perceptions of Other Religions: a Historical Survey*, ed. J. Waardenburg, New York–Oxford 1999, p. 43.

[40] M. Sadowski, *Teologia...*, p. 223.

until the Day of Resurrection/ and soon Allah will inform them/ concerning what they had been doing.[41]

The Arabs referred to those whom they were willing to regard as adhering to the true Gospel – written in *al-'ibrāniyya* – as *naṣārā*, initially using this term for denoting Judeo-Christians, probably the Ebionites, who observed the Law of Moses and forswore earthly wealth – of which, by the way, they spoke quite warmly[42].

To conclude this section, the Ḳur'ān contains both positive and negative opinions about the Jews and the Christians. On one hand members of these religions are considered to deserve protection as the People of the Book and on the other they are accused of rejecting Muḥammad's teachings and of being guilty of *shirk* and *kufr*[43].

3.2. The Muslims' Attitude towards the Christians in Muḥammad's Lifetime

Muḥammad's arrival in Medina made it necessary to regulate the relations between the newly founded Muslim community and the members of other religions living in the city: the Jews, the Christians and the Pagans. On the Prophet's initiative, the so-called *Constitution of Medina*, a very important document in the history of early Islam, was proclaimed. It defined the rights and duties of different Arab tribes, thus putting an end to their feuds, and asserted the role of Medina as a sacred place where all violence is forbidden. Remarkably liberal, it went very far in its tolerance for other cults and religions, guaranteeing the non-Muslims personal safety, protection of women and freedom of religion. Imposing new taxes to support the community in times of conflict, it established the system of courts for resolving disputes. Since some of these disputes involved bloody vengeance, it helped to fend off the outbreak of destructive vendettas. The document stated absolutely clear that *the Jews preserved their religion and the Muslims theirs*, and that the Jews should pay *nafaḳa*[44] – just like other members of the *umma* all of whom were supposed to unite in the struggle against the enemies of the signatories to the *Constitution*. The members of the *umma*

[41] *Ḳur'ān*, 5:12; H. G o d d a r d, *Historia...*, p. 24.

[42] H. B i n T a l a l, *Christianity in the Arab World*, Amman 1994, pp. 11–12.

[43] H. G o d d a r d, *Historia...*, p. 43.

[44] *Nafaḳa* referred to financial support which under Islamic law a husband was required to offer to his wife or wives, or to alimony which he paid to his wife and children after divorce.

were also urged to support each other with counsel, to remain true to their word, to repudiate the evil and to abstain from behaving in a wicked way towards their allies[45].

A few years later, in 628, Muḥammad launched an attack on a rich oasis, Khaybar, inhabited mainly by the Jews. The attackers acted on the pretext that the Jews of Khaybar offered shelter to their brethren from the Banū Naḍīr, who had been banished from Medina, and entered into alliance with Mecca. After a six-week siege, the Muslims finally broke Khaybar's resistance. Local Jews saved their lives but lost their land. They also had to surrender half their crops to Muḥammad who, in addition, was free to withdraw from the agreement at any time, ordering their expulsion from the oasis[46].

Around 630, the Muslims reached an agreement with other religious communities. The adoption of Islam by the Ḥimyarites – a Semitic people from southern Arabia – occasioned the following remark about the Jews and the Christians:

> If a Jew or a Christian becomes a Muslim, he becomes a believer with all the rights and duties. He who wants to adhere to his own religion, whether he is a Jew or a Christian, will not be urged to renounce his beliefs. He must pay taxes.[47]

A similar statement was repeated a few months later, in the midst of much more dramatic circumstances. A delegation led by Khalīd Ibn Al-Wālid was sent to Nadjrān with a goal to present its inhabitants, mostly Christians, with an ultimatum: either, within three days, they will convert to Islam or their city will be attacked. Most opted for the conversion[48]. Those who refused to accept the Prophet's religion had to pay a tribute. All the inhabitants were obliged to abstain from exercising usury; in return they were assured of the absolute safety of both their priests and their churches[49]. Such an approach to non-Muslims, which can be called a compromise, typified Muḥammad's activity in its late stage and consisted in leaving the Christians and the Jews to their own devices as long as they were prepared to obey the Muslim authorities, which primarily involved paying taxes these authorities imposed[50].

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[45] Quot. from J. D a n e c k i published in: PR 1, 1993, pp. 43–44. See also: H. G o d d a r d, *Historia...*, p. 45.

[46] *Ibidem*, p. 46.

[47] I b n I s ḥ ā ḳ, p. 643.

[48] I b n I s ḥ ā ḳ, pp. 510–518.

[49] The text by Ibn Sa'd is quoted from: W. M o n t g o m e r y W a t t, *Muḥammad at Medina*, Oxford 1981, pp. 359–360.

[50] H. G o d d a r d, *Historia...*, p. 47.

3.3. The Muslims' Attitude toward the Christians after Muḥammad's Death

It was the Prophet's interactions with the Jews, much more frequent than his encounters with the Christians, that served as precedents on which, after his death in 632, his followers relied in developing two main attitudes towards the non-Muslims. The first, highly antagonistic, manifested itself in the expulsion by the Prophet's followers of the Jews and the Christians from Arabia. The second, prevalent during the Muslim expansion, seemed to be more conciliatory[51].

The final stage of Muḥammad's activity was marked by significant hostility towards the Jews and the Christians, resulting in the outburst of the persecution of non-Muslims right after the Prophet's death. Patricia Crone and Michael Cook are of the opinion that the Muslims' military raids on the lands bordering Arabia, which took place right after 632, were the most cruel – as illustrated, for example, by the fate of the members of the Byzantine garrison in Gaza whom the Muslim conquerors left with a hard choice: the conversion to Islam or death. Having refused to accept Islam, the soldiers were murdered[52]. The burning of churches, the destroying of monasteries and the desecrating of crosses all came about just in this period – for example, in Sinai. This led to a decrease in the number of Christian pilgrimages which, however, did not disappear altogether, continuing into the tenth century, approved of by the Muslims because of the financial gains that went with them[53].

Things were no better in Arabia, from which, within ten years of Muḥammad's death, all Jews and Christians were expelled. The Muslim accounts of these expulsions differ from one another in some details – Al-Wāḳidī reports that Caliph 'Umar expelled the Jews from Al-Ḥidjāz[54], while according to At-Ṭabarī they were expelled from Khaybar[55]. 'Umar's orders regarding Christians were no different, although there is evidence to suggest that Nadjrān still remained

[51] *Ibidem*, p. 59.

[52] P. C r o n e, M. C o o k, *Hagarism. The Making of Islamic World*, New York 1977, pp. 6, 120.

[53] Ch. W a l s h, *The Cult of St. Katherine of Alexandria in Early Medieval Europe*, Aldershot–Burlington 1988, p. 43. The decrease in the number of pilgrims affected the quantity and quality of devotional articles and the objects of religious art – after the conquest such objects were produced rarely and only in a few places. Thessalonica and Constantinople rose then to the position of important centres attracting pilgrims. G. V i k a n, *Early Byzantine Pilgrimage Art*, Washington 2010, p. 87.

[54] W ā ḳ i d ī, vol. I, pp. 176–180.

[55] Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, vol. III, pp. 105–111 (ed. M.A.F. I b r a h i m).

their home throughout the two centuries which followed this caliph's reign[56]. The tradition which credited the Prophet with the rejection of the possibility of the co-existence of two religions in Arabia was used by the Muslims as a justification for the removal of all non-believers from their lands[57].

Muslim sources offer different accounts of the conquest. Generally, the Arabs, following something of an established pattern, presented besieged cities with an ultimatum: either the inhabitants will surrender, thus saving their lives and property; or they will resist, thus making the terms under which to surrender much harsher – the existing churches will be turned into mosques, and the erection of new ones forbidden. Faced with such an alternative, many cities chose to surrender. Some, however, fiercely resisted[58].

A case in point here is the capture of Jerusalem without a fight. Patriarch Sophronius was designated to negotiatie the terms of surrender on behalf of the inhabitants of the city the takeover of which was carried out under Caliph 'Umar's personal supervision. Sitting on a donkey led by his servant, the caliph entered Jerusalem without pomp and signed a peace treaty with Sophronius, from whom he received the keys to the city. Under the agreement, the Christians and their churches were given 'Umar's protection[59]. Then, the caliph gave orders to clear the area of the Temple Mount and build there a wooden mosque. The mosque was built on the site where the so-called Farthest Mosque (*al-Masjid al-Aḳṣā*, known simply as *Al-Aḳṣā*), built by the Umayyads in 715, is now standing. The Christian Arabic tradition holds that the caliph dropped the idea of praying in the Basilica of the Holy Grave in order to save it from being turned into a mosque. Instead, he prayed in front of the church, where the Dome of the Rock, erected at about the same time as *Al-Aḳṣā*, is still to be found. As a consequence, the city centre shifted from the area within which the Basilica of the Holy Grave was situated to

[56] J.S. Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in pre-Islamic Times*, London 1979, p. 307.

[57] This ḥadīth, despite its popularity in the Middle East, is dubious and many western authors mention it without providing its source. Ḥadīth similar in content can be found in *Sahih* Muslim's collection (vol. XIX, No 4366): *'Umar bin al-Chattab said that he heard the Prophet (peace be with him) say "I will expel the Jews and Christians from the Peninsula and there will be no one left except Muslims"*. In Saudi Arabia to this day neither the Christians nor the Jews are allowed to practice their religion publicly. The latter are even forbidden to enter the country – they cannot legally obtain visas. W. Lingle, R. Delancy, *Burning Questions about Islam: A Panoramic Study for Concerned Christians*, Bloomington 2011, p. 17.

[58] On the surrender of the cities to Muslim invaders see: M. Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Empire: From Surrender to Coexistence*, Cambridge 2011, pp. 32–41.

[59] S. Runciman, *Dzieje wypraw krzyżowych*, vol. 1, Warszawa 1987, pp. 3–4.

the one occupied by a Jewish temple and new Muslim places of worship[60].

ʿUmar ordered the Arabs to refer to the Temple Mount as *Madīnat Bayt al-Maḳdis*. The remaining part of Jerusalem was to be called Īliyā' – after the name with which the centre was "christened" by the Romans in 70, *Aelia Capitolina*[61]. With time, the Arabs began to refer to the Temple Mount as *al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf* and to the city as *Bayt al-Maḳdis* (the Noble Sanctuary). Finally, the city began to be called *Al-Ḳuds al-Sharīf* (the Noble City). After ʿUmar proclaimed Jerusalem to be the third most important Muslim city (along with Mecca and Medina), the traditional interpretation of the Ḳur'ān was changed in such a way as to accommodate the city's new status. The islamization of the centre commenced in the first year after Hidjra, that is, in 632. During their prayers, the Muslims began to turn to Jerusalem, with which the tale of Muḥammad's night journey to heaven came to be linked[62]. It was only after thirteen years that the direction of the prayer was changed to Mecca. In 638 Jerusalem was incorporated into the Caliphate[63]. However, despite this incorporation the city managed to preserve its Christian character. Bearing witness to this is Muʿawiya's decision, after his rise to power in 661, to pray at Golgotha, in the Garden of Gethsemane, at Mary's grave[64].

After it became clear that Byzantium definitely had lost Syro-Palestine, and the whole of the conquered territory came under the Arab administration, the relations between the Christians and the Muslims stabilized. All civil and military power rested with the Arab conquerors, while the non-Muslims, in return for the payment by all free and adult males of a special tax called *djizya*, preserved the right to exercise their religion[65]. The term *djizya* was taken from the fragment of the Ḳur'ān quoted above indicating that it was necessary for the People of the Book to pay a levy (*djizya*)[66].

The life of the Christians in the Muslim state was regulated in detail in the so-

[60] P. C r o n e, M. C o o k, *Hagarism...*., pp. 154–155; *Jerusalem. Its Sanctity and Centrality to Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, ed. L.I. L e v i n d e, New York 1999, p. XXIII.

[61] J.M. L i n q u i s t, *The Temple of Jerusalem*, London 2008, p. 184.

[62] In describing Muḥammad's night travell, the Ḳur'ān (17:1) says: *Immaculate is He who/ caried His servant on a journey by night/ from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthes Mosque*. Around 612 there existed the so-called *Holy Place* in Mecca, while *the Farthest Mosque* was a metaphor which some understood as indicating a dwelling-place in heaven.

[63] M. G i l, *A History of Palestine, 634–1099*, Cambridge 1997, pp. 70–71.

[64] A.S. T r i t t o n, *Caliphs and Their Non-Muslim Subjects: A Critical Study of the Covenant of ʿUmar*, Abingdon–New York 2008, pp. 102–103.

[65] Muslim law schools differed in the method of calculating *djizya*. M. K h a d d u r i, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, Clark 2006, p. 196.

[66] H. G o d d a r d, *Historia...*, p. 63.

called *'Umar's Pact*. Although it is regarded as the agreement which this ruler concluded with the population of the conquered territories, it probably came into being much later[67]. Following the Ḳur'ān's call for paying taxes and enduring humiliation, the *Pact* explains in more detail what meeting this demand actually involves. Under the *Pact*, the population inhabiting the conquered territories, in addition to being banned from criticizing Muḥammad and the Ḳur'ān, could not engage in military operations and offer assistance to enemy spies, could not erect new churches and reconstruct those that have been destroyed, could not eat pork and drink wine in public places, and could not marry Muslim women and wear obtrusive clothes. At the same time, the agreement required the Christians to remain always loyal to Muslim rulers and to practice their religion only in private without displaying the symbols of the cross publicly[68].

From the extended version of the *Pact* one learns that the Christians had to swear to abstain, among other things, from carrying the Bible and crosses in religious processions – especially during Easter and on Palm Sunday – persuading the Muslims to convert to Christianity, riding on horseback using saddles and building houses taller than those built by the Muslims[69]. The document quoted here, which was probably brought into being in the second century after Hidjra, shows that the Arabs, besides treating the Christians as second-class citizens, also viewed them as *dhimmī* (protected), the people of the Covenant[70].

The term *dhimma* appears in the Ḳur'ān twice, on the occasion of Muḥammad's crackdown on the wicked, that is, those who violate the covenant. In the era of the Arab conquests, the term began to be used for denoting the agreements reached between the conquered population and Muslim rulers. There existed precedents for such a policy: the Sassanids attempted to secure the loyalty of the subjects by resorting to a variety of legal regulations and by promising protection and limited religious freedom to those who agreed to pay taxes[71].

It should be kept in mind that not all Christians living in the East fell under Muslim domination. The Empire, even after losing Egypt and Syria, still controlled most of its former territory. In spite of the fact that the Byzantine-Arab frontier in the Taurus Mountains was stable, the rivalry between the Byzantines

[67] One of the proofs lies in the fact that during the reign of 'Umar *djizya* (head tax) was not yet distinguished from *kharāj* (land tax), although both are mentioned in the *Pact*.

[68] A.S. Tritton, *The Caliphs...*, pp. 5–6.

[69] *Ibidem*, pp. 6–8.

[70] H. Goddard, *Historia...*, p. 65.

[71] M.G. Morony, *Religious Communities in Late Sassanian and Early Muslim Iraq*, JESHO 17, 1974, pp. 113–135.

and the Arabs, both on land and at sea, continued. There also existed something of a cultural and intellectual exchange between the two[72]. Byzantine artisans were sent by Emperor Justinian II (685–695, 705–711) to caliph Al-Walīd (705–715) in order to carry out the interior decoration of the Great Mosque in Damascus and of the Prophet's Grave in Medina[73].

After resigning themselves to their fate, Middle Eastern Christians were allowed to practice their religion. Christian clergymen called for submission to earthly authority, promising in return eternal life in heaven. They attempted to rationalize the status of the inhabitants of the conquered territories and to console the faithful by arguing that Jesus was superior to Muḥammad and Christianity theologically superior to Islam. The humiliations the Christians suffered were not as great as to lead to mass conversions, and some Christians did as well in economically as their Muslim neighbours[74].

3.4. The Christian Response to the Advent of Islam

The first Christian interpretations of Islam were centred around social and political rather than religious issues. In the seventh century, in Syria, people were more aware of the rise of a new empire than of a new religion[75].

After some time, the Christians began to feel the need to find a theological explanation of the advent of the Muslims[76]. In the New Testament Jesus is shown meeting with a Canaanite woman (Mt 15,21–28) and a Roman centurion (Mt, 5–13), listening to their pleas, which testifies to his openness towards the people of different ethnic origin[77]. According to Magdalena Lewicka, Saint Paul, in his Areopagus' address, laid the foundation for an interreligious dialogue[78]. However, it is the Old Testament – the Book of Genesis, to be precise – that explains the origin of the Muslims in a story about Abraham's sons – the first-born

[72] C.E. Bosworth, *Byzantium and the Arabs. War and Peace between Two World Civilisations*, [in:] idem, *The Arabs, Byzantium and Iran*, London 1996, art. XIII, pp. 1–24.

[73] H. Goddard, *Historia...*, p. 67.

[74] J. Joseph, *Muslim-Christian Relations...*, p. 14.

[75] S. Brock, *Syriac Views on Emergent Islam*, [in:] *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society*, ed. G.H.A. Juynboll, Edwardsville 1982, p. 13.

[76] Christian sources from before the lifetime of John of Damascus are characterized in: A.-L. de Prémare, *Les Fondations de l'Islam. Entre écriture et histoire*, Paris 2002, pp. 395–469.

[77] A. Wessels, *Some Biblical Considerations Relevant to the Encounter Between Traditions*, [in:] *Christian-Muslim Encounters*, eds. Y.Y. Haddad, W.Z. Haddad, Gainesville 1995, pp. 57–58.

[78] M. Lewicka, *Od konfrontacji...*, pp. 139–140.

Ishmael, who was banished to the desert along with his mother, a slave woman named Hagar[79], and the younger son Isaac whom Abraham had by a legitimate wife, Sarah. The former was supposed to become father of all the Arabs, while the latter was destined to be father of all the Jews. The Book of Genesis contains God's following promise: *And God said unto Abraham* (...) *And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed*[80]. In chapter 25 of the Book, Ishmael's twelve sons are mentioned before the twelve sons of Isaac – in part for the sake of balance and in part to underline the fact that they also form something of a sacred community[81].

In the mid-seventh century, an Armenian bishop, Sebeos, claimed that Muḥammad owed his success to having a good knowledge of the Law of Moses and to teaching the Arabs about Abraham's God. According to Sebeos, the Arabs and the Jews were agreed that both people descended from the same Patriarch[82]. An anonymous Nestorian monk, whose work was written in Iraq around 670, claimed that Ismailis' conquests were driven by a desire to follow in Abraham's steps. The offerings they made to God were a part of the old tradition[83].

The Muslims made no secret of their belief that they were fulfilling God's will and that one of their goals was to correct the teachings of Jesus. It quickly became clear that Islam posed a challenge for the older religion. The Christians, who considered themselves to be in possession of ultimate divine revelation, understood that the Muslims would not accept their position. This led them to elaborate a specific interpretation of Islam – or rather interpretations, for there quickly appeared differences of opinion concerning the new religion between the Christians from the East and those from the West[84].

In the Middle East, Christians interpreted the advent of Islam in terms of the judgment which God passed on those who strayed from the path of righteousness. The Nestorians and the Monophysites in turn pinned the blame on the advocates of the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon. Severus Ibn Al-Muḳaffa', the bishop of Ashmunein, and a Coptic editor of the *Lives of the Saint Church*, wrote that *the Lord abandoned the Roman army as punishment for clinging to the corrupted faith and for inflicting the anathemas on the old Fathers in connection*

[79] After her name Syrian writers called all Muslims *mhagrajje*. S.H. Griffith, *Syriac Writers on Muslims and the Religious Challenge of Islam*, Piscataway 2012, pp. 9–11.

[80] Gen. 21, 12–13.

[81] G. von Rad, *Genesis. A Commentary*, London 1961, p. 258.

[82] Sebeos, p. 238.

[83] J. Moorhead, *The Earliest Christian Theological Response to Islam*, Rel 11, 1981, pp. 265–267.

[84] H. Goddard, *Historia...*, p. 52.

with their role in the Council of Chalcedon[85]. A few centuries later, this interpretation was still adhered to. It was a reaction to the mistreatment of "pre-Chalcedon" Christians by Byzantine authorities in Egypt and Syria[86].

In Egypt, the Copts suffered harassment from the orthodox Patriarch Cyrus, known by the Arabs as Al-Muḳawḳis (which means "the one who comes from the Caucasus"), who served as governor under Emperor Heraclius. He launched a wave of terror which the Egyptians had not experienced since the Great Persecution taking place during the reign of Diocletian. Cyrus' policy may have undermined the loyalty of some of the Copts to the Empire. Some Middle Eastern Christians remained true to the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon. They came to be referred to as the Melkites (after the Syrian word *malka* denoting a king) because of their adherence to the Byzantine liturgy and due to their allegiance to Byzantine emperors[87]. The Melkites gave birth to a different interpretation of Islam, John of Damascus being one of its proponents. Although he was probably unacquainted with the Ḳur'ān[88], he had a good command of Arabic and a good knowledge of Muslim religious rituals – his father served as an official at a caliph's court and John, in his youth, was, according to legend, friendly with Yazīd of the Umayyad dynasty. In his opinion, the simplest way of conveying the essence of Islam lay in treating it as one of the Christian heresies[89].

In *De Haeresibus* (*On Heresies*), John lists one hundred heresies known to previous theologians, adding Islam as heresy one hundred and one[90]. Although, John admits, Muḥammad brought monotheism to the pagan people, he did so by turning the pages of the Old and New Testament in a random manner, and, in creating a new system, he relied on the assistance of an Arian monk. Therefore, Islam should be rejected as the *deceptive superstition of the Ishmaelites* and the *forerunner of the Antichrist*. John applied the last term to the religion and not to the Prophet, as would often be the case with different authors later[91]. Like other Byzantine polemicists, he was familiar with the Arabic tradition that originated in the pre-Islamic era – for example, with the cult of the Morning Star[92]. He also had a knowledge of Ḳur'ānic Christology and theology, demonstrating it especially in the discussion of the religious sources of Islam: Judaism (mono-

[85] W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, Cambridge 1972, p. 353.

[86] H. Goddard, *Historia...*, p. 53.

[87] Today, the name is used to refer to Christians from the Middle East who adheres to the Byzantine rite.

[88] J.R. Merrill, *On the Tractate of John of Damascus on Islam*, MWo 41, 1951, p. 97.

[89] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, col. 764.

[90] M. Sadowski, *Teologia...*, p. 213.

[91] H. Goddard, *Historia...*, pp. 56–57.

[92] J. Meyendorff, *Byzantine Views on Islam*, DOP 18, 1964, p. 118.

theism), Arianism (the Word and the Spirit considered as created beings), and Nestorianism (the doctrine that saw Jesus Christ as a human being)[93]. Given the above, one cannot fully agree with Rollin Armour who wrote:

> In responding to Islam, John of Damascus and other Greek authors put forward a number of erroneous interpretations and false accusations which, while helping to forge Christian identity, were of no help in dealing with Islam's religious and theological principles, as well as with the integrity of faith and life typifying this religion[94].

There is uncertainty as to who wrote *Disputatio Saraceni et Chritiani* (*A Conversation between a Christian and a Muslim*). It is attributed either to John of Damascus or to his student Theodore Abū Ḳurra[95] – though it seems more likely that it was the latter who wrote the work[96] which was something of a guide for Christians willing to discuss religious issues with the Muslims[97]. It is also evidence of John of Damascus' participation in more or less formal discussions with Muslim theologians[98]. The issues dealt with in the treatise were the focus of *kalām*[99] – a Muslim theology that began to develop in the mid-eighth century – and con-

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[93] M. S a d o w s k i, *Teologia...*, p. 213.

[94] R. A r m o u r, *Islam, chrześcijaństwo i Zachód. Burzliwe dzieje wzajemnych relacji*, transl. I. N o w i c k a, Kraków 2004, pp. 89–90.

[95] Born around 740/750 in Edessa Theodore Abū Ḳurra played an important role in a controversy between the Christians and the Muslims over the unity of God. The Muslims accused the Christians of believing in three gods. Abū Ḳurra argued that the Bible's testimony suffices for one to recognize divinity of all the persons in the Holy Trinity – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In addition, out of consideration for those who did not share Christian dogmas, he also resorted to Aristotle's arguments on the unity of being. S.L. H u s s e i n i, *Early Christian-Muslim Debate on the Unity of God: Three Christian Scholars and Their Engagement with the Islamic Thought (9th Century CE)*, Leiden 2014, p. 61. For more on Theodore Abū Ḳurra see: Ł. K a r c z e w s k i, *Dialog Teodora Abu Kurra ze światem islamu – zarys problematyki*, Sem 33, 2013, pp. 277–292.

[96] J. M e y e n d o r f f, *Byzantine Views...*, p. 117.

[97] H. G o d d a r d, *Historia...*, p. 57.

[98] D.J. S a h a s, *John of Damascus on Islam: "The Heresy of the Ishmaelites"*, Leiden 1972, pp. 121–122; *John of Damascus. A Dialogue between a Saracen and a Christian*, [in:] M.S. S e a l e, *Qur'an and Bible*, London 1978, pp. 63–70.

[99] From the Muslim point of view *kalām* was formal and speculative reasoning applied in religion. It constituted a logically regulated way of carrying out disputations in such a way as to justify religious doctrines based on generally accepted principles. S.H. G r i f f i t h, *Faith and Reason in Christian Kalām: Theodore Abū Qurrah on Discerning the True Religion*, [in:] Kh. S a m i r, J.S. N i e l s e n, *Christian Arabic Apologetics during the Abbasid Period (750–1258)*, Leiden 1994, p. 3; M. S a d o w s k i, *Chrześcijańska arabskojęzyczna literatura apologetyczna Bliskiego i Środkowego Wschodu w okresie Abbasydów (750–1050)*, STHSO 32, 2012, p. 91.

cerned the relation between God's omnipotence and man's free will, as well as the identity of *God's Word*[100].

To conclude this section, in the initial period of Muslim-Christian contacts, there emerged three main ways of interpreting Islam. The new religion was seen as the fulfillment of God's promise given to Abraham and Ishmael, as God's judgment against the Chalcedonians, and as one of the Christian heresies. In the ninth century, there began to appear new, more negative interpretations of Muḥammad's religion. However, their discussion lies outside the scope of this paper.

3.5. The Arabization of the Language of the Christians in the Middle East

The Arabic language constituted one of the elements of the new cultural context in which the Christians of the region were placed. At the end of the seventh century, following ʿAbd al-Malik's order, Arabic began to take the place of Greek and Persian as the official language of the state[101]. Determined to defend their own religion, the Christians in the Middle East had to address themselves to the task of translating works which were of crucial importance for their religious beliefs. The adoption of Arabic by Christian churches that remained under Arab domination had no impact either on their doctrine or their liturgy[102]. It also did not entail any changes in the content of their sacred books. The transition to the new language was necessary as the faithful used it in their everyday life[103].

The Arabic language served as the medium without which the intellectual encounter between the Christians and the Muslims would have been impossible. However, a serious problem lay in the fact that theological terminology was absent from Arabic which until the eighth century was not the language of theology or philosophy. Thus, it became necessary to elaborate a vocabulary to be used in the Muslim-Christian dialogue. The process of creating this vocabulary involved providing commonly used words with uncommon meanings[104].

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[100] H. G o d d a r d, *Historia...*, p. 58.

[101] M. S a d o w s k i, *Teologia...*, p. 215.

[102] See, for example, the Arab profession of faith by Abū Ḳurra. I. D i c k, *Deux écrits inédits de Théodore Abuqurra*, Mu 72, 1959, pp. 53–67.

[103] M. S a d o w s k i, *Teologia...*, p. 219.

[104] S.H. G r i f f i t h, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*, London 2008, p. 94.

Of course, it was only gradually that Arabic managed to replace Syrian[105] or Greek. Syrian, used in the monasteries in the fifth and sixth centuries, divided itself into two groups: western (used today in the liturgy by the Melkite Church, the Syrian Orthodox Church and the Maronite Church) and eastern (preserved today by the Assyrian Church of the East). Although Syrian as the language of the communities mentioned above played an important role in almost the whole of the Christian East, its role in Palestine was not very significant[106]. At the beginning of the eighth century, Greek still dominated Palestine's church culture[107], serving as the language of theology and liturgical celebrations. It was also used in administration and during Church councils[108]. Only in the liturgy of Oriental Churches did it have to give way to Syrian[109].

As Michał Sadowski remarks, it was not until the turn of the eighth and ninth centuries that Greek fell out of use in Palestine, which was an important factor in the Arabization of the region[110]. The fundamental Christian texts began to be translated into Arabic as early as the eighth century, including the Bible, patristic writings, homilies, hagiographies, confessions and legal canons regulating the life of the Church. Christian apologetic works in Arabic also date back to the eighth century. It is worth noting that the transition to Arabic took longer in the regions where Syrian remained dominant, and Christian apologetic texts were the first to be translated there into Arabic[111].

3.6. The Syrian Churches

On the eve of the Arab conquest of the Middle East, both the Jacobite and Nestorian churches were subjected to legal discrimination – the Byzantine emperors

[105] I refer here to eastern Aramaic dialect used in the region of Edessa (today in Turkey) which survives in the liturgy of some eastern Churches. For more on the issue, see: A. T r o n i n a, *Wprowadzenie do języka syryjskiego*, Kielce 2003.

[106] S.H. G r i f f i t h, *Melkites, Jacobites, and the Christological Controversies in Arabic in Third/Ninth-Century Syria*, [in:] *Syrian Christians under Islam. The First Thousand Years*, ed. D. T h o m a s, Leiden–Boston–Köln 2001, pp. 9, 16.

[107] I d e m, *From Aramaic to Arabic: the Languages of the Monasteries of Palestine in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods*, DOP 51, 1997, p. 11; i d e m, *Greek into Arabic: Life and Letters in the Monasteries of Palestine in the 9th Century; the Example of the "Summa Theologiae Arabica"*, B 56, 1986, p. 120.

[108] M. S a d o w s k i, *Teologia...*, p. 217.

[109] J. C o r b o n, *L'Église des Arabes*, Paris 1977, pp. 40–41.

[110] M. S a d o w s k i, *Teologia...*, p. 218.

[111] S.H. G r i f f i t h, *The Monks of the Palestine and the Growth of Christian Literature in Arabic*, MWo 78, 1988, pp. 5–6.

recognized only the Melkite Greek Patriarch of Antioch who accepted the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon[112].

The Nestorians found refuge in Persia, where they were safe from the emperor's wrath. The situation of the Jacobites was subject to change depending on the political line pursued by the ruler. In the reign of Justinian I, attempts were made to find the common ground between the Jacobites and the Orthodoxes, but to no effect. After the reign of this emperor, the persecution of the Jacobites increased.

The arrival of the Muslims, despite their poor knowledge of the differences existing between Christian churches, changed the situation. Although the Christians were granted the status of the *dhimmī* and were made to pay *djizya*, which led some of them to decide to convert to Islam[113], those who found shelter in the mountains preserved a significant autonomy[114]. In addition, some Syrian Christians, capitalizing on the cultural advantage they had over the Arabs, managed to secure for themselves the appointment to important positions, which at first they were allowed to hold without having to renounce their religion[115]. It was sufficient for them to adopt some elements of the Arab culture such as, for example, the language. The Islamization was a slow process, stretching over almost three centuries.

The patriarch Yso'yahb III (died in 659) wrote that God, in giving the Arabs their victory, entrusted them with the role of the custodians of the Christian faith. He dismissed the charges that the Arabs tried to convert the Christians to Islam. In his opinion, it was the weakness of the Syrian clergy which was to blame for such conversions[116]. The patriarch Timothy in turn appreciated the fact that

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[112] The orthodox Melkites, although they also lived in Syria's rural areas, were most influential in the cities which remained under Byzantine rule. For more on the Melkites, see: K. K o ś c i e l n i a k, *Grecy i Arabowie. Historia Kościoła melkickiego (katolickiego) na ziemiach zdobytych przez muzułmanów (634–1516)*, Kraków 2004.

[113] Worthy of mention here is the opinion expressed by Daniel C. Dennett, who discovered that the taxes the Muslims imposed on the *dhimmī* were not much higher than those imposed by previous rulers (the Byzantines and the Sassanids). The taxes levied by the Muslims may have encouraged religious conversions because they were imposed on groups (the clergy and aristocracy) that had earlier been exempted from paying taxes. S.H. G r i f f i t h, *Conversion and the Poll Tax in Early Islam*, Cambridge 1950.

[114] N. A w d e, N. L a m a s s u, N. A l - J e l o o, *Modern Aramaic (Assyrian/Syriac) Dictionary & Phrasebook*, New York 2007, p. 8.

[115] A.S. A t i y a, *Historia Kościołów wschodnich*, Warszawa 1978, p. 168.

[116] S. B r o c k, *Syriac Views...*, p. 15. For more on the views held by this patriarch see: F. v a n d e r V e l d e n, *Early Eastern-Syriac Perception of Islam in Ishojahb III Letter Epistularum (640–660): No Earlier Christian Sources for a Christian-Muslim Relationship?*, [in:] *Byzan-*

the Muslims abandoned idolatry and polytheism in favour of the worship of One God. This, he believed, enabled them to earn the respect of both the Lord and many people[117]. Timothy' opinion seems to suggest that initially the Christians in Syria did not view their new rulers as the followers of a religion different from their own. Some Syrian historians considered Caliph ʿUmar to be *more merciful than all the rulers before him*[118]. The anonymous author of the *Chronicle up to 819* seems to share this point of view[119]. However, the *Chronicle up to 1234* contains the sentence which significantly change the view of the ruler: *ʿUmar was a good and merciful man, a friend of truth and justice who turned away from the evil. But he was a greater opponent of the Christians than any of the kings before him*[120]. This source also offers examples of anti-Christian laws introduced by this ruler. However, it should be kept in mind that it was brought into being many years after the events which it describes[121].

In the first years which followed the Arab conquest, the Christians were allowed to enter the mosques, their testimonies were heard in courts of law, and their court service was highly praised[122]. In addition, there was a striking difference in the conditions of life enjoyed by Christians living in the cities on one hand and Christians living in rural areas on the other. While the latter bowed under the weight of the land tax exacted by cruel bailiffs, the former, feeling secure and often held in high regard, could make fortunes through trade or money loans. Christian monasteries, where Muslim rulers liked to stay during their trips and where they often held meetings with tribe leaders, enjoyed a special position. Monks could cultivate the land undisturbed and produce wine, deriving huge profits from its production[123].

The Syrian Christianity reached the pinnacle of its development in the era of the Umayyad dynasty. The first generations of Muslim officials, lawyers or

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tium in Early Islamic Syria: Proceedings of a Conference Organized by the American University of Beirut and the University of Balamand, June 18–19, 2007, eds. N.M. El-Cheikh, S. O'Sullivan, Beirut 2011, pp. 43–48.

[117] S. Brock, *Syriac Views...*, p. 16.

[118] *Chronicle of 846*, p. 234.

[119] *Chronicle up to 819*, p. 15.

[120] *Chronicle up to 1234*, p. 307.

[121] R. Schick, *The Christian Communities of Palestine from Byzantine to Islamic Rule. A Historical and Archeological Study*, Princeton 1995, pp. 88–89.

[122] For example, a Christian known as Al-Akhṭal ("a chatterbox") was appointed to the position of court poet (640–710), and John of Damascus' father served as advisor to Caliph ʿAbd al-Malik. S.Kh. Bukhsh, *Studies: Indian and Islamic*, London 2001, p. 129.

[123] *Ibidem*, p. 128.

theologians were poorly educated and, as such, had to rely on the support of Christians and people acquainted with Hellenistic thought. In the new environment, members of Syrian churches seemed to be better off than under Byzantine rule[124]. With the end of Umayyad rule in 750, the process of the institutionalization of the Muslim theocracy forged rapidly ahead and the Syrian Christianity passed from the phase of its development to that of its decline[125].

3.6.1. The Jacobite Church

Generally speaking, under Muslim rule the Jacobites' religious freedom was greater than (it had been the case) in Byzantium. Seeking inspiration from more culturally advanced people and, displaying willingness to learn from others, the Arabs showed a certain degree of tolerance towards the non-Muslims. Therefore, the Jacobites were welcome at the caliph's court[126]. The removal of the borders which existed in Asia in the era of Persian and Byzantine domination enabled the Jacobites to expand their missionary activity – especially in Persia and Mesopotamia, where they had already managed to establish their presence. Khusraw II Parviz's first wife, Shirin, was a Jacobite[127]. A Jacobite monk, Marutha (629–649), active towards the end of the Sassanid times, was elevated to the position of the bishop of Tikrit[128].

One can thus argue that, despite sporadically occurring persecutions, the first centuries which followed the Arab conquest brought stabilization to the life of the Jacobites. Arab rule also witnessed the development of literature and scholarship, including hagiography, historiography, astronomy, natural sciences and medicine. Syrian and Arabic were used for writing. With time, however, the use of the former limited itself only to the liturgy[129].

The Jacobite patriarch John I (631–648) was reputedly the first to translate fragments of the Bible from Syrian into Arabic[130]. The bishop of Tirkit, Marutha,

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[124] R.M. H a d d a d, *Syrian Christians...*, p. 11.

[125] *Ibidem*, p. 12.

[126] A.S. A t i y a, *Historia...*, p. 168.

[127] For more on the issue see: W. B a u m, *Shirin: Christian, Queen, Myth of Love: a Woman of Late Antiquity. Historical Reality and Literary Effect*, Piscataway 2004.

[128] B.J. K i d d, *Churches of Eastern Christendom from AD 451 to the Present Time*, New York–London 2010 p. 437.

[129] A.S. A t i y a, *Historia...*, p. 169.

[130] There is an ongoing discussion whether there existed the translations of the Bible into Arabic before Islam. However, even if this was the case, none of them survives now, see: L. D e m i r i, *Muslim Exegesis of the Bible in Medieval Cairo Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭūfī's (d. 716/1316). Commentary on the Christian Scriptures. A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation with an Introduction*, Leiden 2013, pp. 62–63.

whom I have mentioned above, was a distinguished theologian, bearing the title of Maphrian of the East. Today, this function is purely honorary, but at the time under discussion maphrians performed a very important role in the areas which remained beyond the reach of patriarchs. They were active in the territories dominated by Nestorianism. Born in Persia and educated in Edessa, Marutha settled in the Monastery of Mar Mattai, eagerly defending the doctrine of his Church in Persia and Mesopotamia.

As Aziz Atiya rightly notes, Severus Sebocht (died in 667) deserves credit for being a pioneer of the Syro-Hellenistic science. He is known to have studied philosophy, mathematics, astronomy and theology. The monastery in Ḳinnasrīn where he resided became an important centre of the Jacobite intellectual life. Jacob of Edessa (633–708) – a bishop, theologian, exegete, grammarian, philosopher and historian – also spent his early days in the monastery. A prolific author, he prepared a revised translation of the Old Testament and wrote biblical commentaries. He contributed to the standardization of the Syrian liturgy by composing a new anaphora, baptism rituals, wedding ceremony, and a liturgical calendar. He also wrote a grammar of the Syriac language and a monumental chronicle – a continuation of the work by Eusebius of Caesarea. Except for a few pages, the whole chronicle is lost[131]. But there survives an uncompleted work by Jacob of Edessa entitled *Hexaemeron* (syr. *Al-Aksamiran*, *Six Days*). Having the creation of the world as its main topic, it also describes a utopian state where people live united under one religion. References to the issues that might antagonize the Muslims or the Jews are omitted from the work. What does shine through in it is a proclivity for the Arab mystic philosophy. In addition to being a writer, Jacob was also a church reformer known for his attempt to bring a stricter discipline to the monastic life. However, his efforts encountered opposition from a group of monks whose cause was embraced by patriarch Julian II. As a gesture of protest, Jacob burned the transcripts of old canons in the gate to the patriarch's residence, thus making his superior aware that he was bitterly opposed to the canons[132]. Later, he roamed from monastery to monastery, writing and delivering his sermons until his death in 708. *Hexaemeron* was completed by Jacob's student George, the bishop of the Arabs (686–724). In ʿAḳūla (the province of Al-Kūfa), where the seat of his bishopric was located, he wrote numerous theological and philosophical treatises defending the doctrine of his Church against Nestorianism[133].

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[131] A.S. A t i y a, *Historia...*, p. 170.

[132] H.G.B. T e u l e, *Jacob of Edessa and Canon Law*, [in:] *Jacob of Edessa and the Syriac Culture of His Day*, ed. R.B. t e r H a a r R o m e n y, Leiden 2008, p. 83.

[133] For more on the problem, see: I.A. B a r s o u m, *The Scattered Pearls: a History of Syriac Literature and Sciences*, Piscataway 2003, pp. 354–358.

The West Syrian Church was also, at least in some measure, successful in its evangelization efforts. Atiya mentions the conversion of Elias, a dyophysite, who became a Jacobite patriarch (709–724), having abandoned his earlier views after studying works by Severus of Antioch. Elias tried to justify his decision in an apologia which he wrote as a response to the letter of the Melkite bishop, Leon[134]. Another patriarch, Cyriacus of Tikrit, became famous for preaching gospel among the Armenians. His successor, Dionysius of Tel Mahre, author of the chronicle covering the years 582–842 (that is, from the accession of emperor Maurice to Theophile's death) made a number of visits to the courts of different rulers seeking their support in his dispute with rebel monks. He appeared in Egypt, Baghdad and Damascus[135]. In Baghdad, he met a Christian king of Nubia, who also arrived in the city to pay respects to caliph Al-Mu ʿtaṣim. This was a difficult period for the Jacobite Church riven by internal divisions and facing persecutions from the Muslims[136].

Against all odds, the Jacobites managed to preserve a significant autonomy. All caliphs were concerned with was whether *djizya* and *kharāj* were paid regularly or who occupied patriarch's throne. Thanks to Christian libraries, Christian schools and scholars, the Arabs were able to absorb the achievements of Hellenistic culture. Still in the reign of the first Abbasid caliphs, most Christians enjoyed much freedom, engaging in trade and using some of the profits it brought to build new churches and monasteries. The situation of the Jacobites was to change for the worse in the centuries to come[137].

3.6.2. The Nestorian Church (the Church of the East)

The position of the Nestorian Church under Sassanid rule was difficult. This is why some of its leaders hoped that the Arab invasion would result in the improvement of the lives of the members of their community. In 637 the Muslims seized control of the Persian Capital in Seleucia-Ctesiphon, soon taking over the whole state. Six years later, they reached the borders of India. The last Sassanid ruler, Yazdegerd III, who tried to save his life by fleeing his country, was killed in 652 in the Marv oasis by one of his subjects. The Arabs became Persia's only rulers. During the reign of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs and the Umayyads, who moved the capital of the Empire from Mecca to Damascus, Persia was

[134] A.S. A t i y a, *Historia...*, p. 171.

[135] He was sent to southern Egypt by the caliph in order to stifle the Copts' uprising, see: *The Oxford History of Historical Writing, 400–1400*, vol. II, eds. S. F o o t, Ch.F. R o b i n s o n, Oxford 2012, p. 173.

[136] A.S. A t i y a, *Historia...*, p. 172.

[137] *Ibidem*, p. 173.

one of the provinces of the great Arab state. It was only in the Abbasid era that the centre of the state shifted further to the east, to Baghdad, and Persia regained some of the influence it had once had. This shift affected the situation of the Nestorians. The Nestorian Church preserved some of the privileges it had enjoyed under Sassanid rulers[138]. It should be recalled here that the Nestorians' status was officially determined during the Council held in Seleucia in 410 and then affirmed by Yazdegerd I (399–420). Muslim rulers did not override these decisions, recognizing the special status the Nestorians had earlier been granted. However, this does not mean that under Muslim rule the Nestorians were given political rights or were exempted from paying taxes the Persians had levied – on the pretext of the war with Byzantium Shapur II doubled the taxes and Khusraw I imposed the head tax in return for the exemption from military service. On the other hand, it seems that the Muslims were more favourably inclined towards the Nestorians than towards any other Christian community[139].

According to some Nestorian legends, Yso'yahb II (628–643/644) established a friendly relationship with Muḥammad. The Prophet reputedly presented the patriarch with a document conferring on eastern Syrians certain privileges, to be confirmed later by two caliphs – ʿUmar and ʿĀlī[140]. The latter was also given credit for granting the Nestorians further rights in return for keeping his army in Mosul supplied with food and water. Scholars, who find these accounts false, believe that Christians created them with a view to improving the position of their Church. Twenty years after the Muslim invasion, the bishop of Adiabene wrote that the Prophet's followers were not as unjust as expected and did not differ from the Christians in respecting the clergy and the churches[141].

It is worth noting that the seizure of power by the Abbasid dynasty brought about no changes in the Nestorians' position. Under Abbasid rule, the Nestorian patriarch was the most important Christian dignitary in the whole Caliphate[142], and Nisibis, Jundishapur and Marv flourished as centres of Syrian culture. Theology, philosophy, history, medicine and natural sciences were taught in schools located in these cities. Ancient Greek texts were translated into Syrian and then into Arabic[143]. Working at the court of two successive caliphs as scribes,

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[138] S. B r o c k, *Christians in the Sasanian Empire: A Case of Divided Loyalties*, [in:] *Religion and National Identity*, ed. S. M e w s, Oxford 1982, p. 12.

[139] A.S. A t i y a, *Historia...*, p. 230.

[140] *Ibidem*, p. 231.

[141] A.R. V i n e, *The Nestorian Churches. A Concise History of Nestorian Christianity in Asia from the Persian Schism to the Modern Assyrians*, London 1937, pp. 89–90.

[142] J. J o s e p h, *Muslim-Christian Relations...*, p. 26.

[143] N. A w d e, N. L a m a s s u, N. A l - J e l o o, *Modern Aramaic...*, p. 8; W.S. M c C u l l o u g h, *A Short History of Syriac Christianity to the Rise of Islam*, Chico 1982, p. 182.

translators or medics, Nestorians were generally respected[144]. Thorough and effective, they also knew how to make themselves indispensable to their new rulers[145].

Although Christianity and Judaism were displaced from Arabia in the seventh century, the church activity did not entirely come to an end there (for example, the Nestorian synod was held in 676 in the south of the peninsula). Nomadic tribes, for example Banu Ṣāliḥ, remained Christian as late as 823 where they suffered persecution by caliph Al-Ma'mūn. It was not until the end of the ninth century that Nestorianism disappeared altogether from Arabia. We do not know anything about the communities converted to Christianity in Central Asia in the fifth–eighth centuries. Some Christian groups must have still been living in the area at the time under consideration, since in 781, a Turkish ruler wrote a letter to patriarch Timothy (778–820) whom he asked to send a bishop to take over the leadership of the Christians living in his state. Timothy also sent a bishop to Tibet[146]. Later, the Nestorians left Samarkand, Bukhara or Tashkent and travelled further to the east where they tried to preach the Christian gospel to the Tartar tribes[147].

It has recently been discovered that Nestorians reached as far east as China. Their first mission was sent there in 635, when the office of the Patriarch of the Church of the East was held by Yso'yahb II (628–643/644). Its dispatch is proved by a stone stele which Jesuit missionaries discovered in 1625 in Shensi[148]. A long inscription in Chinese commemorates *spreading the religion of light* [*Christianity*] *in the Middle Kingdom*. The emperor read the Scripture and ordered that it be distributed in his state. Then, he issued a decree ordering the erection of a monastery. By the end of the seventh century the Nestorian Christianity had found followers in ten Chinese provinces, where it grew until the ninth century, the evidence of which is provided, for example, by Arab travel accounts[149].

Even in this period, though, Nestorians failed to entirely avoid persecutions. Sometimes radically inclined Muslims stood behind their outbreak and sometimes dissensions between Christians themselves, their different intrigues, caused

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[144] R. Le Coz, *Historie de L'Église d'Orient: Chrétiens d'Irak, d'Iran et de Turquie*, Paris 1995, p. 157.

[145] A.S. Atiya, *Historia...*, p. 233.

[146] R. Waterfield, *Christians in Persia: Assyrians, Armenians, Roman Catholics and Protestants*, Abingdon–New York 2011, p. 40.

[147] A.S. Atiya, *Historia...*, p. 224.

[148] P.Y. Saeki, *The Nestorian Monument in China*, London 1916.

[149] A.S. Atiya, *Historia...*, p. 226. For a detailed account of the activity of the Nestorians in China under Mongol rule see: Li Tang, *East Syriac Christianity in Mongol-Yuan China*, Wiesbaden 2011.

the intervention of outsiders. In the brief reign of ʿUmar II (717–720), the oppression consisted mainly in the imposition of heavy economic burdens or in the attempts to coerce conversion to Islam by threats of death[150]. It was not until the reign of ʿUmar II's successors – that is, in the latter half of the eighth century which lies beyond the scope of this paper – that the persecution of Christians assumed a more acute form – for example, with the destruction of churches or the assault on Christian women[151].

Gradually, the Nestorians, along with other Christians living in the Middle East, were losing their strong position. When caliphs abandoned Seleucia-Ctesiphon to build a new capital of their state in Baghdad, Patriarch Hananyeshu II (774–779)[152] also decided to move his operation there. His decision can be regarded as indicating that the state began to exercise increasing influence upon the Church. And it was not long before caliphs designated themselves as arbiters adjudicating on different church disputes, including those regarding authority over the Church[153]. On the other hand, patriarchs began to be dispatched to the Byzantine court as legates representing Muslim rulers. This led them to become more engaged in secular matters, sometimes to the point of being transformed into lay officials who, in an effort to secure for themselves particular positions, failed to prevent themselves from yielding to corruption[154]. Members of the lower clergy, underpaid and with no chance for nomination to any office, often converted to Islam[155]. Worse still, the relations between western and eastern Syrians were very tense, riven with conflicts and mutual accusations, which had the effect of making caliphs view these Christian communities as unable to protect their own interests[156].

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[150] A.Ch. van Gorder, *Christianity in Persia and the Status of Non-Muslims in Iran*, Lanham 2010, p. 50.

[151] A.S. Atiya, *Historia...*, p. 231.

[152] Thanks to caliphs' favours and to bribery, the patriarch Hananyeshu II rose to political prominence. In addition to his own people, he also represented, in the Muslim lands, the Greeks, the Jacobites and the Melkites.

[153] The Metropolitans of seven cities (Jundishapur, Al-Baṣra, Mosul, Irbil, Beth-Jarma, Ḥulwān and Nisibis) gathered during the election of the new patriarch. Each of them was accompanied by three subordinate bishops. The patriarch elected by this assembly received investiture from the caliph who exerted a great influence on the process of election, see: S.Kh. Bukhsh, *Studies...*, p. 134.

[154] A.S. Atiya, *Historia...*, pp. 233–234.

[155] N. Levtzion, *Conversion to Islam in Syria and Palestine and the Survival of Christian Communities*, [in:] *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands, 8th to 18th Centuries*, eds. M. Gervers, R. Bikhazi, Toronto 1990, p. 304.

[156] R. Le Coz, *Historie...*, p. 208.

3.7. The Coptic Church

We know very little about the first decades of Arab rule in Egypt. Although there survive a great number of Arab chronicles relating to the period under consideration, none of them was written earlier than the ninth century, that is, two hundred years after the events dealt with here. Non-Muslim sources, too, originate in periods later than the conquest[157]. However, it is certain that the Arabs had got to know Egypt, Constantinople's granary, prior to the advent of Islam. ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ, the conqueror of this province, led in his youth caravans to the valley of Nile and marveled at the wealth of Alexandria. He felt great pride when informing ʿUmar of the conquest of the city which had 4000 palaces, 4000 bathhouses, 400 theatres, 1200 vegetable stores and 4000 Jews paying taxes[158]. Interestingly, the caliph was not much impressed by the news, rewarding the messenger with a loaf of bread, a bottle of olive oil and a few dates[159]. The local population that survived the attack on the city was shown mercy: those who wanted to leave were allowed to do so, and those who wanted to stay were not forced to convert to Islam. The latter were only required to pay the land tax as long as the flooding of the Nile guaranteed good crops[160].

All the evidence suggests that it was not the caliph who ordered the burning of the most famous book collection of antiquity. The library is more likely to have suffered at the hands of monks or fanatical Christian groups at the turn of the fourth and fifth centuries. The Arabs were willing to learn from those whom they conquered and whose cultural standards were higher than their own. Illustrating this is an account offered by Al-Ṭabarī of the encounter between Muslim commander and some local Copts: *ʿAmr Ibn al-ʿĀṣ, a great warrior and conqueror, decided to give a Bedouin feast on that occasion. He ordered the slaughter of a camel, to be later boiled in salty water*. Seeing the Arabs, who were wearing their traditional clothes, bite into the meat and slurp a soup, the Copts walked away, convinced that they were dealing with people who were rude and uncouth. Having noticed their disapproving reaction, ʿAmr ordered his men to put on the same clothes as those worn by the Egyptians. The Copts who arrived the fol-

[157] P.M. Sijpestejin, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt and the Beginning of Muslim Rule*, [in:] *Egypt in the Byzantine World, 300–700*, ed. R.S. Bagnall, Cambridge 2007, p. 438.

[158] A. Sattin, *Lifting the Veil: Two Centuries of Travellers, Traders and Tourists in Egypt*, London–New York 2011, p. 154.

[159] Th. Vrettos, *Alexandria: City of the Western Mind*, New York 2001, pp. 213–214.

[160] A.L. Al-Sayyid Marsot, *A History of Egypt from the Arab Conquest to the Present*, Cambridge 2007, p. 2.

lowing day *saw something very different from what they had seen the previous day. Servants offered them an array of Egyptian dishes which they ate.* [*The Copts*] *left in disbelief, saying that they had earlier been deceived*[161].

Al-Ṭabari's account manifests the Arabs' capability of adapting to local conditions, their awareness of dealing with more culturally advanced people, and their openness to local customs[162]. Under *ʿUmar's Pact*, the Copts were given the status of the *dhimmī* – the people who were protected but who certainly were not treated in any preferential way[163]. Like other Christians under Muslim rule, the Copts were subject to different restrictions – for example, they were required to wear some distinctive clothes and were banned from riding horses. However, in practice these laws were only rarely enforced[164].

The direct consequence of the Arab conquest was the Coptic Patriarch Benjamin's return from exile, in which he had spent more than a decade[165]. Enjoying ʿAmr's support, Benjamin assumed the leadership of the Coptic Church, forgave those who were guilty of apostasy from Monophysitism and opened up a number of new churches and monasteries, which he often visited, tightening their discipline and ensuring the observance of the canon law by their members[166]. The Copts seized a number of temples and religious buildings from the Melkites. They also replaced Greeks in administrative positions, although the Arabs did not remove the Byzantine administration in order to find favors with the Copts. They simply wanted to make sure that taxes were efficiently collected. ʿAmr's steps yielded a revenue of 200 million gold dinars, excluding gifts in kind[167].

His successors further increased this revenue, which entailed the outbreak of a number of uprisings[168]. However grateful for the religious tolerance displayed by the Arabs, the Copts tried to avoid economic exploitation. Such an attitude translated into mass conversions to Islam, which in turn had a paradoxical effect – rather than encouraging such conversions, the Arabs, fearful of losing

[161] Ṭ a b a r i, *Tarikh*, vol. IV, pp. 109–110.

[162] M. P i n k e r, *Kopuła w architekturze arabsko-muzułmańskiej w pierwszych wiekach islamu*, Warszawa 2010 [unpublished MA thesis], p. 8.

[163] A.S. A t i y a, *Historia...*, p. 109.

[164] *Ibidem*, p. 72.

[165] The patriarch was forced by the imperial governor, Cyrus, to flee to the monastery of St Macary. Benjamin's brother joined the rebellion against Cyrus and was executed, see: S.J. D a v i s, *The Early Coptic Papacy. The Egyptian Church and Its Leadership in Late Antiquity: The Popes of Egypt*, vol. I, Cairo–New York 2004, p. 119.

[166] A. G r i l l m e i e r, Th. H a i n t h a l e r, *Christ in Christian Tradition, From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590–604)*, vol. II, p. 4, London 1996, pp. 81–84.

[167] A.S. A t i y a, *Historia...*, p. 71.

[168] A.L. A l - S a y y i d M a r s o t, *A History...*, p. 6.

their profits, sought to discourage the Copts from accepting their religion[169]. On the other hand the Copts were drawn to Islam for its straightforwardness. In contradistinction to the Church troubled by Christological conflicts, the Muslims' religion was based on belief in God to whom everyone could turn without the intermediary role of clerical hierarchy[170].

From what has been said above it follows that the Arabs were mainly interested in preserving the *status quo* – the well-to-do Copts steadily supplying the state budget with financial means. To be sure, there occured periods of oppression or even persecutions. However, their occurence had more to do with the whims of individual rulers than with the conduct of any clear-cut policy. In the period under consideration, the Copts elaborated a model of peaceful coexistence with the Muslims – an achievement for which they did not have to pay with the loss of their identity. As Aziz Atiya concludes, the revival of the Coptic culture which ensued filled the gap opened up by the Byzantine civilization's gradual disappearance from the region[171].

3.8. The Armenian Church

In the first half of the seventh century, right before the Arab invasion, the Paulician heresy, based on the belief in two Gods and two acts of creation, divided the Church in Armenia. Persecuted by the Byzantine authorities and the Church hierarchy, the Paulicians, accusing the members of this hierarchy of a lavish lifestyle, did not shy away from violence. They also sought the support of the Arabs who, while fighting against the Greeks, found nothing wrong with the local Church[172]. The Byzantine Empire, in turn, strove to preserve its rule at least in western Armenia, frowning upon the emancipatory ambitions of the local populaton.

This Greek-Arab rivalry in Armenia undermined the Armenians' political position but did no harm to the Church which, remaining in no danger of imperial intervention, emphasized its disapproval of the Chalcedon decisions and refused to be united with Constantinople[173].

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[169] A.S. A t i y a, *Historia...*, p. 71.

[170] M. H a n n a, *O dialogu cywilizacji czyli o potrzebie akceptowania innych*, transl. J. Z d a n o w s k i, Warszawa 2004, p. 125.

[171] A.S. A t i y a, *Historia...*, p. 72.

[172] N.G. G a r s o ï a n, *The Paulician Heresy: A Study of the Origin and Development of Paulicianism in Armenia and the Eastern Provinces of the Byzantine Empire*, Hague–Paris 1967, p. 193.

[173] A.S. A t i y a, *Historia...*, p. 282.

Catholicos Hovhannes, called the Philosopher, in addition to authoring numerous theological tracts and drawing up reforms aimed at tightening discipline in the Church, was also a diplomat who tried to better the life of his people. Legend wound itself around his encounter with caliph ʿUmar II in 719[174]. To welcome the ruler, who considered himself to be the Prophet's successor and a pious Muslim, catholicos put on extremely resplendent clothes. When asked by the caliph if Christ had not taught modesty, Hovhannes showed him a sackcloth made of goat wool which he was wearing on naked skin. ʿUmar II concluded that no one could bear such suffering without God's help and promised to do everything which the saint man was going to ask him. Catholicos wanted the ruler to ban forceful conversions to Islam, to grant religious freedom and to exempt the Church and the clergy from taxes. Fulfilling these requests, the caliph also freed the Armenians from their Damascene captivity, into which they had been taken during the war[175].

Having received the guarantees for which he asked, Hovhannes broke relations with Byzantium, got rid of philhellenes and cracked down on the Paulicians who moved to the West. The policy aimed at achieving independence from Byzantium found its expression in the synod called by catholicos to Manzikert in 726.

After ʿUmar II's death, power was assumed by Yazīd II (720–724) who ordered the destruction of Christian pictures. Fortunately for the Armenians his rule did not last long. Although *ʿUmar's Pact* remained in force throughout the period under consideration, its regulations which banned erecting new churches and restoring the old ones were not meticulously observed – the existing temples were embellished with mosaics and icons; the new ones were built of stone and also splendidly decorated[176].

However, Muslim-Christian relations in Armenia also had a darker side to them – due to the outbursts of violence and persecutions which happened from time to time, the catholicoi had to intervene in the Caliphate's capital on behalf of the rest of the faithful. Arab rulers treated them as chiefs of the Armenian people.

The seventh and eighth centuries mark the most important period in the history of Muslim-Christian relations. It was in the first centuries of Islam's

[174] Important in the context of the Byzantine-Arab relations is Leon III' letter to ʿUmar II, in which the emperor responds to the caliph's request for information on the Christian faith, its dogmas and divisions within the Church. In his response the emperor draws both on the Bible and on the Ḳur'ān, stressing the fact that Islam is also divided. A. J e f f e r y, *A Ghevond's Text of the Correspondence between ʿUmar II and Leo III*, HTR 37, 1944, pp. 269–332.

[175] S.B. D a d o y a n, *The Armenians in the Medieval Islamic World. The Arab Period in Armīnyah – 7th to 11th Centuries*, vol. I, New Brunswick 2011, pp. 72–73.

[176] A.S. A t i y a, *Historia...*, p. 283.

existence that the two monotheistic religions came into contact with one another and became familiar with one another's beliefs and rituals. The analysis of both Christian and Muslim sources shows that the relations between the two were very complex. In this initial period of contacts, there existed a variety of attitudes which the Muslims and the Christians adopted towards each other. Christian commentators interpreted Islam's victory in a variety of ways. Either they regarded the Arab invasion as expressing the fulfillment of God's promises given to Abraham and Ishmael, or treated it in terms of the punishment inflicted by God on Christians for departing from the orthodoxy, however the latter was understood, or simply saw it as the divine retribution for various sins. Still others viewed it as an example of one of the Christian heresies.

The Muslims, on the other hand – despite the Ḳur'ān's ambiguous view of the Christians and some persecutions to which they were subjected right after the Prophet's death – developed a peaceful attitude towards the non-Muslims. The latter were guaranteed personal safety, property rights and freedom of religion but had to bear some financial burdens and were subject to some social restrictions. The relations between religions often assumed the form of trilateral relations, those between the followers of Islam, Judaism and Christianity – with the Christians usually enjoying a better position than the Jews. Muḥammad's contacts with the latter were more frequent, which found its reflection in the Ḳur'ān.

The Islamization of the conquered population proceeded gradually. Because of the ambiguity of the word *'aslama*, to be found in Arab sources and meaning both the acceptance of Islam and surrender, the process is not easy to reconstruct. No Muslim government strove to exterminate the Christians, and attempts aimed at their mass conversions were made only very rarely. As the People of the Book the Christians were guardians of their own, though incomplete, divine revelation and, as such, deserved to be granted a degree of autonomy, to have their own leaders and to enjoy their own specific rights. At the same time they were second-class citizens, subject to Muslim rule and required to pay taxes. The religious freedom they enjoyed prevented them from disappearing into the sea of Islam.

To survive as a distinct community, the Christians developed several "cultural strategies". While some of them were employed quite extensively, others were used only sporadically and only within specific groups. According to Heleen Murre-van den Berg, these strategies involved reinterpreting pre-Islamic Christian heritage, assimilating some of the elements of the Islamic culture and isolating themselves from the Muslim environment[177].

[177] The second strategy was prevalent during the reign of the Abbasid rulers (the eleventh to twelfth centuries) while the third in the thirteenth to eighteenth centuries, although other

The first strategy was prevalent in the first two centuries after the advent of Islam, and the contacts between the Christians and Muslims that took place in this period can be referred to as "isolated development". Both religions lived in parallel to each other, with no bridges spanning them and with no profound knowledge of one another. The Christians remained true to their local traditions and languages, and it took some time before they began to understand the significance of the Arabic language. By assimilating it, they to great degree assimilated Arab culture. Christian and Muslim thought began to permeate each other. Christian communities played a significant role in building Muslim civilization, which, quite paradoxically, was a major factor in the decline in the number of Christians in the Middle East.



forms of acculturation were also present in this period. *Introduction*, [in:] *Redefining Christian Identity. Cultural Interaction in the Middle East since the Rise of Islam*, eds. J.J. van Ginkel, H.L. Murre-Van den Berg, T.M. van Lint, Leuven–Paris–Dudley 2005, p. VIII.

Marek M. Dziekan

4. The Byzantines in the Context of the Ḳur'ān

The first encounter between Islam and Byzantium was colored by positive perceptions of Byzantium's monotheism and of its upright ruler, Heraclius. Yet the empire's influence was most strongly felt as a model state, particularly in the early Islamic period, when the Muslims had no compunction about imitating the forms and practices of their imperial rival in developing what would ultimately become a distinctive Islamic civilization – writes the Lebanese scholar of the Arab-Byzantine relations, Nadia Maria El Cheikh[1]. She concludes that the Arab-Byzantine relations underwent different stages, finally assuming a hostile character, which continued well into the times of the Crusades[2]. The Arabs' positive attitude towards the Byzantines is attested to in the Ḳur'ān with regard to the period prior to the Conquest. However, there are some ḥadīths which seem to be heralding future, much worse relations[3]. The death of Muḥammad in 632 marked the end of the friendship – although for almost a decade to come, until emperor Heraclius' death in 641, the Arabs' view of the Byzantines was not unambiguously negative. The Arabic tradition, for example, created a positive image of Heraclius, whom it held up as a model of perfect ruler. However, it is difficult to state unambiguously whether positive references to the Byzantines found in the Ḳur'ān are connected with the image of Heraclius, or the emperor's good image is linked to the tradition which turned him into an archetype of perfect ruler already towards the end of the old Arabic period, or he figures in texts pertaining to this period by way of a backward projection, as in the accounts of Heraclius' meeting with Ḳuss ibn Sā'ida al-Iyādī, the old-Arabic orator, the bishop of Nadjrān, whose opinion was held in high regard by the Prophet himself[4]. The dif-

[1] N.M. El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs*, Cambridge Mass. 2004, pp. 54–55.

[2] *Ibidem*, pp. 226–230.

[3] *Ibidem*, pp. 64–65, 70 and elsewhere in the same chapter.

[4] M.M. Dziekan, *Quss Ibn Sā'ida al-Iyādī. Legenda życia i twórczości*, Warszawa 1996, pp. 8–9.

ficulty lies mainly in the fact that the texts relating to the Ḳur'ān, on which we rely, come from a much later period, when Byzantium was already considered the greatest enemy of the Muslim state.

4.1. The Byzantines in the Ḳur'ān

My aim here is to examine the Ḳur'ānic contexts of the image of the Byzantines in the early Arabic culture. It would certainly be a mistake to assume that, since the holy book of Islam – the Ḳur'ān – is the source of this image, the contexts in question pertain only to this early period. The followers of Islam are known for treating the Ḳur'ān as the extra-temporal source of any knowledge. Consequently, the image of Byzantium contained in it should be regarded as a constant element in the Muslims' perception of the Empire.

4.1.1. Sūra 30. *The Byzantines* (*Al-Rūm*), the verses 2–4

[(1) الم]
(2) غُلِبَتِ الرُّومُ
(3) فِي أَدْنَى الأَرْضِ وَهُم مِّن بَعْدِ غَلَبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُونَ
(4) فِي بِضْعِ سِنِينَ لِلَّهِ الأَمْرُ مِن قَبْلُ وَمِن بَعْدُ وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ
[(5) بِنَصْرِ اللَّهِ]

(1) A. L. M.
(2) The Romans have been defeated
(3) In a land close by; but they, [even] after [this] defeat of theirs, will soon be victorious –
(4) Within a few years, with Allāh is the Command, in the Pastast and in the Future: on that Day shall the Believers rejoice –
(5) With the help of Allāh[5].

Sūra 30. *The Byzantines* (*Al-Rūm*) was revealed around 615/616. Of key importance in our context are the verses 2–4: those which include information on the defeat and victory of the Byzantines (the first verse is a *basmala* that does not fall within the content of the text proper). These ayats – up to the sixth one – form a distinct part of the Sūra that is unrelated to the remaining ones. In a style

[5] *Ḳur'ān*, transl. Y. A l i (all Ḳur'ānic citations after this translation).

proper to itself, the Ḳur'ān is not specific about the episode to which it only vaguely refers, although there is no doubt that the fragment in question concerns historical events. At the same time, as is stressed by some Muslim commentators, it also points to the events taking place in the future.

The German arabist, Theodor Nöldeke, in reference to dating the revelation of the Sūra, writes:

> The first verses of the Sūra 30. must have been revealed after the Byzantines had conducted their unfortunate war with the Persians close to the border with Arabia. However, it is difficult to define which of the numerous defeats the Byzantines suffered till after the Hidjra be meant here; particularly as the older Muslim writers, who report these events in a confused and unreliable manner, are not corroborated by reliable Byzantine testimonies. The usual statement is, that here that defeat is meant which the Byzantines suffered at Adhru'at and Basra, or in Mesopotamia, or in Palestine (...). Perhaps Muḥammad had no specific event in mind.[6]

However, there is no doubt that the Sūra is bound up with the Byzantine-Persian wars waged at the beginning of Heraclius' reign. The details of the commentary reflecting the Muslims' view of the events will be analyzed below. The course of the events is well-known and described in every handbook on the history of the Middle East in the seventh century[7]. For this reason, I will confine myself only to providing a brief summary of these events. It can be said that Persia's hostile attitude towards Byzantium came in the wake of emperor Maurice' fall in 602. The Persians refused to recognize Phocas, the new emperor, and gave vent to their discontent by starting hostilities the direct cause of which was the outbreak of the uprising in Edessa whose leaders sought Persia's support. The bloodiest confrontation between Persia and Byzantium came in 604. The Persians, led by shah Khusraw, seized control of a significant part of the Great Syria. In 611, they conquered Antioch. It was not until the reign of emperor Heraclius (610–641) that the situation began to change[8]. However, in the years that followed, the Byzantines were still on a losing streak. In 613 they lost Damascus and in 614 Jerusalem – to mention only the most important

[6] T. N ö l d e k e, F. S c h w a l l y, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, vol. I, Leipzig 1909, pp. 149–150.

[7] On this issue see: O. B o l ' š a k o v, *Istorija Chalifata*, vol. I, *Islam v Aravii. 570–633*, Moskva 1989, pp. 137–140; B. S k ł a d a n e k, *Historia Persji*, vol. I, Warszawa 1999, pp. 254–256; W.E. K a e g i, *Heraclius, Emperor of Byzantium*, Cambridge 2003, pp. 156–191; *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire c. 500–1492*, ed. J. S h e p a r d, Cambridge 2008, pp. 150–156; *Historia Iranu*, ed. A. K r a s n o w o l s k a, Wrocław 2010, pp. 251–252.

[8] J.F. H a l d o n, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century. The Transformation of a Culture*, Cambridge 1997; W.E. K a e g i, *Heraclius...*, *passim*.

losses the Empire suffered in the Arab context. *The Persians behaved like barbarian invaders. They plundered, burned and carried people off into captivity. At that stage everything worked in their favor* – writes Bogdan Składanek[9]. In addition, the Byzantines also had to struggle with the attacks of the Avars. The Persians continued seizing new territories, including Egypt and Middle Anatolia. However, after attacking Rhodes, they ran out of steam. Besides, the victories they won did not entail strengthening Persia as a state, which Heraclius managed to use to his own advantage, and the tide of the war turned. In 627, the emperor invaded Mesopotamia and inflicted defeat on the Persians at Nineveh. *Shah looked around for someone whom he could blame for the defeat. One of the Persian commanders, a Shahrbaraz*[10]*, was to be made a scapegoat, but he fled abroad*[11]. A coup d'état took place in Persia. Khusraw was overthrown in 628 by his son Kavadh II who immediately sent peace offers to Heraclius.

Muslims were devastated by the initial defeats of the Byzantines whom they supported as the People of the Book. The Meccans, on the other hand, most of whom were still polytheists, took the side of the Persians. The view that the Sūra quoted above refers to the events under discussion is supported by a number of Ḳur'ānic exegetes. In this contribution I will rely on the most important, classic commentary by Abū Dja'far al-Ṭabarī[12]. Significantly, it is also one of the most

[9] B. Składanek, *Historia Persji...*, p. 255.

[10] Most probably the real name of this person was Farrukhan. Shahrbaraz probably refers to the function he performed – literally *the wild boar of the Empire*. It is also mentioned in non-Arab sources, including the Byzantine ones. The mutiny he led even swept him into the throne, which, however, he occupied for two months only. The story which Al-Ṭabarī tells about Farrukhan and his brother Shahrbaraz is only one of the existing versions of it.

[11] B. Składanek, *Historia Persji...*, p. 256.

[12] Abu Dja'far Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī (838–923) – one of the most distinguished scholars of the Arab-Muslim world in the Middle Ages, a theologian, historian and an exegete of the Ḳur'ān. His most influential and best known works are his Ḳur'ānic commentary, *Djāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wil al-Ḳur'ān*, the first and probably the most important one, running to 30 volumes, drawn on extensively by later exegetes, and *Kitāb akhbār Tārīkh al-rusul wa-al-mulūk*, work in many volumes dealing with the world history up to the ninth century. It covers legends, the Arab pre-history, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the Arab conquests. The scholarly literature on this author, also in western languages, is huge: F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, vol. I, Leiden 1967, pp. 323–328; C.E. Bosworth, *Aṭ-Ṭabari*, [in:] *EI*, vol. X, pp. 11–15; V.I. Beljaev, *Predislovie*, [in:] *Istorija at-Tabari*, Taškent 1987, pp. 5–13; M.M. Dziekan, *Bagdad mityczny. Opis powstania miasta w Historii Aṭ-Ṭabarīego*, SAI 6, 1988, pp. 103–122; B. Shoshan, *Poetics of Islamic Historiography. Deconstructing of Ṭabarī's History*, Leiden–Boston 2004, *passim*; J. Danecki, *Podstawowe wiadomości o islamie*, Warszawa 2007, pp. 76–77; F.A. Jakubowski, *Wstęp*, [in:] Abū Ǧa'far Muḥammad ibn Ǧarīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Historia proroków i królów. Z dziejów Bizancjum (do połowy VII w.). Tārīḫ ar-rusul wa-al-mulūk*, Poznań 2011, pp. XXIV–XLII.

detailed and extensive commentaries available. Al-Ṭabarī deals with some controversies surrounding the Ḳur'ānic verses under discussion. Here is the translation of the relevant fragment.

> The Byzantines have been defeated[13] (Sūra 30:2). The recitators differ from each other in reading this fragment.
> Most of cities' recitators (*amṣār*), read *Ghulibat Al-Rūm* with *ḍamma*[14] over the letter *ghayn*, which means that the Persians defeated the Byzantines. They follow Ibn ʿUmar[15] and Abū Sa'id[16] in saying: Ibn Wāḳī' told us: my father told me quoting Al-Ḥasan al-Djafarī and Salīṭ[17] who said: I heard Ibn ʿUmar recite: '*Alif. Lām. Mīm. Ghalabat Ar-Rum* – the Byzantines were victorious'[18]. He was asked: O, Abū ʿAbd al-Rahmān, whom did they defeat? He replied: The province of Syria. However, I am of the opinion that the only right and true lesson is: '*Alif. Lām. Mīm*. the Romans have been defeated', with *ḍamma* over the letter *ghayn*, for this is the interpretation accepted by most recitators. If this is the case, then the way the words should be explained is as follows: 'The Persians defeated the Byzantines'. Other commentators hold the same view. (...) Ibn ʿAbbās[19] said: the Muslims wanted the Byzantines, the people of the Book, to win, while the idolaters[20] wanted the Persians to win, as the latter also worshipped idols. They told Abū Bakr about it and he reported this to the Prophet who recited: Verily, they will be defeated. He conveyed this message to the idolaters and they replied: Let us make a temporary peace. If you win, things will be this way for you and if we win things will be this way for us. Then they concluded a peace treaty for five years. This period elapsed and they did not become victors. Abū Bakr told the Prophet, Peace be upon Him, about it and He replied: Let this be about ten years.

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[13] *Ḳur'ān*, 30:2 (Sūra *Al-Rūm*, i.e. *the Romans*; it means in this case – *the Byzantines*). Some fragments that, in being grammar commentaries, are not directly bound up with the issue under discussion have been omitted from this translation, as have the repetitions of some lines. All the omissions (except for *isnāds*, that is, chains of narrators) are marked by square brackets.

[14] *Ḍamma* is a vocal sign that stands for *u*.

[15] ʿAbd Allāh Ibn ʿUmar (died 692), the son of the caliph ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghābah*, vol. III, pp. 340–345; N.M. El Cheikh, *Muḥammad and Heraclius: A Study in Legitimacy*, StI 89, 1999, p. 358.

[16] Probably Abū Sa'id al-Khuḍarī, the Prophet's companion who reported ḥadīths (died in 693). See: F. Sezgin, *Geschichte...*, vol. I, pp. 505, 789; M.Z. Siddiqi, *Ḥadīth Literature: Its Origin, Development and Special Features*, Cambridge 1993, p. 18.

[17] The Prophet's companion, died in 632.

[18] The full chain of narrators is mentioned here in order to demonstrate the style of this account; in the texts that follow this one I mention only the last one in the chain of narrators, since the full *isnāds* are irrelevant for our analysis.

[19] ʿAbd Allāh Ibn ʿAbbās (died around 686), theologian, the first exegete of the Ḳur'ān, and one of the first followers of Islam. Cf. L. Veccia Vaglieri, *ʿAbd Allāh B. al-ʿAbbās*, [in:] *EI*, vol. I, pp. 40–41; M.M. Dziekan, *Pisarze arabsko-muzułmańscy VII–XX w.*, Warszawa 2003, p. 57.

[20] The Meccans who did not accept Islam.

Sa'id added: a few [*biḍ'*][21] is less than ten. Then the Prophet said: The Byzantines were defeated and then they were victorious. It concerns these words: The Byzantines were defeated in a land close by; but they, after this defeat of theirs, will be victorious within a few years. With God is the Decision, both in the past and in the future. And on that Day the faithful will rejoice at God's victory[22]. Sufyān[23] then said: I was told that they became victorious on the same day when the battle of Badr took place[24].

Ibn 'Abbās said: The words from '*Alif. Lām. Mīm*. The Romans have been defeated' to the words 'and on that Day they will rejoice' concerned the Persians and the Byzantines. First the Persians defeated the Byzantines and then Byzantium won a victory. On the day when the battle between the Persians and the Byzantines took place, God's Prophet fought against the idolatrous Arabs. The People of the Book defeated the idolatrous Persians [*'Adjam* in Arabic] and the faithful rejoiced that God gave victory to them and to the People of the Book who also fought against the idolaters.

'Aṭiyya said[25]: I inquired Abū Sa'id al-Khuḍarī about it and he replied: there was a battle between Muḥammad, God's Prophet, and the idolatrous Arabs and between the Byzantines and the Persians. God gave us victory over the idolatrous Arabs and the People of the Book owed Him a victory over the worshippers of fire [*madjūs* in Arabic]. It concerns the words 'and on that Day the faithful will rejoice'.

'Ikrima reported[26]: Byzantium and Persia were at war with each other in a land close by. It is said that Adhru'at[27] was then the closest land. That is where the battle took place, and the Byzantines suffered a resounding defeat. This event was reported to the Prophet, Peace be upon Him, and to his companions when they were in Mecca. It saddened them immensely because the Prophet did not want illiterate worshippers of fire to defeat the People of the Book of Byzantium[28]. But the Infidels of Mecca were delighted and cursed. They met the Prophet's companions, Peace be upon Him, and said: You are the People of the Book as are the Christians and we are illiterate. And our brothers from Persia inflicted defeat on your brothers from Byzantium. If you started fighting against us, we would recognize you. Then God revealed: 'the Byzantines were defeated in a land close by, but they, after this defeat of theirs, will be victorious within a few years. With God is the Decision, both in the past and in the future. And on that

[21] In Arabic "a few years" is *biḍ' sinīn*. In their commentaries exegetes often raise the question of to how many *biḍ*, that is, "a few" refers.

[22] *Ḳur'ān*, 30:4–5.

[23] Sufyān Ibn 'Uyayna (725–811), a distinguished commentator of tradition, exegete and a Muslim lawyer. F. S e z g i n, *Geschichte...*, vol. I, p. 96.

[24] The first victory the Muslims won over the Ḳuraysh in 624.

[25] 'Aṭiyya Ibn S'ad al-Kūfī (died in 729), one of the most important interpreters of the Ḳur'ān. F. S e z g i n, *Geschichte...*, vol. I, pp. 30–31.

[26] An expert on ḥadīths and exegete of the Ḳur'ān, died in 723. F. S e z g i n, *Geschichte...*, vol. I, p. 23.

[27] The old name of the city Daraa.

[28] In Arabic original there is an interesting play on words here. The Persians are called "illiterate" – *ummiyyūn*, which is designed to contrast starkly with those who have Scripture – *Ahl al-Kitāb*.

Day the faithful will rejoice at God's victory'. Then Abū Bakr addressed the infidels: Did you rejoice at your brothers' victory over our brothers? Do not rejoice. God will not gladden your eyes. Verily, God Almighty, Byzantium will defeat Persia. He informed our Prophet, Peace be upon Him, about it. Then Ubayy Ibn Khalaf said[29]: you lie, Abū Fuḍayl! To this Abū Bakr replied: You are a liar, God's enemy! I will leave ten she-camels as a pledge and so will you. If Byzantium defeats Persia, you will pay. We will wait three years. Then Abū Bakr went to the Prophet and told him about everything. The Prophet replied: That is not what I said, *biḍ'* amounts to between 3 and 9. Go back to him, raise the bet and extend the deadline. Abū Bakr left and, having met Ubayy, asked: Do you regret? – No, I do not. – Then I raise the bet and extend the deadline: one hundred she-camels and nine years – Agreed.

'Ikrima reported: There was a woman in Persia who gave birth to heroic kings only. Khusraw summoned her and said: I want to send the army to fight against Byzantium and I want to put one of your sons in its command. Who is best suited to this task? She pointed to one and said: this one is more cunning than a fox, sharper than a shrike, this is Farrukhan, he is more piercing than the blade of a spear, and this is Shahrbaraz, he is greathearted. Put any one of them in command of your army. I will appoint the greathearted – and he selected Shahrbaraz. The latter set out to fight against the Byzantines and won, destroying their cities and clearing their olive groves. Abū Bakr said[30]: I told 'Aṭā' al-Khurāsānī[31] this story and he asked: Have you not seen Syria? I replied: No, I have not!. Then He said: If you were there you would see destroyed cities and grubbed-up olive groves. Later, when I got to Syria, I saw everything. 'Aṭā' al-Khurāsānī said: Yaḥyā Ibn Ya'mar[32] told me that the emperor sent the man known by the name of Kitma[33] at the head of the Byzantine troops, and Khusraw sent Shahrbaraz. Both armies met near Adhru'at and Bosra, and it was the furthest Syria for them. Persia attacked Byzantium and won a victory. The infidel Ḳuraysh were pleased about what happened while the Muslims were discontent. And God revealed: '*Alif. Lām. Mīm*. The Romans have been defeated in a land close by'. 'Ikrima later told the same story and added: Shahrbaraz crushed them and, destroying their cities, reached the Gulf[34]. Then Khusraw passed away. Shahrbaraz and his men received the message about his death. Then the Byzantines stopped them and killed them. 'Ikrima said in his account: when Persia defeated Byzantium Farrukhan was sitting and drinking. He said to his men: I saw myself sitting on Khusraw' throne. The king who learned about this wrote to Shahrbaraz: When you receive my letter, send me Farrukhan's head. He answered the letter: My King, verily, you will not find a man like Farrukhan. He is filled with vengeance and strength to strike at the ene-

[29] One of the most implacable enemies of the Prophet, killed in the battle of Uḥud in 625.

[30] It is difficult to say which Abū Bakr is meant here – it cannot have been Abū Bakr as-*Ṣ*iddī*ḳ* who died in 634 and who, consequently, could not have met 'Aṭā' al-Khurāsānī.

[31] 'Aṭā' al-Khurāsānī (670–757), an exegete of the Ḳur'ān and traditionist.

[32] Yaḥyā Ibn Ya'mar (died in 707), an exegete of the Ḳur'ān and author of the oldest surviving work on the ways reciting the Ḳur'ān (*ḳirā'a*). F. S e z g i n, *Geschichte...*, vol. I, p. 5.

[33] Attempts to identify the person have been unsuccessful.

[34] The text probably refers here to the Mediterranean Sea.

my – so do not do it. Now the king answered the letter: He enjoys significant support among the Persians. Send me his head as soon as you can. Shahrbaraz did not carry out this order, which angered the king who did not answer the letter. Instead, he sent a mail to the Persians: I dismissed Shahrbaraz and put Farrukhan in command. And he attached a small note to the mail: When Farrukhan is appointed and Shahrbaraz submits to his brother, give it to him. When Shahrbaraz read it he said: I listen and I am obedient! He descended from his seat and put Farrukhan on it, giving him the letter. Farrukhan then said: Bring Shahrbaraz here. He then ordered his men to decapitate him. Yet he said: Do not do it until I draw up my last will and testament. This is so – he said and ordered that a receptacle be brought to him. He took three letters out of it and said: in all of these letters I interceded with Khusraw on your behalf, and you wanted to kill me because of one letter. He relinquished his authority and wrote to the emperor of Byzantium: I would like to discuss something with you but I cannot write about it. That is why we should meet face to face. Take fifty Byzantines with you and I will take fifty Persians. The emperor arrived with five hundred thousand Byzantines and observed the road carefully. He was afraid that he had been deceived. However, he noticed Shahrbaraz approaching with fifty men. Rejoicing at their meeting, they entered a special tent which had been put up especially for them. Each of them was carrying a knife. They called in an interpreter. Me and my brother are those who, through courage and cunning, destroyed your cities. Khusraw grew envious of our success and wanted me to kill my brother, but I refused. Then he ordered my brother to kill me. So we decided to throw over Khusraw and support you against him. The emperor said: You did the right thing. Then they pointed at one another which meant that they were supposed to guard their secret. It would spread very quickly if it got out. He said: Of course. And they both killed the interpreter, each of them using his own knife. Soon Khusraw died by God's will. The news reached the Prophet on Al-Ḥudaybiyya day. He rejoiced as did everyone who was with him[35]. Ḳatāda said[36]: *Alif. Lām. Mīm.* The Romans have been defeated. They were defeated by the Persians in a land close by, but after this defeat of theirs, they will be victorious. He said: When God revealed these verses the Muslims believed their Lord and knew that the Byzantines would defeat the Persians. They bet the idolaters five young she-camels that within five years the Byzantines would defeat the Persians. In making the bet, the Muslims were represented by Abū Bakr while the idolaters by Abū Ubayy Ibn Khalaf. When the appointed period was running out and the Byzantines did not defeat the Persians the idolaters asked about their prize. The Prophet's companions asked him about it too and he replied: you made a mistake by fixing the period of less than ten years, for "a few" is a figure between three and ten, so you need to extend the period. They did so, and God gave Byzantium victory over Persia at the end of

[35] The agreement concluded in 628 between Muḥammad and the Meccans which allowed the Prophet to enter Mecca in 630 and seize control of it. M. G a u d e f r o y - D e m o m b y n e s, *Narodziny islamu*, transl. H. O l ę d z k a, Warszawa 1988, pp. 122–125.

[36] Ḳatāda Ibn Di 'āma (679–735) – blind since his birth and known for excellent memory, he was a reporter of ḥadīths and genealogy. F. S e z g i n, *Geschichte...*, vol. I, pp. 31–32; Ch. P e l l a t, *Ḳatāda Ibn Di 'āma*, [in:] *EI*, vol. IV, p. 748.

these "a few" years. It happened during the return from Al-Ḥudaybiyya. The Muslims rejoiced at the agreement that had been reached and at the fact that the People of the Book defeated the worshippers of fire. And in this way Allāh strengthened their faith as in His words: 'And on that day the faithful will rejoice at God's victory.
(...) ʿAbd Allāh said: the Persians defeated the Byzantines. The idolaters wanted Persia to defeat Byzantium, while the Muslims wanted the Byzantines to defeat the Persians because the former are the People of the Book and, as such, are closer to their own religion. That is why, when the verses from 'the Byzantines were defeated' to 'within a few years' were revealed, they said: Abū Bakr, your companion says that Byzantium will defeat Persia within a few years. Yes – he said. Then they asked: Do you want to bet? And they bet him four she-camels for seven years. Seven years elapsed and nothing happened. The idolaters recalled this fact and began to put pressure on the Muslims who told the Prophet about it. The Prophet asked: What do you mean by "a few years"? they said: Less than ten. Then he replied: Then there are two years left. Finally riders arrived bringing information that Byzantium defeated Persia. The Muslims were very glad and God revealed: '*Ali. Laf. Mim.* The Romans have been defeated'. It is the promise of Allāh. Never does Allāh fail from His promise[37]! ʿAbd Allāh said: And Byzantium survived (...)
Ibn ʿAbbās said: (...) as far as 'they will be victorious' [*sayaghlibūn*] is concerned, most recitators reads it with *fatḥa*[38] over the speech sound *yā'*, and it needs to be read as *Alif. Lām. Mīm. Ghalabat Ar-Rūm,* with *fatḥa* over *ghayn*, so as to be able to recite *sayughlabūn* ['they will be defeated'] with *ḍamma* over *yā'*. Then it can be interpreted as meaning: after their victory over Persia they will be defeated by the Muslims. Thus everything falls into place[39]. The words would not make much sense if one put *fatḥa* over the letter *yā'*. It is because we move from the event that has already happened to the one that may happen. It would mean the a destruction of one information by the other. As far as the words: 'within a few years' are concerned, we have already mentioned disagreements among the exegetes concerning the meaning of "a few" and we have found the right solution. That is why there is no point in going over this again here.[40]

The commentary begins with what appears to be a very learned philological discussion, which, however, is of concern not only to philologists. It indicates two stages of the Byzantine-Persian wars. The second *āyāt* is regarded as recounting the events of 614 – especially the Persian conquest of Jerusalem, the city that had already become very important to the Muslims. The *āyāts* 3–4 herald Byz-

[37] The beginning of the verse 6.

[38] *Fatḥa* – in Arabic script a diacritical sign denoting *a*.

[39] For more on this issue see: T. Nöldeke, F. S c h w a l l y, *Geschichte des Qorāns...*, p. 149, footnote 7.

[40] A l - Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tafsir*, vol. XVIII, pp. 446–459. I omit brief remarks on the verses 3 and 4 as they repeat the information given above. Al-Ṭabarī gives an account of these events in his *History* in the chapter on king Khusraw Parwiz, the son of Hurmuz (especially pp. 181–187). In this account Al-Ṭabarī in part repeats fragments included in his *Tafsīr*. He also refers to some Ḳur'ānic expressions (explaining, for example, how the term "the closest country" needs to be understood).

antium's future victory over pagan Persia. Many Muslims consider these verses to be of special importance as they testify to the truth of the Ḳur'ān, clearly to be given credit for rightly predicting the future course of events – not only in eschatological terms, but also with regard to ordinary, earthly affairs. It is in view of such an approach to the Ḳur'ān that this philological discussion acquires its significance. For according to the second version, rejected by Al-Ṭabarī, it is the Byzantines that ended up defeated. And to accept their defeat is to support the view remaining at odds with a generally positive image of the Byzantines held by the Muslims at the time of the Prophet Muḥammad. That clearly suggests that this second version must have appeared when the Muslims had already begun to view the Byzantines as their greatest enemies. Our attention must also be paid to the lexicographic remarks concerning the word *biḍ'* – "a few". These remarks, too, imply a prophetic perspective, for the accuracy of the Ḳur'ānic statement depends here on what exactly is the number to which the word "a few" refers. Of course, it is difficult to state which events constituted the turning points mentioned above. As Theodor Nöldeke has rightly observed: even Al-Ṭabari's *knowledge is not sufficient to fill this gap*.

The fragment presented above shows the interconnections between the different sides of the conflict, as well as the impact which the events in Syria had on the people of Mecca. It also contains some interesting details on a number of historical figures like, for example, Shahrbaraz. As a typical representative of the Arab chronicle-writing, Al-Ṭabarī not only perfectly demonstrates the mood prevalent in Mecca in the period with which he deals, but he also offers some insight into the worldview typical of the Arab-Muslim culture.

4.1.2. Sūra 3. *Imran's Family* (*Al ʿImrān*), verse 64

(64)قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ

Say, "O People of the Book! come to common terms as between between us and you: that we worship none but Allāh; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, lords and patrons other than Allāh". If then they turn back, say ye, "Bear witness that we at least are Muslims (bowing to Allāh's Will)".

Byzantium does not appear here *expressis verbis*, but all the most important commentaries clearly indicate the historical context of this verse. Ibn Kathīr[41] writes in his *Tafsīr*:

[41] ʿImād ad-Dīn Ibn Kathīr (1300–1373), one of the most famous Arab historians and traditionists of the late Middle Ages. His most important work is a history of Islam *Al-Bidāja*

The words refer to the People of the Book, the Jews, the Christians and all who follow in their steps. "Say: O, the People of the Book! Come to the word". It is about a useful word, which he described later, saying: "the same for you and for us". Thus it has to be equitable between you and us.

And he goes on to explain: that we will not worship except God and not associate anything with Him. No idol, no cross, no statue, no fire nor anything else. We should worship One God only who has no companions. That is a message sent by all prophets. God Almighty said: we sent no messenger before you to whom we would not give revelation: 'There is no god but I; therefore worship and serve Me' [21, 25].

And he said: we assuredly sent amongst every people a Messenger (with the Command): 'Serve Allāh and eschew Evil' [16, 36]. And he said: so that none of us chooses anyone else for his lord, except God. Ibn Djuraydj explains[42]: So that none of us makes others commit a sin against our Lord. 'Ikrima said: they prostrated themselves before each other.

He said: If then they turn back, say *yā'*: 'Bear witness that we at least are Muslims (bowing to Allāh's Will)'. That is, if they turn away from these words and from this call, bear witness to the submission to God-ordained authority.

We have referred to the commentaries by Al-Bukhāri[43], who, in giving his account, followed Az-Zuhrī[44], Ubayd Allāh, Ibn 'Abd Allāh, Ibn Mas'ūd[45], Ibn 'Abbās, Abu Sufyān[46]. Abu Sufyān came to emperor Heraclius. The emperor asked him about God's messenger's descent, Peace be upon Him[47], about his traits and about his message. He answered him truthfully. At that time Abu Sufyān was still a pagan and accepted Islam sometime later. His acceptance of Islam took place after the Al-Ḥudaybiyya agreement and before the takeover of Medina.

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wa-an-nihāja (*The Beginning and the End*). He is also author of a famous commentary on Islam and a short history of the Sacred Book of Islam (*Faḍā'il al-Ḳur'ān*). Cf. H. L a o u s t, *Ibn Kathīr*, [in:] *EI*, vol. III, pp. 817–818; M.M. D z i e k a n, *Pisarze arabsko-muzułmańscy...*, p. 64.

[42] A lawyer and expert on ḥadīths, died in 767. F. S e z g i n, *Geschichte...*, vol. I, p. 91.

[43] Kathīr refers here to a collection of ḥadīths by Al-Bukhāri (died in 870) – one of the most distinguished traditionists. See: Ch. M e l c h e r t, *Al-Bukhārī*, [in:] *EI*^{3}, vol. II, pp. 54–58; K. K o ś c i e l n i a k, *Tradycja muzułmańska na tle akulturacji chrześcijańsko-islamskiej od VII do X w.: geneza, historia i znaczenie zapożyczeń nowotestamentowych w hadisach*, Kraków 2001, pp. 122–125.

[44] A traditionist, historian and a connoiseur of poetry, died in 742. He is described as *the first one who transmitted tradition – awwal man asnada al-hadīth*. F. S e z g i n, *Geschichte...*, vol. I, pp. 280–283.

[45] He lived in the seventh century and was one of the seven *faḳīhs/fuḳahā'* of Medina.

[46] He died around 653, a Ḳuraysh leader from the Umayyad family/line. At first, he was the Prophet's enemy, but he went over to his side. He was father of the first caliph from the Umayyad dynasty, Mu'awiya. See: W. M o n t g o m e r y W a t t, *Abū Sufyān*, [in:] *EI*, vol. I, p. 131; D. M a d e y s k a, *Abu Sufjan*, [in:] *Mały słownik kultury świata arabskiego*, Warszawa 1971, p. 23.

[47] In conformity with the rule I decided to follow here, this is how I translate an Arab eulogy *ṣallā Allāhu 'alayhi wa-sallam*.

It is presented in the ḥadīth as follows: Heraclius asked Abu Sufyān:
– Are you unfaithful?
I answered: No, we have known him for a long time and we have never heard him do any such thing.
And Abu Sufyān went on: that is all I could add.
And it was all about the way he spoke: Then the letter from God's Messenger, Peace be upon Him, was brought[48] and he read it. It said as follows:

In the name of Merciful God. From Muḥammad's, God's Prophet, to Heraclius, the great ruler of Byzantium. Peace be upon him who follows the right path. And he goes on: Next, I summon thee with the appeal of Islam: become a Moslem and thou shalt be safe. God shall give thee thy reward twofold. But if thou decline then thee will sin like all your subjects[49]. 'O People of the Book! come to common terms as between us and you: That we worship none but Allāh; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, lords and patrons other than Allāh'. If then they turn back, say ye: 'Bear witness that we [at least] are Muslims [bowing to Allāh's Will]' (Sūra 3:64).

[48] There exists a huge body of orientalist and Muslim literature on Muḥammad's letter to Heraclius (I present the letter below): L. C a e t a n i, *Annali dell'Islam*, vol. I, Milano 1905, pp. 731–734; M.H. H a y k a l, *The Life of Muḥammad*, n.p. 1976, pp. 374–375; M. G a u d e f r o y - D e m o m b y n e s, *Narodziny...*, pp. 132–134; M. H a m i d u l l a h, *Six originaux des lettres diplomatiques du Prophète de l'islam. Etude paléographique et historique des lettres du Prophète*, Paris 1985; H.M.B.U.D.M. A h m a d, *Życie świętego Proroka Muhammada*, transl. M. N o w a k, Islamabad 1994, pp. 126–131; M. H a m i d u l l a h, *La lettre du Prophète à Hèraclius et le sort de l'original*, Ara 2.1, 1995, pp. 97–110; N.M. E l C h e i k h, *Byzantium...*, pp. 43–46; e a d e m, *Muḥammad and Heraclius...*, pp. 5–21; L.I. C o n r a d, *Heraclius in Early Islamic Kerygma*, [in:] *The Reign of Heraclius (610–641): Crisis and Confrontation*, eds. G.J. R e i n i n k, B.H. S t o l t e, Leuven–Paris–Dudley MA 2002, pp. 113–156; S.Z. M i r z a, *Oral Tradition and Scribal Conventions in the Documents Attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad*, Ann Arbor 2010. M. Rodinson makes no mention of the Prophet's letter (M. R o d i n s o n, *Mahomet*, transl. E. M i c h a l s k a - N o v a k, Warszawa 1994), while I. Hrbek and K. Petraček make only a passing reference to it (I. H r b e k, K. P e t r a č e k, *Mahomet*, transl. G. M a t u s z y ń s k i, A. M r o z e k, Warszawa 1971, pp. 105–106). However, those authors, too, neglect to mention that Heraclius was one of those to whom the Prophet was to send his letter.

[49] There appears here a problematic word which has already received a lot of attention from scholars. In Ibn Kathīr it is *arīsiyyūn*, while in Al-Ṭabarī's *History* – *akkārūn*. L.I. Conrad provides an account of the scholarly discussion devoted to the word (L.I. C o n r a d, *Heraclius in Early...*, pp. 127–129). Most convincing seem to be the views suggesting that the word refers to Arianism or generally to "heresy"; as far as *akkārūn* – "peasants" is concerned, in some sources there appears here the word *fallāḥūn*. For the sake of simplicity, as the problem is irrelevant for our analysis, I translate the word as "subjects", drawing here on A. Abul Hasan Alim Nadwi (S.A.H.A. N a d w i, *Muḥammad Rasulullah. The Apostle of Mercy*, Karachi n.d., p. 250: *the rest of your subjects and followers*) and M.H. Haykal (*The Life...*, p. 365). M. Hamidullah offers the following translation: *paysans retombera sur toi* (*La lettre...*, p. 99).

> Muḥammad Ibn Isḥāḳ[50] and others mentioned that the beginning of the Sūra *'Imrān's Family* up until the verse eighty-some was revealed on the occasion of the arrival of a delegation from Nadjrān. Az-Zuhri recounted this: [The people of Nadjrān] were the first to pay *djizya* and there is no doubt that the verse of *djizya*[51] was revealed after the capture [of Mecca], what is then a connection between what Muḥammad Ibn Isḥāḳ and Az-Zuhrī say and the assertion that the verse was recorded in the letter to Heraclius before the capture? This can be answered in a variety of ways. First, it was revealed twice, for the first time by Ḥudaybiyya and then after the capture of Mecca. The other possibility is that the beginning of the Sūra *'Imrān's Family* up until that verse was revealed on the occasion of the arrival of a delegation from Nadjrān and that the verse itself was revealed earlier. And Ibn Isḥāḳ's testimony about eighty-some verses is not reliable in view of the proof provided by Abu Sufyān. The third possibility is that the delegation of Nadjrān arrived before Al-Ḥudaybiyya and what they brought had nothing to do with *djizya* but was aimed at reinforcing their request. Thus it can be regarded as having served as a way of confirming the peace (...). Fourth, it is also possible that the verse was not yet revealed at the time when God's messenger, Peace be upon him, ordered the inclusion of it in his letter to emperor Heraclius. It was only later that Ḳur'ān's proper fragment was sent down as remaining in line with these words.[52]

In the above commentary only a letter to emperor Heraclius is mentioned. Although the focus of this paper is on Byzantium, it must be added that similar letters were, according to Islamic tradition, sent to other rulers of the neighboring countries. The letters sent by the Prophet, which I would like to present here in greater detail, are discussed by Al-Ṭabarī in the chapter on the events taking place in the seventh year after Hidjra[53]. As usually, he mentions several, slightly different versions. Below I quote two complementary variants:

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[50] I b n I s ḥ ā ḳ (died in 768) was a historian and Prophet Muḥammad's first biographer. His most important work is Prophet's biography that survives only in Ibn Hishām's modified version entitled *Sīrat Muḥammad Rasūl Allāh* or *As-Sīra an-nabawīyya*. F. S e z g i n, *Geschichte...*, vol. I, pp. 288–290; J.B.M. J o n e s, *Ibn Isḥāḳ*, [in:] *EI*, vol. III, pp. 810–811; M.M. D z i e k a n, *Pisarze arabsko-muzułmańscy...*, p. 62.

[51] Pertaining to *djizya* (a tax levied on an Islamic state's non-Muslim subjects) is 29 verse of Sūra 9.

[52] I b n K a t h ī r, *Tafsir*, pp. 55–57. Two historical comparisons irrelevant for the problem under discussion are omitted from this translation.

[53] For the translation of the text I rely on the following edition: Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, ed. M.A.F. I b r a h i m, vol. II, pp. 644–646.

In that year, in the month *Dhū al-Hidjdja*[54] the Prophet, Peace be upon him, sent Ḥāṭib Ibn Balta ʿa[55] of the tribe Lakhm, (...) to Al-Muḳawḳis[56], Shudjāʿ Ibn Wahb[57] (...) to Al-Harīth Ibn Abī Shamir al-Ghassānī[58], Diḥya Ibn Khalīfa al-Kalbī[59] to the emperor [*ḳayṣar*]. He sent Salīṭ Ibn ʿAmr al-ʿĀmirī ʿĀmir Ibn Luʾī to Ḥawza Ibn ʿAlī al-Ḥanafī[60]. And he sent ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Ḥudhāfa al-Salmī[61] to Khusraw [*Kisrā*][62]. And ʿAmr Ibn Umayya ad-Damīrī[63] to Negus [*An-Nadjāshī*][64].
God's Prophet, Peace be upon him, sent Salīṭ Ibn ʿAmr (...) to Ḥawza Ibn ʿAlī, the ruler of Al-Yamāma. And he sent Al-ʿAlāʾ Ibn al-Ḥaḍramī[65] to Al-Mundhir Ibn Sāwā[66] (...), the ruler of Al-Baḥrayn, ʿAmr Ibn Al-Āṣ[67] to Azdits Djayfar Ibn Djulandā and ʿAbbād Ibn Djulandā[68], the rulers of Oman. He sent Ḥāṭib Ibn Abī Balta'a to Al-

[54] 1 *Dhū al-Hidjdja* 7 year from Hidjra corresponds to 1 April 629. There are different accounts of when the envoys in question set out on their mission. Some sources say that they all set out at the same time, others that at intervals. See: M. H a y k a l, *The Life...*, pp. 364–365.

[55] He died around 684. He was the Prophet's companion and one of the earliest followers of Islam. He took part in the first most important battles fought by the Muslims.

[56] See below.

[57] He was the Prophet's companion and one of the earliest followers of Islam. He participated in Hidjra to Abyssinia.

[58] Governor of Damascus from the Ghassānid tribe.

[59] Diḥya Ibn Khalīfa al-Kalbī (died around 670). The Prophet's companion, he is a mysterious figure. According to some accounts, he was so beautiful that Archangel Gabriel himself assumed his form. He participated in the Battle of the Trench and in the battle of Yarmūk. H. L a m m e n s, Ch. P e l l a t, *Diḥya (or Daḥya) b. Khalifa al-Kalbi*, [in:] *EI*, vol. III, pp. 274–275.

[60] A tribe leader and old Arabic poet.

[61] The Prophet's companion. I b n a l - A t h ī r, *Usd al-ghābah*, vol. III, pp. 211–213.

[62] Khusraw II Parviz (591–628), a Persian ruler from the Sassanid dynasty. B. S k ł a d a n e k, *Historia Persji...*, p. 256; S.A.H.A. N a d w i, *Muḥammad...*, pp. 254–256.

[63] The Prophet's companion and his close associate. I b n a l - A t h ī r, *Usd al-ghābah*, vol. IV, pp. 193–194.

[64] Negus was an official title borne by Abyssinia's rulers. In our case the text refers to a ruler who is known in the sources as Al-Aṣḥam Ibn Abdjar. See: E. v a n D o n z e l, *An-Nadjāshī*, [in:] *EI*, vol. VII, pp. 862–864.

[65] The Prophet's companion. I b n a l - A t h ī r, *Usd al-ghābah*, vol. IV, pp. 74–75.

[66] A ruler from the area of Persian Gulf. A Christian in the Pre-Muslim period, he converted to Islam and contributed to the spread of the new religion. J.M. K i s t e r, *Al-Mundhir B. Sāwā*, [in:] *EI*, vol. VII, pp. 570–572.

[67] ʿAmr Ibn Al-Āṣ (594–around 664), one of the most distinguished leaders of the early Islam and conqueror of Egypt. A.J. W e n s i n c k, *ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ*, [in:] *EI*, vol. I, p. 451; F. B o c h e ń s k i, *ʿAmr ibn al-ʿAs*, [in:] *Mały słownik...*, pp. 59–60.

[68] Oman's rulers were converted to Islam by ʿAmr Ibn Al-Āṣ. As S.A.H.A. Nadwi says that *djulandā* is not a proper noun but the name of religious leader. S.A.H.A. N a d w i, *Letters to Monarchs*, http://www.nusrah.com/en/his-biography/Muḥammad-rasulullah/373.letters-to-monarchs.htm.

> -Muḳawḳis, the ruler of Alexandria (...). And the Prophet sent Diḥya Ibn Khalīfa al--Kalbī and Al-Khazradjī[69] to emperor Heraclius, the ruler of Byzantium. When he arrived with a letter from the Prophet, Peace be upon Him, he placed the letter between his thighs and side.

The context of sending these "ambassadors" (accounts do not tally here) was interestingly described by Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam in *Futūḥ Miṣr* (*The Conquest of Egypt)*. Living before Al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam[70] was the historian who, in writing the work mentioned above, drew on Ibn Isḥāḳ.

> In the sixth year after Hidjra of God's Prophet, Peace be upon Him, the Prophet returned from Al-Ḥudaybiyya and sent his men to rulers. (...) One day He ascended the *minbar*, praised God and said: Next I wish to send some of you to alien kings, but do not disperse like the Jews in front of Jesus, Mary's son. God, Praise be unto Him, revealed to Jesus that he must send his men to earthly kings, so Jesus sent Apostles. Those who were sent to the nearby territories were pleased, those sent far away, were not, and they said: I do not like it is me whom you send there. To this Jesus said: God Almighty, I ordered my disciples to do as You told me, but they were not pleased with it. Then God revealed: I will give you an advice! And suddenly they all began to speak different languages. Each of them spoke a language used in a land to which he was to be sent. To this Muhādjir said: O, God's Prophet, we will never speak against your orders. Send us wherever you want![71]

Thus, Muḥammad's alleged correspondence covered the regions of Syria, northern and eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula, Iran, Ethiopia, Egypt and of course Byzantium. In what follows I shall focus on the last two territories, as well as on the two figures that played important roles in their respective histories: Heraclius and Al-Muḳawḳis.

The question of the authenticity of the letters mentioned above remains open to debate, as does the fact of Muḥammad sending his emissaries to the rulers of the neighboring countries. That the envoys were actually dispatched is accepted by all Arab authors – classical, post-classical, those living in the nineteenth century[72], and modern. In the mid-nineteenth century the issue began to attract the attention of orientalists. It can be said that contemporary scholars

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[69] Al-Khazradjī Ibn ʿĀmir, Diḥya's grandfather. Ṭ a b a r ī, *Tarikh*, vol. II, p. 646, footnote 1.

[70] Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam (died in 871), an Arab lawyer and historian, he is in the first place known for the work quated above, that is, the oldest description of the Muslim conquest of Egypt. F. R o s e n t h a l, *Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam*, [in:] *EI*, vol. III, pp. 674–675.

[71] I b n ʿ A b d a l - Ḥ a k a m, p. 64. Cf. I b n Ḥ i s h a m, ed. A. H i d j a z i a s - S a q a, vol. IV, pp. 339–450.

[72] A. A n - N a s ī r ī, *Kitāb al-istiḳṣā li-akhbār duwal al-Maghrib al-Aḳṣá*, ed. M. U t h m a n, vol. I, Bayrut 2010, p. 329.

tend to regard these accounts as having had no basis in reality. This view rests on a thorough analysis of non-Arab sources and of a variety of Arab texts that differ from one another both in terms of the details they contain and in terms of the way they treat the issues considered by western historiography as fundamental, such as, for example, chronology[73]. Muḥammad's correspondence with Khusraw, being part of the same corpus of texts as the letters under discussion, is viewed by the Russian scholar Aly Kolesnikov as authentic[74].

It would be difficult to find a present-day Muslim historian of the early Islam who denies the authenticity of the events in question, the more so as the exegetic literature considers them to be part of the sacred history of Islam. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal (died in 1956), the author of one of the most popular biographies of the Prophet, abstained from providing any critical comment on the issue[75]. The Pakistani scholar Abul Hasan Nadwi (died in 1999) also did not question the belief that the events alluded to in the accounts quoted above actually took place. The same holds true for Muḥammad Hamidullah. Neither in his monograph nor in the article published in one of the leading journals in Arabic studies, I have mentioned above, does he attempt to cast any doubts on the historicity of the events in question. M.H. Haykal and S.A.H.A. Nadwi seem not to notice the western discussion of the topic, although it is highly unlikely that these scholars – both of whom draw on western literature – are unfamiliar with it. Worth noting is also the opinion expressed by the Christian Arab from Lebanon, Nuṣrī Salhab, the author of many books on Islam. Convinced of the reliability of the accounts in question, he considers the doubts held by western scholars to be unserious and unjustified[76].

The Prophet's letters are also important for the history of international relations in the Muslim world. This aspect of the issue has received much attention from the Moroccan scholar from the University of Al-Jadida, Muḥammad Bu Bush. Containing references to a number of other Arab publications on the problem, his work *ʿAlāqāt al-dawlīyah fī al-Islām* (*International Relations in Islam*)[77] provides an analysis of diplomatic missions from the times of the Prophet. N.M. El Cheikh, whom I have already mentioned and whom one can situate at the intersection of Western and Middle Eastern traditions, shies

[73] A little regard for chronology and a mythical thinking typify Arab historiography, sometimes also contemporary one.

[74] A.I. K o l e s n i k o v, *Dve redakcii pis'ma Muchammeda sasanidskomu šachu Chosrovu II Parvizu*, PPSb 17.80, 1967, p. 74.

[75] M.H. H a y k a l, *The Life...*, pp. 374–379 (the first Arabic edition: Cairo 1933).

[76] N. S a l h a b, *Fi khutā Muḥammad*, Bayrut 1971, p. 277.

[77] M. B u B u s h, *ʿAlāqāt al-dawlīyah fī al-Islām*, Dimashk 2009, pp. 96–104.

away from giving an unambiguous support to one of the two sides of the controversy. To conclude this remarks, the Arab-Muslim world counts the information about those emissaries as referring to real historical events which one has no reason to call into doubt. It is adduced in proof of Muḥammad's foresight and political sagacity and serves as a point of departure for the study of international relations, law, and the history of diplomacy in the Muslim Middle East.

However, Muḥammad Bu Bush departs from the truth when he says that western scholars accept the historicity of both the legations and the letters[78]. While there are some doubts about the authenticity of the former, there is almost absolute agreement about the falsity of the latter. Robert B. Serjeant argues that Muḥammad may have corresponded with Byzantine and Persian officials, if only because of Ḳuraysh's extensive trade with those empires. However, it seems impossible that he could send so provocative letters to Heraclius and Khusraw, as even at the moment of his death he did not exercise control over the whole Arabian Peninsula[79]. M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes also doubts that such events ever took place. According to him, the question of the letters to the monarchs has been distorted by tradition[80]. A similar view is held by W. Montgomery Watt in *Muḥammad at Medina*[81]. Many students of Islam do not consider the issue to be worthy of mention and, consequently, it remains altogether omitted from their works. One may argue that orientalists are willing to refer to it only when writing detailed biographies of those who can be assumed to have played any role in this history. Indeed, in itself, it is not regarded as an important aspect of either the history of Byzantium or the life of the Prophet.

4.2. The Prophet's Letter to Emperor Heraclius

There exists an extensive literature on the Arab-Byzantine contacts during the reign of emperor Heraclius (610–641)[82]. The letter which Heraclius sent to

[78] *Ibidem*, p. 100.

[79] R.B. Serjeant, *Muḥammad's Letters to Foreign Monarchs and Governors*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature. Arabic Literature to the End of Umayyad Period*, eds. A.E.L. Beeston, T.M. Johnstone, R.B. Serjeant, G.R. Smith, Cambridge 1983, p. 141.

[80] M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, p. 132.

[81] W. Montgomery Watt, *Muḥammad at Medina*, Cambridge 1956, pp. 345–347 (*Excurse D. Muḥammad's Letters to the Princes).* For M. Hamidullah's comments on the opinions expressed by W. Montgomery Watt see: M. Hamidullah, *Six originaux...*, pp. 84–87.

[82] In addition to the works I have already mentioned see: W.E. Kaegi, *Heraclios and the Arabs*, GOTR 27, 1982, pp. 109–133; L. Pouzet, *Le ḥadīth d'Héraclius. Une caution by-*

Muḥammad Ibn ʿAbd Allāh of Medina, almost the emperor's peer, is believed to concern an interesting aspect of the Byzantine-Arab relations and, as such, is almost always given wide coverage in works devoted to them. The letter was sent right after the relics of the Holy Cross were returned to Jerusalem – regained by Heraclius from the Persians who had brought them out of the Saint City[83].

The story appears in a number of classic Arab works, including various religious texts as well as those which, according to western taxonomy, can be assembled under the rubric of historiography[84]. In his *Tafsīr* Al-Ṭabarī gives the following account of the mission to Heraclius on which Muḥammad was to send:

> [Abu Sufyān] said: Diḥya Ibn Khalīfa al-Kalbī presented him with the Prophet's letter: In the name of God, most gracious, most merciful. From Muḥammad, God's Prophet, to Heraclius, the great ruler of Byzantium. Peace be upon him who follows the right path. Next, I summon thee with the appeal of Islam: become a Moslem and thou shalt be safe. God shall give thee thy reward twofold. But if thou decline then thee will sin like all your subjects[85].
> Ibn Shihāb az-Zuhrī said: A Christian bishop whom I met at the time of ʿAbd al-Malik Ibn Marwān[86] told me that he was well-informed about this matter concerning Prophet, Peace be upon Him, and emperor Heraclius. He said: when the Prophet's letter arrived, along with Diḥya Ibn Khalīfa al-Kalbī, Heraclius took it and placed it between his thighs and his side. Then he wrote to a man in Rome, who spoke Hebrew, describing in detail the whole thing. The Roman answered: Verily, it is the Prophet to whom we are looking forward, there is no doubt about it. Follow his path and believe him.
> He summoned Byzantine patriarchs who gathered in a citadel. The gates were closed behind them. He looked at them from his platform as he was afraid of their reaction. I gathered you here for a good cause. I received a letter from this man, calling on me to accept his religion. Verily, by God, he is the Prophet to whom we have been looking forward and whom we find in our books. Then follow him, believe him and we will save ourselves in this world and in the afterlife.
> He went on: they were indignant at what he said and turned to leave but the citadel's gates were closed. Heraclius said: Turn them back – and he was afraid of them – and said: O, The Byzantines, I told you what you have just heard to test the strength of your faith in view of what happened. I rejoiced at what I saw. Then they fell to their knees before him. The gates were opened at his order and they left.

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zantine à la prophétie de Muḥammad, [in:] *La Syrie de Byzance à l'islam. VII^e–VIII^e siècles*, eds. P. Canivet, J.-P. Rey-Coquais, Damas 1992, pp. 59–66; W.E. Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests*, Cambridge 2000. It comes as a surprise that the last scholar does not refer in any way to the previous research into the letter.

[83] M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, p. 132.

[84] The version from the collection of ḥadīths *Ṣaḥīḥ* by Al-Bukhāri was discussed by L. Pouzet in the article mentioned above.

[85] *Al-Akkārūn*.

[86] A caliph from the Umayyad dynasty. He ruled in the years 685–705.

(...) A scholar reported that after Diḥya Ibn Khalīfa al-Kalbī came to Heraclius and presented him with a letter from Allāh, Peace be upon Him, the emperor said: Verily, by God, I know that your master is a real prophet and that he is the one to whom we have been looking forward and whom we find in our book, but I am afraid of the Byzantines. If it were not for that, I would follow him. Go to the archbishop[87] and tell him about your master – he is more powerful in Byzantium than I am and wields greater influence. See what he will tell you.

He said: Diḥya came to him and told Heraclius about the letter from God's messenger, Peace be upon Him, and about the message itself. The archbishop said: Yes, verily, your master is a real prophet, we know his character traits and his name is to be found in our books[88]. Then he entered, took off his black robe and put on the white one. After that he took his stick and addressed the Byzantines gathered in the Church, saying: we received the letter from Aḥmad[89] who calls on us to believe in Allāh. I declare that there is no other deity but One God and that Aḥmad is his servant and prophet.

He said: And they made a lunge at him and beat him to death. When Diḥya returned to Heraclius and told him about everything, the emperor said: That is what I told you: I am afraid of them. Archbishop, by God, was stronger than me and wielded greater influence over them than I do.

(...) A man living in Syria for a long time said: When Heraclius wanted to set out from Syria to Constantinople and got word of God's Prophet, Peace be upon Him, he gathered the Byzantines and addressed them in the following way: O, the Byzantines, I have something to tell you. Give some thought to it because it may be good. What do you mean? – they asked. He replied: you should know that this man is a real prophet. He is to be found in our book. We can recognize him by the traits through which he was supposed to distinguish himself. Follow him and we will save ourselves in this world and in the afterlife. They said: Should we come under Arab rule while were are richer and more numerous than they are and our country is greater than theirs.

He replied: Lets us then pay him *djizya* every year. Break his bones on my behalf and I will have a rest from fighting against him, giving him this in return. They replied: are we supposed to demean ourselves before the Arabs in return for *kharāj* while we are wealthier and more numerous and our country is greater than theirs. No, by God, we will never do it!

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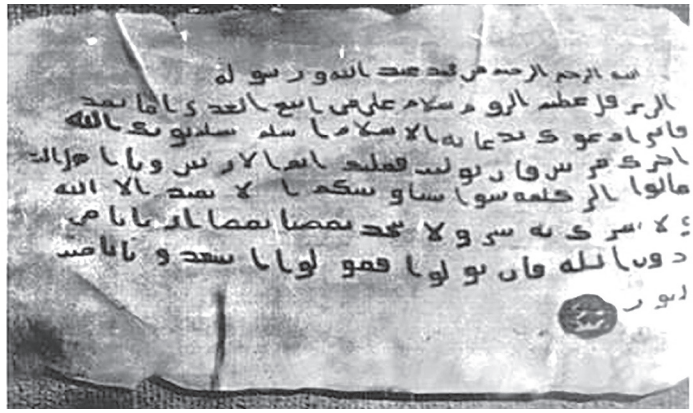
[87] There appears here a mysterious word whose meaning is not clear. In some versions it is *Ḍughāṭir/Ḍaghāṭir/Ḍughāṭur*, while in others *Ṣughāṭir/Ṣaghāṭir* (with *ṣād* (*ṣ*) or *ḍād* (*ḍ*) at the beginning – in Arabic the letters differ from one another only in the presence, or absence, of the dot). In the edition of which I make use here, there appears the form *Ṣughāṭir*, while in the edition used by El Cheikh (*Byzantium...*, p. 47) there appears *Ḍughāṭir*. She treats the word as denoting the name of a bishop. M. Hamidullah argues it is the name of an office: *l'éveque "autocrator", ou ḍuġāṭur des Arabes* (*La Lettre...*, pp. 97–98). I decided to translate the phrase *ṣaghāṭir al-usḳuf* as *archbishop*.

[88] This may be a reference to the issue of Paraclete, widely discussed in Muslim-Christian disputes. For more on the issue see: W.P. T u r e k, *Ahmad-Paraklet-Mani. Spojrzenie na kontrowersyjny werset 61,6 Koranu*, [in:] *Spotkania Arabistyczne III*, ed. E. G ó r s k a, Kraków 2000, pp. 11–26. It can also be indicated by the introduction in the Prophet's letter to Heraclius.

[89] Prophet Muḥammad sometimes goes by the name Aḥmad.

> He said: Let us appease him by giving him the lands of Syria and he will leave me in possession of Ash-Shām[90] (...) To this they answered: Are we supposed to give him the lands of Syria that are the hub of Ash-Shām? We will never do this!
> When thy refused to accept his proposal, he said: Now you see that you have won by forbidding him to cross into your territory. Then he mounted his mule and went away in the direction of the road leading to Ash-Shām. After that he said: Peace be upon the Syrian land, farewell! And he left for Constantinople.

Al-Ṭabarī's work does not contain the full text of the letter. His version is in many respects inaccurate. Below, I quote what appears to be the fullest version of this monument. Here is an alleged original of Muḥammad's letter to Heraclius[91]:



Transcription[92]:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم.من محمد عبد الله ورسوله
الى هرقل عظيم الروم وسلام على من اتبع الهدى اما بعد
فإني أدعوك بدعاية الاسلام أسلم تسلم أسلم يؤتك الله
أجرك مرتين فإن توليت فعليك إثم اليريسين ويا أهل الكتاب
تعالوا إلى كلمة سواء بيننا وبينكم ألا نعبد إلا الله
ولا نشرك به شيئا ولا يتخذ بعضنا بعضا أربابا من
دون الله فإن تولوا فقولوا اشهدوا بأنا مسـ
لمون

[90] In the early Islam the term *Ash-Shām* meant the so-called Great Syria. It was also used to denote the old Damascus. The fragment refering to a division *Ash-Shām*/Syria is rather unclear.

[91] http://t1.hespress.com/files/fromprophetetocesar_851343288.jpg.

[92] Transcription according to M. Hamidullah (*La lettre...*, p. 98), without taking into account vocal and punctuation signs that are the author's interference. The division of particular lines is in conformity with the manuscript.

[Beneath, seal with inscription:]
Translation:
In the name of God Gracious and Merciful. From Muḥammad, God's servant and Prophet,
to Heraclius, Byzantium's great ruler. Peace be upon him who follows the right path.
Next, I summon thee with the appeal of Islam: become a Moslem and thou shalt be safe.
God shall give thee thy reward twofold. But if thou decline then thee will sin like all your subjects.
'O People of the Book!
Come to common
terms as between us and you: That we worship none but Allāh;
that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not, from among
ourselves, lords and patrons other than Allāh'.
If then they turn back, say ye: 'Bear witness that we [at least] are Muslims [bowing to Allāh's Will]'.
[Beneath seal with inscription:]
God
Prophet
Muḥammad

In his *History*, Al-Ya'ḳūbī[93] adds Heraclius' response to the letter from the Muslim Prophet:

To Aḥmad, God's prophet, Peace be upon Him, whom Jesus prophesied, from the emperor, the king of Byzantium. Your messenger brought me Your letter. Verily, I bear witness that you are God's prophet whom we find in the Gospel. Jesus, Mary's son, foretold your coming. I called on the Byzantines to believe in You, but they refused. It would have been better for them to believe me. I want to stand by you, to serve you and to wash your feet.[94]

As mentioned above, many western scholars treat the episode as nothing but a legend. However, Arabists are prepared to admit that such a mission may have taken place. For the Byzantinist, Walter Kaegi, this, too, is a possibility that cannot be ruled out – but, as he says, such a mission, when sent, would have been completely ignored by the Byzantines, leaving Muḥammad's emissary with no chance of being received at the imperial court[95]. Ahatanhel E. Krymsky ends his discussion of the topic with the following conclusion: *It goes without*

[93] Aḥmad Ibn Abī Ya'ḳūb Al-Ya'ḳūbī (died in 897), a geographer and historian, his most known work is *Kitāb al-buldān* (*Book of countries*). M.Q. Z a m a n, *Al-Ya'ḳūbī* [in:] *EI*, vol. XI, pp. 257–258; J. B i e l a w s k i, *Klasyczna literatura arabska*, Warszawa 1995, pp. 187–188.

[94] Ya'ḳūbī, p. 399 (ed. A b d al-A m i r M u h n a).

[95] W.E. K a e g i, *Heraclius...*, p. 236.

saying that Heraclius disregarded Diḥya Ibn Khalīfa[96]. From this it follows that Krymskiy does not entirely reject the possibility of the emperor receiving the letter. Unambiguous about the whole story is Leone Caetani who calls it apocryphal and legendary[97]. Be that as it may, for western scholars the problem lies mainly in the letter itself. In the nineteenth century, doubts about its authenticity were raised by Ignaz Goldziher, and then by Leone Caetani and Frants Buhl, of which M. Hamidullah eagerly informs us – himself convinced of its veracity[98]. He also gives a detailed account of the history of the manuscript which the emperor received[99]. In *Six originaux des lettres du Prophète*, he refers to what he claims is the opinion of anonymous experts from the British Museum who subjected the letter to chemical analysis and examined it using ultraviolet rays. This, says Hamidullah, enabled them to prove that it originated in the times of the Prophet. Their findings were then confirmed by dr. Reed from the University of Leeds. However, it comes as a surprise that this information is not included in the text the author published in 1995 in "Arabica". After all, it could dispel the doubts held by western scholars. In 1997, King Hussein of Jordan announced on television that he was in possession of the document[100]. N.M. El Cheikh, without expressing his own opinion on the subject, provides information that the authenticity of the letter is questioned by the Iraqi scholar, Suhayla al-Jabburi[101].

4.3. The Letter to Al-Muḳawḳis

l-Muḳawḳis[102] (also Maqawqas) is a name which Arab sources give to one of the Coptic Patriarchs of Alexandria. The origin of the name is not quite clear. analysis is to be found in a monograph by Alfred J. Buttler on the conquest of Egypt[103]. This author indicates a number of Arabic sources (Al-Balādhurī – the ninth century, Al-Ṭabarī, Eutychius – the ninth/tenth century, Severus of Al-Ashmūneyn – the tenth century, Ibn al-Athīr – twelfth century, Yākūt al-Ḥamawī – the twelfth/thirteenth century, Abū Ṣāliḥ – thirteenth century, Ibn

[96] A.E. Krymskij, *Istorija musul'manstva*, Moskva 2003, p. 125.

[97] L. Caetani, *Annali...*, p. 731.

[98] M. Hamidullah, *La lettre...*, p. 99.

[99] *Ibidem*, pp. 107–110.

[100] See: N.M. El Cheikh, *Muḥammad and Heraclius...*, p. 11, footnote. 23.

[101] *Ibidem*.

[102] The analysis of the letter in: M. Hamidullah, *Six originaux...*, pp. 95–107.

[103] A.J. Buttler, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt and the Last Thirty Years of Roman Dominion*, Oxford 1902, *Appendix C. On the Identity of 'Al-Muḳauḳas'*.

Khaldūn – fourteenth century), where this figure appears. Of course, Al-Muḳawḳis also appears in all of the works devoted to the life of the Prophet I have mentioned here. Here is the alleged original of the Prophet's letter to Al-Muḳawḳis[104]:

The alleged original of Muḥammad's letter to Al-Muḳawḳis[105]



Transcription[106]:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم. من محمد عبد الله ور
سوله إلى المقوقس عظيم القبط وسلام على
من اتبع الهدى أما بعد فإني أد
عوك بدعاية الاسلام فاسلم
تسلم يؤتك اللهأجرك مرتين
فان توليت فعليك اثم القبط
يا أهل الكتاب تعالوا إلى كلمة

[104] http://werzit.com/intel/history/islam/Moqoqas.jpg. The manuscript is located at the Topkapı Museum in Istanbul: http://iosminaret.org/vol-2/issue1/topkapi_museum.php.

[105] Source: http://werzit.com/intel/history/islam/Moqoqas.jpg [dostęp z 4.02.2014]. The manuscript is located at the Topkapı Museum in Istanbul: http://iosminaret.org/vol-2/issue1/topkapi_museum.php [access 4.02.2014].

[106] According to the edition: F.-A. B e l i n, *Lettre à M. Reinaud, membre de l'Institut sur un document arabe relatif à Mahomet*, JA 4, 1854, pp. 488–489.

سواء بيننا وبينكم الا نعبد إلا الله
ولا نشرك به شيئا ولا يتخذ بعضنا
بعضا أربابا من دون الله فإن
تولوا فقولوا اشهدوا بأنا مسـ
لمون

[Beneath seal with inscription:]

الله
رسول
محمد

Translation:
In the name of God the Gracious, the Merciful. From Muḥammad the Apostle of of God and His Prophet
to Al-Muḳawḳis, the chief of the Copts. Peace be upon him who follows the guidance.
Next, I summon thee with the appeal of Islam:
become a Moslem. If you become Muslim God shall give thee thy reward twofold.
But if thou decline then on thee is the guilt of the Copts.
'O People of the Book!
come to common
terms as between us and you: That we worship none but Allāh;
that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not, from among
ourselves, lords and patrons other than Allāh'. If then
they turn back, say ye: 'Bear witness that we [at least] are Muslims [bowing to Allāh's Will]'.
[Below, seal with inscription:]
God
Prophet
Muḥammad

To Kaj Öhrnberg we owe a summary of the hitherto conducted research into the subject. As Öhrnberg writes, nowadays it is widely held that the source mentions a Melchite patriarch of Alexandria, Cyrus. However, there is no doubt that other persons are also referred to by this name in Arab texts which often confuse historical facts with legends. That the person in question should be identified as Cyrus is corroborated by a comparison between Arab, Byzantine and Coptic sources[107]. In the last category one can include, for example, the chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu. Cyrus, transferred to Egypt by Heraclius, arrived there

[107] See, among others: J o h n o f N i k i u, *indices*; J. P a ł u c k i, *Jan z Nicius*, [in:] *Encyklopedia Katolicka*, vol. VII, Lublin 1997, col. 926.

in 631. (One should pay attention to the divergences in dating). Before his stay in Egypt, he had served as Bishop of Phasis (Poti). The term Al-Muḳawḳis is likely to be connected with Caucasus. Cyrus' successor, Benjamin, was also called Al-Muḳawḳis (or simply Muḳawḳis) by Arab chroniclers. The period in which the latter held his office is described in the sources as *ten years during which Heraclius and Al-Muḳawḳis ruled Egypt*. In a variety of other texts, Al-Muḳawḳis is presented as *Viceroy of Egypt*, whom he was to be in the reign of Heraclius[108]. Thus, the term (leaving aside its unclear etymology) should be regarded as having denoted the "ruler of Egypt" in general. This view finds confirmation in dictionaries of the classical Arabic.

For the account of Ḥāṭib's visit to the patriarch of Alexandria I rely on *Futūḥ Miṣr* by Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam:

> Ḥāṭib set out with the Prophet's letter and when he got to Alexandria he found Muḳawḳis sitting on a platform. He swam up to him on sea, and when he was close to him he indicated the letter from God's Prophet which he was holding with two fingers. When Muḳawḳis spotted Ḥāṭib, he ordered him to give him the letter. He told him to get closer and when he read the letter he said: What, if he is a prophet, prevented him from summoning me and presenting me with his message? To this Ḥāṭib replied: and what prevented Jesus, Mary's son, from telling those who rejected him not to do it? He fell silent for an hour and then he repeated his question. Ḥāṭib gave the same answer and fell silent. Ḥāṭib said: there was a man before you who thought that he was the Greatest Lord and God wrought vengeance on him and you should take revenge for him. Think of others not of yourself. Verily, the earthly world is yours and you will lose it only to what is better, that is, to Islam. Nothing campers to Islam. Moses' prophecy about Jesus is like Jesus' prophecy about Muḥammad, and we summon you to Ḳur'ān just like you summon Torah's believers to the Gospel. We are not trying to make you turn away from Messiah's religion, we are guiding you towards it. Then he read the following letter: In the name of God, the Gracious, the Merciful. From the Apostle of Allāh to the Muḳawḳis, chief of the Copts. Peace be upon him who follows the guidance. Next, I summon thee with the appeal of Islam: become a Moslem and thou shalt be safe. God shall give thee thy reward twofold. But if thou decline then on thee is the guilt of the Copts. 'O People of the Book! come to common terms as between us and you: That we worship none but Allāh; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, lords and patrons other than Allāh'. If then they turn back, say ye: 'Bear witness that we [at least] are Muslims [bowing to Allāh's Will]'. When he read it he put it into a casket made of ivory and sealed it.
> (...) At night Al-Muḳawḳis sent for Ḥāṭib, and the interpreter was the only person he was with, and he said: Tell me about things I am going to ask you about. I know that your master selected you, sending you here. He said: I will answer truthfully to any of

[108] A.J. Buttler, *The Arab Conquest...*, p. 517.

> your questions. He asked: What does Muḥammad call on us to do? He said: He wants you to worship one God only, associating nothing with Him, rejecting everything except Him. He also calls on you to pray. He asked: How many times do you pray? He replied: Five times during the day and night, we fast in Ramadan and make pilgrimages to God's House. He instructs us to respect treaties and to abstain from eating carrion and blood. He asked: Who follows him? He answered: Young people from his tribe and others. He asked: Are his people persecuted? He answered: Yes. Describe him to me – he asked. He described as well as he could. There are some things left which you have failed to take into account – he said. There is red in his eyes, tell me what distinguishes him – there is a sign of prophecy between his shoulder bones, he rides a mule, wears a coat and lives on fruit and crumbs. And he does not mind whether something concerns his cousin or uncle. Yes, these are his traits – he answered. Al-Muḳawḳis said to this: I knew that one more prophet was about to appear, but I thought he would appear in Syria. This is where all prophets before him came from. It turns out that he appeared among the Arabs, in the land of misery and toil. However, the Copts will not listen to me to follow him and I do not want them to know about our conversation. Word will spread about him in the country and his men will get to us to reveal what we were talking about. And I will not say a word to the Copts. Go back to your master. (...) Then he summoned a writer fluent in Arabic and the latter wrote: From Muḥammad Ibn ʿAbd Allāh to Al-Muḳawḳis, the Copts' leader. Peace! Next, I read Your letter and understood its purpose, Your message. I recognized You as the prophet, although I thought he would appear in Syria. I hosted generously your messenger and I send you two girls who are respected among the Copts, a robe and a mule which you can ride. Peace be upon you.[109]

Muḥammad's concubine, Mary the Copt, was to be one of those girls[110]. The Prophet's letter to Al-Muḳawḳis, the first in the Corpus[111] has been considered a forgery ever since it was discovered by western scholars[112]. This papyrus manuscript was found by the French Egyptologist, Étienne Barthélemy, in 1852 in a monastery in Akhmim. In 1854, François-Alphonse Belin published its critical edition. As Theodor Nöldeke remarks, "chancellery style" was at that time much less cufic in character. The seals used as a substitute for signature were made of clay. Colourful seals were not used. What is more, the letter of this kind, apart from the name of the sender, should also contain the name of the person

[109] Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, vol. I, pp. 65–67.

[110] M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu...*, pp. 181–183; F. Buhl, *Māriya*, [in:] *EI*, vol. VI, p. 575.

[111] M. Hamidullah, *Six originaux...*, p. 99.

[112] In the first edition of his *Geschichte des Qorāns* (Göttingen 1860, p. 140) Th. Nöldeke leaned toward the view that the document is authentic. However, in the reprint of the work from 1909 he clearly rejects his previous opinion. See: T. Nöldeke, F. Schwally, *Geschichte des Qorāns...*, p. 190, footnote. 3. M. Hamidullah says that this change was introduced by the editor of the second edition of the book, F. Schwally (p. 101).

entrusted with the task of delivering it[113]. The way in which Hamidullah tries to refute these arguments in his own edition of the letter is rather unconvincing.

Much speaks in favour of the interpretation that Muḥammad's missions to the rulers of the neighbouring countries had no basis in reality. At the same time, it seems to be designed to legitimate Muḥammad's prophecy and the whole *umma* by Christianity[114]. Such a phenomenon, referred to as a backward projection or creative retrospective, is often the case in both historical and pseudohistorical literature. And it is not something to be considered typical of Arab-Muslim culture. The Mexican scholar, E. Florescano, comments on this principle in the following way:

> Every time a social movement wins, imposing its rule on the society, it becomes a measure of history. It rules over the present, defines the future, and arranges the past. It dictates what, and why, deserves to be remembered. (...) The selective and pragmatic reconstruction of the past is as old as the human history itself. It serves as a way of identification, explains the origins of [various phenomena], legitimizes the established order, gives meaning to the life of the nations and individuals, justifies the right of one group to rule over the other, creates reality, and promotes projects to be realized in the near future.[115]

There is no doubt that this way of using history played a specific role in Christian-Muslim disputations that took place in the Middle East in the period under consideration[116].

Finally, worthy of note is some inconsistency with which the earliest Arab sources (or considered as such) treat the Byzantines. The Ḳur'ānic contexts analyzed above are at odds with a part of the Prophet's Tradition, regarded as having been brought into being during his lifetime, (although it was written/recorded two centuries later). In Al-Bukhāri's collection of ḥadīths[117], in the *Book of Jihad* (*Kitāb al-jihād*), there is a short chapter entitled *What was said about the fight with the Byzantines* (*Ma ḳīla fi ḳitāl Al-Rūm*). It concerns itself with only one ḥadīth, narrated by the Prophet's known companion (*saḥābiyya*) Umm Ḥaram

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[113] T. N ö l d e k e, F. S c h w a l l y, *Geschichte des Qorāns...*, p. 190.

[114] N.M. E l C h e i k h, *Muḥammad and Heraclius...*, p. 21; e a d e m, *Byzantium...*, p. 54. I analyse a similar phenomenon in reference to an alleged Christian in my *Quss Ibn Sā'ida al-Iyādī....*, *passim*.

[115] E. F l o r e s c a n o, *Od historii – pomnika władzy do historii wyjaśniającej*, [in:] *Po co nam historia?*, transl. M. M r ó z, Warszawa 1985, p. 71. See also: J. S z a c k i, *Tradycja*, Warszawa 1971, pp. 174–175.

[116] R.B. S e r j e a n t, *Muḥammad's Letters...*, p. 142.

[117] B u k h ā r i, vol. III, pp. 1069–1070, ḥadīth 2766 (ed. Damascus 1993).

Bint Milḥān (died around 647/648)[118]. As she was to bring Islam to Cyprus, she is known as *Shahīdat al-Baḥr*, that is, "Martyr of the Sea". Her grave is believed to be found in Larnaca in tekke Hala Sultan[119]. According to Al-Bukhāri, Umm Ḥaram heard the Prophet say: *The first warriors of my umma who will conquer the city will be forgiven of all their sins.*

Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad* carries a similarly negative connotation. It includes the remark that Antichrist (*Ad-Dajjāl* – whose advent is to be considered as a sign of the end of the world) will come only after the Byzantines have been defeated[120]. However, it seems that these traditional accounts the authenticity of which has long been a topic of concern to a great number of scholars simply reflect the way in which Byzantium was viewed by Muslims later on. This tradition must have emerged when the latter had already stopped regarding the Byzantines as their potential allies and begun to treat them as their greatest enemies. Of course, it remains to answer the question of whether the events dealt with in this contribution actually took place. As it seems, Muslims scholars will differ considerably from their western colleagues in answering the question. For them, the events under discussion form part of a sacred history, and *sacrum* clearly prevents them from accepting the facts.



[118] Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghābah*, vol. VII, pp. 317–318 (biographical entry 7403).

[119] N. Papalexandrou, *Hala Sultan Tekke, Cyprus: An Elusive Landscape of Sacredness in a Liminal Context*, JMGS 26.2, 2008, pp. 251–281.

[120] Ibn Ḥanbal, vol. I, p. 177, ḥadīth 1543 (ed. Bayrut 1993).

Teresa Wolińska

5. The Arabs and Islam in the Eyes of the Byzantines

5.1. The Arabs in Byzantine Eyes

In the opinion of Bert de Vries, from the Byzantine point of view the Arabs were *as mysterious and invisible as their desert* (...) *like shadowy figures seen through a sand storm*[1]. This kind of view, although suggestive, was not true, at least for the people of Syria, Palestine and Egypt, who – which has been demonstrated elsewhere in this book – had had multidimensional relations with Arab tribes. For the inhabitants of Constantinople, or to be more precise – for the European part of the empire, and particularly for their intellectual circles, who tended to trust ancient writers rather than contemporary accounts – the situation could look different.

The Byzantines inherited from their Greek and Roman ancestors a variety of stereotypes and prejudices regarding Arabs/Saracens/Ishmaelites. Their prototype can be found as far back as in the famous verse of *Genesis*, in which Ishmael is described as *a wild man*[2]. Referring to the Old Testament, Joseph Flavius added his own remarks, which reinforced the negative opinion about Arabs who – according to him – were unfaithful and ungodly, greedy and treacherous[3]. Arab women would be famous for making poisons[4].

An interesting example of one of the most stereotypical perceptions of the Arabs can be found in Aesop's fables. One of them is a story of Hermes'

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[1] B. de Vries, *On the Way to Bosra: Arab Settlement in South Syria Before Islam – the Evidence from Written Sources*, [in:] *Hereux qui comme Ulisses a fait un beau voyage: Movements of People in Time and Space*, eds. N. Naguib, B. de Vries, Bergen 2010, p. 73.

[2] Gen, 16,12.

[3] Joseph Flavius, XV, 5, 3 (that accusation would fall in Herod's speech to his army).

[4] Joseph Flavius, XVII, 4, 1.

carriage in which he used to transport bad habits and distribute them among peoples. When the carriage had a crash in Arabia, the local people stole its content, as they believed that it was of great value. So they became false and treacherous more than any other nation – no truth could pass through their mouths[5]. The fact that it was the god of merchants and thieves who fell their victim adds extra flavour to the story. Numerous sources in which the Arabs were described as thieves and robbers go perfectly well with this fable[6]. Their neighbours perceived them as militant and inveterate looters[7]. *It is a dangerous "ethnos*" – concluded Ammianus Marcellinus[8]. Telling of an attack of some unidentified barbarians on the hermits in Rouba, Cyril of Scythopolis described them as *Saracen by nature*[9]. They were seen as enemies from whom the eastern provinces had to be defended[10]. Attention was paid to other negative features of their nature. Theophylact Simocatta assessed them shortly as incredible and disloyal[11]. De Vries suggests that the negative stereotype may have resulted from the fact that the Romans failed to subordinate the people of Arabian Peninsula[12].

For many Byzantine writers their neighbours from the Peninsula were nothing but barbarians. It was caused by the fact that the information about them reached the empire at the peak of dramatic events, usually raids. Eusebius of Caesarea noticed that in the times of persecution of Christians in the empire, the *barbaric Saracens* captured some of those who had sought refuge in the desert and killed many others[13].

The belief that the Saracens were Skenites, nomads dwelling in tents, persisted for a long time[14]. Such description can be found in Marcellinus, who

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[5] Aesop, *Fables*, 112. E. Lauzi, *Bizantini versus Saraceni. Un'accusa d'idolatria*, Ae 88.2, 2014, p. 287.

[6] Joseph Flavius, XV, 10, 1; Pliny, VI, 26; Ammianus Marcellinus, XIV, 4, 3.

[7] Ammianus Marcellinus, XIV, 4, 3.

[8] Ammianus Marcellinus, XIV, 4, 7.

[9] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae*, 14. Further references to Cyril in this chapter after the edition by E. Schwartz.

[10] B. de Vries, *On the Way to Bosra...*, p. 73; D.D. Grafton, *"The Arabs" in the Ecclesiastical Historians of the 4th/5th Centuries: Effects on Contemporary Christian-Muslim Relations*, HTS 64.1, 2008, p. 178.

[11] Theophylact Simocatta, III, 17, 7.

[12] B. de Vries, *On the Way to Bosra...*, p. 81.

[13] Eusebius of Caesarea, *HE*, VI, 42; D.D. Grafton, *"The Arabs"...*, p. 179.

[14] *Skenites whom we now call Saracens* – Ammianus Marcellinus, XXII, 15, 2. See also: Ammianus Marcellinus, XXIII, 6, 13; Evagrius Scholasticus, III, 2; III, 36 (*barbaric Skenites*).

maintained that even when camping, they remained in motion all the time. They had no permanent homes, nor did they stay in the same place for long. The chronicler said with emphasis that an Arab wife married her husband at one place, bore his children at another, and kept raising them somewhere else still[15]. It was emphasised that Saracens neither tilled the soil nor planted trees and they did not know corn or wine[16]. Marcellinus tried to convince his readers that he had personally learned about it[17]. If we were to believe Greek or Roman writers, the Arabs would feed on wild birds and animals, milk, and herbs. The description of the fertile land of *Arabia Felix*, known from the narrations by Philostorgius, changed that picture considerably[18]. The Greek narrative sources were generally overlooking the Arab role in the trade between Byzantium and India.

Relatively much attention was paid to the religion of the people of the Peninsula. Despite that it would be difficult to reconstruct the Arab pantheon based on the testimonies of the ancient and Byzantine writers[19]. The information delivered is fragmentary, most often a curiosity rather than a serious lecture. In the *Life of St. Hilarion*, Jerome described a meeting of an ascetic from Gaza with a few Saracens during their festivities devoted to Lucifer – the Morning Star[20]. They were also known to worship the moon[21]. Philostorgius delivered information about the cult of the Sun and Moon among the Ḥimyarite tribe in the south of the Peninsula[22]. Nonnosus, a sixth century writer, heard of a holiday devoted to a god, during which the Arabs were coming to some place twice a year: in the Spring for one month and after the summer solstice – for another two[23]. At that time all inter-tribal conflicts were suspended[24]. It is possible that the same holiday was seen by Anonymous of Piacenza, on his way to the Holy Land in the sixth century[25]. John of Damascus, who lived in the early eighth cen-

[15] Ammianus Marcellinus, XIV, 4, 3–5.

[16] Ammianus Marcellinus, XIV, 4, 3.

[17] Ammianus Marcellinus, XIV, 4, 6.

[18] Philostorgius, III, 11.

[19] E. Lauzi, *Bizantini versus Saraceni...*, pp. 295–300. Some information has been preserved by Arab historians (Al-Kalbī, Al-Ṭabarī).

[20] Jerome, *Vita Hilarionis*, 25, col. 41; Nilus, III, 12, 13–18; E. Lauzi, *Bizantini versus Saraceni.....*, p. 294.

[21] Ammianus Marcellinus (XXII, 3, 2) writes about sacrifices to Luna offered by Julian during his expedition against the Persians. E. Lauzi, *Bizantini versus Saraceni...*, p. 294.

[22] Philostorgius, III, 4, 4a. According to this author the Arab worshipped *demons* as well by erecting monuments following local tradition.

[23] Nonnosus, pp. 4–7. Nonnosus wrote about various Saracens – from Phoinikon, behind the Taurus Mountains.

[24] Nonnosus, pp. 4–7.

[25] Anonymous Piacentinus, 38.

tury, maintained that the Arabs worshipped a stone which was in fact the head of Aphrodite *Habar*[26]. His record seems to be a blend of information about the role of Al-Ka'ba in beliefs of the inhabitants of the Peninsula and about the pre-Muslim cult of the goddess Al-Lāt. John's information was later repeated by other authors as well.

What evoked particularly morbid fascination were the alleged bloody sacrifices, which included also human offerings, described by some authors, including Pseudo-Zachariah, Nilus of Sinai, Procopius, and Evagrius[27]. According to Nilus, the people of the Arabian deserts did not worship any god at all, only the Morning Star to which they made bloody offerings[28]. He described in detail the ceremony of sacrificing a white camel[29]. Evagrius, writing about the baptised Lakhmid, Al-Nu'umān, informed that prior to his conversion he had himself made offerings of humans[30].

Some of the authors noted the details of the Arab appearance. Pliny described their headgear, haircut and the habit of having beards[31]. Later authors pointed out their modest and mostly incomplete clothes. Ammianus Marcellinus maintained that they wore only a coloured cloak that would reach down to their loins[32]. Patriarch Sophronius was startled and slightly disgusted by 'Umar's simplicity of both robes and manners[33].

Greek, Roman and Byzantine writers also paid attention to the everyday life of Arabs and emphasised their passion for carnal pleasures. Marcellinus maintained that Arab men would marry their wives for a limited time only and after that the women were free to leave their husbands[34]. Sozomen emphasised that

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[26] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, C (CI), 78–94. See: W. Żelazny, *Patrystyczne świadectwa prób dialogu między chrześcijanami a islamem*, [in:] *Wczesne chrześcijaństwo a religie*, eds. I.S. Ledwoń, M. Szram, Lublin 2012, p. 309; E. Lauzi, *Bizantini versus Saraceni*....., pp. 300–305. Accusations of idolatry appeared also in other Byzantine texts, not cited here because they were written much later.

[27] Pseudo-Zachariah, VIII, 5; Nilus, III, 12,13–13,11; Procopius, *De bellis*, II, 28, 12–13; *Chronicle of Seert*, vol. II/I, 18, p. 133; Evagrius Scholasticus, VI, 22.

[28] Nilus, III, 12, 13–18.

[29] Nilus, III, 12, 24 – 13, 11.

[30] Evagrius Scholasticus, VI, 22. There is no doubt that the offerings were made to "Aphrodite". Having been baptised, Al-Nu'umān had her gold statue melted down and gave the gold away to the poor.

[31] Pliny, VI, 28.

[32] Ammianus Marcellinus, XIV, 4, 3.

[33] Theophanes, AM 6127, p. 339; Michael the Syrian, XI, 7, vol. II, pp. 425–426 (Michael praised 'Umar's modesty); Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando*, 19; K. Kościelniak, *Grecy i Arabowie. Historia Kościoła melkickiego (katolickiego) na ziemiach zdobytych przez muzułmanów (634–1516)*, Kraków 2004, p. 60.

[34] Ammianus Marcellinus, XIV, 4, 4.

the Arabs wanted to have children – it was important to them, like to most barbarians[35]. Herodotus and Strabo, and subsequently Sozomen as well, recorded the ancient practice of circumcision, popular among the people of the Peninsula[36]. The latter saw the coincidence of that practice and of other customs (prohibition to eat pork, similar rituals) with the laws of the Jews[37]. That observation, combined with the knowledge of the Arab tribes, originating from Ishmael, led him to interesting conclusions. He believed that the Saracens had distorted the teachings of their forefather, Abraham, which had not been written down until the times of Moses, and began borrowing traditions from their neighbours[38]. Therefore the Arabs would have had adopted Judaism, which they in turn abandoned in favour of polytheism. Some of them, however, following their subsequent relations with Jews returned to the old laws[39]. As we have stated in the chapter devoted to the Arab neighbours of Byzantium, Judaism had indeed been present in the Arabian Peninsula before Islam, also among the Arabs, which Sozomen rightly noted. He was also correct when he wrote about acceptance of Christianity by some of the people of the Peninsula, as a result of meeting priests and monks from the neighbouring deserts[40]. Greg Fisher believes that the opinion of Sozomen, and of other Byzantine writers who connected Arabs with Ishmaelites and derived their origin from Abraham, was in fact depreciative, as thus their false religion was presented as related to *Jewish machinations*[41]. The whole issue does not seem as simple, though, because, as descendants of Abraham, the Arabs were not only related to Jews, but to Christians as well.

The question which attracted particular attention was the skill of Arabs as warriors. David D. Grafton has remarked that the Saracens were known to Byzantine historians of the fourth and fifth century for their warlike ability and polytheist beliefs[42]. *I am barbarian and soldier*, Arethas, a Ghassānid, would say to Justinian I[43]. That utterance, later included in the writings of Michael the Syrian, perfectly conveys Byzantine views on their Arabic neighbours.

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[35] Sozomen, VI, 38.

[36] Sozomen, VI, 38, 11; Philostorgius, III, 4. Herodotus wrote about it with regard to Egyptians (II, 37, 2), Phoenitians and Syrians (II 104, 3–4). Strabo believed that Jews were descendants of Egyptians (XVI, 2, 34; XVII, 2, 5).

[37] Sozomen, VI, 38.

[38] Sozomen, VI, 38.

[39] Sozomen, VI, 38.

[40] Sozomen, VI, 38. He gave the example of Zokomos and his tribe.

[41] G. Fisher, *Between Empires. Arabs, Romans and Sasanians in Late Antiquity*, Oxford 2011, pp. 166–167.

[42] D.D. Grafton, *"The Arabs"...*, p. 183.

[43] Michael the Syrian, IX, 29, p. 247 (also about eating of camel meat).

Zosimus, too, described them as excellent warriors and fantastic horsemen[44]. Two centuries later, a similar opinion was expressed by Evagrius[45]. Ammianus Marcellinus compared the Arabs to hawks, stalking their prey and attacking like flash of lightning[46]. Arab cavalry was particularly highly valued, thanks to its speed, owed to its horses and camels[47]. According to Joshua the Stylite, it chased Roman troops after their unsuccessful clash with the Persians at Tell Beshmai[48]. As we have remarked somewhere else in this volume, the Tanūkhids of Queen Mavia (Māwiyya) displayed their excellent skills during the struggle against Goths and in defence of Constantinople after the defeat in the battle of Adrianople (378)[49]. Emperor Valens took advantage of their military skills in the campaign against the *Scythians,* i.e. Goths, who proved absolutely helpless when facing Saracen horses and spears. Although they attempted to use a trick, it did not help much and they were slain by the Saracen troops[50]. The fear among the Goths was so great that they preferred to surrender to the Huns on the northern bank of the Danube rather than to go on fighting, concluded Zosimus, perhaps somewhat exaggerating[51].

But the Arabs themselves proved helpless when faced with regular Roman army[52]. Their warfare style was such – according to Evagrius – that only Saracens could defeat other Saracens. Emperor Maurice found himself in an uncomfortable situation when his ally, Al-Mundhir, refused to set off across the Euphrates to fight the Arabs in Persian service[53].

Although stereotypical and unfavourable opinions about the Arabs were dominant among the Byzantines, there were exceptions as well. Cyril of Scythopolis, while writing about making a camp by Christianised Arabs, described some of the works they had done, including building a cistern, a bakery, cells for monks and a church or chapel[54]. Evidently, he did perceive them as more than just

[44] Zosimus, IV, 22, 1–3.

[45] Evagrius Scholasticus, V, 20.

[46] Ammianus Marcellinus, XIV, 4, 1. Unfortunately the book about the reign of Marcus Aurelius, with more space devoted to Saracens has not been preserved.

[47] Ammianus Marcellinus, XIV, 4, 3.

[48] Joshua the Stylite, 51 (transl. A. Luther; further references according to this edition).

[49] Ammianus Marcellinus, XXXI, 16, 5–7; Socrates, V, 1; Sozomen, VII, 1–2; Theodore Lector, 219, p. 75; D.D. Grafton, *"The Arabs"...*, pp. 184, 186.

[50] Zosimus, IV, 22, 1–3.

[51] Zosimus, IV, 22, 3.

[52] Zosimus, III, 27, 1 (Arab allies of the Persians would run away along with them upon seeing the Romans).

[53] Evagrius Scholasticus, V, 20.

[54] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii*, 15.

savage barbarians. Theodoret of Cyrus[55] also had a good opinion about Arabs, however only about those that have become Christians. One of them, named Abbas, led an ascetic life under the guidance of a certain Maronas[56]. Such an attitude should not be surprising: if the Arabs were Ishmael's descendants, they should be treated like brothers by Christians.

It is notable that we hear more positive opinions about the Arabs from the individuals who had direct contact with them, rather than from those who knew them only from stories or accounts. This can be clearly seen in the works of Cyril of Scythopolis, in particular in his *Lives of the Monks of Palestine*. In the times of persecution of Christians in Persia, the shah ordered Aspebetus, the *phylarchos* of "Persian Arabs" to guard borders and prevent Christians from fleeing to Roman lands. The latter not only failed to obey the shah's orders, but, filled with compassion, helped Christians instead[57]. Even more curiously, at the time he himself was still a pagan. Only later, forced to escape to the Romans, he became Christian[58]. The Arabs could be grateful, too – four Saracens rescued in the desert by St. Sabbas repaid him by bringing him bread, cheese, and dates[59]. Maris, the uncle of Arab sheikh, Terebon, joined the monks and devoted his estate to the welfare of a monastery[60]. Arab phylarchs, allied with Byzantium, used to warn monks and hermits of the dangers from their pro-Persian cousins[61]. Many were coming to listen to the advice of holy men or ask for healing[62]. St. Simon enjoyed particularly great fame among them[63].

The positive opinion about Saracens, expressed by monks, resulted from the fact that their relations with the nomads were complex. Ulf Scharrer defined

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[55] Theodoret, *De natura*, col. 949; *HR*, VI, 4 (they would boast of being descendants of Ishmael).

[56] Theodoret, *HR*, IV, 12.

[57] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii*, 10.

[58] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii*, 10. Euthymius, who had healed Aspebet's son, contributed to his conversion. Aspebet's son, under his Christian name of Peter, became the first bishop of the Arabs and took part in the Council of Ephesus. See: Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymi*, 15; *PRLE* II, pp. 169–170 [*Asphebetus*].

[59] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae*, 13.

[60] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii*, 10.

[61] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Joannis*, 13.

[62] Theodoret, *HR*, XXVI, 16 (A paralysed chief of one of the tribes asked for healing. Symeon did so in return for baptizing).

[63] Theodoret, *HR*, XXVI, 13, 16, 18. According to Theodoret's testimony, they would come by thousands. Later on an unknown writer added that the Ishmaelites renounced the cult of Aphrodite and smashed the idols before the saint (XXVI, 13). Arabs were probably among the inhabitants of Djabala in Syria, south of Latakia (Theodoret, *HR*, XXVIII, 1–5).

them as *conflict and symbiosis*[64]. On the one hand, they often fell a victim of Arab raids, on the other – they could sometimes count on assistance from their nomadic neighbours. Nilus of Sinai was writing about some Arabs of the Pharan Valley who had defended the ascetics against fellow Arabs from Eluza[65], even before they were converted by Moses the Pharanite (Nilus described them as pagans). Even after the Muslim invasion on 643 the monks could count on defence by the Arab warriors of Pharan[66].

The generally poor opinion about the ethnic group as a whole might hardly regard its particular members. Pseudo-Zachariah left a very good account of phylarch Al-Aṣfar (Tapharas)[67], whom he characterised as wise, brave and excellent in military art[68]. Byzantine authors wrote with some reverence even of their enemies, e.g. about Al-Mundhir III from the tribe of Lakhmids.

5.2. Intellectual Argument with Islam

The Muslim invasion of the territory of the empire made Byzantines see the Arabs chiefly as God's enemies[69], or a tool through which He punishes Christians for their sins. They were perceived as ruthless raiders, robbing the goods of the Byzantines and enslaving them. As we have been trying to point out in another chapter, during the initial raids their victims remained practically unaware of the religion of their invaders. Among the Arab warriors there were both ardent Muslims, close to Muḥammad, but also freshly converted individuals, who probably hardly understood the Prophet's message[70]. The situation was getting

[64] U. Scharrer, *The Problem of Nomadic Allies in the Roman East*, [in:] *Kingdoms and Principalities in the Roman Near East*, eds. T. Kaiser, M. Fecella, Stuttgart 2010, p. 266.

[65] V. Christides, *Once again the "Narrations" of Nilus Sinaiticus*, B 43, 1973, p. 42. Although the source is mostly a product of imagination, it contains real elements as well. There are many manuscripts of Nilus' text, though it still lacks a critical edition. The only available edition is in *PG* 79, cols. 583–694. An abbreviated version of *The Life of Nilus* can be found in: *Basilii imp. Menologium*, ed. J.-P. Migne, [in:] *PG* 117, cols. 256–257.

[66] F. Nau, *Le texte grec des récits du moine Anastase*, OCh 2, 1900, pp. 87–89.

[67] Ταφαράς – John Malalas, XVIII, 26; Jacob of Edessa, p. 240 [319].

[68] Pseudo-Zachariah, IX, 2. In the Latin version he was described as: *vir bellicosus ac sapiens, et armis Romanorum multum exercitatus*. I. Shahîd (*Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, vol. I/I, *Political and Military History*, Washington 1995, p. 64) explains that by religious sympathies of the author.

[69] Theophanes, AM 6165, p. 353.

[70] W.E. Kaegi, *Initial Byzantine Reactions to the Arab Conquest*, [in:] *The Expansion of the Early Islamic State*, ed. F.M. Donner, Aldershot 2008, p. 114. J. Tolan is of similar opinion.

even more complicated due to the fact that Christian Arabs fought on the side of the empire. When the presence of Muslims on the territories torn away from Byzantine rule became permanent, it forced the Christians living there to define some attitude in face of the new, rapidly developing religion. While historians referred to the theological issues only marginally, those issues were absolutely essential for theologians, and the burden of the ideological struggle against Muḥammad's religion rested upon their shoulders.

Although in the turmoil of war there was no time for a serious exchange of views, the "debate" between Christian and Muslims commenced even during the Prophet's life[71]. Later tradition impelled the caliphs to make efforts to present Islam to other nations as well. The ḥadīth attributed the custom of sending letters in praise of the new religion to neighbour rulers and encouraging them to convert to Muḥammad[72]. One of such letters was to have been addressed to Emperor Heraclius[73]. The likelihood of such a correspondence is discussed by Marek M. Dziekan in this volume.

It seems worthwhile, however, to bring up a narration, popular in the Muslim tradition, about an alleged meeting of Heraclius and Abū Sufyān, a prominent citizen of Mecca and future father-in-law of the Prophet. It has been preserved in several versions in Al-Bukhārī's collection of ḥadīth[74]. In the longest version, the emperor had a wish to learn about Muḥammad and called Abū Sufyān, who was on his way with a Ḳuraysh caravan, to Jerusalem[75]. All of the described events were said to have taken place during the armistice between the Ḳuraysh

J. Tolan, *Réactions chrétiennes aux conquêtes musulmanes. Étude comparée des auteurs chrétiens de Syrie et Espagne*, CCM 44, 2001, pp. 350–352.

[71] S. Kaeting Toenies, *Defending the "People of the Truth" in the Early Islamic Period. The Christian Apologies of Abu Ra'itah*, Leiden–Boston 2006, p. 3.

[72] A. Abel, *La lettre Polemique d'Arethas à l'emir à Damas*, B 24, 1954, pp. 349–350. Sebeos, 36 – there is information about a letter sent by the caliph to emperor Constantine (actually to Constans II).

[73] The story about the correspondence between Muḥammad and the emperor can be found in a ḥadīth in the collection of Al-Bukhārī (vol. I, I, no. 6; ed. M. Muḥsin Khān – all references in this chapter according to this edition). The description can be found in: L. Pouzet, *Le ḥadīth d'Héraclius: une caution byzantine à la prophétie deMuḥammad*, [in:] *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam VII^e–VIII^e siècles. Actes du Colloque international Lyon–Maison de l'Orient Méditerranéen, Paris–Institut du Monde Arabe, 11–15 Septembre 1990*, eds. P. Canivet, J.-P. Rey-Coquais, Damas 1992, pp. 59–65.

[74] Bukhārī, I, 16; II, 48; XLVIII, 846; LII, 60, 191, 221; LIII, 399; LX, 75; LXXIII, 10; LXXIV, 277; LXXXIX, 304; M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Narodziny islamu*, transl. H. Olędzka, Warszawa 1988, pp. 132–134.

[75] Bukhārī, I, 16; LIII, 399. Heraclius chose him, since he was Muḥammad's relative (Bukhārī, LII, 191).

and Muslims, before Abū Sufyān converted to Islam. Despite that, listening to his answers, Heraclius was said to have believed that Muḥammad was indeed a true prophet[76]. He agreed to accept the letter from the Prophet via the governor of Bostra[77]. Abū Sufyān concluded that Heraclius was scared of Muḥammad, and was made to think that the latter would become a great conqueror someday[78]. Afterwards, some mysterious voice told him he would be defeated by circumcised men, so he decided to exterminate all Jews. Later on he learned (through an envoy of the king of Ghassānids) that the Arabs were circumcised too, and he understood that the time of their reign was coming. Having arrived in Homs, he gathered his top dignitaries and announced that conversion to Islam was the only chance for the empire to survive. As they strongly opposed, he explained that he only wanted to test their Christian faith[79]. Another ḥadīth informs that Heraclius in fact recognised Muḥammad as a prophet[80]. According to some other version of that narration, cited by Maurice Gaudefroy-Demombynes, the emperor would send Muḥammad's letter to a certain patriarch, as more competent in the questions of faith. The latter during a meeting (services?) at a church was supposed to have announced his conversion to Islam, but the angry crowd killed him upon hearing that[81]. Those narrations, albeit fictional, shows the Muslims desired acceptance of their beliefs by some external authority in order to prove that the message of the Prophet was convincing also for their enemies.

While the above examples of religious exchange of information seem to be the product of their authors alone, it is true that already during the conquest there were meetings between the caliphate leaders and representatives of local population. Since the latter, not infrequently, chose bishops as their representatives, especially in the cities, the meetings sometimes turned into religious disputes, particularly when the Muslims encouraged the Christians to convert to Islam. A good example of such an event was a debate that took take place on 9 May 693 between the Patriarch of Antioch, John and ʻAmr ibn Al-Āṣ. What is interesting, the debate was observed by a group of Christians of different denominations, including Christianised Arabs[82]. The record shows how little both parties knew

[76] B u k h ā r ī, I, 16; LX, 75. Abū-Sufyan emphasised that Muḥammad told Muslims to do good, pray, stay clean and be on good terms with relatives (B u k h ā r ī, LXXIII, 10).

[77] B u k h ā r ī, I, 16; LII, 191; LII, 221; LXXIV, 277. Another ḥadīth was telling that Heraclius wanted to learn about Muḥammad upon receiving a letter from him (B u k h ā r ī, LX, 75).

[78] B u k h ā r ī, I, 16; LII, 191.

[79] B u k h ā r ī, I, 16; LX, 75.

[80] B u k h ā r ī, II, 48; XLVIII, 846; LII, 60.

[81] M. G a u d e f r o y - D e m o m b y n e s, *Narodziny islamu...*, pp. 133–134.

[82] *John and the Emir*, 7–9 (further references after F. Nau's edition).

about each other's faith[83]. The patriarch, supported by other Church dignitaries[84], seemed to be unaware of the fact that according to Muḥammad's learning Christ was the Word of God to Muslims too[85]. At no point of the discussion did he quote the Ḳur'ān, which should not be surprising, as its final version did not yet exist then. On the other hand, no verses from the Bible were quoted in 'Amr's arguments, either. When 'Amr rejected the *Book of Prophets*, the patriarch did not remind him that Islam recognised Old Testament prophets as well, and confined himself to quoting the Torah[86]. 'Amr could not understand why the Christians differed in faith, although they believed in the same Gospel[87]. However, he did not fail to notice the major difference between Christianity and Islam, when he tried to negate the divinity of Christ[88]. Distrustful of the bishop, he sought confirmation of Biblical verses from a Jew, not known by name[89]. The lack of knowledge did not mean lack of interest. 'Amr was interested in the Christian law. According to Michael the Syrian he wanted to learn Christian writings, too. At his request the patriarch had them translated into Arabic, which would have been done by some Christianised Arabs[90].

With time the Byzantines expanded their knowledge about Islam from Christians under the Arab rule who were able to read both the Bible and the Ḳur'ān, and translate them into Arabic, Greek or Syriac. The Muslims – except for converts – knew only Arabic, which is why the knowledge of the Bible among Arab scholars was fairly poor until tenth century, whereas the knowledge of the Christians about Islam expanded quickly[91].

Having got acquainted with the rival, the Christians could undertake a battle on words and arguments. There was another important reason why, from the early eighth century, the Christian elite began to confront themselves with the Muslim challenge. After the few decades that followed the conquest one

[83] The text was written *post factum* and sent to other bishops. Michael the Syrian, vol. II, pp. 431–432.

[84] *John and the Emir*, 10.

[85] *The Early Christian-Muslim Dialogue: A Collection of Documents from the First Three Islamic Centuries, 632–900 AD: Translations with Commentary*, ed. N.A. Newman, Hatfield 1993, p. 8.

[86] *John and the Emir*, 6.

[87] *John and the Emir*, 1–2.

[88] *John and the Emir*, 5–7.

[89] *John and the Emir*, 6.

[90] Michael the Syrian, vol. II, pp. 431–432. Here the Arab leader demanded a Gospel which would conform with the Ḳur'ān.

[91] It ought to be remembered that Anastasius of Sinai did not call that religion by name and mentioned neither Muḥammad, nor the Ḳur'ān. J. Tolan, *Réactions chrétiennes...*, pp. 354–355.

could hardly believe that the situation would rapidly change and that the caliphs' rule would be overthrown. At some point the Byzantines had to accept the idea that getting rid of the invaders from the occupied territories would not happen as quickly as they had expected. That kind of thinking could be observed as early as in the works of Sebeos and Anastasius of Sinai[92]. Dionysius of Tel Mahre did not believe in an imminent expulsion of Muslims, either, although he trusted that the next generation would live to see it[93]. Ghewond was of a similar opinion and perceived the fulfilment of King David's prophecy in a civil war between the Arabs, trusting that God would not forsake the faithful[94]. But when the hopes did not come true, one had to accept that the role of Christians was to survive in an alien, often hostile environment and to keep their faith. Another obligation was to keep up the spirit of fellow believers.

This was even more important considering that the new religion seemed attractive to many inhabitants of the seized territories[95]. Conversions were taking place even during the conquest, yet they were insignificant in number and were met with condemnation[96]. But then the situation got worse. That was the result of both top-down action, initiated by the caliphs, and of individual missionary activities taken up by zealous Muslims. Despite the prohibition of forced conversion contained in the Ḳur'ān[97], and protection extended to the People of the Book for as long as they paid taxes, the belief in the superiority of Islam over other religions made lives of members of said religions difficult[98]. Such a policy was initiated already by the Umayyads, exemplified by the so-called *Covenant of Umar*[99]. Building the mosque of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem – a sa-

[92] W.E. Kaegi, *Initial Byzantine Reactions...*, p. 121.

[93] Dionysius of Tel Mahre, p. 1; J. Flori, *L'Islam et la fin des temps. L'interpretation prophetique des invasions musulmanes dans la chrétienté médiévale*, Paris 2007, p. 118.

[94] Ghewond, 5, 19, 20; J. Flori, *L'Islam...*, pp. 119–120.

[95] In the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* we find a prophecy that it was going to happen (Pseudo-Methodius, XII, 3–6). It was in fact a description of the actual status. What is important, the author emphasized, that those who renounced their faith did so with no compulsion, beatings or torment (XII, 3), but freely (XII, 6).

[96] John of Nikiu wrote of examples like that (CXIII, 1, p. 182; eds. R.H. Charles, D. Litt; all references to this source after that edition). After the capture of Caesarea, Tripoli and Tyre many citizens of those cities accepted Islam. Cf. D.J. Constantelos, *The Moslem Conquest of Near East as Revealed in Greek Sources of the VIIth and the VIIIth Century*, B 42, 1972, p. 349. The chronicler maintains that they did it because of fear.

[97] *Let there be no compulsion in religion. Ḳur'ān*, 2:256 (transl. A. Yusuf Ali).

[98] For example by raising taxes, removal from public space or change of the monetary system. S. Kaeting Toenies, *Defending...*, p. 15.

[99] There is huge literature on this subject. Probably the most important is: A.S. Tritton, *Caliphs and Their Non-Muslim Subjects. A Critical Study of the Covenant of Umar*, Abingdon–

cred place for Jews and Christians alike – had a symbolic dimension[100]. The durability of Arab power also made people convert to Islam[101]. When the number of converts began to grow, one had to explain why so many were listening to Muḥammad. The initial explanation that it was only ignorance and emotionality of the Arabs which decided of his success[102] proved insufficient.

The Church certainly felt threatened and was aware that counteractions were necessary[103]. From the early eighth century we can observe flourishing of polemic literature. It was intended primarily for Christians, whom it was to give arguments in the discussions with followers of Islam and to encourage them to stand by the faith of their forefathers. Among the texts written at that time, we should mention the alleged answer of emperor Leo III to ʿUmar II's letter[104], anonymous apology of Christianity, dated by Khalil S. Samir to 738 or 771[105], testimony of

New York 2008. See also: A. N o t h, *Problems of Differentiation between Muslim and Non-Muslim: Re-reading the "Ordinances of Umar"*, [in:] *Muslims and Others in Early Islamic Society*, ed. R. H o y l a n d, Aldershot 2004, pp. 103–124.

[100] J. T o l a n, *Réactions chrétiennes...*, p. 355; G.J. R e i n i n k, *Early Christian Reactions to the Building of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem*, ChrV 2 (8), 2001, pp. 227–241; O. G r a b a r, *The Umayyad Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem*, AOr 3, 1959, pp. 33–62.

[101] G h e w o n d, 43; J. F l o r i, *L'Islam...*, pp. 119–120.

[102] A.-Th. K h o u r y, *Polemique byzantine contre l'Islam (VIII–XIII s.)*, Leiden 1972, pp. 137–140. E.g. Arethas defined Muslims as emotional, unable to act reasonably or to think logically. A r e t h a s, p. 296.

[103] A. A r g y r i o u (*Perception de l'Islam et traductions du Coran dans le monde byzantine grec*, B 75, 2005, p. 25) writes about a hazard to the very existence of the Church. J. Tolan (*Réactions chrétiennes...*, p. 358) believes that the scale of conversions made Christian theologians define the place of Islam in history.

[104] L e o I I I, cols. 315–324; A. A b e l, *La lettre Polemique...*, pp. 348–349. Although Leo III's response to the caliph is dated to 719, the text preserved in Ghewond was written later. Bedrosyan considered it to be interpolation and did not add it to his translation of Ghewond. For more on that, see: A. J e f f r e y, *Gevond's Text of the Correspondence between 'Umar II and Leo III*, HTR 37, 1944, pp. 269–332 (here we can find the English translation of the letter). The scholar thinks that its author was Leo Syncellus, contemporary to Nicetas (*ibidem*, p. 348), and it was addressed to Ibrāhīm Al-Nagīramī, (A.A. V a s i l i e v, *Byzance et les Arabes*, vol. II/II, transl. H. G r é g o i r e, M. C a n a r d, Bruxelles 1930, p. 203sqq).

[105] The scholar is inclined to accept the earlier date (K.S. S a m i r, *Une apologie arabe du christianisme d'époque umayyade?*, POr 16, 1990/1991, p. 91). On that apology, see: M.N. S w a n s o n, *Beyond Prooftexting: Approaches to the Qur'an in Some Early Arabic Christian Apologies*, MWo 88.3–4, 1998, pp. 297–319. The manuscript of the apology can be found in the Library of Congress (Sinaï ar. 154). The text, along with the English translation, was published at the end of nineteenth century: M. D u n l o p G i b s o n, *Studia Sinaitica*, vol. VII, London 1889, pp. 2–36 (translation); 74–107 (Arabic text). K.S. Samir (*Une apologie arabe...*, pp. 85–89) has pointed out serious errors in both reading the Arabic original and in the translation..

John of Damascus' (first half of eighth century)[106], and homilies of bishop Mar Aba II (641–751) from southern Iraq and katholikos of the Assyrian Church of the East[107]. Fairly close to the discussed times is the polemic of patriarch Timothy with caliph Al-Mahdī (781) and a religious dialogue from Jerusalem, known also as the account from a meeting of a Jacobite monk with the emir of the city (ca. 800)[108].

In the following centuries we can observe a veritable avalanche of polemic literature, but as it goes beyond the frames of this monograph, we shall refer to it only in passing[109]. It should be noted though, that as the time went on, Christian writings in Arabic played more and more important role in the discussion with Muslims, which was caused by the popularity of that language[110], and by the fact that some of the Arab rulers were interested in religious issues and themselves initiated debates. The Nestorian katholikos, Timothy (727–823), laid out the Christian doctrine upon request of caliph Al-Mahdī[111]. Although he wrote in Syriac, the Arabic version of his work is better known to the public. His successors decided to debate with Muslims in their language.

To all those who plunged into reading, it became evident that the Bible and the Ḳur'ān were irreconcilable. Particularly disputable were the dogmas of Incarnation and of the Holy Trinity[112]. Step by step, Christians understood that Islam was not a heresy of Ishmaelites, as John of Damascus had claimed, but an entirely separate religion. Two contradicting phenomena contributed to such an understanding: more and more common conversions to Islam and persistence of Christian communities on Islamic territories[113].

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[106] John was also the author of *Disputatio Saraceni et Christiani*. See: A. A r g y r i o u, *Perception...*, p. 27.

[107] G.J. R e i n i n k, *Political Power and Right Religion in the East-Syrian Disputation between a Monk of Bēt Ḥālē and an Arab Notable*, [in:] *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam*, eds. E. G r y p e o u, D.R. T h o m a s, M. S w a n s o n, Leiden 2006, p. 155sqq.

[108] *The Early Christian-Muslim Dialog...*, pp. 269–354 (the text preserved only in fragments, pp. 282–340).

[109] Of particular importance were the texts by Al-Kindī (c. 820), Nicetas of Byzantium (ninth century) and Bartholomew of Edessa (tenth century). I have devoted a separate article to the polemic between Christians and Muslims: T. W o l i ń s k a, *Elity chrześcijańskie wobec islamu (VII–X w.)*, VP 64, 2015, (forthcoming), where I have also discussed the works chronologically beyond the frames of this book.

[110] M. S a d o w s k i, *Chrześcijańska arabskojęzyczna literatura apologetyczna Bliskiego i Środkowego Wschodu w okresie Abbasydów (750–1050)*, STHSO 32, 2012, pp. 90–92; J. T o l a n, *Réactions chrétiennes...*, p. 354. S. Kaeting Toenies (*Defending...*, p. 19) has used an adequate term *the new lingua franca* to define the process of Arabisation.

[111] *Timothy's Apology*, pp. 1–162.

[112] S. K a e t i n g T o e n i e s, *Defending...*, p. 5; M. S a d o w s k i, *Chrześcijańska...*, pp. 100–104.

[113] S. K a e t i n g T o e n i e s, *Defending...*, pp. 5–6.

Besides the two mentioned above, among the subjects discussed in disputes there was the issue of recognizing Muḥammad as a prophet, the status of the Ḳur'ān and Gospels and their credibility, as well as differences in the legal and religious practices. While Christian polemists questioned the value of the Ḳur'ān, their Muslim opponents accused them of falsifying parts of the Bible[114]. Sandra Kaeting Toenies emphasised that many of the issues were not new to Christians. They had already been accused with similar charges by Jews (absolute monotheism, problems with incarnation)[115].

The first preserved Christian apology was of Melkite authorship[116]. The introduction made numerous references to the Ḳur'ān[117], demonstrating a good knowledge of the Muslim Holy Book. That fact has made Khalil Samir think that he did not live in an isolated Christian ghetto, but must have actively participated in the Arab culture[118]. That probably influenced his narration – a non-aggressive, conciliatory lecture of the doctrine, which would demonstrate Christianity as good for mankind[119]. The first part was a collection of arguments supporting the authenticity of the Holy Trinity dogma[120], followed by the idea of Incarnation, pointing out that God spread His Word to defeat Satan, free mankind from sin and provide resurrection[121]. In that way the basic points of disagreement between both religions were set up.

The writings of John of Damascus (ca. 674–749), a member of its Christian elite, had a much greater response than the text quoted above. Living in a Muslim neighbourhood gave him the opportunity to thoroughly study the new religion. The description of Islam contained in the final chapter of the treaty *On Heresies*[122] is his own[123]. John knew the Ḳur'ān, if not from personal lecture, then certainly second hand. He quoted it, albeit only short passages and not very pre-

[114] *Ibidem*, pp. 8–9; M. S a d o w s k i, *Chrześcijańska...*, pp. 95–97.

[115] S. K a e t i n g T o e n i e s, *Defending...*, p. 7.

[116] K.S. S a m i r, *Une apologie arabe...*, pp. 92, 105. The author emphasizes that Melkites were dominant among the Christians of Damascus and it was not by accident that the first Christian text in Arabic was Melkite.

[117] *Ibidem*, p. 97.

[118] *Ibidem*, p. 105.

[119] *Ibidem*, p. 105. The scholar pays attention to the other features of the discussed text: lacking philosophical arguments, homiletic style and being base on the Bible and patristic literature (*ibidem,* p. 120sqq).

[120] *Ibidem*, pp. 97–98.

[121] *Ibidem*, pp. 100–102.

[122] *Ibidem*, p. 91.

[123] J o h n o f D a m a s c u s, *De haeresibus*, C (CI). In describing other heresies the author sought inspiration in the earlier treatises.

cisely[124]. He defined Sūras as writings (γραφαί)[125], as though they were separate texts. His opinion had influence on many Byzantines[126]. Historians (primarily Theophanes the Confessor and George the Monk), as well as theologians, utilised the arguments from his work.

Characterizing the religion of Muḥammad (whom he called Mamed) John reached for the Ḳur'ān and called up the most essential parts of its teaching. He paid particular attention to Islamic monotheism, by quoting the verse that *He begetteth not, nor is He begotten*[127] and to those elements of the new religion which were at odds with Christianity. He emphasised that for Islam's faithful Christ was the God's Word and Spirit, but not His Son; that according to them He was God's slave and was not crucified (only His shadow was) – but ascended up to Heavens[128]. According to Muslims, Jesus himself was to reprove His disciples when they regarded Him to be the Son of God[129]. In the opinion of Father Jan W. Żelazny, the rejection of Christ's divinity was the chief characteristic of Islam noted by John of Damascus[130].

Most of the information delivered by John about the Muslim religion was correct. He knew that its followers could not celebrate Shabbat, get baptised, or drink wine. They could eat food forbidden by the Torah (but he did not say which), but they could not eat other kind of food (he did not say which either)[131]. Still, the information was not free of errors. We do not know from where he obtained the information that Saracens got circumcised along with their wives[132].

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[124] E.g. he concluded his polemics with a free verse of the Ḳur'ān (5:115). See also: A. Argyriou, *Perception...*, pp. 28–29.

[125] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, C (CI), 95, 149, 152. He named Sūra 4 (*The Women*), 5 (*The Table Spread*) and 2 (*The Heifer*). He also considered Ḳur'ānic the text *She-Camel of God* (C [CI], 114), which is not in the Ḳur'ān.

[126] His works were translated into Arabic and used by Muslim theologians as well. J. Tolan, *Réactions chrétiennes...*, p. 358.

[127] *Ḳur'ān*, 112:1–4.

[128] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, C (CI), 17–31.

[129] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, C (CI), 17–31, p. 135; George the Monk, p. 700 (ed. C. de Boor = IV, 235, 7, ed. J.-P. Migne, col. 868); M. Sadowski, *Chrześcijańska...*, pp. 98–100.

[130] J.W. Żelazny, *Patrystyczne...*, p. 309. At the same time he emphasised that according to the Ḳur'ān God at Christ's request, had sent down to Him and the ones who accompanied him the *a table set* (*Ḳur'ān*, 5:114–115).

[131] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, C (CI), 152; George the Monk, p. 700 (ed. C. de Boor = IV, 235, 6, ed. J.-P. Migne, col. 868).

[132] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, C (CI), 152.

It is also difficult to say where he found the text *God's She-Camel*[133], which was neither in the Ḳur'ān, nor in the Muslim tradition.

John refuted the charge of adding associators (ἑταίριστάς) to God, i.e. being polytheist[134]. He accused Muslims of inconsistency, saying that if they regarded Christ as God's Word, they regarded Him as God at the same time, as the Word and Spirit were inseparable in the one in whom they existed[135]. He rejected the critics of the cult of the Cross, and accused the Muslims of idolatry. He maintained that they worshipped the Morning Star and a stone which was the head of Aphrodite *Habar* (he certainly meant Al-Ka'ba)[136]. He must have been aware that an accusation like that was indefensible in his times – for he added that the Arabs used to be idolaters until the times of Heraclius[137], but now (i.e. in the early eighth century) they were simply heretics[138]. They believed that Abraham and Hagar used to make love on that stone or that Isaac was to be sacrificed thereon[139].

Trying to stand up to Islam, the Christians had to attack its founder. John of Damascus spoke of him with contempt as of a *false prophet* (ψευδοπροφήτης)[140]. He emphasised that there was no-one to witness that his mission was from God – because he had received his revelation in a dream, and nobody had announced his coming[141]. When it turned out that the Ḳur'ān in fact did contain references to the Bible, announcing the arrival of Muḥammad[142], the Muslims were accused of falsifying the Scripture.

Muḥammad's revelations were explained rationally and in a way that was derogatory to him at the same time. Theophanes knew that Muḥammad was to have

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[133] It is possible that the story of a she-camel, who is the mother of a baby-camel, although no male has inseminated her, was a mocking paraphrase of the Gospel (C [CI], 114–148).

[134] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, C (CI), 61–68, p. 136. He referred to the negation of Christ's divinity in the Ḳur'ān (among others: 2:116; 5:73; 7:33; 19:35). He pointed out that the Muslims themselves distinguished between God and Spirit.

[135] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, C (CI), 69.

[136] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, C (CI), 78–94; J.W. Żelazny, *Patrystyczne...*, p. 309.

[137] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, C (CI), 10; *Contra Muhammad*, col. 1448.

[138] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, C (CI), 10.

[139] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, C (CI), 78.

[140] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, C (CI), 10.

[141] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, C (CI), 32; J.W. Żelazny, *Patrystyczne...*, p. 309. John of Damascus pointed out that Muḥammad forbade Muslims doing anything unwitnessed and he himself could not provide a witness. Those arguments were subsequently repeated by other writers. Further on that: A.-Th. Khoury, *Polemique...*, pp. 22–23, 29–30, 105–109.

[142] *Ḳur'ān*, 2:129; 7:157; 61:6.

obtained his message from God through Archangel Gabriel, but he rejected that. He maintained that Muḥammad had suffered from epilepsy, which disturbed and grieved his wife Khadīdja. To explain his attacks, Muḥammad was to tell her he was having visions that caused loss of consciousness. She did not trust him at first, but when his words were confirmed by a certain monk, expelled (from Byzantium?) for unorthodox views, she began telling other women of the tribe that her husband was a prophet. The new beliefs (heresy for Theophanes) started to spread, first secretly, then through war, finally in the open. All that would last for 29 years[143]. According to another version, Muḥammad was to have a dream about the archangel, which he took for reality[144]. In the most extreme interpretation, Muḥammad was tormented by demons[145].

Not only Muḥammad's teaching, but also he himself was attacked. It was reminded that he had been an orphan with no means to live, who owed his riches to a woman. According to Theophanes, Muḥammad used to work for a rich widow Khadīdja, leading caravans between Palestine and Egypt. He later married her, thus obtaining her estate[146]. John of Damascus accused him of immoral conduct – he allowed other men to have four wives and as many concubines as they wished, as well as the right to walk out on their wives, because he had himself desired another man's wife[147]. The Prophet was also blamed for disloyalty, lies, licentiousness, lack of education, and impiety. Christian polemists maintained that he had not been worthy enough to be a real envoy of God[148].

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[143] Theophanes, AM 6122. A similar but abbreviated story was cited in: George the Monk, pp. 698–699 (ed. C. de Boor = IV, 235, 3, ed. J.-P. Migne, col. 865). Also Bartholomew of Edessa informed of Muḥammad's epilepsy (Bartholomew of Edessa, col. 1428).

[144] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, C (CI), 45; A.-Th. Khoury, *Polemique...*, p. 79.

[145] Abū Ḳurra, *Opusculae*, 20, cols. 1545–1548; A.-Th. Khoury, *Polemique...*, p. 79.

[146] Theophanes, AM 6122. Later authors made the story more colourful, writing about Muḥammad's poor look and miserable existence in his childhood (*Contra Muhammad*, col. 1448). Due to his ugliness Khadīdja would not want to sleep with him. They said that he had been the son of a slave woman, Amina, and at the same time he would not have been the son of 'Abd Allāh. Bartholomew of Edessa described colourfully how Muḥammad's grandfather went to the market with his son to find him a woman slave, and then Amina got pregnant, it was not certain if with 'Abd Allāh or with one of the shepherds. Muḥammad would be born at a pasture and brought home on camel manure. Cf.: Bartholomew of Edessa, col. 1425; A.-Th. Khoury, *Polemique...*, p. 65.

[147] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, C (CI), 95.

[148] A.-Th. Khoury (*Polemique...*, pp. 59–102) discusses Muḥammad's life, particularly his moral attitude, as it was described by enemies of Islam (*ibidem*, pp. 87–102).

The Ḳur'ān, another objects of polemic attacks, was presented as a false scripture. John of Damascus suggested that Muḥammad (Mamed) had read the Old and New Testament by chance and had been taught by a certain Arian monk, as a result of which he had *scribbled* some *laughable writings* and was telling everybody he had obtained them by God[149]. For that reason Islam was, according to John, a deceptive cult, herald of Antichrist, and a heresy[150]. The presence of the Old and New Testament elements in Muḥammad's teaching would have been borrowed from Jews and heretics during his business trips when he had worked for Khadīdja[151]. It was said that some heretic monk used to teach Muḥammad[152]. There was a dispute about who that monk may have been: according to some authors he was Arian[153], according to others – Nestorian and Hesychast. He would have been responsible for Muḥammad's idea of Christ, usually perceived as Nestorian, although Anastasius of Sinai saw connection between Muslim beliefs and Monophysitism[154].

Having questioned the Ḳur'ān and criticised Muḥammad himself, the polemists made conclusions about Islam as a whole. It was regarded as a false religion, which would be attested by contradictions a true religion could not have. It was emphasised that its practices did not provide salvation and it did not offer a better morality than other religions. They turned down the idea of successive religions, according to which Judaism was followed by Christianity, which in turn would be followed by Islam[155].

The polemists stressed the essential difference in the method of distribution of Christianity and Islam – the former spread the Good Tidings by the force of its message, the latter – by force alone. Already Abraham the Jew, in the *Teaching*

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[149] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, C (CI), 10–16. In another place he assessed the opinion presented in Sūra 2 as ridiculous (C [CI], 32).

[150] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, C (CI), 1.

[151] Theophanes, AM 6122; George the Monk, pp. 699–700 (ed. C. de Boor = IV, 235, 6, ed. J.-P. Migne, col. 865A–B).

[152] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, C (CI), 10–16. That monk appeared in sources under the name of Bahīrā or Sergios Bahīrā. The story of a Christian who had recognised a prophet in Muḥammad appeared first in Muslim sources and it was later picked up by the writings of Christian authors, who changed its connotation. More on that: B. Roggema, *The Legend of Sergius Bahīrā. Eastern Christians Apologies and Apokalyptic in Responce to Islam*, Leiden–Boston 2009; S. Gerö, *The Legend of the Monk Bahīrā, the Cult of the Cross and Iconoclasm*, [in:] *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam VII^e–VIII^e siècles...*, pp. 47–58; A. Bahkou, *The Christian Legend of Monk Bahīrā. The Syriac Manuscript of Mardin 259/2: Study and English Translation*, n.p. 2006.

[153] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, C (CI), 10–16. Repeated by Abū Ḳurra.

[154] For more on that, see: J. Tolan, *Réactions chrétiennes...*, pp. 354–355.

[155] A.-Th. Khoury, *Polemique...*, p. 45.

of Jacob, pointed out the fact that Muḥammad had arrived with the sword and army, which proved that he indeed was not a true prophet[156].

Attacking Islam, polemic texts often reached for moral issues. We have mentioned John of Damascus who accused Muslims of circumcising women[157]. Also polygamy and position of females in Islam was rejected[158].

Regardless of the intellectual level, knowledge and literary skills of particular authors, they used similar arguments. They focused on fighting the new religion and defending Christian dogmas. The intensity of Islam's assessment varied as well. Theophanes did it quietly, avoiding emotional expressions. The writings of George the Monk about Muḥammad, his teaching and followers were diametrically different and full of pejorative expressions[159]. For John of Damascus the Muslims were barbarians, invaders, usurpers and destroyers of social and religious order[160]. He wrote about them with irony and sarcasm. Although he tried to keep up his temper at first, he could not keep it up for long and said at one point that *into the souls of asses, where you* [*the Muslims*]*, too, like beasts are destined to go*[161]. It is difficult therefore to agree with the suggestion that John avoided using the name of the Prophet because he was afraid of potential repressions for insulting him[162].

The above examples, although incomplete, are still representative, and show that at first the Christians did not attempt to confront the challenge of a new, competitive monotheistic religion. They were initially not aware of the changes that were taking place in the Arabian Peninsula, and treated the invaders like loot-hungry nomads. They did not know their religious views and had no chance learn them due to the lack of Muslim writings. An additional complication was the fact that some of the Arab tribes had been Christianised prior to the birth of Islam. If we add that Islam made references to the Old and the New Testament, it is easy to understand that the victims of the first Arab raids did not know who, from the religious point of view, they were dealing with. This is why Christian sources initially spoke of the Arabs as pagans. Christian writers remembered that before Islam the invaders used to worship idols. Some even maintained that

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[156] *Doctrina Iacobi*, V, 16, pp. 209–210.

[157] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, C (CI), 95.

[158] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, C (CI), 10–16. Cf. *Ḳur'ān*, 2:223 (*Your wives are as a tilth unto you*).

[159] J.V. Maksimov has found nearly a hundred invectives in his text (*Georgij Amartol ob islame*, [in:] *Vizantijskie sočinenija ob islame*, ed. Ju .V. Maksimov, Moskva 2012, p. 66).

[160] A. Zhyrkowa, *Wstęp*, [in:] Jan Damasceński, *Dialektyka albo rozdziały filozoficzne. De haeresibus*, transl. A. Zhyrkowa, Kraków 2011, p. 21.

[161] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, C (CI), 147–148.

[162] J.W. Żelazny, *Patrystyczne...*, p. 310.

Muḥammad in fact had never abandoned the faith of his forefathers. Others accused him of atheism.

Then there came the opinion that Islam was a Christian heresy. The common features and differences of both faiths were pointed out – the rejection of divinity of Christ must have been alien to Monophysites[163]. When Christian authors became better acquainted with the Muslim writings they began to understand the scale of differences. The assessment of Islam gradually evolved from a *sect of Hagarenes* to its recognition as a separate religion, competitive to Christianity, grown out of idolatry and with elements borrowed from different sources[164]. In spite of that, as Sandra Kaeting Toenies has noticed, the Christians, particularly those living under the Muslim rule, still tried to find out any common points with Islam, for example they emphasised numerous references to prophets in the Ḳur'ān[165].



[163] Cf. J. Gnilka, *Die Nazarener und der Koran. Eine Spurensuche*, Freiburg 2007. The scholar is of a different opinion, his views being closer to Nestorian.

[164] *The Early Christian-Muslim Dialog...*, p. 719. Cf. the description of Islam in: Agapius, p. 457 [197].

[165] S. Kaeting Toenies, *Defending...*, p. 9.

Marta Woźniak

6. A Byzantine Heritage? Outline of Art and Architecture of Early Islam (Seventh–Eighth Centuries)

The emergence of the Arab-Muslim Empire is an example of one of the fastest processes of creating a political and cultural superpower in the history of the world. Semites from the heart of the Arabian Peninsula, deprived of any significant achievements in the field of culture apart from orally transmitted poetry, within one century dominated a territory spreading from the Western edges of Europe through North Africa and up to Central Asia, becoming patrons of art and representatives of highly developed culture of those times. It was possible thanks to the rules of Islam, which aimed to eradicate tribal, clan and national divisions. The Arabs managed to bring other Semitic, Iranian and Turkish tribes, and even Persians, creators of an ancient civilization, within the orbit of their own religion and culture. This process was facilitated by a widely-spread custom of mixed marriages (exogamy), which was characteristic for the *umma,* the Muslim community, especially during the time of its greatest growth as a civilization[1].

The Arabs were eager to adopt the artistic, architectural, scientific, philosophical and literary achievements of conquered tribes[2]. Using elements of various artistic traditions of the territories they tried to give them hallmarks of homogeneity. The Muslim attitude to art in the early period was determined by the harsh lifestyle of the former desert-dwellers, although we must also remember Arab elites, who did not exist in a cultural void before Islam and became

[1] M.M. Dziekan, *Dzieje kultury arabskiej*, Warszawa 2008, p. 13.

[2] K. Estreicher, *Historia sztuki w zarysie*, Kraków 1988, pp. 222–223; J. Pijoan, *Sztuka islamu*, [in:] J. Auboyer, J. Ostier, J. Pijoan, *Sztuka świata*, vol. IV, Warszawa 1990, p. 205; M.W. Ałpatow, *Historia sztuki*, vol. II, *Średniowiecze*, transl. M. Kurecka, W. Wirpsza, Warszawa 1991, pp. 34–35; F. Robinson, *Islam*, transl. J. Pierzchała, M.M. Dziekan, Warszawa 1996, pp. 23–24; *Historia sztuki*, vol. V, *Bizancjum i islam*, transl. M. Pabisiak, Kraków 2010, p. 156.

familiar with achievements of other ethnic groups during trading expeditions[3].

The Umayyad period (661–750) is often regarded as the formative period of Islamic art. During the initial years, although Arabic was already an official language and Islam the dominant religion of the lands united under the Umayyad reign, artists created their works according to previously established rules. The main artistic influences came from late antique naturalistic Graeco-Roman tendencies, which were predominant on eastern coast of the Mediterranean. They were complemented by more formal patterns developed by the inhabitants of Byzantium and Persia, visible especially in metalwork and depictions of animals, plants and humans. Moreover, certain elements of Mesopotamian, Visigothic, Berber, and Asian styles could be discerned. In time, however, Muslim artists developed new techniques, forms and conventions, distancing themselves from the listed patterns[4].

The principal aim of the art of Islam was to serve the needs of the new religion and various aspects of social and economic life. Buildings of sacral character, such as mosques and sanctuaries, were erected. Architecture played the key role, while the other types of art played only secondary roles and were dependent on it[5]. Art remained at the service of rulers, who not only founded mosques, but also built palaces, schools, hospitals, bath houses, caravanserais, and later also mausoleums. In the case of the Islamic world, we can talk of dynastic art and styles typical for particular dynasties[6].

The purpose of this chapter is to present the art of Islam in the seventh and eighth centuries, i.e. during the period of the Umayyad dynasty. It is necessary to outline its characteristic features, in particular its iconoclastic tendencies. Since architecture held the highest importance in the discussed period, it is going to be the main focus of the paper, and the most significant religious buildings (the Dome of the Rock, the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus) and secular constructions (the so-called "desert palaces") are going to be described. It needs to be emphasised that the distinction between religious and secular art is made purely by convention – similarities between these forms are often more important than

[3] The Prophet himself was reported to have visited Bostra (in modern day Syria), which was famous for its monumental buildings. A. B a l l i a n, *Country Estates. Material Culture, and the Celebration of Princely Life: Islamic Art and Secular Domain*, [in:] *Byzantium and Islam. Age of Transition, 7th–9th Century*, ed. H.C. E v a n s, B. R a t l i f f, New York 2012, p. 202.

[4] M.W. A ł p a t o w, *Historia sztuki...*, pp. 34–35.

[5] J. B i n o u s, M. H a w a r i, M. M a r i n, G. Öneg, *Islamic Art in the Mediterrenean*, [in:] *The Umayyads: The Rise of Islamic Art*, Amman 2010, p. 17.

[6] *Ibidem*, p. 18.

differences[7]. We are going to depict relicts of Umayyad decorative art and coins, which constitute a valuable source of information on the subject of the official ideology and the policy of a ruler who commissioned their minting[8].

6.1. Characteristic Features of Islamic Art

Although Islam lacks an in-depth reflection on aesthetics, it does not mean that it did not create its own ideal of beauty – connected with God and his greatest creation, the human being[9]. Beauty from the Muslim point of view requires symmetry, balance and contrast, which is particularly visible in Arabic embellishments and calligraphy[10]. Muslim art, whose aim is to emphasise God's glory, is permeated with the spirit of unity – the repetitiveness of arabesque[11] is reflected in the rhythm and rhymes of poetry and melodic line of traditional Arabic music. Muslim art is mostly non-realistic and non-mimetic – its main form of expression is abstraction, though does not mean that it is plastically poor[12].

There is a common belief that art of the analysed area was aniconic[13], although nothing really indicates that early Muslim theology condemned images. According to some accounts, in Al-Ka'ba[14], Muḥammad personally prevented one of the paintings depicting Mary with baby Jesus kneeling from destruction – having entered the temple he placed his hand on this image and said: *Destroy all the paintings except those under my hands*[15].

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[7] A. B a l l i a n, *Country Estates...*, p. 200.

[8] C. F o s s, *Arab-Byzantine Coins: Money as Cultural Continuity*, [in:] *Byzantium and Islam...*, p. 136.

[9] M.M. D z i e k a n, *Dzieje...*, p. 335.

[10] K. E s t r e i c h e r, *Historia sztuki...*, p. 227; J. P i j o a n, *Sztuka islamu...*, pp. 236–238; F. R o b i n s o n, *Islam...*, pp. 200–203.

[11] An arabesque consisted of floral elements, which were stylised, densely distributed and filled the whole surface of the composition. M.W. A ł p a t o w, *Historia sztuki...*, pp. 43–47.

[12] J. B i a ł o s t o c k i, *Sztuka cenniejsza niż złoto. Opowieść o sztuce europejskiej naszej ery*, Warszawa 2004, pp. 70–71; M.M. D z i e k a n, *Dzieje...*, pp. 336–337; *Historia sztuki...*, p. 139.

[13] For more information about iconoclastic tendencies in Islam see: G. M a r ç a i s, *La question des images dans L'art musulman*, B 7, 1932, pp. 161–183; O. G r a b a r, *Islam and Iconoclasm*, [in:] *Iconoclasm. Papers Given at the Ninth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham, March 1975*, ed. A. B r y e r, J. H e r r i n, Birmingham 1977, pp. 45–52.

[14] Al-Ka'ba in Arabic means a cube. The most important Muslim temple is not a mosque but is situated within a mosque in Mecca. It has been a place of veneration since even before Islam. M.M. D z i e k a n, *Dzieje...*, pp. 341–348.

[15] E. C r u i k s h a n k D o d d, *The Image of the World: Notes on the Religious Iconography of Islam*, [in:] *Late Antique and Medieval Art of the Mediterranean World*, ed. E.R. H o f f m a n n, Malden–Oxford–Victoria 2007, p. 193.

Unlike the Old Testament, the Ḳur'ān does not contain a prohibition of producing images of living creatures. However, orthodox Muslim researchers indicate particular passages of Ḳur'ān whose interpretation can serve as a basis for iconoclasm. One of them comes from Sūra 59:24 (*The Exile*) and states: *He is Allah, the Creator, the Maker, the Former*[16]. Apart from pointing to God as the source of any creation, it does not contain an explicit prohibition of producing any kinds of images. It was sunnah, the Prophet's tradition, that limited the believers' possibilities of artistic expression. Particular ḥadīths, such as the one about the meeting of Muḥammad and his wife ʿĀ'isha, contain a ban on creating images:

> Her room was separated with a curtain, on which where were paintings. The Prophet torn them apart and said that on the day of resurrection those will suffer greatest torments who imitate the work of God's creation. Then ʿĀ'isha ordered to make sitting pillows filled with palm tree leaves. Muḥammad did not condemn it.[17]

Another ḥadīth states that *angels do not enter any house in which there is a painting*[18]. The oldest ḥadīths explicitly prohibiting the creation of images originate from the ninth century. Muslims became critical of paintings only in the eighth century – at the exact time of the Christian iconoclasm[19]. Followers of Islam were then forbidden to depict God, human beings and animals[20]. It was an extraordinary coincidence that the same issue gained equally grand significance for the two great religions simultaneously, in the during the eighth century reign of the Umayyad caliphate. One of the most eminent Christian writers, John of Damascus, from the Manṣur family, which played an important role in the Umayyad administration, was an individual who contributed substantially

[16] All Ḳur'ānic translations in this chapter by ʿAli Quli Qara'i.

[17] J. D a n e c k i, *Arabowie*, Warszawa 2001, p. 194.

[18] F. B l i s s, *Zum Beispiel Islam im Alltag*, Göttingen 1998, p. 133.

[19] J. P i j o a n, *Sztuka islamu...*, p. 208. According to Christian sources – Muslim texts make no mention – Umayyad caliph Yazīd II proclaimed an edict, in which he forbade the depiction of human figures and ordered the destruction of Christian crosses. A. G r a b a r, *L'iconoclasme byzantin: le dossier archéologique*, Paris 1984, pp. 155–156. Researchers do not agree on the extent to which this order was enforced. As D a n u t a M a d e y s k a writes (*Historia świata arabskiego. Okres klasyczny: od starożytności do końca epoki Umajjadów (750)*, Warszawa 1999, p. 183): *It can be assumed that this order was probably implemented only in Damascus and areas closest to the centre of power*.

[20] Muslim tradition emphasises that this prohibition refers to depicting living creatures. Thus, artists used various ways to highlight that their works are related to beings devoid of a spirit. For example, they were shown without a head or with a line over the neck. A. W ą s, *Anikoniczny obraz Boga w islamie*, Art 6, 2009, p. 7.

to restoring icons in the Church to their prominent place; by linking them to the idea of salvation he gave a new meaning to their creation. In Islam there was no one to undertake such a task: according to the Muslim doctrine, the words of God contained in Ḳur'ān were the key principles. The Prophet only conveyed them – thus the Ḳur'ān could easily replace paintings[21]. The theories of John of Damascus were of no importance to Muslims, since they rejected the teaching of Jesus Christ's divine nature and considered Christians, who worshipped icons, to be idolaters[22].

In the time of Muḥammad and his direct successors, the struggle against images was aimed at eradicating polytheism. Several centuries later new argumentation appeared: a fight against human arrogance became the centre of attention. Muslim scholars explained that only God was entitled to create. A human, when drawing living beings, usurped God's rights. Furthermore, worshipping statues, even those depicting God, was, as a matter of fact, a veneration of idols. That was an emergence of a rule, which still remains in force today, according to which it is a sin to reproduce any forms, not only gods or humans, but also animals, birds and plants[23].

> As Polish researcher of Islamic art, Kazimierz Łyszcz, says:
> The process was greatly influenced by literary tradition recorded in the form of the aforementioned ḥadīths, which referred to personal experiences of people from the closest surrounding of Muḥammad, or confirmed by those who, in the eyes of the believers, deserved to be trusted. The time of the openness of the new religion and its continual expansion was followed by stagnation and a phase of consolidating the rules of the new faith. One of the signs of the solidification of doctrine was a radical limitation of the freedom of using paintings.[24]

Although some scholars claim that Islam contributed to intensifying the iconoclastic controversy in the Christian world, this thesis lacks sufficient evidence. George Ostrogorsky suggests that what influenced the decision of emperor Leo III, who banned the making of depictions of Christ and his saints, was the ruler's eastern origin[25]. On the other hand, John of Damascus, another representative of Christian elites of Syria, supported the creation of icons. Thus, it is most probable that controversies connected with veneration of paintings had

[21] *Historia sztuki...*, p. 139.

[22] E. Cruikshank Dodd, *Image...*, p. 193.

[23] *Historia sztuki...*, p. 139.

[24] K. Łyszcz, *Malarstwo miniaturowe a tendencje ikonoklastyczne w sztuce islamu*, Art 6, 2009, p. 16.

[25] G. Ostrogorski, *Dzieje Bizancjum*, tłum. H. Evert-Kappesowa et al., Warszawa 1967, p. 185.

existed in the Mediterranean region before Muḥammad's activity. Both Islam and Christianity eventually decided that creating images was legitimate, basing this thesis on their doctrines – in Christianity God becomes a human, a visible figure, thus paintings are justified; in Islam the rejection of the dogma of incarnation results in approving the rightness of a claim that Allah can only symbolise a word[26]. Therefore, it cannot be proven that Islam inherited the Christian tradition concerning this issue[27]. It rather referred to ideas from the Old Testament.

Clear evidence that the matter of figurative representations was yet unresolved in the first centuries of Islam is present in the fact that quite a lot of depictions of people and animals from this period remain. The first Muslim caliphs allowed their palaces to be decorated with scenes of hunts and even the painting of naked human figures. Despite eluding the ban or interpreting it in a way which enabled artistic presentations of living beings, God remained an "inviolable" reality in Muslim art[28].

From the beginning, rather than paintings, it was sculptures which aroused most controversy, being equated with pagan idols, against which the zeal of the followers of the new religion was chiefly aimed. It can be proven by a frequently-quoted passage of Ḳur'ān (5:90): *O you who have faith! Indeed wine, gambling, idols ad divining arrows are abominations of Satan's doing, so avoid them, so that you may be felicitous.* Interestingly, the term *idol* denoted everything that cast a shadow. Sculptures and cult object of other religions were destroyed if there was any suspicion that they might have been objects of idolatry. As K. Łyszcz concludes:

> The dispute on the issue of the origins of iconoclasm still causes disagreement among researchers. Muslim scholars point to the initiating role of Byzantium, while Christians emphasise the decisive influence of Islam.[29]

6.2. Architecture and Art after the Rise of Islam

Arabic architecture from the time of *Djāhiliyya* (lack of knowledge, ignorance) – including their greatest monument, Al-Ka'ba – did not present significant artistic value. More interesting achievements in the field of construc-

[26] *Historia sztuki...*, pp. 139–140.

[27] E. Cruikshank Dodd, *Image...*, p. 194.

[28] A. Wąs, *Anikoniczny...*, p. 7.

[29] K. Łyszcz, *Malarstwo...*, p. 16; P. Crone, *Islam, Judeo-Christianity and Byzantine Iconoclasm*, [in:] *The Formation of the Classical Islamic World*, vol. VIII, *Arab-Byzantine Relations in Early Islamic Times*, ed. M. Bonner, Aldershot 2004, pp. 361–397.

tion can be attributed to representatives of the cultures from the peripheries of the Peninsula: the Lakhmids, the Ghassānids and the Yemeni. Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad al-Hamdānī described throne halls topped with domes, built by the latter tribe. This text, however, referred to semi-mythical constructions, so it cannot be taken literally[30]. The most famous building constructed in pre-Muslim Yemen was the royal Ghumdan Palace, which became a symbol of splendour, wealth and royal power[31].

Since the Arabs did not have their own traditions in the area of architecture, they had to model their constructions on the achievements of the neighbouring civilizations: Byzantium and Persia. This is noticeable both in secular and in religious buildings[32]. The earliest monument of Muslim architecture – a mosque created through adapting the house of the Prophet in Medina – was a very simple construction. The existing building together with the adjacent yard was surrounded with a wall. Next to the Prophet's house a mosque was built from palm tree stumps and its roof was covered with palm leaves[33]. The following mosques, emerging in Al-Kūfa (638–639), Bostra (638–639) and Al-Fusṭaṭ (642), which do not exist anymore, were also very simple in their structure[34]. The first administration buildings, such as *dar al-imara* in Al-Kūfa and in Damascus (after 644) did not have any artistic value – they played a purely practical role. Apparently the first of the Umayyad caliphs, Mu ʿāwija, ordered the restructure of his quarters after being told by a Byzantine envoy that its upper part was suitable for birds and the lower, for rats[35].

The main difference between the early (685–724) and late (724–750) periods of Umayyad art consists of the role of carved decorations and reliefs. Until 724 AD relief sculptures were infrequent compared with mural and floor mosaics. Even in the case of those monuments in which sculptures and reliefs are

[30] R. Ettinghausen, O. Grabar, M. Jenkins-Madina, *Sztuka i architektura islamu 650–1250*, Warszawa 2007, p. 4.

[31] N.N. Khoury, *The Dome of the Rock, the Ka'ba and Ghumdan: Arab Myths and Umayyad Monuments*, Muq 10, 1993, p. 61.

[32] M. Guidetti, *The Byzantine Heritage in the Dār al-Islām: Churches and Mosques in al-Ruha between the Sixth and Twelfth Centuries*, Muq 26, 2009, pp. 1–36.

[33] J. Pijoan, *Sztuka...*, pp. 208–209; R. Ettinghausen, O. Grabar, M. Jenkins-Madina, *Sztuka...*, p. 5; *Historia sztuki...*, p. 141; A. Petersen, *Dictionary of Islamic Architecture*, London 2002, p. 183; J. Sauvaget, *La Mosquée Omeyyade de la Médine. Étude sur les origines architecturales de la mosquée et de la basilique*, Paris 1947.

[34] J. Pijoan, *Sztuka...*, p. 209; N. Rabbat, *The Meaning of the Umayyad Dome of the Rock*, Muq 6, 1990, pp. 12–21; idem, *The Dome of the Rock Revisited: Some Remarks on al-Wasiti's Accounts*, Muq 10, 1993, pp. 67–75.

[35] N. Rabbat, *The Meaning...*, p. 12.

the only decorations, they appear to be much more modest than artefacts from the later Umayyad period. Moreover, the techniques and subjects of these depictions are conservative – neither religious nor secular works contain images of living creatures. The main materials are marble and stone; stuccos appear very rarely. However, it is possible to encounter numerous marble capitals, columns and panels, in reuse[36]; this use resembles early Christian *spolia*[37].

6.3. Examples of Religious Architecture: The Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and the Great Mosque in Damascus

One of the most characteristic monuments of the world of Islam, not simply for its artistic merit but also for its nature as an example of purely Muslim architecture, is the Dome of the Rock (*Ḳubbat as-Ṣakhra*) in Jerusalem[38]. Earlier buildings were of a utilitarian nature – they did not aim to be beautiful, only useful for the faithful who came to the mosque in order to pray. *Ḳubbat as-Ṣakhra* is regarded as a milestone in the history of Islamic architecture owing to the fact that, since the time of its construction at the end of the seventh century, it has not undergone any major change, thus it is now the oldest – almost unchanged – monument of the first centuries of Islam[39]. Interestingly, it is of singular and extraordinary construction – no cases of copying its form are known to us in later Muslim architecture[40].

The Dome of the Rock was completed in the years 691–692 during the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān, the fifth caliph of the Umayyad dynasty[41]. In an

[36] R. T a l g a m, *The Stylistic Origins of Umayyad Sculpture and Architectural Decoration*, Wiesbaden 2004, p. 32.

[37] *Spolium* (pl. *spolia*, "spoil", "loot") is another technique of using an older architectural element (a column, a stone detail etc.) in a new building.

[38] According to some researchers, the choice of Jerusalem – not Damascus, the Umayyad capital – to build this mosque is significant, as it indicates willingness to emphasise the continuity and the dialogue between Islam and the preceding monotheistic religions – Judaism and Christianity. F.B. F l o o d, *Faith, Religion and the Material Culture of Early Islam*, [in:] *Byzantium and Islam...*, p. 246. Geographer Al-Muḳaddasī (born. 945/946), quoted by F.F. Flood (p. 248), wrote that both the Dome of the Rock and the Great Mosque of Damascus were to be a visual counterbalance to beautifully decorated Christian churches.

[39] M. P i n k e r, *Kopuła...*, p. 35; O. G r a b a r, *The Formation of Islamic Art*, New Haven–London 1973, pp. 48–67, 71–74.

[40] *Ibidem*, p. 80.

[41] The reasons for constructing this building are still being discussed by scholars. One of the theories holds that ʿAbd al-Malik wanted to change the direction of the ḥadjdj, the Mus-

inscription on one of the walls, the name of the ruler-founder was replaced with the name of an Abbasid caliph, Al-Ma'mūn, but no attempt was made to change the date of the completion of the building[42]. *Ḳubbat as-Ṣakhra* is situated on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, near the Al-Aḳṣā mosque[43] and the Jewish Wailing Wall. It is built to an octagonal plan (each side is 20.59 m long), with a centrally located double dome with a diameter of 20.44 m[44]. The central plan connected to the dome resembles the design of Byzantine churches. The tradition of constructing buildings of this type in the areas of Syria and Palestine has long history, dating back to Roman times, when a central plan, columns and a dome were the basic architectural elements of mausoleums[45].

Keppel A.C. Creswell connects the design of the Dome of the Rock directly to three Byzantine buildings. The first, no longer extant, is the cathedral of Bostra (512–513), whose structure was topped with a dome based on a tholobate supported by a row of columns and pillars. According to Creswell, the next stage of development of the structure of the central buildings can be Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, which was built in 327–335 AD. It is a building based on a circular plan with two arcades consisting of columns and pillars. These two constructions are linked by an arcade with pillars interweaving with columns and the proportions of a drum[46]. The architectural concept of the Dome of the Rock was also influenced by the shape of the Chapel of Ascension on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem (before 378 AD). The chapel was built on an

lim pilgrimage, from Mecca to Jerusalem, since the cities of the Prophet were at that time in the hands of anti-caliph ʿAbd al-Allāh az-Zubayr. E. H e r z f e l d, *The Genesis of Islamic Art and the Problem of Mshatta*, [in:] *Early Islamic Art and Architecture. The Formation of the Classical Islamic Worlds*, vol. XXIII, ed. J.M. B l o o m, Aldershot Burlington 2002, p. 2. See also: A. E l a d, *Why Did 'Abd al-Malik Build the Dome of the Rock? A Re-Examination of the Muslim Sources*, [in:] *Bayt al-Maqdis. Abd al-Malik's Jerusalem*, vol. I, eds. J. R a b y, J. J o n e s, Oxford 1993, pp. 33–52; *Historia sztuki...*, p. 156.

[42] K.A.C. C r e s w e l l, *The Origin of the Plan of the Dome of the Rock*, London 1924, p. 5.

[43] The Byzantines would give Al-Walīd II many gold dinars for the construction of Al-Aḳṣā (705–712) and send 100 well-trained craftsmen and 40 shipments of mosaic pieces (*tessera*) to decorate the temple. R.W. H a m i l t o n, *The Structural History of the Aqsa Mosque*, Jerusalem 1947; H. S t e r n, *Recherches sur la mosquée al-Aqsa et sur ses mosaïques*, AOr 5, 1963, pp. 28–48; V. C h r i s t i d e s, *Periplus of the Byzantine-Arab Cultural Relations*, [in:] *Cultural Relations between Byzantium and the Arabs*, eds. Y.Y. H i j j i, V. C h r i s t i d e s, Athens 2007, p. 29.

[44] M. P i n k e r, *Kopuła w architekturze arabsko-muzułmańskiej w pierwszych wiekach islamu*, Warszawa 2010, [unpublished MA thesis], p. 35; *Historia sztuki...*, p. 156.

[45] J. P i j o a n, *Sztuka...*, p. 209. For information of the use of a dome in Muslim art see: O. G r a b a r, *The Islamic Dome*, JSAH 22, 1963, pp. 191–199.

[46] K.A.C. C r e s w e l l, *The Origin...*, pp. 26–27; *Historia sztuki...*, p. 156.

octagonal plan[47]. Recapitulating his analysis of the genesis of the form of *Ḳubbat as-Ṣakhra,* the author made a simplified outline of its development:

– a circle inscribed in a circle (the Church of the Holy Sepulchre);

– a circle inscribed in an octagon (the Chapel of Ascension);

– a circle inscribed in an octagon, enclosed in a circle in a square (the Cathedral of Bosra);

– a circle inscribed in an octagon, enclosed in an octagon (the Dome of the Rock mosque)[48].

According to Marguerite van Berchem, who described the decorations of the Dome, the mosaics in *Ḳubbat as-Ṣakhra* were made by Christians and maintained in a Byzantine style[49]. Their characteristic features are a golden background and the absence of any depictions of living creatures. Van Berchem classified and described the following motifs: leaves of acanthus and other plants, scrolls, trees, horns, shells, vases, baskets, bowls of fruit, crescents, stars, jewels, stylized wings, palm trees, conventionalised depictions of flowers, tangles, and palmettes (Fig. 1)[50].

Among all this abundance of varied forms, the most extraordinary elements are adornments such as crowns, bracelets, earrings, necklaces and breastplates. Depictions of jewellery appear almost exclusively on the interior of the octagonal colonnade – in the most important part of the building[51]. The gems presented in the ornamentation of the Dome of the Rock are all of Byzantine or Persian style[52]. Thus, they probably symbolise empires conquered by the Arabs. Oleg Grabar noted a similar manner of using such decorations, among others, in the Hagia Sophia church in Constantinople, where Byzantine rulers had once housed crowns[53]. At the same time, Grabar pointed to a connection between this phenomenon and the Muslim tradition, under which an assortment of objects were sent to Mecca and laid in Al-Ka ʿba[54]. In this context there can be seen two possible explanations of placing images of jewels on the mosaics of the Dome of the Rock[55]. According to one interpretation, crowns and other valuables are

[47] M. P i n k e r, *Kopuła...*, p. 44.

[48] K.A.C. C r e s w e l l, *The Origin...*, pp. 29–30.

[49] M. v a n B e r c h e m, *The Mosaics of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem*, [in:] K.A.C. C r e s w e l l, *Early Muslim Architecture*, Oxford 1969, pp. 240, 321.

[50] K.A.C. C r e s w e l l, *Early Muslim Architecture...*, pp. 252–292.

[51] O. G r a b a r, *Umayyad Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem*, AOr 3, 1959, p. 47.

[52] *Ibidem*, p. 48.

[53] *Ibidem*, p. 49.

[54] M. P i n k e r, *Kopuła...*, p. 46.

[55] O. G r a b a r, *Umayyad Dome...*, p. 52.

a reference to Byzantine and Muslim motifs and their aim is to emphasise the holiness of the place. The other account states that Byzantine and Sassanid insignia were used as a symbol of the acts of humility of the defeated rulers and their acknowledgement of Islam's superiority – they are a form of trophies captured from the enemies[56].



Fig. 1. A mosaic from the interior of the Dome of the Rock, created around 690–691 AD. In the central part of the composition there is a depiction of a vase filled with plants such as acanthus leaves) on a golden background. The whole arrangement is complemented by a geometric floral ornament on its edges (all copies in this chapter by Elżbieta Myślińska-Brzozowska).

This analysis of the decorations in the Dome of the Rock would not be complete without addressing the inscriptions on the interior. They occupy about 240 m – 128 m outside the building and 112 m inside it. They have been described by Max van Berchem[57]. The inscriptions are one of the earliest examples of Arabic script. It is Kufic in style, mostly devoid of diacritical marks. Christel Kessler has proven that almost all letters with diacritical marks are situated on the interior of the arcade, in polemical texts directed against Christianity[58]. They

[56] M. P i n k e r, *Kopuła...*, p. 46.

[57] M. v a n B e r c h e m, *Materiaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum. Memoires publies par les Membres de la Mission Archeologique Francaise au Caire*, Paris 1927, pp. 223–376.

[58] Ch. K e s s l e r, *Abd al-Malik's Inscription in the Dome of the Rock: A Reconsideration*, JRAS 102, 1970, p. 10.

could have been inspired by passages from the Gospel referring to salvation, which graced the Church of the Holy Sepulchre[59].

Oleg Grabar claimed that the inscriptions in the Dome of the Rock convey two main messages[60]: evangelism, exhorting conversion to Islam and confirmation of the superiority of Islam over older religions, especially Christianity.

Having analysed the location, plan and decorations of the Dome of the Rock, the mentioned scholar concluded that the construction should be viewed with reference to two groups: People of the Book, which means followers of Judaism and Christianity, the two religions whose continuation was Islam and the Muslim people. *Ḳubbat as-Ṣakhra* was intended to be a symbol of the power of Islam and the Umayyads over Syria and Palestine. The choice of the Temple Mount was consistent with a centuries-old tradition of emphasising the status of Islam as having "sealed" the two preceding religions. The mosaics depicting the insignia of Byzantine and Persian rulers were to be symbols of their defeat in the battles against the Muslim army (although it could not be claimed that the Byzantine emperor was totally defeated by the Arabs). The inscriptions highlighted the basic rules of the new faith, in particular monotheism. Moreover, the selection of Ḳur'ānic quotations was anti-Christian in nature and pointed to the errors which the followers of this religion made in their doctrine (the key issue being the dogma of the Holy Trinity), as well as encouraging conversion to the only correct faith – Islam[61].

A Christian building often compared to the Dome of the Rock is the Church of the Nativity, with its decorative mosaics. These depictions consist of floral and architectural motifs, images of altars, crosses and books, as well as inscriptions. Each of these elements is present in earlier-built churches of Syria and Palestine or in Byzantine iconography. We can highlight especially the motif of the grapevine; verdant shoots growing from decorated vases are a common feature of the Dome of the Rock and the Church of the Nativity. In fact, it is a part of a classic repertoire transferred to Christian art from the Mediterranean world, which can be exemplified by the church of St. George in Thessalonica. The motif of grapevine was commonly used in Egypt, Syria and Palestine in the fifth–sixth centuries, and later returned in Umayyad art, e.g. in the decorations of the Great Mosque of Damascus[62].

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[59] H. B u s s e, *The Temple of Jerusalem and Its Restitution by ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwan*, JeAr 23/24, 1997/1998, p. 28.

[60] O. G r a b a r, *Umayyad Dome...*, p. 55.

[61] M. P i n k e r, *Kopuła...*, p. 49.

[62] *Ibidem*, p. 198.

The history of the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus is particularly interesting – it was created in the years 706–715 on the site of the Roman-era Temple of Jupiter, rebuilt by emperor Theodosius the Great and converted into St. John's church in 379 AD[63]. Umayyad caliph Al-Walīd I transformed the Christian church into a Muslim temple in 691, but, in keeping with tradition, retained the relic of St. John the Baptist's head[64]. As a result of its numerous alterations the mosque looks rather eclectic: it consists of a spacious rectangular yard, surrounded by porticos on three sides. The latter prove the Byzantine influence[65]. In the southern part of the building there is a prayer hall with an elevated transept, which is perpendicular to the *Ḳibla* wall and three naves parallel to it. Today, a large dome stands above the centre of the transept[66]. According to Al-Muḳaddasī, it used to be situated *in the middle opposite the miḥrāb*[67]. This account from the tenth century might suggest that the dome of the Damascus mosque was not initially located in the same place, but in the *miḥrāb* section. An analysis of the plans of an assortment of mosques proves that domes were usually situated close to the prayer niche[68].

Prior to its destruction in 1983, the Great Mosque held the largest surface covered with gold mosaic – around 4000 square m. It decorated the outer elevation of the gallery (on the side of the yard) and its interior. The mosaics were also placed on the facade of the prayer hall (again on the side of the yard). They originated from the period of Umayyad foundation and later Seljuq reconstruction. The preserved fragments show a resemblance to Byzantine mosaics, known for example from the Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, although some scholars claim that they are more closely related to Roman paintings in Pompeii[69]. They do not depict human beings or animals, but contain coherent

[63] The history and architecture of the mosque have attracted scholars for a long time. Among earlier works the following are especially worth mentioning: A.C. Dickie, *The Great Mosque of the Omeiyades*, *Damascus*, PEQ 29, 1897, pp. 268–328; R. Phenè Spiers, *The Great Mosque of the Omeiyades, Damascus*, ArchRev 8, 1900, pp. 80–88, 103–114, 158–169; O. Grabar, *La grande mosquée de Damas et les origines architecturales de la mosquée*, [in:] *Synthronon. Art et archéologie de la fin de l'Antiquité et du Moyen Âge. Recueile d'études par A. Grabar et un groupe des ses disciples*, Paris 1968, pp. 107–114.

[64] J. Pijoan, *Sztuka...*, pp. 209–211. Apart from the "chapel", where the relic is located, there is also another, with the head of imam Al-Husayn, worshipped especially by Shiites. M.M. Dziekan, *Dzieje...*, p. 353; *Historia sztuki...*, p. 157.

[65] J. Pijoan, *Sztuka...*, p. 211; V. Christides, *Periplus...*, p. 29; *Historia sztuki...*, p. 157.

[66] M. Pinker, *Kopuła...*, p. 64.

[67] Muḳaddasī, p. 157.

[68] M. Pinker, *Kopuła...*, p. 63.

[69] M. al-Asad, *Historical Artistic Introduction*, [in:] *The Umayyads: The Rise...*, p. 49.

compositions of floral (Fig. 2) and architectural motifs – they create images of perfect cities and palaces surrounded by greenery. Both of the preserved fragments are based on a similar structure. In the lower panel water and fruit trees are depicted; above them there are groups of buildings with facades dominated by ancient columns[70].



Fig. 2. The Great Mosque of the Umayyads in Damascus. This mosaic bears a developed floral ornament style from a period slightly exceeding the scope of this paper – the latter half of the eighth century – in which is continued the patterns created in the Umayyad era. It adorns the outer surface of the so-called Dome of the Treasury, a small construction, situated inside the courtyard of the Great Mosque. The building was created around 790, during the reign of the first Abbasids

The iconography of the mosque's mosaic causes interpretational problems. There are three theories regarding the question of its interpretation. It might depict Damascus in late antiquity together with the River Barada flowing through it; these scenes may be the cities which were included in the new empire; thirdly, states the last hypothesis, these images may present the Muslim paradise[71]. In any case, the exceedingly high level of artistry suggests that the mosaics were made by craftsmen brought from Constantinople[72].

As can be concluded from these overviews, the decorations of temples from the period of the first caliphs, the Dome of the Rock and the Great Mosque of Damascus, often include decorative motifs such as acanthus and grapevine

[70] For more information on this subject, see: B. F i n s t e r, *Die Mosaiken der Umayyadenmoschee von Damaskus*, KO 7, 1972, pp. 83–136; F.B. F l o o d, *The Great Mosque of Damascus. Studies on the Makings of an Umayyad Visual Culture*, Leiden 2001; M. v a n B e r c h e m, *The Mosaics of the Dome...*, pp. 324–372.

[71] Ł. P i ą t a k, *Architektura Wielkiego Meczetu Umajjadów w Damaszku*, [in:] *Azja i Afryka: inność – odmienność – różnorodność*, eds. P. B a c h t i n, M. K l i m i u k, Warszawa 2014, pp. 55–56.

[72] M. a l - A s a d, *Historical Artistic...*, p. 49.

leaves, which appeared from late Antiquity in both Christian and in pagan temples[73]. K. Łyszcz states that the preserved fragments of mosaics in the Damascus mosque contain depictions of landscapes and architecture, remaining in the circle of Hellenistic tradition[74].

6.4. "Desert Castles" as an Example of Umayyad Secular Architecture

In the first centuries of Islam Muslims built mosques, palaces and strongholds, drawing mainly on Christian and Persian architectural patterns. The best-known constructions are the so-called "desert castles" (*ḳaṣr*), which, in contrast to the common meaning of the word, were also buildings of non-military character, serving caliphs as seasonal residences. The majority of them fell into ruin, and their poor state of repair complicates research. Additional problems result from the unstable political situation in the region. Other difficulties are connected with the uneven distribution of this kind of monument in the Islamic world[75]. Their analysis can thus be based on archaeological research and studies of historical accounts. However, we should not underestimate the efforts of the French Institute of the Near East in Beirut, under whose aegis a monumental monograph on the subject of the constructions in question has recently been published[76].

There are numerous theories concerning the reasons for building these desert residences. They played the role of caravansaries, providing travellers with an opportunity to rest and replenish their water supplies. They were regarded as the meeting places of the rulers and local Arabic tribes, and so also had a political function[77]. K.A.C. Creswell, a famous English researcher of Muslim architecture compared them to Roman villas and perceived them as a sign of the Umayyad

[73] N. R a b b a t, *Umayyad Architecture: A Spectacular Intra-Cultural Synthesis in Bilad al-Sham*, [in:] *Residences, Castles, Settlements. Transformation Processes from Late Antiquity to Early Islam in Bilad al-Sham, Proceedings of the International Conference held at Damascus, 5–9 November 2006*, eds. K. B a r t l, A. A l - R a z z a q M o a z, n.p. 2009, pp. 13–18.

[74] K. Ł y s z c z, *Malarstwo...*, p. 15

[75] They were usually built on fertile soils in the East from Damascus. At the same time pilgrimage trails and trade routes were also taken into account. A. B a l l i a n, *Country Estates...*, p. 203; J. S a u v a g e t, *Châteaux umayyades de Syrie. Contribution à l'étude de la colonisation arabe aux Ier et IIe siècles de l'Hégire*, REI 35, 1967, pp. 1–49.

[76] D. G e n e q u a n d, *Les établissements des élites omeyyades en Palmyrène et au Proche Orient*, Beyrouth 2012.

[77] There is epigraphic evidence that palaces replaced monasteries as a meeting place for tribes inhabiting the desert. A. B a l l i a n, *Country Estates...*, pp. 203–204.

caliphs' preference for desert lifestyle[78]. On the other hand, a French historian and orientalist Jean Sauvaget claimed that they were not only places of entertainment and rest, but also agricultural centres. The irrigation systems, canals and aqueducts, apart from supplying palaces with water, irrigated fields in their surroundings[79]. Denis Genequand emphasised the political and economical aspects of the workings of "desert castles", describing each of them in detail[80]. Desert palaces were surrounded by gardens that substituted for farmlands, for example in *Ḳaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Sharḳī*[81], whose layout might have referred to the images of paradise[82].

Many of these constructions were built in haste, using materials of low quality. A simple square plan with towers in the corners was dominant; later rectangular layout was introduced[83]. They differed in size: *Ḳaṣr Kharāna* was 40 m long and 40 m wide, while the complex in ʿAndjar was 400 m long and 320 m wide[84]. Rulers wanted to complete the construction of their quarters as soon as possible, at the beginning of their reign: thus they often demolished their predecessors' buildings in order to demonstrate their domination. What is more, the dismantled structures were a perfect source of building materials for new constructions[85].

Arabic documents mentioning castles are relatively late, written down either by enemies of the Umayyads or by their successors, the Abbasids, who tried to tarnish the reputation of the first Muslim dynasty. That is the reason why Abbasid literature often depicted Al-Walīd II as a drunken philanderer and a *bon vivant*, who led a pleasant life in his desert residence. Other Umayyads were accused of ignoring the rules of Islam and striving for wealth[86]. It was believed that the glory of kings became evil when it was transferred to architecture. Lavish buildings created by the Umayyad rulers were supposed to have been constructed at the cost of their subjects[87].

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[78] K.A.C. C r e s w e l l, *Early Muslim Architecture...*, p. 409.

[79] O. G r a b a r, *Umayyad "Palace" and Abbasid "Revolution"*, StI 18, 1963, pp. 7–8.

[80] D. G e n e q u a n d, *Les établissements...*, *passim* (mainly pp. 379–395).

[81] The basic analysis of *Ḳaṣr al-Hayr ash-Sharḳi*: D. G e n e q u a n d, *Les établissements...*, pp. 95–159. Also compare: D.M. S c h l u m b e r g e r, *Les fouilles de Ḳaṣr-el-Heir el-Gharbi (1936–1938). Rapport préliminaire*, Sy 20.4, 1939, pp. 195–373; i d e m, *Deux fresques omeyyades*, Sy 25, 1946, pp. 86–102.

[82] M. P i n k e r, *Kopuła...*, p. 52.

[83] *Historia sztuki...*, p. 157; H. S t e r n, *Notes sur l'architecture des châteaux Omeyyades*, AIsl 11/12, 1946, pp. 72–97.

[84] M.M. D z i e k a n, *Dzieje...*, p. 362.

[85] M. P i n k e r, *Kopuła...*, p. 49.

[86] A. B a l l i a n, *Country Estates...*, p. 200.

[87] O. G r a b a r, *From Dome of Heaven to Pleasure Dome*, JSHA 49, 1990, p. 21.

Out of a dozen or so buildings dated to the Umayyad times, the best preserved are worth mentioning: *Khirbat al-Minja*, *Ḳaṣr ʿAmra*, *Ḳaṣr al-Hayr ash-Sharqi*, *Khirbat al-Mafdjar*, and *Mshattā* (also known by the name of *Mshattā*)[88]. In many there are elements depicting landscapes and architecture. This can be observed in the extant ruins that have been discovered on the border between Syria and Jordan, e.g. in *Ḳaṣr al-Hayr* or *Mshattā*[89].

The best-preserved desert palace is *Ḳaṣr ʿAmra* in Jordan, discovered by Alois Musil in June 1898[90]. It is a relatively small construction, consisting of two main parts. One of them is a large basilican hall covered with a triple-barrel vault and surrounded by two rooms with windowless apses. Another part is a bath consisting of three rooms, one of which is topped with a barrel vault, the second, a cross vault and the third, a dome and two semi-domes. It must be emphasised that in desert conditions a bath is one of the clearest signs of luxury[91].



Fig.3. Wall painting from a presence chamber in the desert palace in *Ḳaṣr ʿAmra* from the first half of the eighth century, depicting a woman with bare breasts An example of figurative art from the Umayyad period

[88] O. G r a b a r, *Umayyad Palaces Reconsidered*, AOr 23, 1993, p. 93.

[89] K. Ł y s z c z, *Malarstwo...*, p. 15; R. H i l l e n b r a n d, *Islamic Art at the Crossroads. East Versus West at Mshatta*, [in:] *Essays in Islamic Art and Architecture in Honor of Katharina Otto-Dorn*, ed. A. D a n e s h v a r i, Malibu 1981, pp. 63–86.

[90] A. M u s i l, *Kusejr Amra*, Vienna 1907; K.A.C. C r e s w e l l, *Early Muslim Architecture...*, p. 253; A. J a u s s e n, R. S a v i g n a c, *Mission archeologique en Arabie*, vol. III, Paris 1922; M. A l m a g r o e t a l., *Qusayr Amra*, Madrid 1975.

[91] J. P i j o a n, *Sztuka...*, p. 211; M. P i n k e r, *Kopuła...*, p. 53; *Historia sztuki...*, p. 160.

The *Ḳaṣr 'Amra* Palace is famous for extraordinary and relatively well-preserved wall paintings. They originate from the first half of the eighth century and depict the so-called "six kings", musicians, young men, women with bare breasts and other naked figures in a very realistic way (Fig. 3)[92]. All the frescos reference the Hellenist art of Syria[93]. Figurative depictions were created without any major limitations, which can be proven by artefacts from this period, which show people, animals and even mythical creatures.

The dome in *Ḳaṣr 'Amra* is the only one preserved in Umayyad palaces. With its depictions of constellations, it referred to the so-called "heavenly domes" – a motif known from antiquity. Undoubtedly, this theme was drawn from the art of earlier inhabitants of Syria and Palestine, i.e. Romans and Byzantines[94]. Fritz Saxl, an Austrian art historian, claims that the painter who created this work must have copied the image of the sky from a Greek book, since the position of the constellations are not consistent with the arrangement seen by observers in the sky, but it is rather its mirror image, seen by God[95].

A very impressive – twelve times the size of other buildings of its kind[96] – unfinished palace in *Mshattā* (Fig. 4) was probably also topped with a dome. This structure was independently discovered by two researchers – Austen Henry Layard in 1840 and Henry Baker Tristram in 1872[97]. The grounds of the palace are surrounded by a wall, 147 m on each side. It is flanked by twenty-five towers; the interior is divided into three parts. The central part consists of an entrance hall, barely preserved, which continues into a spacious courtyard. In the north wing of the palace there is a basilican throne hall, above which the dome was probably mounted. Assuming that it was hemispherical, we can suppose that it rose up to 13 m[98]. Presumably, it was surrounded by three semi-domes[99].

Irving Lavin linked the dome room in Mshattā with the Latin current of *tricorium* – a room with three apses[100]. He claimed that the Umayyad construction

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[92] J. P i j o a n, *Sztuka...*, p. 211. On the subject of nudity in depictions of *Ḳaṣr 'Amra* see: G. F o w d e n, *Qusayr 'Amra. Art and the Umayyad Elite in Late Antique Syria*, Berkeley–Los Angeles–London 2004, pp. 57–64; O. G r a b a r, *The Six Kings at Qusayr Amrah*, AOr 1, 1954, pp. 185–187.

[93] K.A.C. C r e s w e l l, *Early Muslim Architecture...*, p. 268; *Historia sztuki...*, p. 160.

[94] J. P i j o a n, *Sztuka...*, p. 211; M. P i n k e r, *Kopuła...*, p. 55; *Historia sztuki...*, p. 160.

[95] F. S a x l, *The Zodiac of Quṣayr Amra*, [in:] K.A.C. C r e s w e l l, *Early Muslim Architecture...*, pp. 289–295.

[96] A. B a l l i a n, *Ḳaṣr al-Mshatta*, [in:] *Byzantium and Islam...*, pp. 209–211.

[97] K.A.C. C r e s w e l l, *Early Muslim Architecture...*, p. 350.

[98] *Ibidem*, p. 359; J. P i j o a n, *Sztuka...*, p. 212.

[99] M. P i n k e r, *Kopuła...*, p. 56; *Historia sztuki...*, pp. 160–161.

[100] I. L a v i n, *The House of the Lord: Aspects of the Role of Palace Triclinia in the Architecture of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ArtB 44, 1962, p. 3.

is *an epigone of the local Syrian tradition* drawn directly from the Byzantines[101]. Three small domes were probably also located above the rooms in towers, which reached beyond the wall in the throne part of the palace. It is possible that latrines were situated in these towers[102] – it is suggested by particularly bored stones[103].



Fig. 4. A stone relief gracing the facade of the desert palace in *Mshattā*, made in the 5. decade of the eighth century. One of many masterful, low-carved elements, whose purpose was to decorate the outside surface of the walls in caliph Al-Walīd II's residence. Its characteristic feature is elaborate ornamentation, consisting mostly of floral motifs – acanthus leaves and grapevine sprouts. Sometimes images of animals, including various birds, lions and mythical creatures appeared on the facade of the palace.

Another non-preserved dome may have graced the *Khirbat al-Mafdjar* palace, also called Hishām palace[104]. It would most likely have been located above the bath complex. The same kind of vault was built over a small room attached to the pool[105].

It is worth emphasising that the dome[106], whose form had been known for centuries to builders from Persia, Rome and Byzantium, and its shape – reflecting the symbolism of the sky, power and divinity – became distinctive features of Islamic architecture and its indispensable component. The earliest Muslim palaces, from the period of the Umayyads, were strongly influenced by the architecture of Rome and Byzantium. In the process of their construction, the Arabs adopted not only their predecessors' form of a dome but also the additional meaning ascribed to it. Therefore, Arabic-Muslim architecture contains the heavenly symbolism of domes (*Ḳaṣr ʿAmra*) and the symbolism of power (the throne hall in *Mshattā*)[107].

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[101] *Ibidem*, p. 11.

[102] K.A.C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture...*, pp. 355, 359.

[103] M. Pinker, *Kopuła...*, p. 57.

[104] R.W. Hamilton, *Khirbat al Mafjar*, Oxford 1959; H.G. Franz, *Das Omayyadenschloss von Khirbat al-Mafjar*, FF 30, 1956, pp. 298–305.

[105] R. Ettinghausen, O. Grabar, M. Jenkins-Madina, *Sztuka...*, p. 39.

[106] It is impossible to define the date of creation of the first building with a dome. It is estimated that the earliest of them were built at the end of the fourth millennium BC in the Near East. M. Pinker, *Kopuła...*, p. 11.

[107] *Ibidem*, p. 61.

6.5. Decorative Art in the Time of the Umayyads

Umayyad decorative art, realised in products of handicraft (metalwork, weaving, pottery and ivory work) is even more difficult to research than architecture. Many objects were produced in the same way as before the emergence of Islam, thus the majority of them cannot be dated properly, if found outside the original context. It is difficult to identify whether a particular item is of Umayyad, Byzantine, Sassanid or Coptic origin. In the Umayyad epoch these so-called "minor arts" played a secondary role compared to mosaics, architecture and sculpture: all integral parts of architectural constructions.

As it has already been mentioned, figurative depictions did not appear in the context of cult. They were eliminated from the mainstream of the Muslim civilization and allowed to exist only on the periphery of it. The Arabs compensated for this lack by developing incredible abilities to create ornaments[108] on wood and plaster panels, tiles on walls and fired-clay mosaics. They drew inspiration from the world of plants – motifs of leaves, flowers and braches were stylised to such an extent that they became difficult to recognise. Overlapping geometrical patterns, rhombuses and polygonal figures covered whole surfaces[109].

One field allowing artists to escape from religious limitations was handicraft. Various materials, such as wood, clay, metal, glass, fabric and paper, were utilised. In pottery, methods of glazing were various, for example, the production of polychromed vases[110]. Wondrous glass products were decorated with gold and colourful enamel and in metalwork; bronze was encrusted with silver and copper. Fabrics and carpets with geometric, animal and anthropomorphic patterns of the highest quality were made[111]. However, in accordance with the one restriction, depictions of humans and animals could not dominate over other floral or geometric elements.

Reliefs were a rarity. When they appeared on sculptures and statues, they were usually nearly flat. It is worth referring to an example of such decorations in ʿAndjar and *Ḳaṣr Kharāna*, which we have previously mentioned. ʿAndjar

[108] K. E s t r e i c h e r, *Historia sztuki...*, p. 226; J. P i j o a n, *Sztuka...*, p. 240. On the subject of ornamental motifs in the art of early Islam see: M. M o r a i t o u, *Ornamental Motifs in Early Islamic Art*, [in:] *Byznatium and Islam...*, p. 223–229.

[109] K. E s t r e i c h e r, *Historia sztuki...*, pp. 226–228; J. P i j o a n, *Sztuka...*, p. 240.

[110] F. R o b i n s o n, *Islam...*, pp. 204–205.

[111] K. E s t r e i c h e r, *Historia sztuki...*, pp. 226–228; J. P i j o a n, *Sztuka...*, p. 240; J. B i n o u s, M. H a w a r i, M. M a r i n, G. Ö n e g, *Islamic Art in the Mediterrenean...*, p. 17; F. R o b i n s o n, *Islam...*, pp. 206–209.

(in today's eastern Lebanon) is an Umayyad architectural complex, erected on the basis of Byzantine patterns. Its decorations were carved in stone: ornaments joining arcaded windows, stylised acanthus, heads in niches surrounded by plants. The methods of carving were various – sometimes smooth and flat, at other times deeper and more detailed[112]. Another technique consisted of using casting molds: some casts survived in, among other places, *Ḳaṣr Kharana*, dated on the basis of graffiti to the years 661–684. The upper part of the facade and walls of the rooms were decorated with stuccos in the shape of medallions and stylised trees resembling Sassanid artefacts[113].

In no other field is the connection between Byzantine and Muslim trends so visible as in material culture. In the first decades after the conquest, items which were produced and traded did not differ much from those from before the Arab invasion. A sufficient example of this might be glass vessels, such as the decorated jugs used by Muslim, Christian and Jewish pilgrims, or clay lamps decorated with crosses and inscriptions – either Arabic or Greek[114].

6.6. Coins

The Muslim monetary system from the Umayyad epoch went through three phases of development. The first lasted from 692 to 694 AD and was characterised by the use of images of emperors and religious symbols borrowed from the Byzantines and Sassanids. The second stage (694–697) was a time of depicting so-called standing caliphs in Sassanid robes. The third phase, from 697 until the end of the rule of the Umayyads in 750 was a period of minting coins with Arabic religious inscriptions[115].

In the occupied areas Arabic conquerors encountered two fully-functioning monetary systems – Byzantine and Sassanid. In Byzantium gold denominated big transactions, while in small ones, copper coins were used. Byzantine coinage remained in circulation for many years after the Muslim conquest – copper coins until 658, gold until 696. Coins minted on the orders of the Umayyad rulers bore the symbol of a cross for a long time – probably to avoid causing displeasure

[112] R. T a l g a m, *The Stylistic Origins...*, pp. 37–39.

[113] *Ibidem*, p. 39.

[114] A. B a l l i a n, *Country Estates...*, p. 205.

[115] M.L. B a t e s, *The Coinage of Syria under the Umayyads, 692–750 AD*, [in:] *The IV International Conference on the History of Bilâd al-Shâm during the Umayyad Period*, eds. M.A. B a k h i t, R. S c h i c k, Amman 1989, p. 196.

among Christians, who constituted the majority of the community of the region. When caliph Mu ʿāwiya (661–680) did commission the minting of coins without the sign of a cross shortly after 660, they did not meet with much acceptance[116].

Umayyad coins in the first period differed from Byzantine ones only in an inscription in Arabic stating the name of the mint and an affirmation that they were fit for use (*Ṣāliḥ* or *Ṭayyib*). In the course of time, they were replaced by coins depicting a caliph in standing pose on the obverse[117]. On the reverse there was the letter *M* (in the Byzantine system denoting the value 40) or a fragmentary cross from the emperor's solidus. Coins of this kind were a transitional form, being minted several years before Marwān's reform. *Folles* introduced by it differed significantly from the earlier coins, as the majority of them contained the *shahāda*, the Muslim profession of faith, on the obverse and reverse: *There is no god but God. Muḥammad is the messenger of God*. Some coins were decorated with pictures; others had a name of the governor who had commissioned the minting on the reverse, or the name of the mint.

On the other hand, in the Persian territories, the most commonly used were silver Arab-Sassanid coins known under the middle-Persian name *drachma* or *dirham*. They were usually decorated with a portrait of a Sassanid ruler with an inscription and an ornament; on the reverse side there was a Zoroastrian altar with sacrifices. The main difference between Sassanid and Arabic-Sassanid coins was the addition of an inscription in Arabic on the latter ones, although this is not an exact rule. The issue of the monetary system may be proof of the continuous nature of administrative and economic life in the early years of the Muslim reign on Persia[118]. On the orders of ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān (685–705), in Damascus, the minting of new gold and silver coins began to replace the previously used Byzantine coins. This most significant reform of the fifth caliph[119] became the main cause of the war against the Byzantine emperor Justinian II, who refused to accept tribute from the Arabs paid in the new gold coins[120]. Soon

[116] C. F o s s, *Arab-Byzantine Coins...*, p. 136.

[117] Some researchers believe that on a number of coins an image of the Prophet was depicted. *Ibidem*, p. 137.

[118] More about Arabic-Sassanid coins in: J. W a l k e r, *A Catalogue of the Muhammadan Coins in the British Museum: A Catalogue of the Arab-Sassanian Coins. Umaiyad Governors in the East, Arab-Ephthalites, ʿAbbāsid Governors in Ṭabaristān and Bukhārā*, London 1941.

[119] Ph. G r i e r s o n, *The Monetary Reforms of ʿAbd al-Malik*, JESHO 3, 1960, pp. 241–264. The caliph reformed the administration, entrusting it to the Arabs and introducing Arabic as the official language. He also organized a mail service.

[120] M.L. B a t e s, *The Coinage of Syria...*, p. 202; C. F o s s, *Arab-Byzantine Coins...*, p. 137.

Muslim currency gained its own iconography – decorations consisting of Arabic inscriptions[121].

The openness of the Arabs and their willingness to learn from the conquered tribes were crucial for the spectacular development of the culture of the Muslim Empire in the first centuries of Islam. During the reign of the Umayyads the tradition which would be drawn on in the following centuries was shaped. On the other hand, some manifestations of artistic work which had been important in the seventh and eighth centuries, such as mosaics and figurative sculptures, lost their significance in the subsequent period. Robert Hillenbrand described Umayyad art as eclectic, experimental and propaganda. It was eclectic since it attracted artists from the Greco-Roman world, Mesopotamia, Iran and Central Asia to come to Syria; it was experimental because it produced combinations of forms and themes in an unprecedented way; and it was propaganda as many of its works promoted the power and greatness of the Umayyad Arabic-Muslim state and its caliphs.

A false image of rapid change alleged to have taken place in the Near East alongside the transfer of authority in this area from Byzantine to Muslim hands lingers on. In fact, the process of cultural transformation was gradual in nature and did not make a complete break with the previous tradition. Some of its elements survived under the new conditions. Large-scale Umayyad foundations did not start until 685, when caliph ʿAbd al-Malik gained power. His reign had a fundamental impact on the Islamisation of the southern Mediterranean, although even he quite frequently deferred to Byzantine inventions and precedents. As Kazimierz Łyszcz highlighted in his article:

> The dynamically developing new religion needed new iconographic forms, enabling the identification of its creators. In such a huge conglomerate of nations and cultures, various artistic traditions existed and the first caliphs, who possessed both religious and secular power, treated plastic arts in a rather liberal way. Since, in the first phase of the Muslim expansion the Arabs did not yet have their own artists, it seems obvious that, in the early decades, well-qualified Byzantine and Sassanid craftsmen were employed. They continued the patterns of late antiquity, early Christianity and Persia.[122]

The result of their efforts was the utilisation of both Christian and pagan motifs (among others, Hellenist) in ornamentation, visible in the Great Mosque of Damascus and in desert palaces.

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[121] On the obverse it read: *There is no god other than God, no one can equal him*, on the reverse: *God is the only God, eternal and indivisible, who was not born and has no equal*.

[122] K. Ł y s z c z, *Malarstwo...*, p. 15.

The oldest preserved Muslim palaces, dating back to the turn of the seventh and eighth centuries, demonstrate the adoption of Byzantine and Persian forms and solutions by the Arabs, as well as the liberal attitude of the Umayyads to depicting living beings (e.g. naked women from the frescos in *Ḳaṣr ʿAmra*). The domes topping these palaces are also a continuation of ancient traditions, a reference to the symbolism of power and the practice of covering the most important places with this kind of vaults (throne hall in *Mshattā*, for example). Following the process of the adoption of this architectural form by Arabic builders, we need to stress the context of Syria and Palestine as a region, wherein newly-arrived conquerors from the Arabian Peninsula became an inherent part of a centuries-old tradition of constructing dome-topped buildings.

Religious rules prevented some types of depictions in the plastic arts of Islam from developing equally dynamically to others. Later attempts to overcome these restrictions contributed to a bloom of architecture and ornamentation connected to it. In great measure, the art and construction of early Islam were a continuation of Byzantine patterns, but also drew on other traditions. Moreover, they contained some added value – the principle of unity in multiplicity. Despite the lack of homogenous origins, the Arabs managed to give their art a coherent aesthetic form, using elements drawn from various civilizations. The tradition shaped in the seventh century still remains, especially in sacred architecture.



Błażej Cecota, Marek M. Dziekan, Teresa Wolińska

Sources – a Brief Overview



Marek M. Dziekan

A Short Review of Arab Sources

Byzantium bordered the areas of Arab culture, hence references to the Byzantine Empire can be found in a great variety of texts to which this culture gave birth. Primary sources on which we rely for studying the history of Byzantine-Arab relations are very heterogeneous. In addition to texts that are strictly historical in character (assuming there exist Muslim-Arab writings which actually deserve to be classified under this category), the corpus of the sources in question also includes literary works. The complexity of the corpus is clearly seen in the difficulty one encounters in trying to fit medieval Arab writings into western genre typology. The boundary between fiction and non-fiction literature is often fluid, and a similar problem appears when one attempts to draw a distinction between religious and secular texts. Of course, all of this does not prevent us from

attempting to classify this material. However, none of those classifications can be regarded as entirely successful.

An attempt to characterize and classify Arab sources from the perspective of our knowledge of Byzantium was made by Nadia Maria El Cheikh in the preface to her work *Byzantium viewed by the Arabs*[1]. The typology offered by the Lebanese scholar[2], although it should not be entirely rejected, needs to be supplemented. This concerns in the first place poetry which is entirely omitted from her account (as opposed to artistic prose)[3].

The belief that it would be a mistake to exclude poetry from the discussion presented below is based on my own scholarly experience concerning the study of the history of Islamic civilization, as well as on the opinions held by other authors. Tadeusz Lewicki, a distinguished expert on the history of Islamic culture and its relations with the Slavs, also does not omit these kinds of texts from his work *Arabic Sources on the History of the Slavic Peoples*[4]. Lewicki analyzes a brief fragment of the Umayyad poet, Al-Akhṭal. Indeed, many scholars consider it legitimate to treat fictional stories as historical sources. This very fact can be viewed as forming something of a methodological justification for the inclusion of poetic texts in the discussion of the Arab sources on the history of Byzantine-Arab relations. Needless to say, however, such sources require a specific approach and interpretation[5]. A literary work constitutes (or can constitute) a model of reality. As Jerzy Topolski writes: *to fill a model with fictional material essentially does not undermine the truth on the level of the class of facts reflecting important aspects of reality*[6].

All works on the history of the Arabian Peninsula in the early medieval period start their overview of primary sources with a discussion of the old Arabic poetry called *dīwān al-ʿArab*, that is, the Arabs' archive. To this day, Arabists regard it as an important historical source[7]. However, one needs to admit that in

[1] N.M. El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs*, Cambridge Mass. 2004, pp. 5–13.

[2] In this overview I decided to confine myself to the period prior to the Crusades that significantly changed the way in which Christians were perceived in the Islamic world. Sources concerning the epoch to which this monograph is devoted may contain – are even certain to contain – a different vision of intercultural contacts.

[3] N.M. El Sheikh discusses poetry in the entry: *Rūm*, [in:] *EI*, vol. VIII, pp. 601–606.

[4] *Źródła arabskie do dziejów Słowiańszczyzny*, ed. T. Lewicki, vol. I, Wrocław–Kraków 1956, pp. 3–9 (along with detailed commentary).

[5] J. Wojciechowski, *Powieść historyczna w świadomości potocznej. Zarys problematyki*, Kraków 1989, p. 102.

[6] J. Topolski, *Problemy metodologiczne korzystania ze źródeł literackich w badaniu historycznym*, [in:] *Dzieło literackie jako źródło historyczne*, ed. Z. Stefanowska, Warszawa 1978, p. 15.

[7] Among fundamental works concerning the history of the Muslim-Arab historiography one needs to mention: F. Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, Leiden 1952;

our case old Arabic poetry is of little use. The only conclusion to be drawn from it with regard to Byzantium is that in the pre-Muslim period the Arabs did not treat it as a foreign state. The Empire is mentioned in poems by Imru Al-Ḳays (died around 540), by Al-Aʿshā, who is known for his travels (sixth–seventh centuries), and by ʻAmr ibn Ḳamīʾa (448–540). References to Byzantium are also found in the Prophet's most famous panegyrist, Ḥassān ibn Ṯābit. However, these references, as I have mentioned, are not very rich in content and, as such, can be referred to as "signals". A phrase derived from a description of a mount offered by Ṭarafah ibn al-ʻAbd can serve here as a good example: *it is just like the bridge of Rum who has just vowed to reinforce all of its walls with bricks*[8]. Aṣ-Ṣalt (sixth–seventh centuries), father of the well-known poet, Umayyah ibn Abī aṣ-Ṣalt, in turn, in describing a man, says that the *man is more generous than Emperor Heraclius*[9].

The Ḳur'ān and Sunnah, that is, the Prophet's tradition, form another corpus of the texts that concern us here. The Byzantines appear in the Ḳur'ān twice, first in the verses 2 to 4 in the Sūra 30, which, revealed in 616, even bears the title *Ar-Rūm* (*The Romans*, i.e. *The Byzantines*) and second in the Sūra 3, entitled *Imran's Family* (*Āl ʿImrān*) and revealed around 624 (verse 64). I shall return to this fragment later.

Sunnah, which is also called "tradition", forms a theory and practice of the Muslim orthodoxy[10]. It is made up of ḥadīths, that is, tales reporting the teachings, deeds, and sayings of the Islamic prophet, Muḥammad. Each of the ḥadīths contains a chain of narrators (*isnād*) and the text proper (*matn*). Sunnah began to be recorded in the eighth century, that is, in the period in which most of those who remembered the Prophet and thus could actually report his words were no longer alive. The main texts of the Islamic tradition were then brought

T. K h a l i d i, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, Cambridge 1994; F. S e z g i n, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, vol. I, Leiden 1967 (respective chapters); A.A. D u r i, *The Rise of Historical Writing among the Arabs*, Princeton 1983; i d e m, *Arabic Historiography*, [in:] *Culture and Learning in Islam*, ed. E. İ h s a n o ğ l u, Beirut 2003, pp. 487–510; H. K e n n e d y, *Wielkie arabskie podboje. Jak ekspansja islamu zmieniła świat*, transl. M. W i l k, Warszawa 2011, pp. 21–38. In Polish this issue is discussed in greatest detail by J ó z e f B i e l a w s k i (*Klasyczna literatura arabska*, Warszawa 1995) and by the author of this contribution (*Dzieje kultury arabskiej*, Warszawa 2008).

[8] *Poezja arabska. Wiek VI–XIII. Antologia*, ed. J. D a n e c k i, Wrocław 1997, p. 50. The text was translated by J. Danecki and A. Witkowska.

[9] Ṭabarī, *Tarikh* (ed. M.A.F. I b r a h i m, vol. II, p. 147).

[10] In Polish, a detailed discussion of the sunnah can be found in the work: K. K o ś c i e l n i a k, *Tradycja muzułmańska na tle akulturacji chrześcijańsko-islamskiej od VII do X w. Geneza, historia i znaczenie zapożyczeń nowotestamentowych w hadisach*, Kraków 2001.

into being. Most important are the two works entitled *Ṣaḥīḥ*, that is, the *proper (collection of tradition)* by Al-Bukhārī (810–870)[11] and by Muslim Ibn al-Ḥadjdjādj (817–874). These ḥadīths, apart from developing Ḳur'ānic motifs, add some new and significant elements to the Islamic image of Byzantium. This question was also dealt with elsewhere in this book, as was the issue of the commentary literature of which most important are the works by Abū Dja'far Muḥammad b. Djarīr al-Ṭabarī (died in 923).

As the dates of the authors' lives mentioned above suggest, most sources, with the exception of old Arabic poetry and the Ḳur'ān, come from the periods following the one on which we focus here. With regard to the times of the prophet, of the rightly-guided caliphs, or of the Umayyad dynasty, that is, at least to the latter half of the seventh century, one can hardly talk about any Arab historical literature, or about any form of Arab prose. Poetry was the only genre that flourished in the period. Holding special significance for the Arabs, it formed the quintessence of their culture. Prose, both artistic and quasi-scholarly, appeared as late as the ninth century. To be sure, the first historian, Wahb ibn Munabbih (died in 728), lived during the reign of the Umayyads, but his work does not survive. We are familiar only with those of its fragments which Al-Ṭabarī inserted in his own work.

Within the prose conventionally described as historical, it is possible to distinguish a few genres. The so-called *sīra*, that is, the lives of the Prophet are chronologically the oldest ones. Most famous among them is *Sīrah Rasūl Allāh*, that is, *Life of the Messenger of God* by Ibn Isḥāḳ (died in 768). The original text does not survive and we have to rely on its translation by Ibn Hishām (died in 834). Bound up with Muḥammad's life are also the so-called *maghazi* (military conquests). However, these kinds of texts focus exclusively on the Prophet's deeds and, as such, contain no references to the Byzantine Empire.

Following the taxonomy introduced by Nadia Maria El Cheikh, it is advisable to offer a more detailed discussion of the so-called *futuḥ*. In western scholarship the term is usually translated as "conquests" (I dealt with this problem in the chapter *The Arabs before Islam – the Birth of the New Religion*). The *futūḥ* give an account of the Arab conquests of successive territories[12]. Insofar as the relations between Byzantium and the Arabs are concerned, three works come to the fore: *Futūḥ al-Sha'm* (*The Conquest of Syria*) by Abū Ismā'īl al-Azdī (the eight

[11] For detailed information about modern editions of the sources, discussed in this contribution see *Bibliography*, *Sources*.

[12] For more details see: L.I. C o n r a d, *Futūḥ*, [in:] *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, eds. J.S. M e i s a m i, P. S t a r k e y, vol. I, London–New York 1998, pp. 237–240.

century)[13], *Futūḥ* (*Conquests*) by Ibn Aʿtham al-Kūfī (ninth/tenth centuries) and *Futūḥ Miṣr* (*The Conquest of Egypt*) by Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam (died in 870). Worthy of mention in our context is ʿAwāna Ibn al-Ḥakam, whose work, too, touches upon the Arab conquests[14]. However, one needs to bear in mind the fact that these works are in part a compilation and amplification of earlier texts that have not been preserved to the present day. *Futūḥ al-buldān* by Al-Balādhurī which forms something of an encyclopedic compendium of the Arab conquests – organized in geographical order, from Syria to the east – is undoubtedly the most representative work of the genre in question. The work is treated as a turning point in the history of the genre – *futūḥ* that appeared later were nothing but mediocre compilations[15].

Arab chronicles figure prominently among the sources on Byzantine-Arab relations. According to Nadia Maria El Cheikh, works that were brought into being prior to the end of the ninth century are particularly important, meaning here *Kitāb al-akhbār aṭ-ṭiwāl* (*The Book of the Long Narratives*) by Abū Ḥanīfa ad-Dīnawarī (died in 895) and *Tārīkh* (*History*) by Al-Yaʿḳūbī (died in 897). Interested in the history of the outside world, these authors devoted much space to the Caliphate's neighbours: Byzantium and Iran.

However, there is no doubt that it is *Tārīkh ar-rusūl wa-al-mulūk* (*History of the Prophets and Kings*) of Al-Ṭabarī that remains the most important work of the Arab classical historiography. With its title usually shortened to *Tārīkh* (*History*), it deals with the history of the world from its creation to the author's days – its last record concerns 915. In writing this great compilation, Al-Ṭabarī drew on the work of some of his most distinguished predecessors, often abstaining from providing the source of his information. This, however, was common practice in the Middle Ages and cannot be considered to have typified the Arab authors only. Another author of this kind of "world history" is Ibn al-Athīr (died in 1233). His *Kitāb al-kāmil fi al-tārīkh* (*The Complete History*) is sometimes considered to be a continuation of the work by Al-Ṭabarī.

Al-Masʿūdī (died in 956) is another historian who needs to be mentioned here, even though his work does not lend itself to simple categorization. *We owe much of our knowledge to this historico-geographical work. Entitled "Murūj adh-dhahab wa maʿādin al-jawāhir" ("The Meadows of Gold") and replete with anecdotal and legendary material, it presents us with information on history,*

[13] On this issue see also: S.A. M o u r a d, *On Early Islamic Historiography: Abū Ismāʿīl al-Azdī and His Futūḥ al-Shām*, JAOS 120.4, 2000, pp. 577–593.

[14] Fragments of his works survive only in works by other authors. A.A. D u r i, *Arabic Historiography...*, p. 493.

[15] L.I. C o n r a d, *Futūḥ...*, p. 239.

geography, legends, and anecdotes of the Muslim world in the tenth century – writes Józef Bielawski[16]. *The Meadows of Gold* is an abridged compilation prepared by Al-Masʿūdī himself of his two other works, neither of which, however, survives. The Arab historian declares:

> What led me to write this book of history regarding kings and prophets, their countries and their peoples, lost in the darkness of the past, was a desire to follow the example of sages and the learned. I wanted to save for the world that which remains worthy of mention, some specific, profound knowledge.[17]

In addition to chronicle writing, the Muslim world had a particular liking for what can be classified as biographical dictionaries. The multi-volume work by Ibn Saʿd (died in 845), entitled *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, that is, *The Book of the Major Classes* (*of the Prophet's Companions*), gives an account of the lives of Muḥammad and his companions. Ranging in time to the author's days, it still remains a valuable historical source. Ibn Saʿd's work is one of the first to be included in the genre called *tabakat*, which literally means "classes".

Important biographical dictionaries were also written by Yākūt al-Ḥamawī (died in 1229) and Ibn Khallikān, the latter lived at the turn of the classical and post-classical era (died in 1282). Contrary to what its title suggests, the work by Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (died in 1071) *Tārīkh Baghdād* (*A History of Baghdad*) can also be considered to belong in the genre in question.

Descriptive geography, initially tied up with history, gradually separated itself from it. The first work that can be included under the category "geography" is *Kitāb al-Masālik wa-al-mamālik* (*The Book of Kingdoms and Roads*) Ibn Khurradādhbih (died in 885)[18]. A special place among geographical sources is held by *Kitāb al-aʿlāk an-nafāsa (The Book of Precious Necklace)*. Written by Ibn Rusta (tenth century), it contains the most detailed Arab description of Constantinople of the time.

The so-called *adab* literature, which significantly augmented the Arabs' knowledge of Byzantium, constitutes a phenomenon that is not easy to define[19].

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[16] J. B i e l a w s k i, *Klasyczna literatura...*, p. 176.

[17] M a s ʿ u d i, vol. I, p. 12.

[18] Travel literature is omitted from this brief contribution. It came into being at a later period and reflected the situation that existed in Byzantium at that time. It pertained to the Umayyad era only to a very limited extent. Nevertheless, this kind of literature too contained some historical references.

[19] The monograph by Janusz Danecki contains an excellent analysis of *adab* as a complex phenomenon: J. D a n e c k i, *Literatura i kultura w imperium kalifów. Studium twórczości adabowej al-Mubarrada*, Warszawa 1982.

It seems to be best defined by the term "didactic entertainment". Plain in form, it entertained the readers by providing them with knowledge of various topics. An *adab* work, without offering a chronological or a consistent exposition of a given problem, was usually made up of anecdotes, poems, or stories – sometimes completely made up and sometimes based on facts – that dealt with both serious and trifling issues. These works were thus in part literary and in part encyclopedic in nature. They can give us much information on both the history of Byzantium as well as on the situation that existed in the Empire during a given author's life. However, culling it usually requires a lot of effort. Al-Djāḥīẓ[20] (died around 969), Ibn Ḳutayba (died in 889), and Al-Mubarrad[21] (died in 989) are among the most distinguished representatives of the genre under discussion.

The Byzantine motifs to be found in the poetry of the Umayyad period are dispersed. The same holds true for the pre-Muslim lyric. This literature simply signals that the Arabs were aware of the existence of the Byzantine Empire. In a more tangible way, Byzantium appears in works brought into being in the Abbasid period. However, these works contain references only to the period in which they were written – which is beyond the chronological scope of this contribution.

Reminiscences of the Umayyad epoch appear in folk literature, *Sīrat Amīr Ḥamza (Sīrat al-amīra Dāt al-Himma).* Created orally and disseminated throughout the Arab world, *Sīrats* are a form of chivalric romances. It is difficult to indicate the exact time of their appearance. The process of their formation continued for centuries. Still unstandardized, today *sīrats* can be found in various printed versions. The life of the title princess forms the pivot of *Sīrat Amīr Ḥamza.* It is placed against the background of historical events among which the Byzantine-Arab wars clearly stand out. However, *Sīrat* is not a historiographic text. It mixes facts with fiction, sometimes giving a true account of events and sometimes not. However, there is no doubt that this work, intended for a large audience, played a significant role in shaping the image of the Arab-Byzantine relations in the Caliphate's society[22].

In the above I presented a brief overview of the sources that can be used in the study of the Arab-Byzantine relations. Some of those sources are discussed at greater length in the chapter entitled *The Byzantines in the Context of the Ḳur'ān*. The chapter provides examples of particular sources, thus allowing the reader to

[20] In Poland the life and work of Al-Djāḥīẓ is presented in works: K. S k a r ż y ń s k a - B o c h e ń s k a, *Pochwała sztuki słowa. Al-Ǧāḥiẓ i jego teoria komunikacji*, Warszawa 2009; e a d e m, *Al-Ǧāḥiẓ and His Theory of Social Communication*, Warszawa 2010.

[21] For comparison see: J. D a n e c k i, *Literatura i kultura...*, *passim*.

[22] For comparison see: D. M a d e y s k a, *Historia i legenda w "Siracie Zat al-Himma"*, POrient 3, 1981, pp. 233–245; M. C a n a r d, *Delhemma. Épopée arabe des guerres arabo-byzantines*, [in:] id e m, *Byzance et les musulmans du Proche Orient*, London 1973, pp. 283–300.

obtain a better understanding of their specific character. In the chapter I also discuss some methodological problems typifying the research into the history of the Muslim world and stemming from a special character of these sources, some of which are held sacred. In my opinion, this issue is particularly important for scholars from western culture who, unlike Muslims, do not treat these texts as sacred. This factor often becomes an obstacle that turns out to be too difficult for Muslim scholars to overcome.



Błażej Cecota, Teresa Wolińska

Greek, Syrian and Coptic Sources for the History of Byzantine-Arabic Relations in Sixth–Eighth Century

The present monograph covers a period of several centuries. The source base for Byzantine-Arabic relations is relatively abundant and diverse. It consists of historiographic and chronological texts, apocalyptic and hagiographical works, polemical and normative texts, military treatises, and inscriptions. It is also multilingual[1]. Although for a Byzantinist it is the Greek sources[2] that play the leading role, Coptic, Armenian and Syrian[3] texts are also important in our research. Their authors were usually Christians of various denominations (Orthodox,Monophysites and Nestorians), but sometimes also Jews and pagans. Moreover, due to the topical diversity of the monograph, the authors of particular chapters employ own source bases. For example, when writing about nomenclature and stereotypes of Arabs, it was necessary to refer to texts which are much older than the period that is the subject of our research, i.e. the classic Greek and Roman literature (works by Pliny the Elder[4],

[1] The fact that all scholars studying Byzantine-Arabic relations face similar problems has been noted by: A. Cameron, *The Literary Sources for Byzantium and Early Islam*, [in:] *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam, VII^e–VIII^e siècles. Actes du Colloque international, Lyon–Maison de l'Orient Méditerranéen, Paris–Institut du Monde Arabe, 11–15 Septembre 1990*, eds. P. Canivet et, J.-P. Rey-Coquais, Damas 1992, pp. 3–13.

[2] General information: O. Jurewicz, *Historia literatury bizantyńskiej. Zarys*, Wrocław 1984. More details about these authors in (alphabetic order) see: M.E. Colonna, *Gli storici bizantini dal IV al XV secolo*, vol. I, *Storici profani*, Napoli 1956.

[3] General characteristics in: S.P. Brock, *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature*, Kottayam 1997, p. 110sqq.

[4] For information about the author and his works refer to: M. Beagon, *Roman Nature. The Thought of Pliny the Elder*, Oxford 1992; T. Murphy, *Pliny the Elder's Natural History. The Empire in the Encyclopedia*, Oxford 2004.

Strabo[5] and Ammianus Marcellinus[6], to name just a few), the Bible, with a special focus on the Old Testament and Joseph Flavius[7]. A detailed review of sources used in this book would require a separate monograph. For this reason, the overview of sources, will be limited to a general characteristics of particular types of sources, with more attention only to the texts are most important for the subject. The authors of paticular chapters have supplemented our data with the characteristics of sources they used.

Among the historiographic sources there are both first-hand accounts and texts written during later periods, based on earlier works, which have been lost. This also applies to the sources concerning Byzantine-Arab relations before and during the conquest. The former category is represented by, among others, the most eminent chronicler of the sixth century, Procopius of Caesarea[8], whose *History of the Wars*[9] contains information on Justinian's policy regarding the Arabs and information about Arab allies in the service for the Empire. His account, describing the course of events at the end of sixth century was complemented by his follwers – Agathias Scholasticus and Theophylact Simocatta[10].

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[5] G. A u j a c, *Strabon et la science de son temps*, Paris 1966; *Strabone.Contributi allo studio della personalitá e dell'opera*, vol. I–II, ed. F. P r o n t e r a, Perugia 1984–1986.

[6] H. C i c h o c k a, *Ammianus Marcellinus a literatura grecka i rzymska*, M 29, 1974, pp. 289–306; I. L e w a n d o w s k i, *Historyk ginącego świata*, M 48, 1993, pp. 339–349; D. B r o d k a, *Ammianus Marcellinus. Studien zum Geschichtsdenken im vierten Jahrhundert n. Chr.*, Kraków 2009; *The Late Roman World and Its Historian: Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus*, eds. J.W. D r i j v e r s, D. H u n t, London 1999.

[7] We mean in particular his *Jewish Antiquities*. For Flavius Josephus and his works refer to: H.St.J. T h a c k e r a y, *Josephus, the Man and the Historian*, New York 1929; H. S c h r e c k e n b e r g, *Bibliographie zu Flavius Josephus*, Leiden 1968 [=Leiden 1979]. Basic information about this image of the Arabs in Greek historiography is given by Michel Whitby (*Greek Historical Writing after Procopius: Variety and Vitality*, [in:] *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, vol. I, *Problems in the Literary Source Material*, eds. A. C a m e r o n, L.I. C o n r a d, New Jersey 1992, pp. 74–80).

[8] There is vast literature on the subject of Procopius and his works. Here we quote only basic sources, in which a reader will find further references: A. C a m e r o n, *Procopius and the Sixth Century*, London 1985; G. G r e a t r e x, *The Dates of Procopius Works*, GRBS 18, 1994, pp. 101–114; A. K a l d e l l i s, *Procopius of Caesarea: Tyranny, History, and Philosophy at the End of Antiquity*, Philadelphia 2004.

[9] Full bibliographical record of each source quoted in this monograph can be found at the end of the book in *Bibliography*.

[10] A. C a m e r o n, *Agathias*, Oxford 1967; O. J u r e w i c z, *Historia...*, pp. 44–45, 107–110; M. W h i t b y, *Greek Historical Writing...*, pp. 25–80, particularly pp. 30–38, 47–54; A. K a l d e l l i s, *The Historical and Religious Views of Agathias: A Reinterpretation*, B 69, 1999, pp. 206–252.

The history of Byzantium under the reign of Heraclius, especially his struggles with the Persians, is the topic of the writings of George of Pisidia[11]. A great wealth of information on this subject can also be found in the chronicle of Joshua the Stylite[12].

The *Ecclesiastical History* by John of Ephesus is another important work for the studies of Byzantine-Arabic relations on the eve of the invasion. John, the resident of Amida, wrote his chronicle in the second half of the sixth century, and brought his narration up to the year 585[13]. Of the two initial parts of his work only fragments have been preserved in the writings of Dionysius of Tel Mahre and Michael the Syrian. However, the third part, which is essential from the point of view of this monograph, has survived, and provides us with an account of events from the second half of the sixth century. Since John was a Monophysite, he showed interest in his fellow believers – the Ghassānids, Arabic allies of Byzantium. We owe him valuable information concerning the measures taken up by the Japhnid family, who ruled the that, to defend Monophysitism, and their involvement to calm down the disputes inside that denomination. Other sources, such as lives of saints and hermits from Sinai and Syrian deserts, are an invaluable source of history of early Byzantine-Arab relations. Especially important are the texts by Cyril of Scythopolis[14], Theodoret of Cyrus[15], John Moschus[16] and Anastasius the Sinaite[17]. Important but scattered informa-

[11] J. Howard-Johnston, *The Official History of Heraclius' Persian* Campaign, [in:] *The Roman and Byzantine Army in the East*, ed. E. Dąbrowa, Kraków 1994, pp. 57–87.

[12] J.W. Watt, *Greek Historiography and the Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite*, [in:] *After Bardaisan Studies on Continuity and Change in Syriac Christianity in Honour of Professor Han. J.W. Drijvers*, eds. A.C. Klugkist, G.J. Reinink, Leuven 1999, pp. 317–327; idem, *Two Syriac Writers from the Reign of Anastasius: Philoxenus of Mabbug and Joshua the Stylite*, Ha 20, 2006, pp. 275–293.

[13] To learn more about this subject see: R. Duval, *La littérature syriaque*, Paris 1907, pp. 362–363; J.J. van Ginkel, *John of Ephesus. A Monophysite Historian in Sixth-Century Byzantium*, Groningen 1995; P.G. Rahme, *Les écrivains syriaques*, [in:] *Sources syriaques. Nos sources. Arts et littérature syriaques*, n.p. 2005, pp. 196–197; H.G.B. Teule, *Syriac Historiography*, [in:] *ibidem*, pp. 329–330.

[14] B. Kettern, *Kyrillos von Skythopolis*, [in:] *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, vol. IV, Herzberg 1992, cols. 897–899.

[15] T. Urbainczyk, *Theodoret of Cyrrhus: the Bishop and the Holy Man*, Ann Arbor 2002; K.-G. Wesseling, *Theodoret von Kyros*, [in:] *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, vol. XI, Herzberg 1996, cols. 936–957.

[16] E. Trapp, *Johannes Moschos*, [in:]: *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, vol. III, Herzberg 1992, pp. 491–492.

[17] Apart from theological works signed with the name of Anastasius, there are three (A, B, C) corpora of stories about miracles (*Narrationes*). More on this subject can be found in:

tion about the Arabs can be found in *Ecclesiastical Histories* by Eusebius of Caesarea[18], Philostorgius[19], Socrates Scholasticus[20], Hermias Sozomen[21], Evagrius Scholasticus[22], and the *New history* by Zosimus[23].

Additional remarks can be found in the chronicle of John Malalas[24] and in the existing fragments of the works by John of Antioch[25]. Strictly religious texts, such as Old Testament commentaries, in which a lot of attention was devoted to Ishmailites, are also important.

B. Flussin, *Démons et Sarrasins. L'auteur et le propos des Diègémata stèriktika d'Anastase le Sinaïte*, TM 11, 1991, pp. 381–408; O. Jurewicz, *Historia...*, pp. 120–121; J. Haldon, *The Works of Anastasius of Sinai: A Key Source of the History of Seventh Century East Mediterranean Society and Belief*, [in:] *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, vol. I, *Problems in the Literary Source Material...*, pp. 107–149.

[18] For more information on the subject of works of Ecclesiastical historians, see: G.E. Chesnut, *The First Christian Histories: Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret and Evagrius*, Paris 1977. On Eusebius of Cesarea see: H.J. Lawlor, *Eusebiana: Essays on the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea*, Oxford 1912; A. Louth, *Eusebius and the Birth of Church History*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature*, eds. F. Young, L. Ayres, A. Louth, Cambridge 2004; *Reconsidering Eusebius: Collected Papers on Literary, Historical, and Theological Issues*, eds. S. Inowlocki, Cl. Zamagni, Leiden 2011.

[19] H. Leppin, *Heretical Historiography: Philostorgius*, StPatr 34, 2001, pp. 111–124; G. Marasco, *The Church Historians (II): Philostorgius and Gelasius of Cyzicus*, [in:] *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity. Fourth to Sixth Century AD*, ed. G. Marasco, Leiden–Boston 2003, pp. 257–288; *Filostorgio: Cultura, fede e politica in uno storico ecclesiastico del V secolo*, ed. G. Marasco, Roma 2005; *Philostorge et l'historiographie de l'Antiquité tardive / Philostorg im Kontext der spätantiken Geschichtsschreibung*, ed. D. Mayer, Stuttgart 2011.

[20] T. Urbainczyk, *Socrates of Constantinople – Historian of Church and State*, Ann Arbor 1997; H. Leppin, *The Church Historians: Socrates, Sozomenus, and Theodoretus*, [in:] *Greek and Roman Historiography...*, pp. 219–254; P. van Nuffelen, *Un héritage de paix et de piété. Étude sur les Histoires ecclésiastiques de Socrate et Sozomène*, Leuven 2005.

[21] H. Leppin, *The Church Historians...*, pp. 219–254; P. van Nuffelen, *Un héritage..., passim*.

[22] P. Allen, *Evagrius Scholasticus, the Church Historian*, Louvain 1981; H. Leppin, *Evagrius Scholasticus oder: Kirchengeschichte und Reichstreue*, Man 6, 2003, pp. 141–153.

[23] W.A. Goffart, *Zosimus: The First Historian of Rome's Fall*, AHR 76, 1971, pp. 412–441; J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Pagan Historiography and the Decline of the Empire*, [in:] *Greek and Roman Historiography...*, pp. 177–218.

[24] *Studies in John Malalas. Australian Association for Byzantine Studies*, ed. E. Jeffreys, Sydney 1990; e a d e m, *The Beginning of Byzantine Chronography. John Malalas*, [in:] *Greek and Roman Historiography...*, pp. 497–527; M. Whitby, *Greek Historical Writting...*, pp. 60–63.

[25] O. Jurewicz, *Historia...*, pp. 111–112; S. Panagiotis, *Untersuchungen zum Geschichtswerk des Johannes von Antiocheia*, Thessaloniki 1989; S. Mariev, *Neues zur "Johanneischen Frage"?*, BZ 99, 2006, pp. 535–549.

Valuable information can be obtained from the chronicles of Zachariah Rhetor, Jacob of Edessa and Dionysius of Tel Mahre (ninth century)[26]. The first of the author, a monk from Northern Mesopotamia, was writting the sixth century. Unfortunately, the original Greek text of his chronicle has not survived and we are only able to use the Syrian translation, prepared and completed by an anonymous writer named Pseudo-Zachariah. The original Syrian fragments encompass the years 481–569[27]. Jacob of Edessa[28], born near Antioch, used *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius of Caesarea[29] completed and continued the narration up to 692[30]. His edition covers the times of the Arab expansion in Persia and Byzantium. Dionysius of Tel Mahre, born at end of the eighth century in Edessa, was the author of a historical text, devoted to secular and ecclesiastical history, from the beginning of the reign of Emperor Maurice (582 AD) until the death of Theophilos (842)[31]. His work was frequently used by later authors, especially Michael the Syrian and Gregory Bar Hebraeus[32], and partial reconstruction of the content is possible on the basis of the fragments preserved by those authors, particularly of Michael the Syrian. An attempt to reconstruct the original text of Dionysius has been made by Andrew Palmer (*Dionysius Reconstituted*, [in:] *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles*, Liverpool 1993, pp. 111–221).

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[26] P.G. R a h m e, *Les écrivains...*, p. 197; S. B r o c k, *Syriac Historical Writing*, [in:] i d e m, *Studies in Syriac Christianity. History, Literature and Theology*, Ashgate 1992, pp. 14–15; W. W i t a k o w s k i, *Introduction*, [in:] *Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre Chronicle (known also as the Chronicle of Zuqnin)*, vol. III, ed., transl. i d e m, Liverpool 1996, p. XIVsqq.

[27] H.G.B. T e u l e, *Syriac...*, p. 329; P. A l l e n, *Zachariah Scholasticus and the Historia Ecclesiastica of Evagrius*, JTS 3, 1980, pp. 471–488; J. R i s t, *Die sog. Kirchengeschichte des Zacharias Rhetor*, [in:] *Syriaca*, ed. M. T a m c k e, Münster 2002, pp. 77–99; G. G r e a t r e x, *Le Pseudo-Zachariae de Mythèlene et l'historiographie syriaque au sixième siècle*, [in:] *L'Historiographie syriaque*, ed. M. D u b i è, Paris 2009, pp. 33–55.

[28] M. S t a r o w i e y s k i, *Słownik wczesnochrześcijańskiego piśmiennictwa Wschodu. Literatury arabska, armeńska, etiopska, gruzińska, koptyjska, syryjska*, Warszawa 1999, cols. 106–108; *Jacob of Edessa and the Syriac Culture of His Day*, ed. R.B. t e r H a a r R o m e n y, Leiden–Boston 2008; S. B r o c k, *Syriac Historical...*, p. 8.

[29] A Syrian Hawhab, known as Eusebius wrote in Greek in the third century. P.G. R a h m e, *Les écrivains...*, p. 196.

[30] H.G.B. T e u l e, *Syriac...*, pp. 330–331. Subsequent anonymous authors, students of Jacob, brought it up to the year 710 (P.G. R a h m e, *Les écrivains...*, p. 197; M. S t a r o w i e y s k i, *Słownik...*, col. 108).

[31] H.G.B. T e u l e, *Syriac ...*, p. 332; A. P a l m e r, *Dionysius: Introduction*, [in:] *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles*, Liverpool 1993, pp. 85–104.

[32] P.G. R a h m e, *Les écrivains...*, p. 197; R. D u v a l, *La littérature...*, pp. 400–401, 408–411; D. W e l t s c k e, *Les trois grandes chroniques syro-orthodoxes des XII^{e}–XIII^{e} siècles*, [in:] *L'Historiographie syriaque...*, pp. 107–135.

The name of Dionysius (Pseudo-Dionysius) is also associated with the so-called *Zuqnin Chronicle*[33]. Classic edition of the Syriac text was prepared by J.-B. Chabot (*Incerti auctoris Chronicon Pseudo-Dionysianum vulgo dictum*, Paris 1927–1933 [=*CSCO* 91, 104, *Scriptores Syri*, 43, 53, ser. III, vol. I–II]). The author of the chronicle was most probably Joshua, a Syrian monk from Zuqnin monastery. The first three parts of his work are based on other sources, such as the accounts of Eusebius, Socrates Scholasticus and John of Ephesus[34]. Part four contains a lot of information concerning Byzantine-Arabic relations, and internal affairs of the Caliphate. Although it is generally devoted to the events during the Abbasis era up to the year 775, which is significantly beyond the time scope of this monograph (apart from the short outline of the years from 587 to 715), it contains a great amount of valuable information of the Umayyad era. We have access to translations of this chronicle prepared by Amir Harraka (*The Chronicle of Zuqnīn*, vol. III–IV, *AD 488–775*, Toronto 1999) and Witold Witakowski (*The Syriac Chronicle of Pseudo Dionysius of Tel Mahre (known as the Chronicle of Zuqnin)*, vol. III, Liverpool 1996)[35].

A text that is especially important for investigating the course of events connected with the Arab conquest of Egypt and the analysis of Arab policy in the conquered territories was written by John, bishop of Nikiu, a Coptic historiographer from the seventh century, an eyewitness to the Muslim invasion of this province. His *Chronicle of the world*, dating back to the mid-seventh century, was probably written in Greek, and some fragments, dealing exclusively with Egypt, were written in Coptic[36]. Later on it was translated into Arabic and in 1602 into Ethiopian. It covers the history of the world from the times of Adam and Eve until the year 643. The narration, however, is missing several fragments, among others one particularly important part containing the account of the events of 610–640 AD, which is crucial for understanding of the first years of Arab expansion. Unfortunately, the source is not quoted in any of the Byzantine

[33] S. Brock, *Syriac Historical...*, pp. 10–13; M. Starowieyski, *Słownik...*, col. 53.

[34] H.G.B. Teule, *Syriac...*, p. 331; S. Brock, *Syriac Historical...*, pp. 5–7.

[35] A. Harrak, *La victoire arabo-musulmane selon le Chronique de Zuqnin (VIII^e siècle)*, [in:] *L'Historiographie syriaque...*, pp. 89–105.

[36] R.H. Charles, D. Litt, *Introduction*, [in:] *The Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu translated from Zotenberg's Ethiopic Text*, transl. iidem, London–Oxford 1916, pp. IV–V; M. Rodinson, *Notes sur le texte de Jean de Nikiou*, [in:] *IV Congresso Internazionale di Studi Etiopici*, vol. II, ed. E. Cerulli, Roma 1974, pp. 127–137; J. Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World Crisis. Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century*, Oxford 2010, p. 182.

texts, thus there is no possibility of reconstructing the missing fragments. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the original chronicle of John of Nikiu has been lost. There are only two manuscripts, one from the seventeenth century, and the other from the eighteenth century. These copies were based on different editions of the text[37]. Nevertheless, the chronicle of John of Nikiu is an invaluable source for the study of the Arab conquest, the attitude of the local people to the invaders, Muslim policy towards the people of Egypt and the beginnings of the organisation of provinces. To understand the particular character of John's account it is necessary to study texts of other Coptic authors, among others, his successor to the bishopric, Mēnas of Nikiu[38]. The first attempt at editing the chronicle of John of Nikiu was made by a French orientalist Hermann Zotenberg (*Chronique de Jean, évêque de Nikiou. Texte éthiopien*, Paris 1883). In 1916 the text was translated from French into English by Robert Henry Charles, who also corrected his predecessor's mistakes. Currently, a new translation of the chronicle is being prepared by Phil Booth from the Faculty of Theology and Religion at the Oxford University[39].

Another witness of the Arabic expansion was an Armenian chronicler, Sebeos, the author of the *History of Emperor Heraclius*, covering the period from the end of the fifth century until the second half of the seventh century. Not much is known about the life of the historiographer. He was a bishop, and he took part the Council of Dvin in 645 AD. He provided us with information about the Persian dominion over Armenia and the wars between Byzantium and the Persians which directly preceded the Arabic expansion. The text, which continues up to the year 661, closes with the description of the first Arabic successes in the seventh century[40]. This work is also important for another reason: although Sebeos did not

[37] More about John of Nikiu can be found in: A. Carile, *Giovanni di Nikius, cronista bizantino-copto del VII secolo*, FR 4, 1981, pp. 103–155; O. Jurewicz, *Historia...*, p. 111; P.M. Fraser, *John of Nikiou*, [in:] *The Coptic Encyklopedia*, ed. A.S. Atiya, New York 1991, pp. 1366–1367; R. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam*, Princeton 1997, pp. 152–156; H. Suermann, *Koptische Texte zur arabischen Eroberung Ägyptens und der Umayyadenherrschaft*, JCopS 4, 2002, pp. 167–186; J. Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World Crisis...*, pp. 181–189.

[38] The key works of Mēna are: *The Life of Isaac of Alexandria* and the *Martyrdom of Saint Macrobius* (transl. D. Bell, Piscataway 2009[=1988]).

[39] The translation, entitled *The Chronicle of John of Nikiu: Ethiopic Text with Translation and Commentary*, is to be published in *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium. Series Aethiopica.*

[40] For information about Sebeos see: R.W. Thomson, *The Armenian Text*, [in:] *The Armenian History Attributed to Sebeos*, transl. idem, Liverpool 1999, pp. 31–78; *The Heritage of Armenian Literature. From the Sixth to the Eighteenth Century*, eds. A.J. Hacik-

share the religious views of the supporters of the Council of Chalcedon, he did not perceive Arabic invaders as liberators from their yoke.

In order to understand the reactions of the people of the invaded provinces to Arab conquest, it is necessary to analyse the apocalyptic literature: such texts as the account of a converted Jew (*Jacob's Doctrine*)[41], the *Vision of Daniel* and the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Ephraem, Andrew the Fool and Pseudo-Athanasius. A particularly important place among them is occupied by the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius[42], which has survived in several languages. It is ascribed to Methodius, the bishop of Patara. Its author lived in the seventh century and oryginated from a Syrian-Persian community and was an eyewitness to the Arabic invasion[43]. The text was written at the end of that century, probably between 682–692, as a reaction to the policy of ʿAbd Al-Malik and the Christians' conversion to Islam, which was a consequence of the pressure he exerted[44].

To the above list of sources we should add religious texts, such as homilies and letters of Sophronius, the patriarch of Jerusalem, which were written in the fourth decade of the seventh century[45] and the work of John Penkāyē. The latter text, although it aspires to being a chronicle, is closer to historical theology[46]. There are also accounts of first disputes (real or fictional) between Muslims and Christians, and the correspondence attributed to Byzantine rulers, caliphs etc.

Hagiographic sources are a separate group; worth mentioning is a story of the sixty martyrs of Gaza (written before the eleventh century)[47], as well as

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yan, G. Basmajian, E.S. Franchuk, N. Ouzounian, Detroit 2002, pp. 81–93; J. Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World Crisis...*, p. 71sqq.

[41] J. Flori, *L'Islam et la fin des temps. L'interpretation prophetique des invasions musulmanes dans la chrétienté médiévale*, Paris 2007, pp. 123–127.

[42] The texts in known in Syrian, Latin and Greek versions, there is also an Old Church Slavonic translation. Further information about each of the versions can be found in the chapter: *Resistance, Passivity or Collaboration?*

[43] For information about the author and the time of creation see: M. Starowieyski, A. Tronina, *Apokalipsa Pseudo-Metodego. Wstęp i bibliografia*, [in:] *Apokryfy syryjskie*, ed. M. Starowieyski, Kraków 2011, pp. 200–208.

[44] G. Reinink, *Pseudo-Methodius und die Legende vom römischen Endkaiser*, [in:] *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages*, eds. W. Verbeke, D. Verhalst, A. Welkenhuysen, Leuven 1988, pp. 82–111; A. Cameron, *The Eastern Provinces in the 7th Century AD. Hellenism and the Emergence of Islam*, [in:] eadem, *Changing Cultures in Early Byzantium*, vol. IV, Aldershot 1996, p. 298.

[45] The most important are: *Christmas homily* from 634, *Easter homily* from 637 and synodical letter to patriarch Sergius. About the works by Sophronius see: O. Jurewicz, *Historia...*, pp. 115–116.

[46] M. Starowieyski, *Słownik...*, col. 114; H.G.B. Teule, *Syriac...*, pp. 341–342.

[47] The text is known in two versions. In the first one, the person who supports the soldiers is patriarch Sophronius, in the second one – Florent (*Legenda sancti Floriani et sociorum suorum*,

the lives of Eastern saints written by John of Ephesus[48], deeds of Saint Gregentius, the lives of Symeon the Stylite the Younger, sixty martyrs of Jerusalem and many others[49].

Valuable information about the invasion of the Arabs on Byzantine territory, and its direct consequences, was provided by later historians, among whom the most significant was, undoubtedly, Theophanes Confessor, the author of *Chronographia*[50]. His text, a chronicle of world history from the beginning of the world until the year 813 and a continuation of the work by George Syncellus, is an example of a particular genre. The text by Theophanes is invaluable for learning about the so-called dark ages in the history of the Empire, when Byzantine historiography collapsed. In many cases we do not have other historiographic sources for the history of the seventh–eighth centuries than Theophanes' *Chronographia***.** Moreover, the author devoted much attention to the expansion of Islam and Byzantine-Arab relations.

Another Byzantine text worth mentioning is *Historia sýntomos* by Patriarch Nicephorus[51], who lived between 758 and 829. Like Theophanes, Nicephorus

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ed. H. D e l e h a y e, AB 23, 1904, pp. 303–307). More on this subject see: D. W o o d s, *The Early Recension of the Passion of the 60 Martyrs of Gaza (BHL 5672m)*, [in:] *The 60 Martyrs of Gaza and the Martyrdom of Bishop Sophronius of Jerusalem*, ARAM 15, 2003, pp. 144–150.

[48] R. J a b r e - M o u w a d, *Les sources de l'hagiographie syriaque*, [in:] *Sources syriaques...*, p. 317.

[49] G. H u x l e y, *The Sixty Martyrs of Jerusalem*, BMGS 16, 1977, pp. 369–374; O. J u r e w i c z, *Historia...*, pp. 74–75.

[50] The literature devoted to Theophanes and his works is vast. Worth mentioning, among others, are: A.S. P r o u d f o o t, *The Sources of Theophanes for the Heraclian Dynasty*, B 44, 1974, pp. 367–439; C. M a n g o, *Who wrote the Chronicle of Theophanes?*, ZRVI 18, 1978, pp. 9–17; L.M. W h i t b y, *The Great Chronographer and Theophanes*, BMGS 8, 1982/1983, pp. 1–20; O. J u r e w i c z, *Historia...*, pp. 133–135; I. R o c h o w, *Byzanz im 8. Jahrhundert in der Sicht des Theophanes. Quellenkritisch-historischer Kommentar zu den Jahren 715–813*, Berlin 1991; J.N. L j u b a r s k i j, *Concerning the Literary Technique of Theophanes the Confessor*, Bsl 56, 1995, pp. 317–322; C. M a n g o, *Introduction*, [in:] *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284–813*, eds. C. M a n g o, R. S c o t t, G. G r e a t r e x, Oxford 1997, pp. XLIII–C; P. Y a n n o p o u l o s, *Les vicissitudes historiques de la Chronique de Théophane*, B 70, 2000, pp. 527–553; i d e m, *Comme le dit Georges le Syncelle ou, je pense, Théophane*, B 74, 2004, pp. 139–146; A. K o m p a, *Zbieżność losów a zbieżność narracji. O strukturze i autorstwie "Chronografii" Teofanesa*, [in:] *Średniowieczna wizja świata. Jedność czy różnorodność*, eds. T. W o l i ń s k a, M.J. L e s z k a, Łódź 2009, pp. 146–155; Y a n n o p o u l o s P., *Théophane de Sigriani le Confesseur (759–818). Un héros orthodoxe du second iconoclasme*, Bruxelles 2013; A. K o m p a, *In search for the own words of George Syncellus and Theophanes the Confessor: The authorship of the Chronographia reconsidered* (forthcoming, TM, Paris 2015).

[51] For information about the life and works of Nicephorus, see: P. A l e x a n d e r, *The Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople: Ecclesiastical Policy and Image Worship in the Byzantine*

had aristocratic background, which let him obtain good education. In this way, he was able to make a career at court, in the imperial chancery, where he eventually attained the post of a secretary, like his father Theodore. Apart from numerous theological texts, he has also left some historiographic works, such as the aforementioned *Historia sýntomos*, in which he described the history of the Empire from the death of Emperor Maurice (602) to the reign of Constantine V (70s of the eighth century).

Some extra information about Byzantine perception of the Arabs is included in *Chronikòn sýntomos* by George the Monk, called Hamartolòs (the Sinner). We do not really know anything about the author. For his work, George Hamartolòs obtained information from the account of Theophanes the Confessor and patriarch Nicephorus, so most of fragments concerning the early period of the Arab conquest are exact copies of the information mentioned by both of the earlier authors. The original narrative of George Hamartolòs deals mostly with the relations from 813–842[52].

While analysing the situation of former Byzantine territories under Muslim rule, we must refer to the texts which were made in the areas within this paper's scope of interest: in Armenia, Egypt, and Syria. The *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*[53] is important for learning about the Muslim rule in Egypt. This compilation is usually attributed to Severus, the bishop of Hermopolis, also called Severus ibn al-Muḳaffaʿ. He was born about 915 in so-called Old Cairo. Initially, he performed a clerical function (his secular name was Abū Bishr ibn al-Muḳaffaʿ). Then he became a monk and soon a bishop of Hermopolis in Thebaid, in Upper Egypt. This appointment took place either during the episcopacy of Theophanes (953–956) or Menas (956–975). Severus was one of the fist Copts for whom Arabic became the first language.

Among later texts one should mention a work by Armenian historian Ghewond, the author of the *History of Caliphs*. It contains a lot of precious infor-

Empire, Oxford 1958, p. 54sqq; O. J u r e w i c z, *Historia...*, pp. 135–137; E.A. F i s h e r, *Life of the Patriarch Nikephoros I of Constantinople*, [in:] *Byzantine Defenders of Images. Eight Saints' Lives in English Translation*, ed. A-M. T a l b o t, Washington 1998, pp. 25–142.

[52] H. H u n g e r, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, München 1978, pp. 347–351; O. J u r e w i c z, *Historia...*, pp. 137–139; D. A f i n o g e n o v, *The Date of Georgios Monachos Reconsidered*, BZ 92, 1999, pp. 437–447; W. T r e a d g o l d, *The Middle Byzantine Historians*, Basingstoke 2013, p. 114.

[53] About the *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria* (arab. *Ta'rikh Batārikat al-Kanīsah al-Misrīyah*), also called the *Lives of the Holy Church*, see: J. d e n H e i j e r, *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*, [in:] *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, vol. IV, ed. A.S. A t i y a, New York 1991, pp. 1238–1242; i d e m, *Coptic Historiography in the Fātimid, Ayyubid and Early Mamluk Periods*, MeEn 2.1, 1996, pp. 67–98.

mation about Byzantine-Armenian relations and the attitude of the Armenians towards the imperial reign and *basileis* themselves[54]. Also *Kitāb al-'Unwān* by Agapius, a Melkite bishop of Membij in Syria (tenth century) made an important contribution to the research on Byzantine-Arabic relations[55]. However, the most important work was the chronicle by Michael the Syrian, a patriarch of the Jacobite Church between 1166 and 1199 AD[56]. The chronicle is a classic example of general history, recounting events from the time of Adam up to the days of the author. Numerous copies of that paper show that it must have been very popular[57]. What makes the chronicle valuable is the fact that it is based on sound, reliably quoted sources[58].

Apart from the sources written in Syriac or Coptic texts[59] of Christian authors written in Arabic are also important for research concerning Byzantine territories under Muslim reign. The most significant of them are the works by Elias of Nisibis (early eleventh century) and Gregory Bar Hebraeus (twelfth century)[60]. The latter, active in the thirteenth century, left us various historical works, written in Syriac and in Arabic. He was interested in both ecclesiastical history and secular events. Similarly to Michael the Syrian, he based his account on earlier texts, employing Syrian, Persian and Arabic sources. Nestorian Elias of Nisibis, the archbishop of this city at the beginning of the eleventh century, wrote also in Syriac and Arabic[61].

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[54] About Ghewond and his work see: Z. Arzoumanian, *Studies in Armenian Historiography. Bishop Sebēos, Gewond the Priest, Kirakos of Gandzak*, Philadelphia 1981, pp. 21–34; *The Heritage of Armenian Literature...*, pp. 140–160; J.-P. Mahé, *Le problème de l'authenticité et de la valeur de la Chronique de Gewond*, [in:] *Arménie et Byzance – histoire et culture*, Paris 1996, pp. 119–126; M. Starowieyski, *Słownik...*, p. 142. The fundamental work on this subject is, unfortunately, not available in any of the major European languages: N. Akinian, *Ghewond er'ets' patmagir*, Vienna 1930.

[55] A.A. Vasiliev, *Introduction*, [in:] Agapius (Mahboud) de Mebidj, *Histoire universelle*, ed. A. Vasiliev, [in:] *PO* 8/3, Paris 1912, pp. 399–550.

[56] On this subject, among others: W. Wright, *A Short History of Syriac Literature*, London 1894, p. 250sqq; R. Duval, *La litterature syriaque...*, p. 196sqq; J.B. Chabot, *Litterature syriaque*, Paris 1935, p. 125sqq; H.G.B. Teule, *Syriac...*, pp. 332–335; S. Brock, *Syriac Historical...*, pp. 15–17.

[57] H.G.B. Teule, *Syriac...*, p. 334.

[58] *Ibidem*, pp. 334–335.

[59] *Ibidem*, p. 326.

[60] W. Wright, *A Short History...*, pp. 268–281; H.G.B. Teule, *Syriac...*, p. 326; D. Weltscke, *Les trois grandes chronique...*, pp. 123–131.

[61] J.B. Chabot, *Litterature syriaque...*, p. 118sqq; H.G.B. Teule, *Syriac...*, pp. 342–343; A. Borrut, *La circulation des informations historiques entre les sources arabo-musulmanes et syriaques: Elié de Nisibe et ses sources*, [in:] *L'Historiographie syriaque...*, pp. 143–147.

Studies of the history of the Middle East would not be complete without reference to several anonymous Syrian chronicles[62]. The most important of them is *Chronicle up to 1234*, covering both ecclesiastical and secular history, from the beginning of the world until the years 1203–1204[63]. We must also mention an anonymous Syrian source from the beginning of the eighth century (so-called *Chronicle up to 724)*[64], the *Nestorian Chronicle* (also referred to as *Chronicle of Seert*)[65] and a few other texts, which are traditionally named after the year when their narration stops (e.g. *Chronicle up to 819*, or *Chronicle of 846)*[66]. Another important set of information can be obtained from Mozarabic works, first of all the *Chronicle up to 754*, known as *Continuatio Hispana*[67].

For understanding the attitude of the Byzantines to Islam, polemic works seem essential. The discussion with Islam was initiated by John of Damascus[68], and regarding his followers, an important role was played by Nicetas of Byzantium, Bartholomew of Edessa, Euthymius Zygabenus and Theodore Abū Ḳurra[69].

In order to understand the complicated religious situation on the territories of Syria, Palestine and Egypt, it is essential to analyse conciliar and synodical acts, correspondence of important figures representing the Churches of the area, and normative sources. This is the reason for numerous references made in this paper to *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, published by E. Schwartz. For our study, the mentioned above works by Church historians proved to be of equal value. On the other hand, the research of Byzantine administration on the discussed

[62] A. P a l m e r, *Les chroniques brèves syriaques*, [in:] *L'Historiographie syriaque*..., pp. 57–87.

[63] H.G.B. T e u l e, *Syriac*..., p. 337; S. B r o c k, *Syriac Historical*..., pp. 17–19.

[64] S. B r o c k, *Syriac Historical*..., p. 9; A. P a l m e r, *Une Chronique syriaque contemporaine de la conquête arabe. Essai d'interprétation théologique et politique*, [in:] *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam*..., pp. 31–46.

[65] H.G.B. T e u l e, *L'abrégé de la chronique ecclesiastique (Muhtaṣār al-ahbār al-Bīʿiyya) et la Chronique Séert. Quelques sondages*, [in:] *L'Historiographie syriaque*..., pp. 161–177; J.M. F i e y, *Ichô'dnah, métropolite de Basra, et son œuvre*, OS 11, 1966, pp. 431–450; P. N a u t i n, *L'auteur de la Chronique de Séert: Išō'denah de Basra*, RHR 186.2, 1974, pp. 113–126; J.M. F i e y, *Ichodnah et la Chronique de Séert*, POr 6–7, 1975/1976, pp. 447–459.

[66] S. B r o c k, *Syriac Historical*..., p. 14; *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles, including Two Seventh-Century Syriac Apocalyptic Texts and an Historical Introduction*, eds. A. P a l m e r, S. B r o c k, R. H o y l a n d, Liverpool 1993, p. 75sqq.

[67] K.B. W o l f, *Introduction*, [in:] *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain*, ed., transl. i d e m, Liverpool 1999, p. XVsqq; i d e m, *Chronicle 754*, [in:] *Medieval Iberia. Readings from Christian, Muslim and Jewish Sources*, ed. O.R. C o n s t a b l e, Philadelphia 1997, p. 29.

[68] D.J. S a h a s, *John of Damascus on Islam*, Leiden 1972; A. L o u t h, *St. John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology*, Oxford 2005.

[69] O. J u r e w i c z, *Historia*..., pp. 100–103.

territories requires an extensive use of inscriptions (especially the collection *Les inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie)* and, which is natural in this case, legal sources. Another important group of documents are the lists of the cities and provinces, represented by such works as *Synekdemos* by Hierocles, *Description of the Roman world* (*Descriptio orbis romani*) attributed to George of Cyprus or *Christianiké topographía* by Cosmas Indicopleustes[70].

Only upon collecting the data from all said sources we can make out a relatively complete picture of the relations between Byzantium and its Arab neighbours from sixth to mid-eight century.

[70] *Ibidem*.

Abbreviations



AAAS	Annales Archeologiques Arabes Syriennes
AAE	Arabian Archeaology and Epigraphy
AASS	*Acta sanctorum*, vol. I–LXIII, Paris 1863–1940
AB	Analecta Bollandiana
ABC. SB	Acta Biologica Cracoviensia. Series Botanica
ABH	Acta Botanica Hungarica
ABY	Archäologische Berichte aus dem Yemen
ACO	*Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*
ACr	Analecta Cracoviensia
Ae	Aevum. Rassegna di scienze storiche, linguistiche e filologiche
AEt	Annales d'Ethiopie
AEu	Acta Euroasiatica
AHC	Annuarium Historiae Conciliorum
AHL	Archaeology and History in Lebanon
AHR	The American Historical Review
AHSt	Analecta Hierosolimitikes Stachiologias
AIsl	Ars Islamica
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology
AJISS	American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences
AnC	Antigüedad y Cristanismo

And	Al-Andalus
ANES	Ancient Near Eastern Studies
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung*, vol. I, *Von den Anfängen Roms bis zum Ausgang der Republik*, Bd. I–IV, ed. H. Temporini, New York–Berlin 1972–1973; vol. II, *Principat*, Bd. I–XXXVII, eds. H. Temporini, W. Haase, New York–Berlin 1974–.
AOr	Ars Orientalis
Ara	Arabica
ARAM	ARAM. Society for Syro-Mesopotamian Studies
Arb	Arabia
ArchRev	The Architectural Review
ARev	Asiatic Review
Art	Arteria
ArtB	The Art Bulletin: a quarterly published by the College Art Association of America
ARw	Archiv für Religionswissenschaft
ATa	Antiquité tardive
AUL.FH	Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Historica
B	Byzantion
Ba	Baal
BALAC	Bulletin d'ancienne littérature et d'archéologie chrétienne
BASOR	Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Resarch
BCH	Bulletin de correspondance hellénique
BEO	Bulletin d'Études Orientales
BF	Byzantinische Forschungen. Internationale Zeitschrift für Byzantinistik
BMB	Bulletin du Musée de Beyrouth
BMGS	Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies
BNum	Biuletyn Numizmatyczny
Bsl	Byzantinoslavica. Revue internationale des études byzantines
BSOAS	Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies
BSOS	Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, University of London
Byz	Byzantina / Βυζαντινά. Ἐπιστημονικό Ὄργανο Κέντρου Βυζαντινών Ἐρευνών Αριστοτελείου Πανεπιστημίου
ByzS	Byzantine Studies/Études byzantines
BZ	Byzantinische Zeitschrift
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CChO	Collectanea Christiana Orientalia
CCM	Cahiers de civilisation médiévale, X^{e}–XII^{e} siècles
CDCS	*Cambridge Dictionary of Classical Civilisation*, eds. G. Shipley, J. Vanderspoel, D. Mattingly, Cambridge 2006

ChH	Church History
ChrV	Christianskij Vostok / Христианский Восток
CRAIBL	Comptes-rendus des séances de l'Académie des inscriptions et Belles-Lettres
CSCO	*Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium*
CTu	Les Cahiers de Tunisie
DArch	Les Dossies d'Archéologie
DM	Damaszener Mitteilungen
DOP	Dumbarton Oaks Papers
DR	The Downside Review. A Quarterly Journal Published by the Monks of Downside Abbey
DSP	*Dokumenty soborów powszechnych*
E	Eos. Commentarii Societatis Philologae Polonorum
EEBS	*Epeteris Hetaireias Byzantinon Spoudon / Ἐπετηρὶς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν*
EKB	*Encyklopedia kultury bizantyńskiej*, ed. O. J u r e w i c z, Warszawa 2002
EHR	English Historical Review
EI	*Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden–London, ²1960–2005, ³2007–)
Ele	Electrum
EO	Échos d'Orient
EPh	Ekklesiastikos Pharos
ERev	The Ecumenical Review
ETL	Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses
FF	Forschungen und Fortschritte
FHC	Folia Historica Cracoviensia
FHG	*Fragmenta historicorum graecorum*, ed. C. M ü l l e r, vol. I–V, Paris 1841–1870
FR	Felix Ravenna
GA	Graeco-Arabica
GOTR	Greek Orthodox Theological Review, The
GRBS	Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies
Ha	The Harp
HeC	L'Hellenism contemporain
HeyJ	The Heythrop Journal
Hi	Historia. Zeitschrift für alte Geschichte
HSCP	Harvard Studies in Classical Philology
HTR	The Harvard Theological Review
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
HUS	Harvard Ukrainian Studies
HZ	Historische Zeitschrift
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal

IGLS	*Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*, eds. L. Jalabert, R. Mouterde, C. Mondésert, Paris 1929–1970
IJNA	The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology
IQ	The Islamic Quarterly
Ir	Irénikon. Quarterly Journal Published by the Monks of Chevetogne
Isl	Der Islam
Islch	Islamochristiana
IslSt	Islamic Studies
Istn	Istina
Ita	Italica
JA	Journal asiatique
JAC	Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum
JAEIBL	Qadmoniot. Journal for the Antiquities of Eretz-Israel and Bible Lands
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JCopS	Journal of Coptic Studies
JeAr	Jewish Art
JECS	Journal of Early Christian Studies
JEH	Journal of Ecclesiastical History
JEaCS	Journal of Eastern Christian Studies
JESHO	Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient
JHS	Journal of Hellenic Studies
JIS	Journal of Islamic Studies
JLA	Journal of Late Antiquity
JMGS	Journal of Modern Greek Studies
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JÖB	Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik
JPOS	Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society
JRA	Journal of Roman Archaeology
JRAS	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
JRS	Journal of Roman Studies
JSAH	Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians
JSAI	Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam
JSyS	Hugoye. Journal of Syriac Studies
JTS	The Journal of Theological Studies
K	Klio. Beiträge zur alten Geschichte
KH	Kwartalnik Historyczny
KO	Kunst des Orients
KWT.UMK	Teologia i Człowiek. Kwartalnik Wydziału Teologicznego UMK

LAn	Liber Annus
M	Meander. Rocznik poświęcony kulturze świata starożytnego (1946–1996 Meander. Miesięcznik poświęcony kulturze świata starożytnego; 1997–2004 Meander. Dwumiesięcznik poświęcony kulturze świata starożytnego; 2005–2012 Meander. Kwartalnik poświęcony kulturze świata starożytnego)
Man	Mediterraneo antico
MDAI.AK	Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts. Abteilung Kairo
MeEn	Medieval Encounters. Jewish, Christian and Muslim Culture in Confluence and Dialogue
MeMe	Mésogeios-Méditerranée
MGH.AA	*Monumenta Germaniae historica, Auctores antiquissimi*
MGH.SS	*Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores*
MHE	Miscellanea Historiae Ecclesiasticae
Mil	Millennium. Jahrbuch zu Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr. / Yearbook on the Culture and History of the First Millennium C.E.
MLFP	Modern Languages Faculty Publications
Msla	Le Monde slave
MSNAF	Mémoires de la Société nationale des antiquaires de France
Mu	Le Muséon
Muq	Muqarnas. An Annual on the Visual Cultures of the Islamic World
MUSJ	Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph, Beirut
MWo	The Moslem World
NCB	New College Bulletin
Nu	Nubica
OCh	Oriens Christianus. Hefte für die Kunde des christlichen Orients
OCP	Orientalia Christiana Periodica
ODB	*Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. A. Kazhdan, New York–Oxford 1991
OS	L'Orient syrien
OSu	Orientalia Suecana
PAM	Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean
Par	Parnassos / Παρνασσός
PCBE	*Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, Roma 1982–
PEQ	Palestine Exploration Quarterly
PG	*Patrologiae cursus completus, Series graeca*, ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris 1857–1866
PH	Przegląd Historyczny
PL	*Patrologiae cursus completus, Series latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris 1844–1880
PLRE	*The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. I, *A.D. 260–395*, eds. A.H.M. Jones, J.R. Martindale, J. Morris, Cambridge 1971

	vol. II, *A.D. 395–527*, ed. J.R. Martindale, Cambridge 1980
	vol. III, *A.D. 527–641*, ed. J.R. Martindale, Cambridge 1992
PO	*Patrologia orientalis*
POr	Parole de l'Orient
Por	Porphyra
POrient	Przegląd Orientalistyczny
PP	Past and Present: A Journal of Historical Studies
PPSb	Pravoslavnyj Palestinskij Sbornik / Православный Палестинский сборник
PR	Przegląd Religioznawczy
PS	*Patrologia syriaca*, ed. R. Graffin, Paris 1894–1926
PSAS	Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies
PZH	Piotrkowskie Zeszyty Historyczne
QREA	Al-Qantara Revista de Estudios Arabes
RB	Revue biblique
RE	*Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, eds. G. Wissowa, W. Kroll, Stuttgart 1894–1978
REB	Revue des études byzantines
REG	Revue des études grecques
REI	Revue des études islamiques
Rel	Religion
RH	Revue historique
RHE	Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique
RHR	Revue de l'histoire des religions
RIBLA	Revue de l'Institut des belles-lettres arabes
RIDA	Revue internationale des droits de l'Antiquité
RKult	Roczniki kulturoznawcze
RMPh.NF	Rheinischen Museum für Philologie. Neue Folge
ROC	Revue de l'Orient chrétien
RSI	Rivista storica italiana
RSO	Rivista degli studi orientali
RSR	Revue des sciences religieuses
RTK	Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne
RTL	Revue théologique de Louvain
RTNW	Rocznik Towarzystwa Naukowego Warszawskiego
SAI	Studia Arabistyczne i Islamistyczne
SCH	Studies in Church History
Sem	Seminare. Poszukiwania Naukowe
Si	Signs

SJT	The Scottish Journal of Theology
StHAJ	Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan
STHSO	Studia Teologiczno-Historyczne Śląska Opolskiego
StI	Studia Islamica
StPatr	Studia Patristica
StPB	Studia patristica et Byzantina
STV	Studia Theologica Varsaviensia
StZHistUJ	Studenckie Zeszyty Historyczne Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego
SUFED	Sakarya Üniversitesi Fen Edebiyat Dergisi
SvEA	Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok
Sy	Syria. Archéologie, art et histoire
Sym	Symmeikta / Σύμμεικτα
Taw	Al-Tawhīd
TM	Travaux et mémoires du Centre de recherches d'histoire et civilisation byzantines
TPAPA	Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association
Ty	Tyche. Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte, Papyrologie und Epigraphik
USS	U Schyłku Starożytności. Studia Źródłoznawcze
VC	Vigiliae christianae: A Review of Early Christian Life and Language
VP	Vox Patrum. Antyk Chrześcijański
VV	Vizantijskij vremennik / Византийский временник
WDr	W Drodze
WH	War in History
ZAC	Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum / Journal of Ancient Christianity
ZDMG	Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft
ZDPV	Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins
ZNW	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche [/ des Urchristentums]
ZPE	Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik
ZRVI	Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta / Зборник Радова Византолошког Института
ZSSR.RA	Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Romanistische Abteilung
ŽNDS	Damaskin. Žurnal Nižegorodskoj duchovnoj seminarii / Дамаскин. Журнал Нижегородской духовной семинарии

n.d.	no date
n.p.	no place

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Illustrations



Photographs by
Paweł Filipczak
(1–6, 9–13, 16–19, 21–26, 30–37)
Łukasz Gaszewski
(7–8, 14–15, 20, 27–29, 38–39)
Marta Woźniak
(40–45)

Text by
Paweł Filipczak



1. Baqir Mountains (Jabal Bāqir), Jordan. A mountain ridge above the Gulf of Aqaba surrounds the city from the east and north-east. The east bank of Jordan River is situated north of the ridge.



2. Sea coast at Sidon (Ṣaydā, Lebanon) with a thirteenth-century castle with granite columns from the Roman times, used to reinforce the construction. Columns like these were often used in Crusaders' castles of the Middle East.



3. Bostra (Buṣrā al-Shām), Syria. The city of Bostra was once the capital of the Byzantine province of Arabia. A Roman theatre of the second century A.D., rebuilt and fortified in the fifth and sixth century, from the mid-thirteenth century used as a fortress. Basalt blocs give it a distinctive, dark look.



4. Gerasa (Djarash), Jordan. A rare oval forum, dated – like a temple of Zeus in the bottom part of the photo – to the first and second century AD, surrounded by a colonnade. Parts of a water supply system, which was still used as late as in the seventh century, have survived in the centre of the forum. Gerasa was captured by the Arabs in 636 and destroyed in the earthquake of 749.





5–6. Tyre (Ṣūr), Lebanon, the capital city of the province of Phoenicia (*Phoenice Paralia*). An important ecclesiastic centre; place of the synods of 355 and 513 and an important place of commerce and craftsmanship. Seriously damaged in the earthquakes of 501 and 551 and rebuilt; seized by the Arabs ca. 638. A number of Byzantine sarcophagi have survived in the Al-Bass district (a cross and part of inscription can be seen on the photo). In the district of Al-Mīnā there is a well-preserved Roman street with a colonnade and remains of a Byzantine floor mosaic.





7–8. Byblos (Djubayl). In the Roman times Byblos was a small town, less important than Tyre or Sidon, but thanks to a harbour it became an important trade centre. The colonnade and theatre are dated to the early third century AD. The theatre has been reconstructed in ca. 1/3 of its original size and moved from its original location to give access to older archaeological layers. From the fourth century AD Byblos was the seat of a bishopric. The capture of the city by Arabs in ca. 636 did not put a stop to its normal course of life.



9. Apamea (Afāmiya, Syria). The capital of the province of *Syria Secunda*, one of the biggest cities of Syro-Palestine. The photo shows the main street (*cardo maximus*), flanked by columns with distinctive spiral grooves (second half of second century). The city was destroyed in an earthquake in the first half of sixth century and rebuilt by emperor Justinian. Occupied and looted by Persia in 612–628, it was captured by the Arabs in 636.



10. Palmyra (Tadmur, Syria). Part of the so-called Great Colonnade, the main street, leading from the Grand Arch to a *tetrapylon* seen in the background. North-west of it there was emperor Diocletian's camp. The monumental buildings of Palmyra were devastated between fourth and sixth century. Justinian rebuilt city walls; the city was a military fortress up to Heraclius' times. Captured by Arabs in 634.



11. Beirut (Lebanon). Roman *thermae* with sub-floor heating (*hypocaustum*) excavated in the centre.



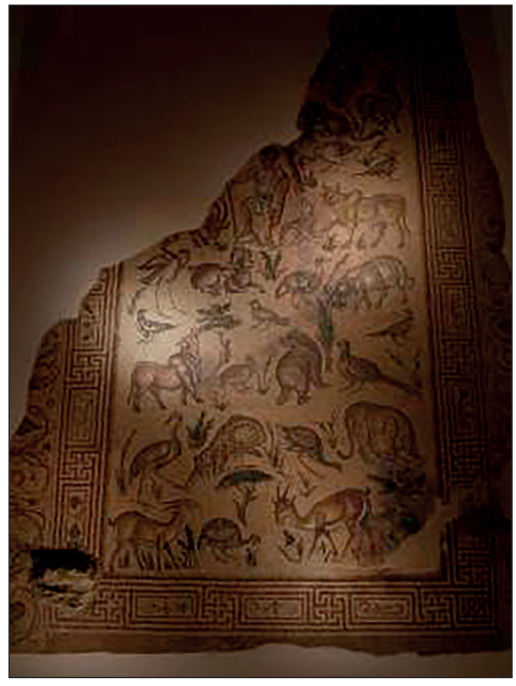
12. Beirut. Colonnade at *cardo maximus* – the main street of the city in the Roman and Byzantine era. One of the few remains of that time. The city was almost totally destroyed in the earthquake of 551. Rebuilt some time later, it was captured by the Arabs in 635. In the Umayyad period the city was a small but important harbour.



13. Beirut. Columns with a richly decorated architrave. Excavated 1946 in the centre of the city (Place de l'Étoile), where in the Roman times there probably was a forum. Today the columns stand in front of the National Museum.



14–15. Beirut. St. George Cathedral of the Greek Orthodox Church. In 1994–1997 archaeologists from the American University of Beirut excavated Byzantine mosaics in the church basement.



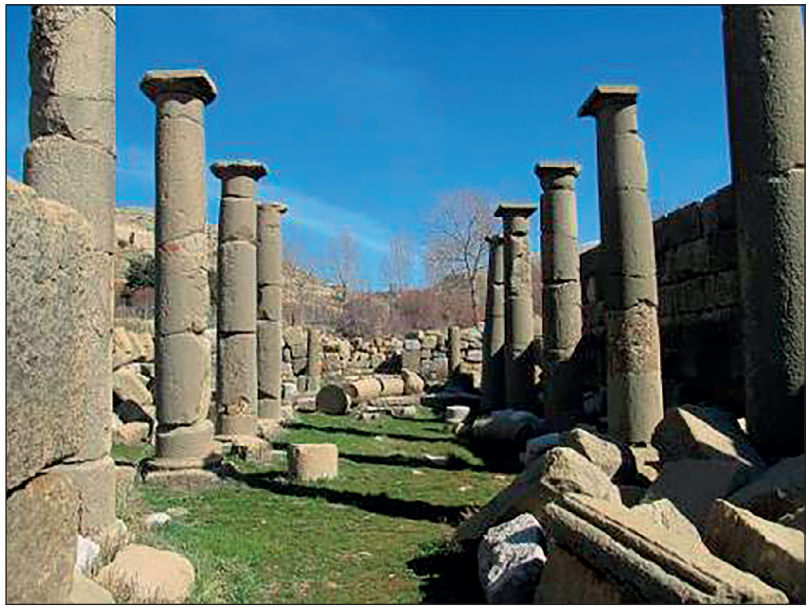
16. Beirut. National Museum. A mosaic, dated to the fifth or sixth century AD, found in the southern suburbs of the city, depicting Jesus the Good Shepherd, surrounded by animals. The mosaic was partly damaged during the Lebanese civil war (1975–1990).



17–18. Petra (Jordan). Floor mosaics, showing Christian symbols and mythological figures from the so-called Byzantine Church, built in the late fifth century, redecorated in mid-sixth and destroyed in the early seventh century.



19. Mādaba (Jordan). A mid-seventh century floor mosaic from the Church of St. George, with a map of the Middle East.



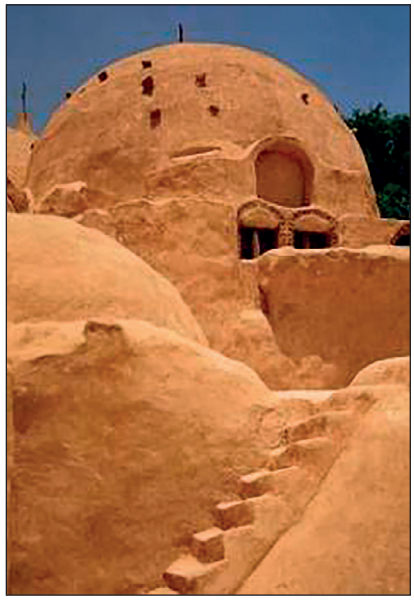
20. Faqra, Lebanon. In the upper parts of Mt. Lebanon, at about 1550 m above sea level there are imposing ruins of pagan temples, devoted probably to Adonis and Astarte. In the late Roman Empire, most probably in the fourth century, a church was built in the ruins. A nave with the adjacent rooms and a stone with an encircled cross have survived until today.



21. Ḳaṣr ibn Wardān (60 km north-west of Hama), Syria. Ruins of a church from ca. 564 – part of a fortified checkpoint (with a palace and barracks) on the Byzantine-Arab border.

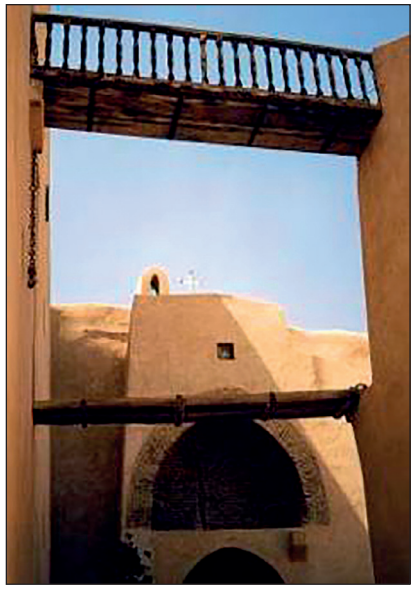


22. Ḳaṣr ibn Wardān. A Greek inscription on a dark basalt stone in the lintel of a one of the buildings.





23–24. Natron Valley (Wādī al-Naṭrūn), Egypt. A big monastic centre between today's Cairo and Alexandria. In the photo there is the Monastery of St. Paisios, founded in the fourth century. Thick walls, small windows and other defensive parts should provide security during raids of Arab nomads.





25–26. Natron Valley. A Syriac monastery founded in the sixth (according to some sources in the fourth) century. The monastery, raided by the Arabs, was rebuilt in the mid-ninth century.







27–29. Bait al-Dīn, Lebanon. A palace of Emir Bashir Shihab II (eighteenth/ nineteenth century) has a huge collection of early Byzantine mosaics, most of which were found in villages by the sea or in Mount Lebanon, in Jiyyeh (ancient Porphyrion), Bait Mari, Zahrani and Ansar.



30. Ḳaṣr al-Ḥallābāt (30 km north-east of Amman), Jordan. A castle form the first half of eighth century, built by caliph Al-Malik, in the place of a Roman military camp.



31. Ḳaṣr Ḥammām al-Ṣarakh (30 km north-east of Amman), Jordan. Umayyad baths. You can see the remains of the heating system (*caldarium*).



32. Ḳaṣr ʿAmra (50 km north-east of Amman), Jordan. One of desert castles; a tri-nave construction with a barrel vault, composed of a reception room and *thermae*, built by caliph Al-Walīd in the first half of the eighth century.



33. Ḳaṣr ʿAmra. A wall painting on the vault of *caldarium*, depicting the northern sky with the signs of the zodiac.



34. Ḳaṣr Azraḳ, Jordan. A fortress of black basalt, in the Roman times known as Basienis (100 km north-east of Amman). Built by the Romans to control the border, was later used by the Byzantines and Umayyads as well. Rebuilt in the present form in the first half of the thirteenth century.



35. Amman (ancient Philadelphia), Jordan. The palace of the Umayyads. Built in the mid-eighth century by caliph Hishām. Some parts of the building remind the Taq Kasra – the monumental palace ensemble in Ctesiphon, the capital city of Sassanid-era Persia.



36. Ḳaṣr Kharāna (50 km east of Amman), Jordan. A fortress on the plan of a square, surrounded by walls of brick and stone, built by Al-Walīd in the first half of eighth century.



37. Ḳaṣr Kharāna. Persian architectural patterns. A room with arches resting on in-built columns.



38. ʿAndjar, Lebanon. The Great Palace, the biggest residence of Umayyad caliphs, discovered during the archaeological excavations in 1949. The walls and arches have been reconstructed.



39. ʿAndjar. The city was built in the early eighth century (probably during the reign of Al-Walīd or Al-Abbas), on a rectangular plan, surrounded by walls and with the Roman streets plan. The city was intersected by the two crossing streets (*cardo* and *decumanus maximus*). Inhabited during a few decades, it was abandoned most probably in the same eighth century.



40. Damascus, Syria. The Umayyad Mosque, built 706–715 by Al-Walīd and Al-Malik in the place of the Basilica of John the Baptist (erected on the ruins of the former temple of Jupiter in the fourth century AD). The photo depicts the House of Treasury, founded in 789. It is possible that the *Bayt al-Māl* was located there during the reign of the Umayyads.



41. Damascus, Syria. The Umayyad Mosque. According to the tradition which dates back to the Byzantine era, the head of John the Baptist was kept in a small chapel of the main hall.



42. Jerusalem, Israel. Dome on the Rock. A shrine on the Temple Mount, built in the late seventh century during the reign of Al-Malik, in the place where Muḥammad is believed to have had a revelation known as *al-Mi'rādj* (ascension). A view from the Western Wall, also known as the Wailing Wall, the only preserved part of the Second Temple of Jerusalem, destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. The existing part of the wall, however, was erected in the late first century BC during the construction works in the times of Herod the Great.



43. Jerusalem. Al-Aḳṣā mosque. Erected on the Temple Mount in the vicinity of the Dome on the Rock to commemorate *al-'Isrā'*, or Muḥammad's revelation, during which he rode on his steed, *Burāḳ* to "the farthest mosque" in Jerusalem.



44. St. Catherine Monastery (Daīr al-Qiddīsa Kātrīnā), Sinai, Egypt. Erected in the mountain area of southern Sinai, in a valley at the foot of Mount St. Catherine. Emperor Justinian had the walls built to protect the monastery from nomadic raids. He also ordered a basilica to be erected in the place where earlier there was the Chapel of the Burning Bush. In the seventh century the monastery was granted special privileges by Muslims. By Muḥammad's own decision the monastery was exempt from taxes.



45. Cairo, Egypt. The Coptic Orthodox Church of St. Virgin Mary (known also as the "Hanging Church" or Al-Muʿallaḳa). Built probably at the end of the seventh century, in the place of an older Christian temple, which may have come from the end of the third century. The two bell towers were added as late as in the nineteenth century.



Byzantina Lodziensia

1997–2015

I.

Sławomir Bralewski, *Imperatorzy późnego cesarstwa rzymskiego wobec zgromadzeń biskupów*, Łódź 1997, ss. 197.

[*Les empereurs du Bas-Empire romain face aux conciles des* évêques]

II.

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UNIVERSITY OF ŁÓDŹ
WALDEMAR CERAN RESEARCH CENTRE FOR THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA AND SOUTH-EAST EUROPE, CERANEUM

ul. Matejki 32/38
90–237 Łódź, Polska
ceraneum@uni.lodz.pl

* * *

Sławomir Bralewski
Zofia A. Brzozowska
Błażej Cecota
Paweł Filipczak
Teresa Wolińska

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY AND HISTORY
DEPARTMENT OF BYZANTINE HISTORY

ul. A. Kamińskiego 27a
90–219 Łódź, Polska
bizancjum@uni.lodz.pl

* * *

Marek M. Dziekan
Marta Woźniak

FACULTY OF INTERNATIONAL AND POLITICAL STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

ul. Narutowicza 59a
90–131 Łódź, Polska
kbwism@uni.lodz.pl

* * *

Hassan Badawy

ARISTOTLE UNIVERSITY OF THESSALONIKI
FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY

54124 Thessaloniki, Greece