The Prologue to John in Ibn al-Ṭayyib's

Commentary on the Gospels.

A thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Oxford.

Julian Faultless.
St. Cross College.
Faculty of Oriental Studies.
Hilary term, 2001. [i.e 2002]

Thesis Abstract.

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The thesis presents a critical edition of the Arabic text (Chapter 2), annotated translation (Chapter 3) and analysis of various aspects of the Prologue to John in the *Commentary on the Gospels* by the Abbasid philosopher, doctor, theologian and Biblical exegete, Abû al-Faraj 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Ṭayyib (d. 1043/44). It is unquestionably the most influential work of Gospel exegesis in Arabic. The critical edition compares three mss, Paris ar. 85 and 86 (both c. 13th C), and BL or. 3201 (early 19th C). All three are of Egyptian provenance.

Chapter 4 analyses the differences between the original Eastern ('Nestorian') and later Miaphysite ('Jacobite') recensions, whilst Chapter 5 consists of a discussion of the exegetical sources for the *Commentary* (meaning that portion of it on the Prologue to John), concentrating on Theodore of Mopsuestia, Chrysostom, Moshe bar Kepha and Isho'dad of Merv, only the last of whom has been established as a likely direct source. Unidentified intermediaries were established as being the sources for interpretations derived from the other exegetes. Close links were identified between the East- and West-Syriac exegetical traditions.

Chapter 6 discusses the technical terminology in (and beyond) the *Commentary* including, in particular, a substantial analysis of *jawhar* (substance) and *dhāt* (essence), and terms relating to 'person' and hypostasis. Chapter 7 analyses the Biblical quotations in the *Commentary*, found to be translated from the Peshitta, and a discussion of the strong possibility of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's authorship of the Arabic Diatessaron. There is also analysis of the Ge'ez (Ethiopic) translation of the *Commentary* (Chapter 8).

A context for the *Commentary* is provided by a biography of the author (Chapter 1), based on a detailed analysis of the primary sources, along with a brief survey of his works. There is also a discussion of his relationship with Ibn Sīnā.

The conclusion includes a discussion of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's relationship to the Islamic tradition, which turns out to be far from obvious.

The appendix consists of a provisional list of primary source references to Ibn al-Ṭayyib, and possible original passages in the *Commentary*.

Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah:

'[al-Yabrūdī] asked who was the foremost man of the day in the medical art and possessing a profound knowledge of it. He was told that there was in Baghdad Ibn al-Ṭayyib, the secretary of the Catholicos, that he was a trained philosopher and that he had an excellent skill in the art of medicine and of other branches of science.'[1]

Ibn Buṭlān (Ibn al-Ṭayyib's favoured pupil):

'Our master, Ibn al-Ṭayyib spent twenty years in commenting on [Aristotle's] Metaphysics and fell so ill pondering on it that he almost emitted his last breath on it.'[2]

Ibn Sīnā:

'What [Ibn al-Ṭayyib's] writings merit is that they should be returned to the vendor and the money paid for them left with him.'[3]

Maimonides:

'But the [philosophical] commentaries of al-Ṭayyib, Yaḥyá ibn 'Adī, or al-Baṭrīq are worthless texts (*sepārīm ābūdīm*); he who concerns himself with them is wasting his time; one only uses them when in real need.'[4]

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[1] Ibn Abī Uṣaybī'ah, *'Uyūn al-anbā'* (section on al-Yabrūdī), ed. Riḍā, p. 611, ll. 3 - 5; (ed. Müller, vol. 2, p. 141, ll. 4 - 6); trans. Schacht / Meyerhof, *The Medico-Philosophical*, p. 68.

[2] Schacht / Meyerhof, *The Medico-Philosophical*, Ar. p. 54, ll. 6 - 8; trans. p. 87 f.

Also quoted by Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Ta'rīkh*, p. 223, ll. 16 - 18.

[3] al-Bayhaqī, *Tatimmah*, p. 28. This is in fact a quotation from a letter by a disciple of Ibn Sīnā's from Rayy. See Gutas, *Avicenna*, p. 68.

[4] Maimonides in a letter to Samuel ibn Tibbon. See Steinschneider, *Die hebraeischen Ueberstetzungen*, p. 42, n. 293.

Franz Rosenthal:

'... the astoundingly learned and prolific Ibn al-Ṭayyib. Ibn al-Ṭayyib has deservedly been called "great" by G. Graf. Modern scholars are well aware of his importance, but his work has not yet been given anywhere near its due.'[5]

Dmitri Gutas:

'... at the time when Avicenna was composing works that were to revolutionize Arabic philosophy, the Christian Ibn al-Ṭayyib could do no better than write commentaries on the *Eisagōgē* and the *Categories* that are practically translations of those produced five centuries earlier by David and Elias...'[6]

Ecclesiastes, 1:8:

'The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun.'

Terence:

'nullumst iam dictum quod non dictum sit prius'[7]

Igor Stravinsky:

'Was I merely trying to refit old ships while the other side - Schönberg - sought new forms of travel? ... But ... I did not pretend to have invented new conveyors or new means of travel ... the true business of the artist *is* to refit old ships. He can say again, in his way, only what has already been said.'[8]

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[5] Rosenthal, 'The Symbolism of the Tabula Cebetis', p. 273 f.

[6] Gutas, 'Aspects of Literary form', p. 45.

[7] Terence, *Eunuchus*, prologue, l. 41.

[8] Stravinksy (and Robert Craft), *Dialogues*, p. 129.

This thesis is dedicated to G. A. F.

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First and foremost, I must thank Sebastian Brock, who has not only been a excellent supervisor but an ideal one. Without his erudition and generosity of spirit the experience of producing this thesis would have been much the poorer. In more than five years, I hardly ever made an appointment but was never once turned away if he was alone in his office (a wonderfully chaotic room). He was also exceedingly tolerant of my somewhat erratic level of production. Even he might have been a little alarmed had he known quite the level of my musical commitments at certain times during my studies but I never felt any pressure on his part.

Secondly, I would like to thank my good friend in Norway, Olav Øye (*øye*, Norwegian for island, cognate with the first syllable of the English word - the English spelling is erroneously derived from Latin, *isola*). My most productive and enjoyable periods were in fact spent overlooking the very island after which his family is named, Snilsveitøy, from the comfort of his *naust* (boat 'nest') in Rosendal, filled as it is with weird and wonderful sailing and fishing paraphernalia. I cannot conceive of a better environment for study - peaceful, with breathtaking scenery and the sound of waves lapping on the shore. I am grateful too to Daniel Rye and Fiona Parker for hosting me on my first trip to Rosendal, on the mouth of Hardangerfjord (Grieg country) and introducing me to a place whose beauty can scarcely be surpassed anywhere in the world. Solveig and Kåre Haugse were also very hospitable to me there and I shall never forget out trip to Kåre's beloved Hardangervidda (the largest mountain plateau in northern Europe).

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during the viva (and since) and John has been kind enough to provide me with some gainful employment.

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This thesis is dedicated to my father, who lived just long enough to be aware of my application to study Arabic at SOAS and who would have been inordinately proud, no doubt, of a Faultless D.Phil. from Oxford.

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Abbreviations and Conventions.

Cowley, *EBI*	*Ethiopian Biblical Interpretation.*
EI	*Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd ed.).
Brockelmann, *GAL*	*Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur.*
Graf, *GCAL*	*Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur.*

Unless it is otherwise stated or quite clear from the context, the *Commentary* refers to that portion of the *Commentary on the Gospels* covering the Prologue to John. The *Introduction* refers to Ibn al-Ṭayyib's *Introduction* to the *Commentary.*

'Eastern' and 'Western' always refer to the East- and West-Syrian traditions.

'Elias' refers to Elias of Nisibis.
'Moshe' refers to Moshe bar Kepha.
'Theodore' refers to Theodore of Mopsuestia unless stated otherwise.
'Yaḥyá' refers to Yaḥyá ibn 'Adī.

Numbers without any other obvious reference, refer to the sections of the edition and translation of the *Commentary.*

Dating.

Dating throughout is A.D.

Terminology.

Christian Arabic refers to the religious literature written by Christians in Arabic and has no dialectical implication.

The **Church of the East** (existing mainly in Iraq and Persia) is often erroneously referred to as Nestorian. This Church follows the Christological doctrine of Theodore of Mopsuestia above all, and rejects the doctrine of 'two persons' attributed (possibly unfairly) to Nestorius.[1]

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[1] See above all, Brock, 'The "Nestorian" Church: a lamentable misnomer', passim.

The Oriental Orthodox churches including the Syrian Orthodox (Jacobite), Armenian, Ethiopian and Coptic Churches should be referred to as **Miaphysite** rather than Monophysite since they do not deny that Christ was 'from two natures' (before the union), which was indeed denied by Eutyches, who is therefore justifiably referred to as a Monophysite.[1]

Translation.

All translations are by the present writer unless stated otherwise.

Transliteration.

Arabic transliteration follows the system of the Library of Congress and the American Library Association (1991).

In quotations from secondary sources, the spelling of transliterated items has often been normalised for the sake of consistency and in order to avoid confusion. So, for example, in the chapter on terminology, *dhāt* is always spelt thus and Ibn al-Ṭayyib is spelt thus almost throughout the thesis.

The Syriac transliteration should be self-evident. As often is the case in the secondary literature, the vocalisation of proper names is not reproduced scientifically.

The transliteration of Ge'ez is explained in the chapter on the Ge'ez translation.

The version of the Arabic font used for the thesis is unfortunately unable to produce *lām + alif*. There is also a problem in Roman script in the spacing between words in italics and plain script.

On Nestorius see, in particular, de Halleux, 'Nestorius, histoire et doctrine', passim.

[1] See, for example, Brock, 'The "Nestorian" Church: a lamentable misnomer', p. 26.

General Introduction.

Ibn al-Ṭayyib's *Commentary on the Gospels* (finished in, or before September, 1018) is the most influential work of Gospel exegesis in Arabic. It was widely copied for close on a millennium[1] and as Macomber notes, it 'enjoyed great popularity outside of [its author's] church.'[2] Brock has also pointed out that 'through Ibn al-Ṭayyib's Arabic commentaries, the East Syrian exegetical tradition reaches the later Coptic and Ethiopian Orthodox traditions.'[3] Indeed, Cowley described Ibn al-Ṭayyib's influence on the Ethiopian exegetical tradition as 'very pervasive.'[4]

Apart from its wide dissemination and influence, the *Commentary* has intrinsic importance as a fine eleventh-century example of the compilatory commentaries covering substantial portions of the Bible which began to be produced in Syriac in the ninth century (Moshe bar Kepha and Isho'dad of Merv, in particular) and which are central to the Christian literature of the period. It is also valuable as a witness to the transmission of Syriac literature into Arabic, and of Arabic into Ge'ez. Despite its importance for the tradition of Biblical exegesis in the Medieval Middle East and Ethiopia, no substantial study has hitherto been undertaken on the *Commentary* and a number of misconceptions concerning the work have had currency. Owing to the dearth of research on the *Commentary*, the research for this study was approached from the start with an open mind as to what areas it should cover.

The doyen of Christian Arabic studies, Samir, has pointed out on a number of occasions that the most pressing need in the field is for critical editions and translations.[5] After discovering that the published edition of the *Commentary* was wholly unsuitable for scholarly research, the selection of a portion or portions of the text for such treatment became necessary. The Prologue to John was selected as the focus for the thesis not only as a conveniently discrete section but also, and more importantly, as the most Christologically significant passage in the Gospels. In addition, it soon became clear that it would be necessary to compare the *Commentary* with the commentaries of Theodore and Moshe

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[1] See Graf, *GCAL*, vol. 2, pp. 167 - 169 for the fullest current list of mss.

[2] Macomber, 'Newly discovered fragments', p. 444 f.

[3] Brock, *Brief Outline*, p. 94.

[4] Cowley, *EBI*, p. 378. With regard to further study of the traditional Ethiopian commentary corpus (the so-called *Andemta*), Cowley stated that 'the major *desideratum* is a critical edition, translation, and comparative source-critical study of the *exegetica* of Ibn al-Ṭayyib' - Cowley, *EBI*, p. 7.

[5] See, for example, Samir, 'La tradition arabe chrétienne. État de la question, problèmes et besoins', passim.

bar Kepha, amongst others. Only John survives of Theodore's Gospel commentaries and it is only Moshe's commentary on the same Gospel which has been published.

The chapter on the recensions arose out of the study of the manuscripts and lead to an investigation of the rival Christologies of the East- and West-Syrian traditions which necessitated the Miaphysite revisions. This chapter and the source-critical study of the *Commentary* were essential to place the work in the wider exegetical context and to clarify some aspects of the important interaction between the Eastern and Western traditions, which are sometimes mistakenly viewed as being quite separate. Also in need of clarification were some of the key theological terms in the *Commentary*. The chapter on terminology highlights the obvious lack of adequate previous treatment in this area. The biographical chapter, which precedes the critical edition, pulls together all the known primary sources to an extent not previously undertaken, and gives the *Commentary* a context within Ibn al-Ṭayyib's life and working environment.

The study of the Biblical quotations within the *Commentary* was useful not only in clarifying which Gospel version they were translated from but also in establishing any possible link with the Arabic Diatessaron, the attribution of which to Ibn al-Ṭayyib has been the subject of much debate. The analysis of the Ge'ez version was fruitful as a study of a Ge'ez translation with an extant Arabic *Vorlage*.

One perspective in the thesis which might be thought to be lacking is that of the historical background. Since this background is not specifically relevant to any of the main arguments of the thesis, it was decided that there was little point in re-inventing the Buyid historical wheel or that of the Baghdad School of philosophy.[1] This lack of socio-historical perspective might further be explained if one considers the fact that historical and social context are not of equal importance for every kind of text. We might expect a study of novels to be more concerned about the society in which they were produced than a study of logical texts, for example. Likewise, a knowledge of the politics of early nineteenth-century Germany is of more use in studying Fidelio than the Razumovsky quartets. The history and politics of Baghdad in the first half of the eleventh century have no obvious direct bearing on the *Commentary*. The literary- historical context, however, is presented to some extent in the chapter on the sources for the *Commentary*, as is the intellectual environment in the biographical chapter, although to a lesser extent. For these larger issues to be tackled adequately, many more of the relevant primary texts need to be published and analysed.

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[1] The Baghdad School has been particularly well served recently by Gutas in *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture.*

Chapter 1.

Ibn al-Ṭayyib's Life and Works.

Introduction.

Ibn al-Ṭayyib worked in Buyid Baghdad at a time when the world of Arabic learning was rich in great figures. Ibn al-Haytham[1] (d. 1039), described as 'without any doubt, the best [Arab] physicist,'[2] was active in Cairo, whilst in the East were to be found al-Bīrūnī (d. after 1050), 'the most distinguished encyclopaedist of the Muslim scientists,'[3] and Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037), one of the greatest of all Arabic philosophers, and undoubtedly the most influential of the medieval Islamic East. As we shall see, Ibn al-Ṭayyib was, in fact, the philosopher whom Ibn Sīnā most reviled.[4] He was also a contemporary of one of the greatest of Christian Arabic theologians and fellow member of the Church of the East, Elias of Nisibis (d. after 1049).

In the world of letters, amongst Ibn al-Ṭayyib's most notable contemporaries in Baghdad were al-Tawḥīdī (d. 1023) and Miskawayh (d. 1030), whilst in Syria, al-Ma'arrī (d. 1058) was composing verse which can be considered as the summation of hundreds of years of Arabic poetic tradition.

Whilst surely not to be counted on the same level as al-Bīrūnī and Ibn Sīnā, Ibn al-Ṭayyib is important not only as the main philosophical rival of Ibn Sīnā but also as one of the last representatives of a long line of Christians in Baghdad who were vital in bringing the Greek sciences of logic and medicine to the Arab world. As a practising doctor and medical teacher he was recognized as one of the most distinguished of his time and was employed in the 'Aḍudī hospital,[5] one of the most advanced in the whole of Western Asia and Europe.

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[1] Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah mentions a *risālah* to Ibn al-Ṭayyib from Ibn al-Haytham on 'a number of topics in the natural sciences and metaphysics.' See *'Uyūn*, section on Ibn al-Haytham, ed. Riḍā, p. 558, l. 19 f.; (ed. Müller, vol. 2, p. 97, l. 4 f.).

[2] Vernet, 'Ibn al-Haytham', *EI*, vol. 3, p. 788.

[3] Saliba, 'al-Bīrūnī', p. 405.

Also described by Gibb as one 'who more than any other writer, represents for us the genius of Islamic science' (*Arabic Literature*, p. 104), and by Boilot as 'one of the greatest scholars of medieval Islam, and certainly the most original and profound' ('al-Bīrūnī', *EI*, vol. 1, p. 1236).

[4] See H.V.B. Brown, 'Avicenna', p. 37.

[5] Named after the Buyid *amīr al-umarā'*, 'Aḍud al-Dawlah, who founded hospitals named after him in Shiraz and Baghdad. See Bowen, 'Aḍud al-Dawla', *EI*, vol. 1, p. 212.

In the religious sphere, he was not only the foremost exegete in Christian Arabic literature (and remains so) but also an important compiler of canon law and a man who played an important rôle in the administration of the Church of the East.

His name, according to ms Paris 85 (f. 164v, l. 6 f.), is Abū al-Faraj ʻAbd Allāh ibn al-Ṭayyib. When he is referred to as Abū al-Faraj ʻAbd Allāh Ibn al-Ṭayyib ibn ʻAlī ibn Abī ʻĪsā al-Shammās al-ʻIbādī[1], this is an error resulting from the conflation, which appears in the later BL ms, of the author's name with that of the scribe referred to in the colophon of Paris 85.[2] The Paris ms (f. 164v, l. 9 f.) gives the name of the scribe (possibly even Ibn al-Ṭayyib's secretary) of a copy dating from 1018 as ʻAbd Allāh ibn ʻAlī ibn Abī ʻĪsā al-Shammās[3] al-ʻIbādī.[4]

Also in the later literature, he is often referred to as al-ʻIrāqī[5] but this *nisbah* is not applied to him by al-Bayhaqī or Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʻah and so this may be a corruption of ʻIbādī (which is the *nisbah* of the scribe) or, more likely, a misreading of Ibn al-Qifṭī who says:

عبد الله بن الطيب أبو الفرج الفيلسوف عراقي .[6]

In other words, Ibn al-Ṭayyib is Iraqi, rather than this being his common designation. One might also question why a man who is not known to have travelled far from Baghdad should be known by such an epithet.

In Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʻah, in the section on Ibn al-Haytham, he is referred to as Abū

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[1] Rieu, *Supplement*, p. 15, reads al-ʻAbbādī but this is less likely than al-ʻIbādī. ʻIbādī was the *nisbah* attached to the Christians of Ḥīra. For an explanation of the term, see Ibn Khallikān (quoting al-Thaʻlabī), *Wafayāt al-aʻyān*, entry no. 88 (dedicated to Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn), vol. 1, p. 206. See also Shahīd, 'al-Ḥīra', *EI*, vol. 3, p. 462.

[2] See BL. Or. 3201, f. 371v.

[3] *Shammās* is a loanword (see Lane, *Lexicon*) from Syriac *shamāshā*.

[4] Could this man be related to Ibn al-Ṭayyib's medical student, ʻAlī ibn ʻĪsā al-Kaḥḥāl, author of the most important medieval textbook on the treatment of eyes (known as Jesu Haly in the West)? See Graf, *GCAL*, vol. 2, p. 176 and Ullmann, *Medizin*, p. 208.

Brockelmann notes that ʻAlī ibn ʻĪsā is not to be confused with Mutawwakil's physician, ʻĪsā ibn ʻAlī (*GAL*, Supp. 1, p. 884).

[5] For example, Brockelmann, *Geschichte*, vol. 1, p. 635; Graf, *GCAL*, vol. 2, p. 160; Landron, *Chrétiens*, p. 108; Vernet, 'Ibn al-Ṭayyib', *EI*, vol. 3, p. 955.

[6] Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Ta'rīkh*, p. 223, l. 5 f.

al-Faraj ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Ṭayyib al-Baghdādī al-Manṭiqī.[1]

Incidentally, nowhere is it stated when or where Ibn al-Ṭayyib was born, but there is nothing to suggest that it was not in or near Baghdad itself.

Biographical sources.

Biographical information concerning Ibn al-Ṭayyib is somewhat scarce. It is in two of the great biographical dictionaries that we find most coverage,[2] *Tatimmat ṣiwān al-ḥikmah* by al-Bayhaqī (d. c. 1169 / 70)[3] and *‘Uyūn al-anbā’ fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā’* by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘ah (d. 1270). Although al-Bayhaqī devotes not insubstantial space to Ibn al-Ṭayyib, much of his account is taken up by quoted extracts from his writings (including portions of philosophical works, not all of which make much sense out of context),[4] whilst the relevant section in Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘ah consists largely of a lengthy anecdote (beautifully told but not very informative) and an extensive list of the author’s works (as many as forty-two are given, by far the fullest medieval source for Ibn al-Ṭayyib’s literary output).[5]

Ibn al-Qifṭī (d. 1248) in *Ta’rīkh al-ḥukamā’* (known in the form of the epitome, produced in 1249 by al-Zawzanī)[6] merely gives a brief, general assessment of the author,[7] which is then copied almost verbatim by Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286) in his *Arabic Chronography.*[8] Other sources offer minimal information.[9]

[1] Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘ah, *‘Uyūn*, ed. Riḍā, p. 558, l. 19 f. (ed. Müller, vol. 2, p. 97, l. 4 f.).

[2] For a brief assessment of the sources for the history of Arabic medicine, which provide most of the material we have about the life of Ibn al-Ṭayyib, see Ullmann, *Die Medizin in Islam*, pp. 228 - 233.

[3] The work is an Arabic supplement (*tatimmah*) to the biographical *Ṣiwān al-ḥikmah* of Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī (d. c. 985). See Dunlop, ‘al-Bayhaḳī’, *EI*, vol. 1, p. 1131.

[4] al-Bayhaqī, *Tatimmat ṣiwān*, pp. 27 - 32.

[5] Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘ah, *‘Uyūn*, ed. Riḍā, pp. 323 - 325; (ed. Müller, vol. 1, pp. 239 - 241).

[6] See Dietrich, ‘Ibn al-Ḳifṭī’, *EI*, vol. 3, p. 840.

[7] Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Ta’rīkh*, p. 223.

[8] Bar Hebraeus, (Gregorius Ibn Hārūn), *Ta’rīkh mukhtaṣar al-duwal*, p. 190.

[9] Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, p. 226 f.; trans. Budge, *Chronography*, p. 203; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, vol. 3, p. 282 f.

Ṣalībā ibn Yūḥannā (14th C), *Maris Amri* (attributed to ‘Amr ibn Mattá), pp. 96 and 98 f. This work is the ‘five chapter’ *Kitāb al-majdal.* ‘Amr ibn Mattá is the author of the 11th C ‘seven chapter’ *Kitāb al-majdal* (wrongly attributed to Mārī ibn Sulaymān). For a discussion of the authorship of this work see Holmberg, ‘A reconsideration of the *Kitāb al-magdal*’, passim.

Shams al-Ri’āsah Abū al-Barakāt (Ibn Kabar) (d. 1324), *Katalog*, p. 653 / 684 f., provides notice

In a very useful overview of the genre, Gibb has noted that it is a characteristic of Arabic biographical dictionaries to concentrate only on the bare facts of a man's career and in the case of writers to quote from, or list their works (al-Bayhaqī and Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah respectively). Demonstrating the reputation of the man is also important, hence Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah's otherwise pointless anecdote concerning the visit of two Persians to Ibn al-Ṭayyib discussed below. Contingent facts in the life of the character, or his personality, are of little concern.[1]

Priesthood.

Ibn al-Ṭayyib was probably ordained since Abū al-Barakāt and Ṣalībā ibn Yūḥannā describe him as a *qiss* or *qissīs* (priest),[2] which is confirmed by Bar Hebraeus in the *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum* (*qashīshā* is the Syriac cognate).[3] Also, in the note on authorship in the colophon of Paris ar. 85 (f. 164v, l. 6), part of his nomenclature is given as *al-qiss*.

However, in the *Chronicon Syriacum* Bar Hebraeus describes Ibn al-Ṭayyib as a monk (*dayrāyā*)[4] but this is very unlikely, not only because this is not reported by the other sources, but also because the vocation of a monk would seem to be at odds with his professional responsibilities as a physician and medical teacher and as secretary to the Catholicoi of the Church of the East. He became secretary to the Catholicos Yūḥannā VII (Ibn Nāzūk, 1012 - 20 or 1013 - 22)[5] and led the synod which elected Elias 1 (of Tirhān,

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of four of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's major Christian works, including a very important description of the existence of a 'Jacobite' recension of the *Commentary*. Abū al-Barakāt's list of works forms the seventh chapter of the author's *chef d'oeuvre*, *Miṣbāḥ al-ẓilmah wa-īḍāḥ al-khidmah*. See Graf, *GCAL*, vol. 2, pp. 438 - 442, particularly p. 441, where Graf notes that Riedel's translation has many errors.

[1] See Gibb, 'Islamic Biographical Literature' p. 56 f.

See also Behrens-Abouseif 'The Image of the Physicians', particularly pp. 331 - 334; and Wadād al-Qādī, 'Biographical Dictionaries' a useful study of the genre in general, although of the authors relevant here, only Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah gets a passing mention.

[2] Abū al-Barakāt, *Katalog*, p. 653; Ṣalībā ibn Yūḥannā, *Maris Amri*, pp. 96, l. 18 and 98, l. 20.

[3] Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, vol. 3, p. 283, l. 9.

[4] Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, p. 226, last line.

[5] Ṣalībā ibn Yūḥannā, *Maris Amri*, p. 96, l. 17 f.

For dates see Coakley, 'The Patriarchal List' p. 75. See this article also for a discussion of the problems in dating the Catholicoi.

Fiey, *Pour un Oriens Christianus Novus* (1993) and the same author's *Chrétiens Syriaques sous les Abbassides* (1980) also supply dates for the Catholicoi.

It is not clear if Ibn al-Ṭayyib was also secretary to the Catholicos who held office between Yūhanná and Elias, namely Ishōyabh IV. See Coakley, 'The Patriarchal List' p. 75.

1028 - 49)[1] as Catholicos.[2] He remained, presumably, as secretary to Elias 1 since he was responsible for the official approval of Elias of Nisibis' apologetic work, *The Sittings*, in 418 A.H. (before January 30th 1028).[3] He was not himself the Catholicos as al-Bayhaqī mistakenly reports,[4] nor was he secretary to either Timotheus I (780 - 820) or II (Arbilaya) (1318 - 28)[5] as Abū al-Barakāt has it.[6] Baarda, likewise, seems to confuse the Catholicos Elias 1 with Elias of Nisibis (d. 1046) when he speaks of Ibn al-Ṭayyib as secretary to the latter.[7]

Translator.

Goodman has written that the 'last major translator [of the Graeco-Arabic tradition] was the Nestorian Ibn al-Ṭayyib,' although he does go on to say that his 'works were largely paraphrases and commentaries.'[8] Troupeau, on the other hand, claims that Ibn al-Ṭayyib acted only as a commentator in the medical and philosophical traditions:

'Mais alors que ses deux maîtres [i.e. Ibn Zur'ah and Ibn Suwār][9] traduisaient encore des textes du syriaque en arabe... Ibn al-Ṭayyib n'a composé que des commentaires.'[10]

Part of this apparent contradiction may well lie in what is actually intended by the term translation. If Ibn al-Ṭayyib produced an Arabic epitome of a work in Syriac, for example, might this be considered a translation? Or should the term be reserved for works which attempt to reproduce accurately a text in another tongue? Whatever the answer to these questions, the issue of which category Ibn al-Ṭayyib's works fall into can only be settled when his writings, and those of his immediate predecessors, have received far more attention than has been the case thus far.

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[1] For dates see Coakley, 'The Patriarchal List' p. 75.

[2] See Graf, *GCAL*, vol. 2, p. 160.

[3] See Mai, *Scriptorum Veterum Nova Collectio*, vol. 4, p. 326. Quoted in Ibn al-Ṭayyib, ed. Hoenerbach, *Fiqh an-Naṣrānīyah*, trans. vol. 1, p. v f.

[4] al-Bayhaqī, *Tatimmat ṣiwān*, p. 27, l. 7.

[5] For dates see Coakley, 'The Patriarchal List' p. 74 f.

[6] Abū l-Barakāt, p. 653. For an explanation of this error see Graf, *GCAL*, vol. 2, p. 160, n. 4 and Ibn al-Ṭayyib, ed. Hoenerbach, *Fiqh al-naṣrānīyah*, trans. vol. 1, p. v f.

[7] Baarda, 'The Author of the Arabic Diatessaron', p. 90 f.

[8] Goodman, 'The Translation', p. 494.

[9] Troupeau refers to these two as his teachers, whether rightly or wrongly.

[10] Troupeau, 'Le rôle des syriaques', p. 9.

Whether or not Ibn al-Ṭayyib acted as a translator, in the strict sense of the word, of philosophical or scientific works, he certainly translated or interpreted many Syriac works in general. That his knowledge of other tongues extended beyond Syriac, however, is open to question. Al-Bayhaqī claimed he did:

وكان عالما باللغة الرومية واليونانية .[1]

'He had a knowledge of Byzantine and ancient Greek.'[2]

Rosenthal took al-Bayhaqī's claim at face value and Sanders assumed that Ibn al-Ṭayyib understood Greek.[3] Walzer, however, who certainly had an intimate knowledge of the Arabic Aristotelian tradition, writes the following:

'[The members of the circle of] the Christian philosophical school of Baghdad in the 10th and the first half of the 11th century ... knew Arabic and Syriac equally well but ... unlike Theodore Abū Qurrah and Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq, had no knowledge of Greek.'[4]

Bar Hebraeus suggests that Ibn al-Ṭayyib's knowledge, even of Syriac, was less than perfect, despite having translated or interpreted vast tracts of Syriac literature:

'Personally I think that he was weak in his knowledge of Syriac lexicography, for I have found blunders in various places in his interpretations. Of these the following is an example from [the Book of] Job, *dḥārteh wlaytāwhy*,[5] where *ḥ* has the vowel *ā* and the *t* has the hardening point over it, the form being derived from *ḥawrā*, that is *ḥzāyā*, 'vision'. But he understood the word to be *ḥartheh*, and he gave *ḥ* the short vowel *a* and softened the *t* into *th* as if the form was taken from *ḥartheh*, 'the end'.[6]

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[1] al-Bayhaqī, *Tatimmat ṣiwān*, p. 28, l. 4 f.

[2] This is Rosenthal's understanding of the Arabic terms, 'The Symbolism of the Tabula Cebetis', p. 275.

[3] 'The Symbolism of the Tabula Cebetis', p. 275. Sanders :- 'C'est là [al-Bimaristān], comme son illustre contemporain Avicenne, qu'il lut Aristote et Galenus dans le texte originale...', *Commentaire*, vol. 2, p. I.

[4] Walzer, *Greek into Arabic*, p. 65.

Also: 'like most members of [the tenth-century Baghdad Christian-Arabic school of Aristotelian studies, Abū Bishr Mattá] did not know Greek and used to translate from previous Syriac translations.' Walzer, *Greek into Arabic*, p. 119.

[5] Not Budge's transliteration.

[6] Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, p. 227, ll. 3 - 7; trans. Budge, *Chronography*, p. 203.

Given the considerable literary output of this author, and remembering the fact that he was a man with ecclesiastical duties as well as being a practising doctor, it is hardly surprising to learn that Ibn al-Ṭayyib's normal working method when composing texts was to work with a secretary or scribe, as we learn from Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah:

أكثر ما يوجد من تصانيفه كانت تنقل عنه إملاء من لفظه .[1]

'Most of his extant publications were transmitted from him by dictation from his own words.'

Schacht and Meyerhof mention Abū Sa'īd al-Yamāmī as acting as his secretary,[2] although the relevant sections of Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah do not mention him in this regard, nor his similarly named son.[3]

Doctor.

As well as writing commentaries on, or making epitomes of many of the extant works of Galen and Hippocrates, Ibn al-Ṭayyib practised and taught medicine in the famous 'Aḍudī hospital in Baghdad (which is also where he had studied medicine). It was characteristic of the physicians of the time to be equally versed in the theoretical and practical aspects of medicine.[4] We learn from al-Muqaddasī (d. c. 990) that Christians were in the majority in the medical profession in Abbasid Baghdad,[5] to the point where one Muslim doctor (probably not quite as eloquently droll in real life as he appears here) bemoans his religious affiliation, as recounted by al-Jāḥiẓ:

A doctor of some repute, Asad ibn Jānī, was asked the reason why he was so short of patients even in a time of plague. He replies:

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[1] Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah, *'Uyūn*, ed. Riḍā, p. 323, penultimate 2 lines; (ed. Müller, vol. 1, p. 239, l. 27).

[2] Schacht / Meyerhof, *The Medico-Philosophical*, p. 63. n. 18.

[3] See Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah, *'Uyūn*, ed. Riḍā, p. 322 f.; (ed. Müller, vol. 1, p. 238 f.).

[4] See Behrens-Abouseif 'The Image of Physicians', p. 334.

[5] See al-Muqaddasī, *Descriptio Imperii Moslemici*, p. 183, l. 7 f.; trans., p. 225.

For the rôle of Christians in Abbasid medicine see also Nasrallah, *Histoire du mouvement littéraire*, vol. 2.2 (750 - 10th C), pp. 64 - 71 and vol. 3.1 (969 - 1250), pp. 148 - 165, although Nasrallah is mainly but not exclusively concerned with Melkites.

أمّا واحدة فإنّي عندهم مسلم وقد اعتقد القوم قبل أن أتطبّب لا بل قبل أن أُخلَق أنّ المسلمين لا يفلحون في الطب واسمي أسد \ وكان ينبغي أن يكون اسمي صليبا ومرائل ويوحنا وبيرا وكنيي أبو الحارث وكان ينبغي أن تكون أبو عيسى وأبو زكريّا وأبو إبراهيم وعلىَّ رداء قطن أبيض وكان ينبغي أن يكون رداء حرير أسود ولفظي لفظ عربي وكان ينبغي أن تكون لغتي لغة أهل جندي سابور [1]

'In the first place I am [known by them to be][2] a Muslim, and before I studied medicine, nay, before ever I was created, the people held the view that Muslims are not successful physicians. Further my name is Asad, and it should have been Ṣalībā, Marā'il, Yuḥannā or Bīrā [i.e. a Syriac or Aramaic name]; and my *kunya* is Abū al-Ḥārith, and it should have been Abū 'Īsá, Abū Zakarīyā or Abū Ibrāhīm [i.e. Christian or Jewish instead of Muhammadan]; and I wear a cloak of white cotton, and it should have been of black silk; and my speech is Arabic, and it should have been the speech of the people of Jundī-Shāpūr [in S.W. Persia].'[3]

Ibn al-Ṭayyib's reputation in medicine was apparently very high amongst his contemporaries, as we learn from an anecdote from Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah:

ولما تبصر في أشياء منها ، وصارت له معرفة بالقوانين العلمية ، وحاول مداواة المرضى ، ورأى اختلاف الأمراض وأسبابها وعلاماتها ، وتفنن معالجاتها ، وسأل عمن هو إمام في وقته بمعرفة صناعة الطب والمعرفة بها جيدا . فذكروا له أن ببغداد أبا الفرج بن الطيب كاتب الجاثليق ، وإنه فيلسوف متفنن ، وله خبرة وفضل في صناعة الطب وفي غيرها من الصنائع الحكمية . فتأهب للسفر وأخذ سوارا كان لأمه لنفقته . وتوجه إلى بغداد وصار ينفق عليه ما يقوم بأوده ويشتغل على بن الطيب إلى أن مهر في صناعة الطب وصارت له مباحثات جيدة ، ودراية فاضلة في هذه الصناعة [4].

'After [al-Yabrūdī] had acquired some insight into the matter and gained some knowledge of the scientific rules of medicine, and had tried to treat sick people and had

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[1] al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-bukhalā'*, p. 109 f.

[2] Omitted from Browne's translation.

[3] Trans. E.G. Browne, *Arabian Medicine*, p. 8.

[4] Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah, *'Uyūn*, section on al-Yabrūdī, ed. Riḍā, p. 611, ll. 1 - 7; (ed. Müller, vol. 2, p. 141, ll. 2 - 8).

seen the varieties of diseases, their causes and symptoms, and had arrived at a technical knowledge about their treatment, he asked who was the foremost man of the day in the medical art and possessing a profound knowledge of it. He was told that there was in Baghdad Ibn al-Ṭayyib, the secretary of the Catholicos, that he was a trained philosopher and that he had an excellent skill in the art of medicine and of other branches of science. He then prepared for his journey, took a bracelet that had belonged to his mother to provide for his expenses, set out for Baghdad and spent what was necessary for his needs. He worked with Ibn al-Ṭayyib until he became skilled in the medical art, made fundamental investigations and acquired a profound knowledge in this art.'[1]

At some point earlier in his career even Ibn Sīnā admits grudging respect for Ibn al-Ṭayyib's medical writings in his refutation of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's commentary on Galen's *On the Natural Faculties* (and quoted by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah):

إنه قد كان يقع إلينا كتب يعملها الشيخ أبو الفرج بن الطيب في الطب ونجدها صحيحة مرضية خلاف تصانيفه التي في المنطق والطبيعات وما يجري معها .[2]

'We have come across books produced by Ibn al-Ṭayyib on medicine and we find them to be sound and satisfactory, unlike his writings on logic, the natural sciences and so forth.'

However, in a quotation (found in al-Bayhaqī) from what Pines takes to be a later text,[3] the source of which in Ibn Sīnā's corpus is yet to be identified, he rescinds his earlier approbation even of the medical works:

وكان أبو علي يعترف بتقدمه في صناعة الطب ثم يعترض على بعض رسائله في الطب ويقول › ظننتُ أن أبا الفرج كان مقدّما في الطب إلا أن كلامه غير فصيح فبعضه مستقيم وبعضه سقيم فهو من المستطرفين لا من أصحاب الصناعة .[4]

'[Ibn Sīnā] used to recognize his lead in the art of medicine, but then he raised objections to some of his treatises on medicine saying: "I had supposed that Abū al-Faraj

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[1] Trans. Schacht / Meyerhof, *The Medico-Philosophical*, p. 67 f.

[2] Ibn Sīnā, *Risāleleri*, p. 66, ll. 1 - 3.

Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah, *'Uyūn*, ed. Riḍā, p. 324, ll. 2 - 4; (ed. Müller, vol. 1, p. 239, ll. 29 - 31).

[3] See Pines, 'La philosophie orientale', p. 17, n. 1.

[4] al-Bayhaqī, *Tatimmat ṣiwān*, p. 28, ll. 5 - 8.

was a leader in medicine but his words are not eloquent, some of it being correct, some faulty, so he is one of the dilettantes[1] and not one of the masters of the art."'

Ibn al-Ṭayyib is, incidentally, known to have been teaching at the 'Aḍudī on 22nd February, 1016, since we have a report to this effect from Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah:

ووجدتُ شرحه لكتاب جالينوس إلى أغلوتن وقد قرئ عليه ، وعليه الخط بالقراءة في البيمارستان العضدي في يوم الخميس الحادي عشر من شهر رمضان سنة ست وأربعمائة .[2]

'I found his commentary on Galen's *Pros Glaukōna* which had been read under him and on it is the note that the text had been read in class in the 'Aḍudī Hospital on Thursday, 11th Ramaḍān, 406.'

Philosopher.

Ibn al-Ṭayyib was the last designated head (*ra'īs*) of the so-called Baghdad school of philosophy, a designation which was purely honorific in this context, according to Rescher.[3] He was a pupil of Ibn Suwār (also known as Ibn al-Khammār) and possibly also Ibn Zur'ah.[4] He made commentaries on, or epitomes of most of the extant works of Aristotle and Porphyry's *Eisagōgē*.

An anecdote, related by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah, gives an impression of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's philosophical standing. Kahle's synopsis is thus:

'Two young Muslims came from Persia to Baghdad with the intention of studying

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[1] The usual meaning of *mustaṭrif*, 'to find something novel' hardly makes sense here. A dilettante is someone who dabbles with the superficialities (*ṭaraf*, 'border, fringe') of a subject, which fits the context very well here. If we read *mustaẓrif* for *mustaṭrif*, this might also mean something akin to dilettante.

[2] Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah, *'Uyūn*, ed. Riḍā, p. 323, ll. 20 - 22; (ed. Müller, vol. 1, p. 239, ll. 21 - 23).

[3] Rescher, *The Development*, p. 34, n. 3.

[4] Only Ibn Suwār is mentioned in this regard by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah in the section on Ibn al-Ṭayyib - *'Uyūn*, ed. Riḍā, p. 324, l. 24 f; (ed. Müller, vol. 1, p. 240, l. 21 f.). Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah's own cited source is Abū al-Khaṭṭāb Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Abī Ṭālib in his book, *al-Shāmil fī al-ṭibb*.

Ibn al-Ṭayyib's teachers are not mentioned in the other primary sources in the sections concerning him.

Rescher claims Ibn Zur'ah also as Ibn al-Ṭayyib's teacher (*The Development of Arabic Logic*, table p. 35), as does Troupeau ('Le rôle des syriaques', p. 8).

medicine under the famous Ibn al-Ṭayyib. At his house they were told that he was in the church. There he was shown to them, an old man, dressed as a priest, the censer in his hand, offering incense. They were wondering to see the famous professor occupied in this way. When they saw him later in the house, they told him the reason of their coming to Baghdad. Ibn al-Ṭayyib had seen the strangers in the church; he now asked them whether they had made a pilgrimage to Mekka. "No", was the answer. So he recommended them to go first to Mekka. After their return he would be ready to accept them as pupils. They had to go. When they came back, weary and exhausted, he asked them whether they had accomplished everything, inclusive of throwing stones in the valley of al-Mīna. All had been done by them. "So it is right", he said. What is ordered by divine law must be fulfilled to the letter, without reflecting about it. They had seen him doing so in church. Now they had done themselves what was ordered by their law. They became his pupils and were later famous physicians."[1]

How much credibility we should give to such an anecdote is open to question. If Muwaffaq al-Dīn ibn al-Quff al-Naṣrāni is the man claimed by Kahle,[2] he must have been born at least half a century after Ibn al-Ṭayyib's death, so on whose authority is this very neat narrative recounted? Nonetheless, even if the story is entirely fictitious, given that it appears in a work composed by a Muslim, as Kahle points out, it 'well illustrates the high esteem in which Ibn al-Ṭayyib was held among Muslims.'[3]

As can been seen from his astonishingly impressive list of works, Ibn al-Ṭayyib was extremely industrious, but not only industrious, also a man who appears to have grappled with difficult texts until he reached a level of understanding which satisfied him. The following is reported by Ibn Buṭlān, Ibn al-Ṭayyib's favoured pupil,[4] concerning his master:

وشيخنا أبو الفرج عبد الله بن الطيب بقي عشرين سنة في تفسير ما بعد

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[1] Synopsis by Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza*, p. 310.

Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah, *'Uyūn*, ed. Riḍā, p. 324, ll. 5 - 23; (ed. Müller, vol. 1, p . 239, penultimate line - p. 240, l. 20).

[2] Is this the Ibn al-Quff (d. 1286) of whom Graf writes in *GCAL*, vol. 2, p. 214 and Ullmann in *Die Medizin*, p. 176? Although the names do not precisely coincide, this Ibn al-Quff was a pupil of Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah's. Kahle in fact equates them, *The Cairo Geniza*, p. 310.

[3] Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza*, p. 310.

[4] That he was Ibn al-Ṭayyib's favoured pupil is reported by Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Ta'rīkh* (section on Ibn Buṭlān) p. 314, l. 21 f.; trans. Schacht / Meyerhof, *The Medico-Philosophical*, p. 58.

الطبيعات ومرض من الفكر فيه مرضة كاد يلفظ نفسه فيها .[1]

'Our master, Ibn al-Ṭayyib spent twenty years in commenting on [Aristotle's] Metaphysics and fell so ill pondering on it that he almost emitted his last breath on it.'

Indeed, reports of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's health seem to have reached Ibn Sīnā, as is hinted at in the following extract of a letter by one of the latter's disciples:

'I have heard that the master [Ibn al-Ṭayyib] was suffering for a period from mental derangement due to illnesses that continually befall thinkers; perhaps this is one of his works from that period. Maybe time will cure him.'[2]

Gutas notes:

'According to Galenic humoral pathology, continuous thinking, or brooding, causes an excess of black bile in the body, which in turn brings about "black bile diseases," i.e., mental disorders, collectively known as *melancholia, sawdā'*.'[3]

Ibn Sīnā himself considered wine to be an effective cure:

'Wine ... renders black bile more slippery and able to leave [the system] more easily. It subdues the harmful influence of black bile by contrariety, and it breaks up all entanglements without the necessity of excessive and abnormal heating.'[4]

As Gutas explains:

'... prolonged thought produces in the body an excess of black bile, which not only destroys the humoral balance but could also lead to "black bile diseases"... Black bile diseases are, in contemporary terms, the "occupational hazard" of philosophers...

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[1] Schacht / Meyerhof, *The Medico-Philosophical*, Ar. p. 54, ll. 6 - 8; trans. p. 87 f.

Also quoted by Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Ta'rīkh*, p. 223, ll. 16 - 19.

[2] Gutas, *Avicenna*, p. 68, translated from an unpublished ms.

[3] Gutas, *Avicenna*, p. 68, n. 9.

[4] Quoted in translation by Gutas, *Avicenna*, p. 185.

Ibn Sīnā, *al-Qānūn fī al-ṭibb*, ed. Būlāq (A.H. 1294), vol. 1, p. 169, ll. 24 - 26; (Gruner 410, sect. 802).

Wine restrains the development of such tendencies in the body.'[1]

The letter reporting, amongst other things, Ibn al-Ṭayyib's ill health was written by an anonymous disciple of Ibn Sīnā's in Rayy to an equally anonymous *shaykh* in Iraq (presumably Baghdad).[2] It is a rich source, at least at an anecdotal level, of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's relationship with Ibn Sīnā. The background to the letter is described thus by Gutas:

'The events described in the letter took place in 1030, after the attack on Isfahan by the Ghaznavid Mas'ūd and the loss of the *Fair judgement* earlier that year.[3] The letter itself was probably written shortly afterwards: after the death of the Ghaznavid Maḥmūd in May of 1030, who is referred to as "the late Sultan", but before the death of Avicenna in 1037, because he is referred to in the letter ... without the customary ... benedictory formulae for the dead. In any case the extreme upper limit is Ibn al-Ṭayyib's death in 1043, since he was alive at the time the letter was written.'[4]

Since the letter remains unpublished, we must rely on Gutas' translation and summary, and because of the fascinating insight the letter gives into the rivalry between the greatest philosopher of the day and his main philosophical opponent, Gutas' summary will be quoted in full:

'The purpose of this letter is in the main apologetic. An emissary of Avicenna arrived at Baghdad and sought to buy books of the eminent philosopher Ibn al-Ṭayyib. Ibn al-Ṭayyib, however, was displeased at the idea of having Avicenna acquire his books, and in order to discourage the sale, and perhaps also insult Avicenna, asked for an exorbitant price. The reason for Ibn al-Ṭayyib's displeasure - apparently scholarly rivalry - is not stated in the letter; the author merely says discreetly, "the fact that somebody like Avicenna has sent for Ibn al-Ṭayyib's books did not meet with the latter's pleasure." The emissary, however, was instructed to purchase books irrespective of the price, and thus

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[1] Gutas, *Avicenna*, p. 185.

Could the wine cellars of Oxford be a legacy of Avicenna, whose works were known from an early period in the University's history, and is the cellar of All Souls' particularly well stocked because of the intensity of thought in which its fellows are engaged?

[2] See Gutas, *Avicenna*, p. 64.

The best manuscript of this work is in the Bodleian Library, Hunt. 534, ff. 13b - 15b. See Gutas, *Avicenna*, p. 65.

Pines discusses the contents of this letter in the appendix to 'La "Philosophie"', pp. 35 - 37.

[3] For a description of the events surrounding the loss of this work see Gutas, *Avicenna*, pp. 134 - 136.

[4] Gutas, *Avicenna*, p. 65.

the sale was made. The story must have circulated in Baghdad quickly. In the philosophical circles in which the rivalry between the two men was known, Avicenna's eagerness to acquire books despite the insultingly inflated price was interpreted - perhaps even at the suggestion of Ibn al-Ṭayyib himself - as indicating a commensurate scholarly need for them on his part. The letter was written in order to dispel this notion. The author asks specifically the recipient to circulate the letter so that people could realize that "the need for [Ibn al-Ṭayyib's] books was not as great as implied by [the willingness to pay] such an exorbitant price and ... that there was no satisfaction with them." It was written either at the request of the recipient, who must have heard the rumours in Baghdad and wished to find out the true facts from his acquaintance in Rayy, or else it was sent on the disciple's own initiative in order to restore Avicenna's reputation in Baghdad. In any case, we owe this letter and the useful information it contains to an all too human situation: philosophical rivalry, scholarly gossip, and the hurt pride of a disciple.

The background of the letter is equally revealing. After the loss of the *Fair Judgement* during the sack of Isfahan, Avicenna would be neither enticed to rewrite it upon the request of his disciples in Rayy, nor provoked into polemics by sending for the books of the philosophers in Baghdad. It was only when a rich young man - the Alcibiades of the group - offered to buy the books himself, thus suggesting that the real reason for Avicenna's refusal to consider rewriting the book was niggardliness, that Avicenna was moved to action and sent his emissary to Baghdad with the inevitable instructions that the books be bought at any price. We thus owe the events that prompted the letter also to a human situation: the young disciple's insolence and the master's *amour propre* and umbrageousness.'[1]

That an element of professional rivalry played a part in the arguments of these two men was recognized by al-Bayhaqī:[2]

كان الشيخ أبو علي يذمّه ويهجّن تصانيفه ويقول في المباحث ‹من حق تصنيفه أن يُرَدّ على بايعه ويُترَك عليه ثمنُه› ولعل ذلك لتحاسد يكون بين أهل العصر.[3]

'[Ibn Sīnā] used to criticize [Ibn al-Ṭayyib] and disparage his writings saying in *The Investigations*, "What his writings merit is that they should be returned to the vendor

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[1] Gutas, *Avicenna*, p. 64 f.

[2] We have no written evidence of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's opinion of Ibn Sīnā.

[3] al-Bayhaqī, *Tatimmat ṣiwān*, p. 27 f.

This is in fact a quotation from the letter from the disciple from Rayy. See Gutas, *Avicenna*, p. 68. The letter is indeed included in the Bodleian ms of the *Mubāhathāt*.

and the money paid for them left with him." Perhaps this was owing to the envy which existed amongst the people of the time.'

In fact, al-Bayhaqī goes on to say, after admitting that there is a great [intellectual] distance (*bawn ba'īd*) between Ibn al-Ṭayyib and Ibn Sīnā, that the latter was offensive (*mu'dhin*) and insulting (*muhajjin*).[1] He then relates an anecdote which is intended to reveal the great man's lack of manners. Al-Bayhaqī reports, on the authority of 'a certain book,' that whilst attending a seminar presided over by the very eminent historian Miskawayh (a man some fifty years his senior), Ibn Sīnā tosses a walnut to the master requesting that he calculate its surface area. Miskawayh throws it back and calmly declares that Ibn Sīnā is more in need of improving his manners than he himself is of knowing the area of the walnut.[2]

Beyond sheer rivalry and Ibn Sīnā's supposed pugnacity or intolerance, H. V. B. Brown claims another factor as crucial in the dispute between Ibn Sīnā and the Christian philosophers of Baghdad, namely a deep-seated philosophical difference of opinion with regard to nature. The issue is philosophically too detailed to be dealt with fully here but it is worth extracting the essential points from Brown's article:

'Avicenna's attitude to nature is central to his criticism of Aristotle and the later Peripatetic tradition. I hope to show that it is especially relevant to his criticism of the Christian Arab school in 11th century Baghdad.'[3]

'... Alexander [of Aphrodisias'] account of nature as an efficient cause was adopted by the Christian Arab teachers. We know that Alexander's commentary on [Aristotle's] *Physics* was translated into Arabic and was used extensively in the Arab commentary.'[4]

'Avicenna firmly rejected [the] account of nature [accepted by the Christian Arab philosophers] which denied that God had full responsibility for the being of everything in

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[1] See al-Bayhaqī, *Tatimmat ṣiwān*, p. 28, l. 10 f.

[2] See al-Bayhaqī, *Tatimmat ṣiwān*, p. 28, l. 11 - p. 29, l. 5.

In their introduction to Ibn al-Ṭayyib's *Fiqh al-naṣrānīyah*, Hoenerbach and Spies (trans. vol. 1, p. iv) imply that Miskawayh censured Ibn Sīnā for his harsh criticism of Ibn al-Ṭayyib, but this seems in fact to be a reference to the incident recounted here, a general censure of Ibn Sīnā which does not involve Ibn al-Ṭayyib. Spies' review in Die Welt des Islams, N.S. vol. 4 (1955), p. 221, referred to by Hoenerbach and Spies (trans. vol. 1, p. iv, n. 10a), makes no mention of Miskawayh.

[3] H.V.B.Brown, 'Avicenna', p. 35.

[4] Brown, 'Avicenna', p. 43.

the world.'[1]

'The Christian philosophers of Baghdad ... gave [the] Active Nature a place second only to God. Avicenna and al-Razi ... [saw] nature as devoid of intelligence and rational choice and so as no agent at all. I [i.e. Brown] suggest that this different attitude to nature was one of the things which provoked Avicenna's virulent attacks on these "philosophers of the west."'[2]

Gutas, however, suggests a more fundamental and wide-reaching cause of the dispute between the two men, while not denying that there were genuine and deeply held differences of philosophical opinion:

'... at the time when Avicenna was composing works that were to revolutionize Arabic philosophy, the Christian Ibn al-Ṭayyib could do no better than write commentaries on the *Eisagōgē* and the *Categories* that are practically translations of those produced five centuries earlier by David and Elias, complete with indications of the divisions of the text into *praxeis* (*ta'līm*).[3] The Paris *Organon* manuscript, produced at about the same time in the same circles, gives ample evidence of the adherence to the old methods and forms of exposition.[4,5]

Later, in the same article, he offers a cultural explanation for his perception of the creative gulf between the two figures:

'It is true that Ibn al-Ṭayyib could still produce [textual commentaries faithfully reproducing the school corpus] a century later [than al-Fārābī], but he was a Christian and therefore following a tradition that was socially quite cut off from the mainstream Islamic intellectual life. Witness the bitter feud between him and Avicenna, a feud which bespeaks not so much different philosophical ideologies - although there was that too - but the conflict between the past and the present. The kind of philosophical praxis in which Ibn

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[1] Brown, 'Avicenna', p. 44.

[2] Brown, 'Avicenna', p. 47.

[3] 'Endress, 'Die wissenschaftliche Literatur', p. 462 and n. 7. For Avicenna's justifiable reaction to these very same works, see his comments and those of a disciple cited in Gutas, *Avicenna*, pp. 68-9.' Gutas' footnote.

[4] 'For a detailed discussion see R. Waltzer, 'New Light on the Arabic Translations of Aristotle' and Huggonard-Roche, '*Remarques*'.' Gutas' footnote.

[5] Gutas, 'Aspects of Literary form', p. 45.

See also Gutas, *Avicenna*, p. 227, n. 12, for a brief description of the closeness of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's commentary on Aristotle's *Categories* to that by Elias.

al-Ṭayyib was engaged belonged to the Christianizing school of Alexandria at the turn of the seventh century and to its spin-off, Christian Syriac scholarship, while Avicenna was concerned with producing a philosophy that met current and, as history showed, even future needs.'[1]

Whilst it may well be the case that Ibn al-Ṭayyib was conservative, is it reasonable to accuse him of achieving what was in fact his likely aim, namely the preservation of the tradition? Gutas' (twentieth-century) opinion might imply that Ibn Sīnā's animosity grew out of his frustration with Ibn al-Ṭayyib's lack of creativity. But was this really Ibn Sīnā's own sentiment? Ibn Sīnā's animosity seems directed more at the content of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's philosophy rather than any absence of innovation. His criticism never appears to be that Ibn al-Ṭayyib is derivative.

However, in a review article of the volume in which Gutas' article appears, Lameer notes that the current state of knowledge of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's philosophy is not sufficient to justify any sweeping claims:

'Whether or not Avicenna's (negative and hostile) reaction to Ibn al-Ṭayyib's logical works was "justifiable" can only be determined by studying the contents of these works (and, of course, by subsequently comparing the results with Avicenna's views on these matters), something which has so far been done for his commentary on the *Eisagōgē* alone.'[2]

What may be true, though, based on current knowledge, is that in the end, Ibn Sīnā attempted a bold synthesis of Aristotelian philosophy and Islamic theology, whilst Ibn al-Ṭayyib's Aristotelian commentaries appear to operate within the relatively self-contained Aristotelian sphere (although his theological works are far from untouched by Aristotelian notions and methods).

Theologian and exegete.

Whatever Ibn al-Ṭayyib's position may be in Arabic philosophy, he is undoubtedly one of the major figures of Christian Arabic literature .[3] He was the first great compiler of

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[1] Gutas, 'Aspects of Literary form', p. 47 f.

[2] Lameer, 'The *Organon* of Aristotle', p. 96.

[3] Graf is still the basic reference work for Ibn al-Ṭayyib's religious writings, *GCAL,* vol. 2, pp. 160 - 177.

canon law in Arabic, in *Fiqh al-naṣrānīyah*, culled from Syriac sources.[1] An assessment of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's rôle in philosophical theology is more difficult to realize, although at the beginning of this century Graf judged that even if Ibn al-Ṭayyib's philosophical theology was heavily dependent on that of Yaḥyá ibn 'Adī (despite the latter being a Syrian Orthodox), nevertheless, the later author made significant advances over the work of his predecessor in matters of the Trinity and the 'Attributes'.[2] It is notable that most of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's theological treatises are affirmations of the unity of the Trinity, a fact which surely results from the need of a Christian of the time to defend his faith from the common Muslim accusation that Christians were tri-theists.

In the sphere of Christian Arabic literature, it is though, above all, as an exegete that Ibn at-Ṭayyib is renowned. There are extended commentaries on the Psalms and the Gospels (the *Commentary*). At some time later in his career he assembled his various exegetical works together, forming *Firdaws al-naṣrānīyah*.[3] The important fact to note here (and which has not always been made clear) is that this work includes his previously independent commentaries on the Psalms and the Gospels (the *Commentary*), as Ibn al-Ṭayyib himself explains:

رأيت بعد تصنيفي المقالات الشريفة في أصول الدين وهي كثيرة وتفسيري الإنجيل وكتاب المزامير بالشرح الكبير وابتداءي بالرسائل وتصنيفي فقه النصرانية واختبارها أن أجمع سائر تفاسيري الكتب الحديثة والعتيقة باختصار بالعربية ليقرأ وينتبه لما أطرح فيعاد إليه . ففعلت .[4]

'I decided, after composing elevated treatises on the fundamentals of the religion (and they are numerous), my commentary on the Gospels, the Book of Psalms in an extensive exposition, my making a start with the Epistles, my composition on Christian law and its application, to collect all my commentaries on the New and Old Testaments by summarizing them in Arabic in order that one can read them and bring one's attention

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A useful, more recent supplement to Graf is to be found in Caspar, 'Bibliographie', vol. 2, pp. 203 - 208.

[1] For his importance in canon law where his influence was felt mainly through the work of Ibn al-'Assāl, see Samir, 'Christian Arabic Literature', p. 449 f.

[2] Graf, 'Philosophie und Gotteslehre', pp. 47 - 51.

[3] For the fullest description of this work see Féghali, 'Ibn at-Ṭayyib et son commentaire', p. 151 f.

The section on Genesis has been edited and translated by Sanders (*Commentaire*).

[4] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, ed. Sanders, *Commentaire*, text, p. 2.

to what I bring out and so that it may be referred to [in future].[1] So this is what I did.'

Death.

وعرضت في زمنه أوباء كثيرة .[2]

'During the lifetime [of Ibn Buṭlān] reigned many pestilential diseases.'[3]

Ibn Buṭlān (quoted by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah) implies that Ibn al-Ṭayyib may have died as a result of one of these 'pestilential diseases':

ونقلت أيضا من خط بن بطلان ، فيما ذكره من الأوباء العظيمة العارضة للعلم بفقده العلماء في زمانه قال : ما عرض في مده بضع عشرة سنة بوفاة الأجل المرتضى ...؛ ومن أصحاب علوم القدماء أبو علي بن الهيثم وأبو سعيد اليمامي ... وأبو الفرج عبد الله بن الطيب ؛ ومن متقدمي علوم الأدب والكتابه : ... وأبو العلاء المعري . فانطفأت سرج العلم وبقيت العقول بعدهم في الظلمة .[4]

'I [Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah] copied, moreover, the following remarks written by Ibn Buṭlān's own hand on the great epidemic diseases which wrought havoc to science by the deaths of learned men in his time. He says: "Within the space of some ten years occurred the deaths of the venerable al-Murtaḍā...; and among the representatives of the sciences of the Ancients: ... Abū 'Alī ibn al-Haytham, Abū Sa'īd al-Yamāmī ... and Ibn al-Ṭayyib; and among the prominent men of letters and literature: ... Abū al-'Alā al-Ma'arrī. So the light of science was extinguished, and the minds were left, after their deaths, in darkness."'[5]

However he may have died, the sources for the date of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's death are contradictory.

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[1] Lit. 'it is returned to.'

[2] Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah, *'Uyūn*, section on Ibn Buṭlān, ed. Riḍā, p. 326, l. 20 f.; (ed. Müller, vol. 1, p. 242, l. 13).

[3] Trans. Schacht / Meyerhof, *The Medico-Philosophical*, p. 61.

[4] Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah, *'Uyūn*, section on Ibn Buṭlān, ed. Riḍā, p. 327, l. 11 - p. 328, l. 1; (ed. Müller, vol. 1, p . 242, l. 28 - p . 243, l. 4).

[5] Trans. Schacht / Meyerhof, *The Medico-Philosophical*, pp. 62 - 64.

Ibn al-Qifṭī says:

عاش إلى بعد العشرين والأربعمائة وقيل مات سنة خمس وثلثين وأربعمائة .[1]

'He lived at least until 420 (Jan. 1029 / Jan. 1030) and it is said he died in 435 (Aug. 1043 / Jul. 1044).'

Bar Hebraeus is less equivocal about the date. In the Syriac *Chronicon* the date of his death is given as the end of Teshrīn I 1355 in the Greek (i.e. Seleucid) calendar,[2] which is October 1043[3] as Graf states[4] (not 1044, as Budge has it).[5]

Ṣalībā ibn Yūḥannā, however, informs us that Ibn al-Ṭayyib was buried in 434 A.H.,[6] which in the Western calendar runs from August 1042 to August 1043.

To summarise the information from the sources (in chronological order of authorship):

Aug. 1043 to July 1044	Ibn al-Qifṭī
Oct. 1043	Bar Hebraeus
Aug. 1042 to Aug. 1043	Ṣalībā ibn Yūḥannā

Without knowing which of these three writers had the more reliable source (they may even have shared one, with the confusion creeping in during the conversion process from one calendar to another) it is impossible to make a reliable judgement on the matter.

According to Ṣalībā ibn Yūḥannā, Ibn al-Ṭayyib was buried in the church (not the cemetery) of Durtā[7] situated by the West Bank of the Tigris in Baghdad.[8] By the year 1300 the monastery seems to have been swept away through changes in the course of the

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[1] Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Ta'rīkh*, p. 223, l. 19 f.

[2] See Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, p. 226; trans. Budge, *Chronography*, p. 203.

[3] Using Wüstenfeld, *Tabellen*, p. 65.

[4] See Graf, *GCAL*, vol. 2, p. 161.

[5] See Bar Hebraeus, trans. Budge, *Chronography*, p. 203.

[6] See Ṣalībā ibn Yūḥannā, *Maris Amri*, p. 99, l. 2.

[7] See Ṣalībā ibn Yūḥannā, *Maris Amri*, p. 99, l. 1, and for the interpretation that it was not the cemetery, see Caspar, 'Bibliographie', vol. 2, p. 203.

[8] See Allard, 'Chrétiens à Baghdad', p. 378.

river.[1]

Conclusion.

Not many facts concerning Ibn al-Ṭayyib's life have come down to us, but what we do have is a good impression of how he was viewed within one or two centuries of his death. Although he may not have been universally acknowledged as a fine philosopher, he was nonetheless clearly eminent in the field and was certainly a very important figure in medicine and the Church.

Our main sources for his life, the great biographical dictionaries, are by no means heavily dependent on each other in the case of Ibn al-Ṭayyib (except for Bar Hebraeus on Ibn al-Qifṭī). What is striking is what remarkably good access they seem to have had to highly relevant written sources. For example, apart from extracts of various of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's writings, al-Bayhaqī presents us with two of Ibn Sīnā's critical comments, one of which is accurately reproduced from the letter by his disciple from Rayy.[2] As well as the very extensive work list and the anecdote on the authority of Ibn al-Quff,[3] Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah also provides a quotation from Ibn Sīnā, this one taken from his refutation of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's commentary on Galen's *On the Natural Faculties*.[4] Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah also reports that he himself has seen a note on a manuscript in Ibn al-Ṭayyib's own hand.[5] As for Ibn al-Qifṭī, he seems to have been aware of how Ibn al-Ṭayyib was viewed by Maimonides (d. 1204), if he is, as seems likely, the 'narrow-minded Jew' referred to in the *Ta'rīkh*.[6] In addition, he provides a quotation from Ibn Buṭlān's controversy with Ibn

[1] See Le Strange, *Baghdad*, p. 118.

[2] See al-Bayhaqī, *Tatimmat ṣiwān*, p. 27, and for the quotation's origin in the letter by the disciple from Rayy, Gutas, *Avicenna*, p. 68.

[3] See Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah, *'Uyūn*, ed. Riḍā, p. 324, ll. 5 - 23; (ed. Müller, vol. 1, p . 239, penultimate line - p. 240, l. 20). Synopsis by Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza*, p. 310.

[4] See Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah, *'Uyūn*, ed. Riḍā, p. 324, ll. 2 - 4 (ed. Müller, vol. 1, p. 239, ll. 29 - 31) and for the quotation's origin, Ibn Sīnā, *Risāleleri,* p. 66, ll. 1 - 3.

[5] See Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah, *'Uyūn*, ed. Riḍā, p. 323, ll. 20 - 22; (ed. Müller, vol. 1, p. 239, ll. 21 - 23).

[6] Maimonides in a letter to Samuel Ibn Tibbon (translator of the *Guide to the Perplexed*):

'Aber die Commentare (*pērūshē*) des Ṭayyib, oder Jahja b. Adi, oder al-Batrik sind ohne Wert (*sepārīm ābūdīm*); wer sich mit ihnen beschäftigt, verliert seine Zeit; man thue es nur in der Not.' Trans. Steinschneider, *Die hebraeischen Ueberstetzungen des Mittelalters*, p. 42, n. 293. The letter is described by Steinschneider, *Catalogus Librorum Hebraeorum in Bibliotheca Bodleiana*, col. 1900.

Ibn al-Qifṭī:

'I saw someone involved in the field criticizing him for prolixity (*taṭwīl*). But this denouncer was a narrow-minded (*ḍayyiq al-fiṭna*) Jew who had come across a statement by Ibn Sīnā.' *Ta'rīkh*, p. 223, l. 11.

Riḍwān,[1] and like Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah he too has set eyes on an autograph note by Ibn al-Ṭayyib, this time the *ijāzah* (the licence to teach a text) for Ibn Buṭlān on a copy of *The Fruits of Argument*.[2]

Ibn al-Qifṭī was a younger contemporary of Maimonides, and both men were resident in Cairo at some point in their lives, which facts increase the likelihood that it is Maimonides to whom Ibn al-Qifṭī refers.

The philological point of interest here is that the Hebrew *ābūdīm*, taken as 'ohne Wert' by Steinschneider (a minor extension of the definitions given in Jastrow's *Dictionary*, 'lost, decayed'), appears in Ibn al-Qifṭī as *taṭwīl* ('prolixity'), closer in sense to the Arabic cognate of the original Hebrew, *abad* ('eternity'). Maimonides was surely using the term in its original Hebrew sense, with the misinterpretation appearing in translation. Not only is it unlikely that Maimonides would have misused the Hebrew term, but also, whilst Ibn al-Ṭayyib's total output can accurately be described as voluminous, on the evidence of the *Commentary*, and other works, he is actually a distinctly concise author.

[1] See Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Ta'rīkh*, p. 223, ll. 16 - 18, and for the quotation's origin, Schacht / Meyerhof, *The Medico-Philosophical*, Ar. p. 54, ll. 6 - 8; trans. p. 87 f.

[2] See Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Ta'rīkh* (section on Ibn Buṭlān), p. 314 f.; trans. Schacht / Meyerhof, *The Medico-Philosophical*, p. 58.

Introduction to the critical edition.

Ibn al-Ṭayyib's *Introduction* to the *Commentary*.

In his *Introduction* to the *Commentary*, Ibn al-Ṭayyib provides us with a forceful and sometimes impassioned plea for faith that does not dispense with rationality and learning.[1]

In his article surveying Arabic Gospel exegesis, Graf made a detailed summary of the *Introduction*, including substantial sections in translation.[2] More recently, Samir has produced a characteristically thorough edition and translation of this work but one which unfortunately covers only the first four sections of his division of the work into thirteen.[3] Samir's description of the sections is as follows:

'1. Introduction: Mépris de la science ['*ilm*] chez les fidèles.

2. Première objection: Les apôtres n'étaient que des pêcheurs ignorants.

3. Deuxième objection: Notre foi est basée sur le miracle, non sur la science.

4. Troisème objection: Les préceptes de l'évangile n'ont pas besoin de science pour être compris.

5. La démonstration [*burhān*] est supérieure au miracle.

6. Quatrème objection: Le chrétien doit simplement vivre en faisant le bien.

7. Cinquième objection: La vie mystique est préférable à la science.

8. Nécessité d'étudier la Tradition et l'Écriture.

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[1] In an article published in 1982, Breydy wrote the following:

'Ma communication ... comprenait ... la question de Abdallah Ibn al-Ṭayyib et la pseudo-introduction qui lui est attribuée.'

The implication here is not found elsewhere, and in conversation with the present author, Samir has said that he knows of no evidence which puts Ibn al-Ṭayyib's authorship into question. See Breydy, 'La IIIe Apologie de Duwayhi,' p. 241.

[2] See Graf 'Exegetische Schriften', pp. 25 - 28.

[3] Samir's edition is published in two parts: 'Nécessité de la Science' (sections 1 to 3) and 'Nécessité de l'Exégèse Scientifique' (section 4).

9. Ignorance des évêques.

10. Ignorance des laïcs.

11. Les fidèles et les mélodies liturgiques.

12. Les fidèles et l'argent.

13. Conclusion.'[1]

The fourth section is crucial in explaining the need for intelligent exegesis. In the previous section (the third) he has explained that it is not enough merely to receive the Gospels but one must also act according to its precepts[2] whilst in the fourth section he demonstrates that understanding the Gospels' precepts is not possible without learning.

The *Introduction* implies that Ibn al-Ṭayyib intended the *Commentary* for both the clergy and the laity, since both come in for equal censure for their ignorance. Ibn al-Ṭayyib's reputation for being critical of the Church authorities is reported by Bar Hebraeus in the *Chronicon Syriacum*:

'[Ibn al-Ṭayyib] charged the chief officials of their Church with being ignorant in matters of ecclesiastical doctrines and other subjects.'[3]

In the conclusion to the *Introduction* we find a crucial passage in which Ibn al-Ṭayyib reveals his working method in compiling the *Commentary*:

واعتمد ايراد ما قالوه سوى اننى اوجز واختصر واجتهد فى الايضاح وازيد من عندى حلَّ شك \ وتنقيح كلام بحسب ما تنتهى قدرتى اليه [4]

'I intend to quote what [the unquestionable masters] said except that I abbreviate and abridge, and do my utmost to clarify and add my own [material] to solve any doubtful

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[1] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 'Nécessité de la Science', p. 246 f.

[2] See Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 'Nécessité de la Science', p. 258 f.

[3] Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, p. 227, l. 2 f.; trans. Budge, *Chronography*, p. 203.

[4] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, ms BL or. 3201, f. 9r - 9v; (ed. Manqariyūs, *Tafsīr al-Mashriqī*, pp. 36 - 37).

In the quotations from the *Introduction*, the editorial method is that explained in the introduction to the critical edition of the *Commentary*.

matters and refine the expressions, to the full extent of my ability.'

The *Commentary* , an introduction.

In *Firdaws al-naṣrānīyah* Ibn al-Ṭayyib refers to the *Commentary* as *tafsīrī al-injīl*[1] ('my commentary on the Gospels'). It is referred to as *sharḥ al-injīl* by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah[2] and *majmū' sharḥ al-anājīl al-muqaddasah* by Abū al-Barakāt.[3]

The note on authorship in Paris ar. 85 (f. 164v, l. 6 f.) confirms that it is by Abū al-Faraj 'Abd Allāh Ibn al-Ṭayyib.

The colophon of Paris ar. 85 (f. 164v, ll. 9 - 12) states that it is a copy of a ms executed by 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Alī ibn Abī 'Īsá al-Shammās al-'Ibādī and finished in Aylūl, in the year 1329 of Alexander (i.e. Seleucid calendar) or Jumādá I, 409 of the Arabs (i.e. A.H.), which is September, 1018.[4] This is thus the *terminus ante quem* for the work's composition. In the *Introduction* the author tells us that he wrote it after *al-Uṣūl al-dīnīyah*.[5]

It has been claimed by some scholars that Ibn al-Ṭayyib wrote a 'draft' version of the *Commentary* in Syriac.[6] Graf is surely correct in regarding this assumption as mistaken.[7] There are a number of reasons for following him to this conclusion.

First and foremost is the fact that in the *Introduction* Ibn al-Ṭayyib himself does not actually suggest the existence of the Syriac 'draft':

قادتنى الضروره ... ان اجمع ما قاله الملافنه المحققون مثل مار يوحنا فم الدهب ومار افرام وغيرهما باللغه العربيه لاستلايها على هده البلاد أعنى العراق وعدم الناس فهم اللغه السريانيه[8]

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[1] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, ed. Sanders, *Commentaire*, text, p. 2.

[2] See Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah, *'Uyūn*, ed. Riḍā, p. 325, l. 23; (ed. Müller, vol. 1, p. 241, l. 20).

[3] See Abū al-Barakāt, *Katalog*, p. 653 / 684 f.

[4] Using Wüstenfeld, *Tabellen*, pp. 10 and 65.

[5] See Ibn al-Ṭayyib, ms BL or. 3201, f. 9v, l. 1 f.; (ed. Manqariyūs, *Tafsīr al-Mashriqī*, p. 36 f.).

[6] See for example de Slane, *Catalogue*, p. 21:

'Ce commentaire, rédigé d'abord en syriaque, fut traduit en arabe par l'auteur lui-même.'

De Slane is quoted by Cowley, 'Scholia of Ahob of Qatar', p. 331, n. 6, who refers to this Syriac 'draft' throughout his oeuvre. Tisserant is presumably following de Slane in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, vol. 11, col. 276.

[7] See Graf, *GCAL*, vol. 2, p. 167 f.

[8] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, ms BL or. 3201, f. 9r, ll. 16 - 21; (ed. Manqariyūs, *Tafsīr al-Mashriqī*, p. 36, ll. 16 - 19).

'Necessity has led me ... to collect what the unquestionable masters[1] such as Mār Yūḥannā Golden-mouth,[2] Mār Ephrem and others said ... in the Arabic language, since it holds sway over this country, I mean Iraq, and people lack an understanding of Syriac.'

Also, since the bulk of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's task consisted of translating the Gospels and his source commentaries on them into Arabic, why should he compose a version of this monumental opus in Syriac? Indeed, his stated aim is precisely to furnish his contemporaries with Arabic versions of the commentaries of the Syriac masters at a time when a knowledge of the latter language was rare amongst the Arabic-speaking Christians of Baghdad.

Thirdly, it is surely significant that the existence of no other work by Ibn al-Ṭayyib in Syriac is known either in manuscript or through reference to it in a primary source.

The source of this erroneous notion of a Syriac version is no doubt a passage in the colophon of the manuscripts of the *Commentary* which says:

وشرح تفسيره جمع الشيخ القس الفاضل أبى الفرج عبد الله بن الطيب ادام الله عزه ونقله من السريانيه الى اللغه العربيه [3]

'The shaykh, the virtuous priest Abū al-Faraj 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Ṭayyib collected the explanation[s] of [the Gospel's] interpretation and translated it from Syriac into the Arabic language.'

However, this is surely the work of a scribe who misinterprets the similar phrase quoted just above in Ibn al-Ṭayyib's own introduction.

The form and character of the *Commentary*.

Sections of the Gospel text, ranging in length from one phrase to four verses alternate with commentary introduced by the rubric, 'the exegete said.' In all the sections from Jn 1:1c onwards, following the commentary attributed to 'the exegete' comes a

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[1] *Malāfinah* comes from Syriac *malpānā*.

[2] In the body of the *Commentary* Chrysostom is referred to as Mār Yuwānīs.

[3] Paris ar. 85, f. 164v, ll. 6 - 8; BL or. 3201, f. 371v, ll. 12 - 14 (corresponding with BL Or. 732, f. 366r in the Ge'ez, see Cowley, 'Scholia of Ahob', p. 331, n. 6).

generally longer portion where Mār Yuwānīs (Chrysostom) is cited. In most cases this material attributed to Chrysostom is followed by shorter portions where Isho'dad is named most often amongst other exegetes, or an interpretation is introduced by a phrase such as 'we say' or 'some say.'[1]

Generally speaking, Ibn al-Ṭayyib apportions the same amount of coverage to each verse, with the unsurprising exceptions of verses 1 and 14. In this respect his is a methodical commentary, never excessively detailed, but with every phrase covered. This is in stark contrast to Chrysostom and Isho'dad, two of the *Commentary's* principal sources (whether anterior or proximate). Chrysostom, it should be borne in mind, is a homilist not an exegete proper and so is not constrained by the necessity to restrict himself to analysing the biblical text. His coverage of the Prologue spans some sixty pages in Migne's edition of the Greek, with around thirty dedicated to the first verse alone.[2] Whilst Isho'dad's work, on the other hand, is a true commentary, his coverage is by no means systematic, with for example verses 6 to 11 (and 22 to 28 beyond the Prologue) being completely overlooked. Theodore's commentary is the closest in style to Ibn al-Ṭayyib's but the latter's is a less discursive and expansive commentary. Indeed, given that Theodore observes in the introduction to his commentary on John that the job of the exegete is to 'explain difficult expressions in the biblical text, without superfluous digressions, which are permitted, even required of the preacher,'[3] Ibn al-Ṭayyib could be said to have fulfilled Theodore's own stipulation even better than he did himself.

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[1] By contrast, 'in the case of the Synoptics, [the commentary sections are] introduced by the rubric "The Interpreter has said,"' but there is no further division of the comments. See Macomber, 'Newly discovered fragments', p. 445, where the author also writes the following concerning the Synoptics:

'Even in Nestorian manuscripts the particular source of individual comments is never identified. Indeed, the only differentiation of sources is simply implied by vague introductory phrases. In most cases this is merely, "And the saying that...", referring to particular words of the evangelist that are to be commented on, but often, by contrast, comments are introduced by "And some say...", or "The commentators inquire into the reason for..."'

[2] See Chrysostom, ed. Migne, *Patrologiae Graecae*, vol. 59, pp. 23 - 86.

[3] Theodore quoted by Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation*, p. 71 f.

The mss used for the critical edition of the *Commentary*.

The inadequacy of the published edition.

The printed edition of the *Commentary*,[1] edited by an Egyptian Copt at the turn of the last century, is of little use for serious philological study, not only because it is not a critical edition (based on the Miaphysite recension, in fact) but also because, as the editor openly confesses in his introduction, he did not hesitate to 'improve' the language (not just the orthography) of the manuscripts.[2] Moreover the editor replaced the original Gospel quotations with ones taken from the nineteenth century Protestant version produced in Beirut. More problematic than all this though is the fact that the editor interpolated whole passages of his own with no indication of the fact,[3] although some of these interpolations are not without a certain charm - such as when the author insists that there is no suggestion that the guests at the wedding of Cana were drunk themselves, only that this is normally the case.[4] However, it must be admitted that particularly in the case of the *Introduction*, where for this study it was possible to consult only one manuscript for the section not edited by Samir, the edition was of use in some instances where the manuscript was difficult to decipher.

The mss employed.

Three mss were chosen for the edition, all of Egyptian provenance: Paris ar. 85 and 86, and British Library or. 3201. The mss fall into two recensions with Paris ar. 85 representing Ibn al-Ṭayyib's original (Eastern) version and the other two representing the Miaphysite revision. Graf's is still the fullest list of mss,[5] but now needs to be supplemented by the information in Samir's edition of the *Introduction*[6] and by Macomber's knowledge of the mss which were transferred from Diyarbakir to Mardin and most of which are now likely to be in Baghdad.[7]

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[1] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, ed. Manqariyūs, *Tafsīr*.

[2] See Samir, 'Nécessité de la Science', p. 245.

[3] See for example, the second half of p. 380 amongst many others.

[4] See p. 413.

[5] See Graf, *GCAL*, vol. 2, pp. 167 - 169.

[6] See 'Nécessité de la Science' p. 243 f. and 'Nécessité de l'Exégèse Scientifique', pp. 244 - 246.

[7] See Macomber, 'Newly discovered fragments', p. 444 f.

Paris ar. 86 is dated 1248 and Paris ar. 85 is also most likely thirteenth-century, so both mss were copied some two centuries after the composition of the *Commentary* and are amongst the earliest known mss of the work. Paris ar. 85 is valuable as a witness to the original Eastern recension, since most of the other examples are probably largely inaccessible in Iraq or Turkey. British Library or. 3201, dated 1805, was used mainly owing to its accessibility but was also very useful in being the only one of the three mss to contain Ibn al-Ṭayyib's *Introduction.*

Apart from the relatively few and not very extensive (although important) alterations in the Miaphysite recension, the lack of many serious textual difficulties in the mss, or of serious divergences between them, suggests that they may be relatively close to Ibn al-Ṭayyib's original.

A Paris ar. 85.

164 folios.

Egyptian script (oriental).

Anonymous, undated.

13th C according to Troupeau,[1] but Macomber says 11th C (probably taking the date from the colophon, which is a copy).[2]

Colophon (f. 164v) is copied from a ms made by 'Abd Allāh Ibn 'Alī Ibn Abī 'Īsā al-Shammās ('deacon') al-'Ibādī in Aylūl, 1329 in the Alexandrian (i.e. Seleucid) calendar, or Jumādá I, 409 A.H., that is September 1018.

f. 2v - 79v commentary on Luke.
f. 80r - 164v commentary on John.

The first folio or so of the commentary on John is unfortunately missing and there are also some serious problems with the ordering of the folios beyond the Prologue.

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[1] See Troupeau, *Catalogue des Manuscrits Arabes (Bibliothèque Nationale), Première partie - manuscrits chrétiens.*

[2] See Macomber, 'Newly discovered fragments', p. 444, n. 17.

B Paris ar. 86.

303 folios.

Egyptian script (oriental).

Anonymous, dated Kīhak, year of the Martyrs 964 (A.D. 1248).

Same colophon (f. 302v) as Paris ar. 85.

Troupeau incorrectly states that this is a copy of Paris ar. 85.[1] See the chapter on the recensions of the *Commentary*.

f. 3v - 44r commentary on Mark.

f. 45v - 167v commentary on Luke.

f. 168v - 303r commentary on John.

C British Library or. 3201, ms. no.15, (*Supp*., Rieu, p. 12 f.)

372 folios. 11 3/4'' by 8'', 25 lines 5'' long.

Written in a large, but rather indistinct, *naskhī*.

Dated Suyūṭ, Wednesday, the 2nd of Mesuri, year of the Martyrs, 1521 (A.D. 1805). Copyist named.

f. 1r preface of commentator.

f. 12v Eusebius' Canons with a short preamable.

f. 19r commentary on Matthew.

f. 188v commentary on Mark.

f. 215v commentary on Luke.

f. 297r commentary on John.

f. 371v-372r note on authorship (same colophon as in Paris mss but conflates the author's and copyist's names).

The relationship of the mss.

Given that Paris ar. 86 and the BL ms are both witnesses of the Miaphysite

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[1] See Troupeau, *Catalogue des Manuscrits Arabes.*

recension, the only important question to be answered is whether the BL ms is ultimately derived from Paris ar. 86. This can best be deduced by assessing whether Paris ar. 86 has substantial departures from Paris ar. 85 which are not shared by the BL ms. This is in fact the case. In some ways the BL ms, despite having been copied five and a half centuries later than Paris ar. 86, could be said to be a more reliable ms than Paris ar. 86.

The ms of the Ge'ez translation of the Miaphysite recension seems to be in the same tradition as the BL ms rather than Paris ar. 86.

The language of the mss.

All three mss exhibit orthographic features of what is often called Middle Arabic. Wolfdietrich Fischer has produced a brief and lucid overview of the history of the usage of the term along with his own conclusions on the issue. The following is a selection from his main points.

In 1966 - 67, in his *Grammar of Christian Arabic*, Blau stated that 'Middle Arabic constitutes the missing link between Classical Arabic and modern dialects.'[1]

Fischer, however, took the view that:

'linguistically speaking there is no space between the morphophonemic structure of Classical Arabic and that of the Neo-Arabic dialects for introducing an intermediate stage of Middle Arabic. Therefore the non-Classical features of those texts under consideration should be regarded as pure Neo-Arabic, if we regard hypercorrect forms in this connection. For, as far as I see, no phonological, morphological or syntactic feature has been found in Middle Arabic texts which are not attested in the Neo-Arabic dialects.'[2]

As a result of the debate which arose on the matter, Blau modified his earlier view and moved more in line with Fischer's stance:

'Now, I prefer to call the vernacular elements preserved in Judeo-Arabic and Christian-Arabic texts (and, sometimes, in the writings of Muslims as well) *Early Neo-Arabic*, preserving *Middle Arabic* as a general term for the language of these texts, in

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[1] Blau, *A Grammar of Christian Arabic*, vol. 1, p. 36.

[2] Fischer, 'What is Middle Arabic?', p. 432.

which Classical Arabic, Neo-Arabic, and pseudo-correct elements alternate...'[1]

Fischer himself wrote:

'... I have proposed to call Middle Arabic all those texts written by authors who are not able to reach the high standard of educated Classical Arabic or who do not intend this.'[2]

This is, then, a sociolinguistic definition and has no particular time-frame.[3]

Could Ibn al-Ṭayyib write well-formed Classical Arabic?

In his discussion of the authorship of the Diatessaron, in comparing it with works where Ibn al-Ṭayyib's authorship is uncontested, Marmardji wrote:

'Pour persister, malgré tout, à attribuer cette oeuvre à Ibn al-Ṭayyib, on est obligé d'amettre qu'il ne savait pas l'arabe. Or, ses multiples ouvrages, composés en bon arabe, prouvent le contraire.'[4]

Kahle was of the same opinion:

'[Ibn al-Ṭayyib] was an able stylist who could write very well classical Arabic.'[5]

However, in some of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's Christian writings other scholars have noted divergences from classical Arabic. Hoenerbach and Spies, for example, wrote the following of the linguistic style of the great compilation of canon law, *Fiqh al-naṣrānīyah*:

'Der Text weist deutliche Spuren einer Übersetzungsliteratur aus dem Syrischen auf, so dass er sprachlich nicht auf der Höhe jener Werke Ibn al-Ṭayyibs steht, deren

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[1] Blau, 'The Importance of Middle Arabic Dialects', addenda to reprint in *Studies in Middle Arabic*, p. 83.

[2] Fischer, 'What is Middle Arabic?', p. 432 f.

[3] See Fischer, 'What is Middle Arabic?', p. 432 f.

[4] Marmardji, *Diatessaron de Tatien*, p. lxxxix.

[5] Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza*, p. 311.

excellent Arabic P. Kahle hervorhebt.'[1]

In response, Kahle admitted that he agreed 'entirely' with Hoenerbach and Spies on the quality of the Arabic of *Fiqh al-naṣrānīyah*.[2]

Sanders also mentions that the *Commentary on Genesis* is one of the texts written by Ibn al-Ṭayyib 'en arabe chrétien, où l'influence du syriaque est manifeste.'[3] The phrase 'en arabe chrétien' is unfortunate since it suggests that this is a particular dialect, akin to the language of the corpus described by Blau in his *Grammar of Christian Arabic*, which latter is much closer to Neo-Arabic than any of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's texts.[4] Sanders also implies that there is a deliberate difference between Ibn al-Ṭayyib's works intended for a general audience and those intended for a specifically Christian one and that Ibn al-Ṭayyib attempts some kind of Syriacized Arabic for the latter. This is most improbable. Although we can observe the modern phenomenon of the friendly Englishman addressing the tourist in pidgin ('me no smoke'), it is not plausible in the case of a highly educated native speaker addressing other native speakers. A change in register would not be surprising and is probably the case, but deliberately Syriacized Arabic is highly unlikely.

Baarda claims in some detail that many of the so-called faults that Marmardji found in the Diatessaron translation (if it is by Ibn al-Ṭayyib) can be ascribed to Syriacisms[5] and has explained the phenomenon thus:

'Whereas Muslim authors often maintained the ideal of Classical Arabic, Jewish and Christian authors more easily gave way to vulgarisms, to non-classical idiom and vocabulary. The influence of living speeches such as Hebrew and Aramaic (Syriac) made themselves felt in the Jewish and Christian communities where Arabic gradually gained ground.'

However, in the case of works such as the *Commentary on Genesis*, *Fiqh al-naṣrānīyah* and the *Commentary* itself, the non-standard linguistic features noted by Hoenerbach, Kahle and Sanders (other than the orthography of the mss) are surely to be assigned to Syriacisms resulting from these works being to a large extent translations

[1] *Fiqh al-naṣrānīyah*, Arabic vol. 1, p. vi and quoted by Baarda, 'The Author', p. 90, n. 177.

[2] Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza*, p. ix.

[3] Sanders, *Commentaire*, trans. vol., p. I.

[4] There is discussion by Samir of the existence or not of a specifically Christian Arabic language in 'La tradition arabe chrétienne. État de la question, problèmes et besoins', pp. 52 - 59.

[5] See Baarda, 'The Author', pp. 91 - 102.

from the Syriac, rather than to the influence of Neo-Arabic.

Scribal interference.

Ibn al-Ṭayyib was therefore perfectly capable of writing well-formed Classical Arabic, even if the influence of Syriac is occasionally noticeable in his works derived from Syriac originals.

Samir is of the opinion that the 'faults' found in the texts of the great Christian Arabic writers, where the standard of educated Classical Arabic is not attained, are attributable to copyists and not the writers themselves.[1] This is surely the case with the *Commentary*. A Classical Arabic aimed for but not attained might be an accurate description of the language of the mss.

[1] See Samir, 'La tradition arabe chrétienne', p. 77, cited by Féghali, 'Ibn at-Ṭayyib et son commentaire', p. 154.

Chapter 2.

Critical Arabic text of the Prologue to John in the *Commentary*.

Editorial method.

The method adopted for the critical edition of the *Commentary* follows that of the Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium and was described and defended by the sometime editor of the series, Draguet, in an article published in 1977. The article specifically relates to Syriac texts but the methodology can be transferred to the editing of Arabic texts.

The English summary of this article is as follows:

'The editor of a Syriac text must furnish a faithful picture of the available witnesses, but also indicate the textual profile which seems best to approximate the original. He should distinguish between objective data and subjective editorial judgment. The following method is recommended:

1. A "base manuscript" is selected and edited, defects included.

2. The diacritical punctuation of the base ms is generally retained, but tacitly reduced to the style of ancient mss. Grammatical punctuation is normalized.

3. Editorial judgement on the relative value of variant readings is indicated in the apparatus.

4. A translation accompanies the text. Attention is called to variant readings.

Among other advantages, this method most conveniently allows for modifications when new textual evidence is found.

It is a method very close to that of Origen when he edited the pre-massoretic Hebrew biblical text.'[1]

In the sphere of Christian Arabic studies this methodology goes against that propounded most notably by Samir and described in part of a lengthy article developed from a paper delivered at the Premier Congrès International d'Études Arabes Chrétiennes in 1980.[2] Whilst there are undoubtedly benefits to be gained from Samir's heavily interventionist style of editing, it might be thought to rely rather too much on the subjective judgements of the editor. Moreover, some of the motivation behind the methodology may

[1] Draguet, 'Une méthode d'edition des textes syriaques', p. 18.

[2] See Samir, 'La tradition arabe chrétienne. État de la question, problèmes et besoins', pp. 74 - 85. A critique of Draguet's method is offered in the same article, pp. 68 - 73.

not be entirely scientific but can be attributed to an understandable effort on Samir's part to present Christian Arabic as a literature worthy of serious scholarly attention.

The method adopted for this edition not only has obvious advantages for linguistic study but also benefits from not imposing norms which may be irrelevant in a Christian context where the grammar of Quranic Arabic does not hold sway to the same extent as it obviously does in Islamic literature. However, it must be admitted in the present instance that Ibn al-Ṭayyib himself, as stated above, was surely not ignorant of the norms of Classical Arabic.

The major disadvantage of this method is that it could present a text which we can be fairly certain is far from the text as it was originally written. However, in the present case, given that the differences between the mss are relatively minor (apart from the few differences between the recensions), we can reasonably assume that the edition well represents the content of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's original, if not the orthography. Also, the fact that only one witness to the original Eastern recension was used might be seen to justify its use alone as a 'base'.

There are certain features of Arabic, not shared with Syriac, which need to be discussed in relation to the editorial method:

1. A feature of all three manuscripts and familiar from many Neo-Arabic dialects is the loss of interdental fricatives in favour of stops (in particular *th* > *t* and *dh* > *d*). The base ms has been followed as closely as possible in terms of orthography in this respect but it is not consistent and there is the added problem that the difference between the interdental fricative and the equivalent stop is only a matter of a diacritical point.

2. Since the letter *yā'* in final position is written in the manuscripts with and without diacritics seemingly at random, and since this would not seem to be the result of any significant feature of pronunciation, it was decided to dispense with the diacritics altogether.

3. The orthography of the base manuscript has been followed with regard to final *hamzahs*, which are omitted more often than not.

Editorial conventions.

Paris ar. 85 was chosen as the base ms since it is the only witness to the original Eastern recension of the three mss employed, although since Paris ar. 85 lacks the beginning of John, Paris ar. 86 acts as the base ms until part way through section 5.

When the mss depart from Classical Arabic orthography (as they frequently do), the Classical Arabic equivalent is given only where it may not be obvious.

The text has been divided into sections each time a new phrase or word is interpreted.

Sigla.

A	Paris ar. 85.
B	Paris ar. 86.
C	British Library or. 3201.
Eth	British Library or. 732 (the Ge'ez translation).
om	omit.
+	add.

[ms B, Paris ar. 86, f. 168v] 1

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم وبه نستعين[1]

بشاره يوحنا بن زبدى

المكمل للبشرى[2]

Jn. 1:1a < فى البدء كان الكلمه موجودا >

2 قال المفسر تطلب المفسرون فى هدا الفصل عدت مطالب

3 الاول منها العله التى من اجلها لم يجر يوحنا على عاده متى ولوقا فى الاخبار بولادت مخلص الكل وتصرفاته البشريه ويقولون ليلا تنجدب العقول باجماعهم على ذالك الى ابطال اعتقاد الاهيته والظن فيه بانه انسان حسب* فانفرد بالكلام فى اللاهوت والاخبار بحاله وان كان ذالك يتجاوز القدره الانسانيه حتى لا يشوب الاعتقاداة فيه زلل ولا خطا* ولا تنجذب الى ان مخلص الكل انسان سادج ولا اله غير متجسد

4 والتانى هل اورد يوحنا ما اورد من امر اللاهوت على علم تحققه من قبل ام القدره الالهيه لقنته فاورد ما اورده* ويقولون انه فى الوقت الدى نطق بما نطق به لم يفقه حقيقته لكن من بعد البحت والتفتيش وقف عليه وعلم ان ما قاله يتجاوز قدرت البشر*

5 والثالث فى الفرق بين المتقدم والمتاخر والمبدا وما عن المبدا ويقولون ان المتقدم

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[1] This Basmala seems to be in a different hand from what follows.

C. بسم الاب والابن وروح القدس الاله الوحيد [بسم ... نستعين

بشارت يوحنا الرسول المكمل للبشرى المقبوله الطاهره [بشاره ... للبشرى [2]

جيب مرنا يسوع المسيح صلاته يكون معنا الى الابد امين

الاصحاح الاول سريانى

C. قال يوحانا الرسول السعيد

والمتاخر هما من المضاف [ms B, Paris ar. 86, f. 169r] ومتى وجد المتقدم وجدالمتاخر ولا يفهمه المتقدم الا ويفهم المتاخر فاما المبدا وان كان مبدا

[ms A, Paris ar. 85 Begins, f. 80r] الامور هى عنه . فانه يوجد من[1] قبل وجودها . ولا يلزم وجودها مع وجوده . ولا يتعلق فهمه بفهمها . وكل[2] مبدا متقدم وليس كل متقدم مبدا . فان اول حجر[3] فى الحايط هو متقدم وليس هو مبدا للحايط . فقنوم الابن الازلى وان كان عله ومبدا للموجودات[4] فليس يلزم ان يكون وجودها مع وجوده . ولهدا قال يوحنا فى البد كان الكلمه موجودا . ولم يقل فى المتقدم[5] *

6 والرابع اعطا العله التى من اجلها قال . ان فى الابتدا كان الكلمه موجودا . ولم يقل كان الابن موجودا . ويقولون ان ذلك ليلا تنجذب الاوهام الى كونه مخلوقا ومفعولا على ما جرت عليه العاده فى الولاده الانسانيه . فعبر هده[6] العباره عنه ليلا يضلل هدا الشك . ويظن بالابن انه ليس بمساو للاب فى الوجود وان كان معلولا له *

7 والخامس اعطا العله التى من اجلها سمى قنوم الابن كلمه ويقولون ان العاده جرت فى الامور الالهيه ان تسما بالاسما المصطلح عليها . ويستعار لها اسما من اسما الموجودات . ولا يخترع لها اسماء غريبه ليلا يصعب فهمها اد[7] كانت غريبه من جهه[8] المعنى واللفظ جميعا كما قيل فى السليح . ان الرب الاهنا نارا[9] اكله . فسمّى الرب باسم النار ليدل على عظم انتقامه . والكلمه[10] اسم تدل[11] على قنوم الابن الازلى

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[1] من] om B.

[2] وكل] فكل B.

[3] حجر] حجرا C.

[4] للموجودات] الموجودات B.

[5] المتقدم] التقدم B C.

[6] هده] om B C.

[7] اد] ادا B C.

[8] جهه] خهه B.

[9] نارا] نار B; om C.

[10] والكلمه] + ايضا B C.

الدى هو الجوهر القديم مع خاصه انه ولد من الاب قبل[1] الدهور .

8 وقوم قالوا وليس قولهم بحق . سمى كلمه لانه يدل على اراده الاب كما تدل الكلمه على مراد النفس [80v] والملايكه قد دلوا على ذلك . فينبغى ان يسموا[1] بهدا الاسم .

9 والمفسر يقول[2] ان الكلمه[3] تقال على ضروب كثيره . على اللفظه الملفوظ بها بالفم وعلى القوه الموجوده فى النفس على تصور المعانى المركوزه فى الطبع الموجود[4] بوجود النفس التى هى غير مفارقه لها .

10 فسماه كلمه ليدل على ان وجوده مساو لوجود الاب وازليته مساويه لازليته . لا فرق بينهما لا فى الجوهر ولا فى الوجود . لكن الخواص حسب . فان خاصه الاب بانه[5] عله ومولد وخاصه الابن انه معلول ومولود .

11 والمفسر يقول[6] انه قال فى المبدا كان الكلمه موجودا ولم يقل كلمه الله . لان كلمه الله هى اوامره ووصاياه لا الابن الازلى .

12 ومار يوانيس يقول ان قوله فى البد كان الكلمه موجودا ولم يقل الكلمه ويمسك. ليدل على ازليته ومساواته للاب فى الجوهر والوجود . وليفرق بينه وبين الخليقه . كما قيل ان فى البد خلق الله ذات[7] السما والارض . ولم يقل فى البد كانت ذات السما وذات الارض موجوده .

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[11] يدل B C. [تدل

[1] تسموا C. [يسموا

[2] وقال اخر B C. [والمفسر يقول

[3] om B. [الكلمه

[4] الموجوده C. [الموجود

[5] انه B C. [بانه

[6] وقال اخر B C. [والمفسر يقول

[7] om, following Eth; dittography with the next phrase. [ذات

13 وانت فلا تقشعر من اسم الاب والابن والعله والمعلول . فهده لعمرى انه يجب لبعضها التقدم على بعض لكن ليس فى الزمان . فان العله اقدم من المعلول بما هى عله لا فى الوجود ولا فى الزمان . وكدلك الاب اقدم من الابن بما هو سبب لا فى الزمان ولا فى الوجود .

14 وتامل ما احسن تكميل يوحنا لكتاب البشاره . والتعليم عن طبيعه سيد الكل فان[1] متى قال ان روح القدس اعد انسانا لاتحاد[2] بن الله الازلى . فعلمنا عن قنومه الانسانى[3] . وزعم انه مخلوق ومفعول[4] وله مبدا زمانى [81r] ويوحنا قال ان فى البدى كان الكلمه موجودا . فعلمنا عن قنومه الالهى[5] . وانه ازلى سرمدى غير مفعول ولا محدث .

1:1bقال يوحنا الرسول ‹ والكلمه كان موجودا عند الله ›

15 قال المفسر لما قال ان فى البد كان الكلمه موجودا . ليلا[6] يظن انه عله ومبدا وليس بمعلول . خبر كيف[7] حاله عند الله . فقال انه كان موجودا عند الله . يريد انه معلول وابن لابيه . ومولود منه قبل كل الدهور باسرها . وانت فلا يخطر ببالك بان[8] الولاده زمنيه . ومحتاج فيها الى الانفعالات والالام الجسمانيه لكن ولاده الهيه لا زمان فيها ولا تقدم للوالد على[9] المولود بالزمان . واعلا من ان يخطر بالاوهام والافكار . ففى الفصل الاول اوجب لقنوم الابن الازليه . وفى التانى انه معلول وليس بعله .

---

[1] قال [فان C.

[2] الجسد المتحد به [انسانا لاتحاد B C.

[3] الولاده الجسدانيه [قنومه الانسانى B C.

[4] مفعول [مخلوق ومفعول C.

[5] الولاده الالهيه [قنومه الالهى B C.

[6] لان [ليلا read for sense.

[7] كان + [كيف B.

[8] ان [بان B C.

[9] عن [على C.

والكلمه فقد قلنا انها[1] لفظه داله[2] على الابن الازلى . لا[3] اللفظه الخارجه بالصوت ولهدا اخرجها[4] مخرج التدكير[5] *

1:1c-1:5 قال يوحنا الرسول < والله هو الكلمه هدا كان موجودا لدى الله فى البد كان كل بيده . وما كان كون شى واحد من[6] دونه . به كانت الحياه والحياه هى نور الناس. والنور يضى[7] فى الظلام والظلام لم يدركه * >

16 قال المفسر اولا اوجب للكلمه الازليه والقدم[8] وتانيا انه معلول وليس بعله فلا[9] يظن به انه ليس باله لانه معلول قال فيه انه الله جل اسمه **[81v]** اد كان قنوم الاب وقنوم الابن وقنوم الروح فى الجوهر واحد واختلافهما[10] فى الخواص . فالاب هو الجوهر مع خاصه[11] انه ولد[12] والابن هو الجوهر مع خاصه[13] انه ولد من الاب قبل الدهور . والروح هو الجوهر مع خاصه انه انبعت من الاب .

17 وقول هدا هو[14] موجود فى البد لدى الله . يريد انه مساو له فى الجوهر

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[1] انها] انه C.

[2] داله] دال C.

[3] لا] على + B.

[4] اخرجها] اخرجه B C.

[5] التدكير] التدكره C.

[6] من] om C.

[7] يضى] اضا C.

[8] القدم] المقدم C.

[9] فلا] فليلا B C.

[10] واختلافهما] + واختلافها A (marginal note); واختلافهم B. Read with A or B.

[11] خاصه] خاصته C.

[12] ولد] والد B; اولد C.

[13] خاصه] خاصته C.

[14] هو om B.

والقدره. وعضد ذلك بان قال كل شى كان بيده . اى به تم خلق العالم وجميع الموجودات . وهدا قاله[1] ليدل على انه غير منفصَل من الاب وانه مساوى[2] فى الجوهر.

18 وقوله وكل بيده كان . لا لانه كان يجرى فيه مجرى الاله والشى المستخدم . لكنه فاعل جميع الموجودات .

19 وقوله ومن[3] دونه لم يوجد شيا[4] واحد مما وجد اى لم ينفرد الاب بفعل شى دونه . اد كان جوهرهما واحد[5] وفعلهما واحد[6] .

20 وقوله وبه كانت الحياه . معناه انه ليس يوصف بانه فى نفسه حى حسب لكن ومفيد[7] الحياه للمخلوقات التى لها حياه .

21 وقوم يقرون هدا الحرف وما يقدمه[8] على هذا الوجه . ومن دونه لم يوجد شى واحد . ويقرى بعده[9] . وما وجد به كان حياه وهدا يبطل . لان ليس كلما خلقه[10] هو حياه بمنزله الارض والجبال .

22 وقوله والحياه هى نور الناس لانها تكسب الناس علما وافكار[11] صحيحه . فكانه يقول انه لم يكفه ان افاده الحياه حتى افادهم العلم والمعرفه .

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[1] قاله] قال C.

[2] مساوى] مساويه B.

[3] ومن] من C.

[4] شيا] شى B C.

[5] واحد] واحدا B.

[6] واحدا] واحد B.

[7] ومفيد] لكنه مفيد read, following Eth, which is syntactically better.

[8] يقدمه] تقدمه C.

[9] بعده] به C.

[10] خلقه] يخلقه C.

[11] وافكار] وافكارا B C.

23 وقوله وهو النور ينير فى الظلام والظلام[1] ما ادركه . يريد بالظلام العالم المملوا من الظلال[2] الدى جا لخلاصه .

24 وقوله ما ادركه . اى لم يقهره العالم والموت والخطيه . وهدا الكلام [82r] فى الحقيقه يجرى مجرى النبوه .

25 وقوله ما ادركه يقتضى ان يكون لا يدركه . فان الزمان يستعمل للماضى[3] منه بدل المستانف فى الكتب .

26 ومار يوانيس يقول ان فاده[4] زيادته فى قوله من دونه لم يوجد شى واحد مما وجد

27 لفظه مما وجد ليلا يقدر انه هو سبب وجود ما سواه . فيكون سبب وجود روح القدس . فاستثنى وقال مما وجد . وهو الدى وصفه موسى فى اول التوراه .

28 وقوله والحياه هى نور الناس يريد والحياه التى افادها والنعمه التى افاضها بخلقه العالم وحسن عنايته به من بعد . بها يستنير الجنس البشرى[5] . لا استناره جسمانيه لكن عقليه وروحانيه . ولم يضف الى الجنس البشرى الملايكه وغيرهم . لان العنايه صرفت فى ذلك الوقت الى الجنس البشرى وتقويمه *

29 ومار افريم يقول لما تكلم فى ازليه الابن الازلى وولادته[6] من الاب اخد ان يتكلم فى خلقة ما خلق قال كل بيده كان .

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[1] الظلام والظلام] الظلمه و الظلمه C.

[2] الظلال] الضلال B C (read with B C).

[3] للماضى] الماضى for sense. *al-zamān* is *casus pendens* with *al-māḍī* as the subject.

[4] فاده] فايده B C.

[5] البشرى] om B.

[6] وولادته] وولوده C.

30 وايشعداد يقول . ان النور اشاره الى المسيح والظلام شعب اسرايل .

31 وقوم قالوا ان الظلام اشاره الى الجسم الدى سكن فيه[1] *

1:6-8 قال يوحنا الرسول < كان انسان ارسل من الله اسمه يوحنا هدا اتى للشهاده ليشهد على النور فيومن كل انسان على يده ليس هو النور لكن ليشهد على النور >

32 قال المفسر لما فرغ من ا لكلام فى القنوم الالهى[2] انتقل الى الكلام فى العماد لانه ابتدا السنه الجديده واول ما وجب ان يذكره من ذلك هو يوحنا لانه [82v] هو الصوت المنادى[3] قدام الكلمه .

33 ومار يوانيس يقول قوله[4] ارسل يريد ان الله ارسله لينادى بالمسيح و يشعر الناس بوروده ويهيى الناس له

34 وقوله هدا[5] . كان انسان ارسل من الله[6] . ليس يريد به كونه ومولده لكن ارساله.

35 وقوله هدا اتى ليشهد على النور . يريد على المسيح ليس لانه مفتقر[7] الى شهادته . فانه قال انا ليس[8] من الناس[9] التمس شهاده[10] وانما شهد عليه ليقود الناس

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[1] وقوم ... فيه] om B C.

[2] القنوم الالهى] ازليه الابن B C.

[3] المنادى] + به C.

[4] قوله] قول C.

[5] هدا] om B C.

[6] الله] + اسمه يوحنى C.

[7] مفتقر] مفتقرا C.

[8] ليس] لست for.

[9] ليسا من الناس] من الناس ليس B.

[10] شهاده] شهادته C.

الى الايمان به . وحتى لا يرى كانه ضده . وليوبخ اليهود الدى[1] لم يومنوا مع ادعانهم[2] ليوحنا . فانه ان كان صادقا عندهم فلا ينبغى ان يصدق هو ويقبل[3] من شهد عليه بانه اجل منه . ولهدا قال حتى كل انسان يومن به . ولان عاده الشاهد على الاكثر جرت ان يكون اجل من المشهود عليه ما[3] فرق بينهما . فقال ليس يوحنا هو النور . لكن اتى ليشهد على النور *

1:9-10 قال يوحنا الرسول ‹ هو نور الحق الدى ورد[4] الى العالم لينير كل انسان فى العالم كان والعالم بيده كان والعالم لم يعرفه ›

36 قال المفسر قوله هو النور الدى ينير لجميع من امن به .

37 ومعنى قوله انه اتى الى العالم لينير كل انسان . اى لكل من يومن به ويعود اليه بان يفيده الحق فان الفضيله انما تكتسب بالاراده لا[5] بالاضطرار ولم تمنع نفسها من يحبها .

38 ومعنى قوله اتى الى العالم اى ظهر فى العالم . وليس يلزم ان يقهر الناس على الايمان به . اد كانت الفضيله لا تتم بالقهر .

39 وقوله فى العالم كان يريد بجوهره وقنومه . لا على انه فى مكان . لكن بمعنى انه [83r] كان موجودا . ولم يحدث جوهره وقنومه بعد ان لم يكن .

40 وقوله والعالم فى يده كان يريد تحت تدبيره وهو خلقه

---

[1] الدى] الدين B C.

[2] ادعاناهم] اذعاناهم read.

[3] ما] om B.

[4] ورد] اتى B C.

[5] لا] om C.

41 ولم يعرفه لخفا داته واستنارتها ومباياناتها[1] لما فى العالم .

42 ومار يوانيس يقول . قوله والعالم لم يعرفه يريد ان الجهال الدين تشبثهم بالارضيات لم يعرفوه . فاما اهل الفضل فعرفوه عند مجيه . وقبل مجيه باشعارهم بوروده كقوله . ان ابرهيم ابوكم . اشتاق ان يبصر يومى فابصر[2] وسر . وكقول داوود[3] قال الرب لربى اجلس عن يمينى . وكقوله ان كتيرين من الانبيا والابرار اشتاقوا ان يبصروا ما تبصرونه ولم يبصروا

1:11-13 قال يوحنا الرسول ‹ اتى الى ماله وماله[4] لم يقبله[5] فاما الدين قبلوه فاعطاهم سلطانا ليصيروا لله ابنا الدين يومنون باسمه الدين ليسوا من دم ولا من مراد اللحم[6] ولا من مشيه رجل بل من الله ولدوا * ›

43 قال المفسر ان[7] هدا القول يتضمن لوم الدين لم يقبلوه ولم يومنوه به . والنعمه التى افاضها على الدين قبلوه عبيدا كانوا[8] او احرارا . اعاجما ويونانيين[9] وهى موهبه البنوه . واختصاصهم بها لا البنوه الطبيعيه . لكن الابد الالهى والاتصال به

44 ومار يوانيس يقول . قوله جا[10] الى ماله[11] يدل به على انه ليس ضروره دعته

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[1] ومباينتها [ومباياناتها B C.

[2] وابصر [فابصر C.

[3] داود [داوود B.

[4] خاصته وخاصته [ماله وماله C.

[5] تقبله [يقبله C.

[6] هوى لحم [مراد اللحم C.

[7] ان] om B C.

[8] كان [كانوا C.

[9] اعاجم او يونانيين [اعاجما ويونانيين B C (read with B C).

[10] وجا [جا C.

[11] خاصته [ماله C.

من طريق القهر الى المجى لكن تفضله حته[1]

45 وماله[2] يشير به الى اليهود لاختصاصهم . ويجوز ان يشير به الى جميع الناس لانهم[3] خلقهم باسرهم.

46 وقوله جا اليهم بمعنى ظهر بالاتحاد وبلبسه الجسم[4] اد كان فى جميع الموجودات بمعنى عام لها . [83v] لا على انه فيهما[5] فى مكان . وانظر الى التلميد لرحمته لما[6] قال جا الى ماله[7] ولم يقبله . لم يقل[8] ما الدى يجب عليهم من العقاب لكن امسك .

47 وقوله لا من الدم ولا من اراده اللحم ولا من اراده[9] الرجل . يريد ان البنوه التى[10] اختصهم بها ليست بنوه طبيعيه لكن الهيه واراد به بان منحهم موهبه الاختصاص بالعماد والتصرف فى الحق بحسب[11] نياتهم وانصبابهم اليه . فان مواهب الحق لا تمنح[12] بالقهر للانسان لكن بارادته وادا تقدم وطى نفسه بالاعمال الصالحه .

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[1] حته] حثه read.

[2] وماله] وخاصته C.

[3] لانهم] لانه B C (read with B C).

[4] وبلبسه الجسم] وباخده الجسد B; وباخده بالجسد C.

[5] فيهما] فيهم C.

[6] لما] om B.

[7] ماله] خاصته C.

[8] يقل] om C.

[9] اراده] مشيه B.

[10] التى] الدى C.

[11] بحسب] بحسنه B C (read with B C).

[12] تمنح] تمنع C.

48 وايشعداد يقول ان الانسان يولد من الله على ثلثه اضرب . يريد انه[1] يتحصل له الاختصاص على ثلثه اضرب . بالعماد ولاطلاعه اياه على المستورات ومن القيامه ومن التعاليق

49 قوله للدين يومنون باسمه . فايده[2] اشعارنا بانه لا يصل احد الى البنوه والاختصاص بالله الا بعد الايمان به *

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[1] انه] ان C.

[2] فايده] فايدته C (read with C).

1:14a قال يوحنا الرسول › والكلمه صار لحما وحل فينا ‹

50 قال المفسر الكلمه يريد بها[1] ابن الله .

51 وقوله صار بمعنى اتخد لحما

52 واللحم يريد به شخص انسان . لان العاده جرت بان يسمى الكل باسم جزه[2]

53 وبقوله حل فينا ابطل ان يكون دات الكلمه انقلبت فصارت[3] لحما . لان الحلول فى شى[4] لا يكون لما ينقلب داته فيصير الكلام[5] . وابن الله الازلى صار انسانا[6] وظهر للخليقه لتخليصها من الخطيه .

54 ومار تاودروس يقول[7] انه قال دلك ليحقق الناسوت . وحتى **[84r]** لا يظن قوم بها انها خيال . لان الكلمه الازليه[8] لا ترى و حتى لا يقدر فيه انه انسان حسب لا الهه[9] له وليدل على تفضله[10] .

55 ولفظه صار تقال على ضربين . على الشى الدى ينقلب داته كقولنا ان الما صار

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[1] بها] به C.

[2] جزْءه] جز for.

[3] فصارت] فصار B C.

[4] شى] الشى C.

[5] الكلا] الكلمه for.

[6] صار انسانا] اعد شخص انسان واتحد به مند ابتدا كونه B;
اعد شخص انسان واتحد به من مند ابتدا كونه.C

[7] ومار تاودروس يقول] وقال مفسر اخر B C.

[8] الازليه] om B C.

[9] الهة] الهيه C.

[10] تفضله] تفضيله C.

هوى بمعنى ان طبيعته انقلبت فصارت هوا . وبمعنى اتخد كما يقول[1] . ان زيد صار نحويا . بمعنى انه اقتنا صناعه النحو وداته باقيه .

56 واستعماله اللحم بدل[2] الانسان كما جرت العاده ان يسما الكل من الجز[3] . كقول داوود[4] اليك ياتى كل لحم اى كل انسان .

57 ومار يوانيس يقول لما قال ان الدى[5] قبلوه ولدوا من الله وصاروا ابنا لله افاد سبب دلك وقال لان الكلمه اتحد بنا لخلاصنا وللرفع منا وانحطاطه لم تخرج طبيعته عن حالها . فانها باقيه بعد الاتحاد كما كانت قبل الاتحاد . كالملك الدى يدنوا[6] لخطاب المساكين فان ذلك لا يضع منه .

58 ويقول ايضا ان معنى قول الانجيل ان الكلمه صار لحما . هو انه اتخد لحما حل فيه[7]

59 ومعنى حل فينا هو انه سكن فينا كاخر فى اخر . وهده[8] بمنزله قول السليح . ان المسيح ابتاعنا من لعنه الناموس . وصار عوضنا لعنه . لا لانه داته انقلبت فصارت لعنه . لكنه تحمل لعناتنا . بان نهج لنا طريقا للتخلص منها.

60 واحوب[9] يقول . قوله[10] ان الكلمه صار لحما قاله على ما ظنه قوم . وداك انه لما

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[1] يقول] نقول B.

[2] بدل] يدل C.

[3] الجز] الجزء for.

[4] داوود] داود B.

[5] الدى] الدين B C.

[6] يدنوا] يدنو for.

[7] حل فيه] تجسد به B C.

[8] وهده] وهدا B C.

[9] واحوب] واوجب C.

[10] قوله] بقوله C.

اتحد بنا ظن به انه صار انسانا . و عاده الكتاب جرت انه يدكر الامور بحسب ظن الناس فيها . كالقول بان هيرودس اغتم وباقى الفصل . وان الاسما [84v] تدرج كالمدرجه .

61 ونقول[1] ان الكلمه وصف بالكون لاجل مقارنته الجسم الكاين[2] فوصف بصفته

62 وايشعداد يقول انه قال ان الكلمه صار لحما . بمعنى[3] اتخد لحما ولم يقل اتخد انسانا . لان النفس تكون بعد اربعين يوما فى الدكر فقال انه اتخد لحما ليلا يقال . فالانسان لم يكن تاما الا بعد اربعين يوما فالاتحاد كان بعد اربعين يوما ويستشهد . بقول اتناسيوس مع اخد[4] اللحم كان متحدا بالله ومع اخد النفس كانت متحده بالله .

63 وايضا فدكر الاتحاد من الجز[5] . الاحسن[6] من الانسان ليدل على انحطاط ابن الله برحمته واتحاده بنا .

64 وبعض القديسين سال الله ان يكشف له عن تفسير[7] هده اللفظه فقيل له اعط الكلمه الحلول واللحم الكون

65 واخر سال ان يفهمها فقيل له اقطع فى القراه الكلمه وقل بعد دلك ان لحما تكون[8] وحل فينا يريد الكلمه حل فى اللحم المتكون

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[1] ويقول [ونقول B.

[2] اتحاده بالجسم [مقارنته الجسم الكاين B C.

[3] انه add C. [بمعنى

[4] باخد [مع اخد C.

[5] الجزء [الجز for.

[6] الاخسّ [الاحسن B C (read with B C).

[7] om C. [تفسير

[8] يكون [تكون C.

66 وتاولوغوس[1] يقول ان الكلمه اتحد بجمله الانسان بتوسط العقل *

1:14b قال يوحنا الرسول < ورأينا مجده كمجد الوحيد من الاب المملو نعمه وحقا[2] >

67 قال المفسر لما قال ان الكلمه حل فينا اراد ان ينبى[3] ان داك لم يغيره عن حاله

68 والاشيا البسيطه تدل[4] عليها من افعالها لان دواتها لا تشاهد . فقال الدليل على دلك انا شاهدنا مجده يريد افعاله وأياته فى الولاده والعماد والقيامه وعدله وخرقه العادات فتحققنا انه الوحيد المولود من الاب قبل[5] الدهور

69 وقوله المملو من النعمه والقسط اى الفايض بالنعمه والقسط والموصوف بهما لاجل غفرانه الخطايا وهدره[6] اللعنه السالفه

70 ولا يضلل قوله كالوحيد الدى من الاب فتظن [85r] انه غيره . فان هدا الظن يتم فى الشيين احدهما يورد متالا على الاخر . فاما ادا كان الكلام فى شى واحد لم يعترضه شك .

71 ومار يوانيس يعترض بالشك بعينه ويقول . ادا كان مجده[7] كمجد الوحيد الدى من الاب فما[8] الفرق بينه وبين موسى والانبيا الدين كان مجدهم والنعمه الفايضه عليهم مثل دلك ويجيب بالجواب بعينه ويقول . ان قوله راينا مجده كمجد الوحيد الدى

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[1] وتاولوغوس [وتاولوغس B; وتاولوغتس C.

[2] وحقا [وقسطا B C.

[3] ينبى [ينبئ for.

[4] تدل [يدل B C.

[5] قبل [كل + C.

[6] وهدره [وإهداره for.

[7] مجده [مجد C.

[8] فما [فاما C.

من الاب . وهدا كقول الانسان فى الرجل الجيد القتال[1] كانه[2] كالشجاع البطل . ومعنى هذا انه بالحقيقه شجاع لا تمتيلا[3] له بشى *

72 ونقول[4] ايضا ان قوله راينا مجده ولم يقل راياه . لاجل ان داته لا تشاهد وانما يشاهد[5] افعاله . فان وجه موسى وهو شخص انسان ادا كان لما استنار لم يستطيع احد النظر اليه الا من ورا حجاب . فكم اولى بالابن الوحيد . فلهدا اتحد شخص انسان وظهر منه لندنوه[6] منه فيخاطبنا .

73 وايشعداد يقول . وزيادته على قوله وراينا مجده مجدا كمجد الوحيد من الاب ليدل ان المشاهده كانت للافعال لا للدات[7] *

1:15 قال[8] الرسول < يوحنا شهد عليه وهتف قايلا هدا الدى قلت انه سياتى بعدى وهو كان قبلى من اجل انه اقدم منى >

74 قال المفسر[9] لا يفسر هدا الكلام[10] على التقدم فى الوجود . لكن على التقدم فى الشرف والجلاله حتى يكون تقدير الكلام هكدى . هدا الدى قلت انه ياتى بعدى ويظن به الناس انه دونى لاعتماده[11] منى وشهادتى عليه بعد قليل تظهر انه اشرف منى ومتقدم على وانا كالخادم له . وبالحق يتقدم على . لانه [85v] متحد بالله تعالى ومظهر

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[1] القتيل for. القتال]

[2] كان الشجاع C. كانه كالشجاع]

[3] تمثيل B (read with B). تمتيلا]

[4] ويقول B C. ونقول]

[5] تشاهد B C (read with B C). يشاهس]

[6] ليدنو C. لندنوه]

[7] وان الاتحاد بالقنوم والجوهر + B C. للدات]

[8] يوحنا + B C. قال]

[9] المفسر يقول + A (in a later hand). المفس]

[10] ان هدا الكلام لا يفسر B C. المفسر يقول لا يفسر هدا الكلام]

[11] لاجل اعتماده B C. لاعتماده]

الحق فى العالم .

75 وقوله وكان اقدم منى هو مقام قوله ويكون . والعاده جرت فى الكتاب باستعمال مثل دلك كما قال اشعيا كالحمل للدبح[1] اخد . وكما قال داوود اقترعوا تيابى بينهم *

76 ومار يوانيس يقول ان يوحنا الانجيلى كرر شهادات المعمد دفعات كتيره ليخجل اليهود بمخالفتهم اياه مع شهاده يوحنا عليه وكونه فى نفوسهم جليلا عظيما

77 فاما باقى التلاميد فانهم اوردوا شهادات الانبيا فى امره . بمنزله شهاده اشعيا فى مولده وغيرها . لان اكثر كلامهم كان فى الناسوت[2] .

78 والشهاده القريبه اشرف من الشهاده البعيده وكما ان بشارته اشرف من بشاره الباقيين . كذلك ايضا الشهاده التى استعملها اشرف من شهاده الباقيين . والشهادة المورده ليست لتحقيق امر المخلّص فى نفسه . اد كان الاشرف لا يحتاج الى الادون لكن لمداواه اليهود وتانيسهم . ولهده العله ايضا اتحد ابن الله بانسان[3] وظهر فيه[4] للناس

79 واحتيج الى شهادة يوحنا حتى لا يشهد هو ايضا على نفسه . ولان العاده جرت بان ينطاع الانسان ويصغى[5] الى المناسب والموافق فى لغته واليهود لانصبابهم فى الارضيات كان فعلهم ارضيا ويوحنا لتالهه كان تعليمه سماييا . دليل ذلك قوله الدى ارسلنى هو قال لى[6] الدى ترى الروح يحل عليه فهو المنتظر .

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[1] للدبح [للذبح for.

[2] الناسوت [التجسد B C.

[3] اتحد ابن الله بانسان [اتخد ابن الله شخص انسان B C.

[4] فيه [من B C.

[5] ويصغى [om B C.

[6] الى [ان + C.

80 ويقال فلم لم يقل يوحنا ان[1] الدى ياتى بعدى هو ابن الله وقال انه اشرف منى . والجواب ان الطبيب الحادق[2] ينبغى ان يدرج المريض اولا [86r] اولا ولا يفجاه بالادويه الصعبه . واليهود لما كانوا مايلين مع الارضيات ونفوسهم لم تشعر بالسمايات[3] لم يجز ان يفجاهم بغايه الاعتقاد فى مخلص الكل . فنهايه الامر انه قاسه الى نفسه وهو اجل الناس عندهم ففضله عليها .

81 وبقوله داك الدى قلت انه[4] ياتى بعدى دل على معرفته اياه كانت قديمه بالرمز الالهى لا بالمشاهده حسب .

82 ويقول قايل الا قال يوحنا هدا القول قبل حضور مخلص الكل . فنقول انه لو قال قبل حضوره حتى يحضر ويرى بالحال السميه التى كان عليها لكان يزرى به ويمتهن الشهاده . فلما حضر وشاهده الناس حينيد ابرز الشهاده حتى يخرج من نفوسهم تصوره بالحال[5] الظاهره التى هو عليها .

83 ونقول ان قوله ياتى بعدى ليس معناه انه يوجد بعدى اد[6] كان قد وجد لكن معناه انه[7] يظهر للدعوه بعد دعوتى

84 وقوله لانه اقدم منى ليس[8] يريد بازليته اد كان هدا ظاهر[9] ولا فايده فى قوله . وقد قلنا ان معنى قوله اقدم منى يريد[10] انه يتقدمنى فى الشرف بناسوته[11] لا فى

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[1] ان] om B.

[2] الحاذق] الحادق for.

[3] للسمايات] بالسمايات C.

[4] انه] انت C.

[5] بصوره الحال] تصوره بالحال C.

[6] اد] ادا C.

[7] انه] ان C.

[8] ليس] om C.

[9] ظاهر] ظاهرا B (read with B).

[10] يريد] + به B C.

الوجود . والا صار الكلام لغوا لان تقديره[1] يكون هكذى . وهو اقدم منى لانه اشرف منى . والحق[2] هو ان يقال هو اقدم منى لانه اشرف منى .

85 ومار افريم يقول ان قوله انه[3] ياتى بعدى لانه اكبر منه بسته اشهر وقوله يتقدمنى بالالاهيته *

1:16-17 قال يوحنا الرسول < ومن امتلايه اخذنا كلنا نعمه بدل نعمه لان الناموس بموسى اعطى[4] والحق والنعمه[5] بيد ايشوع[6] كان * >

86 **[86v]** قال المفسر مار تاودروس يفسر هذا الفصل على هذا الوجه يقول[7] لما قال يوحنا انه اشرف منى قال ومن كماله يريد ومن كمال النعمه الموجوده بناسوته لاجل اتحادها بالالهيه[8] ومشاركتها فى البنوه بتوسط روح القدس الفايضه التى[9] لا فنا له ولا نقصان نمثار[10] نحن ونستمد ونشاركها فى البنوه ويصير لنا سهم من النعمه بعد ما كنا بعدا عنها من غير ان تنقص كالنار التى لا ينقصها الاستضاه[11] بها

87 وقوله نعمه[12] بدل نعمه معناه[13] انه اعطانا بدل نعمه الناموس العتيق النعمه

---

[11] لناسوته B C. [بناسوته

[1] كان + C. [تقديره

[2] والحال C. [والحق

[3] om C. [انه

[4] اعطى بموسى B C. [بموسى اعطى

[5] ونعمه والحق B. [والحق والنعمه

[6] المسيح + B C. [ايشوع

[7] om B C. [مار ... يقول

[8] بالاوهت B; بالاهيه C. [بالالهه

[9] الفايص الدى B C. [الفايضه التى

[10] نمتاز C. Do A and B mean نمتار ? [نمثار

[11] الاستناره C. [الاستضاه

[12] ونعمه B. [نعمه

المجدده. وهاتان وان كانتا[١] جميعا تشتركان[٢] فى الاسم فالتفاوت فى المعنى بينهما[٣] كبيرا . فان تلك كالمثال وهده تجرى[٤] مجرى الصوره الحقيقيه *

88 وقوله لان الناموس اعطى بيد موسى معناه ان الموهوب بيد[٥] موسى هو الناموس حسب المتضمن[٦] للاوامر والنواهى المعطاه على سبيل التفضل لما تجوزوا[٧] الناموس الطبيعى .

89 وقوله فاما الحق والنعمه فبيد ايسوع المسيح معناه ان موهبه البنوه والمولد الثانى والسنه الجديده والقرب من الله ورجا القيامه وغفران الخطايا وصلت الينا بتوسط ايسوع المسيح . يريد ناسوت[٨] ايسوع المسيح اد كانت موهبه البنوه والمولد الجديد يتشابهان من وجه . وداك انهما اوامر بالايمان والطاعه والدبايح[٩] والاختتان[١٠] والمعموديه . سوى ان العتيقه تجرى مجرى المثال . والجديده تجرى مجرى الصوره التامه الكامله . فان وصايا العتيقه تتعلق بالظهورات الجسمانيه. [87r] والايمان بالتوحيد حسب ودبايح الحيوانات والحديثه تتعلق بالظهورات النفسانيه والعلم بالتوحيد والتثليث معا . والدبيحه التى يتبعها غفران الخطايا . وصاحبها قرب نفسه عوضا عن الحمل الدى دبح بمصر ورشش دمه على الابواب التى تجرى[١١] مجرى المثال له .

---

[١٣] معناه] om B C.

[١] كانتا] كانا B.

[٢] تشتركان] يشتركان B C.

[٣] بينهما فى المعنى] فى المعنى بينهما B C.

[٤] وهده تجرى] وهدا يجرى C.

[٥] بيد] على يدى B C.

[٦] المتضمن] والمتضمن C.

[٧] تجوزوا] تجاوزوا C (read with C).

[٨] ناسوت] تانس B C.

[٩] والدبايح] والذبايح for.

[١٠] والاختتان] والاحتان C.

[١١] التى تجرى] الذى يجرى ‘Lamb’ should surely be the head noun, not ‘doors.’

90 ومار يوانيس يقول ما احسن ما فعل يوحنا بان لم يقايس بين شخصى موسى والمسيح لكن بين الامور التى استفيدت منهما[1] فارى ان المستفاد كان من موسى[2] اوامر حسب . ومن المخلص موهبه البنوه وغفران الخطايا . ودلك بقوله ان لابن البشر سلطان[3] فى الارض لغفران الخطايا . فان دلك يقود السامعين الى قبول ما قاله والاصغا اليه .

91 وايشعداد يقول ان بنوه المخلص كانت جوهريه حقيقيه . وبنوتنا نحن بالتفضل وانت فقس بين النعمه الماضيه والمستانفه وانظر الفرق بينهما . بدل موسى اعتضنا المسيح سيد الكل . وبدل الناموس العتيق . النعمى بالقيامه وموهبه البنوه . وبالخلود فى النعيم والسنه الجديده .

1:18 قال يوحنا الرسول ما راى الله احد من الاول الوحيد الله فى حصن[4] ابيه خبر

92 قال مار تاودروس يقول[5] ان هاتين اللفظتين قالهما الانجيلى اعاده[6] عن يوحنا المعمد . وداك انه لما ظن ما تقدم له من القول من الاطناب فى امر المخلص ان الله ظهر بنفسه لمصلحه الناس ونفعهم [87v] وكان ظهور الله غير ممكن . لانه ليس جسم[7] ولا مدرك[8] ولا محسوس[9] افصح عن الدى ظهر لنا فقال . الوحيد الله الدى هو فى ضمن ابيه هو خبر ومعنى ذلك ان ابن الله الازلى . هو الدى ظهر لنا بان لبس[10]

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[1] منها [منهما C.

[2] من موسى كان [كان من موسى for sense.

[3] سلطانا [سلطان B C (read with B C).

[4] حضن [حصن B C (read with B C).

[5] المفسر [مار ... يقول B C.

[6] اعاده] om C.

[7] جسما [جسم B C (read with B C).

[8] مدروكا [مدرك B; مدركا C (read with B or C).

[9] محسوسا [محسوس B C (read with B C).

[10] اخد [لبس B C.

جسدا منا وخاطبنا منه[1] وعلمنا الحق .

93 وقوله وحيد لانه كدلك .

94 وقوله فى ضمن ابيه يريد اى المساوى لابيه فى الجوهر والسلطان والقدره الدى هو غير مفارق له .

95 ومار يوانيس يقول . ولمتشكك ان[2] تتشكك ويقول كيف يقال لا يرى . واشعيا يقول انى رايت الله جالسا على كرسى عظيم . وحزقيال يقول انى رايته جالسا على الكروبين[3] . وحل الشك ان الله ليس بجسم ولا يظهر للحواس ولا يجلس . وانما هو لفضل العنايه. ادا رام الظهور يظهر للناس . بان ياخد ماده من الهوى فيظهر منها كما يشا وكدلك الملايكه . ولا يظهر بنفس جوهره اد كان غير محسوس.[4]

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[1] منه] به B C.

[2] ان] الذي read for sense.

[3] الكروبين] + ودانيال وغيره قد نظروه والانجيل يقول ان ملايكتهم ينظرون وجه ابى الدى فى السموات . وايضا يقول طوبى للنقيه قلوبهم فانهم يعاينون الله . B C.

[4] محسوس] + والاتقيا بقلوبهم ينظرونه من نظر اعماله العاليه . وهذا هو الدى تنظره الملايكه والانبيا والصديقون . B C.

Chapter 3.

Translation of the Prologue to John in Ibn al-Ṭayyib's *Commentary.*

Introduction.

The translation is primarily intended to be read alongside the Arabic, hence its slight tendency towards literalism rather than entirely idiomatic English. Footnotes translating variant readings from the edition are only included when the variant is felt to be substantial. Readings from footnotes in the edition including the phrase 'read with' are followed in the translation.

Rather than employ redundant synonyms, hendiadys in the Arabic is indicated by '[x 2]'.

The translation.

1. [**Paris ar. 86, f. 168v**] In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful, [from whom] we seek succour.[1]

The Gospel of John, son of Zebedee.

The consummation of the Gospels.[2]

Jn 1:1a. <In the beginning the Word was existent.[3]>

2. The exegete says the commentators on this chapter look into a number of questions.

3. The first of them is the reason why John didn't follow the example of Matthew and Luke with regard to reporting the birth of the Saviour of all and his human conduct. They say it is so that [men's] minds are not drawn by their [i.e. the Evangelists] unanimity in that into neglecting belief in his divinity and supposing concerning Him that He is a

[1] God ... succour [*seems to be in a different hand*]] the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the one God. C f. 298r.

[2] The Gospel ... Gospels] The Gospel of the Apostle John, the consummation of the accepted and pure Gospels.

May our lord Jesus Christ respond to his prayer. Let Him be with us for ever. Amen.

The first chapter, (in) Syriac. C f. 298r.

[3] The Arabic reflects the Peshitta.

mere human. He [i.e. John] is alone in discussing the Divinity and in reporting its condition, even if that exceeds human ability, so that he does not mix beliefs about Him with error [x2] and so one is not drawn into [thinking] that the Saviour of all is a mere human or a divinity who was not incarnate.

4. The second [of them] is - did John reveal what he revealed concerning the Divinity on the basis of knowledge which he previously ascertained, or did the divine power instruct him so that he revealed what he revealed? And they say that at the time he uttered what he uttered he did not comprehend its truth but after looking into it and examining it he grasped it and knew that what he said exceeded human ability.

5. The third [of them] is about the distinction between what precedes and what follows, and the origin and what is from the origin. They say that what precedes and what follows are relative [**Paris ar. 86, f. 169r**] and when that which precedes exists, what follows exists, and what precedes cannot be understood without understanding what follows. But the origin, even if it is the origin [**Paris ar. 85 begins, f. 80r**] of things that come from it, exists before their existence and their existence does not necessarily [happen] with its existence. An understanding of it is not connected with an understanding of them. Every origin precedes, but not everything which precedes is an origin. Thus the first stone in the wall is the one that precedes but it is not an origin of the wall. So the *qunūm* of the eternal Son, even if it was a cause and origin of what exists, it is not necessary that their existence [happen] with its existence. Therefore John says <In the beginning the Word was existent> and he did not say 'in what preceded'.

6. The fourth [of them] is to give the reason why he said <In the beginning the Word was existent>, and he did not say 'the Son was existent'. They say that this is so that suppositions will not be drawn that His being was created or made as usually happens in a human birth. Put in another way, [it was said] so that this doubt would not deceive [us], that it might be thought that the Son was not equal to the Father in existence even if He was caused by Him.

7. The fifth [of them] is to give the reason why the *qunūm* of the Son was called 'Word'. They say that the custom concerning divine matters is that they are called by names agreed upon and some names of existing things are borrowed for them. Strange names are not devised so that it is not difficult to understand them [as would be the case] if they were all strange with regard to both meaning and enunciation. As was said in the

[writings] of the Apostle 'The Lord, our God, is a consuming fire'[1]. The Lord was called by the name fire to indicate the greatness of His vengeance. 'The Word' is a name which indicates the *qunūm* of the eternal Son, which is the pre-existent substance in respect of its property, that He was born from the Father before all epochs.

8. Some say, but what they say is not true, He was called 'the Word' because He indicates the will of the Father, just as the word [normally] indicates the will of the Spirit, [**f. 80v**] The Angels indicated that. They had to use this name.

9. The exegete says[2] that 'the Word' is said in many different ways - of the expression uttered by the mouth, and of the faculty existing in the soul by way of the conception of ideas fixed in nature[3] existing through the existence of the soul which is not separate from them.

10. And he [John] called Him 'Word' to indicate that His existence is equal to the existence of the Father and His eternity equal to His eternity. There is no difference between them either in substance or existence but only in their properties. So the property of the Father is that He is the cause and the begetter. The property of the Son is that He is the effect and the begotten.

11. The exegete says[4] that he says <in the beginning the Word was existent> and he does not say 'the Word of God' because the Word of God is His commandments [x2], not the eternal Son.

12. Mār Yuwānīs says that what he said was <in the beginning the Word was existent> and he did not say '... the Word' and stop there in order to show its eternity and equality with the Father in substance and existence, and to differentiate between It [the Word] and creation. Just as was said 'In the beginning God created the essence[5] of the heavens and the earth' and it did not say 'In the beginning the essence of the heavens and the essence of the earth was existent'.

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[1] Heb 12:29 (= Dt 4:24).

[2] And the exegete says] And another said. B C Eth.

B f. 169v, l. 6; Eth. f. 288v.2.12.

[3] A different but related word is used from that referring to the nature of a human being or God.

[4] And the exegete says] And another said. B C Eth.

B f. 169v, l. 12; Eth. f. 288v.3.2-3.

[5] essence] om Eth. f. 288v.3.17, which reading is preferable to the Arabic.

13. So reader, do not tremble at the name of the Father, the Son, the Cause and Effect. For, by my life, it must be that one of them has precedence over the other, but not in time. So the Cause has precedence over the Effect in as much as it is a cause neither in existence nor in time. Likewise, the Father has precedence over the Son in as much as He is a cause[1] neither in time nor existence.

14. Consider how beautiful is the perfection of John of the book of the Gospel and [how beautiful is] the teaching concerning the nature of the Lord of all. For Matthew says that the Holy Spirit prepared a human to unite with[2] the eternal Son of God.[3] So he teaches us about His human *qunūm*.[4] And he declares that He is created and made and has a temporal beginning. [**f. 81r**] And John says <in the beginning the Word was existent.> So he teaches us about His divine *qunūm*.[5] It is eternal [x2], neither made nor brought into being.

Jn 1:1b. The Apostle John said <and the Word was existent with God.>

15. The exegete says that when he says <in the beginning the Word was existent> so that it is not thought that He is the cause and origin and not an effect,[6] he informs us of how His state is with God. So he says He <was with God>. It means He is an effect and a son of His father and born from Him before absolutely all epochs. Reader, do not imagine that the birth was temporal and needed bodily agitations and pains. It was, rather, a divine birth beyond time and so the begetter had no precedence over the begotten in time. He is too lofty to be conceived of by means of fancies and opinions. In the first phrase the *qunūm* of the Son necessarily possesses eternality, and in the second He is an effect and not a cause. As for the Word, we have said that it is an utterance indicating the eternal Son, not an utterance emerging by means of the voice and therefore He caused it to emerge in the masculine gender.

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[1] A different word for cause is used from the previous one in this section, perhaps to stress the differentiation between the defined and undefined.

[2] a human to unite with] the body in which was united. B C Eth.
B f. 170r, l. 8; C f. 299r, l. 6; Eth. f. 289r.1.6-7.

[3] Mt 1:18, 20.

[4] His human *qunūm*] the bodily birth. B C Eth.
B f. 170r, l. 9; C f. 299r, l. 6; Eth. f. 289r.1.8-9.

[5] His divine *qunūm*] the divine birth. B C Eth.
B f. 170r, l. 11; C f. 299r, l. 8; Eth. f. 289r.1.13.

[6] See 13 n 4.

Jn 1:1c - 5. The Apostle John said <and God is the Word. [2] This was existent with God in the beginning, [3] everything was through His hand and without Him nothing's being occurred. [4] Through Him was the life and the life is the light of people. [5] And the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome Him.>

16. The exegete says firstly, the Word necessarily has eternity and timelessness. Secondly, [he says] that He is an effect and not a cause. So that it is not supposed of Him that He is not God because He is an effect he says concerning Him that He is God, exalted be His name, [**f. 81v**] since the *qunūm* of the Father, the *qunūm* of the Son and the *qunūm* of the Spirit are one in the Substance and the difference between them is in properties. So the Father is the Substance with regard to the property that He begat. The Son is the Substance with regard to the property that He was begotten from the Father before [all] epochs. The Spirit is the Substance with regard to the property that He proceeded from the Father.

17. When he says <This is existent in the beginning with God>, it means He is equal to Him in the Substance and in power. That is supported by the fact that he said <everything was through His hand> that is [to say], by Him was accomplished the creation of the World and all existing things. He said this to indicate that He is not separate from the Father and He is equal in substance.

18. When he says <all was through His hand> it is not because He operates in it [all] in the manner of an instrument or something used but He is the maker of all existing things.

19. When he says <without Him nothing existed which existed>, that is to say, the Father was not alone in doing anything without Him since their Substance is one and their action is one.

20. When he says <and through Him was Life> he means that He should not be described as being alive in Himself alone but He gives the benefit of life to the created beings which have life.

21. And some read this phrase and what precedes it in this way:- <and without Him nothing existed> and what is read after it is 'that which existed through Him was life'. This is incorrect because not everything which He created is life, such as the earth and the mountains.

22. And when he says <and the life is the light of people> it is because He imparts to people knowledge and true ideas. So it is as if he were to say that it was not enough for Him to give them the benefit of life without[1] giving them the benefit learning and knowledge.

23. And when he says <He was the light shining in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome Him>, the darkness means the world full of error which He came to rid it of.

24. He says <it did not overcome Him>, that is to say, neither the world, nor death, nor sin conquered Him. This statement **[f. 82r]** is truly in the manner of a prophecy.

25. When he says <it did not overcome Him> it is necessarily the case that it <u>will</u> not overcome Him for the past tense is used[2] instead of the future in Scripture.

26. And Mār Yuwānīs says that the benefit of His superabundance is in the phrase <without Him nothing existed which existed>.

27. The phrase <which existed> is so that it is not assumed that He is the cause of the existence of that which is other than Him and so he would be the cause of the existence of the Holy Spirit. So he excluded [the Holy Spirit] and said <which existed> which is what Moses described at the beginning of the Torah.

28. When he says <and the life is the light of people> it means the life which He gives the benefit of, the grace which He caused to flow by creating the world and the beauty of His concern for it afterwards. By it, human kind is illuminated, not a physical illumination but intellectual and spiritual. He did not mention in addition to human kind, angels or other beings because [His] concern was directed at that time to human kind and its formation.

29. And Mār Ephrem says when he speaks concerning the eternity of the eternal Son and His birth from the Father he begins by speaking about the creation of what was created [and] said <all was through His hand>.

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[1] The context seems to demand this rendering of *ḥattā.*

[2] Lit. 'The past from time is used.'

Cf. Ge'ez:

for [this] tense is not used for that which has passed in Scripture but explains what will come. Eth. f. 289v.2.23-26.

30. And Isho'dad says that the light is a reference to Christ, and the darkness is the people of Israel.

31. And some say that the darkness is a reference to the body in which He lived.[1]

Jn 1:6-8. The Apostle John said <There was a human who was sent from God whose name was Yūḥannā. [7] This one came for witnessing,[2] to bear witness to the light, so all people might believe through him. [8] He is not the light but to bear witness[3] to the light.>

32. The exegete says, when he [i.e. the Evangelist] has finished the discussion about the divine *qunūm*[4] he moves on to a discussion about the baptism because it is the start of the new law. The first who must be mentioned in this regard is John [the Baptist] because [**f. 82v**] he is the voice announcing ahead of the Word.

33. And Mār Yuwānīs says, when he says <was sent> it means God sent him to announce the Messiah, to inform people of His arrival and to prepare people for Him.

34. And when he says this - <there was a human sent from God,> it does not mean his being or birth but his being sent.

35. And when he says <This one came to bear witness to the light> it means Christ, not because He is in want of witness. So he said <I do not seek witness from people,>[5] He only bore witness to Him so that he might lead people to faith in Him and so that it would not appear as if he were against Him, and in order to rebuke the Jews who did not believe despite submitting to John. So if He had been truthful in their opinion, he [John] would not have had to say he was truthful, or He receive him who bore witness that He was greater than he. For this reason he said <so that everybody might believe in Him>. Because the custom with a witness is usually that he is greater than the one witnessed whenever there is a difference between them, he said, John <is not the light but came to

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[1] And some ... lived] om B C Eth.

B f. 171v, l. 13; C f. 300r, l. 2; Eth. f. 290r.1.9.

[2] The awkward syntax here mirrors the Peshitta (which is not awkward).

[3] The apparent ellipsis of the Arabic reflects the Peshitta.

[4] divine *qunūm*] eternity of the Son. B C Eth.

B f. 171v, l. 17; C f. 300r, l. 5; Eth. f. 290r.1.19-20.

[5] Jn 5:34. Once again, the awkward syntax mirrors the Peshitta.

bear witness to the light>.

Jn 1:9 - 10. The Apostle John said <He is the light of truth who came down to the world to illumine every human. [10] He was in the world and the world was through His hand and the world did not know Him.>

36. The exegete said, when he says <He is the light,> [it means] the one who illumines all who believe in Him.

37. And it means when he says <He came into the world to illumine all people>, (that is,) all who believe in Him and yield to Him that He grants them the truth. For grace is only acquired through will and not coercion and does not withhold itself from him who loves it.

38. And it means, when he says <He came into the world,> He appeared in the world. He did not have to compel people to believe in Him since virtue does not come about through compulsion.

39. And when he says <He was in the world> it means in His substance and *qunūm*, not however that He was in a place, but in the sense that **[f. 83r]** He was existent. His substance and *qunūm* did not come into being after they had not been.

40. And when he says <the world was in[1] His hand> it means under His direction and that He created it.

41. And it did not know Him because His essence was concealed and its illumination and ways in which it differs from whatever exists in the world.

42. And Mār Yuwānīs says, when he says <and the world did not know Him> it means that the ignorant ones whose clinging is to earthly matters did not know Him. As for the people of grace, they knew Him when He came and before He came through being aware of His descent, as when He said <your Father Abraham desired to see my day, saw it and was glad>[2]. Just as David said <the Lord said to my lord, sit at my right,>[3] and as He says <Many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see but did not see>[4].

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[1] *Fī* is used here rather than *bi* as in the Biblical quotation.

[2] Jn 8:56.

[3] Ps 110:1, quoted in Mt 22:43, Mk 12:36, Lk 20:42.

[4] Mt 13:17.

Jn 1:11-13. The Apostle John said <He came to His own and His own did not receive Him. [12] As for everyone who received Him, He gave them power to become children of God,[1] those who believe in his name, [13] those who are not from blood nor from the desire of the flesh nor from the desire of a man but rather from God.>

43. The exegete said that what he says here constitutes a reproach to those who did not accept Him and did not believe in Him. The grace which He caused to flow over those who did receive Him, whether slaves or free-born, foreigners or Greeks, is the gift of filiation and their being chosen by Him - not a filiation originating in nature but the divine eternity and the connection with it.

44. Mār Yuwānīs says, when he says <He came to His own>, it indicates that it was not necessity which induced Him through coercion to come, but His grace impelled Him.

45. And <His own> refers to the Jews because they were chosen and it may refer to all people because He created them, every one.

46. And when he says <He came to them>, it is in the sense of appearing in His unity and by dressing in the body,[2] since He was in all existing things in a general sense for them, [**f. 83v**] not that He was in them in a place. So look at the disciple on account of his compassion when he said <He came to His own but they did not receive Him>. He did not speak of the punishment which they must receive, but refrained.

47. When he says <not from the blood or will of the flesh, and not from the will of the man[3]>, it means the filiation in which He chose them was not a filiation of nature but divine. He meant by it that He bestowed on them the gift of being chosen through baptism and conduct in truth in accordance with their intention, and their being devoted to Him. The gifts of truth are not granted[4] to the human by coercion but by his will. When he preceded he prepared himself through good deeds.

48. And Isho'dad says that the human is born from God in three ways. He means that he attains for himself being chosen in three ways - by baptism and knowing it through the

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[1] Once again the awkward syntax mirrors the Peshitta.

[2] dressing in the body] taking the body. B C Eth.
B f. 173r, l. 9; C f. 300v, l. 17; Eth. f. 290v.3.17.

[3] The wording is slightly different from the Biblical quotation earlier.

[4] granted] prevented. C.

mysteries, by the Resurrection and by the explanations.[1]

49. When he says <to those who believe in His name>, the point is to let us know that no one reaches filiation or being chosen by God except after reaching faith in Him.

Jn 1:14a. The Apostle John said <and the Word became flesh and dwelt with[2] us.>

50. The exegete said he means by <the Word>, the Son of God.

51. When he says <became>, it means He took on flesh.

52. Flesh means a human person[3] because it is customary for the whole to be called by the name of a part.

53. When he says <He dwelt with us> it negates [the idea] that the essence of the Word may have been changed, therefore He became flesh because 'dwelling with something' is not [used] for that whose essence changes, so the Word becomes. The eternal Son of God became a human[4] and appeared to creation to save it from sin.

54. And Mār Tāwadrūs says[5] that he said this to confirm His humanity and so that [**f. 84r**] some people would not think He was an apparition because the eternal Word is not seen,[6] or suppose that He was a mere human with no divinity, and [he said that] to show His grace.

55. His expression 'became' is used in two senses - [firstly,] of something whose essence changes, such as when we say that water became air, meaning that its nature

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[1] 'Explanations' fits rather oddly here. In the corresponding passage, Isho'dad has *gelyānē*, 'revelations,' see Isho'dad, *Commentaries*, p. 111, l. 1.

[2] The exact intended force of *fī* here is hard to judge.

[3] The translation of '*shakhṣ insān*' as 'human person' is to be preferred to 'human being' for the sake of consistency in rendering the two terms.

[4] became a human] prepared a human person and united with it from the beginning of its being. B C Eth.

B f. 173v, ll. 11-12; C f. 301r, ll. 8-9; Eth. f. 291r.2.17-19.

[5] And Mār Tāwadrūs says] And another exegete said. B C Eth.

B f. 173v, l. 13; C f. 301r, l. 9; Eth. f. 291r.2.22.

[6] Contrary to previous examples, *kalimah* is treated as grammatically feminine.

changed so it became air; [secondly,] in the sense of taking on, as when we say that Zayd[1] became a grammarian, meaning that he acquired the art of grammar while his essence remains [the same].

56. His use of 'flesh' instead of human is like the custom of the whole being called by [the name of] a part such as when David said <to You will come all flesh>[2], that is, every human.

57. Mār Yuwānīs says, when he said <those who received Him> <were born from God> and became <children of God>, he informs [us] of the reason for this. He said [it is] because the Word united with us to save us and to rise from us. His condescension did not make His nature leave its state, so it remains after it united as it was before it united - like the king who approaches to talk with the poor. But this does not detract from him.

58. He [i.e. Yuwānīs] also says that the meaning of the Gospel, when it says <the Word became flesh>, is that He took the flesh in which He dwelt.[3]

59. The meaning of <dwelt with us> is that He lived amongst us as one amongst others. This is in place of what the Apostle says that <Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law and became accursed instead of us,>[4] not because His essence changed so that He became accursed, but [because] He bore our curses in that He pursued a path for us to save us from them.

60. Ahob[5] says, he said <the Word became flesh,> against what some suppose, namely, that when He united with us, it is supposed that He became a human. It is customary in the Bible to record matters with regard to what people think about them, such as when he says <Herod was worried>[6] (and the rest of the section), and <the heavens [**f. 84v**] shall be rolled up like a scroll>.[7]

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[1] Zayd is the standard name in the Arabic grammatical tradition.

[2] Ps 65:2. Peshitta, *kull basar*.

[3] in which He dwelt] in which He became incarnate. B C Eth.
B f. 174r, l. 10; C f. 301r, l. 22; Eth. f. 291v.1.7.

[4] Gal 3:13.

[5] Ahob] C misunderstands this name, as does Eth. f. 291v.1.22.

[6] Mt 14:9.

[7] Is 34:4.

61. We say that the Word is a described as [coming into] being because it is associated[1] with the body which is [coming into] being [i.e. created in time],[2] and thus He is described by its [i.e. the body's] attribute.

62. Isho'dad says that He says <the Word became flesh> in the sense that He took flesh and it did not say 'He took a human' because the soul came into being after forty days in the account.[3] So he said <He took on flesh> so that it would not be said: 'Therefore the human was whole only after forty days, so the uniting was after forty days'. He [i.e. Isho'dad] cites as evidence what Athanasius says: 'at the taking of the flesh, it [the flesh] was uniting with God and at the taking of the soul, it [the soul] was uniting with God.'

63. Also, therefore he records the uniting of a part less significant than the human[4] to indicate the condescension of the Son of God through His mercy and His uniting with us.

64. A certain holy man asked God to reveal to him the interpretation of this phrase, so he was told: 'Accord to the Word, the dwelling, and to the flesh, the being'.

65. Another asked to understand it, so it was said to him, spend time reading the word and say after that: 'Flesh which was formed and dwelt in[5] us, means that the Word dwelt in the flesh which was formed.'

66. The Theologian says that the Word united with all of mankind by means of the Intellect.

Jn 1:14b. The Apostle John said <and we have seen His glory like the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.>

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[1] Possibly an allusion to Heb 2:14, Pesh. '*eshtawtap*', 'share, partake.' More expected as a Vorlage, theologically speaking, although not semantically so acceptable, might be Sy. *nqef* (adhere).

[2] associated with the body which exists] united with the body.

B C Eth.

'Which exists' is to be preferred to 'existing' as a translation of *kā'in*, since the implication should be that the body was not an apparition, rather than that it was pre-existent.

B f. 174v, l. 2; C f. 301v, l. 4; Eth. f. 291v.2.7-8.

[3] It is unclear what account is referred to, since there is no apparently relevant mention of forty days in the New Testament (only the Temptation and Acts 1:3).

[4] I.e. the flesh.

[5] Ar. *fi*.

67. The exegete said, when he said <The Word .... dwelt with us>, he wanted to make it known that this did not change Him from His state.

68. Plain things are indicated by their deeds because their essences are not witnessed. So he gave the indication for that - <we have seen His glory>, meaning His deeds and signs at the birth, baptism and resurrection, and His justice and His breaking of customs.[1] So we have been convinced that He is the Only-begotten, born of the Father before [all] epochs.

69. When he says <full of grace and justice>, that is to say, overflowing with grace and justice. He is attributed with these so that He may forgive sins and invalidate the former curse.

70. Let his words <like the Only-begotten who is from the Father> not mislead you so that you might suppose [**f. 85r**] He is other than He is. This supposition occurs concerning two things, one of which provides a comparison for the other whereas if what is said concerns one thing [only] it is not exposed to doubt.[2]

71. Mār Yuwānīs is exposed to the very same doubt when he says: 'If <His glory is like the glory of the Only-begotten who is from the Father> then what is the difference between Him, Moses and the prophets whose glory, and the grace flowing over them was like this?' He gives the very same answer, saying 'When he says <We saw His glory like the glory of the Only-begotten, who is from God>, this is like someone saying about an excellent fighter - "He was brave like a hero." This means that he was truly brave; it is not a comparison of him to something else.'

72. We also say that when he said <We saw His glory>, he did not say 'We saw Him' because His essence is not seen but only His deeds. Moses' face, he being a human person, if when it was shining, could not be looked upon by anyone except from behind a veil[3] - how much more so with the only-begotten Son. Therefore, He united with the

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[1] In standard Ash'ari terminology, the phrase *kharq al-'ādah* can mean miracle. God continually recreates the world, usually much as it had been, occasionally 'breaking custom' and recreating (part of) it some other way - hence, 'miracle.'

Either sense would fit here, since the Gospels often present Christ as a man overturning convention.

[2] The sense seems to be that the statement <His glory is like...> makes people doubt that He is the Only-begotten.

[3] Ex 34:30 - 35. The phrase *min warā ḥijāb*, is Quranic: 33:53 and 42:51 (cf. 38:32).

human person and appeared through him so that we might approach Him, and He address us.

73. Isho'dad says his addition to what he said - '<We saw His glory> as a glory <like that of the Only-begotten from the Father>' is in order to indicate that the seeing was of the deeds not the Essence.[1]

Jn 1:15. The Apostle[2] said <Yūhanná bore witness to Him and called out saying 'This is the One of whom I said, He will come after me who was before me [in preference] because He was before me [in time].>

74. The exegete said that what is said here should not be explained in terms of precedence in existence but the precedence in honour and glory so that the implication of what is said is thus - 'This is the one who I said would come after me. People suppose that He is inferior to me because He was baptised by me but my witness of Him, before long, will show that He is superior to me and has precedence over me and that I am like a servant to Him. Truly He has precedence over me because He is [**f. 85v**] united with God on high and reveals truth in the world.

75. When he says <He had ... precedence over me>, it is in place of saying 'He has ...'. It is the norm in the Bible to do something like this; as Isaiah said <He was taken like a lamb to the slaughter>[3] or as David said <They cast lots for my clothes.>[4]

76. Mār Yuwānīs says that John the Evangelist reiterates the witness of the Baptist many times to put the Jews to shame for their opposition to Him despite John's witness to Him and the fact that He was glorious and great amongst them.

77. As for the other disciples,[5] they produce the witness of the prophets concerning things to do with Him, such as the witness of Isaiah concerning His birth and other

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[1] Essence] + And the uniting was in the *qunūm* and the Substance. B C Eth.

B f. 175v, l. 8; C f. 302r, l. 11; Eth. f. 292r.3.3-4.

[2] The Apostle] + John. B C.

[3] Is 53:7.

[4] Ps 22:18.

[5] I.e. evangelists.

matters because most of what they say concerns His humanity.[1]

78. A close witness is greater than a distant witness and just as his Gospel is greater than the Gospels of the others, so is the witness which he made use of greater than the witness of the others. The witness produced is not to verify what the Saviour decrees concerning Himself since the greater one did not need the lesser, but he does it to cure and tame the Jews. For this reason also, the Son of God united with a human[2] and appeared in him to people.

79. John's witness was needed so that He also would not bear witness to Himself and because it normally happens that a human obeys and pays heed to what is fitting [x2] in his own language. Because the Jews were intent on worldly matters their action was worldly, but because of John's godliness, his teaching was heavenly. The indication for that is when he says <He who sent me ... told me> 'the one on whom you see the Spirit settle is the one awaited.'

80. It is said: 'Why did John not say "The one who comes after me is the Son of God" but he did say "He is greater than me"?'. The answer is that the skilful doctor must bring the patient along little [**f. 86r**] by little and not rush in with difficult treatments. When the Jews were preoccupied with worldly matters and their souls did not perceive the heavenly, it was not possible for him to rush in with the full extent of faith in the Saviour of all. The end of the matter is that he compared himself with Him, he being the most honoured human amongst them, and gave preference to Him over himself.

81. When he says <This is the one whom I said is coming after me>, it indicated that his knowledge of Him was pre-existent through the divine sign, not only through seeing.

82. Someone may say, 'Did John not say this thing before the coming of the Saviour of all?' We say that if he had spoken before His coming in order to present and reveal the heavenly state in which He existed then he would have detracted from Him and degraded his witness. So when He came and people saw Him, then he presented his witness in order to remove from their souls [their] impression of Him through the outward state in which He was.

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[1] humanity] incarnation. B C Eth.

B f. 176r, l. 9; C f. 302r, l. 25; Eth. f. 292v.1.19-20.

[2] united ... human] took a human person. B C Eth.

B f. 176r, l. 15; C f. 302v, l. 4; Eth. f. 292v.2.4-6.

83. We say that when He says <He comes after me> it does not mean He exists after me, because He had existed. Rather it means: 'He appears for the mission after my mission'.

84. When he says <because He was before me>, it does not mean through eternity, because this is obvious and there is no benefit in saying it. We have already said that when he says <He has precedence over me>, it means He has precedence over me in glory through His humanity, not in existence. Otherwise, these words would be futile because the implication [of these words] is: 'He is like that'. He has precedence over me because He is greater than me. The truth[1] is that which is said, <He has precedence over me> because He is greater than me.[2]

85. Mār Ephrem says that when he says <He comes after me>, it is because he is six months older than Him and he says <He has precedence over me> because of His divinity.

Jn1:16-17. The Apostle John said <From his fullness we all took grace for grace [17] because the law was given through Moses, whilst grace and truth were through Jesus Christ.>

86. **[f. 86v]** The exegete says, Mār Tāwadrūs interprets this section in the following manner, saying[3]: when John said 'He is more exalted than me' He said [also] <and from his perfection.> This means from the perfection of the grace existing through His humanity because of its unity with the Divinity and its sharing in the filiation through the Holy Spirit which flows, has no extinction nor diminishing. We are provided for [x 2], we partake of it [the grace] in the filiation and becomes for us a share of the grace, although we were far from it without its diminishing, like a fire, which is not diminished by giving light.

87. When he says <grace in exchange for grace>, it means that He gave us, in exchange for the grace of the old law, the renewed grace. [As for] these two, even if they both share the name [i.e. law], the difference in meaning between them is great. One is like a figurative expression, whereas the other is expressed as a true expression.

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[1] truth] situation. C.

[2] The repetition may possibly be the result of textual corruption.

[3] Mār ... saying] om B C Eth.
B f. 177r, l. 11; C f. 303r, l. 6; Eth. f. 293r.1 27.

88. When he says <Because the law was given through Moses> it means that the gift through Moses is the law only containing the commandments and prohibitions given through favour when they [the Israelites] trangressed the natural law.

89. When he says <As for truth and grace, they are through Jesus Christ>, it means the gift of filiation, the second birth, the new law, nearness to God, the hope of resurrection, the forgiveness of sins [all] reached us through Jesus Christ. It means the humanity of Jesus Christ[1], since the gift of filiation and the second birth resemble each other in a sense. That is, both [the the old and new law] are the commandments of faith, obedience, sacrifice, circumcision and baptism. Only, the old [law] is equivalent to a type and the new [law] is equivalent to a perfect, whole form. The old commandments related to physical phenomena, [**f. 87r**] belief only in the Unity and animal sacrifice. The new [commandments] relate to spiritual phenomena, knowledge of both the Unity and Trinity and the sacrifice that is followed by the forgiveness of sins. Their [i.e. the new commandments'] originator offered Himself in place of the lamb which was sacrificed in Egypt and whose blood was sprinkled on the doors[2] and which stands as a type for Him.

90. Mār Yuwānīs says: How beautiful is that which John did in not making a comparison between the persons of Moses and Christ but between the things which are beneficially gained from them. Thus he shows what was beneficially gained from Moses was only commandments, but from the Saviour, the gift of filiation and the forgiveness of sins. That is [stated] when it says <The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins>[3]. This leads listeners to accept and pay heed to what He said.

91. Isho'dad says that the filiation of the Saviour was truly of the Substance. Our filiation is through favour. So, compare the former and the renewed grace, and see the difference between them. In place of Moses we have received, in compensation, Christ, the Lord of all. In place of the old law, bliss through the resurrection and the gift of filiation, and through eternity in bliss and the new law.

Jn 1:18. The Apostle John said <No one ever saw God from the beginning. The only-begotten, God in the bosom of His Father made Him known.>

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[1] the humanity of Jesus Christ] Jesus Christ's becoming human. B C Eth.

B f. 177v, l. 10; C f. 303r, l. 19; Eth. f. 293r.3.11.

[2] Ex 12:3-7.

[3] Mk 2:10 and Lk 5:24.

92. [The exegete] said Mār Tāwadrūs says[1] that the evangelist repeated these two phrases after John the Baptist. This is because when it was supposed that what preceded this statement was an exaggeration concerning the Saviour, namely that God Himself appeared in the people's interest and for their benefit [**f. 87v**] when it would be impossible for God to appear since He is not a body and is neither comprehensible nor perceptible, he made [this] clear concerning the one who appeared to us. So he says 'the Only-begotten, God who is within His Father, He made [Him] known,'[2] and the meaning of this is that the Son of the eternal God is the one who appeared to us in that He dressed in[3] a body from us and addressed us from it and taught us truth.

93. And when he says <Only-begotten> it is because He is thus.

94. And when he says in the midst of His Father it means, in other words, equal to the Father in substance, power and ability - one who is not separate from Him.

95. And Mār Yuwānīs says 'A sceptic may well doubt and say: "What do you mean by 'He is not visible'? Whereas Isaiah says <I saw Him sitting on a great throne>,[4] Ezechiel says <I saw Him sitting on cherubim[5]>."'[6] The solution of this doubt is that God is not a body, is not revealed to the senses and does not sit. It is only out of the abundance of His concern if He wishes to appear that He does appear to men in that He takes matter from the air and appears from it as He wishes, likewise the angels. He does not appear in His substance itself since it is not perceptible.[7]

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[1] [The exegete] said Mār Tāwadrūs says] The exegete said. B C Eth.

B f. 178r, l. 15; C f. 303v, l. 14; Eth. f. 293v.2.11-12.

[2] 'the Only-begotten ... known'] Paraphrase of the Biblical passage.

[3] dressed in] took. B C Eth.

B f. 178v, l. 4; C f. 303v, l. 19; Eth. f. 293v.3.4.

[4] Is 6:1.

[5] Ez 99:1.

[6] cherubim>] + and Daniel and others have seen Him. The Gospel says <their [His. Eth.] angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven> [Mt 18:10]. Also it says <Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God> [Mt 5:8]. B C Eth.

B f. 178v, ll. 10 - 12; C f. 303v, l. 24 - f. 304r, l. 2; Eth. f. 293v.3.19-25.

[7] perceptible] + And the pure in heart see Him by seeing His lofty deeds. This is the one whom the angels, prophets and righteous see.

B C Eth.

B f. 178v, ll. 16-18; C f. 304r, ll. 5 - 6; Eth. f. 294r.1.9-13.

Chapter 4.

The two recensions of the *Commentary*.

Introduction.

Anyone observing the widespread diffusion of manuscripts of the *Commentary* over the Christian Middle East (including Coptic foundations), as well as the work's substantial penetration of the Ethiopian tradition, may wonder how it is that a commentary originating from the Church of the East could have achieved such an extensive reach. The answer, at least in the case of two out of the three Arabic manuscripts used in this study (along with the Ge'ez translation), is that, at some time during or before 1248, Ibn al-Ṭayyib's original work was tailored to fit Miaphysite Christology.

The existence of this recension was already noted by the Cairene Copt, Shams al-Ri'āsah Abū al-Barakāt (d. 1324) in *Miṣbāḥ al-ẓulmah wa-īḍāḥ al-khidmah*:[1]

له مجموع شرح الاناجيل المقدّسة وقد نقّحه بعض اليعاقبة وانتزع منه الألفاظ التي لرأي النسطورية مناسبة ونقلت منه عدّة نسخ بعد ذلك ابتغاء لِما فيه من الفضائل والمعانى التي تعِب جامعه فيها.[2]

'There is to his [name], a collection of commentaries on the holy Gospels, which a certain Jacobite[3] revised and from which he removed phrases which were in accordance with the beliefs of the Nestorians. After that, a number of copies were made of it for the sake of the excellent passages in it, and the meanings which its compiler laboured over.'

In more recent times, the existence of this recension seems to have been noticed only by Macomber, who appears to be unaware of Abū al-Barakāt.[4] Neither Graf nor even Troupeau (in his catalogue of the Paris library) make mention of it.

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[1] See Graf, *GCAL*, vol. 2, pp. 438 - 442. The seventh chapter was edited and translated (often inaccurately, see Graf p. 441) by Riedel as *Der Katalog*.

[2] Abū al-Barakāt, *Katalog*, p. 653 / 684 f. The editor misreads and so mis-translates the last phrase.

[3] The fact that Abū al-Barakāt refers to a Jacobite should not be taken to imply that it was not revised by a Copt. The two traditions were extremely close at this time and the term does not exclude Copts.

[4] See Macomber, 'Newly discovered fragments', p. 444 f.

This chapter offers an analysis of the major divergences between the two recensions - the original Eastern version being represented by Paris ar. 85, and the Miaphysite revision, by Paris ar. 86, BL or. 3201, and or. 732 (the Ge'ez translation). Since most of the divergencies pertain to Christology, a brief outline is offered of the origins of the Christological differences between the Miaphysite and Eastern Churches.

Chalcedon.

At the Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451) the main dogmatic pronouncements were as follows:

'Jesus Christ is fully divine and fully human, "like us in all things apart from sin." He is acknowledged "in two natures, without confusion [ἀσυγχύτως], without change [ἀτρέπτως],[1] without division [ἀδιαιρέτως], without separation [ἀχωρίστως];[2] the difference of the natures in no way abolished by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved, and concurring into one Person and one ὑπόστασις."'[3]

Elucidating the Patristic Greek Chalcedonian understanding of the terms, Kallistos Ware has explained that πρόσωπον and ὑπόστασις answer the question 'who?' (emphasising unity), whilst φύσις answers the question 'what?', (emphasising diversity).[4]

The Formulary of Reunion of 433 that Christ is ὁμοούσιος (i.e. consubstantial, or of the same essence / being) with us as well as the Father[5] was admitted by all sides except the Eutychians.

Antiochene Christology.

The Church of the East, existing, as it did, within the Sasanian Empire, was not part of the οἰκουμένη of the Roman Empire and so was not present at Chalcedon, an 'ecumenical' council (not a universal one), convened by the Emperor. It could though, if

[1] These two directed against Eutyches.

[2] These two directed against Nestorius.

[3] *The Blackwell Dictionary of the Eastern Church*, entry 'Ecumenical councils', Parry, Melling, p. 171.

[4] Lecture delivered in Oxford.

[5] See Grillmeier, *Christ*, vol. 1, pp. 497 - 501.

it chose, recognize a council retrospectively, as happened in the case of Nicaea, eighty -five years after the Council had sat.[1]

This Church was, to all intents and purposes, already independent from the other Churches, not only by lying outside the Roman Empire but also by having objected ('not without some good reason')[2] to the irregular procedure of the Council of Ephesus of 431.[3]

It is essential to understand that the rejection of the Chalcedonian Definition by the Church of the East resulted from its understanding of the key Christological terms. The Antiochenes held that the two natures of the Chalcedonian Definition implied two *qnōmē*. They reached this conclusion because of their understanding of *qnōmā*, as Brock has explained:

'The Greek term ὑπόστασις is represented in Syriac by the word *qnōmā*, which has a much wider range of meanings than the Greek has. When the Church of the East uses *qnōmā* in connection with 'nature' it usually speaks of 'the two natures and their *qnōmās*', where *qnōmā* means something like 'individual manifestation.'[4]

The kernel of Brock's interpretation of the Eastern usage of the term follows:

'a *qnōmā* is an individual instance or example of a *kyānā* (which is understood as always abstract),[5] but this individual manifestation is not necessarily a self-existent instance of a *kyānā*.'

In the joint communiqué of the second non-official consultation on dialogue within the Syriac tradition we find the following:

'... it is always essential to realize that, in the context of Christology (as opposed to the situation in Trinitarian theology), there is a clear and important difference between the understanding in the Church of the East of the term *qnōmā* (i.e. individuated, but not

[1] Brock, 'The "Nestorian" Church', p. 25.

[2] Brock, 'The "Nestorian" Church', p. 24.

[3] See Mar Aprem, *The Council of Ephesus of 431*, and de Halleux, 'La première session du Concile d'Ephèse (22 juin 431)'.

Nestorius had been deposed at this council but it was the procedure not the deposition to which the Church in the Persian Empire objected.

[4] Brock, 'The "Nestorian" Church', p. 28. Also the subsequent quote.

[5] Brock has written in an unpublished document that the term means 'set of characteristics'.

Chediath has explained: 'The *qnōmā* is the concretization of the abstract *kiyānā* such as this or that.' *The Christology*, p 89.

personalized nature) and that of the other Syriac Churches where *qnōmā* is regularly understood as the equivalent of *hypostasis* in the sense of person.

Thus the following explanation of the term of "*Qnōmā*" has been presented by the Assyrian, Chaldean and Syro-Malabar delegations of the Church of the East:

"In Christology, as expressed in the synodical and liturgical sources of the Church of the East, the term *qnōmā* does not mean *hypostasis* as understood in Alexandrine Tradition, but instead, individuated nature. Accordingly, the human nature which the holy Spirit fashioned and the Logos assumed and united to Himself without any separation, was personalized in the Person of the Son of God. When we speak of the two natures and their *qnōmē*, we understand this very much in the same sense as two natures and their particular properties (*dīlāyātā*)."'[1]

It was this very understanding of *qnōmā* (not necessarily self-existent, precisely the meaning of ὑπόστασις) as a manifestation of a *kyānā* which led to the Church's rejection of the Chalcedonian formula of one ὑπόστασις but two φύσεις on the grounds of illogicality, as we learn from Isho'yabh II (d. 646):

'Although, in accordance with the opinion of their own minds, they preserved the true faith with the confession of the two natures, yet by their formula of one *qnōmā* (= ὑπόστασις), it seems, they tempted weak minds. As an outcome of the affair a contradiction occurred, for with the formula 'one *qnōmā*' they corrupted the confession of 'two natures'; while with the 'two natures' they rebuked and refuted the 'one *qnōmā*'... On what side we should number them [i.e. as orthodox or heretical] I do not know, for their terminology cannot stand up, as Nature and Scripture testify: for in these, many *qnōmē* can be found in a single 'nature', but that there should be various 'natures' in a single *qnōmā* has never been the case and has not been heard of.'[2]

The doctrine of the Church of the East is then, the union of two natures and their two *qnōmē* in one *parsōpā*.

Alexandrine Christology.

The Definition of Faith laid down at Chalcedon eventually led to the establishment

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[1] Ed. Stirnemann, *Syriac Dialogue* (2), *Second Non-Official Consultation*, p. 193.

[2] Isho'yabh II, *Lettre christologique*, p. 42, Eng. trans. Brock, 'The "Nestorian" Church', p. 24.

of the independent Oriental Orthodox Churches. The theologians of the Alexandrine tradition such as Severus held the Chalcedonian formula to be illogical but for different reasons from those of the Antiochenes. Once again, the understanding of the terms is the cause of the rejection of the Definition. The Miaphysites regarded φύσις as being close in meaning to ὑπόστασις,[1] hence the one φύσις following logically from the one ὑπόστασις.[2] For Severus, one ὑπόστασις implied one nature:

'It is obvious to all who have just a modicum of training in the teachings of true religion that it is contradictory to speak of two natures with reference to one Christ, he being one ὑπόστασις. For whenever one speaks of one ὑπόστασις, one must necessarily also speak of one nature.'[3]

Their doctrine of 'a single incarnate nature of God the Word' (μία φύσις τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη) but 'from two natures' (before the incarnation), and their assertion of Christ's twofold consubstantiality not only with the Father but also us, is evidence that their opponents were misguided or disingenuous in accusing them of denying Christ's humanity.

<u>Diagrammatic representation of the Christological formulae.</u>

	φύσις / *kyānā*		ὑπόστασις / *qnōmā*	προσωπον / *parsōpā*
Oriental Orthodox	**1**	**<<<<**	**1**	**1**
Chalcedonians	**2**		**1**	**1**
Church of the East	**2**	**>>>>**	**2**	**1**

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[1] For the Church of the East *kyānā* / φύσις is close in meaning to *ousia*.

[2] See Brock, 'The "Nestorian" Church', p. 27 f.

Compare the Cappadocians, for whom the terms φυσις and ὀυσία, in a Trinitarian context, were more or less interchangeable. See Kelly, *Early Christian,* p. 263 - 269.

[3] Severus, *Orationes ad Nephalium*, p. 16, Eng. trans. Brock, 'The "Nestorian" Church', p. 25, n. 3.

Analysis of the two recensions of the *Commentary.*

The phrase in bold type ({...} in the Arabic), is the phrase in the original Eastern recension which is replaced in the Miaphysite recension (mss B, C and the Ethiopic translation) by the phrase in italics ([...] in the Arabic). Minor departures from the Miaphysite Arabic recension in the Ge'ez translation ('Eth.') are not noted here.

1. Alteration of '*qunūm*'.

14. [f. 80v, l. 19] So he [i.e. Matthew] teaches us about

His human qunūm]

the bodily birth

(B f. 170r, l. 9; C f. 299r, l. 6; Eth. f. 289r.1.8-9).

فعلمنا عن {قنومه الانسانى} [الولاده الجسمانيه]

14. [f. 81r, l. 1] So he teaches us about

His divine qunūm]

the divine birth

(B f. 170r, l. 11; C f. 299r, l. 8; Eth. f. 289r.1.13).

فعلمنا عن {قنومه الالهى} [الولاده الالهيه]

32. [f. 82r, l. 18] When he has finished speaking of the

divine qunūm]

eternity of the Son

(B f. 171v, l. 17; C f. 300r, l. 5; Eth. f. 290r.1.19-20).

لما فرغ من ا لكلام فى {القنوم الالهى} [ازليه الابن]

Of the occurrences of *qunūm* in the *Commentary*, only those at 14 (twice) and 32 are in a Christological context. It is notable that it is precisely only in these instances that the Miaphysite recension deletes mention of *qunūm.*[1]

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[1] The remaining instances, correctly identified in the Miaphysite recension as not being Christological, are at 5, 7 (x 2), 15, 16 (x 3) and 39 (x 2).

Miaphysite Christology recognizes only one *qunūm* or ὑποστασις in Christ and so, whilst the instances of *qunūm* referring to Christ as one of the *qunūm(s)* of the Trinity remain in the Miaphysite recension, those instances which imply a distinction between the human and divine *qunūm(s)* in Christ are expunged. However, not only is the Miaphysite revisor well able to distinguish between the Christological and the Trinitarian, his substitution of 'divine *qunūm*' with 'divine birth' at 14 but 'eternity of the Son' at 32 show that he is only to be satisfied with a substitution which suits each individual context.

2. Alteration of 'humanity'.

77. [f. 85v, l. 8] most of what they [i.e. the other Evangelists] say concerns His

humanity]

incarnation

(B f. 176r, l. 9; C f. 302r, l. 25; Eth. f. 292v.1.19-20).

الناسوت} [التجسد

89. [f. 86v, l. 15] it means ....

the humanity of Jesus Christ]

Jesus Christ's becoming human.

(B f. 177v, l. 10; C f. 303r, l. 19; Eth. f. 293r.3.11).

ناسوت} [تانس

Once again, the author of the Miaphysite recension exhibits a high level of theological awareness of the context in which the Christologically crucial terms occur. Mention of Christ's humanity is not in itself unacceptable,[1] it is only when such mention implies divisibility of the φύσις or ὑπόστασις that it becomes inadmissible. It is only at the very points in the *Commentary* where such divisibility is suggested, namely 77 and 89, that 'humanity' is substituted with 'incarnation' in the first case, or 'becoming human' in the second - these two concepts obviously considered less liable of being seen to imply two ὑποστάσεις or φύσεις.

At 77 the commentator states that most of what the Evangelists other than John

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[1] Cyril himself, for example, wrote:

'Christ exists as one and only Son, one and the same is God and man, as perfect in divinity as perfect in humanity.' Ep. ad Succensum, quoted Grillmeier, *Christ*, vol. 2:4, p. 30 f.

say regarding Christ's birth 'concerns His humanity', implying a contrast with John, who, we are to understand, is concerned more with Christ's divinity. Again at 89, the subtlety of the Miaphysite recension is revealed by the fact that here again the divisibility of the nature is only implicit. We are told that we receive the gifts of <truth and grace> through Christ's humanity. The revisor presumably takes this to mean that the commentator is suggesting that the divinity is not directly involved in this process of giving.

At 86, on the other hand, the *Commentary* is explicit in stating the unity of the divinity and the humanity, so mention of the latter is allowed to remain, whilst at 84 the implication would seem not to be a contrast between the humanity and the divinity, but a contrast between Christ's humanity, which is superior to the Baptist's, and his existence as a human, in which regard the Baptist had temporal precedence. The third instance, at 54, in which the Miaphysite recension permits mention of the humanity is, ironically, in an interpretation correctly attributed to Theodore no less, the arch-Antiochene. Theodore interprets the phrase <the Word became flesh> as confirming Christ's humanity. The Miaphysite revisor correctly, and fairly, takes this as not implying that Christ was not divine, but that he was not only divine.

3. Alteration of 'dressing' or 'dwelling in the body'.

46. [f. 83r, l. 19] and by

dressing in the body]

taking the body

(B f. 173r, l. 9; C f. 300v, l. 17; Eth. f. 290v.3.17).

وبلبسه الجسم} [وباخده الجسد \ وباخده بالجسد

92. [f. 87v, l. 3]

He dressed in]

He took

a body from us.

(B f. 178v, l. 4; C f. 303v, l. 19; Eth. f. 293v.3.4).

لبس} [اخد

31. [f. 82r, ll. 13 - 14] **And some say that the darkness refers to the body in which He lived**

[omit in B, C and Eth]

(omit B f. 171v, l. 13; C f. 300r, l. 2; Eth. f. 290r.1.9).

{وقوم قالوا ان الظلام اشاره الى الجسم الدى سكن فيه

58. [f. 84r, l. 12] He took the flesh

in which He dwelt]

in which He became incarnate

(B f. 174r, l. 10; C f. 301r, l. 22; Eth. f. 291v.1.7).

حل فيه [تجسد به

An example of the Eastern interpretation of the incarnation using the language of 'dressing' or 'dwelling' can be found in Theodore's *Catechetical Homilies*:

"'He became man,'[1] they [i.e. the fathers at Nicaea] said. And it was not through a simple providence that he lowered himself, nor was it through the gift of powerful help, as he has done so often and still [does]. Rather did he take our very nature; he clothed[2] himself with it, came into being in it and dwelt[3] in it so as to make it perfect through sufferings; and he united himself with it.'[4]

The Miaphysite objection to the language of dressing used to describe the incarnation (not in fact universal in the Western tradition) was discussed by Philoxenus in his commentary to the Prologue (written shortly after 508)[5]:

'Take what the Apostle said...: his words were, <He who, in the days of His flesh ...> [Heb 5:7]. Instead of this the [Syriac translators of the Peshitta] interpreted (as follows): <When he was clothed in flesh>,[6] and instead of [following] Paul, they concurred

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[1] Sy. *hwā bar nāshā.* This comes from the Nicene Creed.

[2] Sy. *lbesh.*

[3] Sy. *'mar.*

[4] Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Les homélies catéchétiques de Théodore*, f. 41r.

Eng. trans., Grillmeier, *Christ*, vol. 1, p. 429, although the phrase 'came into being in it' is mistakenly omitted.

[5] See Brock, *Brief Outline*, p. 39 f.

[6] Sy. *kad besrā lbīsh.*

with the position of Nestorius, who cast the body onto the Word, like a garment on anyone's body, and like purple [robes] on the bodies of the emperors - so that another, beside him, might be thought of, in the same way that every garment is something other apart from the person who wears it.

And again, with the passage where the Son said to the Father <You have established me with a body>[1] [Heb 10:5] - indicating the inhomination by means of which [the Son] fulfilled the Father's will and became a sacrifice on behalf of all: this too they interpreted as <You clothed me in a body>.[2] Thus it can be recognized everywhere that it is not the words of the Apostle that they have interpreted, but they have put [instead] their own opinion in their renderings.'[3]

4. Alteration of 'associated with the body which exists'.

61. [f. 84v, ll. 1 - 2] for the sake of His being

associated with the body which exists]

united with the body

(B f. 174v, l. 2; C f. 301v, l. 4; Eth. f. 291v.2.7-8).

مقارنته الجسم الكاين [اتحاده بالجسم

At 61, the Miaphysite recension prefers Christ's being 'united with the body' to His being 'associated with the body which exists.' This concept of Christ's being 'associated' with the body may be an allusion to Heb 2:14:[4]

<Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same.>[5]

It must be admitted that this correlation of Arabic '*muqārana*' with '*eshtawtap*'

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[1] Sy. *pagrā dēyn tqant lī.*

[2] Sy. *pagrā dēyn albeshtānī.*

[3] Philoxenus, *Commentaire*, Sy., p. 53, l. 18 - p. 54, l. 5. Eng. trans. Brock.

[4] This verse is, incidentally, discussed by Philoxenus at the beginning of his commentary on the Prologue. Philoxenus, *Commentaire*, Sy., pp. 1 - 4.

[5] The Gk of this verse has '*kekoinōnēke*' (from *koinōneō*), 'associated' (<are sharers>) and '*metesche*' (from *metechō*), <partook>, thus using different verbs for the children and Christ.

In the Peshitta, however, both '*kekoinōnēke*' and '*metesche*' are translated by '*eshtawtap*', 'share, partake.'

of Peshitta Hebrews is only conjectural,[1] since we cannot know if either Ibn al-Ṭayyib or the scholar responsible for the Miaphysite revision would have made this connection. But if correct, the fact that the concept of Christ's 'associating' with flesh and blood has Biblical precedence would indicate that 'association' is not necessarily the issue here. Rather, the Miaphysite revisor's objection is to *kā'in*. Although Ibn al-Ṭayyib's intention in using this word was almost certainly to indicate that the body was not an apparition (see 54), the revisor may have taken it to imply that the body was pre-existent.

5. Alteration of 'uniting with a human'.

14. [f. 80v, l. 18] For Matthew says that the Holy Spirit prepared

a human to unite with]

the body in which was united

the eternal Son of God.[2]

(B f. 170r, l. 8; C f. 299r, l. 6; Eth. f. 289r.1.6-7).

متى قال ان روح القدس اعد {انسانا لاتحاد} [الجسد المتحد به] بن الله الازلى

The Miaphysite revisor replaces the phrase 'uniting with a human' and with 'the body in which was united' (cf. the revision at 61 discussed immediately above). This alteration is to be expected since the original phrase, once again, as at 61, might be taken to imply a pre-existing human.

6. Apparently anomalous alterations.

53. [f. 83v, l. 18] And the eternal Son of God

became a human]

prepared a human person and united with it from the beginning of its being

(B f. 173v, ll. 11-12; C f. 301r, ll. 8-9; Eth. f. 291r.2.17-19).

صار انسانا [اعد شخص انسان واتحد به مند ابتدا كونه]

A number of aspects of this particular alteration are puzzling. First and foremost is

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[1] More expected as a *Vorlage*, theologically speaking, although not semantically, might be Sy. *nqef* (adhere).

[2] Cf. Matt. 1:18, 20, <she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.>

the fact that the Miaphysite revisor felt that revision was necessary at all since the phrase, 'became a human,' is part of the Nicene Creed.[1] There is, then, certainly no conventional Cyrilline objection to it. Secondly, the alteration seems to exemplify Antiochene Christology. Thirdly, the alteration seems to assert the very thing which at 14 was itself deemed worthy of alteration, namely, 'the Holy Spirit prepared a human to unite with the eternal Son of God.'

The obvious conclusion to draw from this evidence is that an error has crept into the manuscript tradition - maybe a scribe confused the alteration with the original. However, there is evidence which strongly suggests that this neat solution is not the answer to the problem.

First, we might compare the different recensions at 78:

78. [f. 85v, ll. 12 - 13] the Son of God

united with a human]

took a human person.

(B f. 176r, l. 15; C f. 302v, l. 4; Eth. f. 292v.2.4-6).

اتحد ابن الله بانسان [اتخد ابن الله شخص انسان

Although *ittaḥada* and *ittakhadha* would be more expected in each other's recensions, they are orthographically far too close (although only the former is employed with a preposition) for any reliable conclusion to be drawn from this anomaly. The alteration, however, from '*insān*' to '*shakhṣ insān*' is highly significant because not only is this paralleled exactly at 53 but it also brings the text into line with 72 ('*ittaḥada shakhṣa insānin*'), which is left untouched by the revisor. Moreover, if the recensions at 14 are examined more closely, the apparent contradiction, already noted, between 14 and 53 is not absolute, since at 14 the Eastern text has '*a'adda insānan*' whilst the Miaphysite revision of 53 has '*a'adda shakhṣ insānan.*'

So, the Miaphysite recension is, in fact and for whatever reason, absolutely consistent in rejecting the concept of the Word uniting with an '*insān*' or the latter being prepared for the Word, whilst preferring '*shakhṣ insān*' in its place - there are no counter examples in the *Commentary*. It must therefore be considered highly unlikely that scribal error is a factor at all in the puzzling nature of these revisions.

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[1] See, for example, Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Les homélies catéchétiques de Théodore*, f. 41r, l. 17.

The issue here is what exactly does the Miaphysite revisor understand by *shakhṣ insān*. This could only be answered accurately if there were sufficient examples of the usage of the phrase within the Miaphysite recension for a reliable conclusion to be drawn based on context, and there are very few examples. Otherwise, we would need to know the identity of the revisor in order to look for examples in his other works, but he is anonymous.

However, the answer to the problem may lie in an observation made by Holmberg concerning the avoidance by many Christian Arabic writers of *shakhṣ* as a term for the persons of the Trinity.[1] He writes that

'... the word was felt to imply very strongly sensual perception and so was less suitable to designate the divine persons.'[2]

Holmberg cites two authorities for his thesis. First, Lane's *Lexicon*:

'*Shakhṣ* - the body, or bodily or corporeal form or figure or substance of a man, or some other object or thing, which one sees from a distance.'[3]

Secondly, Israel of Kashkar:

قلنا إنّ الشخص اسم وقع التعارفُ به على ما لحقه الحسُّ من خواصّ الأجرام من نوع من الأنواع.[4]

'We say that *shakhṣ* is a noun by which recognition happens according to the properties of bodies of one species or another upon which perception falls.'[5]

In other words the *shakhṣ* is not so much the man himself but only the thing perceived by the senses. It is precisely this sensual connotation, making it unsuitable for reference to the persons of the Trinity, which is attractive for the Miaphysite revision, thus avoiding the idea of a fully individual human, existing independently before the incarnation.

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[1] B. Holmberg, '"Person" in the Trinitarian doctrine', p. 303 f.

I would like to thank Holmberg himself and Mark Beaumont for suggesting the solution to this puzzle at the Mingana Symposium, 2001.

[2] Holmberg, '"Person" in the Trinitarian doctrine', p. 304.

[3] Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, p. 1517.

[4] Israel of Kashkar, *A Treatise*, section 148.

[5] Israel of Kashkar, trans. Holmberg, *A Treatise*, section 148.

7. Citations of Theodore and 'the exegete.'

54. [f. 83v, l. 19]

Mār Tāwadrūs says

another exegete said

(B f. 173v, l. 13; C f. 301r, l. 9; Eth. 291r.2.22).

ومار تاودروس يقول} [وقال مفسر اخر

86. [f. 86v, l. 1] **Mār Tāwadrūs interprets this section in the following manner, saying**

[*omit*]

(B f. 177r, l. 11; C f. 303r, l. 6; Eth. 293r.1.27).

مار تاودروس يفسّر هدا الفصل على هدا الوجه يقول}

92 [f. 87r, l. 17]

Mār Tāwadrūs says the exegete

the exegete

(B f. 178r, l. 15; C f. 303v, l. 14; Eth. 293v.2.11-12)

مار تاودروس يقول المفسر} [المفسر

All mention of Tāwadrūs, meaning Theodore of Mopsuestia, is excised in the Miaphysite recension. This is no surprise, since his Christology was perceived as being diametrically opposed to the Miaphysite Christology of Cyril.[1] What is surprising, though, is that the interpretations following citations of Tāwadrūs remain intact. So the interpretations of the Antiochene exegete *par excellence* are acceptable, but only when anonymous. Whether this excision was made for the sake of the laity, for whom Theodore may have been a known heretic, or to avoid censure by the church authorities, is not clear.

Two other Eastern exegetes, on the other hand, remain. Isho'dad's name is retained in all five of its occurrences, as is Ahob's at 60. Is this because they are not recognized by the revisor as being Eastern, or is it that the revisor knows that they will not be recognized as being such by others?

The Miaphysite recension is inconsistent with regard to mention of 'the exegete.'

[1] The condemnation, though, of Theodore's works in 553 at the Fifth Ecumenical Council at Constantinople would have applied only to Chalcedonians.

At 9[1] and 11[2] 'the exegete' is excised in favour of 'another' but all the remaining references to the exegete are retained. What is notable here is that 9 and 11 are the only instances where the 'exegete' is cited other than to introduce commentary sections. It is remarkable that the revisor appears to recognize that the formula, 'the exegete said,' which begins every commentary section, does not refer to Theodore, but that the two references within commentary sections may do.

8. Incipits.

1. [f. 168v] *In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful, from whom we seek succour.*

The Gospel of John, son of Zebedee.

The consummation of the Gospels. (B).

باسم الله الرحمن الرحيم وبه نستعين

بشاره يوحنا بن زبدى

المكمل للبشرى

1. [f. 298r] *In the name of God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the one God.*

The Gospel of John the apostle, the consummation of the accepted and pure Gospels.

May our lord Jesus Christ respond to his prayer. Let Him be with us for ever. Amen.

The first chapter, (in) Syriac.

John, the blessed Apostle says. (C).

بسم الابوالابن وروح القدس الاله الوحيد

بشارت يوحنا الرسول المكمل للبشرى المقبوله الطاهره

جيب مرنا يسوع المسيح صلاته يكون معنا الى الابد امين

الاصحاح الاول سريانى

قال يوحانا الرسول السعيد

The manuscript of the original recension of the *Commentary* being acephalous, comparison can only be made of the two manuscripts representing the Miaphysite recension.

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[1] A f. 80v l. 1; B f. 169v, l. 6.

[2] A f. 80v l. 7; B f. 169v, l. 12.

The first (B) is dated 1248, the second (C) is early nineteenth century.

The *basmala* at the beginning of B, if it is original (the hand writing appears to be different), is replaced by the specifically Christian incipit in C. In both manuscripts John is described as the consummation of the Gospels. In C, the chapter is introduced as the first Syriac chapter, presumably because, as we discover later, the chapter divisions of the *Commentary* follow the Peshitta.

10. Miscellaneous additions.

There are three phrases or passages which appear only in the Miaphysite recension but which do not replace phrases in the original.

73. [f. 85r, l. 13] in order to indicate that the seeing was of the deeds not the Essence *and the uniting was in the qunūm and the Substance* [add in B, C and Eth.].
(B f. 175v, l. 8; C f. 302r, l. 11; Eth. f. 292r.3.3-4).

وان الاتحاد بالقنوم والجوهر

This first addition is an affirmation of Miaphysite doctrine which serves to confirm the unity of the *qnōmā* and *kyānā* following a phrase which could be taken to imply divisibility of the same.

95. [f. 87v, l. 8] cherubim>

and Daniel and others have seen Him. The Gospel says <their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven> [Mt. 18:10]. *And also it says <Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God>* [Mt. 5:8] [add in B, C, and Eth.].
(B f. 178v, ll. 10-12; C f. 303v, l. 24 - f. 304r, l. 2; Eth. f. 293v.3.19-25).

ودانيال وغيره قد نظروه والانجيل يقول ان ملايكتهم ينظرون وجه ابى الذى فى السموات . وايضا يقول طوبى للنقيه قلوبهم فانهم يعاينون الله

95. [f. 87v, l. 12] perceptible.

And the pure in heart see Him by seeing His lofty deeds. And this is the one whom the angels, prophets and righteous see [add in B, C, and Eth.].
(B f. 178v, ll. 16-18; C f. 304r, ll. 5-6; Eth. f. 294r.1.9-13).

والاتقيا بقلوبهم ينظرونه من نظر اعماله العاليه . وهذا هو الدى تنظره الملايكه والانبيا والصديقون

With regard to the first of these two additions, it is striking that Chrysostom, who is the ultimate source for this section of the original recension, also quotes Daniel and Mt. 18:10.[1] It should not, however, necessarily be assumed that the coincidences of reference to Daniel and Matthew indicate Chrysostom as source for this Miaphysite addition. It is just as likely that the revisor had a sufficient knowledge of Scripture to enable him to cite relevant parallel passages. The motivation, however, behind both these additions is not clear, since neither of them serves any obvious exegetical purpose. They are also, notably, the only examples of substantial additions throughout the *Commentary*.

Conclusion.

The scholar responsible for the Miaphysite recension is a theologian of some subtlety. *Qunūm* for example, is excised only in Christological contexts, not Trinitarian, and the distinction between the two spheres is not always obvious. Likewise, *nāsūt*, 'humanity' is expunged only when it implies divisibility. Another impressive feature is the revisor's recognition that 'the exegete' is a reference to Theodore only beyond its position in the formulae beginning each commentary section of the text.

The author of the Miaphysite revisions is not named in its earliest known ms witness (Paris 86) nor by Abū al-Barakāt in his mention of the existence of the recension. The ms is dated 1248, however, which is therefore the *terminus ante quem* for the recension. Although there is no evidence in the ms indicating authorship, the consistency and intellectual level of the revisions would lead one to expect that they are unlikely to have been undertaken by an unknown theologian. Although there is nothing pointing in their direction other than the Egyptian provenance of the manuscript and its Miaphysite Christology, the Ibn al-'Assāl brothers[2] must be prime candidates. Also, the fact that Abū al-Barakāt, a Cairene was aware of the existence of the recension might suggest that it

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[1] Chrysostom, *Homilies on John*, p. 51.

There is, incidentally, no reference in Chrysostom's homily to the pure in heart, although mention is made to the 'pure and sleepless nature' of the angels (p. 52).

[2] The three major writers from this family (originally bee-keepers, presumably) are al-Ṣāfī Abū al-Faḍā'il ibn al-'Assāl (d. before 1260 and probably the eldest), al-As'ad Abū al-Faraj Hibat Allāh ibn al-'Assāl (d. 1250) and al-Mu'taman Abū Isḥāq Ibrahīm ibn al-'Assāl (d. after 1265). See Graf, *GCAL*, vol. 2, pp. 388 - 403, 403 - 407 and 407 - 414, respectively; and Blanchard and Griffith, 'Al-'Assāl family'.

was the work of an Egyptian. Given the date of the manuscript, it is an exciting possibility that it could be their very own handiwork, or at least that of their immediate circle.

Although the East and West-Syrian traditions are often presumed to exemplify the frequently touted dichotomy between the Alexandrine and Antiochene schools of exegesis, there was in fact, as Brock has pointed out, 'considerable interaction between the East and West-Syrian exegetical traditions.'[1]

Van Rompay has remarked that the narrowing of the gap between the Eastern and Western traditions:

'becomes even more clearly visible in the literature of the Islamic period.'[2]

This phenomenon in the Christian sphere is explained elsewhere by the author as resulting, paradoxically, precisely from the cessation of Christian rule in the region:

'[With the advent of Arab rule, both] Monophysites and Nestorians were freed from the harassment of the Chalcedonian authorities, and contacts between the various groups were intensified.'[3]

For Molenberg, Moshe bar Kepha can be seen as exemplifying this interaction in the West-Syrian tradition:

'Moses bar Kepha did not use only the works of John Chrysostom; he also drew on the commentaries of Theodore of Mopsuestia[4] and used Syriac dyophysite interpretations.[5] Part of these interpretations were probably taken from a source identical either to Isho'dad or Theodore bar Koni or closely related to both of them. His work displays a tendency in Syriac monophysite exegesis to combine the features of early monophysite exegesis with its Alexandrian ferment with those of Antiochene origin...'[6]

Working in the other direction, in the Eastern tradition of the same period, Molenberg notes spiritual interpretative tendencies of an Alexandrian hue in Theodore bar Koni and Isho' bar Nun, contrary to the Antiochene standards laid down by the sixth-century (A.D.) synods. Chrysostom, for example, begins to be cited around the end of the eighth century by Isho' bar Nun, and Isho'dad not only borrows from Isho' bar Nun but also

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[1] Brock, Brief Outline, p. 94.

Two important articles dealing with this issue of the interaction between the East and West-Syrian traditions are: van Rompay, 'La littérature exégétique syriaque et la rapprochement des traditions syrienne-occidentale et syrienne-orientale' and Molenberg, 'The Silence of the Sources'.

[2] Van Rompay, 'The Christian Syriac Tradition', p. 641.

[3] Van Rompay, 'Development', p. 559.

[4] See e.g. Reller, *Mose bar Kepha*, p. 161 ff.

[5] Cf. e.g. Reller, *Mose bar Kepha*, 169 ff. and Reinink, *Studien*, pp. 90 - 113.

[6] Molenberg, 'The Silence', p. 148.

uses extracts of Chrysostom not found in the earlier author.[1]

We can see Ibn al-Ṭayyib as exemplifying this interaction between the East and West-Syrian exegetical traditions in two ways. Firstly, he seems to have shared a source with Moshe bar Kepha. Moreover, Theodore of Mopsuestia is less the foundation of the Prologue, quantitatively speaking, than is Chrysostom.[2] Secondly, this Eastern *Commentary* had wide currency in Coptic Egypt and Ethiopia, even if in the modified form illustrated in this article. East-Syrian may be East and West-Syrian may be West but the twain do meet in scriptural exegesis.

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[1] See Molenberg, 'The Silence', p. 148.

[2] Chrysostom is, of course, an Antiochene exegete, but as has been noted, from around the second/eighth century, he came to be regarded as the seminal exegete of the West-Syrian tradition.

Chapter 5.

The exegetical sources for the *Commentary*.

1. Introduction.

2. Arabic exegesis.

3. Outline of the main periods of Syriac literature.

4. The Persian Schools at Edessa and Nisibis.

5. Assessing the sources for the *Commentary*.

6. Theodore.

7. Chrysostom.

8. Isho'dad.

9. Moshe.

10. Attributed to Ephrem.

11. Unidentified material.

12. Original material.

13. The *Diyarbakir / Anonymous Commentary* and the *Gannat Bussāmē*.

14. Conclusion.

Introduction

This chapter offers a survey of the relationship of the *Commentary* to earlier Syriac commentaries on John, in an attempt to establish, and in some cases, also, to eliminate its likely sources.

To begin with, an attempt is made to give a historical perspective to the study, including a brief discussion of exegesis as taught at the Schools of Edessa and Nisibis.

The Arabic exegetical tradition before Ibn al-Ṭayyib.[1]

The Arabic Gospel exegetical tradition prior to Ibn al-Ṭayyib is by no means extensive, no doubt reflecting the primacy of Syriac (or Greek) as the language of religion for many Arab Christians.

Around the middle of the ninth century, a Melkite priest from Damascus, one **Abū al-Sirrī Bishr Ibn al-Sirrī**, completed a translation and commentary on the Gospels - a work now lost - although it is referred to by al-As'ad Abū al-Faraj ibn al-'Assāl. However, a dated ninth-century Kufic ms of a translation and commentary (in the form of extensive marginalia) on Acts and the Catholic epistles, apparently by the same author, has been preserved in Sinai.[2] Initial investigation suggests that this commentary is a crucial repository of exegesis of generally Eastern Syriac provenance.[3]

In the same period **Nonnus, Bishop of Nisibis**, wrote a commentary on John, which only survives in Armenian translation. In the tenth century, a commentary on the Gospels, also now lost, was composed by **Sāwīrus, Bishop of al-Ashmūnayn**.

Outline of the main periods of Syriac literature.

It is the rich Syriac, rather than the Arabic, exegetical tradition to which the *Commentary* is heir. Since this survey of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's sources (in effect, a highly selective account of exegesis of the New Testament[4] from Ephrem to Ibn al-Ṭayyib), spans some six and a half centuries, it might be useful to give an outline of the relevant

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[1] All the information on Arabic exegesis here, unless stated otherwise, comes from Samir's overview of the subject in 'Christian Arabic Literature', pp. 446 - 449. The works referred to here are works of exegesis proper, that is dealing with complete books of the Bible, and so writings which only treat particular passages are excluded.

The other important account of the subject is Graf, 'Exegetische Schriften zum Neuen Testament in arabischer Sprache bis zum 14 Jahrhundert', which is more detailed than Samir but does not attempt to convey an impression of the overall picture.

[2] Ed. and trans. Staal, *Mt.Sinai Arabic Codex 151* (Acts, Catholic Epistles).

[3] Brock's investigation of these marginalia should be appearing in a forthcoming Festschrift for Samir.

[4] The fullest account of the history of New Testament Syriac exegesis up to and including Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286) is by McCullough, 'Early Syriac Commentaries on the New Testament'

There is a more recent survey (in two parts) by van Rompay on the exegetical tradition relating to the Old Testament, which is also relevant since many of the major commentators on the Old Testament also contributed commentaries on the New. See van Rompay, 'The Christian Syriac Tradition of Interpretation' and 'Development of Biblical Interpretation in the Syrian Churches of the Middle Ages.'

principle periods of Syriac literature, in order to give a framework to the enquiry.

The most useful overviews, giving a sense of the larger picture of the whole of Syriac literature, are two surveys by Brock.[1] The two periods identified by Brock, of relevance here, are the so-called golden age and the Islamic period.

The golden age is subdivided in the later account into two - firstly, the 4th C (Aphrahat and Ephrem, above all), and secondly, the 5th - mid 7th C.[2]

The period following the Golden age stretches from the advent of Islam up to the invasion of the Mongols. Brock says of the commencement of this period:

'Although with hindsight the Arab invasions represent a fundamental political break in the history of Western Asia, there is nevertheless very much a sense of continuity in Syriac writers of the period.'[3]

Nonetheless, he considers that the period can be distinguished somewhat from the 'golden age' by its being one of 'scholarly consolidation and encyclopaedic effort.'[4]

However, one should not imagine that figures from the golden age such as Ephrem and Aphrahat arose *ex nihilo* simply because we lack substantial written evidence of the tradition out of which they arose. Thus, the contrast between supposedly creative and less creative periods may not be as marked as might sometimes be envisaged. This question of the level of creativity, in particular with respect to the exegetical compilers of the Islamic period, will be examined in the conclusion.

The Persian Schools at Edessa and Nisibis.

The relevance of the Persian Schools at Edessa and Nisibis (so-called because of the Persian origin of many of its students) for the present study lies in its being the most important institution of higher-learning for the Church of the East in the fifth and sixth

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[1] See Brock, 'Three Thousand Years of Aramaic Literature' (1989), pp. 20 - 22; and *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature* (1997), passim but particularly pp. 7 - 13. See also Brock's entry, 'Syrian Christianity' in ed. Parry et al., *The Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity*.

[2] 'Three Thousand Years', p. 20 f.; and *A Brief Outline*, p. 7.

The first and last of Brock's periods (prior to the 4th C, and subsequent to the 13th C, respectively), are not relevant here.

[3] Brock, *A Brief Outline*, p. 53.

[4] Brock, 'Three Thousand Years', p. 21.

centuries, and thus crucial for the dissemination of Antiochene exegetical principles. The School was founded in Edessa, possibly around the beginning of the fifth century, under the direction of Ephrem's disciples. Vööbus argues that had it been founded by Ephrem himself, as Barḥadbshabbā claims,[1] this fact would have been more widely acknowledged in the earliest sources.[2] In 489, Bishop Qūrā of Edessa, an avid opponent of Antiochene theology, secured a decree from the Emperor Zenon, leading to the closure of the School.[3] After the end of the Edessene chapter of its history, the School moved across the border to Nisibis, just inside the Persian Empire, at a date which is unclear.[4]

In a number of Syriac compilatory exegetical works (the *Diyarbakir Commentary*, amongst others), reference is made to the 'tradition of the Schools' (*mashlmānūtā d-eskōlē*),[5] referring to the Schools at Edessa and Nisibis. An early explanation of this 'tradition' is given by Barḥadbshabbā of Ḥalwān (fl. early 7th C)[6] in *The Book of the Cause of the Foundation of the Schools*.[7] According to Barḥadbshabbā:

'in this one thing [Qiyōrē][8] was anxious: up to then the interpretations of the Interpreter were not translated into the Syriac tongue, but rather he would interpret extemporaneously from the traditions of Mar Ephrem; these, as they say, were transmitted from Addai the Apostle... For also that which we call the 'tradition (*mashlmānūtā*) of the School,' we do not mean the interpretation (*pushshāqā*) of the Interpreter [i.e. Theodore], but rather these other things that were transmitted from mouth to ear of old. Then afterwards the blessed Mar Narsai mixed them into his homilies and the rest of his writings.'[9]

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[1] Barḥadbshabbā, *Cause*, p. 381.

[2] See Vööbus, *History of the School*, pp. 7 - 9.

[3] See Vööbus, *History of the School*, pp. 30 - 32. Philoxenus, amongst others, also seems to have campaigned for the closure.

[4] See Vööbus, *History of the School*, pp. 33 - 56.

[5] The vocalisation of this loan-word, is not certain - Brockelmann, *Lexicon* has *eskōlē* (Eastern vocalization) whilst Payne-Smith, *Thesaurus*, has *eskūlī*. Whether the word should be taken as singular or plural is also not clear - the use of *syāmē* (the Syriac diacritics for plurals) on loan-words is apparently not systematic.

[6] See Brock, *Brief Outline*, p. 48, for the possibility that this author is one and the same as Barḥadbshabbā 'Arbaya.

[7] Ed. and French trans. by Scher.

[8] Qiyōrē was supposedly the Head of the Persian School of Edessa sometime during the first quarter of the 5th C. See Vööbus, *History of the School*, p. 10 f., and references there to further discussion of the problems in dating Qiyōrē's tenure.

[9] Barḥadbshabbā, *Cause*, p. 382 f., trans. by Becker. See, also, translation of this extract in van Rompay, 'The Christian Syriac Tradition', p. 633.

Van Rompay has drawn attention to the distinction made by Barḥadbshabbā between *pushshāqā*:

'[this] term refers to compositions written by individual authors'

and *mashlmānūtā*:

'[this term] seems to refer to an oral transmission of teachings and ideas that passed anonymously from generation to generation.'[1]

One question raised by the extract from Barḥadbshabbā is whether Ephrem's interpretations continued to be taught alongside Theodore's, or whether they were superseded entirely by the latter. Vööbus takes him to mean that Ephrem's commentaries were relinquished,[2] but surely the implication is not that the Ephremic tradition was extinguished, but rather that it continued - hence the need to distinguish the two types, or sources of interpretation.[3] This reading is upheld by the fact that we still find references to the *mashlmānūtā d-eskōlē* in the *Anonymous Commentary* and the *Gannat Bussāmē*, which are thought to date from around the ninth and tenth centuries respectively, long after Barḥadbshabbā's time, let alone Qiyōrē's. Supporting this interpretation of Barḥadbshabbā even more so is the evidence uncovered by Jansma to show that Narsai, who was head of the school from about 450 - 470,[4] was heavily indebted in his writings to both Theodore and Ephrem.[5]

Van Rompay, whilst admitting that the evidence is not clear-cut, claims that later, and at the School of Nisibis, Ḥenānā (Head of the School from 572 - 610) 'is said to have replaced Theodore of Mopsuestia by John Chrysostom as the highest authority in the field of exegesis,'[6] However, the primary source on which van Rompay bases his thesis does not necessarily warrant such an interpretation. The second canon of the Synod (585) under Isho'yahb 1st is a defence of Theodore's writings and doctrine.[7] In the canon, clearly directed against Ḥenānā and his followers, we read:

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[1] Van Rompay, 'the Christian Syriac Tradition', p. 633; see also anon., trans. van Rompay, *Le Commentaire*, p. xxxiv.

The two Syriac terms are also juxtaposed by Barḥadbshabbā in *Cause*, p. 378, l. 10 f.

[2] See Vööbus, *History of the School*, pp. 10 f. and 14.

[3] See Reinink's discussion of this issue in *Studien zur Quellen*, p. 162, n. 12.

[4] Dating Narsai's tenure as Head of the School is problematic. See Vööbus, *History of the School*, pp. 62 - 65. Although he does not help on this point, in *Fiqh al-naṣrānīyah*, Ibn al-Ṭayyib does appear to offer details concerning the School not obviously found elsewhere. See Vööbus' index under the Arab's name.

[5] See Jansma, 'Narsai's Homilies', pp. 224 - 235.

[6] See van Rompay, 'The Christian Syriac Tradition', p. 637.

[7] *Synodicon Orientale* (ed. Chabot), pp. 136 - 138 / 398 - 400.

'They reject also the commentary that was composed by the Interpreter in the spiritual sense on the Book of the blessed Job.'[1]

There follows a diatribe against the perpetrators of this rejection of Theodore, on account of their 'blasphemy and deceit.'[2] Towards the end of the canon, the law is laid down:

'No one of all the ecclesiastical orders is allowed to slander this ecclesiastical doctor in secret or in public nor reject his sacred writings nor accept *the other commentary* that is foreign to the truth.'[3]

Chabot (editor of the *Synodicon*) and Vööbus take this 'other commentary' as referring to the work of Ḥenānā.[4] In contrast, and of special interest for the present study is the fact that none other than Ibn al-Ṭayyib himself, in his (or his intermediary's) interpretation of the canon, takes the phrase to mean Chrysostom (as does van Rompay):

فى اتباع تفاسير تاذوروس المفسر والاعتماد على كتبه وان الذى يخالفها ويتبع غيرها فهو محروم كما فعل من عانده فى اتباع يوحنا فم الذهب .[5]

'Concerning the following of the commentaries of Theodore, the exegete, and relying on his books. The one who disagrees with them and follows other [books] is debarred,[6] such as the action of the one who opposed him in following John Chrysostom.'

Vööbus, however, is probably right in seeing this phenomenon as part of 'Ḥenānā's endeavor to supplant the authority of Theodore with an ever-growing appreciation for the exegetical work of John Chrysostomos,'[7] rather than a wholesale rejection of Theodore.

A very important point is made by Molenberg concerning the tradition of exegesis in the Eastern Church following Narsai, who himself had been head of the School at

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[1] *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 137 / 399; Eng. trans., Vööbus, *History of the School*, p. 246.

[2] *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 138 / 399; Eng. trans., Vööbus, *History of the School*, p. 246 (Vööbus' interpretation of the syntax of this passage is puzzling).

[3] *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 138 / 400; Eng. trans., Vööbus, *History of the School*, p. 245.

[4] *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 400, n. 1. Vööbus, *History of the School*, p. 245, n. 16.

[5] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, *Fiqh al-naṣrānīya*, Arabic vol. 1, p. 120, ll. 5 - 8.

[6] *Maḥrūm* may possibly carry the specific force of excommunication.

[7] Vööbus, *History of the School*, p. 244.

Nisibis:

'Apart from the works of Narsai, who died in the first decade of the sixth century [c. 502], not a single specimen of East-Syrian exegesis in this period has come down to us in its original form. The sources are silent until the end of the eighth century, when the works of Theodore bar Koni and Isho' bar Nun [both Easterners] bear witness not only to the ongoing exegetical process, but also to the underlying Antiochene principals.'[1]

Assessing the sources for the *Commentary.*

Since Biblical exegesis is central to any Christian literary tradition and since it is, by definition, the interpretation of a limited corpus, the study of its history can give a valuable insight into the development of Syriac literature.

In the diachronic study of exegetical works, there would seem to be two basic approaches, or tendencies (by no means necessarily mutually incompatible) both of which have inherent strengths and weaknesses.

The first approach is to take an interpretation of one verse, or even one phrase, of Scripture, and to try to discover the full picture of its interpretation for a given period and tradition. This is the approach taken by Coakley, for example, in an important article published in 1981.[2] In this essay, Coakley traces the interpretation of Lk 2:25 (the old man Simeon) all the way from Ephrem to Dionysius bar Salībī, thus giving an excellent birds-eye view of the development of Syriac exegesis through some eight hundred years, albeit of just one minor Biblical figure. This is also the approach taken by Cowley in his studies of the rich tapestry which is the traditional Ethiopian Andemta exegetical corpus. Cowley's principle aim was the uncovering of the sources of this tradition, an aim which is fulfilled with extraordinary erudition.[3]

The strength of this approach is precisely the overview that can be gained of hundreds of years of tradition, and also the greater likelihood of unearthing ultimate anterior sources. The inherent weakness is that the larger picture of a particular exegetical work, the context in which the particular interpretation is found, can be lost. Additionally,

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[1] Molenberg, 'The Silence of the Sources', p. 145.

[2] Coakley, 'The Old Man Simeon'.

[3] See all Cowley's works in the bibliography.

Cowley's masterpiece, *EBI*, the author's Cambridge D.Div. thesis, is an astonishing piece of exegetical archaeology.

although not necessarily an inherent weakness, but at least a danger, is that proximate and anterior sources are not always clearly distinguished along the sometimes tortuously complex lines of development.

The second approach is to take a wider sample of whichever text is the focus of the study and to concentrate on establishing the proximate sources. This is the method largely adopted in this study. Its weakness is that the relationships of sources at more than one remove from the text are not examined closely but its strength lies in the relative certainty with which spurious proximate sources can be eliminated - much more difficult if conclusions are extrapolated from the evidence of the interpretation of single verses.

Although the sources for the *Commentary* on John are unlikely to be the same as those for Luke and Matthew[1] (Mark has not been touched upon in the secondary literature), reference is occasionally made in this study to the secondary literature in which sources for Matthew and Luke have been analysed, particularly when this has been done in some detail and with possible relevance for the present study.

When, for convenience, the *Commentary* on Luke or Matthew is referred to, this should not be taken to mean that the *Commentary* on all four Gospels was not originally produced by the author as one text.

Finally, in the references to the work of Cowley in this chapter, it must be remembered that he was utilising the Geez translation of the Miaphysite recension of the *Commentary*, although since the Geez version of the prologue to John has been shown to be a relatively faithful rendition of the Arabic Miaphysite recension (itself differing from the original Eastern version only in relatively infrequent Christological details), Cowley's conclusions need not be treated with undue caution.

The importance of citation in establishing relationships between texts.

One of the disadvantages of examining only a small extract of a particular commentary is that in attempting to establish the nature of its relationship with previous

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[1] A clue to the use of different sources for the Synoptics lies in the employment of a different layout for each portion of commentary from that found in John. See Macomber, 'Newly discovered fragments', p. 445f.

Also, Reinink has shown that, for example, the sources of the so-called *Anonymous Commentary* differ for Luke and John, and the tradition from which this *Anonymous* work emerges has close links with Ibn al-Ṭayyib.

or later texts, there is inevitably a heavy reliance on making judgements based largely on the similarity of content of one small extract with others, often equally small. When taking a larger portion of a text as a sample, factors other than simply similarity of content can be taken into account. In particular, analysis of citation can be useful tool. Two phenomena related to citation have proved invaluable in the present study.

First, if two texts have material in common and in the later text the material is ascribed to a third party, an attribution which is absent from the earlier text, one may state with some certainty that the earlier of the two texts is not the source for the later of the two, but rather, there must be a source which is shared. There are at least two striking examples of this phenomenon in the *Commentary*. This method is clearly only valuable in eliminating likely sources.

Secondly, if in a text, uncited, but clearly closely related material immediately precedes cited material from the same author, particularly if this occurs relatively frequently, as it does in the *Commentary*, ignoring deliberate carelessness on the part of the author as the cause, it may reasonably be assumed that breaks in the chain of transmission result from the existence of intermediary texts. Rare occurrences of this phenomenon might be attributable to scribal error, but the frequency with which they occur in the *Commentary* make this explanation highly unlikely.

The only caveat against drawing such conclusions about relationships between texts, based on citation, might be that a particular citation has been lost in the ms tradition and that a later author had a ms of the same work to hand, which included the citation. Or names might even have been inserted to give the added authority of citation. However, if the passage turns out to be correctly attributed, this latter explanation can be reasonably discounted.

Another textual phenomenon, which is really only useful if statistical weight is built up from the frequency of its occurrence (again, not possible if only a brief extract is examined), is the existence of numerous minor and seemingly pointless departures from a named or unnamed, but recognised, source. This may well suggest the existence of intermediaries and can be compared with Chinese whispers.

Theodore of Mopsuestia

An impression of the enormously high esteem in which Theodore (c. 350 - 428) was held by the Church of the East in the fifth century, can be gained from an excerpt of a homily penned by the great poet, Narsai (c. 399 - c. 502), who studied at, and was later head of the School of Edessa:[1]

> 'It is proper to call the instructor[2] of the instructors the one skilled of mind,
> without whom there would be no instructor who teaches well.
> Through the treasury of his writings, all who gained [them], gained,
> and through his commentaries they acquired the ability to interpret.
> ...
> His meditation became for me like a guide towards the Scriptures,
> and he has raised me towards an understanding of the books of the spirit.'[3]

Around the beginning of the seventh century we find that Barḥadbshabbā credits Theodore with heralding a new era in which order has been brought to the exegetical confusion of the past:

> 'For until that time when Grace brought this man into being and to the abode of human beings, all the portions of teaching and the interpretations and traditions of the divine scriptures - in the likeness of different species, from which is made the image of the King of Kings - were dispersed and cast everywhere in confusion and without order among all the earlier writers and Fathers of the catholic church.[4]
>
> After this human being had separated the good from the evil and been trained in all the writings and traditions of the first [Fathers], then like a skilful doctor, he collected into one whole[5] all the traditions and chapters which were dispersed, and he compounded them skilfully and intelligently, and from them he mixed [like medicines] one complete

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[1] Vööbus, *History of the School*, pp. 57 - 65.

[2] Syriac, *sāfrā*.

[3] Narsai, ed. Martin, 'Homélie de Narsès sur les trois docteurs nestoriens', (14) p. 475, ll. 9 - 16. Quoted and translated (occasionally incomprehensibly) by Vööbus, *History of the School*, pp. 106. Martin's French translation is preferable, (15) p. 506.

Theodore's works were not only admired but officially advocated:

> 'In 543/544 an East-Syrian synod at Seleucia-Ctesiphon had made the exegetical method advocated by Diodore of Tarsus and his pupil Theodore of Mopsuestia the standard for its theologians, and its decision was renewed at synods in 576 and 585.' Molenberg, 'The Silence', p. 145.

[4] Or, less likely, 'catholic Fathers of the church.'

[5] Or 'harmony,' 'agreement.'

aid for learning, perfect in beauties; this man who uproots and puts an end to the sickly diseases from the minds of those who approached his teaching eagerly...

That which was said of Solomon was fulfilled in him: he was wiser than everyone before him and after him.'[1]

As van Rompay notes:

'The emphasis which Theodore placed on historical exegesis, his complex of hermeneutic principles, and his theology and anthropology, had considerable influence on the East-Syrian theologians working in the School of Nisibis and, later on, at the other schools in Persian territory.'[2]

Although Theodore wrote in Greek, his works are far better preserved in Syriac,[3] thanks to his works being condemned at the Fifth Ecumenical Council at Constantinople in 553.[4] The commentary on John, which survives only in fragments in Greek and Latin,[5] is complete in Syriac.[6] His writings may perhaps already have begun to be translated into Syriac, in or around the school of Edessa, even during the author's lifetime - Barḥadbshabbā writes of Qiyōrē (Head of the Persian School at Edessa in the early fifth century):

'In this one thing he was anxious: up to then the interpretations of the Interpreter were not translated into the Syriac tongue... After the commentary of Theodore had been translated into Syriac and passed on to the assembly of Edessa, that man [i.e. Qiyōrē]

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[1] Barḥadbshabbā, *Cause*, p. 378 f., trans. by Becker.

This passage is discussed by Vööbus, *History of the School*, p. 106 f.

[2] Van Rompay 'The Christian Syriac Tradition', p. 640.

Macina provides a rich analysis of the development of early Antiochene exegesis, particularly Theodore, in 'L'homme à l'école de Dieu. D'Antioche à Nisibe: Profil herméneutique, théologique et kérygmatique du mouvement scoliaste nestorien.'

Schäublin has demonstrated that Antiochene exegesis had its origin in pagan, Alexandrian philology. See *Untersuchungen*, p. 156 f.

[3] Theodore in the Syriac tradition is the subject of van Rompay's 'Quelques remarques.' There is a brief discussion of Theodore in Syriac translation in van Rompay 'The Christian Syriac Tradition', p. 634.

Names associated with this translation activity are Qiyōrē, Hiba, Kumi and Ma'na of Rewardashir. See van Rompay 'The Christian Syriac Tradition', p. 634. For a more detailed discussion of the identities of the translators, see van Rompay, 'Quelques remarques,' pp. 35 - 37.

[4] Rejected at the same council were the works Theodoret of Cyrus had written against Cyril of Alexandria, and Ibas' letter to Mari. See Grillmeier and Hainthaler, *Christ*, vol. 2:2, pp. 411 - 462.

[5] See Geerard, *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*, vol. 2, p. 350 f.

[6] Theodore of Mopsuestia, ed. and trans. I.-M. Vosté, *Theodori Mopsuesteni commentarius in evangelium Iohannis Apostoli.*

Some idea of the complex situation with regard to what is left of Theodore's commentaries in general can be had from Macomber, 'Newly discovered fragments', p. 441.

took his rest[1] with the whole brotherly assembly.'[2]

Van Rompay takes the chronicler to mean, not that Qiyōrē instigated the translation of Theodore's works, but only that the task was completed under his supervision. The same writer also suggests that the introduction of Theodore's commentaries into the curriculum at Edessa was an innovation, the ground for which had been well prepared by the existence of an Antiochene current within the Edessene tradition[3] - the latter having its roots in Ephrem, as we learn from Baṛhadbshabbā.[4] Indeed, van Rompay notes, for example, significant correspondences in both method and content between Ephrem's exegesis of Genesis and Exodus and that of the exegetes of the Antiochene school.[5]

If Mshīhāzkā's *Chronicle of Arbela* is a genuine 6th C work and not a modern forgery perpetrated by Mingana,[6] we learn from it that Abraham d-bēt Rabban (the third Head of the School of Nisibis, starting some time after 510)[7] took it upon himself to clarify what he saw as the obscurities of Theodore in Syriac. It is not entirely clear whether this clarification consisted of a revision of the translations as such, or simply a desire to aid the students in understanding them in class.[8]

Since Theodore's commentary on John exists only in Syriac translation, in references to it, it should be recognized that the Syriac is not necessarily an entirely faithful rendition of the original Greek.

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[1] The Syriac, like the English, could imply that he died, but probably should be taken to mean that he was satisfied (an alternative meaning of the word).

[2] Baṛhadbshabbā, *Cause*, p. 382 - 83, trans. by Becker.

[3] Van Rompay, 'Quelques remarques,' p. 33.

[4] See Baṛhadbshabbā, *Cause*, p. 382.

[5] Van Rompay, 'Quelques remarques,' p. 34.

[6] See Brock, 'Syriac historical writing', pp. 304 - 302 (23 - 25).

[7] Vööbus, *History of the School*, p. 136.

[8] See Vööbus, *History of the School*, p. 137 f., based on Mshīhāzkā's *Chronicle* (ed. Mingana, *Sources syriaques*), p. 622.

Is 'the Exegete' of the *Commentary*, Theodore?

Since the Church of the East considered Theodore the exegete *par excellence*, and, as such, he is referred to simply as 'the Interpreter,'[1] it might therefore, not unreasonably, be presumed that the phrase which begins every section of the *Commentary* (except at 92) following the quotation of the Gospel text, '*qāla al-mufassir*,' is a reference to Theodore.

However, although of the eleven instances where 'the exegete' is cited (ignoring 86 and 92 for the time being), in seven, Theodore is indeed the source, this still leaves two important cases where he almost certainly is not (15 and 16, where Isho'dad is the source), one minor instance, at 2, where he probably is not, and one case, at 74, where material from Theodore and Chrysostom is conflated. Moreover, Theodore or, more precisely, *Mār Tāwadrūs* (from Syriac *Tewādāwrāws*)[2] is referred to by name three times (54, 86 and 92), and in fact at 86 (and probably 92, although there seems to be minor textual corruption here) it specifically says 'the exegete says Mār Tāwadrūs says ...,'[3] so presumably Ibn al-Ṭayyib does not intend the reader to take 'the exegete' as specifically referring to Theodore in the other cases where the latter is not mentioned by name. So it seems that 'the exegete' is simply a formula for distinguishing the start of the commentary proper from the Gospel quotation,[4] although as has been said, Theodore is more often than not the source quoted following the phrase, which is no doubt an indication of the author's preeminent position in the history of exegesis in the Eastern Church.

On the two occasions (9 and 11), however, where 'the exegete' is cited other than immediately following the Biblical extracts, Theodore is indeed the source. This situation suggests that in one or more of the intermediaries for the *Commentary*, Theodore is referred to by name, whilst in another he is simply 'the exegete.' This means that in the instances where 'the exegete' is cited other than following Biblical quotations in the rest of the *Commentary*, they can probably be taken to refer to Theodore. This inconsistency in the usage of the phrase 'the exegete' also suggests that Ibn al-Ṭayyib himself was unsure of its precise reference beyond the formulaic rubric.

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[1] Syriac, *mpashqānā*. See references in Payne Smith, *Thesaurus*, p. 3328, col. 2.

[2] See Costaz, *Dictionnaire*, p. 420, for vocalisation of the Syriac.

[3] Sanders has found other instances of this formulation, 'Moses bar Kepha bei Ibn at-Ṭayyib', p. 255.

[4] Reinink came to the same conclusion in studying the commentary on Luke:

'Hinter dem *Qāla al-Mufassir* steckt *eine typisch kompilatorische und grösstenteils anonyme Exegese*', Reinink, *Studien zur Quellen- und Traditionsgeschichte*, p. 160.

However, if the *Commentary* on John (as opposed to Luke) is preserving 'eine ... anonyme Exegese' at all, it is doing so only in a few, brief sections, since most of the interpretations of the *Commentary* can ultimately be traced to known sources.

Theodore as a source for the *Commentary*.

Of all the twenty-three sections of the *Commentary* based wholly or partly on Theodore, in only three is he named (54, 86 and 92). Given Theodore's pre-eminence in the Eastern exegetical tradition, if Ibn al-Ṭayyib was aware of the ultimate source of his Theodoran material why would he avoid mention of the master exegete except in all but three apparently random cases? The most likely explanation is surely that he was unaware of the ultimate provenance of his Theodoran material. Macomber suggests the possibility that it comes from an intermediary source, shared, incidentally, with the anonymous Eastern lectionary commentaries represented by a number of manuscripts known to Macomber.[1] This seems much more plausible, given the evidence, than Macomber's contradictory statement that Ibn al-Ṭayyib seems to have had a Syriac version of Theodore's commentary on John to hand.[2]

The conclusion that Ibn al-Ṭayyib did not have Theodore's commentary to hand is supported by the fact that the three sections in which Theodore is cited (54, 86 and 92),[3] are in fact no closer to Theodore's original than a number of other sections. At 74, for example, after the introductory phrase, 'the implication of what he says is thus,' we have a relatively close rendering of Theodore, as we also do at 87,[4] although even in these cases, the parallel is close and yet not close enough to suggest the absence of an intermediary. These two sections are nonetheless closer to Theodore than 86, in which Theodore is actually cited - after an opening clearly related to his cited source, Ibn al-Ṭayyib soon slips into material shared with Moshe, although ultimately derived from Chrysostom.[5]

Might the *Commentary* on the synoptic Gospels be a reliable source for reconstructing Theodore's lost commentaries?

Macomber, who has undertaken invaluable work in uncovering and describing many manuscripts (including exegetical works) in ecclesiastical libraries in the Middle East, has suggested that the *Commentary* might be a valuable source for reconstructing

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[1] *Episcopal Syriac B, Berlin Sachau 104*, and the first parts of both *Vatican Borgia Syriac 61* and *Vatican Syriac 244*. See Macomber, 'Newly Discovered Fragments', p. 446 f.

[2] Macomber, 'Newly Discovered Fragments', p. 446.

[3] For 54, see Theodore, ed. and trans. Vosté, *Theodori Mopsuesteni commentarius in evangelium Iohannis Apostoli* (from now on referred to as Theodore), p. 33 / 23; and for 92, see p. 38 / 26 f.

[4] For 74 see Theodore, p. 37 / 25 f.; for 87, see p. 38 / 26.

[5] See Theodore, p. 37 f. / 26; Moshe, f. 27r / p. 88, ll. 23-25; and Chrysostom, p. 47.

Theodore's lost interpretations of the synoptic Gospels:

'It is clear from a comparison of Ibn at-Ṭayyib with Vosté's edition of the Syriac version of Theodore's commentary [on John], that all of the first part [i.e. immediately following the Gospel quotations] is in fact derived from the commentary of Theodore.'[1]

However, as has been shown above, not all of the sections which Macomber assumes are Theodoran, are such, even if most are. Macomber continues:

'Frequently, Theodore's words have been abbreviated and summarized, and much has been omitted, but all of the views and most of the expressions themselves are unmistakeably those of Theodore... It should be noted that the Theodoran sections of the commentary are very much closer to the original text of Theodore and more extensive than anything found in either Isho'dad of Merv or the *Gannat Bussāmē*.'[2]

On this point, it could be claimed that Macomber's assessment of the *Commentary* is tainted by viewing it through spectacles of the rose-tinted variety. Of course, it would be wonderful if the *Commentary* were a repository of accurately transmitted Theodoran material, but, as we have seen, even the passages attributed to Theodore are not very close, and the unattributed passages are impossible to distinguish from passages derived from other sources. Moreover, the question of attribution in the synoptic Gospels is even more problematic:

'Even in Nestorian manuscripts [of the *Commentary* on the Synoptic Gospels] the particular source of individual comments is never identified. Indeed, the only differentiation of sources is simply implied by vague introductory phrases. In most cases this is merely, "And the saying that...", referring to particular words of the evangelist that are to be commented, but often, by contrast, comments are introduced by "And some say...", or "The commentators inquire into the reason for...". I suspect that the former views are those of Theodore himself, as the character of the comments is similar to what we find in other of his surviving exegetical works. Proving this suspicion, however, would require a careful comparison of Ibn al-Ṭayyib with fragments of Theodore's commentaries that are certainly genuine.'[3]

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[1] Macomber, 'Newly discovered fragments', p. 445.

[2] Macomber, 'Newly discovered fragments', p. 445.

[3] Macomber, 'Newly discovered fragments', p. 445 f.

Macomber continues:

'If we may judge from the commentary on the Gospel of St. John, Ibn al-Ṭayyib may be expected to give an appreciably more extensive reflection of the missing gospel commentaries of Theodore than other sources now available to us. The only serious question in my mind is whether Ibn al-Ṭayyib had at his disposal a Syriac version of the commentary on the Synoptics, as he seems to have had for the commentary on John, or whether he was using a secondary source.'[1]

However, all the evidence of the *Commentary* would suggest that it is very unlikely indeed that Ibn al-Ṭayyib had a copy of Theodore's commentary to hand.

Reinink considers that what might be more fruitful in the attempt to reconstruct Theodore's lost exegesis is a study of those portions of the *Anonymous Commentary* (see below) which are based on the source which is not heavily dependent on Isho'dad. Reinink thinks these portions to be the best existing representative of Theodore's exegesis of *Romans*, and suggests that a careful analysis of this anonymous tradition in the sphere of the Gospel commentaries might be a useful approach in recreating Theodore's lost interpretations.[2]

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[1] Macomber, 'Newly discovered fragments', p. 446. Macomber later states a similar conclusion:

'... both [i.e. Ibn al-Ṭayyib and the lectionary commentary, the author is discussing] seem to me much better sources for the reconstruction of the missing gospel commentaries of Theodore of Mopsuestia than either Isho'dad of Merv or the *Gannat Bussāmē*.' *'Newly* discovered fragments', p. 447.

[2] Reinink, 'Die Exegese des Theodor', p. 391. Also see the discussion of the relationship between this source and Theodore in Reinink, *Studien zur Quellen- und Traditionsgeschichte*, pp. 165 - 222.

John Chrysostom.

Although Chrysostom (c. 347 - 407), being primarily a homilist, is sometimes seen as a less rigid adherent of Antiochene exegetical principals than his friend and contemporary, Theodore, as Simonetti has pointed out, 'the myriad possibilities which [Chrysostom] could find in the text which had just been read to his congregation are based on a rigorously literal reading of it, something which shows his full adherence to Antiochene exegetical precepts.'[1] However, the distinctive differences between the two masters were recognised in the 7th C by Dadisho' Qaṭraya, who claimed that Chrysostom's homiletic (*mtargmānāyā*) approach to scripture was undoubtedly more appropriate for the laity than the historical (*tash'itānāyā*) one espoused by Theodore, which was more suitable for scholars.[2]

As has already been noted, for a while, and at the behest of Ḥenānā, Chrysostom became the preferred exegete at the School of Nisibis,[3] although van Rompay points out that this was probably not an innovation:

'Although Chrysostom's exegetical works have left no traces in the early East-Syrian literature, in all probability it was not Ḥenānā who first introduced him in East-Syrian circles. His name and some of his works may have already been known in the Schools of Edessa and Nisibis.'[4]

An important point made by Molenberg is that Chrysostom's rôle in West Syriac exegesis (as opposed to theology in general) should not be compared, as has sometimes been done, with that of Theodore's for the East Syriac tradition. The latter was hugely influential for Eastern exegesis from an early stage, whilst Chrysostom leaves no appreciable mark on early Western exegetes such as Philoxenus and Jacob of Serug, for example. It was not until the eighth century (with the possible exception of an anonymous catena), that Lazarus of Bēt-Kandasa shows the marked influence of Chrysostom's exegesis. Later, in the ninth century, the works of Moshe bar Kepha and the so-called Severus-catena (861) are heavily indebted to the Greek Father.[5]

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[1] Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p. 74.

[2] Van Rompay, 'Development of Biblical Interpretation', p. 565.

[3] See Vööbus, *History of the School*, pp. 244 - 246.

For a discussion of the backlash in favour of Theodoran values, see van Rompay, 'Development of Biblical Interpretation', p. 564 f.

[4] Van Rompay, 'The Christian Syriac Tradition', p. 637.

[5] Molenberg, 'The Silence of the Sources', p. 147.

Krüger has produced a brief overview of the rich Syriac tradition of translation of Chrysostom's works.[1] This tradition has not only intrinsic importance, but because, as Childers notes in his study on the homilies on John[2] in Syriac, the Syriac mss predate the extant Greek evidence by centuries, they are vital early witnesses to the original text.[3]

A Melkite contemporary of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's, Ibn al-Faḍl, a deacon at Antioch, produced Arabic translations of Chrysostom's homilies on Matthew and John[4] but these are unlikely to have reached the Eastern orbit in Baghdad and there is no reason not to take Ibn al-Ṭayyib at his word that he was using Syriac sources as the basis for his work.

It should be noted that Chrysostom's nomenclature in Ibn al-Ṭayyib's works is not consistent. Throughout the body of the *Commentary*, in all three mss used in this study, Chrysostom is referred to as *Mār Yūwanīs*, but in the BL ms of the *Introduction*, he is referred to as *Yūḥanná fam al-dhahab*,[5] as he is, on at least one occasion, in Ibn al-Ṭayyib's compilation of canon-law, *Fiqh al-naṣrānīya*.[6] Whether the Arabic calque simply represents a later tradition is unclear. Incidentally, in the notes on authorship of the 16th C Ethiopic mss of the *Commentary*, the Geez calque for Chrysostom, *afä wärq*, is used.[7]

<u>Chrysostom as a source for the *Commentary*.</u>

Chrysostom is cited 10 times in the *Commentary* (12, 26, 33, 42, 44, 57, 71, 76, 90 and 95). All of these sections relate recognisably to sections of Chrysostom's homilies.[8]

The author argues that, 'given the scanty evidence of Chrysostom's influence on monophysite authors in the late and early sixth century,' Reller (*Mose bar Kepha*, p. 139) is mistaken in claiming that the Greek's importance for West-Syriac exegesis even before Moshe cannot be overestimated.

[1] See Krüger, 'Eine bisher unbekannte homilie des hl. Johannes Chrysostomus in syrischer Übersetzung', p. 78 f. See also Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 80, n. 4; Geerard, *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*, vol. 2, p. 523 f. and for accounts of the Syriac mss of particular homilies, Sauget, 'L'Homéliaire du Vatican Syriaque 253', p. 331 n. 17 (hom. 37); and p. 337, n. 31 (hom. 85).

[2] The eighty-eight homilies on John, incidentally, are far shorter than those on Matthew were delivered later, probably about 391. See Quasten, *Patrology, vol. 3*, p. 439.

[3] Childers, *Studies in the Syriac Versions*, p. 4.

[4] See Graf, 'Exegetische Scriften', p. 23. Graf does not state whether Ibn al-Faḍl translates the homilies complete.

See also Bacha, 'S. Jean Chrysostome dans la littérature arabe' p. 176 f.

[5] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, ms BL or. 3201, f. 9r, l. 18.

[6] Ibn al-Ṭayyib's *Fiqh al-naṣrānīya*, Arabic vol. I, p. 120, l. 8.

[7] See Cowley, 'Scholia of Ahob of Qatar', p. 331, n. 6.

[8] Writing of the Geez translation of the *Commentary* on John, Cowley's verdict that 'the passages

However, the fact that on three occasions Chrysostomic material immediately precedes citations of Chrysostom (44, 76 and 90)[1] suggests that Ibn al-Ṭayyib did not have Chrysostom's homilies (in Syriac, of course) to hand, since he seems to be unaware of the provenance of all his Chrysostomic material.

In addition, at 77, there is a misunderstanding of Chrysostom which surely would not have occurred had Ibn al-Ṭayyib been interpreting Chrysostom's original text (in Syriac translation, of course). However far from the letter of his principle anterior sources (Theodore and Chrysostom), this instance is, in fact, the only one where the general sense of the source could be said not to have found its way relatively unscathed into the *Commentary*. In this section, Ibn al-Ṭayyib makes the point that the Evangelists other than John, and unlike him, concentrate on aspects of Christ's humanity utilising the witness of the Prophets. However, the precise point which is made by Chrysostom, on whom the passage is surely based (he is cited at the start of 76), is the contrast between, on the one hand, John's use of a living witness, John the Baptist, and on the other, the remaining Evangelists' use of the departed Prophets.[2] Moreover, in the subsequent section, 78, the Arabic fails again to impart Chrysostom's essential message. In this section, Ibn al-Ṭayyib more or less reiterates the point already made in 76 about the Baptist's putting the Jews to shame for failing to acknowledge Christ, whilst missing Chrysostom's crucial notion that John's witness would be more easily and readily accepted, coming as it did from a lesser being than Christ Himself.[3]

The evidence adduced above indicates that Chrysostom is almost certainly not a proximate source, so Ibn al-Ṭayyib must have derived his interpretations based on Chrysostom from one or more intermediary. One such source is the Chrysostomic intermediary shared with Moshe, the existence of which will be demonstrated later. Another possible source would be the Mar Aba (d. 751) of the *Gannat Bussāmē*, who will also be discussed in due course.

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attributed to [Chrysostom] bear little resemblance to [his] writings,' is rather harsh considering the fact that Chrysostom's extensive homilies inevitably require considerable abbreviation for exegetical purposes. Cowley, 'Scholia', p. 333.

[1] See 43, Chrysostom, ed. Schaff, *A Select Library*, vol. 14 (from now on referred to as Chrysostom), p. 36 (43 is a conflation of Theodore and Chrysostom); see 75, Chrysostom p. 46; and see 89, Chrysostom pp. 48 - 50.

[2] See Chrysostom, p. 44.

[3] See Chrysostom, p. 44.

Isho'dad of Merv.

Isho'dad (fl. 850) was the author of commentaries on most of the Bible. His vigorous style, along with the absence of a consistent coverage of the text are in contrast to exegetes in the more sober, Theodoran mould.

In his introduction to Gibson's edition of the Gospel Commentary,[1] Harris desribes the wellspring from which Isho'dad draws:

'... there is no doubt that the writer had access to a mass of Jewish and Christian traditions, explanatory of the Old and New Testaments.'[2]

Isho'dad's substantial influence not only on writers in the Eastern tradition, such as Ibn al-Ṭayyib, but also Dionysius and Bar Hebraeus is significant proof of the absence of exclusivity between the two Syriac exegetical streams.[3]

Isho'dad as a source for the *Commentary*.

Concerning the Geez translation of the *Commentary*, Cowley has stated:

'those [passages] attributed to Isho'dad are almost identical with the text of [his] gospel commentary.'[4]

Isho'dad is cited on five occasions in the *Commentary* (30, 48, 62, 73 and 91), and while it is true that these passages are generally much closer to Isho'dad than those attributed to Chrysostom and Theodore, to say that they are 'almost identical' suggests that they are no more than a translation, which is not the case, as can be seen from the comparisons below.

48 'And Isho'dad says that mankind is born from God in three ways. He means that he attains for himself being chosen in three ways - by baptism and knowing its mysteries,

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[1] Isho'dad of Merv, ed. and trans. Gibson, *The Commentaries of Isho'dad on the Gospels*.

[2] Isho'dad, trans., p. xix.

[3] There is a useful discussion of Isho'dad's Old Testament commentaries (concentrating on the twelve Prophets) as a bridge of the two traditions in Diettrich, *Ishō'dādh's Stellung in der Auslegungsgeschichte des Alten Testamentes*. See in particular, p. viii (introduction); pp. xxxiv - xlii (Isho'dad as a source for Dionysius and Bar Hebraeus); pp. lvi - lxv (Isho'dad's use of heterodox sources).

[4] Cowley, 'Scholia of Ahob of Qatar', p. 333.

by the resurrection and by the explanations.[1]'

Isho'dad: 'the Scriptures say that we are born of God in three ways; through Baptism, by means of types; through purification by means of Revelations; through Resurrection by means of deeds; and through the three of them we are called the Adoption.'[2]

63 [Continuation of immediately preceding section attributed to Isho'dad] And also, therefore he records the uniting of a part less significant than the human [i.e. the flesh] to indicate the condescension of the Son of God through His mercy and His uniting with us.

Isho'dad: 'he speaks of a vile part of Man ... so that from this here, he may know the greatness of the humiliation of the Word; ... but at the same time that He should humble [Himself] for our exaltation and our glory.'[3]

73 'Isho'dad says and adds to what he says - '<We saw His glory> as a glory <like that of the Only-begotten from the Father>' in order to indicate that the seeing was of the deeds [*af'āl*] not the Essence.'

Isho'dad: 'Therefore it is not said about the substance [*ūsiyā*] of the Word that 'we beheld', but about the coming into being [*hwāyā*] of the Word.'[4]

91 'Isho'dad says that the filiation of the Saviour was truly of the Substance. Our filiation is through grace.'

Isho'dad: 'He on the one hand is united in a natural Sonship; we on the other hand, are partakers in the graciousness, and grace for grace.'[5]

From all four of the above extracts, it can be seen that Ibn al-Ṭayyib is signally not just reproducing Isho'dad in Arabic. In general Ibn al-Ṭayyib is a little clearer and more sober in tone than his forebear. At 73, for example, the rendering of Syriac *hwāyā*, 'coming into being' with Arabic *af'āl*, deeds, is not precisely accurate but it does fulfil Ibn al-Ṭayyib's stated aim of clarifying the original.

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[1] For the problem with this word, see note in translation chapter.

[2] Isho'dad, ed. and trans. Gibson, *The Commentaries* (from now on referred to as Isho'dad), p. 111 / 216.

[3] Isho'dad, p. 115 / 219.

[4] Isho'dad, p. 118 / 221. Gibson's trans. emended from 'being' to 'coming into being.'

[5] Isho'dad, p. 119 / 221. Gibson's trans. emended from 'naturally in Sonship' to 'in a natural Sonship.'

Authors cited by Isho'dad but not Ibn al-Ṭayyib.

30 'And Isho'dad says that the light refers to Christ, and the darkness to the people of Israel.'

Isho'dad: 'Others, the Persian Sage, for example, say that the Light is Christ, the darkness the people of Israel.'[1]

31 'And some say that the darkness refers to the body in which He lived.'

Isho'dad: 'But Gregorius calls darkness figuratively the flesh, in which God the Word dwelt, and the world.'[2]

64 [Continuation of cited passage, attributed (correctly) to Isho'dad, starting at 62]

'And some holy men asked God to reveal to them this phrase. So it was said to them: "Accord to the Word the fact of dwelling, and to the flesh, the fact of being."'

Isho'dad: 'Now one of the Theophori, labouring in prayer, to know the meaning of *the Word became flesh*, heard by a revelation, that it was being said to him, Give to *the flesh* the became; to *the Word*, that *it dwelt.*, ... This was as they testify and hand down, the monk Cyrus.'[3]

In the preceding three extracts, it can be seen that whereas, in the passage corresponding to 31, Isho'dad cites Gregory, Ibn al-Ṭayyib simply has *qawm*, 'people', whilst in the passage corresponding to 64, 'one of the Theophori, ... the monk Cyrus' is cited by Isho'dad, whereas Ibn al-Ṭayyib refers only to *ba'ḍ al-qiddīsīna*, 'some holy men.' In 30, Isho'dad's citation of 'the Persian sage' (i.e. Aphrahat), is replaced with one to Isho'dad himself. Why might Ibn al-Ṭayyib, or possibly an intermediary, replace Isho'dad's mention of specific individuals with references of a more general nature? The answer might be that he presumes the names will mean little or nothing to his expected audience - maybe he is even trying to avoid intimidating them with unfamiliar names. A less likely explanation is that Ibn al-Ṭayyib is unfamiliar himself with these names, although one might reasonably ask where an eleventh century theologian would look for enlightenment when encountering an obscure name from Christian literary history?

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[1] Isho'dad, p. 110 / 216.

[2] Isho'dad, p. 110 / 216.

[3] Isho'dad, p. 115 / 219.

However, as a counter-example, we have the following:

62. 'And he [i.e. Isho'dad] cites as evidence what Athanasius says: 'at the taking of the flesh, it [the flesh] was uniting with God and at the taking of the soul, it [the soul] was uniting with God.'

Isho'dad: 'But now he shewed, that there was in the Person of the Word stability and movement of His individuality, Athanasius says, the flesh is at once the flesh of God, the soul at once the soul of God.'[1]

Why should Ibn al-Ṭayyib, or his intermediary cite Athansius but not Gregory, one of the Theophori, or the Persian sage? There is no obvious explanation. Moreover, in a slightly earlier section we find an example of a citation in the *Commentary* which is wholly absent from Isho'dad:

60 'And Ahob says, with regard to his phrase <the Word became flesh>, against what some suppose, namely, that when He united with us, it is supposed that He became a human. It is customary in the Book to record matters with regard to what people think about them, such as when it says <Herod was worried>, and <the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll>.'

Isho'dad: 'It is not alleged that He was changed to flesh, to Man; ... for that is a custom of Scripture, that it names facts according to the supposition of others; like this, that the heavens...'[2]

The fact that Ahob is cited as the origin of this interpretation in the *Commentary* but not Isho'dad, and also the fact that Ibn al-Ṭayyib's version is fuller, certainly suggest that the latter two share a common source.

<u>Uncited Isho'dad.</u>

The following three extracts show resemblances between Ibn al-Ṭayyib and Isho'dad in passages of the *Commentary* in which either Isho'dad is not cited, or which do not immediately follow sections in which he is cited. Once again, a comparison between these two authors highlights the difference in tone - Ibn al-Ṭayyib is noticeably less rhetorical and flamboyant than the Bishop of Hdattā, but, in these cases, with plainness

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[1] Isho'dad, p. 114 f. / 219.

[2] Isho'dad, p. 114 / 218.

comes clarity.

18 'When he says <all was through Him> it is not because He was in the manner of an instrument or something used but He is the maker of all existing things.'

Isho'dad: 'Now this *by Him* is not as by a servant, nor as by a tool, according to the wickedness of some; but as by the Maker and Creator.'[1]

19 'When he says <without Him nothing existed which existed>, that is to say, the Father did not act alone in doing something without Him since their Substance is one and their action is one.'

Isho'dad: 'there was nothing of the things that were, that was [created] from the Father alone without Him, the Son being a stranger to its creation, for in this, that the Son is continually with the Father, He of necessity is partaker with Him also in creation.'[2]

88. 'And when it says <Because the law was given through Moses> it means that the gift through Moses is the law only containing the commandments and prohibitions given through grace when they [i.e. the Israelites] trangressed the natural law.'

Isho'dad: 'He calls the Law also *Grace*; ... the natural law has been made void, the Scriptural Law is ordained; the first one remaining unstudied in its keeping and rejected.'[3]

Whilst these extracts are noticeably at a further remove from Isho'dad than the cited sections, they are clearly in the same tradition, and, in fact, in all three cases Isho'dad is closer to the *Commentary* than anything to be found in Theodore or Chrysostom. Since Isho'dad is also cited by name five times in the *Commentary*, the likeliest explanation for the existence of cited and uncited parallels is that Ibn al-Ṭayyib had access, whether directly or indirectly, to both Isho'dad[4] and a common source. Whether Ibn al-Ṭayyib had to hand a source combining Isho'dad and a common source, or whether the two were separate is impossible to say, given the evidence. What should be noted is the fact that one of the two sources proposed by Reinink for the New Testament section of the *Anonymous Commentary* was Isho'dad himself, or something very close to him.[5]

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[1] Isho'dad, p. 108 / 215.

[2] Isho'dad, p. 108 / 215.

[3] Isho'dad, p. 119 / 221.

[4] While it is hardly a contentious issue, Cowley confirms Isho'dad as a source for the *Commentary*. See *EBI*, p. 61, on Jn 12:11; and 'Scholia' p. 340, on unspecified extracts of John.

[5] Reinink, 'Die Exegese des Theodor', p. 382.

Moshe bar Kepha.

In Moshe bar Kepha (c. 833 - 903) we reach a pivotal figure in the West Syriac commentary tradition.[1] He is, as McCullough writes:

'the earliest Syriac-speaking exegete known to us to comment on the whole of the Bible[2] and his commentaries have played a key role both in preserving previous exegetical tradition and in influencing the great Syriac exegetes of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.'[3]

Moreover, unlike Dionysius bar Salībī, whose subsequent exegetical writings Schlimme claims:

'are pure excerpts, omitting important parts and leaving the reader unsatisfied and puzzled... [Moshe] compiled the available traditions on biblical books and topics with exemplary skill.'[4]

Only half of the commentary on Matthew remains but those on Luke and John are relatively well preserved, the latter having been published in a photographic edition of the ms.[5] For the student of exegetical history, the most frustrating feature of Moshe's commentaries is the rarity of his citation of sources, whether anterior or proximate.

Moshe as a source for the *Commentary* on John.

With regard to Ibn al-Ṭayyib's interpretation of Jn 12:11, Cowley claims Moshe as the proximate source,[6] as he does elsewhere for unspecified extracts of John.[7]

However, while there is clearly a relatively close resemblance between passages in the *Commentary* and Moshe bar Kepha, the evidence, in fact, would seem to point away from Moshe's being a direct source for Ibn al-Ṭayyib.

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[1] For assessments of Moshe's importance see Strothmann, *Johannes von apamea*, p. 106, n. 119, Vööbus, 'Découverte du commentaire de Mose bar Kepha sur l'Evangile de Matthieu', p. 359 and Schlimme, 'Die Bibelkommentare des Moses bar Kepha', passim.

[2] See Baumstark, 'Die Evangelienexegese', p. 359, n. 3.

[3] McCullough, 'Early Syriac Commentaries', p. 25.

[4] Schlimme, 'Die Bibelkommentare des Moses bar Kepha', excerpted from English summary, p. 71.

[5] The commentary on John has been edited and translated by Schlimme, *Der Johanneskommentar des Moses bar Kepha.*

[6] Cowley, *EBI,* p. 61.

[7] Cowley, 'Scholia', p. 340.

One indication is the fact that in five of the sections of the *Commentary* (42, 44 (with 45), 57, 90, 95), in which material ultimately derived from Chrysostom is found, material also shared, to a greater or lesser extent, by Moshe, Chrysostom is cited by Ibn al-Ṭayyib but not Moshe. This strongly suggests a common, Chrysostomic source.

There are a number of other indications of a common Chrysostomic source in these sections attributed to Chrysostom:

1. It is surely no coincidence that the interpretations we find in 44 and 45 are also contiguous in Moshe,[1] whilst the Chrysostom, upon which they would seem to be based, is to be found in two separate homilies (and in reverse order).[2]

2. In 57, in which we find the first section of commentary on Jn 1:14 attributed to Chrysostom in the *Commentary*, we find a close parallel with what is Moshe's first comment on the same pericope (surely no coincidence).[3] However, the analogy, which we find in the *Commentary*, of the king's association with the poor not detracting from him, is absent from Moshe but not from Chrysostom.

3. In 90, the Evangelist is lauded for making his comparison, not between the persons of Moses and Christ, but rather the benefits gained from them. This concept comes from Chrysostom,[4] but while Moshe clearly has access to this ultimate source, he in fact makes quite the opposite point,[5] thus contradicting the sense of the Gospel, which makes the comparison between the law coming from Moses, and truth and grace coming from Christ.

The most striking example for establishing the nature of the relationship between Ibn al-Ṭayyib and Moshe is to be found at 42. In Chrysostom's homily no. 8, we find the following:

'<And the world knew Him not.> By <the world> he here means the multitude, which is corrupt, and closely attached to earthly things, the common turbulent, silly people. For the friends and favourites of God all knew Him, even before His coming in the flesh. Concerning the Patriarch Christ Himself speaks by name, <that your father

[1] For 44, see Moshe, ed. and trans. Schlimme, *Der Johanneskommentar* (from now on referred to as Moshe), f. 18r / p. 55, ll. 12-15; and for 45, see Moshe, f. 18r / p. 55, ll. 20-23.

[2] For 44, see Chrysostom, Homily no. 10, p. 35; and for 45, Homily no. 9, p. 32.

[3] See Moshe, f. 19r and 19v / p. 60, ll. 3 f., 15 f. and 20 f.

[4] Chrysostom, p. 49.

[5] See Moshe, f. 28r / p. 91, l. 17-19.

Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.>[1] And concerning David, confuting the Jews He said, <How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, the Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand.>[2] [*Two full sentences including a quotation from Acts 3:24*] "How then," says one, "did He say Himself <Many prophets have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them>[3]?"'"[4]

Moshe has the following, clearly derived from Chrysostom:

'The entirety of contemptible men, who cling to worldly things, did not know Him, whilst the virtuous men knew Him. Our Lord said Himself:<Abraham rejoiced to see my day, saw it and was glad>.[5] And when He chastised the Jews through David, He said <How does David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right>.[6] And the apostle Paul says <Many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see but did not see>[7].[8]

In the *Commentary* we find:

42. And MārYuwānīs says, when he says <and the world did not know Him> it means that the ignorant ones who clung to earthly matters did not know Him. As for the people of grace, they knew Him when He came and before He came through being aware of His descent, as He said <your Father Abraham desired to see my day, saw it and was glad>.[9] Just as David said <the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right>.[10] And as He says <Many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see but did not see>.[11]

The remarkably close correspondence between Moshe and Ibn al-Ṭayyib (including the adoption of Mt 13:17 in favour of Chrysostom's Lk 10:24) might lead one to assume

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[1] Jn 8:56.

[2] Mt 22:43.

[3] Lk 10:24.

[4] Chrysostom, p. 30. This passage is also, incidentally the basis for Philoxenus, *Commentaire*, Sy., p. 50, l. 24 - p. 51, l. 7 but Moshe's source (see below) is clearly not Philoxenus.

[5] Jn 8:56.

[6] Mt 22:43 (quoting Ps 110:1).

[7] Mt 13:17.

[8] Moshe, 17r, l. 30 - 17v, ll. 1 - 8 / p. 53, ll. 8 -19.

[9] Jn 8:56.

[10] Ps 110:1.

[11] Mt 13:17.

that Moshe was a direct source for the Arabic, for the correspondence is far too close for it to be a coincidental adaption of Chrysostom. However, there is one crucial difference - Chrysostom is cited by Ibn al-Ṭayyib but not Moshe. Given that there is no obvious evidence of textual corruption at this point in the ms of Moshe's commentary (throughout, Moshe rarely cites his sources), one must be led to the conclusion that Moshe and Ibn al-Ṭayyib ultimately derived this Chrysostomic material from a common intermediary source. Of course, by the time this interpretation reached Ibn al-Ṭayyib it may well have become embedded in a quite different context from that in Moshe's source, but it remained intact, and most importantly, it retained its provenance from Chrysostom.

All the evidence above suggests not that Moshe is a source for the *Commentary*, but rather that he and Ibn al-Ṭayyib had a common source of Chrysostomic material.

Moshe as a source for the *Commentary* on Luke.

With regard to the *Commentary* on Luke, one of the leading exponents of source-critical work in the field of Syriac Gospel exegesis, Reinink, has written:

'Aus einem Vergleich zwischen der Exegese des Ibn al-Ṭayyib und der Exegese des Moses bar Kepha zu Luk. 2, 34 ff. in Moses' Lukaskommentar ... ergab sich eine so enge Verwandschaft zwischen der kompilatorischen Exegese des Moses und der des Ibn al-Ṭayyib, daß mit der Möglichkeit ernstlich gerechnet werden muß, daß Ibn al-Ṭayyib die Evangelienkommentare des Jakobiten weitgehend benutzte.'[1]

However, not long after the publication of Reinink's monograph, Sanders, after a careful comparison of the interpretation of Luke 1:40 in Ibn al-Ṭayyib, Moshe and the *Gannat* (research which was carried out in consultation with Reinink), came to the conclusion that, while it could not be denied that Ibn al-Ṭayyib may have had access to Moshe's work, it is clear that the two authors shared a common source, whose interpretation of Luke 1:40 later found its way into the *Gannat*, under the name of Mar Aba.[2] Sanders also notes that Ibn al-Ṭayyib's tone is closer to that of Mar Aba rather than Moshe's in addressing the reader or audience directly.[3]

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[1] Reinink, *Gannat Bussāmē*, p. 161, n. 10.

[2] Sanders, 'Moses bar Kepha', p. 256.

[3] Sanders, 'Moses bar Kepha', p. 259 f.

Sections attributed to Ephrem.

The earliest Syriac commentary relating to the Gospels is that on the Diatessaron by Ephrem (c. 306 - 373).[1] It is crucial as an extended example of fourth-century Syriac Gospel exegesis. Ephrem finds the Gospels, as he does the rest of the Bible, a rich source of symbols. As he himself said, 'this Jesus has made so many symbols that I have fallen into the sea of them'.[2] There are some textual problems in the work (only the Armenian text is complete) and the authorship has been a matter of some debate.

The first section attributed to Ephrem is as follows:

29. And Mar Ephrem says when he [i.e. the evangelist] speaks concerning the eternity of the eternal Son and His birth from the Father he begins by speaking about the creation of what was created [and] said <all was through Him>.

This interpretation is not found in the appropriate place in the Diatessaron commentary, although in his interpretation of the previous two verses, Ephrem has indeed stressed the eternity of the Word.[3] Ephrem's exegesis of the phrase at hand consists of quoting other biblical phrases confirming that God is the creator of all.

The second section in which Ephrem is cited is thus:

85. Mar Ephrem says that when he says <He comes after me>, it is because he is six months older than Him and he says <He has precedence over me> because of His divinity.

This also does not come from the Diatessaron commentary but the interpretation is found unattributed in Moshe.[4]

Although neither of these interpretations attributed to Ephrem are to be found in the Diatessaron commentary, and although pseudo-Ephrem is rife in Syriac literature, they may still be part of genuine Ephremic tradition, since, as van Rompay has noted:

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[1] See Ephrem, ed. and trans. (Latin) Leloir, *Saint Éphrem, Commentaire de 'Évangile concordant* and trans. (Eng.) McCarthy, *Saint Ephrem's Commentary*.

[2] Ephrem, quoted from the *Carmina Nisibena* by Brock, 'The Harp of the Spirit', p. 17.

[3] Ephrem, 1. 2 - 5. Leloir and McCarthy use the same numbering system for the Diatessaron commentary.

[4] See Moshe, f. 26r / p. 85, ll. 1 - 9.

'The "traditions of Mar Ephrem", mentioned by Barḥadbshabbā, are not Ephrem's written works, but the exegetical heritage which was created and moulded before him, to which he may have contributed, and which he passed to the next generation.'[1]

Another possible early source for these Ephremic traditions is the commentary on the Gospels by a disciple of Ephrem's called Aba (fl. 400). This commentary has been preserved in fragments in a ms in the British Library.[2] Reinink has argued that sections of his Gospel commentary other than those preserved in the ms are to be found under Ephrem's name in the *Gannat Bussāmē* and Ibn al-Ṭayyib's *Commentary* has been shown to share material with the *Gannat*. Reinink's attribution of the appropriate sections to Aba, is based on the fact that, although Aba was apparently a close disciple of Ephrem, the portions of the *Gannat* under question are quite different from Ephrem's work, as they also are from Theodore of Mopsuestia's, the other most significant influence on Syriac exegesis of the period.[3]

Unidentified passages.

Other than the two passages attributed to Ephrem, there are two more sections of the *Commentary* which are surely not by Ibn al-Ṭayyib but whose source(s)[4] have remained unidentified - the first (65) being too specific not to be derived from a source (i.e. 'And another asked to understand it, so it was said..'), and the second (66) being attributed to 'the Theologian,' meaning Gregory of Nazianzus.[5] Neither of these passages are in Theodore, Chrysostom, Isho'dad or Moshe.

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[1] Van Rompay, 'The Christian Syriac Tradition', p. 633.

[2] Aba, three fragments ed. Harris, *Fragments of the Commentary of Ephrem Syrus upon the Diatessaron*, pp. 92-95 and the fourth ed. Nau, 'Fragments de Mar Aba, disciple de Saint Ephrem', p. 70 f.

[3] Reinink, 'Neue Fragmente zum Diatessaronkommentar des Ephremschülers Aba', passim.

[4] They are, it should be noted, adjacent sections, which may suggest that they come from the same intermediary.

[5] The notion attributed to Nazianzus has not yet been located - the Theological Orations and the letters on the Apollinarian controversy have been consulted so far. It is, though, just vaguely hinted at in the Fourth Oration, p. 191, and the letter to Nectarius, p. 231.

Possible original material.

واجتهد فى الايضاح وازيد من عندى حل شك .[1]

'I work hard to clarify, and I add my own [material to] dissolve[2] doubt.'

We learn from Ibn al-Ṭayyib's own hand in his introduction that he did not shy away from adapting his source material, or even adding to it, in order to effect clarification.

We cannot, of course, be sure that what we might imagine to be original material by Ibn al-Ṭayyib (included here is radical reworking of a source), is such. It may simply be that this supposedly original material is based on an undiscovered intermediary. However, the case for Ibn al-Ṭayyib being responsible for many, or even most of the passages which remain wholly unaccounted for in Theodore, Chrysostom, Isho'dad or Moshe, is strengthened by the fact that many of them are, as we hope to show below, of a piece and by no means at odds with what we might expect from the author, given his intellectual background.

In the following, when a passage is posited as being by Ibn al-Ṭayyib, it should always be borne in mind that any claims are necessarily hypothetical since our knowledge of the author's proximate sources is so sketchy. Only a few of the supposedly original passages will be analysed, although all are quoted in the relevant appendix.

One characteristic modification which Ibn al-Ṭayyib seems to make is in creating his own analogies (or similes), or substituting his own for those in the source text, both of which adaptions are undertaken for the sake of clarification. For example, in explaining the manner in which the Word became flesh, at 55 we find a passage clearly based on Isho'dad.[3] The analogies of water becoming air, and Zayd becoming a grammarian (a rather donnish analogy, this), however, are not in the Syriac. As well as being far more concise and more scientific (*'ilmī*, that is) than Isho'dad, Ibn al-Ṭayyib is also much clearer. Moreover, Ibn al-Ṭayyib fully understands the crucial and essential difference between Arabic *ṣāra* and Syriac *hwā*, the former having a stronger sense of change.

Again, at 71, in elucidating the Gospel's phrase <His glory, like the Glory>, the

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[1] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, ms BL or. 3201, f. 9r, l. 22; (ed. Manqariyūs, *Tafsīr al-Mashriqī*, p. 36, l. 20 f.).

[2] The syntax here is not clear and the edition is so far from the ms at this point that the former is probably not to be trusted.

[3] Isho'dad, p. 111 ff. / 217 ff.

simile found in the source text is altered. The passage in Ibn al-Ṭayyib is correctly attributed to Chrysostom, and the Greek's own wonderfully elaborated example relates to a king.[1] The point made is that we should understand the difference between a king (who is obviously like a king since he is one) and a commoner who happens to resemble a king. Ibn al-Ṭayyib's analogy is that of a hero:

'He was brave like a hero. This means that he was truly brave, peerless in everything.'

Ibn al-Ṭayyib's motive for this modification is not immediately obvious, but it may be that he feels Chrysostom's example of an earthly king is too open to confusion with the heavenly King Himself.

Again at 80, Chrysostom's original simile is replaced with one which is significantly less charming and poetic. In explaining how the Baptist was skilful in introducing the people to Christ's true nature only gradually (Jn 1:15), Chrysostom employs the engaging analogy of mother birds teaching their chicks to fly progressively rather than quickly and suddenly. In the Arabic, Ibn al-Ṭayyib changes the setting from that of the animal kingdom to his own profession of medicine and likens the process to that of a skilful doctor introducing difficult treatments step by step.

Ibn al-Ṭayyib's most common addition to, or adaption of, his source material is by way of technical, theological explanation or expansion. Even Theodore, let alone Chrysostom and Isho'dad, does not focus much of his attention on strictly theological matters and indeed, all three commentators share a tendency to avoid such technical terms as 'hypostasis' and 'property.' Ibn al-Ṭayyib, however, even though he seems to be addressing a lay audience does not hesitate to employ such technical terms in an attempt to clarify fully the Prologue, which is, after all, one of the most theologically suggestive passages in Scripture.

Occurring at 10, 14, 15, 16 and 39 are passages not to be found in Theodore, Chrysostom or Isho'dad, in which Ibn al-Ṭayyib concerns himself with describing the Trinity. Ibn al-Ṭayyib wrote a number of treatises on this subject, but it is striking that whereas the emphasis of the treatises, which are probably directed, at least in part, at a Muslim audience, is clearly on the unity of the Trinity, this is not the focus of the Trinitarian passages of the *Commentary*, which are more generally descriptive of the Trinity. It is also noteworthy that Christological matters are given less space than Trinitarian,

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[1] Chrysostom, p. 41.

although at 46, 61 and 92 Ibn al-Ṭayyib does apparently interpolate brief explanations of the incarnation.

When discussing which parts of the *Commentary* may be original, account must be taken of the four occasions (61, 72, 82 and 83)[1] on which an interpretation is introduced with the words 'we say.[2] This phrase, however, rather than indicating Ibn al-Ṭayyib's own exegesis seems to be a stylistic formula, since the interpretations at 72, 82 and 83 are all to be found in Chrysostom and are continuations of sections in which the Greek is cited. In addition, 61 is a loose version of a passage in Isho'dad.[3]

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[1] For 72, see Chrysostom, p. 40; and for 82 and 83, Chrysostom, p. 45.

[2] 'We have said' occurs at 15 and 84.

[3] Cf. Isho'dad, p. 114 / 218.

Other important Eastern commentaries.

Three very important works in the history of Eastern exegesis are the *Gannat Bussāmē* and two separate but closely related works, the so-called *Diyarbakir* and *Anonymous* commentaries.[1] The fact that the New Testament portions of the *Gannat* and the *Anonymous Commentary* display a marked affinity with Isho'dad, means that they cannot afford to be ignored by the student of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's *Commentary*. More importantly, van Rompay has noted significant parallels between the *Diyarbakir* commentary and Ibn al-Ṭayyib's commentary on Genesis, as has Sanders between the *Gannat* and the *Commentary* on Luke. Unfortunately, however, the New Testament section of the *Anonymous* tradition remains unpublished, whilst the portion of the *Gannat* published by Reinink contains nothing treating the Prologue to John directly. So for the moment we are reliant on analyses in the secondary literature.

The *Diyarbakir 22* and *Anonymous Commentaries.*

Van Rompay writes of these texts:

'Three separate but interrelated texts must be distinguished here:

1) an anonymous commentary on Gen-Exod 9:32, preserved only in ms. (olim) Diyarbakir 22;[2]

2) an anonymous commentary on the Pentateuch (published in part by Levene),[3] preserved in a number of manuscripts;

3) the continuation of the preceding commentary, covering the remaining books of the Old Testament (in two mss) or the entire Old Testament and New Testament (in one ms, i.e., ms Diyarbakir 22).

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[1] For a clarification of these terms see immediately below.

[2] The ms is now in the Chaldean Patriarchate in Baghdad, no. 21.9. See Reinink, 'Die Exegese des Theodor', p. 381. Not van Rompay's footnote.

[3] Ed. Levene, *The Early Syrian Fathers on Genesis*, which consists of Levene's ed. and trans. of part of Mingana 553, which covers the Pentateuch. See Mingana, *Catalogue of Mingana Collection*, vol. 1, p. 1022 f., which includes an exhaustive list of citations.

Levene believes the literary and intellectual skill of the author to be of a high order, and as an exegete, ranks him as far superior to Isho'dad; 'Remarques sur deux commentaires', p. 62. [Not van Rompay's footnote].

As far as we can judge from the section on Gen - Exod 9:32 of the *Anonymous Commentary* [i.e. 2] is an abridged version of the *Diyarbakir Commentary* [i.e. 1].'[1]

Therefore, and somewhat confusingly, according to van Rompay, the New Testament portion of the Diyarbakir ms (and in fact the whole of the commentary after Exod. 9:32) is not a continuation of the so-called *Diyarbakir Commentary*, which term he reserves for the section on Gen. - Exod. 9:32 alone, but rather forms part of the *Anonymous Commentary* tradition.[2] Thus, the New Testament portion of the Diyarbakir ms can be referred to as part of the *Anonymous Commentary*.

All three works seem to emanate from the region of Bet-Qatraye (around modern Qatar). The *Diarbakir Commentary* seems to date from the 8th C, whilst the *Anonymous Commentary* may have been composed around the end of the 9th, or beginning of the 10th C.[3]

The only detailed study of the New Testament portion of the *Anonymous* tradition has been undertaken by Reinink (he does not, unfortunately, attempt to date the text). He says that the text differs in its literary style from other Eastern works, meaning the *Scholion* of Theodore bar Koni, Isho' bar Nun's *Select Questions on the Old and New Testament*, the commentaries of Isho'dad and the *Gannat Bussāmē*. The unknown compiler, as described by Reinink, made excerpts from the two sources described below, sometimes juxtaposing, sometimes interweaving them.[4]

The first source is compilatory in character. Reinink considers it to be in such close accord with Isho'dad's exegesis, that they may be assumed to be one and the same work.[5]

The closeness of this source to Isho'dad may be explained by the fact that the author of at least the Old Testament portion of the *Anonymous* tradition is described in Mingana 553 (containing only the commentary on the Pentateuch) as 'a humble disciple of Isho'dad.'[6] Levene considers that his commentary may have been drawn up from notes

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[1] Van Rompay, 'Development of Biblical Interpretation', p. 568.

[2] See van Rompay, *Le Commentaire*, trans. vol., pp. xl - xliv.

[3] Van Rompay, 'Development of Biblical Interpretation', p. 568 f.

[4] Reinink, 'Die Exegese des Theodor', p. 381 f.

[5] Reinink, 'Die Exegese des Theodor', p. 382.

[6] Levene, 'Remarques sur deux commentaires', p. 55.

taken down from the mouth of the master.[1]

In contrast, the second source is usually in the form of a continuous commentary, in which verses, or sections of verses, are connected by transitional formulae. In the commentary on John, this source represents, at origin, the commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia, although with a more significant accretion of Syriac traditions than is the case with the commentary on Luke.[2] This source has close ties with Theodore bar Koni, Isho' bar Nun and Isho'dad.[3]

The compiler takes neither Theodore's, nor Isho'dad's exegesis wholesale, but the excerpts he makes are more or less verbatim.[4]

In an article published before the appearance of his edition of the *Diyarbakir Commentary*, van Rompay noted the parallels between it and the commentary on Genesis by Ibn at-Ṭayyib, some of which are not found in Isho'dad.[5] With regard to Cain and Abel, van Rompay notes a correspondence between the interpretations found in the *Diyarbakir Commentary* and Ibn al-Ṭayyib,[6] which is also the case with the commentary on the name 'Mezahab' (Gen. 36:39).[7]

The *Gannat Bussāmē*

The *Gannat Bussāmē*[8] is a collection of 'commentaries on the biblical pericopes (both OT and NT) read during liturgical services. It is arranged according to the Sundays

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[1] Levene, 'Remarques sur deux commentaires', p. 62.

[2] Reinink, 'Die Exegese des Theodor', p. 382.

[3] Reinink, 'Die Exegese des Theodor', p. 390.

[4] Reinink, 'Die Exegese des Theodor', p. 382 f.

[5] Van Rompay, 'Le commentaire sur Gen.' [N.B. not the subsequent ed. of the text], p. 123.

[6] Anon., trans. van Rompay, *Le Commentaire*, p. 58, n. 35, referring to Ibn al-Ṭayyib, ed. and trans. Sanders, *Commentaire*, text, p. 39, l. 18 - p. 40, l. 1, and trans. p. 38, n. 3.

In the *Diyarbakir Commentary*, the tradition in common with Ibn al-Ṭayyib is attributed to Rabban Gabriel - for a discussion of the identity of whom, see van Rompay, *Le Commentaire*, trans. XXVII - XXXII.

[7] Anon., trans. van Rompay, *Le Commentaire*, p. 138, n. 15, referring to Ibn al-Ṭayyib, ed. and trans. Sanders, *Commentaire*, text p. 90, n. 1, 2nd part and trans. p. 84 f.

Once again the tradition is attributed to Rabban, whom van Rompay equates with the Rabban Gabriel mentioned above.

[8] Ed. and trans. Reinink, *Gannat Bussāmē, 1. Die Adventssonntage.* Reinink also produced a masterly analysis of the sources for the text: *Studien zur Quellen- und Traditionsgeschichte des Evangelienkommentars der Gannat Bussāmē.*

and feasts of the liturgical year.'[1] It may have been written for a group of members of the Eastern Church of Turkish origin.[2] It can be dated to the tenth century.[3]

Only the sources for the NT portions will be mentioned here.[4]

The most frequently cited authority in the *Gannat* is Mar Aba, or Mar Aba of Kashkar, who can be identified with the Catholicos, Mar Aba II (641 - 751, sic).[5] Reinink demonstrates that while he is as conversant with Theodoran principles as would be expected, his works not only display the marked influence of John Chrysostom, but he even quotes him, although always without naming his source. Mar Aba also manifests a pronounced propensity towards symbolic interpretation, at odds with strictly Antiochene methodology.[6]

Mar Aba's importance for the present study lies in the fact that Sanders has shown interpretations ascribed to him in the *Gannat* are shared by Ibn al-Ṭayyib's commentary on Luke.[7]

The second most frequently cited authority in the *Gannat* is Ṣeliba Zeka Seharbokt bar Mesargis, who is not otherwise known in Syriac literature, but is known in the Arabic-Islamic tradition. If Reinink is correct in his identification, Seliba came from a family of Christian medics and wrote his commentary in the first half of the ninth century.[8]

The third source which Reinink mentions is Isho'dad.

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[1] Van Rompay, 'Development of Biblical Interpretation', p. 571.

[2] *Gannat Bussāmē*, trans. p. vii.

[3] See van Rompay, 'Development of Biblical Interpretation', p. 571.

For a detailed discussion of the problem of dating the *Gannat*, see *Gannat Bussāmē*, trans. p. x.

[4] For mention of sources relevant to sections of the *Gannat* not dealing with the New Testament, see van Rompay, 'Development of Biblical Interpretation', p. 571 and particularly, *Gannat Bussāmē*, trans. pp. xxx - xxxix, where four other sources are discussed.

[5] For a full discussion of the identification, see Reinink, *Studien*, pp. 61 - 70.

For an extensive analysis of Mar Aba's importance in the Gospel commentary tradition as exemplified by the *Gannat* see Reinink, *Studien*, pp. 158 - 268.

For a condensed version of the above, see *Gannat Bussāmē*, trans. pp. xxi - xxv.

[6] Reinink discussed by Molenberg, 'The Silence,' p. 149.

[7] Sanders, 'Moses bar Kepha bei Ibn at-Ṭayyib', p. 256.

[8] See *Gannat Bussāmē*, trans. pp. xxv - xxix.

Conclusion

1. Sources

2. Interaction of Eastern and Western traditions.

3. Contemporary trends.

4. Level of Creativity.

Proximate Sources and possible intermediaries.

Only three sources have been conclusively established for the *Commentary*:

1. Isho'dad (or a reliable intermediary).

2. A source in common with Isho'dad.

3. An intermediary in common with Moshe ultimately deriving from Chrysostom.

Ibn al-Ṭayyib, may, of course, have had a source to hand which combined the above in any combination, 1 and 2 being the most likely amalgam.

It should be admitted that Ibn al-Ṭayyib's proximate sources are unlikely to come to light. Nonetheless it is worth noting that the terminus ante quem for an intermediary for material in common with Isho'dad (d. 850) must be the first half of the 9th C and the second half of the same century for the seemingly largely Chrysostomic material in common with Moshe (d. 903).

Two texts which should certainly be investigated for possible connections with the *Commentary* are the New Testament portion of the *Anonymous Commentary* (Diyarbakir ms) and likewise the *Gannat Bussāmē*, particularly those interpretations attributed to Mar Aba in the latter. Incidentally, the *Anonymous Commentary* is probably, and the *Gannat* almost certainly, too late be be the common sources shared with Isho'dad and Moshe. Another unpublished work which needs to be investigated is Isho' bar Nun's *Select Questions on the Old and New Testament* (d. 828).[1]

Eliminated as proximate sources for the *Commentary* are Ephrem, Theodore, Chrysostom and Moshe.

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[1] See van Rompay, 'Development of Biblical Interpretation', p. 567.

The somewhat tangled web which constitutes the great tradition of exegetical compilation, in which Ibn al-Ṭayyib plays an important rôle, might best be seen as a continually evolving stream, with tributaries contributing to a varied current. One commentary is just a snap-shot or cross-section of this stream in which Theodoran, Chrysostomic and even earlier Ephremic interpretations are often all combined.

2. Interaction between Eastern and Western traditions.

Although the East and West Syriac traditions are often presumed to exemplify the frequently touted dichotomy between the Alexandrine and Antiochene schools of exegesis, there was in fact, as Brock points out, 'considerable interaction between the East and West-Syrian exegetical traditions.'[1]

Van Rompay has suggested that from an early period the West-Syriac tradition did not reject Theodore's interpretative methods outright:

'The opponents of Antiochene exegesis, in Syria representing the West-Syrian branch of the tradition, strongly criticized Theodore's categorical insistence on historical interpretation. They did not, however, take refuge in the camp of Theodore's enemies, i.e. Origen[2] and the allegorists. They were not rejecting the historical approach, but rather superimposing typological and spiritual exegesis on the first level of exegesis - which they, too, saw as the historical one - much more freely and abundantly than would have been acceptable to Theodore's followers. In this moderate and balanced approach, Syrian scholars were led by Ephrem, as well as by such Greek authors as Chrysostom, Athanasius and Cyril of Alexandria, and the Cappadocians. Since most of these authors were also read and studied among the East Syrians, and gradually left their mark on the latter's exegesis as well, *the distance between the two branches of Syriac exegesis tended to*

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[1] Brock, Brief Outline p. 94.

Two important articles dealing with this issue of the interaction between the Eastern and Western traditions are:

van Rompay, 'La littérature exégétique syriaque et la rapprochement des traditions syrienne-occidentale et syrienne-orientale.'

Molenberg, 'The Silence of the Sources: The Sixth Century and East-Syrian "Antiochene" Exegesis.'

[2] '... as far as we know, neither Philo's nor Origen's exegetical works have been translated into Syriac. Origen's influence only entered the Syrian world through the Syriac translations of the works of Evagrius of Pontus, which became very popular among both East and West Syrians and would have a great impact on the exegetical literature of the later period.' Van Rompay, 'The Christian Syriac Tradition of Interpretation', p. 641.

narrow.'[1,2]

Speaking of the Eastern tradition, on the other hand, also at a relatively early stage in its development, Molenberg has noted:

'In the course of the sixth century spiritual interpretation found its way into biblical exegesis.'[3]

In other words, one of the very aspects of Alexandrian exegesis which is thought to distinguish it most from the Antiochene, was becoming a feature of the interpretative armoury of the latter tradition.

Van Rompay has remarked that the narrowing of the gap between the Eastern and Western traditions, noted above,

'becomes even more clearly visible in the literature of the Islamic period.'[4]

This phenomenon in the Christian sphere is explained elsewhere by the author as resulting, paradoxically, precisely from the cessation of Christian rule in the region:

'[With the advent of Arab rule, both] Monophysites and Nestorians were freed from the harassment of the Chalcedonian authorities, and contacts between the various groups were intensified.'[5]

For Molenberg, in the Western tradition, Moshe can be seen as exemplifying this interaction:

'Moses bar Kepha did not use only the works of John Chrysostom; he also drew on the commentaries of Theodore of Mopsuestia[6] and used Syriac dyophysite interpretations.[7] Part of these interpretations were probably taken from a source identical

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[1] Not the author's italics.

[2] Van Rompay, 'The Christian Syriac Tradition of Interpretation', p. 640 f.

[3] Molenberg, 'The Silence of the Sources,' p. 155.

[4] Van Rompay, 'The Christian Syriac Tradition of Interpretation', p. 641.

[5] Van Rompay, 'Development of Biblical Interpretation', p. 559.

[6] See e.g. Reller, *Mose bar Kepha*, p. 161 ff.

[7] Cf. e.g. Reller, *Mose bar Kepha*, 169 ff. and Reinink, *Studien*, pp. 90 - 113.

either to Isho'dad or Theodore bar Koni or closely related to both of them. His work displays a tendency in Syriac monophysite exegesis to combine the features of early monophysite exegesis with its Alexandrian ferment with those of Antiochene origin...'[1]

Working in the other direction, in the Eastern tradition of the same period, Molenberg notes spiritual interpretative tendencies of an Alexandrian hue in Theodore bar Koni and Isho' bar Nun, contrary to the Antiochene standards laid down by the sixth-century synods. Chrysostom, for example, begins to be cited around the end of the eighth century by Isho' bar Nun, and Isho'dad not only borrows from Isho' bar Nun but also uses extracts of Chrysostom not found in the earlier author.[2]

We can see Ibn al-Ṭayyib as exemplifying this interaction between the Eastern and Western traditions in two ways. Firstly, in the sources he employed - quantitatively speaking, Theodore is less the foundation of the *Commentary* than is Chrysostom.[3] Moreover, Ibn al-Ṭayyib certainly seems to have shared a source with Moshe. Secondly, as Brock has pointed out:

'through Ibn al-Ṭayyib's Arabic commentaries the East Syrian exegetical tradition reaches the later Coptic and Ethiopian Orthodox traditions.'[4]

3. To what extent does the *Commentary* typify contemporary trends?

The encyclopaedic nature of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's exegesis typifies a trend in the Syriac exegesis of the period after the advent of Islam, although Ibn al-Ṭayyib's motivation in wanting to preserve the Syriac heritage by translating it into Arabic was quite specific to him. Prior to Islam commentaries were usually written on single books or passages of the Bible, the latter sometimes in the form of poetry (or poetic homilies) but during the Islamic period commentaries began to be produced on more or less the whole Bible (e.g. Moshe and Isho'dad). The reasons for this development are not clear but may include the wider availability of complete texts of the Bible and the fact that the holy scripture of the Islamic tradition was very much viewed as an indivisible entity.

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[1] Molenberg, 'The Silence of the Sources', p. 148.

[2] See Molenberg, 'The Silence of the Sources', p. 148.

[3] Chrysostom is, of course, an Antiochene exegete, but as has been noted, from around the eighth century, he came to be regarded as the seminal exegete of the Western tradition.

[4] Brock, *Brief Outline*, p. 94.

The trend in Syriac exegesis, beginning around the eighth century, towards encyclopaedic works, is mirrored in the Islamic Arabic tradition of *tafsīr* of around the same period, a trend exemplified above all by the *Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*[1] by Abū Ja'far al-Ṭabarī (d. 923). al-Tabarī's work can described as 'a vast compendium of traditions and analysis.'[2] Another important work, this time contemporary with the *Commentary* is al-Tha'labī's (d. 1035) *al-Kashf wa-al-bayān 'an tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, which is comparable with al-Ṭabarī's in its size and compendious nature.[3] Also in the encyclopaedic vein are the numerous biographical dictionaries of the period, a genre which Gibb describes as 'a wholly indigenous creation of the Islamic community'.[4]

4. Level of creativity.

At the conclusion of his article (already referred to) on the Syriac interpretation of Lk 2:25, Coakley discusses the crucial question of which period in the history of Syriac exegesis, creativity in interpreting Scripture could be said to be on the wane. He discusses suggestions on this matter put forward by Vosté and three German scholars.

In 1928, and rather dismissively, Vosté proposed a relatively early date for the end of creative exegesis (whilst not exempting Latin and Greek writers from the same stricture):

'La littérature syriaque semble avoir perdu a partir du VIe siècle toute originalité; toute sève créatrice semble épuisée à la suite du schisme et des persecutions. On constate d'ailleurs le même phénomène chez les Latins et chez les Grecs. Après le VIe siècle il n'ya plus que des compilateurs et des abréviateurs'.[5]

Coakley considers that Vosté is overly pessimistic, and prefers the conclusion reached by Schlimme, Strothmann and Wiessner, in an article published jointly in 1978. The period of innovation in exegesis proposed by these authors extends into the century after Vosté's suggestion:

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[1] The work was many years in the making and 'was not ready for dissemination until some date between 896 and 903, Bosworth, al-Ṭabarī', *EI*, vol. 10, p. 14.

[2] Rippin, 'Tafsīr', *EI*, vol. 10, p. 86.

See the second part of the conclusion of the thesis for a discussion of the existence, or otherwise, of traces of the influence of *tafsīr* on the *Commentary*.

[3] See Rippin, 'Tafsīr', *EI*, vol. 10, p. 86.

[4] Gibb, 'Islamic Biographical Literature' p. 54, and passim for an overview of the genre.

[5] Vosté, 'Le Gannat Bussame', p. 395 f.; quoted, in part, Coakley, 'The Old Man Simeon' p. 212, n. 90.

'Die inhaltlich-materialen Aussagen zu den wesentlichen Problemen der Theologie, vor allem zur Bibel-Exegese, scheinen als festes Traditionsgut im 7. Jh. abgeschlossen zu werden.'[1]

Coakley himself sees Moshe bar Kepha [c. 833 - 903] as providing a summation of this creative period:

'it [is] clear that after Moshe bar Kepha scholars preferred not to discuss alternative solutions to problems but to choose from, or combine, the exegetical possibilities already available.'[2]

'Moshe bar Kepha presents an inventory of the exegesis of this period, and marks its end. Later E. and W. Syrian tradition does not go beyond handing on or abbreviating the material which can be found in his work.'[3]

Whilst it may well be true that exegetes after Moshe did not venture novel interpretations of the Bible, it is clear that a writer such as Ibn al-Ṭayyib fulfilled his duty as an exegete with his intellectual faculties fully engaged and was no doubt not alone amongst later exegetes in being no mere peddler of half-digested, received ideas.

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[1] Schlimme et al., 'Traditionalismus und Orthodoxie', p. 195; quoted Coakley, 'The Old Man Simeon' p. 212, n. 90.

[2] Coakley, 'The Old Man Simeon' p. 211.

[3] Coakley, 'The Old Man Simeon' p. 212. Coakley cites Schlimme et al. as reaching the same conclusion, 'Traditionalismus und Orthodoxie', pp.192 f.

Chapter 6.

Technical Terminology in the *Commentary*.

Preface.

The purpose of the present chapter is to elucidate some of the technical theological vocabulary found in the *Commentary*. The particularly problematic terms *jawhar* and *dhāt*, and *shakhṣ* and *qunūm* will be discussed in some detail, including their usage by authors other than Ibn al-Ṭayyib. This widening of scope, whilst interesting for its own sake, has, more importantly, resolved some issues which might have remained unresolved had the analysis been restricted to Ibn al-Ṭayyib. The other technical terms, the meaning of which is not contentious, are noted along with a brief explanation and examples of their employment (those occurring outside the *Commentary* are quoted, those within are only listed according to the number of the section of the *Commentary* in which they occur.) Some quotations are repeated from one section to another - this is for the sake of clarity and avoids cross-referencing.

There has been no attempt to provide equal coverage of all the terms analysed here. *Jawhar* and *dhāt* proved to be particularly problematic and demanded a detailed study unwarranted by most of the other terms.

Given the complexity of the history of the key Trinitarian and Christological terms in theological literature, it is beyond the scope of the present work to give anything other than a very brief resumé of the Greek and Syriac lexical background. However, to make any sense of the Arabic terminology, account must be taken of Greek and Syriac, which is the literature from which Christian Arabic emerges. For the sake of clarity, many of the key Greek and Syriac terms are left untranslated. To burden with English connotations these multifaceted terms would only muddy the waters.

It is beyond the scope of this study to describe Islamic usage of the terms under scrutiny here. It is discussed only where it throws light on the Christian usage.

Abbreviations:

C = Coptic; E = Church of the East; M = Melkite; W = Syrian Orthodox.

Introduction.

The overriding impression one gets from studying the usage of the major technical terms in Christian Arabic discourse is one of disarray.[1] To take one example (admittedly extreme), there are some ten words merely to express the persons of the Trinity.[2] This somewhat chaotic situation, which, incidentally, is mirrored in the proliferation of Arabic versions of the Bible, is surely not entirely accidental.

Arabic is the language of Islam. Although this platitude hides the fact that not all Arabs are Muslims and not all Islamic literature is in Arabic, the overwhelming identification between the religion and the language of its revelation should not be forgotten in the effort to promote awareness of the non-Muslim contribution to Arabic culture. Around four centuries after 'Iyāḍ ibn Ghanm had effected the Arab conquest of Nisibis,[3] Elias (975 -1046) of that city could still write:

النصارى إنما يلزمهم القول بأن الله جوهر ، لحالتين : ...
والحالة الأخرى ، أن كتابهم ولغتهم أطلقا عليه اسم الجوهر .[4]

'**The Christians** are only obliged to say that God is a *jawhar* for two reasons:... The second is that their book and **their language** have applied the word *jawhar* to Him.'

فإن أنكر المسلمون ... تسميتنا البارئ تعالى ›جوهرا‹ ، عبارة عن القائم بنفسه ، فليدلونا على اسم في لغتهم ينوب عن ›القائم بنفسه‹ نيابة أوقع من اسم ›الجوهر‹ .[5]

'If **the Muslims** reproach us for calling the Creator - exalted be He -, '*jawhar*', to express that which subsists in itself, then they should indicate a word to us in **their language** which represents that which subsists in itself more appropriately than '*jawhar*'.'

As Samir notes, the language of the Christians in the first extract must be Syriac,

[1] See Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 181. Also, a cursory glance at the tables, in the same work, on pp. 182 f. will give an immediate impression of the extraordinary lack of consistency in usage from one author to another.

[2] See Haddad, *La Trinité*, pp. 170 - 181, and table p. 183. See also Holmberg, '"Person" in the Trinity', passim. Discussed more fully in section on *shakhṣ/qunūm* below.

[3] This occurred c. 640. See al-Balādhurī, *The Origins*, p. 274 and Kennedy, *The Prophet*, p. 63.

[4] Elias, 'Entretien', pp. 71 - 73.

[5] Elias, 'Entretien', p. 73.

which we can surmise from other works by Elias.[1] The ascription of language to religion in these excerpts is particularly striking when one considers the fact that already, around the year 840, some two hundred years before Elias, Nonnus, Bishop of Nisibis, had written a commentary on the Gospel of John in the Arabic tongue.[2] Despite early efforts such as Nonnus' in creating a Christian presence in Arabic, it clearly took a very long time for Syriac no longer to be considered the natural language of Christianity in the region. Elsewhere, in Baghdad, Ibn al-Ṭayyib himself writes that he is producing the *Commentary* as a whole, in order to preserve the Syriac heritage at a time when knowledge of the language is fading.[3] This suggests that Syriac, along with the Aramaic dialect local to Baghdad, still had a significant presence amongst the Christians not very long before the 11th century.[4]

We see, therefore, that even though Arabic may have been their mother tongue, it is not the language that Christians in the region associated closely with their religion.[5] This state of affairs, along with the socio-political fragmentation resulting from their being a minority with no serious political clout (this fragmentation being compounded by the divisiveness of the existence of the various Churches), did not provide very fertile ground for the establishment of a solid, monolithic tradition, where theological terms might be agreed upon and thence become securely rooted. An additional factor in the multiplicity of terms is the hybridity of the Christian Arabic heritage. It has its roots in Greek as well as Syriac, and in the philosophical traditions, as well as the theological, of both cultures.

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[1] See Elias, 'Entretien', p. 72, n. 40.

The distinction between Arab Muslims and Syriac Christians can also be found in another of Elias' encounters with the vizir Abū al-Qāsim. See Elias, 'Deux cultures', p. 634; and, for a further example, Elias, 'Le sens des mots', p. 144.

See also Elias, 'Entretien', p. 72, n. 40, where Samir notes: 'On se souviendra qu'Élie de Nisibe est parfaitement bilingue et que la région de Nisibe à son époque est encore assez largement syriacisée.'

[2] This work, though, only survives in Armenian translation. See Samir, 'Christian Arabic Literature', p. 448.

[3] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, ed. Manqariyūs, *Tafsīr al-mashriqī*, p. 36, l. 19; ms BL or. 3201, f. 9r, l. 20 f.

[4] According to Morony, 'people speaking various dialects of Aramaic were by far the most numerous linguistic group in Iraq in [the late Sasanian and early Islamic] periods' (*Iraq*, p. 169), although 'Arabs lived in or near Iraq throughout Classical and Late Antiquity' (*Iraq*, p. 214). There almost certainly were, however, Christians whose first language was Arabic from pre-Islamic times. See, for example, Montgomery Watt, 'Two Interesting Christian-Arabic Usages', passim.

Arab hegemony in Baghdad came with the construction of Baghdad as the purpose-built capital, begun by al-Manṣūr in 762. See al-Balādhurī, *The Origins*, p. 457, al-Ṭabarī, *The History*, vol. 28, p. 237 and Kennedy, *The Prophet*, p. 135.

Unfortunately, we cannot know when Baghdad became a city with a majority Arabic-, rather than Aramaic-speaking population.

[5] The Christian Arabs in South-Palestine, responsible for the corpus on which Blau's *Grammar of Christian Arabic* is based, must have felt less attachment to Syriac.

The proliferation of terminology we encounter in Christian Arabic discourse is not mirrored in Syriac. This no doubt arises from the fact that the communities for whom Syriac was the literary language were more geographically cohesive, and from there being no discord between language and religion. Syriac was, after all, predominantly a Christian language.[1] The existence, also, of a school such as that at Nisibis, with a significance beyond its home city (clearly the most effective way to promulgate a unified technical vocabulary), has no equivalence in the Christian Arab context. The perceived need (existing also in the Syriac tradition) to conform to the terminology of the Aristotelian scholastic tradition alongside that of the theological heritage surely also aided this terminological proliferation.

When Christian theologians felt the need to express themselves in Arabic, like all translators in a technical field, they faced the problem of either investing existing terms with new meanings, coining neologisms, or adopting loan-words. The Arab theologians had a particularly arduous task because they were operating in a field which was highly developed in Greek and Syriac, with the additional problem of often having to use vocabulary with heavy Islamic connotations. As a weak minority in a Muslim world they were clearly 'on the back foot' in this latter respect.

The basis of many of the Christological controversies of the 5th and 6th centuries was the differing understanding of the key Greek technical terms amongst the various parties.[2] The problems were compounded when the debate was conducted in Syriac because there was often no simple one to one correspondence between a Greek word and its Syriac equivalent, since the Syriac word may have had its own set of associations, sometimes quite different from the Greek original.[3] The issue is doubly complicated in Arabic since we are dealing with a field of discourse which ultimately goes back to Greek but whose direct antecedent is more often Syriac.

Yaḥyá was well aware that in any debate terms must be agreed upon: 'Nous agirons sagement, ... en commençant par examiner la signification exacte de chacun des mots qui entrent dans la proposition de notre adversaire, car, dans une discussion, il faut

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[1] For an example of pagan Syriac material, see Brock, 'A Syriac Collection of Prophecies', passim.

[2] See Brock, 'The Christology of the Church of the East', p. 130. Also, for example, the somewhat convoluted dispute between Severus and John of Caesarea discussed in Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 2, part 2, p. 52 ff.

[3] In the context of the relation of φυσις to Syriac *kyānā*, Wigram employs the useful image of 'two circles which cut one another but have different centres', *An Introduction to the History of the Assyrian Church*, p. 283.

tout d'abord s'entendre sur les termes que l'on emploie.' [1]

Whilst terminology was often crucial in the debates between the various churches, there were theologians who had misgivings about nit-picking over terminological niceties. Ibn al-Ṭayyib himself had the following to say on the matter:

والأسماء آلات مستعملاة للمسميات ليدل بها عليها وإذا كانت المسميات الوجود يشهد بصحتها فالمشاجرة في الأسماء من شأن السافسطائيين وهم المغالطون لا من شأن أصحاب الحق المتمسكين بالأديان . [2]

'Words are instruments employed for the things named to be signified by them. If existence bears witness to the authenticity of the things named, then dispute over the names is the business of sophists who deceive, and not the business of those concerned with the truth, who are adherents of religions'.

In the secondary literature, the work which deals most extensively with technical theological vocabulary (although not exclusively so) is Haddad, *La Trinité divine chez les théologiens arabes, 750-1050*, which is a gold-mine of pertinent citations, often from unpublished mss.[3] However, the presentation of the material is rather unsystematic, leading to a sometimes confusing impression.

Landron, *Chrétiens et musulmans en Irak*, covers a wide range of authors from the Church of the East.[4] Once again, the presentation is not crystal clear, and there is the additional drawback to Haddad that passages from the Arabic sources are quoted only in French translation.

The greatest handicap for the student of Christian Arabic literature is the lack of an adequate lexicographical reference work.[5]

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[1] Yaḥyá, trans. Périer, *Yaḥyá*, p. 155 (the Arabic has not been published).

[2] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 'Le traité sur l'Unité et la Trinité', p. 83.

[3] See particularly chapter 3, 'Notions philosophiques', pp. 129 - 185 (terminology is discussed specifically pp. 161 - 185.)

[4] The passages on terminology in this work are cited under the relevant sections.

[5] Endress' Graeco-Arabic dictionary, when it is completed, will no doubt be of some help, but this work does not cover the specifically Christian tradition.

1 ***jawhar*** **substance**

dhāt **essence** [1]

The thorniest lexical difficulty which has to be addressed in the *Commentary* is that of distinguishing between *dhāt* and *jawhar*.[2] This particular problem, which is common to a number of Christian Arabic theologians, is not confronted head-on in the major studies which address Christian Arabic theological terminology.[3] The issue is not confined to Christian theological writings, but is apparent in the philosophical corpus also (including works by Muslims, of course). In fact, although the purpose of this chapter is to elucidate the terminology as employed in *The Commentary*, it is also necessary to look into philosophical usage of the terms. It is well known that the theological debates in the early Church were undertaken against the background of Aristotelian and Platonic thought (in Late-Antique guise, of course), moreover, most of the prominent Christian Arabic theologians were also active in the field of secular philosophy. Therefore, it is no surprise if, to understand certain aspects of theology, we need to stray into this related sphere.

Jawhar and *dhāt* will only be discussed in the senses of 'substance' or 'essence', since these are the only senses relevant to the *Commentary*.[4]

Origins.

Arabic *jawhar* is a loan-word from Persian *gowhar*, ultimately going back to Zoroastrian Pahlavī *gōhr,* where the word probably already had a technical, philosophical, as well as a popular use (i.e. 'substance' as well as 'mineral, jewel')[5], which is reflected in Arabic.[6] It is, incidentally, not a Quranic word.

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[1] The translations 'substance' and 'essence' follow what seems to be widespread usage, although, in fact, there is nothing to be gleaned from the English terms to usefully distinguish between the two Arabic items.

[2] Other words relating to the substance/essence of God, not dealt with here, are discussed by Haddad, *La Trinité*. See p. 166 for *māhīyah*, pp. 166 - 168 for *'ayn*, and p. 168 f. for *ma'ná*.

[3] See Haddad, *La Trinité*, pp. 161 - 169 and Landron, *Chrétiens et musulmans*, p. 195 f.

[4] Apart from its more common usages, *jawhar*, for instance, may also be used elliptically, referring to a single unit of *jawhar*, to mean 'atom'. See Pines, *Studies in Islamic Atomism*, p. 4 f. Also Walzer: 'The atom in the Democritean-Epicurean special meaning of the term ... can be rendered by *jawhar*', al-Fārābī, *On the Perfect State*, p. 374, n. 238.

[5] See Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems*, p. 89 f. Bailey's interpretation that the word is connected with the root meaning 'to grow' is contested by Zaehner, 'Postscript to Zurvān', p. 233 f.

[6] For a very useful survey of the history of usage of *jawhar* in both *falsafah* and *kalām*, see S. van den Bergh, '*Djawhar*', *EI*.

Dhāt, unlike *jawhar*, is a native Arabic term, with important cognates in the other major Semitic languages. It also has a range of usages which are not technical.[1]

The philosophical tradition.

The Aristotelian background.

Whilst a lengthy discussion of Aristotle's notion, or notions, of substance is unnecessary here, the area of Arabic thought under discussion cannot be understood adequately without reference to them.[2]

First and foremost must be distinguished primary and secondary substance.

Primary substance:

'A substance [ὀυσία] - that which is called a substance most strictly, primarily, and most of all - is that which is neither said of a subject nor in a subject, e.g. the individual man or the individual horse.' [3]

Elsewhere, these primary substances are categorised as things 'neither in a subject nor said of a subject, for example, the individual man or individual horse - for nothing of this sort is either in a subject or said of a subject.' [4] These can be considered as individual substances.

Secondary substance:

'The species in which the things primarily called substances are, are called secondary substances, as also are the genera of these species. For example, the individual man belongs in a species, man, and animal is a genus of the species; so these - both man and

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For *jawhar* as 'jewel', see M. Keene and M. Jenkins: 'Whether or not *jawhar* had the meaning "jewel" from the beginning of the word's usage in the Arabic language is uncertain, but this meaning is well-attested from early in the Islamic era... The Arabic lexicographers from at least as early as the 4th/10th century give "jewel" as a meaning for *jawhar*... *jawhar* was clearly the most important single term for jewelry and jewels in the Arabic language during its reign as the *lingua franca* of the Islamic world.' *EI*, supplement, p. 250.

See also S.M.Stern: 'The Arabic word appears to denote the innermost part of the shell of the oyster, the pearl', quoted by Walzer in al-Fārābī, *On the Perfect State*, p. 337.

[1] See Afnan, *Philosophical Terminology*, p. 101.

[2] For a modern introduction to some of the problems in Aristotle's concept of substance, see Barnes, 'Metaphysics' in Barnes, *Cambridge Companion*, pp. 89 - 101.

[3] Aristotle, *Categories*, 2 a 11 - 14 (Bekker's numbering), trans. Ackrill.

[4] Aristotle, *Categories*, 1 b 3 - 6, trans. Ackrill.

animal - are called secondary substances.' [1]

Elsewhere, these secondary substances are categorised by Aristotle as those things which are 'said of a subject but are not in any subject. For example, man is said of a subject, the individual man, but is not in any subject.' [2] These can be considered as universal substances.

Aristotle specifies two other categories of things, namely those which 'are in a subject but not said of any subject ... for example, the individual knowledge-of-grammar' and those which are 'both said of a subject and in a subject ... for example, knowledge.' [3] However, the substances beyond Aristotle's primary and secondary are not relevant for the present discussion.

Aristotle in Syriac.

In the Syriac translation of the *Categories* revised by Jacob of Edessa,[4] οὐσία is rendered by Syriac *ūsiyā*.[5]

In his study on the Syriac commentary tradition on the *Eisagōgē*, Baumstark states that *kyānā* is found for οὐσία, as well as the Syriac transcription of the Gk.[6] Although not referring specifically to Aristotle in Syriac, Payne-Smith suggests that the transcribed form eventually became dominant.[7] This reflects the trend in Syriac translations from the fourth to seventh centuries towards a more literal rendering of the Gk. originals, both philosophical and theological.[8]

The alternative term for οὐσία in the Christian tradition, *ītūtā*, does not seem to appear in the Syriac Aristotelian corpus.

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[1] Aristotle, *Categories*, 2 a 14 - 19, trans. Ackrill.

[2] Aristotle, *Categories*, 1 a 20 - 22, trans. Ackrill.

[3] Aristotle, *Categories*, 1 a 16 - 1 b 9.

[4] See Brock 'The Syriac Commentary Tradition', p. 12 and Hugonnard-Roche 'Sur les versions syriaques', passim.

[5] See (Syriac) Aristotle, *Les Catégories*, pp. 213 and 409.

[6] Baumstark, *Aristoteles*, pp. 213 and 223 f.

[7] Payne-Smith, *Thesaurus*, p. 1703.

[8] See Brock, 'Towards a History', passim.

Aristotle in Arabic.[1]

The use of *jawhar* in parts of the Arabic Aristotelian corpus as the equivalent of ὀυσια is fairly early (e.g. Metaph. 1028 b 33, trans. Usṭāth; Metaph. 987 a 18, trans. Naẓīf; A. Post. 73 a 35, trans. Mattá.[2]

Dhāt, also, can stand for ὀυσία (e.g. A. Pr. 46 a 36, trans. Theodorus;[3] Top. 146 b 2, trans. al-Dimashqī).[4]

In what represents, according to Peters, 'the first entry of the *Categoriae*, and hence Aristotle, into the Arabic-speaking world' , the Arabic version of a Greek compendium of the *Eisagōgē*, *Categoriae*, *De interpretatione* and *Analytica priora*, translated by Ibn al-Muqaffa' (whether father or son),[5] ὀυσια is rendered by *'ayn*.[6] Walzer notes the later abandonment of *'ayn* in favour of the more convenient and unambiguous *jawhar* by the younger Ibn al-Muqaffa' in the second half of the eighth century, although the earlier term 'remained in use in the theological, mystical and legal texts, but did not really suit the Aristotelian meaning of ousia'.[7]

In the later translation of the *Categories* by Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn, according to the editor, Georr, *jawhar* stands for ὀυσια,[8] whilst *dhāt* is not used in a technical sense.[9]

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[1] See Peters, *Aristoteles Arabus*, passim.

[2] See Afnan, *Philosophical Terminology*, p. 99.

[3] This is presumably the translator Afnan refers to as *tadhārá*. See Peters, *Aristoteles Arabus*, p. 15.

[4] See Afnan, *Philosophical Terminology*, p. 101.

[5] See Peters, *Aristoteles Arabus*, p. 11.

[6] See Ibn al-Muqaffa', *al-Manṭiq*, passim, e.g. p. 9, para. 18, l. 3. This fact was recognised by al-Khwārazmī:

ويسمي عبد الله بن المقفع الجوهر عينا

'Abd Allāh ibn al-Muqaffa' calls the *jawhar*, *'ayn*.'

al-Khwārazmī, *Mafātīḥ al-'ulūm*, p. 143, l. 8. Cited by Holmberg, '"Person" in the Trinitarian Doctrine', pp. 301 - 302.

It is noteworthy that this earliest translation of the *Eisagōgē* was still available to al-Khwārazmī in the latter part of the tenth century (*Mafātīḥ al-'ulūm* is dedicated to Ibn Aḥmad al-'Utbī, vizier to the Sāmānid Nūh II Ibn Manṣūr, who ruled in Bukhārá from 976 - 997, see 'al-Khwārazmī', *EI*).

[7] See Walzer, *Greek into Arabic*, p. 97, who compares the history of Arabic renderings of *ousia* with those of *doxa*.

Afnan notes, for example, that Ibn al-Muqaffa' uses *jawhar* in *al-Manṭiq*. Afnan, *Philosophical Terminology*, p. 100.

[8] See Georr, *Les Catégories*, p. 213. See also Holmberg, '"Person" in the Trinitarian Doctrine', p. 302, citing Aristotle (Arabic), *Manṭiq Arisṭū 1*, pp. 33 - 76.

Jawhar also sometimes renders Gk. *physis,* as in the two Arabic versions of the pseudo-Aristotelian *De mundo* and Proclus.[1]

The origin of the use of both the terms in their technical senses cannot easily be established.[2]

al-Fārābī.

Ibn Abī Usaybī'ah refers to a treatise, presumed lost,[3] by al-Fārābī on the subject of *jawhar*.[4]

jawhar

Within his book, *Kitāb al-ḥurūf,* which might be called a free commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, al-Fārābī gives an invaluable, if sometimes problematic account of his understanding of many key philosophical terms.

Al-Fārābī begins his explanation of *jawhar* with a discussion of the two popular uses of the word.[5] Al-Fārābī's exposition of the philosophical usages of *jawhar* opens

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[9] See Georr, *Les Catégories*, p . 220.

[1] See al-Fārābī, *On the Perfect State*, p. 337, n. 36.

[2] See Afnan, *Philosophical Terminology*, pp. 99 - 101, where a brief history of the philosophical use of the word is given. For the early usage to be firmly established we will probably have to wait for the appropriate fascicule of Endress' Graeco-Arabic dictionary to appear.

[3] No extant version was apparently known to Walzer (al-Fārābī, *On the Perfect State*, p. 337) and the appropriate volume of Sezgin's *Geschichte* is yet to appear.

[4] Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah, *'Uyūn*, ed. Müller, vol. 2, p. 139, l. 13.

[5]

[1] والجوهر عند الجمهور يقال على الأشياء المعدنية والحجارة التي هي عندهم بالوضع والإعتبار نفيسة .

al-Fārābī, *Book of Letters,* p. 97, para. 62, ll. 20-21.

1] *'Jawhar*, amongst the common people, is said of minerals and stones which, by convention, are considered valuable.'

[2] وقد يستعملون اسم الجوهر في مثل قولنا < زيد جيّد الجوهر > ، ويعنون به جيّد الجنس وجيّد الآباء وجيّد الأمّهات .

al-Fārābī, *Book of Letters*, p. 98, para. 63, ll. 10-11.

2] '[People] may [also] use the word *jawhar*, such as when we say 'Zaid is of good *jawhar*', meaning well-bred, with good ancestors.'

with statements of the two principal meanings:

1 وأمّا في الفلسفة فإنّ الجوهر يقال على المشار إليه الذي هو لا في موضوع أصلا .[1]

1. 'In philosophy, *jawhar* is said of a referent which is not in a subject at all.'

2 ويقال على كل محمول عرّف ماهو هذا المشار إليه من نوع أو جنس أو فصل ، وعلى ما عرّف ماهية نوع نوع من أنواع هذا المشار إليه .[2]

2. '[Also], it is said of every predicate which makes known this referent whether it be a species, a genus or a differentia[3] or that which makes known the quiddity of each of the species of this referent.'

That there are two meanings according to al-Fārābī is confirmed in the conclusion to the section on *jawhar*:

صار ما يقال عليه الجوهر في الفلسفة ضربين ، أحدهما الموضوع الأخير الذي ليس له موضوع أصلا ، والثاني ماهية الشيء – أيّ شيء اتفق مما له ماهية. ولا يقال الجوهر على غير هذين .[4]

'in philosophy, that which is said to be the *jawhar* happens to be of two types, firstly, the ultimate [i.e. absolute] substrate which has no substrate at all, and secondly, the quiddity of a thing - whatever it may be - amongst that which has a quiddity. And nothing apart from these two things is said to be the *jawhar*.'

In other words, *jawhar* is used of something that cannot be 'in' a subject, and also of the universals that are said of it.[5] These two usages are Aristotle's first and second substances. Yet within the second of al-Fārābī's definitions are subsumed two separate usages, namely that which makes known a referent but also that which makes known the

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[1] al-Fārābī, *Book of Letters,* p. 100, para. 67, l. 17 f.

[2] al-Fārābī, *Book of Letters*, p. 100, para. 67, l. 18 f.

[3] Gk. *eidos*, *genos* and *diaphora* respectively.

[4] al-Fārābī, *Book of Letters*, p. 105, para. 73, ll. 8-10.

[5] Abed, *Aristotelian Logic*, p. 70.

quiddity of something.

In fact, in the midst of the text between the introduction and conclusion to the section on *jawhar* quoted above, al-Fārābī states explicitly that there is what he calls a third use (which is actually simply a sub-category of his original second category):

فإنهم يعنون بالجوهر ههنا الأشياء التي بالتئام بعضها إلى بعض تحصل ذاتُ الشيء ، وهي التي إذا عُقلت يكون قد عُقل الشيء نفسه ملخّصا بأجزائه التي بها قوام ذاته أو ملخّصا بالأشياء التي بها قوام ذاته .

فإنّ هذا المعنى الثالث من معاني الجوهر جوهر مضاف ومقيّد بشيء ، وليس يقال إنه جوهر على الإطلاق ، وإنما يقال إنه جوهر لشيء ما . [1]

'So they mean by *jawhar*, here, things, which by the connection of one to another the *dhāt* of the thing comes into being. They are those things which, if intelligized, [are such that] the thing itself is intelligized, summed up in its parts by which [arises] the subsistence of its *dhāt*, or summed up in the things by which [arises] the subsistence of its *dhāt*.

And this third of the meanings of *jawhar* is a relative *jawhar*, [i.e.] bound with something, and it is not said that it is a *jawhar* absolutely - it is only said that it is a *jawhar* of something or other.'

So there would seem to be two principle types of *jawhar*, with two sub-categories subsumed within the second - firstly, a referent which is not in a subject, secondly, that which makes known a referent, and thirdly, that which makes known the quiddity (*māhīyah*) of a referent. It is in this third sense that al-Fārābī uses *jawhar* interchangeably with *māhīyah* and *dhāt.* As we have seen in the quotation immediately above, the third type is a relative *jawhar.* Al-Fārābī argues that the first two types are both absolute. The second type, he says, is absolute since it is the intelligible of a thing, and the intelligible of a thing is identical with the thing itself. As Abed points out, surely al-Fārābī cannot be arguing that the genus or species is identical with the thing itself, since they clearly are not. Abed says that this problem is only resolved if the intelligible is taken to be the combination of all intelligibles.[2]

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[1] al-Fārābī, *Book of Letters,* p. 101, para. 67, ll. 4-8.

[2] Abed, *Aristotelian Logic*, p. 71.

Al-Fārābī begins his explanation of the term *dhāt* with five usages.[1] After expounding these five[2] he continues :

وهو يقال على كل ما يقال عليه الجوهر وعلى ما لا يقال عليه الجوهر . فإن المشار إليه الذي في موضوع ليس يقال إنه جوهر أصلا لا بإطلاق ولا بإضافة . [3]

'It [*dhāt*] is said of everything which is said to be *jawhar* but also what is not said to be *jawhar*. The referent which is in a subject is not said to be a *jawhar* at all either absolutely or relatively.'

Abed summarises al-Fārābī's discussion as follows:

'Thus *dhāt* is used for any sort of being ranging from "this" which is not "said of" a subject (such as "this spot of a certain color") to "God". In each of these cases the term *dhāt* is called "absolute *dhāt*".[4]

The usages of *dhāt* mentioned so far are absolute. But the term can also be used in relation to a thing:

وأمّا ذات الشيء فهو ذات مضافة . فأنّه يقال على ماهيّة شيء وأجزاء ماهيّته وبالجملة لكلّ ما أمكن أن يجاب به – في أيّ شيء كان – في جواب ما هو ذلك الشيء ، كان الشيء مشارا إليه لا في موضوع أو نوعا له أو كان مشارا إليه في موضوع أو نوعا له . [5]

'As for the *dhāt* of something, it is a relative *dhāt*. It is said of the quiddity of something, of the [constituent] parts of the quiddity, in short, of everything by means of which can be answered the question, about whatever it may be: 'what is that thing?', whether the thing is a referent not in a subject or a species of it, or whether it is a referent in a subject or a species of it.'

According to Abed, the implication of al-Fārābī's explanation is thus:

[1] al-Fārābī, *Book of Letters,* p. 106, para. 74, passim.

[2] The exact nature of these five need not concern us here.

[3] al-Fārābī, *Book of Letters*, p. 106, para. 75, ll. 9-11.

[4] Abed, *Aristotelian Logic*, p. 73. Abed's additional claim that in this sense *dhāt* is synonymous with *shay'* is surely false.

[5] al-Fārābī, *Book of Letters*, p. 106, para. 75, ll. 11-14.

‘ In the expression, “*dhāt* of x”..... the term *dhāt* of something can refer to any of the following: essence (*māhīyah*), genus (*jins*), differentia (*faṣl*) and even species (*naw‘*). For it, too, can be used to answer a “what is it?” question (when the subject of inquiry is an individual, of course).’ [1]

The obvious problem here then (in the relative use of *dhāt*) is what the difference is between the thing itself and its *dhāt*. Al-Fārābī is explicit in stating that there is a difference:

وإن الذات المضافة إلى شيء ينبغي أن يكون غير المضاف إليه ، ولا يبالى أي غيرية كانت بينهما بعد أن يكون غيره بوجه ما . [2]

‘The *dhāt* related [i.e. said of] something must be different from that thing, no matter what the difference is between the two, as long as it is different from it in some aspect.’ [3]

He goes on to suggest what we mean when we talk of the *dhāt* of something:

وحتى لو قلنا < ذات الشيء > أو < ذات هذا الشيء > أو < ذات شيء ما > فإنما نلتمس به ماهيته التي هي أخصّ مما يدلّ عليه < الشيء > . ولو قلنا < ذات زيد > فإنما نلتمس ماهيته التي هي أعمّ مما يدل عليه < زيد > أو التي هي ماهيته في الحقيقة . [4]

‘So if we say ‘the *dhāt* of the thing’, ‘the *dhāt* of this thing’ or ‘the *dhāt* of something’, we are seeking the quiddity which is more particular than that indicated by ‘the thing’. And if we say ‘Zayd’s *dhāt*’ we are seeking the quiddity which is more general[5] than that which is indicated by ‘Zayd’, or which is his quiddity in reality.’

If we follow al-Fārābī correctly here, he seems to be saying that *dhāt*, in this usage (i.e. relative *dhāt*) is virtually synonymous with *māhīyah* (quiddity).

In summary, according to al-Fārābī, the difference between *jawhar* and *dhāt* would

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[1] Abed, *Aristotelian Logic*, p. 74.

[2] al-Fārābī, *Book of Letters*, p. 106, para. 75, ll. 14-16.

[3] Translation by Abed, *Aristotelian Logic*, p. 74.

[4] al-Fārābī, *Book of Letters*, p. 106, para. 75, ll. 19-22.

[5] The apparent contradiction that the *dhāt* is both more specific and more general is explained by Abed (*Aristotelian Logic*, p. 84, n. 23). When we ask what a thing is and the answer, for example, is ‘a man’, that is at once both more specific than ‘thing’ and more general than ‘Zayd’.

seem to be that whilst *jawhar* can only be used of restricted categories of things, everything can be said to have a *dhāt*, which is a term more or less synonymous with *māhīyah*. With reference to those things which can be called *jawhar*, al-Fārābī offers no explanation of what the distinction is between a *jawhar* and its *dhāt*, and in fact, in this instance the two words may be largely synonymous.[1] If this is the case, on occasion, the author's usage of these terms would amount to hendiadys:

فلهدا هو أزلي دائم الوجود بجوهره وذاته ...

'Therefore it is without beginning, and everlasting in its substance and essence ..' [2]

Yaḥyá ibn 'Adī's philosophical writings.

Platti provides us with a definition of *jawhar* from Yaḥyá's own hand:

واسم الجوهر عندهم يقال على العموم على كل ذات عرضا كانت او جوهرا مقابلا للعرض ويعنون بالعرض ما هو موجود في شيء لا كجزء منه ولا يمكن ان يكون قوامه خلوا مما هو فيه. ويقال اسم الجوهر على الخصوص على ما ليس هو في موضوع. وهم يشيرون باسم الجوهر هاهنا الى المعنى الثاني وهو المرسوم بانه ما ليس هو في موضوع . [3]

'The word *jawhar* for them [i.e. philosophers], used generally, is said of every *dhāt*, whether it be an accident or a *jawhar* susceptible[4] to accident. They mean by accident, that which is existing in something, not as a part of it and whose subsisting cannot be devoid of that in which it is. The word *jawhar*, used specifically, is said of that which is not in a subject. They indicate by the word *jawhar* in this case, the second meaning, which is that which is described as not being in a subject.'

This definition of *jawhar* shows that for Yaḥyá, the term includes both Aristotle's

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[1] With regard to al-Fārābī's use of the terms in his commentary on *De Interpretatione*, Zimmermann comes to the same conclusion: '*Dhāt* [essence, self], as used by al-Farabi, seems to be largely synonymous with, but less strictly technical than, *jawhar* [jewel], which represents Aristotle's first category of "substance". I have reserved "substance" to translate *jawhar.*' al-Fārābī, trans. Zimmermann, *Al-Farabi's Commentary and Short Treatise on Aristotle's De Interpretatione*, p. 22, n. 7.

[2] See al-Fārābī, *On the Perfect State*, p. 56, l. 11.

[3] Platti, *Yaḥyá*, p. 85, n. 41, cited from unpublished ms.

[4] 'Susceptible', if we read قابلا. As it stands the text may possibly mean '*jawhar*, which is the opposite of accident.'

first and second substance.[1]

Platti provides no equivalent definition for *dhāt* from Yaḥyá's own pen but he does offer his own, brief interpretation of the author's understanding of the term:

'L'essence (*dhāt*) de la chose, qu'on doit exprimer si on veut definir la chose, est l'essence de cette 'realité' existante visée.[2]

Although this evidence is clearly very limited, it does suggest, unsurprisingly, that Yaḥyá follows his great mentor al-Fārābī in his usage of the terms.

Ibn Sīnā.

In fathoming Ibn Sīnā's usage of philosophical vocabulary we have an invaluable tool in the form of Goichon's lexicon. The following passages, most pertinent to distinguishing between the two terms at hand, have been taken from this work.

الجوهر ... هو كل ما وجود ذاته ليس في موضوع اي في محلّ قريب قد قام بنفسه دونه بالفعل لا بتقويمه .[3]

'The *jawhar* is everything, the existence of whose *dhāt* is not in a subject, that is to say, in a nearby receptacle; it subsists by itself, without it [the subject] in actuality, not by virtue of it making it subsist.'

ويقال جوهر ... لكل ذات وجوده ليس في موضوع وعليه اصطلح الفلاسفة القدماء منذ عهد ارسطو في استعمالهم لفظة الجوهر .[4]

'*Jawhar* is said of every *dhāt* whose existence is not in a subject, and the ancient philosophers gave it this technical sense from the time of Aristotle when they used the term *jawhar*.'

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[1] See Platti, *Yaḥyá*, p. 85.

[2] According to Platti, *ma'ná* is the term Yaḥyá employs for this 'réalité existante visée. See *Yaḥyá*, p. 83.

[3] Ibn Sīnā, *al-Najāh*, 126 (Cairo, 1913); quoted Goichon, *Lexique*, p. 51.

[4] Ibn Sīnā, في الحدود, from the collection entitled منطق المشرقيين (Cairo, 1908), 88; quoted Goichon, *Lexique*, p. 51.

كل ذات لم يكن في موضوع فهو جوهر وكل ذات قوامها في موضوع فهو عرض .[1]

'Every *dhāt* which is not in a subject is a *jawhar* and every *dhāt* whose subsisting is in a subject is an accident.'

فنقول ان لكل شيء ماهية هو بها ما هو وهي حقيقته بل هي ذاته وذات كل شيء واحد .[2]

'We say that everything has a quiddity by which it is what it is, and which is its reality, indeed, it is its *dhāt*, and the *dhāt* of everything is one.'

As far as can be ascertained from the foregoing passages, Ibn Sīnā's conception of *jawhar* and *dhāt* closely follows that of al-Fārābī. *Jawhar* is Aristotle's first category of substance (unfortunately, the second category is not included in the brief extracts presented by Goichon) whilst *dhāt* is a synonym for *māhīyah.* It is, of course, beyond the scope of the present work to discover exactly how close the two Arabic philosophers are in their use of these two terms, but there would seem to be no basic discrepancy.

Ibn al-Ṭayyib's philosophical writings.

Only one of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's philosophical works has been published, furnished with a glossary relating its technical terminology to its Greek antecedents.[3] Unfortunately, the editor and translator does not help in distinguishing precisely between the two words under discussion here, and in fact the glossaries in the edition and translation volumes respectively offer contradictory information. In both the edition and translation volumes *jawhar* is given as the Arabic equivalent of οὐσία [4] However, whilst in the edition *dhāt* is said to be the equivalent of either το τι εστι or οὐσία,[5] in the translation volume it is

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[1] Ibn Sīnā, *al-Najāh*, 325 (Cairo, 1913); quoted Goichon, *Lexique*, p. 134.

[2] Ibn Sīnā, from unpublished ms quoted by Goichon, *Lexique*, p. 134-135.

[3] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, ed. and trans. Gyekye, *Ibn al-Ṭayyib's Commentary on Porphyry's Eisagoge* (ed.) and *Arabic Logic* (trans.). Unhelpfully, the numbering of paragraphs in the edition and translation do not coincide.

[4] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, ed. Gyekye, *Ibn al-Ṭayyib's Commentary*, p. 189 and *Arabic Logic*, p. 232.

[5] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, ed. Gyekye, *Ibn al-Ṭayyib's Commentary*, p. 190.

said to be equivalent to either τι or το τι εστι.[1]

Given the absence of an explicit explanation by Ibn al-Ṭayyib of his understanding of the two terms, such as the ones we have from al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, we must rely on the evidence of context. However, in his published philosophical works, there does not appear to be any instance where the usage of *jawhar* can usefully be compared with that of *dhāt*[2] but since there is nothing to suggest otherwise, it is probably not unreasonable to assume that Ibn al-Ṭayyib applies *jawhar* to those very same categories which al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā explicitly cite, namely Aristotle's first and second substances, whilst *dhāt*, the more general term, seems to apply to the quiddity (*māhīyah*) of any thing.

The Christian theological tradition.

It is most important in any analysis of technical terminology relating to the nature of the Trinity and Christ to distinguish between usages in these two areas. One lexical item can be used quite differently when referring to the relation between the persons of the Trinity or the nature(s) within Christ Himself.

Although there is a similar issue existing in the Latin tradition, in that ὀυσια is translated both by *essentia* and *substantia*,[3] the Western and Eastern traditions are wholly separate in this matter and so Latin need not be discussed.

The Syriac background.

It must be emphasised that in the following, unless mentioned otherwise, it is the Eastern tradition which is under discussion. The West and East Syriac understandings of the various terms was sometimes quite different.

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[1] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, trans. Gyekye, *Arabic Logic*, p. 232.

[2] For an instance of the usage of *jawhar* see Ibn al-Ṭayyib, *Ibn al-Ṭayyib's Commentary*, para. 236 (Ar.), *Arabic Logic*, para. 148 (trans.); and for *dhāt* see *Ibn al-Ṭayyib's Commentary*, p. 41, para. 92, ll. 11-15 (Ar.), *Arabic Logic*, p. 25, para. 4 (trans.).

[3] See, for example, Augustine, *De Trinitate*, V, viii (pp. 215-217) and Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a. 29, 2.

Kyānā

Kyānā is the standard translation of φυσις.[1] Thus, in Christological usage, East Syriac writers speak of the 2 *kyānē* in Christ. However, unlike the Syrian Orthodox, the Church of the East associated *kyānā* closely with *ītūtā*[2] (equivalent to οὐσία), so that to translate *homoousios* one finds both *bar kyānā* and *bar ītūtā*.[3]

Ītūtā

Ītūtā is the usual rendering of οὐσία [4] although *ūsiyā* also exists as a loan-word in Syriac. One finds *ītūtā* in the translation of the Cappadocian formula for the Trinity. It also exists in the phrase *bar ītūtā* as an alternative rendering to *bar kyānā* for ὁμοούσιος

For the present discussion the important distinction between *ītūtā* and *kyānā* is that unlike the latter, *ītūtā* is not used to render the two φύσεις of Antiochene Christology.[5]

It should be noted that Babai uses *ītūtā* as an equivalent for *qnōmā* in his quotations of Hebrews 1:3.[6]

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[1] See Brock, 'The Christology', p. 130 and Connolly, 'On the history', p. 217 f.

Brockelmann, *Lexicon* p. 321, Payne-Smith, *Thesaurus* 1703 f., Payne-Smith, *Compendious*, p. 213.

[2] See Brock, 'The Christology', p. 131. Severus, incidentally, firmly rejects the association of φύσις and ουσια (ibid n. 36). One of Severus' opponents on this issue is John of Caesarea ('The Grammarian'), whose arguments are discussed in Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 2, part 2, pp. 53 ff.

[3] See Brock, 'The Christology', p. 131.

[4] See Brock, 'The Christology', p. 131 and Connolly, 'On the history', pp. 212 - 217.

Brockelmann, *Lexicon* p. 16, Payne-Smith, *Thesaurus* 173, Payne-Smith, *Compendious*, p. 15.

[5] See dictionary entries listed above and especially Connolly, 'On the history', p. 216.

[6] See Wigram, *An Introduction*, p. 284.

Summary of ambiguities in Greek and Syriac terms.

Greek

ὀυσία = φύσις with regard to the Trinity.[1]

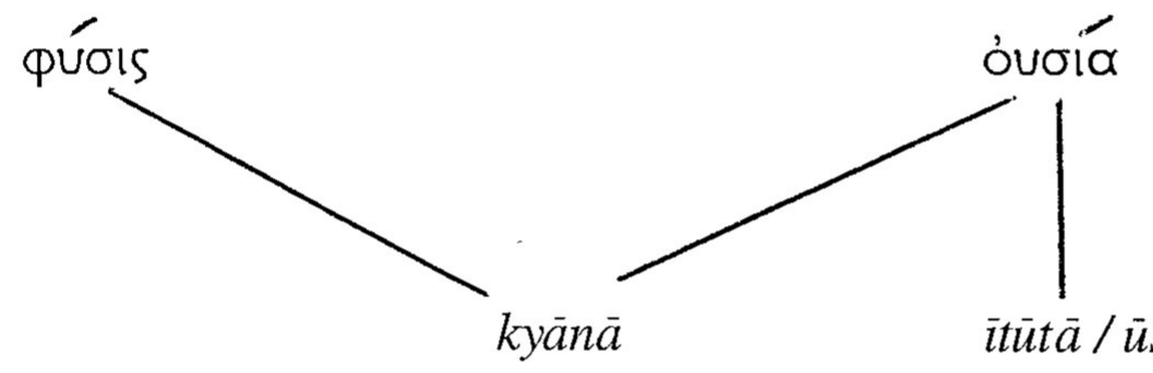
ὀυσία = ὑπόστασις in early Christian usage (prior to the mid-fourth century).[2]

Syriac

kyānā = φύσις or ὀυσία

kyānā or *ītūtā* (in Eastern tradition) = ὀυσια

Diagrammatic representation of the relationship between Gk. and Syriac terms.



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[1] This was the usage of the Cappadocians, for example. See Kelly, *Early Christian,* p. 263 - 269.

[2] See Kelly, *Early Christian*, p. 129; *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, entry 'Hypostasis' and Lampe, *Lexicon*, p. 1454, col. 2, no. 6.

The Arabic terms in relation to the Trinity.

Table of terminological usage.

The following table (adapted from Haddad)[1] indicates which of four terms signifying the nature or substance of God are employed by these major authors. Unfortunately, even in the body of the text, Haddad does not sufficiently explain the different shades of meanings of the various terms. However, the table does clearly show how little consistency there is in the employment of technical vocabulary in Christian Arabic literature, even within one church or period.

N.B. This table should only refer to terms relating specifically to the Trinity (i.e. not Christological).

j = jawhar; d = dhāt; t = ṭabī'ah; k = kiyān.[2]

Timothy 1st (E)	728 - 823	*j t*
Theodore Abū Qurrah (M)	d. after 825	*t*
Abū Rā'iṭah al-Takrītī (W)	1st quart. 9th C	*j d k*
Yaḥyá ibn 'Adī (W)	893 - 974	*j d t*
Sāwīrus Ibn al-Muqaffa' (C)	d. after 987	*j d t*
Ibn Zur'ah (W)	943 - 1008	*j d*[3]
Elias of Nisibis (E)	975 - 1046	*j d*
Ibn al-Ṭayyib (E)	d. 1043	*j d t*

In the following, brief historical survey of the usage of *jawhar* and *dhāt* amongst Christian Arabic authors, the writers chosen as exemplars are members of the Church of the East or, in the case of Yaḥyá ibn 'Adī and Ibn Zur'ah, the most important Christian predecessors of Ibn al-Ṭayyib in the Baghdad school.

Yaḥyá ibn 'Adī's theological writings (W).

In 1920, Périer was under the impression that Yaḥyá used a number of terms (including *jawhar* and *dhāt*) more or less synonymously, and also accused him of

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[1] Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 182.

[2] These latter two terms are discussed in separate sections below.

[3] Haddad's table fails to note that Ibn Zur'ah does use the term *jawhar*. See, for example, Starr, *Epistle*, p. 39.

inconsistency.[1] Haddad is largely in accord with this supposition, at least with regard to the first point,[2] citing a passage from a treatise by Yaḥyá on the Trinity to support this contention.[3] Platti, on the other hand, was of the opinion that Yaḥyá was actually consistent and did clearly distinguish between the various terms. The following five extracts from theological treatises provide clear evidence that for the author the two words were not synonymous, since in some instances they occur as subject and predicate in the same clauses.

فقد تبين ووضح مماثلة العقل والعاقل والمعقول للأب والابن والروح من حيث أن جوهر العقل ذات العاقل وذات المعقول إذ كان المعقول والعقل ذات واحدة ولا تتكثر من حيث \ هي ذات ... وإن ذلك مماثل بما تعتقده النصارى في البارئ جل وتعالى من أنه جوهر واحد غير متكثر بوجه من الوجوه من حيث هو جوهر [4]

'It has been made clear how the *intellectus*, the *intelligens* and the *intelligibile* are comparable to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit since the *jawhar* of the *intellectus* is the *dhāt* of the *intelligens* and the *intelligibile*, because the *intelligibile* and the *intellectus* are one *dhāt*. [This *dhāt*] is not multiple in as much as it is a *dhāt*.... This resembles that which Christians believe concerning the Creator, majestic and exalted be He, namely that He is one *jawhar*,[5] not multiple in any aspect in as much as He is a *jawhar*.'

ونبين أن ما يظنه جهال النصارى في الأقانيم الثلاثة أنها ذوات ثلاث موضوعات مخالف كل واحد منها صاحبيه في نفسه ... خطأ وكفرٌ ويلزمهم به أن يكون البارئ جل اسمه ثلاثة جواهر وثلاثة إلهة . [6]

'We will show that what the ignorant Christians suppose concerning the three *qunūm(s)*, namely that they are the *dhawāt* of three substrates, each different from its two

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[1] Périer, *Yaḥyá*, p. 98. Ironically, Périer himself is utterly inconsistent in rendering Yaḥyá's terms into French. In *Petits traités*, p. 54, for example, on the same page he translates *jawhar* and *dhāt*, as 'substance' and 'essence', apparently at random.

[2] Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 162 f.

[3] Yaḥyá, *Petits traités*, pp. 52-54. In fact, Haddad is mistaken in thinking that this particular passage confirms that the terms are synonymous.

[4] Yaḥyá, *Petits traités*, p. 21 f.

[5] '... he [Yaḥyá] makes it clear that the term "substance" [*jawhar*] in the expression "one substance" is to be taken to mean "essence" (*dhāt*) or "quiddity" (*māhīyah*).' Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam*, p. 336. Wolfson does not, however, go on to explain how we are to distinguish 'substance', 'essence' or 'quiddity' in this context.

[6] Yaḥyá, *Petits traités*, p. 45.

companions in itself, is an error and impiety, for they should therefore admit that the Creator, majestic be His name, is three *jawāhir* and three gods.'

وأن كل جوهر يخالف جوهرا آخر بفصل ذاتي له فواجب ضرورة أن يكون جوهر كل واحد منهما الخاص به غير الجوهر الآخر الخاص به ويلزم لذلك أن يصدق الحكم عليهما أنهما جوهران وأنهما ليس جوهرا واحدا .[1]

'For any *jawhar* which differs from another by a differentia essential to it, it must necessarily be that the *jawhar* of each of them, particular to it, is other than the other substance [which is] particular to it, and the consequence of that is that it is true to assert about them that them that they are two *jawhar(s)* and not one.'

وإن قال إن الخلاف بين الجواهر ... خلاف ذاتي[2]

'If he says the difference between the *jawāhir* is a difference of the *dhāt.*'

فذات المسيح إذن لا بد ضرورة إما جوهر وإما عرض[3]

'The *dhāt* of Christ must then either be a *jawhar* or an accident.'

From the evidence above, there is no reason to believe that Yaḥyá was either inconsistent in his employment of the terms, or failed to distinguish between them. Since every *jawhar* has a *dhāt*, there are many contexts in which the two items can be used interchangeably, but, by no means, does it follow that the author had a hazy conception of the distinction between the two.

Ibn Zur'ah's theological writings (W).

We appear to lack writings which might inform us as to how Ibn Zur'ah distinguishes between *jawhar* and *dhāt.* Nothing, however, in the following excerpts from the secondary literature suggests that his usage differs markedly from that of his teacher and fellow Syrian Orthodox, Yaḥyá:

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[1] Yaḥyá, *Petits traités*, p. 54.

[2] Yaḥyá, *Petits traités*, p. 57.

[3] Yaḥyá, *Petits traités*, p. 111.

'Quand il parle de la Trinité, Ibn Zur'ah désigne la nature divine, le plus souvent, par le mot *dhāt* (Essence), parfois par le mot *jawhar* (Substance.)'[1]

'Ibn Zur'ah réserve le terme de *dhāt* à la nature divine. Il maintient à *jawhar* et à *māhīyah* le sens de <essence>, sans jamais leur donner celui de nature.' [2]

'... the persons of the Trinity are defined as attributes of the divine "essence" (*dhāt*) ... the persons are states of the divine ... substance (*jawhar.*)' [3]

Elias of Nisibis (E).

Elias is important for the present discussion because he is the major contemporary of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's from the Church of the East. The fact that their understanding of crucial theological terms display fundamental differences goes to show their independence and also, perhaps, the lack of a strongly defined tradition.

Elias' position with regard to referring to God as a *jawhar* appears to have changed at some point in his career. In the famous discussion with the Vizir ibn 'Alī al-Maghribī,[4] the third chapter consists of a debate in which Elias defends the Christians' usage of the term.[5]

Elias' initial point is thus:

ونحن نسمّي القائم بنفسه < جوهرا > . ولذلك نقول إن الله تعالى جوهر [6]

'We call that which subsists by itself, a *jawhar.* And therefore we say that God on high is a *jawhar.*'

The Vizir says that in referring to God as *jawhar* the Christians necessarily imply

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[1] C.Haddad, *'Īsā ibn Zur'a*, p. 198; quoted by Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 143.

[2] Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 164.

[3] Starr, *Epistle*, p. 39.

[4] Elias, 'Entretien'.

[5] Elias, 'Entretien', pp. 64 - 75. This chapter is discussed briefly by Haddad, *La Trinité*, p.137, who relies on the translation of the 'Discussion' in Delly, *La théologie*, pp.65 - 78.

[6] Elias, 'Entretien', p. 64, para. 52.

that God is circumscribed and susceptible to accidents because in the visible world there is no *jawhar* which does not have these characteristics.[1] Elias responds by saying that in admitting that God subsists by himself (*qā'im binafsih*) Muslims themselves should affirm that He is circumscribed and susceptible to accidents[2] since, once again, in the visible world there is no entity subsisting by itself without these characteristics. The Christians do not oblige Muslims to admit, in referring to God as subsisting by himself, that He is circumscribed and susceptible to accidents and the Muslims should do likewise when Christians refer to God as a *jawhar*.[3]

The Vizir goes on to say, using the same line of argument, that if God is a *jawhar* because He subsists by himself, He must therefore be a body since there is nothing, subsisting by itself, in the visible world, which is not a body. Employing the same logic as his response to the previous objection, and referring again to the visible world, Elias says that Muslims should also admit that He is a body because they affirm that He is living, active, powerful and knowing.[4]

In concluding the third chapter, Elias and the Vizir agree to differ since they reach the understanding that they are using the relevant terms in different ways.[5] Of particular interest in light of Elias' later change of heart is the fact that Elias says that Christians are obliged to use the term *jawhar* because there is no term in Arabic (which he admits is not the language of the Christians) other than *jawhar* to express that which subsists by itself. He implies that such a term does exist in the language of the Christians, by which he must mean Syriac. The term he is referring to, we can assume, is *kyānā*, since in another work, Elias explicitly states that the two terms are synonymous:

ولما فسر المقدمون من علمائنا الكتب المنطقية والشرعية عبروا عن هذه اللفظة التي هي بالسريانية كيانا ومعناها القائم بنفسه باللفظة التي هي بالعربية جوهر.[6]

'When the scholars amongst our forefathers produced commentaries on logical and theological texts, they translated the Syriac term *kyānā*, meaning that which subsists by itself, by the Arabic word, *jawhar*.'

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[1] The problem of transferring Aristotelian ideas to a Christian context is discussed by Haddad, *La Trinité*, pp. 131 - 135 and specifically that of applying the term *jawhar* to God, p.140 ff.

[2] The notion that a substance is susceptible to accidents is an Aristotelian one. See Haddad, *La Trinité*, p.130 f.

[3] Elias, 'Entretien', pp. 66 - 67.

[4] Elias, 'Entretien', pp. 68 - 71.

[5] Elias, 'Entretien', pp. 72 - 75.

[6] Cheikho, *Seize traités*, p. 107, ll. 13 - 15. This passage, and the surrounding paragraph, is translated by Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 131.

In an article in which he presents a treatise by Elias which must surely date from a later period in Elias' career than the discussion with the Vizir,[1] Samir notes a very close correspondence between passages in the discussion and this later treatise, in which the author has substituted *kiyān* for *jawhar*, the very word whose usage by Christians Elias had previously defended.[2]

In opposition to the quotation cited above ('We call that which subsists by itself, a *jawhar*'), Elias now writes:

والنصارى يسمون القائم بنفسه ‹ كيانا›. ولذلك يقولون إن البارئ تعالى كيان واحد.[3]

'The Christians call that which subsists by itself, a *kiyān.* Therefore, they say that the Creator on high is one *kiyān.*'

Later in the text he goes on to say:

واذا كان اسم ‹الجوهر› في لغة العرب لا يقع إلا على ‹ ما شغل حيزا وقبل عرضا›، وليس في لغة العرب لفظه يعبر بها عن ‹ القائم بنفسه › كما عند السريانيين، وجب أن نقول ‹ إن الله كيان واحد›، عبارة عن القائم بنفسه.[4]

'If the word *jawhar*, in the language of the Arabs, only applies to "that which occupies a space and is susceptible to accidents", and there is no term to express "that which subsists by itself", as there is in Syriac, then we must say that God is one *kiyān*, in order to express that which subsists by itself.'

The usage of *dhāt* by Elias is unique amongst the authors studied here. For Elias, the *dhāt* is not equivalent to the *jawhar/kiyān* of God, which underlies the three hypostases, but is rather the hypostasis of the Father alone, as opposed to that of the Son or Holy Spirit. Examples of this usage can be found in Elias, 'Un traité nouveau', p.137, para. 20, Elias, 'Entretien' p. 88, paras. 145 - 6, p. 90, para. 154, p. 92, para. 157, p. 92, para. 158. Possible precedents for Elias in this regard are discussed in the chapter on the Christian

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[1] Elias, 'Un traité nouveau'.

[2] Elias, 'Un traité nouveau', p.121 f. Samir also notes the same evolution in a third work, as yet unpublished. Elias uses *kiyān* in his translation of the Cappadocian formula (see Sbath, *Vingt Traités*, p. 126, l. 3), according to Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalām*, p. 128, n. 88.

[3] Elias, 'Un traité nouveau', p.137, para. 20.

[4] Elias, 'Un traité nouveau', p.141, paras. 38 - 39.

Arabic concepts of the Trinity.

Conclusion: *jawhar / dhāt* (Trinitarian).

لا فرق عند النصارى بين الجوهر والذات ... [1]

'There is no difference for the Christians between *jawhar* and *dhāt* ...'

Thus says the Patriarch Elias I, and Sāwīrus ibn al-Muqaffa' concurs.[2]

Ibn al-Ṭayyib would seem to make no distinction if the following two extracts are taken as evidence:

الأقنوم ليس هو أكثر من مجتمع الذات مع الصفة . [3]

'The *qunūm* is nothing more than the combination of the Essence with the attribute.'

القنوم هو الجوهر مع الصفة . [4]

'The *qunūm* is the Substance along with the attribute.'

Wolfson writes: 'In the Arabic translations of the Greek formula μια ὀυσια, τρεις ὑποστάσεις ... the term ὀυσία ... is translated either by *jawhar*, "substance" used in the sense of "essence" (cf. Yaḥyá ibn 'Adī, *Petits*, p. 36, l. 8; [Shahrastānī, ed. Cureton,] *Milal*, p. 172, l. 9, and p. 176, l. 8) or by *dhāt*, "essence" (cf. Paul Rāhib of Antioch, [ed. Cheikho] *Vingt Traités*, p. 27, l. 11).'[5]

One might like to take the preceding as proof enough in the matter. However, whilst in many instances they are indeed interchangeable, the terms are not, in fact,

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[1] The Patriarch, Elias I, from ms. Vat.. ar. 110, f. 181 r; quoted Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 162, n. 199.

[2] Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 162 f., citing examples from various ms works.

[3] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 'Le traité sur la Trinité et l'Unité', p. 109, l. 11; quoted Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 154, n. 157.

[4] Ms extract from Ibn al-Ṭayyib's treatise on the fundamentals of the religion, preserved by Ibn al-'Assāl (Par. ar. 200, f. 75); quoted Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 154, n. 158.

[5] Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalām*, p. 128, n. 88.

strictly synonymous in every author who might appear to use them so. Unless Ibn al-Ṭayyib is to be accused of writing tautological nonsense the following quotations show conclusively that the author considered the terms as quite distinct:

والنصارى تقول في الذات إنها جوهر لا كالجواهر .[1]

'And the Christians say of the *dhāt*, that it is a *jawhar*, but unlike the [other] *jawāhir*.'

والجوهر يشير به الى ذات البارئ تعالى التى قد بان أنها واحدة .[2]

'And the *jawhar* indicates the *dhāt* of the Creator on high, which, it is clear, is one.'

صفات البارئ تعالى على ضربين ، صفة تتعدى الذات الى المخلوقين ولا تقف عند جوهر الذات ، بل تجر معها جوهراً آخر كصفة قادر فإنها صفة لله تعالى تجر معها جوهر المقدور .[3]

'The attributes of the Creator on high are of two sorts; an attribute which goes beyond the *dhāt* towards created beings and does not stop at the *jawhar* of the *dhāt* but brings with it[4] another *jawhar*,[5] such as the attribute of having power; it is an attribute of God on high, which brings along with it the *jawhar* of the object of the power.'

So it is clear that for Ibn al-Ṭayyib *jawhar* and *dhāt* are not synonymous. However, we surely should not extrapolate from quotations regarding the Trinity to arrive at a conclusion about the author's general understanding of the terms, since as he himself says, God's *jawhar* is unlike any other.

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[1] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 'Le traité sur l'Unité et la Trinité', p. 81, l. 16

[2] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 'Le traité sur la Trinité et l'Unité', p. 109, l. 4.

[3] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 'Le traité sur la Trinité et l'Unité', p. 115, ll. 3 - 4.

[4] It is unclear whether this pronoun refers to the attribute or the *dhāt*.

[5] What exactly Ibn al-Ṭayyib means by this statement is puzzling. Just what is the sort of attribute which 'does not stop at the *jawhar* of the *dhāt*'? The other quotations suggest that for *dhawāt* which can be called *jawāhir*, the terms are more or less synonymous. Maybe Ibn al-Ṭayyib has in mind that the *jawhar* is a reality of which the *dhāt* is only an abstraction.

Jawhar and *dhāt* occur in a Trinitarian context in the following places:

jawhar

7, 10, 12, 16 x 4, 17, 19,

39 (Syriac *kyānā'īt*)[1]

91 (Syriac *kyānāytā*)[2]

94, 95

dhāt

41, 53, 59, 72

73 (Syriac *ūsiyā*)[3]

Christological usage.

As has been noted elsewhere, Ibn al-Ṭayyib, along with the other Christian Arab writers, shows a markedly greater interest in problems of the Trinity, rather than specifically Christological issues, hence the much greater preponderance of examples relating to the Trinity of the terms under scrutiny here. Given the paucity of published Christological treatises, we must rely more on the secondary literature's analysis of unpublished sources - in this instance, we have only Landron's brief survey of Christological terms relating to substance.[4] However, this portion of Landron must be treated with caution, since when she quotes the Patriarch Elias I in translation - 'il n'y a pas de différence chez les chrétiens entre l'essence [*dhāt*], la substance [*jawhar*] et la nature [*tibā'*][5] - to back up her claim that - 'd'une façon générale, les termes <substance> [*jawhar*], <nature> [*ṭabī'a*] et <essence> [*dhāt*] sont considérés comme équivalents et employés indifféremment'[6] - Elias almost certainly refers to the terms in Trinitarian usage, which is how Haddad takes them.[7] However, when the author later somewhat contradicts herself, she is probably closer to the mark - 's'ils parlent de deux substances [i.e. *jawhar*] ou de deux natures [i.e.

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[1] See Theodore, *Theodori Mopsuesteni commentarius*, p. 32, l. 7.

[2] See Isho'dad, *The Commentaries*, p. 119, l. 14.

[3] See Isho'dad, *The Commentaries*, p. 118, l. 14.

[4] See Landron, *Chrétiens*, p. 195 f. This work, it should be remembered, deals only with the Church of the East.

[5] The Patriarch Elias I, from ms. Vat. ar. 110, f. 181 r (Haddad), f. 181 v (Landron); quoted Landron, *Chrétiens*, p. 196, n. 784 and Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 162, n. 199.

[6] Landron, *Chrétiens*, p. 196.

[7] Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 162.

ṭabī'a] dans le Christ, les nestoriens ne semblent pas avoir dit souvent "deux essences" [i.e. *dhāt*].'[1]

Only one Christological treatise by Ibn al-Ṭayyib has been published, *al-Kalām fī al-ittiḥād*.[2] This is the only substantial published work where we can observe his usage of *jawhar* in a Christological context. The occurrences of *dhāt* in this work support Landron's claim that it is probably not synonymous with *jawhar* [φύσις] in a Christological context.

The following two extracts from the Christological treatise are the only examples in Ibn al-Ṭayyib's published works where there is mention of two *jawhar(s)*.

وطائفة ثالثة وهم النسطورية زعمت أن الإتحاد وقع بين القديم والمحدث بالخاصة حسب أعنى بمعنى البنوة فأما الجوهران أعني جوهر الإبن الأزلي وجوهر الإنسان فبقيا على حالهما وكذلك الأقنومان .[3]

'A third group, the Nestorians, claim that the Union occurred between the Pre-existent one and the Temporal one through the property only, in other words, through the reality[4] of filiation. As for the two *jawhar(s)*, I mean the *jawhar* of the eternal Son and the *jawhar* of the man, they remained in their state, as did the two *qunūm(s)*.'

وأقنوم الإبن الأزلي والشخص المأخوذ من مريم يوصفان قبل الإتحاد بأنهما جوهران وأقنومان ، ومن المقر به أنهما بعد الإتحاد جوهران وأقنومان .[5]

'And the *qunūm* [6] of the eternal Son, and the person taken from Mary are qualified before the Union as being two *jawhar(s)* and two *qunūm(s)* and it is confirmed that, after the Union, they are two *jawhar(s)* and two *qunūm(s)*.'

In these two excerpts, since *qunūm* stands for *qnōmā* in the East Syriac Christological

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[1] Landron, *Chrétiens*, p. 196, citing Elias of Nisibis, and Ibn al-Ṭayyib, Par. ar. 200, f. 66 v, para. 13.

[2] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 'Le traité sur l'Union.'

[3] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 'Le traité sur l'Union', p. 150, ll. 8 - 10.

[4] The word *ma'ná* is problematic to translate, particularly so since it is a term rarely used by Ibn Ṭayyib. The translation 'reality' is taken from Platti, who gives a useful analysis of Yaḥyá's usage. See Platti, *Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī*, pp. 80 - 84. The wider Christian Arabic usage of the term is discussed briefly by Holmberg, '"Person" in the Trinitarian Doctrine', p. 301.

[5] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 'Le traité sur l'Union', p. 150, ll. 14 - 16.

[6] The transcription *qunūm*, contrary to the Arabic in this instance, is adopted for the sake of consistency (see the beginning of the section on *qunūm*, later in this chapter.)

formulae, *jawhar* must stand for φυσις, because in the Christology of the Church of the East, besides the two *qnōmē*, there are two φυσεις but only one *parsōpā*.[1]

These statements emphasise the need, particularly with regard to writings emanating from the Church of the East to keep the Trinitarian and the Christological absolutely distinct. God the Trinity is one *jawhar* with three *aqānim*. Christ Himself, however, is two *jawhar(s)* in one person. Ibn al-Ṭayyib must have been well aware that, for any Muslim coming across this notion of two *jawhar(s)*, the alarm-bells of polytheism would have started to ring. This no doubt partly accounts for the preponderance of Trinitarian treatises in his oeuvre, in which God's oneness, His one *jawhar*, is emphasised.

The only occurrence of either term in a specifically Christological context is that of *jawhar* at 73, but this is not in the original recension, only the Miaphysite revision.

General conclusion.

It has been shown that Ibn al-Ṭayyib and, in fact, Christian theologians in general, keep the Trinitarian and Christological spheres conceptually quite distinct. What is more difficult to fathom is the extent to which philosophical understandings of the terms infiltrate the theological. Inasmuch as God's *jawhar* is clearly *sui generis*, as is no other, the matter might be considered unimportant, but for Ibn al-Ṭayyib it would seem that Aristotelian notions of substance are not irrelevant in the theological context as the following extract from a theological work clearly indicates, in which Ibn al-Ṭayyib chooses to explain his general philosophical understanding of the terms:

اسم الجوهر في كل ذات تدل مطلق الطباع في الشيء كطبع الانسان المطلق في اشخاصه .[2]

'The name of *jawhar*, with regard to every *dhāt*, signifies the absolute natures in the thing, such as the absolute nature of man in his individuals [i.e. individual manifestations].'

The situation might be usefully conceptualised as two spheres, the Aristotelian

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[1] 'In none of these East Syriac texts do we ever encounter the "Nestorian" formula of "two prosopa".' Brock, 'The Christology', p. 131. See also the section on *qnōmā* later in this chapter.

[2] Ms extract from Ibn al-Ṭayyib's treatise on the fundamentals of the religion, preserved by Ibn al-'Assāl (Par. ar. 200, f. 95v); quoted Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 150, n. 118.

and theological, which overlap but which are never confused.

That Ibn al-Ṭayyib's usage of the Arabic terms mirrors Syriac, as shown below, is very striking:[1]

jawhar	ὀυσία in the Trinity and φύσις in Christology.
kyānā	ὀυσία in the Trinity and φύσις in Christology.
dhāt	ὀυσία in the Trinity but not φύσις in Christology.[2]
ītūtā	ὀυσία in the Trinity but not φύσις in Christology.[3]

For confirmation that this scheme is no coincidence, in other words, that it genuinely reflects Ibn al-Ṭayyib's translation practice, comparisons would need to be undertaken between those Arabic works which have a specific Syriac *Vorlage,* and the texts on which they are based. Such analysis is feasible in a work such as the *Commentary*, with named and easily identifiable sources, but the author's theological treatises, with no clear *Vorlage*, and the paucity of Christological material means that there may simply not be enough evidence to yield results of real worth.

In the *Commentary*, only three instances have been discovered where it can be stated with some certainty that Ibn al-Ṭayyib is rendering a particular Syriac term with either *jawhar* or *dhāt* (*jawhar* renders *kyānā* at 39 and 91, and *dhāt* renders *ūsiyā* at 73).[4] This is clearly far from enough evidence on which to base reliable conclusions.

A number of earlier commentators in the secondary literature seem to have laboured under the mistaken assumption that simply because the two Arabic terms both render ὀυσια, there could therefore be no meaningful distinction in Arabic. Whilst in many contexts *jawhar* and *dhāt* are more or less interchangeable, that no meaningful distinction exists between the terms in Arabic, or that they are used arbitrarily, is simply not the case in general.

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[1] Syriac *ūsiyā* has been omitted from the scheme, which, as a Gk. loan-word, is used in both the Trinitarian and Christological contexts, as in the Gk.

[2] See Landron, *Chrétiens*, p. 196.

[3] See Connolly, 'On the history', p. 216.

[4] See Theodore, *Theodori Mopsuesteni commentarius*, p. 32, l. 7 and Isho'dad, *The Commentaries*, p. 119, l. 14 and p. 118, l. 14, respectively.

2 *ṭabī'ah / ṭab' / ṭibā'* [1] **nature**

For the three authors quoted immediately below, spanning a century and a half and including figures from two of the three main Syriac traditions, we can see that *ṭabī'ah* is synonymous with *jawhar* and *dhāt* in a Trinitarian context.[2] However, this is not the case with all Christian Arab authors, as will be discussed below.

Sa'īd ibn Baṭrīq / Eutychius (877 - 940, M):

الأب والإبن والروح القدس كيان واحد في ثلاثة أقانيم ، جوهر واحد ، طبيعة واحدة .[3]

'The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one *kiyān* in three *qunūm(s)*, one *jawhar*, one *ṭabī'ah.*'

Elias I (d. 1049, E):

لا فرق عند النصارى بين الجوهر والذات والطباع .[4]

'There is no difference for the Christians between *jawhar*, *dhāt* and *ṭibā'*.'

Ibn al-Faḍl (fl. m. 11th c., M):

إن الطبيعة والجوهر شيء واحد عند الآباء القديسين .[5]

'*Ṭabī'ah* and *jawhar* are one and the same for the holy fathers.'

In addition, according to Haddad, Timothy (c. 728 - 823, E), uses *jawhar* and *ṭabī'ah* as synonyms, although the former term is the more frequent, as is the case with

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[1] These three variants would seem to be more or less synonymous. Other than the most common form, namely *ṭabī'ah*, *ṭab'* is also found in Ibn al-Ṭayyib and *ṭibā'* in the Patriarch Elias I, for example. See Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 162, n. 195 f. *Ṭibā'* does not seem to occur as a singular noun in Ibn al-Ṭayyib - it is most likely the plural of *ṭab'* in the extract from Ibn al-Ṭayyib's treatise on the fundamentals of the religion, preserved by Ibn al-'Assāl (Par. ar. 200, f. 95v) and quoted Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 150, n. 118.

[2] If the extracts have been taken by Haddad from Trinitarian contexts, as they should have been.

[3] Sa'īd Ibn al-Baṭrīq, quoted Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 162, n. 197.

[4] The Patriarch Elias I, from ms. Vat. ar. 110, f. 181 r; quoted Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 162, n. 199.

[5] Ibn al-Faḍl, from ms Salvat. 173, f. 155 r; quoted Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 141, n. 62.

Ibn al-Faḍl.[1] Sāwīrus ibn al-Muqaffa‘ (d. after 987, C) sees *jawhar*, *dhāt* and *ṭabī‘ah* as synonymous.[2]

Other authors have deliberately eschewed the term: ‘quelques écrivains ont carrément refusé de désigner la nature divine par *ṭabī‘ah*, jugeant ce mot trop près de la nature humaine, presque profane.’ [3]

On the other hand, Haddad claims that there are authors who make a definite distinction between *ṭabī‘ah* and *jawhar / dhāt*. Ibn al-Ṭayyib, along with a number of other authors (including Ibn Zur‘ah),[4] reserves *ṭabī‘ah* for reference to the nature of Christ, whilst *jawhar* is used for the divine *ousia* before the incarnation.[5] He says that the term (and its variant, *ṭab‘*)[6] is found only in Ibn al-Ṭayyib’s Christological works, but is totally absent from his Trinitarian writings.[7] However, no instance has been identified where he refers to the two *ṭabī‘ah(s)* / φυσιες in Christ,[8] so the term is used only for the nature of the incarnate Word as an entity, as is the case in one instance in the *Commentary*:[9]

57 وللرفع منا وانحطاطه لم تخرج طبيعته عن حالها .

‘And at His rising from us and His condescension, His *ṭabi‘ah* did not leave its state.’

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[1] See Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 163.

[2] Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 162 f., citing examples from various ms works.

[3] Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 181.

[4] Haddad, *La Trinité*, pp. 143 and 164. If Haddad is correct in stating that ‘Ibn Zur‘ah n’applique jamais à la Trinité le terme de *ṭabī‘ah* (Nature), qu’il réserve à la nature humaine et à celle du Verbe incarné’ (p. 143) this is strikingly at odds with the practice of his teacher, Yaḥyá, at least in the following instance:

وهو مماثل للإبن إذ طبيعة الإبن وطبيعة الأب واحدة

‘It [i.e. the reality of the *intelligens* existing in the *intellectus*] is comparable to the Son, since the *ṭabī‘ah* of the Son and the *ṭabī‘ah* of the Father are one’ (Yaḥyá, *Petits traités*, p. 21.)

[5] See Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 163. Other authors cited, who follow this usage are Abū Rā’ita, Abraham of Tiberias and George of Mosul.

[6] This so-called variant occurs only once in the *Commentary*, at 9, and clearly refers to nature in the sense of the natural world.

[7] For examples of Ibn al-Ṭayyib’s usage of *ṭabī‘ah* (or *ṭab‘*) see ms. Par. ar. 200, f. 67v, l. 1; f. 71r, ll. 1, 11, etc.; quoted Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 163, n. 209.

[8] Landron claims that there are authors who do speak of the two ‘natures’ (i.e. *ṭabī‘ah(s)*) in Christ. See *Chrétiens*, p. 196.

[9] The other instance, at 14, where *ṭabī‘ah* is used other than to refer to the natural world, does not contradict this suggestion.

This distinction, where φύσις / *ṭabī'ah* is reserved for the nature of Christ and *jawhar* for the divine *ousia* before the incarnation, would seem to go back at least as far as John of Damascus, where φύσις is rarely used for the divine nature before the incarnation.[1] This distinction is a little at odds with the Syriac tradition of the Church of the East which closely associated *ītūtā* (οὐσία) with *kyānā* (φύσις). [2]

The term is found twice in the *Commentary*, at 14 and 57 referring to the divine nature.

In the *Commentary*, both *ṭab'* (at 9) and *ṭabī'ah* (at 43, 47 and 55) are found in the sense of the natural world.[3]

3 ***kiyān*** **nature**

This term, although not in fact employed by Ibn al-Ṭayyib, at least in the *Commentary*, deserves mention here since it is an important alternative to *jawhar*.

It is a loan word, from Syriac *kyānā*, and was substituted for *jawhar* by Elias, as has been discussed above, owing to Muslim objections concerning the attribution of *jawhar* to God. It was employed a century before Elias by Sa'īd Ibn Baṭrīq / Eutychius (877 - 940, M):

الأب والإبن والروح القدس كيان واحد في ثلاثة أقانيم ، جوهر واحد ، طبيعة واحدة .[4]

'The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one *kiyān* in three *qunūm(s)*, one *jawhar*, one *ṭabī'ah*.'

The term does not appear to be used in a Christological context.

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[1] Wolfson, *Philosophy of the Church Fathers,* vol. 1, p. 347 (where the author cites *On the Orthodox Faith*, I, 8; *PG.* vol. 94, col. 824 B etc. and I, 8; *PG,* vol. 44, col. 808 A); quoted Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 163.

[2] See Brock, 'The Christology', p. 131.

[3] An example of Yaḥyá's use of the word in this sense can be found in *Petits traités*, p. 31.

[4] Sa'īd ibn al-Baṭrīq, quoted Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 162, n. 197.

4	***shakhṣ***	**person**
	farṣūf	**person**
	qunūm	***qnōmā*** [1]

Largely for the sake of clarifying the sense of *qunūm*, *farṣūf* and *shakhṣ* are discussed alongside it, although *farṣūf* is not used in the *Commentary* at all, and *shakhṣ* not as a technical term. *Shakhṣ* occurs three times in the original Eastern recension collocated with *insān* (52, 72 x 2), where the meaning is simply 'human being' (rendered 'human person' in the translation for the sake of consistency in rendering *shakhṣ*). At the word's only appearance where it is not collocated with *insān* (90), it means 'person' in the non-technical sense.[2] The tricky matter of the usage of the term in the Miaphysite recension is discussed in the chapter on the recensions. Beyond the *Commentary*, however, *shakhṣ* is used occasionally by Ibn al-Ṭayyib in its technical sense, as is *farṣūf*, hence the need to discuss them here.

As with *jawhar* and *dhāt*, it is essential to distinguish between Trinitarian and Christological usage.

Syriac background.

parṣōpā

This is πρόσωπον.[3] It has different usages with regard to the Trinity and Christ alone. East Syrians hold with the Syrian Orthodox and Chalcedonians that there is one *parṣōpā* in Christ (the Nestorian formula of 2 *parsōpē* is not found.)[4] The word is also

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[1] The Syriac is kept here because the Arabic term, in the usage of the Church of the East, is not satisfactorily matched even by ὑπόστασις, let alone any English word. In a Christological context the understanding by the Church of the East of the word *qnōmā* is not the same as that of the West Syriac tradition. Neither, of course, does it match the understanding of ὑπόστασις by the Chalcedonians.

[2] In 'Le traité sur l'Union' by Ibn al-Ṭayyib, Troupeau renders *shakhṣ* with *individu*. See p. 146 f. and p. 149 f.

[3] See Brock, 'The Christology', p. 131; Connolly, 'On the history', p. 219 f. and Wigram, *An Introduction*, pp. 279-282.

[4] Brock, 'The Christology', p. 131.

Also see Landron, *Chrétiens et musulmans*, p. 199, which confirms that, in Arabic, the notion of two persons in Christ is not found in any reliable text emanating from the Church of the East. Landron informs us that the form 'two *shakhṣ(s)*' is found in a Christological context in 'Abd Ishū' ibn Bahrīz, but the relevant text only survives in a transmission from a West Syrian, so Ibn Bahrīz may have been wilfully misquoted. Alternatively the 'mistake' may have arisen from the writer genuinely confusing *qunūm* and *shakhṣ* in a Christological context because they are more or less synonymous with regard to the Trinity.

used to describe the members of the Trinity as an alternative to *qnōmā.* [1]

qnōmā

It is crucial here to separate Trinitarian and Christological usages. *Qnōmā* is the usual Syriac term for ὑποστασις[2] and, as in Gk., the word is used to describe both the members of the Trinity (as in the Cappadocian formula)[3] and also the 2 ὑποστάσεις of Antiochene Christology. In the Christological context, the Church of the East understands the term *qnōmā* very differently from ὑπόστασις in the Chalcedonian definition.[4] It is important to remember that the later Antiochenes took the 2 φύσεις / *kyānē* as their starting point, and for them this implied 2 *qnōmē.*[5]

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[1] See Wigram, *An Introduction*, p. 281 with the proviso of Brock, 'The Christology' p. 131, n. 37.

In Gk. πρόσωπον and ὑπόστασις would seem to be more or less synonymous. See Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, p. 1187: 'in orthodox [Trinitarian] use: [πρόσωπον is] used by most anti-Sabellian writers as a less metaphysical equivalent of ὑπόστασις.'; and p. 1456: 'in Trinitarian contexts [ὑπόστασις] frequently approximates *Person*, though in the Cappadocians it denotes rather *individual.*'

[2] See Brock, 'The Christology', p. 130; Connolly, 'On the history', pp. 220 - 231 and Wigram, *An Introduction*, pp. 282 -286. Also, Holmberg 'Some remarks', passim but especially p. 120.

[3] *Qnōmē* is in fact the normal term used by the East Syrians to refer to the members of the Trinity. See Brock, 'The Christology', p. 131, n. 37.

[4] See Brock, 'The Christology', p. 127 f. N.B. p 128, n. 13, referring to key passage on p. 142 explaining the Eastern understanding of the two terms.

[5] See Brock, 'The Christology', p. 130 f. The Syrian Orthodox Church, who also held the view that φύσις implied ὑπόστασις (and vice-versa), took the one ὑπόστασις of the Chalcedonian definition as necessarily implying one φύσις.

Summary of the ambiguities in the Greek and Syriac terms.

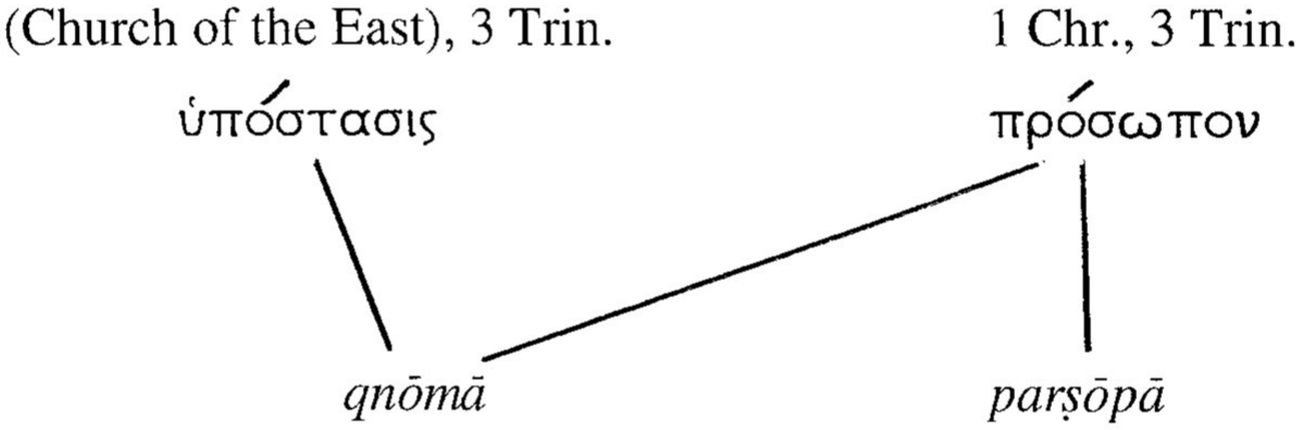
Greek

ὑπόστασις : 2 in Christ (in later Antiochene tradition), 3 in the Trinity.
πρόσωπον : 1 in Christ, 3 in the Trinity.

Syriac

qnōmā = ὑπόστασις (2 in Christ (only in the Church of the East), 3 in the Trinity) or
πρόσωπον (relating to Trinity only).
parṣōpā = 1 in Christ, 3 in the Trinity.

Diagrammatic representation of the relationship between Gk. and Syriac terms.



The Arabic terms in relation to the Trinity.

It should be noted that there are quite a number of more or less synonymous Arabic terms to designate the members of the Trinity other than *qunūm* and *shakhṣ*. These are discussed by Haddad and Holmberg.[1]

Qunūm

Qunūm[2] (from Syriac *qnōmā*) is the most common word employed by Arabic theologians to designate the persons of the Trinity.[3]

Qunūm occurs 13 times in the *Commentary*, at 5, 7 x 2, 14 x 2, 15, 16 x 3, 32, 39 x 2 and 73 (mss B and C only). All occurrences, except those at 14 and 32, are in relation to the Trinity. As with Syriac *qnōmā*, for Ibn al-Ṭayyib *qunūm* can refer not only to the three members of the Trinity but also to the two ὑποστασεις in Christ.

In various of his treatises relating to the Trinity, Ibn al-Ṭayyib provides us with definitions of his understanding of *qunūm*. He sees the *qunūm* as the combination of the *jawhar / dhāt* together with that which characterises, presumably, a particular part of the *jawhar / dhāt*, although the *jawhar / dhāt*, it is always emphasised, is one.

الأقنوم ليس هو اكثر من مجتمع الذات مع الصفة [4]

'The *qunūm* is nothing more than the combination of the *dhāt* with the attribute.'

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[1] See Haddad, *La Trinité*, pp. 170 - 181, and table p. 183, where *khāṣṣah*, *ma'ná*, *ṣifah*, *wajh*, *qiwām*, *barṣūb/farṣūf* and *ḥāl* are all also cited as terms designating the persons of the Trinity.

See also Holmberg, '"Person" in the Trinitarian Doctrine', passim, where *qiwām*, *ma'ná*, *'ayn*, *barṣūb/farṣūf*, *wajh*, *khāṣṣah*, *ṣifah*, and *ḥāl* are discussed alongside *qunūm* and *shakhṣ*.

[2] The standard modern form is *'uqnūm* but all three mss. employed in this study are quite consistent in spelling it without the initial *alif*. The vocalisation, *qunūm* is taken from Graf, *Verzeichnis*, p. 11. The alternative vocalisation, *qanūm*, is used by Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 170. These variations exist because Arabic, unlike the Syriac (*qnōmā*) from which the word is taken, does not allow for a consonant cluster in initial position.

In Ibn al-Ṭayyib's 'Le traité sur l'Union', the form *uqnūm* is found.

[3] See table in Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 183 and Holmberg, '"Person" in the Trinitarian Doctrine', p. 301.

Haddad gives an exemplary account of the term in Arabic, *La Trinité*, pp. 170 - 172.

A useful definition of the term by Yaḥyá can be found in Platti, *Yaḥyá*, p. 84, n. 39.

[4] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 'Le Traité sur la Trinité et l'Unité', p. 109, l. 11; quoted Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 154, n. 157. Note the variant spelling, al-uqnūm.

القنوم هو الجوهر مع الصفة [1]

'The *qunūm* is the *jawhar* along with the attribute.'

فاذا تخصصت بصفة سميتها بالتخصيص قنوما [2]

'If [the Essence] is characterised by an attribute, one calls it, by its characterisation, a *qunūm*.'

Shakhṣ

Shakhṣ, which is the obvious Arabic calque for πρόσωπον, although used by a number of writers to designate members of the Trinity, seems to have been avoided by many.[3] One reason for this, according to Holmberg, is that

'the word was felt to imply very strongly *sensual* perception and so was less suitable to designate the divine persons.'[4]

Another reason for this avoidance, as with Elias' eventual renunciation of *jawhar* in favour of *kiyān*, may well result from accusations by Muslims. In this case, the charge being that of tritheism, if the word is taken in its everyday sense.[5]

An example of such a notion makes an appearance in the debate between Yaḥyá and al-Kindī:

ثم قال الكندي – وإن كانت الثلاثة أقانيم بالحقيقة أشخاصا لم تزل ...
قال يحي بن عدي – وليس يقول النصارى أيضا إنها أشخاص بالمعنى ذهب إليه الكندي . [6]

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[1] Ms extract from Ibn al-Ṭayyib's treatise on the fundamentals of the religion, preserved by Ibn al-'Assāl (Par. ar. 200, f. 75 ; quoted Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 154, n. 158.

[2] Ms extract from Ibn al-Ṭayyib's treatise on the fundamentals of the religion, preserved by Ibn al-'Assāl (Par. ar. 200, f. 95v); quoted Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 150, n. 118.

[3] See Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 176 f. and Holmberg, '"Person" in the Trinitarian Doctrine', p. 303 f.

Ibn al-Ṭayyib appears to use the word only once in a Trinitarian context, in his writings which have been published to date - and this presuming that Troupeau's 'individu' translates *shakhṣ*. See Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 'Traité sur la science' p. 677.

[4] Holmberg, '"Person" in the Trinitarian Doctrine', p. 304, citing Israel of Kashkar, *A Treatise*, section 148, as evidence.

[5] See al-Isfahānī, *Épître sur l'Unité*, p. 4, n. 5.

[6] Yaḥyá, 'Un traité', p. 10. Quoted Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 176, n. 337 (with wrong page reference).

'Then al-Kindī said "If the three *qunūm(s)* are truly persons which are eternal ..."

Yaḥyá said "The Christians do not say that they are persons in the sense which al-Kindī means".'

A third reason is explained by Holmberg:

'... another reason for the Christian Arab reluctance to use *shakhṣ*, as well as other words associated with προσωπον / *parṣōpā*, may be sought in the distinction which especially East Syriac theologians traditionally made between *qnōmā* and *parṣōpā*. While the word *qnōmā* is used for divine hypostases, the word *parṣōpā* is reserved for the Christological doctrine as a designation for the person of Christ as born by the Virgin. In so far as this distinction was inherited by the Arabic-speaking theologians, the words related to πρόσωπον / *parṣōpā* were naturally regarded as less suitable in the Trinitarian context.'[1]

Farṣūf.

According to Haddad, besides *qunūm*, Ibn al-Ṭayyib himself uses *farṣūf* (from προσωπον, via Syriac) to denote the persons of the Trinity.[2] Holmberg writes:

'These words [i.e. *barṣūb* and *farṣūf*, alternative transcriptions of the Syriac] are used especially by writers in Egypt. Outside of Egypt they occur mainly in texts by or about East Syrians, and in connection with the Christological doctrine of the one person of Christ.' [3]

Distinction between *qunūm* and *shakhṣ / farṣūf.*

Although the text has only appeared so far in Troupeau's French translation, a passage should not be overlooked in which Ibn al-Ṭayyib distinguishes between *qunūm* and *shakhṣ / farṣūf*. We can be fairly certain of the underlying Arabic terms indicated, as

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[1] Holmberg, '"Person" in the Trinitarian Doctrine', p. 304.

[2] This term, however, does not seem to appear in any of the published editions of his works. See ms extract from Ibn al-Ṭayyib's treatise on the fundamentals of the religion, preserved by Ibn al-'Assāl (Par. ar. 200, f. 95v); cited Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 176, n. 335. An extract of this work has been published by Troupeau in French translation only. See Ibn al-Ṭayyib 'Traité sur la science'. See also the foonote following the one below.

[3] Holmberg, '"Person" in the Trinitarian Doctrine', p. 303. Haddad makes much the same point regarding the geographical spread of the term, *La Trinité*, p. 175 f.

Troupeau is very methodical in this respect:

'Si l'essence [i.e. *dhāt*] est particularisée par un attribut, on la nomme <hypostase> [i.e. *qunūm*], par la particularisation, et si l'attribut est déterminé, on la nomme <personne> [i.e. *farṣūf*] et <individu> [i.e. *shakhṣ*].'[1]

The first half of the statement is clear enough and reiterates the author's understanding of *qunūm*. The second half, however, is more tantalising, since it defines (in what is most definitely not a Christological context), what for Ibn al-Ṭayyib the distinction is between *qunūm* and *shakhṣ* - terms, which in a Trinitarian context, one would have thought to be indistinguishable. However, without the Arabic original (the word underlying 'determiné' is the crucial missing piece in the puzzle) we can only surmise that *shakhṣ / farṣūf* are considered somehow more concrete, less abstract than *qunūm*.[2]

The Arabic terms in Christology.

Qunūm

Of the occurrences of *qunūm* in the *Commentary*, only those at 14 and 32 are in a Christological context. It is very striking that it is precisely these occurrences where the Miaphysite recension deletes mention of *qunūm*.

As has been mentioned above, it must be borne in mind that the Antiochenes took the 2 φύσεις / *kyānē* of the Chalcedonian definition as their starting point, and for them this necessarily implied 2 *qnōmē*.

It is worth quoting the following two extracts, since they are the only examples of a Christological usage of *qunūm* in Ibn al-Ṭayyib's published writings.

وطائفة ثالثة وهم النسطورية زعمت أن الإتحاد وقع بين القديم والمحدث بالخاصة حسب أعنى بمعنى البنوة فأما الجوهران أعني جوهر الإبن الأزلي وجوهر

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[1] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 'Traité sur la science', p. 677.

A footnote tells us, relating to <personne>, that there is a marginal gloss in the ms. informing the reader that Syriac *farṣōfā* means 'face'.

[2] 'D'après Assémani, les Nestoriens expriment par hypostase la nature existante en elle-même, perçue par la raison, et, par prosopon, cette même nature perçue par les sens', Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 157.

الإنسان فبقيا على حالهما وكذلك الأقنومان .[1]

'A third group, the Nestorians, claims that the Union occurred between the Pre-existent one and the Temporal one through the property only, in other words, through the reality[2] of filiation. As for the two *jawhar(s)*, I mean the *jawhar* of the eternal Son and the *jawhar* of the man, they remained in their state, as did the two *qunūm(s).*'

وأقنوم الإبن الأزلي والشخص المأخوذ من مريم يوصفان قبل الإتحاد بأنهما جوهران وأقنومان ، ومن المقر به أنهما بعد الإتحاد جوهران وأقنومان .[3]

'And the *qunūm* [4] of the eternal Son and the person taken from Mary acquire their attributes[5] before the Union, since they are two *jawhar(s)* and two *qunūm(s).* It is acknowledged that after the Union they are two *jawhar(s)* and two *qunūm(s).*'

Once again, these statements emphasise the need, particularly with regard to writings emanating from the Church of the East to keep the Trinitarian and the Christological absolutely distinct. There are three *'qunūm(s)* in the Trinity, but within one of these three, namely Christ, there are a further two *qunūm(s).*

Shakhṣ / farṣūf.

According to Landron, who is writing of the Christological context, *shakhṣ* began to replace *farṣūf* in the tenth century as the rendering of Syriac *parsōpā.* The author cites Elias of Nisibis, the Patriarch Elias and Ibn al-Ṭayyib himself, who all confirm the equivalence of the native Arabic term with *parṣōpā.*[6]

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[1] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 'Le traité sur l'Union', p. 150, ll. 8 - 10.

[2] See p. 176, n. 4.

[3] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 'Le traité sur l'Union', p. 150, ll. 14 - 16.

[4] The transcription *qunūm*, contrary to the Arabic in this instance, is adopted for the sake of consistency (see the beginning of the section on *qunūm.*)

[5] The verb *yūṣafāni* here is taken as being denominative from *ṣifah*, 'attribute.'

[6] Landron, *Chrétiens et musulmans*, p. 198, citing for Elias of Nisibis, his *Thesaurus Arabico-Syro-Latinus*, ed. Dominikus Germanus a Silesia (Rome, 1636); for Elias I, *Uṣūl*, Vat. ar. 110, f. 187; and for Ibn al-Ṭayyib, Par. ar. 200, f. 95 v.

Distinction between *qunūm* and *shakhṣ*.

Ibn al-Ṭayyib himself furnishes us with an explanation of the difference between *qunūm* and *shakhṣ*.

والقنوم جوهر واحد بصفة ، والشخص جواهر كثيرة بصفات كثيرة فهو شخص واحد لا قنوم واحد .[1]

'The *qunūm* is one *jawhar* with an attribute, and the *shakhs* is a number of *jawāhir* with a number of attributes, so He [i.e. Christ] is one *shakhṣ*, not one *qunūm*.'

This statement is crucial for an understanding of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's Christology. His definition of *qunūm* in a Christological context is just the same as that we have seen in relation to the Trinity (see above). The concept of *qunūm* obviously carries with it the notion of singularity, since it is emphasised that it is one *jawhar*. The concept of *shakhṣ*, on the other hand, carries with it the idea of plurality, the plurality of the two φύσεις and ὑποστάσεις of Antiochene Christology.

[1] Ms extract from Ibn al-Ṭayyib's treatise on the fundamentals of the religion, preserved by Ibn al-'Assāl (Par. ar. 200, f. 75v); quoted Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 157, n. 173.

5 ***inbi'āth*** **procession**

This is Greek *ekporeusis*, Syriac *nāpōqūtā*[1] and refers to the relation of the Holy Spirit to the Father, originating in John 15:26, and elaborated by the Cappodocians.[2]

Four instances of its usage beyond the *Commentary* have been noted:

Yaḥyá ibn 'Adī:

الأقانيم الثلاثة ... مخالف كل واحد منها صاحبيه ... بما اختص به احدها من الأبوة والآخر من البنوة والآخر من الانبعاث [3]

'Each of the three *qunūm[s]* differs from its companions by paternity in one, filiation in another, and procession in the third, by which each one is characterised.'

Elias of Nisibis:

ولما كانت الذات علّةَ ولود الكلمة ، وعلة انبعاث الروح ... [4]

'And since the Essence is the cause of the birth of the Word and the cause of the procession of the Spirit.'

وكانت الروح منبعثة من الذات كانبعاث الحياة من النفس والحرارة من الشمس [5]

'And the Spirit proceeds from the Essence, just as life proceeds from the soul, and heat from the sun.'

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[1] This identification is based on the contextual evidence of the term's use both in and beyond the *Commentary*.

[2] See for example Gregory of Nazianzus, *Theological Orations*, p. 161.

[3] Yaḥyá, *Petits traités*, p. 45. In the same text see examples on pp. 50, 52, 55 and 57-61.

[4] Elias, 'Entretien d'Élie de Nisibe' p. 90, para 154.

[5] Elias, 'Entretien d'Élie de Nisibe' p. 92, para 156.

Ibn al-Ṭayyib:

أما صفة العلم فيسمونها أبوة وصفة العالم بنوة وصفة المعلوم انبعاثا [1]

'They [the Christians] call the attribute of the knowledge, paternity, the attribute of the knowing, filiation, and the attribute of the known, procession.'

This term occurs only once in the *Commentary*, at 16.

6	***tajassud***	**incarnation**
	ittiḥād	**union / uniting**

According to Landron:

'Le mot "incarnation" [*tajassud*] étant peu utilisé par les auteurs nestoriens, deux termes la désignent habituellement dans leurs oeuvres apologétiques et théologiques: celui d'"inhabitation" (*ḥulūl*) et celui d'"union" (*ittiḥād*).'[2]

This is borne out by the evidence of the *Commentary*, since *tajassud* occurs only once (at 3), whilst *ittiḥād*, or related forms, are found in sections 14, 46, 57, 60, 62, 63, 66, 72, 74, 78 and 86.[3]

In the West Syriac tradition, Ibn Zur'ah, for instance, uses *ittiḥād*, and *ta'annus* but not *tajassud*.[4] This no doubt reflects the West Syriac tendency to avoid emphasis of Christ's corporality.

Incidentally, the second form relative of *ittiḥād*, *tawḥīd*, a very common word amongst Muslim theologians, is found in section 89, and is used to denote the unity of the Trinity as opposed to the unity within Christ.

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[1] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 'Le Traité sur l'Unité et la Trinité', p. 81, l. 17.

[2] Landron, *Chrétiens et musulmans*, p. 194.

[3] A useful discussion of these, and related terms can be found in Landron, *Chrétiens et musulmans*, p. 194 f. See also Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 'Le Traité sur l'Union.'

[4] See Starr, *Epistle*, p. 37, n. 1.

7 ***inḥitāt*** **condescension**

This is Syriac *metnaḥttānūtā* [1] and refers to the Word's descent to earth in becoming Christ.

This term occurs twice in the *Commentary*, at 57 and 63.

8 ***khāssah*** **property**

This is Gk *idiotēs*, and signifies that by which the various persons of the Trinity are distinguished, one from another (unlike their substance, which is one), but it must be borne in mind that for Ibn al-Ṭayyib these properties are not accidents, unlike properties inherent in other substances.[2] According to Haddad the concept of 'a property which follows the essence' (see quotation immediately below) is an innovation on the part of Ibn al-Ṭayyib, in an attempt to avoid the charge of assigning accidents to God.[3] The term is synonymous with *ṣifah* (see following entry).

The fullest explanation we have of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's concept of property is to be found in one of his theological treatises:

ولقائل ان يقول ان كانت لذات البارئ صفات موجودة لها فمعها اعراض ، والاعراض من صفات الكائنات .

والجواب ان الموجود في الشيء منه ما يسمى عرضا ومنه ما يسمى خاصة ، وهذه تسمى خواص تتبع الذات ولا تسمى أعراضا .[4]

'To some who might say that if the *dhāt* of the Creator possesses attributes existing for it, then it has with it also accidents, for accidents are amongst the attributes of beings, the response is that which exists in the thing is in part called an accident, and in part called a property, and these are called 'properties which follow the *dhāt*', and are not

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[1] This identification is based on the contextual evidence of the term's use within the *Commentary*.

[2] Ibn Zur'ah, incidentally, is unusual amongst Christian writers in not employing this term with regard to the members of the Trinity. See Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 140, quoting C. Haddad, *'Īsā ibn Zur'a*, p. 200. (A useful philosophical, though not theological, definition of the term is given by Ibn Zur'ah. See Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 139, n. 56.)

[3] See Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 155.

[4] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 'Le Traité sur la Trinité et l'Unité', p. 123, ll. 1 - 4; quoted Haddad, *La Trinité*, p. 155, n. 163.

called accidents.'

This term occurs eight times in the *Commentary*, at 7, 10 (x 3) and 16 (x 4).

9 *sifah* attribute

This term can be said to be the Islamic counterpart of *khāṣṣah* which must have had a Christian connotation for Muslims. The following two quotations show that for Ibn al-Ṭayyib, and also Yaḥyá, *khāṣṣah* and *ṣifah* are absolutely synonymous.

Ibn al-Ṭayyib:

والنصارى ... وتسمي الصفات خواص [1]

'[For] the Christians ... the attributes are called properties.'

Yaḥyá:

وأنه ذو ثلاث صفات وإن شئت فقل خواص [2]

And He has three attributes, or say, properties, if you will.

It is striking that Ibn al-Ṭayyib employs *khāṣṣah* more frequently in the *Commentary* (surely written for a Christian audience) with *ṣifah* being used only once, whereas the latter term is more frequent in his theological works, which seem, at least in part, directed towards a Muslim readership.

Moreover, despite Ibn al-Ṭayyib's claim that the two terms are synonymous, is it merely a coincidence that the only occurrence of *ṣifah* in the *Commentary* (at 61) is a reference to an attribute/property of the Word, whereas *khāṣṣah* is used for the attributes/properties of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit? This may be a case of the author wishing to show the mental distinction he makes between the Word and the incarnate Son by dint of separate, albeit synonymous, vocabulary.

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[1] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 'Le Traité sur l'Unité et la Trinité', p. 81, l. 16.

[2] Yaḥyá, *Petits traités*, p. 22.

This word, which occurs at 6, 61, (53 B C only) , 64 and 76, is included in this discussion because it would be the nearest Arabic calque for Gk *ousia*. However, it is often impossible to distinguish clearly in a particular context between its various connotations, which range from its use as a straightforward verbal noun meaning 'to be' but also 'coming into being', to a more technical usage, where it would be closer to the philosophical usage of *ousia* (the occurrence at 61 would seem to be a fairly certain instance of this connotation.)

Summary of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's usage.

jawhar	ὀυσία in the Trinity and the 2 φύσεις in Christ.
dhāt	ὀυσία in the Trinity but not theφύσεις in Christ.
ṭabī'ah	The nature of the incarnate Word.
qunūm	The 3 members of the Trinity and the 2 *qnōmē* in Christ.
shakhṣ / farṣūf	The 3 members of the Trinity and the one πρόσωπον of Christ.

Conclusion.

Although the principle purpose of this study has been to clarify the technical terminology in the *Commentary*, it is maybe worthwhile expanding the perspective to make some suggestions, however brief, as to the possible implications of the work on the broader cultural and historical canvas.

The most obvious interest of this study for anyone involved in the study of this period and region beyond the Christian sphere is to assess the extent of the influence of Islam on Christian literature. In fact, as it turns out, the influence at the level of vocabulary of Arabic Christian literature as a whole could be said to be not insignificant, although neither is it overwhelming. Ibn al-Ṭayyib, for example, in general, uses the term *khāṣṣah* in the *Commentary* (surely intended for a Christian audience), whilst its Islamic equivalent, *ṣifah*, is employed in his, presumably, at least partly, apologetic works on the Trinity.

Having specifically defended the use of *jawhar* with regard to God, at a later stage in his life, Elias bows to Muslim pressure and substitutes *kiyān*. Islamic interpretation of *shakhṣ* in the Trinitarian context may also account, in part, for its avoidance by many Christian writers.

It is also surely not fanciful to attribute the almost alarming disarray in theological vocabulary (and Bible versions) to the effect of being a divided minority lacking political authority to support the ecclesiastical bodies.

If Landron is to be believed, and hers is a plausible argument, the gradual replacement of *farṣuf* by *shakhṣ* is evidence of the increasing loss of Syriac, at least by the members of the Church of the East (who happen to be the subject of Landron's study.)[1]

Another conclusion, and perhaps the most significant, which may be drawn from this study is that Christian Arabic literature is not as epigonic as has often been assumed. There is by no means always a simple one to one correspondence between the Arabic terms and their Greek and Syriac antecedents; indeed much of this study would have been redundant had there been such a neat congruity, and this surely reveals the Christian Arabic tradition as a vital and innovative one, not just the poor relation of Greek or Syriac.

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[1] Landron, *Chrétiens et musulmans*, p. 198.

Chapter 7.

Quotations from the Gospels in the *Commentary*.

Scope of the Enquiry.

The aim of the present study is to put the Gospel quotations found in the *Commentary* (not confined to the Prologue to John) into the context of other early Arabic versions and above all, to ascertain the *Vorlage* for Ibn al-Ṭayyib's Gospel text. Also, the text's relationship to the Arabic Diatessaron will be examined.

Abbreviations.

C; Codex Curetonius, Old Syriac (ed. Kiraz).

D; the Arabic Diatessaron (ed. Ciasca).

Gk; the Greek Gospels (ed. Aland).

H; the Harklean Syriac Gospels (ed. Kiraz).

IT; Ibn al-Ṭayyib's *Commentary*.

P; the Syriac Peshitta (ed. Kiraz).

S; Codex Sinaiticus, Old Syriac (ed. Kiraz).

Early versions of the Gospels in Arabic.

The first sensation likely to be experienced by anyone venturing into a study of the Arabic versions of the Gospels is one of bewilderment.[1] There can be few, if any, other Christian communities with such a proliferation of translations of Scripture.[2] After an initial foray by Guidi,[3] the first scholar to deal with the subject at any length was Graf,[4] and some fifty years on, little advance has been made on his work.[5] The meticulous study

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[1] See Metzger, *Early Versions*, p. 260.

[2] This plurality of translations finds a parallel in the Jewish Karaite translations of the Hebrew Bible (although not the Rabbanite tradition, where Saadiah Gaon's version gained supremacy). See Polliack, *The Karaite Tradition*, passim and review of the same, by Olszowy-Schlanger, *JSS* 45 (2000), p. 387 f.

[3] See Guidi, 'Le traduzione'.

[4] See Graf, *GCAL*, vol. 1, p. 85 ff.

[5] Unfortunately, it has not been possible to locate a copy of Henninger's 'Arabische Bibelübersetzungen' although its brevity (fourteen pages only) makes it unlikely to constitute much of an advance, if any, on Graf. There is also a relatively brief, more recent survey in Arabic by K. E. Bailey, 'The

undertaken by Samir on just one of the countless existing versions, that of the thirteenth century Copt, al-As'ad ibn al-'Assāl, is an indication of how much remains to be done.[1]

The obvious question to be answered is why such diversity.[2] In the Syriac Churches, after all, which are closest to the Arabic Churches geographically and linguistically, the situation is rather more straightforward, with six clearly defined versions, one of which, the Peshitta, had achieved a predominant position from a relatively early date.[3] In fact, it may well be with the Syriac language itself, in large part, that the answer to the problem lies. The Islamic conquests of present day Syria and Iraq naturally did not result in the instantaneous transformation of the Aramaic-speaking population into an Arabic-speaking one. This must have been especially true of that section of the Christian community which did not convert. Given the fact, therefore, that many of these Christians would have retained a knowledge of Syriac (as bilingual, if not still monolingual Aramaic speakers) long after Arabic had become the language of government, and given the veneration which was no doubt accorded to Syriac as the language of a long-standing liturgical tradition,[4] there was no pressing need for an early translation of the Gospels for a population able to understand the version(s) current at the time. As a result of the continued dominance of Syriac in the liturgy[5] and what we might fairly assume to be the extent that Aramaic continued to be understood, the need only gradually arose for Arabic translations and then certainly not throughout the conquered territories. This hypothesis is borne out by the fact that three-quarters of the surviving Arabic versions of Ephrem are of Ephrem Graecus, which suggests that translations of Ephrem Syrus were not required to the same extent.[6] Graf also explains that, for whatever reason, a canonical Arabic version was not imposed by the Church authorities. The situation then arose that each community and, perhaps, even each generation might produce its own version of the Gospels or the Psalms, the two parts of the Bible which were usually the first to be translated.[7] However, of course, few of these translations were free of influence from earlier versions. For example, one might find a version originally translated from the Greek being revised in line with the Peshitta -

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Arabic Versions of the Bible'.

[1] See Samir, 'La version arabe', passim.

[2] This diversity finds a surely not coincidental parallel in the proliferation of technical terms translating Gk and Syriac. See the chapter on technical terminology.

[3] See Brock, 'Versions', passim.

[4] See Graf, *GCAL*, vol. 1, p. 87. This argument does not hold for the Melkite Church, of course, whose liturgical language was Greek.

[5] Again, this does not apply to the Melkites.

[6] According to Samir in a conference paper yet to be published.

[7] See Graf, *GCAL*, vol. 1, p. 85.

very problematic for the textual critic.[1] This cross-fertilisation of versions must have been particularly pronounced with respect to the Gospels, given that so many of their phrases must have been etched onto the minds of any translator.

The other major, and closely related issue which needs to be addressed, is that of assessing the period in which the earliest translations of complete books of the Bible rather than isolated extracts came into being. The two main antagonists in the recent literature on this subject are Irfān Shahīd and Sidney Griffith;[2] the former arguing for the first appearance of such translations in pre-Islamic times, the latter in the Abbasid period. Certainly Griffith's reasoning is rather more convincing: 'If among the tribes any Arabic versions of the Gospel ever were made prior to the rise of Islam, an accomplishment that is not to be considered *a priori* impossible or even unlikely, all mention and all unambiguous evidence of them disappeared later.'[3] Joshua Blau supports this view on linguistic grounds, maintaining that none of the existing early manuscripts of biblical texts show any signs of having been produced in the pre-Islamic era.[4] Shahīd, on the other hand, relies on supposition: 'the feeling of the Arabs for their language and the spoken word was such as to make it completely incomprehensible that they would not have desired to express their religious sentiments through their own language, which had been so highly developed and refined by the great poets of pre-Islamic Arabia.'[5] This argument is what might be termed in postmodern jargon as essentialist and while, as Griffith says, the possibility of translations dating from this period is not to be ruled out, the Arabs' love of their language alone is not sufficient to make their lack 'completely incomprehensible.' Griffith ascribes the appearance of the first translations to the birth of the polemic between Muslims and Christians in the first Abbasid century.[6]

Of the twelve early manuscripts (mostly from Sinai) listed by Metzger in his survey of early Arabic versions of the New Testament, most are from the Greek but four of them (nos. 1, 2, 4 and 7) are said to be from one or other Syriac version.[7] However, only the first of these (Vat. arab. 13) preserves portions of the Gospels, and then only in

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[1] See Graf. *GCAL*, vol. 1, p. 85 f.

[2] See Griffith, 'The Gospel in Arabic' and Shahīd, *The Martyrs of Najrān*, pp. 247 - 250, and *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century*, pp. 435 - 443.

[3] Griffith, 'The Gospel', p. 137.

[4] See Blau, 'Sind uns Reste', passim.

[5] Shahīd, *The Martyrs*, p. 248.

[6] See Griffith, 'The Gospel', passim.

[7] See Metzger, *Early Versions*, pp. 261 - 263.

fragments. Number 2 in Metzger's list (cod. Sinai arab. 151) dates from 867 and contains Acts and the Catholic Epistles. This particular version was translated by Bishr ibn al-Sirrī and is said to be 'filled with Islamic phrases'[1] and throughout 'there is very strong evidence of Syriac'.[2]

So whilst the version found in Ibn al-Ṭayyib's *Commentary* seems to be the earliest extant complete translation of the Gospels made from Syriac,[3] given the existence of these various versions of other books of the New Testament (and the Gospel fragment in Vat. arab. 13) and given the fact that, as Graf writes, the Gospels and Psalms were usually the first books of the Bible to be translated,[4] it is highly improbable that Ibn al-Ṭayyib's really is the first complete version from Syriac. In fact, Ibn al-Sirrī is known to have composed commentaries on Matthew, Luke and John, so he himself may well have been responsible for a translation of these books at least.[5] There are quotations from the Gospels, thought to be translated from Syriac, in the works of two ninth century Arabic authors, al-Ya'qūbī's *History*[6] and 'Alī Ṭabarī's *Book of Religion and Empire,*[7] but of the verses in these texts which have been compared with ĪṬ there seems to be no significant connection.[8] As is to be expected, this is also the case with the early Gospel version translated from Greek published by Levin.

The Arabic Diatessaron.

The value of D as a witness to what is presumed to be the Syriac of Tatian's original is disputed. The general consensus is that it preserves well the sequence of the original (in this respect it conforms with the passages in Ephrem's Commentary) but in wording has so thoroughly been brought into line with P as to be of little use.[9] However

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[1] Staal, *Mt. Sinai*, Pauline Epistles, vol. 2, p. v.

[2] Staal, *Mt. Sinai*, Pauline Epistles, vol. 2, p. vii.

[3] See Graf, *GCAL*, vol. 1, p. 150.

[4] See Graf, *GCAL*, vol. 1, p. 85.

[5] See Staal, p. v.

[6] Ed. Houtsma.

[7] Ed. Mingana.

[8] See also, Karoui, *Die Rezeption der Bibel*, which deals particularly with Bible quotations in the works of Ibn Qutayba.

[9] See Petersen, *Tatian's Diatessaron*, p. 137.

Baarda[1] (and Baumstark before him)[2] finds the text indispensable for a reconstruction of the original Syriac. In the context of an article on one particular pericope he says: '... the Arabic harmony text, as so often, appears to be of high value for the reconstruction of the original Syriac Diatessaron.'[3] There is no doubt that it is indeed heavily influenced by P but the three examples noted in this study (Matt. 5:15, 18, and 25:5) show that traces do remain of the Old Syriac, some indication that the text is not completely worthless as a Diatessaron witness. It should be added at this point that the primary purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between IṬ and D along with the Syriac versions. For this reason peculiarities in the Arabic Diatessaron are only noted in the verse by verse analysis when they are relevant to the Gospel translation. For a proper evaluation of D itself the text would need to be studied alongside such witnesses as Ephrem and Aphrahat.

The Gospel quotations in the *Commentary.*

That the translation was carried out by Ibn al-Ṭayyib himself is taken on the authority of Hibat Allāh ibn al-'Assāl.[4] There is no reason to doubt this attribution, although on what authority Ibn al-'Assāl makes this assertion is unclear.

In the *Commentary* the Gospel quotations are introduced with the words 'The Apostle Matthew / John said...' The quotations are of varying length. Longer, self-contained extracts, the parables for example, are often quoted unbroken whilst portions of the Prologue to John, on the other hand, are broken down into constituent clauses.

The manuscript.

Only one ms was used for this chapter, BL or. 3201. The two Paris mss employed in the edition (Paris ar. 85 and 86) were only obtained after this study had been written and when the Biblical extracts in them were compared with those in the BL ms, no differences were observed sufficient to change the substance of the argument. In addition, neither of the Paris mss include the commentary on Matthew.

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[1] See all three works by Baarda in the bibliography.

[2] See his review of Marmardji's edition, p. 241 f.

[3] Baarda, 'To the roots' p. 132.

[4] See Graf, *GCAL*, vol. 1, p. 151.

Methodology.

In the verse by verse analysis which follows, the quotations from the Gospels as found in the ms of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's Commentary are set alongside the corresponding verses from Ciasca's edition of the Arabic Diatessaron.[1] Exact correspondences between the two are marked with ' = '. The orthography in the ms version is not commented upon except where the standard equivalent may not be quite obvious. The orthography is not consistent although it is generally in line with Middle Arabic, with the loss of interdentals and final hamzahs amongst other features. Moreover, the orthography of D as found in both Ciasca's and Marmardji's edition is entirely orthodox so that when a cross is marked beneath a word in IṬ with non-standard spelling the standard equivalent must be supplied whether it be in terms of orthography or morphology, in the case of some jussives, for example. The paraphrases found within the body of the Commentary have been examined but are in general so free as to be of little relevance to the present study. Also, since in the course of the analysis no convincing evidence was found for a direct relationship between the Old Syriac versions and IṬ (and on historical grounds any such link would be very unlikely) and although they often share readings with P against Gk, they are only referred to when they differ from P but exhibit an affinity with either IṬ or D. The same is true for H, which usually mirrors the Greek so closely as to be virtually indistinguishable from it as a *Vorlage*, and anyway it is unlikely that Ibn al-Ṭayyib, an East Syrian, would have made use of this West-Syrian revision.

Verse by verse analysis.

For ease of reference the Western (i.e. non-Syriac) division of verses is employed, although where the division in the mss is smaller than the Western, this is reflected in the text.

Syriac vocalisation is always quoted as in the printed editions, even if the Arabic translation suggests a different interpretation of an unvocalised text.

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[1] Ciasca's text is probably the preferable of the two editions, if far from ideal (it mixes the two recensions.) See Metzger, *Early Versions*, p. 15 and Petersen, *Tatian's Diatessaron*, p. 137.

Matthew 5:1 - 29 (Diatessaron 8).

Mt. 5:1; IṬ فلما راى يسوع ان الجمع صعد الى الجبل ولما جلس قرب اليه

D = = ابصر = الجموع = = (not in D)

تلاميد

(not in D)

The Arabic rendering is only possible if P *lkenshē* is taken as singular and *sleq* as a participle. Owing to the lack of agreement between τοὺς ὄχλους and ἀνέβη, Gk cannot be taken this way.

2 وفتح فاه وكان يعلمهم ويقول

= = وعلمهم وقال

كان يعلمهم . Compound tense also in P but imperfect in Gk.

3 طوبا للمساكين بالروح فان ملكوه السما لهم

= = = = = =

Here and in vv. 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10 IṬ and D translate Gk ὅτι or P *d* with فان / ف rather than the more obvious لان . But where one has ف the other always has فان and vice-versa. Six examples of this are surely too many to be a coincidence. Is the translator of IṬ or D deliberately trying to avoid an exact correspondence?

4 طوبا للمحزونين فانهم يعزون

= = فهم يتعزون

5 طوبا للمتواضعين فهم الدين يرتون الارض

= = = = الطوبى

للمتواضعين . Gk πραεῖς means 'mild, gentle' (Lampe), P *makīkē* 'humble,meek' (Payne-Smith). IṬ means 'humble'. In this case a Greek word is rendered in P with a Syriac term having two ranges of meaning, only one of which corresponds to that of the

Greek. IṬ selects the nuance that does not correspond to the Greek.

6 طوبا للدين هم جياع وعطاش للعداله فانهم يشبعون
الطوبى = للجياع والعطاش = فهم =

للدين . No equivalent in Gk or D but P has a relative pronoun, cf. v. 8.

7 طوبا للرحما فعليهم تكون الرحمه
الطوبى = = = =

8 طوبا للدين هم الدين بقلوبهم اطهار فهم الدين يرتون الله
الطوبى = للاطهار = = يبصرون =

للدين هم الدين . The Arabic is cumbersome, surely a scribal error. Nonetheless, P has a relative pronoun not found in Gk.

بقلوبهم . Possessive pronoun in P but not in Gk.

يرتون . Obviously a scribal error for يرون.

9 طوبا لفاعلى السلامه فانهم يدعون ابنا الله
الطوبى = السلام فهم = = =

10 طوبا للذين نفوا من اجل العدل فان ملكوه السما هى لهم
الطوبى = طردوا لاجل العدالة ف = السموات =

للدين . Again (cf. vv. 6 and 8) IṬ has a relative pronoun as does P unlike Gk (D agrees with IṬ on this occasion unlike vv. 6 and 8).

Here P *kīnūtā* (Gk δικαιοσύνης) is translated عدل not عداله as it is in v. 6. There is no obvious difference in meaning between the two Arabic words. Also, interestingly, neither S nor D are consistent. The original Syriac Diatessaron is thought often to agree with the Old Syriac and it is instances such as this which convince Baarda in particular to place a higher value on D than had generally been assigned it previously. However, given

the fact that we cannot be certain of the priority of IṬ and D in terms of dating and since their relationship to each other in terms of word for word correspondence is rather puzzling (one might even describe it as negative on occasions, seeming to avoid correspondence, see e.g. note to v. 3) hard conclusions should not be drawn from such an example as to the relationship between any of the texts under discussion. Nonetheless one might hazard that the inconsistency in D and S is also reflected in the original Syriac Diatessaron. And although one might like to think that the inconsistency in IṬ is significant, given the similarity of the two words it may merely be the result of scribal interference.

هي. The copula which reflects P here is redundant and is in fact absent in the parallel passage in v. 3.

11 طوباكم متى يعيروكم ويشردوكم ويتقولون عليكم بكل قول سيى كدبا بسببى

وتكلموا فيكم = كلام سوء لاجلي كذبا (not in D)

ويشردوكم . Gk, P, S and D all use a word from the same root as that used in the first part of v.10. Only C and IṬ are inconsistent. Historically speaking, a direct relationship between these latter two is very unlikely at this date. If P is the base text, and P alone, it may be that the translator, seeing two different words in P, related only by root, feels no obligation to reflect this in the Arabic.

However, if the inconsistency noted in the preceding verse is not the result of scribal interference, taken with this verse it may just be that in fact the Diatessaron, whether in Syriac or Arabic actually has some influence on IṬ here. But, as has been noted, both of these instances can be explained without resource to a text other than P.

يتقولون . P and Gk have the common verb 'to say' (the latter in the subjunctive) but D has the verb meaning 'to speak'. IṬ means 'to fabricate'. Is this simply anticipating the sense of what follows (كدبا) or is it once again the influence of D which actually uses an equivalent verb form, albeit from a different root.

قول . IṬ and P are explicit in glossing what in Gk remains unspecified.

(Marmardji is mistaken in necessarily taking يعيروكم from Lk 6:22b and not Mt 5:11 since both Gk and P use the same word in both instances).

12a فحينيدا افرحوا وسروا فان اجركم كتير فى السما

= = = ف= كبير = =

فحينيدا . The equivalent for this word is found in P but not in Gk.

12b فهكدى طردوا من تقدمكم من الانبيا

= = الانبياء = قبلكم

S and C have two separate readings in this verse which are peculiar to them. IṬ has neither.

طردوا . Once again IṬ is inconsistent in relation to the preceding verse against P, Gk and D. Is it that the translator has before him two texts (not necessarily in the same language) and is unwilling to give priority to one or other of them or is this phenomenon simply the result of stylistic preferences? (Cf. note to John 1:13.)

13 انتم انفسكم ملح الارض فان تتفه الملح بمادا يملح لشى لا يصلح لكن ليلقى

= = = = = ف= = = = = = = =

خارجا فتوظاه الناس

= يطرح ويتوظاه =

No equivalent for Gk ἐτι in P and IṬ.

IṬ and D both make an active construction from a passive in Gk and P (as do S and C). This strongly suggests a relationship between IṬ and D and may also reflect one between D, and S and C, which is to be expected since the Old Syriac versions and the original Syriac Diatessaron are thought to share many readings.

14 انتم نور العالم وغير ممكن ان تخفى مدينه على جبل مبنيه

= = لا يمكن = تتستر = مبنية على جبل

مبنيه . This strongly suggests P as the source for IṬ rather than Gk. Not only does IṬ translate P rather than Gk but also, rather awkwardly, mimics the word order of P by failing to place the participle immediately after the noun to which it relates.

15 ولا ينيرون سراجا ويجعلونه تحت مكيال بل على مناره ويضى للذين

= ينيروا = ويضعوها = مكبة لكن = المنارة وينير لجميع من

فى البيت اجمعون

= =

ينيــرون ... ويضـى. Another instance of inconsistency in IṬ against P (and D), although in this case Gk itself actually uses two different words. A relationship to the Gk should almost certainly not be inferred here given that in the eighty or so verses examined closely by the writer there are very few examples indicative of this and none which are unlikely to be coincidental. Again, the most plausible explanation would be two base texts for the translation.

اجمعون. A pseudo-correction.

16 وهكدا ينير نوركم امام الناس ليشاهدوا اعمالكم الصالحه ويسبحوا اباكم

هكذا = = قدام = ليبصرون افعالكم = ويمجدوا =

الذى فى السما

= = =

ينير . IṬ follows the indicative of P (Syriac not possessing a separate form for the jussive), not the jussive of Gk.

17 لا تظنوا باننى جيت لانقض السنه والانبيا لم ات لانقض لكن لاكمل

= = اني = لنقض الناموس او الانبياء = = = = =

لانقض ... انقض ... لاكـــمل . While Gk has three infinitives in this verse (normal Gk usage) IṬ follows P in having three finite verbs (D has an infinitive and two finite verbs).

والانبـيا. IṬ corresponds only with S and C in having ‘and’ here. Gk, P and D all have ‘or’. However, the two are orthographically very close in Arabic.

جـيت ... ات . Gk and P use the same word twice in this verse, whilst IṬ and D agree in having two different ones. This is a rare instance where IṬ and D correspond against Gk and P although there are numerous other indications of a relationship between the two.

18 وحقا اقول لكم ان تزول السما والارض ولا تزول يا واحده او خط واحد
الحق = = الى = تجوز = = لا تجوز سينة = = حرف =
من الناموس حتى يتم باسره
= السنة الى ان يكون جميع

This verse makes no sense as it stands. There is no main verb, ان instead of الى (cf. D) gives the wrong sense as does the و before لا تزول.

It is interesting to note that D has سـينة whilst IṬ has يا , the equivalent of the *yūdh* of all the Syriac versions which themselves reflect Gk.

خط. This better translates P rather than Gk although the latter has a very specific term (meaning 'serif') for which Arabic probably possesses no exact equivalent.

النامـوس . Once again IṬ uses a different word from that in the previous verse (سنة) whilst P and Gk are consistent. D uses the same two words as IṬ but in reverse order. This phenomenon is hard to explain. The fact that IṬ is inconsistent , as stated before, might best be accounted for by positing two base texts but that IṬ and D are in opposition (cf. note to v. 3) is puzzling.

يتم · IṬ actually better translates Gk than P but this is such a rare instance and hardly conclusive evidence; this is almost certainly merely a coincidence.

19a كل من يحل واحده من هده الاوامر الصغار ويعلم هكدى الناس يدعى
= = ينقض الان احد = = = = = = =
ناقصا فى ملكوه السما
= = = =

كل من IṬ more closely reflects P than Gk (cf. also v. 19b).

يحل . P and D repeat the verb from v. 17 but IṬ and Gk use two different verbs, (لانقض in v. 17). However, since IṬ, P and Gk all use the same verb here as that found in Jn 1:27 what might initially suggest a relationship between Gk and IṬ is probably only fortuitous. In other words, IṬ is consistent in its translation of P but only in relation to Jn 1:27 not v. 17 although this is not to suggest that the translator necessarily made a conscious connection with the verse in John.

الاوامر الصغار. The agreement between noun and adjective here in both IṬ and D is distinctive in that it reflects colloquial usage rather than CA (while D is fairly standard in its grammar, at least in such cases, if Ciasca's edition is to be trusted). However, this is the sort of feature which might most easily be subject to the influences of scribal transmission and so is not to be taken as significant.

ناقصا . IṬ and D agree in following P by translating with two different words where Gk repeats from earlier in the verse.

19b وكل من يعلم ويعمل فهدا يدعى عظيما فى ملكوت السما

كل = يعمل ويعلم يدعى هذا = = = =

20 واقول لكم انه اذا لم تزد عدالتكم اكتر من الدى للكتبه والمعتزله لم تدخلوا

اقول = ان = تفضل = ب= = الكتاب = لا =

ملكوت السما

= =

اذا ... المعتزله. The syntax here mirrors P exactly producing somewhat awkward Arabic including الدى which might better be feminine to agree with عدالتكم.

21 سمعتم انه قيل للاولين لا تقتل وكلمن يقتل يجب عليه الحكم

= = = للقدما = = فكل من = يستحق =

22a وانا اقول لكم ان كل من يسخط على اخيه باطلا فهو مستحق الحكم
= = = = جميع = = = = = = = =

22b وكلمن يقول لاخيه راقا فهو مخصوم من الجماعه وكل من يقول يا
وكل من = = يا سمج = = = = وكلمن = له =

جاهل فهو مستحق لنار جهنم
= نار = = = =

In both this verse and the preceding one, we have a piece of striking evidence pointing to a relationship between IṬ and D and on this occasion the correspondence although not exact is direct. Gk and P use the same word four times which is translated by IṬ with as many as three different words. The relationship between IṬ and D is as follows:

IṬ	يجب	مستحق	مخصوم	مستحق
D	يستحق	مستحق	مخصوم	مستحق

The correspondence in the third instance could hardly be coincidental given that both P and Gk are consistent throughout. Also noteworthy is the first instance where IṬ uses different vocabulary and D a different tense from the second and fourth. What is particularly interesting here is that S and C are consistent in all four instances except that in the first they have a finite verb as opposed to the equivalent participle in the others. This would seem to be another instance, albeit a minor one, where D (and even IṬ on this occasion) reflects an Old Syriac reading which one might assume was therefore also in the Syriac Diatessaron.

راقا. This word is not found in Lane, Dozy, Kazimirsky, or the *Lisān* and its form obviously suggests a straight transcription from the Syriac (if from Gk one would have expected ك not ق .) Would this word have been generally understood by the readers (or listeners) of this text or is the transcription an indication of lack of comprehension on the part of the translator, although D gets the right sense?

لنار جهنم. Both IṬ and D reverse the order of the genitive of Gk and all Syriac versions although this could simply be the result of standard usage in what might have

been a commonly known phrase.

23 وان تكن مقربا كربانك على المدبح وهناك تدكر ان اخاك حافظا

اذا كنت الان = = = = وتتذكر ثم ب = = حقدا

عليك احنه ما

= حقدا =

حافظا. حافظ would make better sense.

احنه. This translation of P has no equivalent in Gk.

24 فدع قربانك على المدبح وانطلق فترض اخاك اولا ومن بعد عد فقرب قرب

فخل = = = وامض اولا = = فحينئذ = =

قربانك

=

There is no equivalent for Gk ἐκεῖ or Syriac *tamān* in either IṬ or D. The *argumentum ex silentio* in such an instance cannot be strong but this manuscript is not characterised by many lacunae.

على. IṬ and D agree here against the meaning of both P and Gk ('before').

عد. Again IṬ and D agree against P and Gk which both have words connoting 'go' not specifically 'return'.

قرب. This is either the preposition (rather redundant here) or a case of dittography.

25 كن متالفا مع خصمك سريعا ما دمت معه فى الطريق

= متلافيا = بسرعة و= = = = = (cf. Lk 12:58)

ليلا يسلمك خصمك الى القاضى ويسلمك القاضى الى الجابى فتقع فى الحبس

= = = = و = يسلمك = = وتقع = =

ليلا (for لئلا).

26 فالحق اقول لك انك لا تخرج من هناك حتى تودى اخر فل
والحق = = ب= = = = ثم الى حين = = =

27 سمعتم بانه قيل لا تفرجو
= = = = تفجر

28 انا اقول لكم ان كل من ينظر الى امراه كى يشتهيها فى المحال
وانا الان = = ب = كلمن نظر = = مشتهيا لها ف = الحال

فقد فجر بها فى قلبه
(not in D)

المحـــال. D makes better sense here. As it stands المحـــال could be one of three possibilities: مَحالّ pl. of مَحَلّ 'places', مُحـال 'impossible' or مِحـال 'cunning' none of which suit the context here. If the reading of D is taken this better translates P ('immediately') than Gk ('already').

29 وان ادتك عينك اليمنى فافقعها والقاها عنك فالاصلح لك
ان كانت = = تؤذيك فافقئها والقها = فالاولي =

ان تهلك عضوك الواحد ولا يقع ساير جسمك فى جهنم
= يهلك احد اعضائك = يحصل باسره = = الجحيم

ادتك (presumably from آذى). The correspondence here between IṬ and D is significant in that the Arabic means 'to harm' whilst both Gk and Syriac mean 'to cause to stumble/sin'.

فـافـقـعـهـا. The reading of D should surely be followed here since the text of IṬ makes little sense as it stands ('to explode' intransitive). *Alif* and *'ayn* are of course phonologically close.

فـــالاصلـح. The ms. seems to have been emended here and in fact makes better sense than D which seems to need the addition of معروفا to complete the idiom meaning 'to be of benefit'.

Matthew 25:1-13 (Diatessaron 43 and 31).

Mt. 25:1 حينيد تشبه ملكوت السمواه العشر العدارى اللاتى
= = = السماء لعشر بتولات اولئك اللواتى

اخدن مصابيحهن وخرجن لتقلين الختن والعروس
= = = لاستقبال = =

لتقلين. A strange form as it stands. The best alternative for sense would be ليقبلن which although involving three alterations is still orthographically close (cf. v. 6).

2 فخمس منهن كن حكيمات وخمس جاهلات
خمس = = = = = =

حكيمات... IṬ follows the word order of P against Gk.

3 واوليكن الجاهلات اخدن مصابيحهن ولم ياخدن معهن دهنا
واولئك = = سرجهن = = = =

واوليكن . Not the standard form of the word (cf. vv. 4, 7 and 8). The demonstrative is found in P not Gk.

4 واوليكن الحكيمات اخدن دهنا فى اوعيه مع مصابيحهن
واوليك = = = = ظروف = =

5 فلما ابطا الختن نعسن كلهن ونمن
= تاخر = نمن = ورقدن

نعـــسن كلهن ونمن. A rare instance of IṬ more closely reflecting Gk than P.

However, given the orthographic similarity between the two they may easily have been interchanged at some stage in transmission.

6 وفى نصف الليل ضجه ها الختن ات فابرزن لتقلبه
= وسط الليل وقعت صيحة = = يوافي فاخرجن لاستقباله

ات. There is no equivalent for this in Gk but P has the cognate verb.

لتقلبه . The best emendation here would be لتقلبنه (cf. v. 1).

7 حينيد اوليك البتولات قمن كلهن وهيات مصابيحهن
= قام كل = = وهيان =

البتولات. A different word from that used in v. 1 while P, D and Gk are consistent. In this verse IṬ agrees with D.

8 فقلن اوليك الجاهلات للحكيماه اعطنا من دهانكن فقد انطفات مصابيحنا
قلن = = اعطونا = = = = =

9 فاجابن اوليك الحكيمات وقلن لعل ما يكفينا واياكن لكن ادهبن الى
فاجاب = = العله لا = = = امضين =

الذين يبيعون فابتعن لكن
الباعين وابتعن =

الذين. P, not Gk, shares the relative pronoun with IṬ.

10 ولما انطلقن ليتباعن وافا الختن فاللواتى كن مستعدات دخلن معه الى
= = للابتياع = = والمستعدات = = =

بيت التعريس واغلق الباب
العرس وارتج =

وافا. In the eighty or so verses studied for this paper this is the only occurrence of this word to translate Syriac *atā* or Gk ἔρχομαι (cf. e.g. vv. 6 and 11). Elsewhere أتى or جاء are employed. Given that it is not used elsewhere this could well be an indication of the influence of D since this is the verb commonly employed with this meaning in D and is so here.

فاللواتى. As in the previous verse P not Gk has a relative construction here.

11 وباخره جا .....
واخيرا وافت

The text is corrupt here with most of the verse missing. This might be a good indication that the Gospel quotations in this manuscript were copied from a copy of this Commentary and not interpolated from a separate and later complete version of the Gospels. A paraphrase of the verse does exist in the body of the Commentary but it is too free for one to be able to attempt a reconstruction of the original.

12 وقال لهن الحق اقول لكم اننى لا اعرفكن
اجاب = = = = لكن ب= = =

The first word of the verse would seem to be missing.

13 فاستيقظوا اذ فلستم تعلمون ذالك اليوم ولا الساعه
تيقظوا الان فليس تعرفون = = = تلك =

فلستم . P and Gk have the usual negative particles here. The presence of the emphatic negative in both IṬ and D, albeit in slightly different forms, is a strong indication of a connection between the two.

ذالك اليوم . P shares the demonstrative with IT, not Gk.

The additional demonstrative تلك, which is specific to D is found in the paraphrase existing in the Commentary itself although not in the Gospel quotation here. However, this could well be merely coincidental given the free nature of the paraphrases.

John 1:1-28 (Diatessaron 1, 3 and 4).

Jn. 1:1a فى البد كان الكلمه موجودا

= = = =

كان الكلمه موجودا. This more closely reflects P which has a compound construction as opposed to Gk. Compare v. 10 where P has only a single element and this is reflected in IṬ.

كلمـــــه. Taken as masculine, as is the Syriac equivalent which is also feminine except when referring to the Logos.

1b والكلمه كان موجودا عند الله

= لدى = =

1c والله هو الكلمه

= = =

2 هدا كان موجودا لدى الله فى البد

= هو في البدء = =

لدى . IṬ is once again inconsistent in relation to v. 1b against P, D and Gk (this inconsistency is confirmed in the readings found in the body of the Commentary, f. 299b lines 11, 12 and 27.)

3 كان كل بيده وما كان كون شى واحد دونه

= = كان ومن دونه ولا موجود = كان

There is no equivalent for the relative phrase found at the end of the verse in both P and Gk. كـــون could be seen to reflect the change in Gk from ἦν in vv. 1 and 2 to ἐγένετο in v. 3 (a change not reflected in P) and this hypothesis is supported by the parallel phrase in D in v. 10. However, IṬ does not follow D in v. 10 in this respect (although كـــان could easily enough have been substituted for كـــون in transmission and given the otherwise almost verbatim translation may well have been) and is unusually distant from D in the present case. Is this rather subtle reflection of the Gk (not even

found in H) a happy accident?

4 به كانت الحياه والحياه هى نور الناس
= = = = = = =

5 والنور اضا فى الظلام والظلام لم يدركه
= ينير = الظلمة والظلمة = =

6 كان انسان ارسل من الله اسمه يوحنا
(not in D)

7 هدا اتى للشهاده ليشهد على النور فليومن كل انسان على يده
= جاء = = = = ليؤمن = = بتوسطه

على يده. Note the inconsistency compared with v. 3 not reflected in P, Gk or D.

8 ليس هو النور لكن ليشهد على النور
= = = = = = =

IṬ and D have present tense against both P and Gk.

9 هو نور الحق الدى اتى الى العالم لينير كل انسان
الذي = = = المنير ل = = ات الى العالم

لينير. The conjunction here denoting purpose is notable in that it reflects neither P, D nor Gk, unless the Syriac relative particle is misconstrued as the particle of purpose, which it should not be, given that it is not followed by an imperfect.

10 فى العالم كان والعالم بيده كان والعالم لم يعرفه
= = = = به كون = = =

See note to v. 1a.

11 اتى الى خاصته وخاصته لم تقبله

جاء = ماله وماله = يقبله

12 فاما الدين قبلوه فاعطاهم سلطانا ليصيروا لله ابنا الدين يومنون باسمه

و= = اعطاهم السلطان ليكونوا ابناء الله = = =

لله ابنا . If the text is not corrupt here this strange word order is hard to explain.

لدين يومنون . IṬ and D follow C where للدين would more accurately translate Gk or P and in fact the verse does not read comfortably with its two relative clauses without this minor emendation.

13 الدين ليسوا من دم ولا من هوى لحم ولا من مشيه رجل بل من

= ليس هم = الدم = = ارادة اللحم = = ارادة = لكن =

الله ولدوا

= =

هوى ... مشيه . Once again IṬ is inconsistent against the other versions and in this instance, since neither word coincides with D, the latter cannot be brought in as a plausible cause. Does the author simply wish to avoid repetition, or is it a matter of finding the best collocations?

14a والكلمه صار لحما وحل فينا

= = = = =

صار . We find the first example of the use of this word to translate Syriac *hwā* or Gk ἦν and ἐγένετο in this Christologically crucial verse and IṬ is in agreement with D.

14b وراينا مجده كمجد الوحيد من الاب المملو نعمه وحقا

وقسطا = = = = = = = =

In the whole of this important verse IṬ and D coincide exactly except on the last word where D takes the cognate of P. According to Payne-Smith the Syriac word can

mean either ‘truth’ or ‘justice’ whilst the Arabic of IT and D denote each respectively.

15 يوحنا شهد عليه وهتف قايلا هدا الدى قلت انه سياتى بعدى وهو كان قبلى
= = = ونادى وقال = هو = = = ياتي = و= =

من اجل انه اقدم منى
= = =ل

16 ومن امتلايه اخدنا كلنا نعمه بدل نعمه
= = = = النعمة عوض النعمة

17 لان الناموس اعطى بموسى والحق والنعمه بيد يسوع المسيح كان
= = بتوسط موسى اعطي = = ب = = كانا

18 ما راى الله احد من الاول الوحيد لله فى حضن ابيه خبر
الله لم يبصره انسان قط = = هو = = = هو =

19 وهده هى شهاده يوحنا لما ارسل اليه من اورشلم كهنه ولاويين ليسالوه انت
= = = = = اذ = = اليهود = = = = =

من انت
= =

ارسل . This verb needs to be read as a passive without the addition of اليـــهـود which is missing here.

20 فاعترف وما انكر واقر بانى لست المسيح
واقر ولم يحجد واعترف بانه ليس هو =

فاعترف ... واقر . IT and D are both inconsistent against P and Gk but again the correspondence is negative.

21 فسالوه فمن انت ايليا فقال لست افالنبى انت فقال كلا
وسالوه ايضا ماذا الان االيا انت = = هو انبي = قال لا

اف . For the use of these two particles in conjunction see Lane p. 3, col. 1.

فـقـال كـلا . A strong case for P as the *Vorlage*, Gk has 'answered' against P's 'said.'

22 قالوا فمن انت لنرد الجواب الى الدين ارسلونا مادا تقول عن نفسك
= له = = لنجيب = = = = = =

There is no equivalent for Gk οὖν in P or IṬ.

23 فقال انا الصوت الدى ينادى فى القفر اصلحوا سبيل الرب كما قال اشعيا
= = = الصارخ = = طريق = = = =

النبى
=

الدى ينادى . IṬ follows P in having a relative clause with a finite verb against the participle of Gk.

24 وقد كان اوليك المرسلون من المعتزله
و الذين ارسلوا كانوا = جهة =

اوليك . There is no demonstrative in Gk as there is in P.

المعتـزله . It would be interesting to know when this indigenous Arabic term came into use to render 'Pharisees'. It is also found in Sinai Ar. 151 (ed. Staal), translated from the Syriac, e.g. Acts 23:6.

25 فسالوه وقالوا له ما بالك الان تصبغ اد لست المسيح ولا ايليا ولا النبى
= = = لماذا تعمد = و = = = = نبيا

26 فاجاب يوحنا وقال لهم ما بالكم الان اصبغ بالما وبينكم قايم من انتم لا

اجاب = = = انا اعمد = بينكم = = = =

تعرفونه

=

لهم . IṬ follows P against Gk in taking this word with قال , not اجاب (the origin of which difference in reading may lie in analogy with the previous verse.)

اصبغ...قايم . Both IṬ and D have a finite verb followed by a participle whilst P and Gk are consistent in having two participles and finite verbs respectively.

27 داك هو الدى ياتى بعدى وهو اقدم منى الدى انا غير مستحق لحل

هذا = = قلت انه = = وكان قبلى = = لا استحق ان احل

سيور خفيه

= =

IṬ mirrors P not Gk in having a full sentence in the first clause of this verse.

وهو اقدم منى . The equivalent of this phrase is not found in the standard Aland text of Gk but it is found in Codex Alexandrinus and many miniscules and so is not evidence for P as the *Vorlage*. This additional phrase brings the verse into line with v. 15.

28 كان هذا فى بيت عنيا فى ممر الاردن حيت كان يوحنا يعمد

وذلك = = = = = عبر = = = = = يوحنا =

يعمد . Once again IṬ is inconsistent when compared with the other versions (cf. e.g. v. 26.) As before this phenomenon could be accounted for by the influence of D, given that the word here is the one commonly employed in D with this meaning.

John 20:19-31 (Diatessaron 54).

Jn. 20:19 ولما بلغت عشيه يوم الاحد وكانت الابواب

حتى = = ذلك اليوم الذي هو = = و = كانت

مغلقه بحيت كان التلاميد مرتجه للخوف من اليهود جا يسوع وقام بينهم وقال

مرتجة = = = لاجل الخوف = = و= = فقام = =

السلم معكم

السلام =

مرتجه . There seems to be a corruption in the text here. The word can be read in one of three ways: مرتجّة (form 8), مرتجه (form 8) of مرتجة (form 4). The first option 'trembling (from fear of the Jews)' makes the better sense whilst the second word, although in Hava and Kazimirski, is not listed in the eighth form but in all three cases a masculine plural would be required to agree with the preceding noun. Some Gk texts have συνηγμένοι in this position but there is no obvious Arabic word with the connotation 'assembling' which is orthographically close to مرتجه . The most plausible explanation for the text as it stands can be found with recourse to D which has مرتجة earlier in the verse (i.e. form 4), a synonym for مغلقة . There are two likely possibilities. Firstly, it is the result of displacement of a marginal gloss. Secondly, the text of IṬ originally read مرتجة (الابواب) but a scribe at some point in the course of transmission was unhappy with this word, replaced it with the word he thought made best sense in the context, but not wishing to eradicate the original word altogether, moved it to another point where it seemed better suited, even if the wrong gender and number (in other words, he understood the word only as form 8).

20 قال هذا واراهم يديه و جنبه وسر التلاميد لنظرهم الى سيدنا

(not in D) التلاميذ سروا (not in D)

لنظرهم . IṬ shares with P a causal subordinate against the temporal of Gk.

21 قال لهم يسوع ايضا السلم معكم كما ارسلنى ابى انا ايضا ارسلكم

و = = = السلام = = = = = = = =

ارسلنى ... ارسلكم . P also has repetition against Gk which uses two separate verbs.

22 ولما قال هذا نفخ فيهم وقال لهم اقبلو روح القدس
= = = = = = = = = =

فيهم . The equivalent is in P not Gk.

23 ان تتركوا لانسان خطاياه تترك له وان تمسكوا انسانا يكون ممسوكا
= = خطاى = = = تمسكوها على انسان تكن ممسكة

تتـــركـــوا ... تمسكوا . The collocation of these verbs with 'sin' is not standard Islamic usage (certainly not Quranic) and surely reflects the influence of Syriac on Christian Arabic texts.

24 توما احد الاتنى عشر وهو الملقب بالتوم لم يكن تم معهم لما جا يسوع
و = = = المدعى ثاما = = مع التلاميذ = وافى =

تم (for ثم). The equivalent is found only in P not Gk.

25 فقال له التلاميد ابصرنا سيدنا فقال لهم هو ان لم ابصر يديه
= = = قد = = = = = = = انا =

مواضع المسامير والمسها باصبعى لا اومن وابسط يدى على جنبه لا اصدق
= = والقى عليها اصابعي وامر ب = = = = =

An equivalent of Gk ἄλλοι is in neither P nor IṬ.

مواضع . IṬ reflects P more than Gk 'mark'.

باصـــبـــعى... . There is no equivalent in P or IṬ for the repetition in Gk of τὸν τύπον τῶν ἥλων although in IṬ in the corresponding position we find لا اومن which comes from neither Gk nor P. The origin of this phrase is not clear since it is orthographically remote from the مواضع المسامير one would expect as a translation of Gk.

والمسـهـا ... وابسط . Against Gk there are also two different verbs in P and D although neither of those in the latter coincide with IṬ.

26 ومن بعد تمانيه ايام كان التلاميد داخلا وتوما
= = = = = في الاحد الاخر = = مجتمعين ايضا = =

معهم فوافى يسوع والابواب مغلقه قام فى الوسط وقال لهم السلم معكم
= وجاء = = مرتجة ف = وسطا = = السلام =

لهم . Equivalent found only in P (and D), not Gk.

27 وقال لتوما هات اصبعك الى هاهنا وابصر يدى وهات يدك
= = ادن ب = = = = = = = =

وابسطها على جنبى ولا تكن غير مومن لكن مومن
فابسطها = = = = = مصدق = مصدقا

No equivalent for Gk εἶτα in P or IṬ.

وابسطها . Cf. v. 25 (والمسها ... وابسط) IṬ is consistent with P here in repeating the verb translating the second occurrence of βάλω in v. 25.

28 اجاب توما وقال يا سيدى والهى
والاهي = = = = =

يا . Only IṬ and D have a vocative particle although the article in Gk might be taken as a vocative here if not as an exclamation.

29 قال له يسوع الان لما ابصرتنى امنت طوبى للذين لم يبصرونني وامنوا
= = = = = = = اذ = = = = =

الان . The equivalent for this word is found only in P not Gk.

للذين . A relative exists in P not Gk.

30 وايات كتيره اخر عمل يسوع قدام تلاميده لم تكتب فى هدا الكتاب

= = = = = = وهي التي = = صنع = = =

There is no equivalent for Gk μὲν οὖν καὶ whilst Syriac *dēyn* is often translated by nothing more than *wa*, as here.

31 وهدا الدى كتب ايضا لتومنوا بان يسوع هو ابن الله وادا ما امنتم يكون

وهذه المكتوبة = = ب = المسيح = = = = تكون

لكم باسمه حيات الابد

= = = =

وادا. IṬ and P both miss the force of the parallel ἵνα clauses in Gk.

باسمه حيات الابد. IṬ follows the word order of P rather than Gk.

وادا مـــا. The coincidence between D and IṬ in their use of مـــا here is striking although it also reflects P.

Results.

Strong examples of P as a *Vorlage* for IṬ:

Matt. 5:5, 12a, 14, 20, 23.

John 1:21.

Weak or ambiguous examples of P as a *Vorlage* for IṬ:

Matt. 5:1, 2, 6, 8 (x2), 10, 11, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19a (x2), 22b, 28.

Matt. 25:2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 13.

John 1:1a, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27 (x2).

John 20:20, 21, 22, 24, 25 (x4), 26, 27 (x2), 29 (x2), 30, 31 (x2).

Examples of Gk as a possible *Vorlag*e for IṬ (all weak or ambiguous):

Matt. 5:15, 18. Matt. 25: 5. John 1:3.

Strong examples of a link between IṬ and D:

Matt. 5:13, 17, 22b, 24 (x2), 29.

Weak or ambiguous examples of a link between IṬ and D:

Matt. 5:3, 11 (x2), 19a, 22b, 24. Matt. 25:7, 10.

John 1:8, 20, 26, 28. John 20:19, 28, 31.

Examples of readings from the Old Syriac versions reflected in D:

Matt. 5: 10, 13, 22b.

Conclusion.

There can be little doubt from the analysis above that Ibn al-Ṭayyib was translating from the Peshitta in producing his Arabic version of the Gospels.

The authorship of the Arabic *Diatessaron* has been the subject of a number of articles, whose linguistic arguments have been discussed in the introduction to the critical edition of the *Commentary.* What was regarded as the text's divergences from the norms of orthodox Classical Arabic led Marmardji and Kahle to reject the attribution to Ibn al-Ṭayyib. According to Marmardji, the author who had composed so many works in well-formed Arabic could not possibly have been responsible for a work so full of

solecisms.[1] Kahle concurred.[2] Baarda claims, however, in some detail, that many of the so-called faults that Marmardji found can be ascribed to Syriacisms,[3] whilst Sanders considers the mere fact of the divergence of the language from Classical norms no reason not to attribute it to Ibn al-Ṭayyib.[4]

In the foregoing analysis, a close link has clearly been shown between IṬ and D.[5] The sheer quantity of correspondences is alone enough to demonstrate this fact, without the examples listed above where the two share an unusual reading. However, the relationship between the two texts, as has been pointed out, is not always one of straightforward correspondence and there is also the question of how to explain the not infrequent inconsistencies in IṬ against the other versions. A plausible explanation might be that when translating P (there are no significant traces of Gk) Ibn al-Ṭayyib had a copy of D to hand. This would explain the inconsistencies in IṬ since in this scenario he would be working with two sources although, in fact, where P and D differ markedly he usually follows P. This relative chronology also makes sense if Ibn al-Ṭayyib is indeed the author of the Arabic Diatessaron, since having completed a translation of the four individual Gospels at a time when the importance of the Diatessaron was waning,[6] why would he then undertake a translation of the latter? In addition, the apparently higher frequency of Syriacisms in the Diatessaron translation could be explained by the translator's relative inexperience.

The main weakness in this argument is the closeness of D to P (only three instances out of some eighty verses where the latter is not reflected in favour of S or C). The obvious explanation for this phenomenon is that D was brought into line with P precisely through IṬ. However, this reasoning leaves the inconsistencies in IṬ unaccounted for (it is more inconsistent than D). So, the argument for the priority of D over IṬ requires either that the Syriac *Vorlage* of the former had already largely been brought into line with P or

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[1] See Marmardji, *Diatessaron de Tatien*, p. lxxxix.

[2] See Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza*, p. 311. Kahle's discussion of the authorship of the Arabic Diatessaron runs from pp. 307 - 313, but his dismissal of Ibn al-Ṭayyib as the author rests solely on his perception that the work's language is 'not very correct and certainly not classical,' and therefore that it cannot be by Ibn al-Ṭayyib.

[3] See Baarda, 'The Author', pp. 91 - 102.

[4] See Sanders, *Commentaire*, trans. p. I, n. 7.

[5] N.P. Joosse has pointed out in conversation with the present writer that he had noted a similarly close correspondence in his study of the Sermon on the Mount in the versions of the Arabic Diatessaron and the *Commentary*. The results of this study form part of his thesis, *The Sermon on the Mount in the Arabic Diatessaron.*

[6] The Persian translation of the Diatessaron is also rather late.

that the scholar responsible for D also had the text of P to hand during the translation.

Of course the arguments adduced here do not settle the issue of the authorship of the Arabic Diatessaron once and for all but given what has clearly been shown to be the close relationship between it and what we can fairly assume to be Ibn al-Ṭayyib's own translation of the Gospels, it is surely not unreasonable to accept the testimony of some of the mss of D[1] and attribute the translation of both works to one and the same man.

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[1] See Baarda, 'The Author', passim.

Chapter 8.

The Ge‘ez translation of the *Commentary*.

This chapter presents an analysis of the Ge‘ez translation of the *Commentary*, dating from 1522 / 23. It intends to cover the instances where the Ge‘ez diverges markedly from the Arabic but by no means is every single discrepancy noted. The translation is placed in the wider context of the medieval Ethiopian translation movement, as far as is possible given the limited attention this area has so far received. Ibn al-Ṭayyib’s place in the Ethiopian exegetical tradition is also discussed.

Terminology.

Ge‘ez is the Classical language of Ethiopia and was more or less the only written language until the nineteenth century. This native term is to be preferred to ‘Ethiopic,’ to avoid confusion with ‘Ethiopian,’ which can then include any Ethiopian language or tradition.

Transliteration.[1]

The system employed for the representation of Ge‘ez is one which reflects the orthography rather than any hypothetical pronunciation, except in the case of doubled consonants, which are indicated, and the seventh order ‘vowel’, which latter can mark a so-called shwa vowel or the absence of a vowel (in this latter case, opinion may differ on the appropriate transcription)[2]. Therefore, amongst other features, first-order vowels are always transcribed ‘*ä*’ even after a laryngeal consonant. In the list below, only those letters where the correspondence is not obvious are noted.

Vowels

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th order
ä	*u*	*i*	*a*	*ē*	*o*	*e* or absence of a vowel

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[1] It is hoped that later versions of this chapter will employ Ge‘ez script.

[2] For example, is it Ya‘qob or Ya‘eqob?

Consonants

ሀ	ሐ	ሠ	ሰ	ኀ	አ	ዐ	ጠ	ጸ	ፀ
h	*ḥ*	*sh*	*s*	*kh*	*ʾ*	*ʿ*	*ṭ*	*ṣ*	*ḍ*

The Ge'ez '*hamzah*' (glottal stop) is only reproduced when not in initial position, as is normal practice in transliterating Arabic.

Numbering of cited passages.

The folio number is followed by the number of the column (the folios are divided into three) and the line.

The medieval Ethiopian translation movement.

The historical development of the translation movement in medieval Ethiopia has yet to be studied in any depth.[1] As often with pre-modern Christian cultures, the translations of the Bible have been given the most attention but these texts were a product closer to Late Antiquity than to the great flowering of translations in the 15th and 16th centuries.[2]

Irvine distinguishes three high points in the development of medieval Ethiopian literature.[3] The first two of these he identifies with the reigns of 'Ämdä Ṣeyon (1314-44) and Zärä Ya'qob (1434-68), respectively. The third is notable in the field of translation

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[1] The major (and magisterial) histories of Ethiopian literature are: Littmann, 'Geschichte der äthiopischen Litteratur' (1907), Guidi, *Storia della Letteratura Etiopica* (1932), Cerulli, *Storia della Letteratura Etiopica* (1956) and Ricci, 'Letterature dell'Etiopia' (1969). There are briefer but nonetheless useful surveys in Littmann, *Abessinien* (1935), pp. 94 - 112; Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians* (1965), pp. 136 - 157; Irvine, 'Ethiopic Literature' (1971) and Getatchew Haile 'Highlighting Traditional Ethiopian Literature' (1995). There is extensive, up-to-date bibliographical information in Beylot 'Langue et littérature éthiopiennes' (1993).

A very informative, recent introduction to the Church in Ethiopia (including its literary heritage) by Kropp can be found in the *Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity*, ed. Parry, pp. 184 - 190.

[2] See Ullendorff, *Ethiopia and the Bible*, pp. 31 - 72, and another Schweich lecture, Knibb, *Translating the Bible.*

It seems that the Ge'ez Old Testament was revised in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but the first version(s) was completed by the mid-seventh century. See Knibb, pp. 2 f.

[3] Irvine, 'Ethiopic Literature', p. 204.

particularly for the works of one 'Enbaqom (fl. 1530),[1] who was a Muslim convert, originally named Ṣāliḥ, hailing from Iraq or Yemen. He is most famous for producing the Ge'ez version of the Bärälam and Yewasef cycle but, according to Ricci, he was also responsible for translating Chrysostom's commentary on Hebrews[2], and a commentary on the Gospels (*Tergwamē wängēlat*).[3] This latter should be the commentary by Dionysius bar Salībī, the translation of which Littmann and Guidi claim Lebnä Dengel (1508-40) commissioned along with Chrysostom's commentary on Hebrews, and a monastic work entitled *Ärägawi mänfäsawi*.[4] The translation of Chrysostom's work is dated 1523, which makes it exactly contemporary with the translation of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's commentary on the Gospels. 'Enbaqom also wrote an original apologetic work against Islam.[5] The Ge'ez version of the great Patristic compilation, *Haymanotä äbäw*, also dates from this period[6], as does the *Gädlä Giyorgis*, a life of Saint George.[7]

Also notable in the field of translation is Äbba Sälama II, metropolitan of the Ethiopian Church c. 1348 - 88, known as Mätärgwem ('Translator') for his promotion of the translation of much Coptic literature from Arabic.[8]

That the vast majority of the translations into Ge'ez are from Arabic is well known[9], but what has scarcely been touched upon is the important question of who exactly the translators were. If, as seems most likely, the translators were native Ethiopians (in fact, the translation which is the subject of the present study is surely not by a native Arab given the nature of the errors in translating) how and where did they learn Arabic? Were the translators considered to be ordinary clerics, since they were presumably in the employ of the Church, or were they a highly educated class apart? Ullendorff has pointed out that in some instances the Egyptian members of the Abuna's retinue may have helped

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[1] See Ricci, 'Letterature', pp. 838 - 39 and Irvine, 'Ethiopic Literature', pp. 204 and 207.

[2] This, with the aid of Michael the Egyptian, see Beylot, 'Langue et littérature', p. 248.

[3] Ricci, 'Letterature', p. 839.

[4] According to Kamil this is a compilation of works by John Saba. See Kamil 'Translations from Arabic', p. 64.

[5] Published by van Donzel as *'Enbaqom, Anqasa amin.*

[6] See Ricci, 'Letterature', p. 840.

[7] See Kamil, 'Translations from Arabic', p. 64.

[8] See van Lantschoot, 'Abbā Salāmā.'

[9] By the 15th century Coptic had long been replaced by Arabic as the language of the Coptic Church. See Littmann, 'Geschichte' pp. 204 - 5, Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians*, p. 146 and Ricci, 'Letterature', p. 814.

in the translation process.[1] Littmann has observed that Ethiopian literature was largely an anonymous enterprise,[2] so charting its course is thereby rather problematic. Since a number of monasteries may also share the same name[3] it can be difficult in addition to identify centres of translation, if there were such.

This study, however, does not attempt to answer broader historical questions, which can only be adequately addressed once a broad spectrum of Ge'ez works, representative of the translation movement as a whole, has been studied in some depth. Another desideratum is the publication of reliable, critical editions of the largely Arabic *Vorlagen.*

The principal source for these Arabic texts was Egypt (although some texts may also have come from Ethiopian monks in Jerusalem).[4] The Abunas of the Ethiopian Church were appointed by, and came from Alexandria, although given Ethiopia's geographical isolation, contacts between the Patriarchate and the highland plateau must have been very infrequent. Indeed, Rubenson has shown that the post of Ethiopian Abuna was seen by the appointees as tantamount to a prison sentence (the journey from Alexandria to the Ethiopian highlands was extremely hazardous).[5] So the development of the Ethiopian Church was, by and large, independent of the nominal mother Church in Egypt. The transmission of important religious texts therefore surely constituted the most significant link between the two Churches.

The Ethiopian *Ändemta* exegetical tradition.

The so-called *Ändemta* commentaries (*ändemta*, 'and someone [says]') are the traditional oral Biblical commentaries which Ethiopian trainee priests learn by rote even today. It is only relatively recently that they have begun to be transmitted in written form. In the Central Highlands these commentaries are now largely in Amharic and their initial purpose is in fact to impart an understanding of the Ge'ez text of the Bible, which remains the liturgical language of the Orthodox Church. However, the translational element is only one aspect of the *Ändemta* corpus, which constitutes a remarkably rich tapestry of

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[1] Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians*, p. 146.

[2] Littmann, 'Geshichte', p. 203.

[3] See, for example, Ricci, 'Letterature', p. 900, n. 14.

[4] See Ricci, 'Letterature', p. 814.

[5] Forthcoming conference paper delivered at the Christian Arabic conference in Lund, 1996.

interpretations including much Patristic and even Rabbinic material.

The late Roger Cowley's academic career was devoted to the study of the *Ändemta* commentaries, principally an attempt to trace their numerous sources all the way back to Patristic and Rabbinic roots. A comprehensive list of Cowley's publications can be found in the bibliography but particular attention should be paid to his final major work, *Ethiopian Biblical Interpretation*, published in 1988.

Pedersen (*Traditional Ethiopian Exegesis of the Book of Psalms*) and García (*Ethiopian Biblical Commentaries on the Prophet Micah*) have more recently made valuable additions to Cowley's ground-breaking scholarship but their studies consist largely in producing translations (no mean feat in itself given the often elliptical nature of the commentaries) and in the case of García, critical editions of sections of the *Ändemta* corpus, rather than Cowley's source-critical work.

Ibn al-Ṭayyib's place in the Ethiopian exegetical tradition.

Ibn al-Ṭayyib's influence on the Ethiopian exegetical tradition has been described by Cowley, as 'very pervasive,'[1] a judgement supported not only by the number of interpretations taken from Ibn al-Ṭayyib's works into the *Ändemta* tradition but also the number of mss of the Ge'ez translation of the *Commentary*. Pedersen also notes that Ibn al-Ṭayyib's commentary on the Psalms may account for the existence of traces of Syriac commentaries in this portion of the *Ändemta* corpus,[2] although it is known that the Syrian presence was strong in the Ethiopian Church in the 13th C.[3]

Cowley's almost certainly erroneous assumption of the existence of a Syriac 'draft' of the *Commentary* (often referred to),[4] and the further assumption that the Ethiopian tradition is based on this 'draft' may possibly result from Cowley's realisation that the Ge'ez translations of Ibn al-Ṭayyib, with which he was familiar, were not an unadulterated

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[1] Cowley, *EBI*, p. 378.

Brock has noted that 'through Ibn al-Ṭayyib's Arabic commentaries the East Syrian exegetical tradition reaches the later Coptic and Ethiopian Orthodox traditions.' *Brief Outline*, p. 94.

[2] See Pedersen, *Traditional Ethiopian Exegesis*, p. 294.

[3] See Tamrat, *Church and State*, p. 69 and also Cerulli's comments on the former name of Lalibela, namely Roha, in *Storia*, pp. 35 - 37.

[4] For examples see *EBI*, pp. 44 and 53, 'The "Blood of Zechariah"', p. 294, and 'Scholia of Ahob of Qatar', p. 332.

This error is discussed in the chapter, 'Introduction to the *Commentary*'

product emanating from the Church of the East. He may have thought that Ibn al-Ṭayyib only 'doctored' his Western sources in the process of translation from Syriac to Arabic. However, as we now know, the Ge'ez translation was in fact made from the Miaphysite recension.

Although the Ge'ez translation of the *Commentary* was made from this Miaphysite version, Cowley made the following observations on the awareness in some Ethiopian quarters that Ibn al-Ṭayyib was not himself a Miaphysite:

> 'There is evidence of objection to the interpretations of [Ibn al-Ṭayyib] on the grounds of his Nestorianism, ... possibly his works were translated after the [*Ändemta* commentaries] had partially crystallised, or they gained currency among the Felashas, and for these reasons lacked a full acceptance among [*Ändemta*] teachers. However, in the current state of study, the evidence concerning rejection of [Ibn al-Ṭayyib's] *exegetica* is rather slight, and should be seen as the exception which proves the rule that his influence has been very pervasive, and that narrow doctrinal concerns have scarcely affected Ethiopian exegesis.'[1]

<u>The ms on which this study is based.</u>

BL or. 732:

ff. 371, all four Gospels, fine hand, dated A.D. 1612/13.[2]

Contents:

f. 1r - 14b	introduction.
f. 15r - 206r	commentary on Matthew.
f. 206r	note on authorship.
f. 209r - 222v	commentary on Mark.
f. 228r - 287v	commentary on Luke.
f. 288r - 366r	commentary on John, end of which seems to be truncated.
f. 366r - v	note on authorship.
f. 366v	note on date of Ge'ez copy.

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[1] Cowley, *EBI*, p. 378.

[2] Wright, *Catalogue*, p. 200, also Cowley, 'Scholia of Ahob', p. 330, n. 6.

f. 366r gives the date of translation into Ge'ez as the 15th year of the reign of the emperor Lebnä Dengel (i.e. 1522-23 A.D.).

f. 366v gives the date of the present copy as the 6th year of the reign of Susenyos (i.e. 1612-13 A.D.).

'The note on authorship in BL or. 732, f. 206a [and BL or. 731, f. 142a] includes the following:

<This is the interpretation of the old and virtuous (priest), servant of God, Abba Yoḥannes Äfä Wärq of the east; and this came (*fäläsät*) from the language of Syria into the language of Arabia as he himself remembered it>.'[1]

Thus, in the Ge'ez tradition the *Commentary* has become attributed to Chrysostom - *Äfä Wärq* ('mouth of gold') being a calque of the Gk, probably via Arabic *Fam al-Dhahab.*

A second note (f. 366r) on the authorship (which, unlike the note above, corresponds, with alterations,[2] to a note in the Arabic ms tradition) attributes the *Commentary* again to Chrysostom:

'<The virtuous teacher Yoḥannes Äfä Wärq compiled the explanation of their interpretations and translated it from the language of Syriac into the language of Hebrew>.[3]

This was the only ms which was consulted as the basis for this study,[4] and it

[1] Cowley, 'Scholia of Ahob', p. 331, n. 6.

[2] 'F. 317b of BL or. 3201 (Arabic) reads Ibn al-Ṭayyib's full name in place of <Yoḥannes Äfä Wärq>, and reads <Arabic> in place of <Hebrew>,' Cowley, 'Scholia of Ahob' p. 331, n. 6.

[3] Cowley, 'Scholia of Ahob', p. 331, n. 6.

[4] BL or. 731 is, according to Wright, a copy of the present ms. Were it to be a different text, this should have been evident to Wright, or even more so to Cowley.

BL or. 731: ff. 311, all four Gospels, neat 17th C hand, undated. See Wright, *Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscripts*, p. 199, and there is an additional description of the contents of mss BL or. 731 and 732 in Cowley, 'Scholia of Ahob', p. 330, n. 6. Contents:

f. 4r	an introduction chiefly derived from Ephrem
f. 12r - 142r	commentary on Matthew
f. 142r	note on authorship
f. 142v - 208v	anonymous commentary covering Mt 1:18b - 22:46
f. 209r - 222v	commentary on Mark
f. 223r - 260r	commentary on Luke
f. 260r - v	list of patristic authorities

seems to be in the tradition of the Arabic ms, BL or. 3201 (cf. this ms and the Ge'ez at 60, for example), rather than the other Miaphysite Arabic ms used in this study, Paris ar. 86.

Orthography of the ms.

38. *bäkwerḥ* (290v.1.4). The *ḥ* should more properly be *h*.

42. *wätäkhashyä* (290v.2.5). The *kh* should more properly be *ḫ*.

57. *wäiyäḥäḍeḍo* (291r.3.27 - 291v.1.1). Both of the *ḍ*s should more properly be *ṣ*s.

These three examples of divergencies, amongst many others, from historically correct orthography are of letters which are indistinguishable in Amharic pronunciation. Nowadays, Ge'ez is pronounced the same as Amharic (amongst the Amharas, at least) and since at the time of the translation, Ge'ez had almost certainly long died out as a language in everyday use, the same probably held true in the 16th century. Some of the letters which are not distinguishable in Amharic pronunciation are, however, differentiated in Tigriñña, for example, amongst other modern Ethiopian Semitic languages.

42. *wätäkhashyä* (290v.2.5).

The 4th order vowel (*a*) after the first radical also reflects modern pronunciation, where what would be a 1st order vowel (ä) after a non-laryngeal consonant becomes a 4th order after a laryngeal consonant.

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f. 261r - 311v commentary on John, end of John seems to be truncated

In addition, f. 142v - 208v consist of an anonymous commentary on Mt 1:18v - 22:46, which 'appears to be a compilation by Ibn al-Ṭayyib or a contemporary of addenda to his *Commentary* on Matthew, based exclusively on Moshe bar Kepha and (probably) on Isho'dad or their contemporaries.' Cowley, 'Scholia of Ahob' p. 331, n. 6.

BL or. 736 is a ms of the Ge'ez translation of the *Commentary* on Matthew alone (fine hand,17th C). Wright, *Catalogue*, p. 201.

Analysis of the Ge'ez translation.

The Ge'ez translation of the portion of the Arabic text under discussion here (the translation is of the whole *Commentary*) can be said to be relatively faithful to the original, despite the many minor discrepancies. The recension on which it is based is the Miaphysite, as one would expect given the date of the translation and, of course, the nature of the relationship between the Church in Ethiopia and the Egyptian Coptic Church.

There are only some ten or so substantial alterations or additions to the Arabic of the Miaphysite recension - none of these is more than a sentence long and nowhere is the meaning significantly destroyed or perverted.

Substantial additions or alterations.

39. He existed]

He exists in every place, filling everything in heaven above and earth below, and everything is held in His palm. (290v.1.8 - 12).

This addition appears in the midst of an explanation of Christ's substance and hypostasis. The Ge'ez interpolation is in the manner of a brief respite from the technical explanation as well as a word of praise, a feature generally missing from the rather sober style of the Arabic.

57. from him]

at all from his greatness [x 2]. Just as this One was united in a wondrous thing which is not said [here]. (291v.1.1 - 4).

The Ge'ez translator is here emphasising the message of the Arabic, as above, at a point in the text where Christ's nature is being discussed.

55. Zayd became a grammarian, meaning that he acquired the art of grammar while his essence remains]

a wise man has become a fool while his essence remains in him. (291r.3.8 - 10).

This alteration serves to make the rather specialised example taken by Ibn al-Ṭayyib more comprehensible to the average reader and, in fact, it may well be that the concept of a grammarian would have been wholly unfamiliar to the common Ethiopian at the time. It would also, of course, have been unknown to any non-Arabist that Zayd was a neutral term, equivalent to 'so-and-so'.

18. it is not because He was in the manner of an instrument or something used]

it is not because He acts in/through Him [in] the manner of the people of God, like a servant who is sent by his master. (289v.1.6 - 9).

The Ge'ez here is a clarification of the Arabic and is a more concrete version of the rather abstract original.

91. bliss, through the resurrection and the gift of filiation, and through eternity in bliss and the new law]

which was a type and temporal, we have received the new law and the existence of the Son of God through being given bliss for ever. (293v.2.4 - 8).

The difficulty in the Arabic here is syntactical rather than conceptual (the text may possibly be corrupt) and the Ge'ez eradicates the problem whilst preserving what must be the general sense.

1. God ... succour]

In the name of God the living and eternal Creator who was and will be for ever. (288r.1.1 - 2).

1.The Gospel ... Gospels]

We begin then the Gospel of John the Apostle, the consummation of the great Gospels, the spokesman of the Kingdom. The Apostle says. (288r.1.3 - 6).

These two modifications at the very beginning of the text are inevitable cultural adaptions using stock phrases familiar to any Ethiopian reader (this is also, incidentally, the only place where Arabic mss B and C differ markedly).

5. like the first ... construct state]

in addition.[1] Whereas Matthew supposed that He preceded, John [supposed] that He came later; however, do not understand "first" without understanding "last". (288r.3.2 - 5).

This addition appears to be the result of the translator not realising that *mty*, in this instance, means 'when' and not 'Matthew' (good evidence that the scholar was not a native Arab). He then constructs his own contrast between the two Evangelists, a contrast in no way implied at this point in the original.

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[1] The meaning of the Ge'ez word is not entirely clear. However, the translator seems to be unfamiliar with the Arabic as a technical grammatical term. A grammatical connotation for the Ge'ez is not found in Dillmann's, Grébaut's or Leslau's dictionaries.

Technical terms.

As can be seen from the numerous examples below, the translator fails to render Arabic technical terms into Ge'ez with any consistency. In some instances, he employs ingenious circumlocutions (there is also the one and only major omission), and this in a translation which is elsewhere rather literal.

There was certainly not the long tradition of scientific discourse in Ge'ez as there was in Arabic, so that the technical lexicon had not stabilised as it had done in late Abbasid Baghdad. Therefore, the translator occasionally has to resort to loose interpretative renderings to satisfactorily capture the sense of the Arabic. This may either be because he does not feel that the Ge'ez terms have exactly the right connotation or, alternatively, he thinks that the audience for which he is writing will have some difficulty in satisfactorily comprehending the more technical passages.

Cause / effect; *'illah / ma'lūl.*

13. the Cause and Effect]

the origin and that which was originated (*tentehi wäzätäwäṭnä*). (288v.3.21 - 22).

13. not in time. So the Cause has precedence over the Effect in as much as it is a cause]

omit (288v.3.23).

This is the only substantial omission in the portion of the text considered here.

13. in as much as He is a cause]

over the Son by virtue of [His] paternity. (288v.3.26).

15. an effect]

was originated (*täwäṭnä*). (289r.1.21)

15. cause and origin]

originator (*wäṭani*). (289r.1.22).

15. He is an effect and a son]

the Ancient of Days (*qädamawi*) is the only-begotten son. (289r.1.25 - 26).

15. He is an effect and not a cause]

He is later and is not following [sic]. (289r.2.14 - 15).

16. He is an effect and not a cause. So that it is not supposed of Him that He is not God because He is an effect]

He existed. So, oh human, do not think that He was later and was not God but

[His] existence was with Him from the first, without beginning. (289r.3.5 - 10).

The considerable inconsistency in the rendering of 'cause and effect' suggests that the translator is not entirely comfortable with the relatively close Ge'ez equivalents which he uses in 13 (*tentehi wäzätäwäṭnä* 'the origin and that which was originated') and 15 (*wäṭani* 'originator' and *täwäṭnä* 'was originated').

Property; *khāṣṣah.*

7. in its property] om (288r. 2.4).

10. 'but only in their properties', translated by 2 words (*bä'äkal wäggäṣṣ*) (288v.2.26 - 27), both of which seem to suggest hypostasis/*qnūm*. Then in the next two sentences 'property' is rendered both times simply by *äkal* (288v.2.27 + 3.1).

16. 'in properties' *bä'äkalat wäbägäṣṣ* (289r.3.15 - 16) as in 10.

The translator here makes nonsense of the text by using *äkal* for both 'hypostasis / *qnūm*' and 'property', thereby losing the crucial contrast in the Arabic between the two.

16. 'With regard to the property' x 3, *ser'āt.* (289r.3.17, 18 + 21).

This Ge'ez word is notoriously difficult to translate. The most appropriate meaning for the context, amongst those listed by Leslau[1], might be 'disposition'.

Again, the translator is not consistent in his employment of the three translations of 'property' (*äkal*, *äkal wägäṣṣ* and *ser'at*). He creates some confusion since both *äkal* and *gäṣṣ* can also mean 'hypostasis / *qnūm*.'

Existence; *wujūd.*

10. 'existence' x 3]

hellawēhu (of the Son), *helluna* (of the Father) and *bähällewo* (referring to both). (288b 2.21 + 22 + 25).

13. 'in existence']

bähallewo (not specific to Father or Son). (288b 3.25).

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[1] Leslau, *Concise Dictionary of Ge'ez,* p.50.

74 + 84. 'existence' x2]

hellawē (referring to Christ and John the Baptist). (292a 3.11-12 + 293a 1.11).

The translator here makes a consistent distinction, not at all present in the Arabic, between the existences of the Father and Son. It is perhaps striking that such a distinction should be found in a Miaphysite text. The word he employs for human existence (*hellāwē*), he also uses for 'substance / essence' (see immediately below).

Substance / essence; *jawhar / dhāt.*

6. 'substance' *hellawē* (288b 2.3).

10. 'in substance' *bähellawē* (288b 2.25).

16. 'in substance' *bähellawē mäläkot* (289a 3.14-15).

17. 'in substance' x2, firstly, *bämäläkot* (289a 24-25) and secondly, *bähellawē mäläkot* (289b 1.5).

19. 'Their substance' *hellawēhomu* (289b 1.15-16).

39. 'substance and qnum' x 2, *hellawē mäläkot* (290b 1.6 + 12-13).

41. 'His essence' *hellawēhu*, also adds 'His authority' *wätäbäwḥotu* (290b 1.19-20).

53. that the Word] that the substance/essence (*hellawē*) of the Word. Eth (291a 2.12).

55. 'nature' and 2nd occurrence of 'essence'. *hellawē* (291a 3.7 + 9).

1st occurrence of 'essence' *re'es* (291a 3.5).

This usage of *re'es* is a calque from Arabic *dhāt*, which like the Ge'ez can also mean 'self'.

68. their essences] apart from them [i.e. the deeds] they. Eth. (291b 3.23).

Reference to 'essences' is avoided.

72. 'His essence' *hellawēhu* (292a 2.12-13).

91. 'substantial' *hellawitä mäläkotawitä* (293b 1.22-23).

94. 'in substance' *bähellawē* (293a 3.9).

The translator seems to make no consistent distinction between *hellawē* and *hellawē mäläkot*, although the latter is never used for 'essence'. This distinction between 'substance' and 'essence', incidentally, exists only in the Arabic tradition and is not found in Greek or Syriac.

Epithets.

Jn 1:1b. John the Apostle says]

John says. Eth (289a 1.16). Also all later occurrences.

At the beginning of the text John is indeed referred to as the Apostle (see 1) but for some reason this epithet is excised subsequently.

7. the Apostle]

the prophet. Eth (288b 1.24).

It is, in fact, Paul who is being quoted, but Paul is himself quoting from Deuteronomy at this point, and this minor emendation may be the result of the translator being more familiar with the Old Testament, or possibly giving it priority.

14. Matthew]

+ the Evangelist. Eth (289a 1.5).

42 + 75. David]

+ the prophet. Eth (290b 2.4-5 + 292b 1.6).

It is common for David to be referred to as a prophet.

1 + Jn 1:14a the Apostle John]

+ the spokesman of the Kingdom. Eth (288a 1.6 + 291a 2.2).

This epithet, recognising John as the most authoritative of the Evangelists, is reserved for the two most crucial points in the text - the very opening and Jn 1:14.

59. the Apostle]

+ Paul, the Perfumed and Enlightening Tongue. Eth (291b 1.12-13).

This is the usual Ethiopian epithet for Paul.

77. Isaiah]

+ the prophet. Eth (292b 1.17).

90. John]

+ the Evangelist. Eth (293b 1.6).

Change of name.

42 + 57. Mār Yuwānīs]

omit Eth (290b 1.22 + 291a 3.16).

It is puzzling that reference to Chrysostom should be bypassed in these two instances, whilst he is explicitly named elsewhere. Is this simple scribal error or does the translator have some inkling that Chrysostom's theology is closer to that of the Church of the East than his own dogma? It may also be that he wants to avoid confusion with the Evangelist, since in the Ge'ez, unlike the Arabic, there is no distinction made between the two (the name of both being *Yoḥannes*).

Change of person.

6. They say]

We say thus. Eth (288b 1.2).

72. We also say that when he says]

Also he says. Eth (292a 2.10-11).

83. We say that when he says]

And when he says. Eth (292b 3.25-26).

There is no obvious reason for these inconsistencies.

Hendiadys against the Arabic or vice-versa.

13. in time]

in days and seasons. Eth (288b 3.24-25).

17. and power]

power and authority (*wäkehil wäsheḷṭan*). Eth (289a 3.25).

38. compulsion]

compulsion and coercion (*kwerḥ wä'ägbero*). Eth (290b 1.4).

42. and was glad]

and was glad and rejoiced (*wätäfäshsheḥä wätäkhashyä*).[1] Eth (290v.2.4 - 5).

44. grace]

beautiful love and compassion. Eth (290b 3.7-8).

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[1] For *wätäkhashyä*, read *wätäḥäshyä.*

47. divine]

divine and spiritual. Eth (291r.1.4 - 5).

63. through His mercy]

through His mercy and compassion (*bäshahlu wäbämeḥrätu*). Eth (291v.2.27 - 3.1).

These uses of hendiadys which do not reflect the Arabic are stylistic touches that add little to the sense of the text.

92 + 95. nor perceptible]

nor visible or tangible. Eth (293v. 2.23 - 24 + 294r.1.8 - 9).

This ingenious use of hendiadys when, presumably, the translator is not aware of an equivalent Ge'ez word, accurately captures the meaning of the Arabic.

16. eternity and timelessness]

precedence (*qedmenna*). Eth (289r. 3.4 - 5).

This is the only occasion when the translator does not follow the Arabic hendiadys, and in fact the Ge'ez has a different connotation to the Arabic.

<u>Addition of 'the form'.</u>

52. a human person]

He took the form of a man. Eth (291r. 2.7 - 8).

53. became a man]

prepared/arranged [the form of + Eth.] a human being and united with it from the beginning of its being. B C Eth (291r.2.17 - 19).

78. united with a man]

took a human being. B C;

took the form of a human being. Eth. (292v.2.4 - 6).

In these Christologically crucial passages the Ethiopian translator adopts the phraseology of Philippians 2:7, *näsh'ä är'äya gäbr* (the ms has *säb'* for *gäbr*, an insignificant change), 'he took the form of a man', and in doing so he may want to distance himself somewhat even from the Miaphysite recension in playing down Christ's direct contact with humanity, so it is only with the 'form' of a man that He unites.[1]

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[1] There is a survey of Ethiopian material related to Christology in Cowley, *Ethiopian Biblical Interpretation*, pp. 267 - 293.

Improvements on the Arabic.

12. First occurrence of 'essence' omitted. Eth (288v.3.17).

The Ge'ez eliminates the probable dittographical error present in all three Arabic mss, but this may simply be through automatic reproduction of the opening phrase of Genesis (which is what the Arabic should have).

20. but He gives the benefit of life]

but He is the giver of life. Eth (289v.1.20 - 22).

The Arabic is probably corrupt here and needs a minor emendment to make sense. The Ge'ez reading eradicates the problem.

25. for the past tense is used[1] instead of the future in Scripture.]

for the tense is not used for that which is past in the Scriptures but explains what will come. Eth (289v.2.23 - 26).

The syntax of the Arabic is a little tricky here but the Ge'ez is clear enough and surely reflects the basic intention of the Arabic, which ultimately derives from Theodore.

Reflecting the obscurity of the Arabic.

36. The syntax of the Arabic and Ge'ez are equally obscure. Does the repetition of *fekkarē* (290r.3.16) indicate the translator's unease?

60. Ahob]

Eth (291v.1.22) is a translation of C here and so makes equally little sense since C has read what is a proper name as a verb.

Misunderstanding the Arabic.

19. the Father did not act alone, doing something without Him]

since He was not separate from the Father in performing all His deeds without Him. Eth (289v.1.13 - 15).

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[1] Lit. 'The past from time is used.'

Cf. Ge'ez:

for [this] tense is not used for that which has passed in Scripture but explains what will come. Eth. f. 289v.2.23 - 26.

The translator seems to have some problem understanding the Arabic, probably not realising that *infarada* can mean both 'to act alone' as well as 'to be alone'.

25. When he says <it did not overcome Him> it is necessarily the case that it <u>will</u> not overcome Him]

it is necessarily ... not overcome Him. *omit* Eth (289v.2.23).

The confusion here is that the Ge'ez does not use the past tense in the first part of the phrase, which is the point of the commentary, so that the second half subsequently makes no sense. It is therefore omitted.

41. The translator quite misunderstands the syntax of this passage (290v.1.18 - 22). The Ge'ez means as follows: 'And they [i.e. His creations] did not know Him, therefore His essence and authority was concealed. Its illumination and manifestation existed because they were on earth'.

66. with all of mankind]

and became a complete human. Eth (291v.3.13 - 14).

This is a simple misunderstanding of the Arabic.

67. plain]

slight (*räqaqat*). Eth (291b 3.21).

This is a possible meaning of Arabic *basīṭah* but probably not the one intended here, which is, rather, 'plain'.

77. Isaiah about His birth and other matters]

Isaiah the prophet and others about His birth. Eth (292b 1.17-18).

Another simple misunderstanding.

95. He does not appear in His essence itself since it is]

They do not appear in their essences themselves since they are. Eth (294a 1.7-8).

The translator seems to think, mistakenly, that the Arabic refers to the angels previously mentioned, rather than God.

<u>Giving the opposite meaning to that intended by the Arabic.</u>

53. The two negative verbs after *äḍre'a* 'negate, annul' (291r.2.11-13) would appear to give quite the opposite sense to that intended by the Arabic.

Redundancy.

62. the flesh, He was uniting with God and at the taking of the Spirit]

the flesh and Spirit He was uniting with God and at the taking of the flesh and Spirit. Eth (291b 20-22).

This repetition may well be the result of the translator once more (cf. 52, 53 and 78) wanting to avoid the conceptual separation of flesh and Spirit.

Analogy with a Biblical phrase.

35. want of witness]

+ And He says He is not in need of the witness of a man. Eth (290r.2.12-14).

Cf. Jn. 5:34 <But as for me, it is not the witness of man which I receive>.

The wording, although not the word order, is very close to that of the printed edition of the Ge'ez New Testament.

Other discrepancies.

The following discrepancies, which are generally less substantial than the ones presented above, have not been categorized.

68. lit. breaking custom]

constantly and customarily performing miracles. Eth (292r.1.2 - 3).

It is remarkable that the Ethiopian translator takes the Arabic phrase in its purely Islamic sense, since this is not a Christian concept but standard Ash'ari terminology. God is thought to recreate the world continually, usually much as it had been, occasionally 'breaking custom' and recreating (part of) it some other way - hence, 'miracle.' This strongly suggests that the translator had an informant with a very good knowledge of Islam, possibly a convert.

21. At the beginning of 21 Eth. adds

'And there are those who say "in Him was life"'

thus making 'this phrase' explicit. Eth (289b 1.23-24).

32. the Word]

God the living Word. Eth (290a 1.25-26).

39. And His substance and *qunūm* did not come into being after they had not existed]

And His substance was not new or [coming] later but His being is from the first. Eth (290b 1.12-15).

41. His essence]

+ His authority. Eth (290b 1. 19-20).

42. + Evangelist. Eth (290b 1.22-23); thus clarifying the passage.

43. eternity]

choice. Eth (290b 3.2).

45. their]

+ relationship and. Eth (290b 3.10).

53. that the Word]

that the essence (*hellawē*) of the Word. Eth (291a 2.12).

58. the Word]

God. Eth (291b 1.5).

59. amongst us>]

+ which means His [people]. Eth (291b 1.8-9).

60. with us]

+ and changed. Eth (291b 1.25).

62. on a man]

a complete form in one day. Eth (291b 2.12).

62. soul]

limbs. Eth (291b 2.12-13).

62. uniting]

complete form. Eth (291b 2.17).

65. The flesh was formed and dwelt amongst us]

He became flesh and dwelt above us and below us. Eth (291b 3.10-11).

70. for the other]

+ person. Eth (292a 1.16).

This addition is at odds with the Arabic, which explicitly states that the comparison is between two *things*.

88. the law only containing the commandments and prohibitions given]

the law of the Ten Commandments, only / but his mentioning of the commandments and not transgressing the laws which were given to the world. Eth (293a 2.24-27).

88. natural]

fleshly [i.e. mortal]. Eth (293a 3.2).

89. through Jesus Christ [1st x]]

+ to us. Eth (293a 3.4).

89. since the gift of filiation ... That is]

since it was moreover the gift of filiation. And the new birth is made manifest in it in three ways, which are. Eth (293a 3.11-14).

91. the Saviour]

our Lord and Saviour. Eth (293b 1.22).

95. does not sit]

+ with them. Eth (294a 1.1-2).

95. matter]

flesh. Eth (294a 1.5).

Omissions.

16. So that]

omit. Eth (289a 3.6).

62. as in the accounts]

omit. Eth (291b 2.14).

Conclusion.

Although this translation is relatively faithful to the original Arabic,[1] the translator does not shy away from making adaptations. These are of three main types. First, the translator makes additions to the text at points where the argument is somewhat abstract or technical (18, 39, 55 and 57). These would seem to be added to aid the less educated reader. Secondly, he makes what one might call cultural adaptions (1, 55 and 59) where the Ethiopian reader may be confused by the original. Thirdly, he adapts the text in places which are crucial from a Christological point of view (52, 53 and 78). This reveals clearly that our translator is theologically aware and one whose expertise extends beyond the linguistic sphere.

The translation is a scholarly piece of work. However, there are a number of errors in comprehension (5, 19, 66 and 67) which surely indicate that the translator was not a native speaker of Arabic. They also suggest that he did not have an Arab assistant at

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[1] Cowley states that the Ge'ez translation of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's commentary on Genesis is 'close to the original, contains many Arabic words, and in places is somewhat rough and obscure', *EBI*, p. 114. Apart from the absence of many Arabic words, this is also a reasonable description of the present translation.

his side throughout the task. However, the correct translation of the somewhat recondite Islamic phrase at 68 suggests that someone with a very good knowledge of Islam was involved at some stage in the translation process, possibly a Muslim convert. In general, the level of knowledge evinced by this translation, both linguistic and theological, is impressive.

General Conclusions of the Thesis.

In attempting to draw together some of the threads of the various chapters, there will inevitably be some repetition from the conclusions of the individual chapters, where the ideas, particularly in the first part of this chapter, are covered more fully.

The chapter is divided into two main sections, the first dealing with questions relating specifically to conclusions drawn from this study, whilst the second opens out the discussion into the area of what Ibn al-Ṭayyib's works might tell us about the relationship between Christianity and Islam in his day.

Footnote references are not generally repeated from earlier chapters.

Philological conclusions.

It has been established that there are two distinct recensions of the *Commentary*, Ibn al-Ṭayyib's original Eastern version and a Miaphysite recension, the existence of which was already noted by the Copt, Shams al-Ri'āsah Abū al-Barakāt (d. 1324). It is by no means clear who was responsible for this recension but it is clearly the work of a learned theologian with a subtle grasp of Christology. It may possibly have originated from the circle of the 'Assāl brothers. The fact that an Eastern commentary had wide currency in Coptic Egypt, even if in modified form, is illustrative of the interaction between the Eastern and Western traditions in the field of exegesis. This interaction is also exemplified by the sources which have been shown to be shared by Ibn al-Ṭayyib and earlier exegetes of the Western tradition such as Moshe bar Kepha.

Only three sources have been conclusively established for the *Commentary*:

1. Isho'dad (or a reliable intermediary).
2. A source in common with Isho'dad.
3. An intermediary in common with Moshe ultimately deriving from Chrysostom.

Ibn al-Ṭayyib, may, of course, have had a source to hand which combined the above in any combination, 1 and 2 being the most likely amalgam. Eliminated as proximate sources for the *Commentary* are Ephrem, Theodore, Chrysostom and Moshe. Two as yet unpublished works which should certainly be investigated for possible connections with the *Commentary* are the New Testament portion of the *Anonymous Commentary* (Diyarbakir

ms) and likewise the *Gannat Bussāmē*, particularly those interpretations attributed to Mar Aba in the latter. Another unpublished work which should be looked into is Isho‘ bar Nun's *Select Questions.*

The importance of citation in establishing links between texts has been demonstrated. In particular, if two texts share material but only in the later text is it cited, the likelihood is that there is a common source. Also, if a text mixes cited and uncited material from the same ultimate source, apparently at random, there is probably an intermediary.

It has been shown that the rubric *qāla al-mufassir* ('the exegete said'), which introduces almost all of the commentary sections following the Biblical quotations, does not necessarily refer to Theodore, but is simply a formula. This fact and a comparison between the *Commentary* and Theodore's commentary on John demonstrate that the *Commentary* as a whole cannot be used as a reliable source for an attempt at reconstructing Theodore's lost commentaries on the Synoptic Gospels.

A relatively close connection has been established between the Arabic translation of the *Diatessaron* and the *Commentary*, thus supporting Ibn al-Ṭayyib's claim to its authorship.

How original is the *Commentary*?

Whilst the *Commentary* might not contain many novel interpretations of the Gospels, this should not be taken to mean that the task of compilation which Ibn al-Ṭayyib undertook was necessarily uncreative, let alone thoughtless. The text is a finely crafted, intelligent work and one which is stylistically homogeneous, which in itself is evidence of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's great skill, given the heterogeneity of his sources.

Moreover, the cult of originality, which Vosté could be said to have fallen victim to, amongst others (including Gutas in the philosophical realm), would surely have been a foreign concept to Ibn al-Ṭayyib, who saw his rôle as preserving his heritage.

However, although Ibn al-Ṭayyib and other Christian Arab authors may have seen themselves as transmitters of their heritage, the proliferation of theological terms and Arabic Bible versions described below, even if they have socio-political factors, betoken a vital tradition. Christian Arabic is not the epigonic literature, the poor relation of Greek and Syriac, it has sometimes been taken to be.

Questions of terminology and language.

There has been shown to be, what might be described as a situation of disarray in the usage of theological vocabulary amongst Christian Arab authors. However, whilst there is remarkably little consistency between one author and another, even contemporaries in the same Church, the theologians themselves have been shown to be internally consistent, which has not always been recognized by scholars. No case was found where an author could be said to have used terms haphazardly.

A number of theological terms have been clarified, not only in the *Commentary* but also in works by other Christian authors. In particular, *jawhar* and *dhāt* have been shown not to be precisely synonymous either in philosophical or theological usage. Also, an attempt was made to untangle the usage of the terms for 'person' in both the Christological and Trinitarian spheres. These spheres, it is clear, are never confused by Ibn al-Ṭayyib or any other medieval author encountered in this study.

The disarray in usage of terms between authors might be attributed to the effect of Christians' being a divided minority and lacking political authority to support the ecclesiastical bodies. This same situation would explain the absence of an Arabic Bible version, or even versions, which had wide currency.

Also, the apparent absence in general of early Arabic Bible versions suggests that Syriac held sway amongst Christians, at least as a religious language, well into the Islamic period. As late as the eleventh century Elias of Nisibis still refers to 'the language of the Christians,' meaning Syriac.

Syriac, however, is in decline in Baghdad by Ibn al-Ṭayyib's time since this is the very reason he states he is writing the *Commentary*. The Syriac heritage is in danger of being lost along with the language. Landron has also noted that in theology *shakhṣ* replaces *farṣūf* from the tenth century onwards as a knowledge of Syriac was no longer universal amongst Christians.

The orthography of all three manuscripts of the *Commentary* employed in this study is evidence that Christian scribes were often unfamiliar with the norms of Classical Arabic. This failure to attain the high standard of educated Classical Arabic should not be ascribed to Ibn al-Ṭayyib himself, although his works based on Syriac originals occasionally reveal traces of the source language.

The Ge'ez translation.

The Ge'ez translation of the *Commentary* (based, as would be expected on the Miaphysite recension) is relatively faithful to the Arabic, but intelligent adaptions are made for the Ethiopian context. Given the nature of the errors in rendering the Arabic, the translator cannot have been a native speaker of Arabic, and may not have had an Arab advisor to hand. He was, however, theologically aware to a high degree.

Possible Islamic influence on the *Commentary* and other Christian writings of the Abbasid period.

There is a danger in an academic field dominated by Islamic studies, as Arabic is, of seeing the study of Arabic Christian literature as having value mainly insofar as it relates to Islamic history and literature. Nonetheless, given the social and political dominance of Islam at the time of its composition, the issue must be addressed as to what extent the *Commentary* might be influenced by its Islamic environment.

Since so much of the thesis as a whole is specifically philological, there is unavoidably a certain amount of speculation in this discussion, the scope of which lies beyond the coverage of the thesis. We should also be wary of drawing general conclusions about the relationship of Christianity and Islam in the Abbasid era merely from the example of the *Commentary*.

What must be carefully distinguished in this discussion are the specific influence, if any, of Islamic exegesis on the *Commentary* and the more general influence of the Islamic environment.

In his article on Islamic *tafsīr* in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Rippin has written:

'Pride of place in the tools used in the interpretative process has been given to grammar... As an implement for asserting the scholar's status and authority, arguments over grammar have had no rival.'[1]

This no doubt results in part from the great importance attached to the language of revelation in Islam, an importance which is not matched in the case of Christianity, where

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[1] Rippin, '*tafsīr*', *EI*, vol. 10, p. 84.

translations of the Gospels were made at a relatively early stage in its history. The lack of grammatical analysis in the *Commentary* itself is only to be expected in a work, the interpretations in which, as its author was well aware, are based on a Biblical text which is a translation of a translation (that is, Arabic via the Peshitta).

Later in the same article Rippin writes:

'Rivalling grammar but yet often thought of as dependent upon it, the framework of legal analysis emerges quite clearly in some works...'[1]

Once again, this differs markedly from the situation in Christianity, where there is no close equivalent to *Fiqh*. Although canon law exists, there is nothing in the Patristic or medieval period akin to a legal system based on an intense scrutiny of the revealed text.

The obvious differences in exegetical focus in the *Commentary* from those described by Rippin are, therefore, not uncharacteristic of the Christian tradition. Furthermore, Ibn al-Ṭayyib no doubt felt that the rich heritage of Christian Biblical exegesis, or at least that part of it with which he was familiar, was surely more than sufficient to fulfil his requirements. Moreover, Ibn al-Ṭayyib's aim in the *Commentary* is to preserve the Christian Syriac exegetical tradition on which it is based, two of the principle exegetes in which tradition, Theodore and Chrysostom, predate Islam. Therefore, it would primarily be in his choice of passages from earlier commentaries in which Ibn al-Ṭayyib might reveal the influence of Islam.[2]

This brings us to the question of the possible Islamic influence on the *Commentary* beyond the tradition of Islamic *tafsīr*. Martin Accad has written:

'If the purpose of biblical interpretation is to address continually the particular needs of the church in its changing context, then the newly emerging Islamic context must have aroused such needs within the Christian community.'[3]

While this statement is hard to refute on common-sense grounds, the evidence of the *Commentary* in this respect is not very strong. There is really only one aspect of the *Commentary* which we might want to attribute to the influence of the Islamic context -

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[1] Rippin, '*tafsīr*', *EI*, vol. 10, p. 84.

[2] The fact that the *Commentary* is a work of compilation also explains the paucity of passages in which Ibn al-Ṭayyib overtly reveals his philosophical background.

[3] See Accad, *The Interpretation of Particular Passages*, p. 119.

this is the avoidance of overt Christological polemics, and the evidence for Islamic influence is not unambiguous even here.

The avoidance of overt Christological polemics in the *Commentary* (although the author's own Christological position is made clear enough) reflects a wider trend in Ibn al-Ṭayyib's oeuvre. Of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's numerous known works, there is only one whose principle subject is Christology.[1] This avoidance of Christological polemics (the two natures of Antiochene Christology are also played down) may, in part, be attributable to the Islamic environment since possibly the most important accusation made by Muslim theologians against Christians is that they are tri-theists.[2] Therefore, Islam pushes the concerns of Christian theologians towards Trinitarian issues and away from Christological ones. Christians need to assert the unity of the Trinity, as Ibn al-Ṭayyib himself does in a number of treatises.[3] Also, all of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's Trinitarian treatises, which are probably directed at least in part to a Muslim readership, are concerned with emphasising the unity of the Trinity whilst this is not the case with the passages of the *Commentary* concerning the Trinity. Indeed, it is this very difference of emphasis which suggests that these Trinitarian treatises are intended, in part, for a Muslim audience. Another phenomenon which suggests a Muslim audience for these treatises is the presence of a more noticeably Islamic vocabulary, as will be explained below.

This lack of overt Christological polemics may, however, also be attributable to Ibn al-Ṭayyib's irenic attitude towards his fellow Christians, but this in itself may not be wholly unaffected by the Islamic environment. Faced with a seemingly all-powerful Islam, some Christians must surely have felt the need to emphasise the fundamental unanimity of the various Churches. In fact, a number of Christian Arab theologians of the Abbasid period did this very thing.[4]

One area of Islamic influence in Christian writers in general, although it is negligible in the *Commentary* itself, is that of vocabulary. The only clear example in the *Commentary* is the employment on one occasion of *ṣifah*, the Islamic version of Christian *khāṣṣah*, and in context even this occurrence cannot plausibly be assigned to a desire on the part of the author to allude in any way specifically to the Islamic concept of attribute. However, beyond the *Commentary*, Ibn al-Ṭayyib himself and other Christian writers are prepared

[1] Ed. and trans. by Troupeau as 'Le Traité sur l'Union'.

[2] See Samir, 'Christian Arabic Literature in the Abbasid Period', pp. 452 - 455.

[3] See, for example, 'Le Traité sur l'Unité et la Trinité', 'Le Traité sur la Trinité et l'Unité' and 'Le Traité sur les Hypostases et la Substance' all ed. and trans. by Troupeau.

[4] See Samir, 'Christian Arabic Literature in the Abbasid Period', p. 451 f.

to tailor their Christian vocabulary in favour of Islamic terms.

For example, whilst *khāṣṣah* is prevalent in the *Commentary*, *ṣifah* is the common equivalent in the Trinitarian treatises. Elias of Nisibis, it has been noted, at some point in his career, ceases to use the word *jawhar* in relation to God, in favour of *kiyān*, which move is clearly in response to Muslim objections to the term (objections which do not seem to concern Ibn al-Ṭayyib). There is also a more general avoidance amongst many Christian authors of using *shakhṣ* to refer to the persons of the Trinity, since the term may have been felt to have too strong a physical connotation.

Muslim and Christian interaction.

Beyond this Islamic influence on theological emphasis (i.e. away from Christological towards Trinitarian) and to a lesser extent, vocabulary, Ibn al-Ṭayyib's writings as a whole evince no great acquaintance with Islam. Indeed, and this is surely remarkable, there seems to be no explicit mention of Islam in any of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's works.[1] This suggests that he is a member of an intellectually self-sufficient community or one which is self-consciously trying to assert its self-sufficiency by not openly admitting the very existence of the overwhelmingly dominant group.

However, in the eighth section[2] of the *Introduction* (presumably not intended for a Muslim readership), however, we do find a passage notable for revealing that Ibn al-Ṭayyib does have a knowledge of Islamic tradition:

والسنه تنقسم الى قسمين اصل وفرع ...
والفرع ... هو الفقه الذى نسميه نحن قوانين وبه نعرف الحلال من الحرام .[3]

'The *sunnah* is divided into two, the fundamental and the subsidiary...
The subsidiary ... is the law which we ourselves call the canons, and through it we know what is permitted from what is forbidden.'

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[1] According to the bibliography in *Islamochristiana*, which is a thorough survey of the influence of Islam in the output of medieval Christian Arab authors. See Caspar et al., 'Bibliographie du dialogue islamo-chrétien' in *Islamochristiana*, part 2 (1976), pp. 203 - 208. There are however a number of theological arguments in his works which are clearly in response to Muslim charges against Christians.

[2] Following Samir's division of the text. See 'Nécessité de la Science', p. 246 f.

[3] Ibn al-Ṭayyib, ms BL or. 3201, f. 6v, ll. 12 and 15 f.; (ed. Manqariyūs, *Tafsīr al-Mashriqī*, p. 32. ll. 2 and 4 f.).

The phrase 'we ourselves call' implies not only that he is aware of using Islamic terminology but also that his readership might need to be reminded of the Christian term, *qawānīn*.

This example, however, is by no means representative of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's works as a whole.

Knowledge of Islam cultivated for its own sake by a Christian in this period is highly unlikely. Knowledge, if it existed at all, would generally have been confined to the specific (albeit far-reaching) area of the Muslim-Christian debate - a debate which Ibn al-Ṭayyib seems not to have taken an active part in.[1] The striking religious heterogeneity of the Baghdad school, for example, was almost certainly restricted to the rarefied atmosphere of an intellectual elite in pursuit of higher learning and should not be taken as symptomatic of wide-ranging intellectual contact between Christians and Muslims.[2]

As the *Qur'ān* has it:

‹ لكم دينكم ولي دين ›[3]

'To you your religion, and to me my religion.'

This quotation (admittedly taken out of context)[4] probably largely sums up the attitude of Muslims and Christians at a time when faith was absolute and each man sincerely believed his religion to be the sole repository of truth.

What is striking, given the certainty of faith on each side, is that there is little evidence of Christians complaining of maltreatment or prejudice on the part of their Muslim neighbours. In fact, the anecdote recounted by al-Jāḥiẓ, in which a doctor complains of the domination of the medical profession by Christians from the East,[5] is quite remarkable

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[1] By far the fullest account of the medieval Muslim-Christian dialogue is to be found in P. Khoury, *Matériaux pour servir à l'étude de la controverse théologique islamo - chrétienne de langue arabe du VIIIe au XIIe siècle* (6 volumes are planned, 5 have appeared), although as the title suggests it is more a work of reference than analysis.

[2] Buyid social history being neglected as it is, the nature and extent of the social contact between the various religious groups of the time remains unclear.

[3] The *Qur'ān*, Sūra 109, *al-kāfirīn*, 'The Unbelievers', v. 6.

[4] The *Sūrah* as a whole is, in fact, exhorting Muslims to spurn the beliefs of unbelievers (amongst whom Christians and Jews are not numbered) rather than prescribing an attitude of religious *laissez-faire*.

[5] See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-bukhalā'*, p. 109 f.; trans. Browne, *Arabian Medicine*, p. 8.

when one remembers that the complainant is an Arab Muslim living in the heart of the Arab Islamic empire. His resentment may or may not be tinged by prejudice, but nevertheless the situation reveals that the members of the religious minority have been allowed to hold sway in a crucial profession.

Avenues for future research.

The most obvious avenue for future research is that of a critical edition and source-critical study of the whole of the *Commentary*, along with Ibn al-Ṭayyib's other as yet unpublished exegetical writings and theological treatises. One particularly notable lack is the absence of a critical edition of the sections of the *Introduction* not yet edited by Samir. The *Introduction* is a fascinating document, which has a good deal to tell us about Ibn al-Ṭayyib's *Weltanschauung*. It could usefully be compared with the introductions to his other exegetical works.

Alongside the publication of critical editions, there is clearly a need for the collection of data on specifically Christian vocabulary or usages. The current dictionaries are inadequate for serious theological and philosophical study.

It is only when a much wider cross-section of texts has been studied in some depth that broader cultural and historical questions (such as the relationship between Christians and Muslims) can be addressed with any confidence.

In the Ethiopian sphere, the field is still wide open for further development of Cowley's pioneering source-critical studies of the extraordinarily rich *Ändemta* tradition, but it seems unlikely that this area will benefit from someone of his calibre in the near future.

Appendix A.

Provisional List of Primary Source References to Ibn al-Ṭayyib.

Any list such as this for an author as important and influential as Ibn al-Ṭayyib cannot hope to be comprehensive. It is therefore presented as work in progress.

Major biographical notices.

al-Bayhaqī (d. c. 1169 / 70), *Tatimmat ṣiwān al-ḥikmah* (pp. 27 - 32).

Ibn al-Qifṭī (d. 1248), *Ta'rīkh al-ḥukamā'*(p. 223).

Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah (d. 1270), *'Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'* (ed. Riḍā, pp. 323 - 325; ed. Müller, vol. 1, pp. 239 - 241).

Minor biographical notices.

Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Ta'rīkh* (section on Ibn Buṭlān), report that Ibn al-Qifṭī has seen an autograph note by Ibn al-Ṭayyib on a ms (p. 314 f.; trans. Schacht / Meyerhof, *The Medico-Philosophical*, p. 58).

Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah, *'Uyūn* (section on Ibn Buṭlān), report that Ibn Buṭlān worked and studied under Ibn al-Ṭayyib (ed. Riḍā, p. 325, l. 26; ed. Müller, vol. 1, p. 241, l. 22; trans. Schacht / Meyerhof, *The Medico-Philosophical*, p. 59);

report of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's death (ed. Riḍā, p . 327, l. 15; ed. Müller, vol. 1, p. 243, l. 1; trans. Schacht / Meyerhof, *The Medico-Philosophical*, p. 63).

Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286), *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum* (vol. 3, p. 282 f.).

Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum* (p. 226 f.; trans. Budge, *Chronography*, p. 203).

Bar Hebraeus (Gregorius ibn Harūn), *Ta'rīkh mukhtaṣar al-duwal* (p. 190), copied almost verbatim from the section on Ibn al-Ṭayyib by Ibn al-Qifṭī.

Ṣalībā ibn Yūḥannā (14 C), *Maris Amri et Slibae* (pp. 96 and 98 f.).

Philosophical literature.

Ibn Sīnā's refutation of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's commentary on Galen's *On the Natural Faculties* (ed. Ülken, *Ibn Sina Risāleleri*, vol. 1).

(Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah, *'Uyūn* (section on Ibn Sīnā), mention of Ibn Sīnā's refutation (ed. Riḍā, p. 458, last line; ed. Müller, vol. 2, p. 20, l. 16).)

Letter by an anonymous disciple of Ibn Sīnā's in Rayy (Bodleian ms., Hunt. 534, ff. 13b - 15b; trans. Gutas, *Avicenna*, pp. 64 - 72).

Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah, *'Uyūn* (section on Ibn al-Haytham), mention of a letter to Ibn al-Ṭayyib from Ibn al-Haytham (d. 1039) on 'a number of meanings in the natural and divine sciences' (ed. Riḍā, p. 558, l. 19 f.; ed. Müller, vol. 2, p. 97, l. 4 f.).

Maimonides (d. 1204), letter to Samuel ibn Tibbon (excerpt trans. Steinschneider, *Die hebraeischen Uebersetzungen des Mittelalters*, p. 42, n. 293; ms described by Steinschneider, *Catalogus Librorum Hebraeorum in Bibliotheca Bodleiana*, col. 1900.).

Work lists.

By far the fullest medieval list of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's works is to be found in Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah, *'Uyūn* (ed. Riḍā, p. 325, ll. 1 - 23; ed. Müller, vol. 1, p. 240, l. 27 - p. 241, l. 20).

Abū al-Barakāt (d. 1324), *Katalog* (p. 653 / 684 f.).

Appendix B.

Interpretations in the *Commentary* which may be attributable to Ibn al-Ṭayyib.

The present writer tentatively suggests the following passages may be the original work of Ibn al-Ṭayyib, since they do not appear to be directly derived from interpretations in the principal published sources. Some of them, however, may well turn out to be indeed based on earlier commentaries.

10. So the property of the Father is that He is the cause and the begetter. And the property of the Son is that He is the effect and the begotten.

14. For Matthew says that the Holy Spirit prepared a human to unite with the eternal Son of God. So he teaches us about His human *qunūm*. And he declares that He is created and made and has a temporal beginning. And John says <in the beginning was the Word>. So he teaches us about His divine *qunūm*. It is eternal [x2], neither made nor brought into being.

15. In the first phrase the *qunūm* of the Son necessarily possesses eternality, and in the second He is an effect and not a cause.

16. ... since the *qunūm* of the Father, the *qunūm* of the Son and the *qunūm* of the Spirit are one in substance and the difference between them is in properties. So the Father is the Substance with regard to the property that He begat. The Son is the Substance with regard to the property that He was begotten from the Father before epochs. And the Spirit is the Substance with regard to the property that He proceeded from the Father.

24. These words are truly in the manner of a prophecy.

28. When he says <and the life is the light of people> it means the life which He furnishes, the grace which He caused to flow by creating the world and the beauty of His concern for it afterwards.

39. His substance and *qunūm* did not come into being after they had not existed.

46. ... in the sense of His appearing in his unity and by dressing in a body.

47. When he preceded he prepared himself through good deeds.

55. ... such as when we say that water became air, meaning that its nature changed so it became air; [secondly,] in the sense of taking on, as when one says that Zayd became a grammarian, meaning that he acquired the art of grammar while his essence remains.

61. We say that the Word is a description of His being, for the sake of His being associated with the existing body, and so a description of Its attribute.

68. Plain things are indicated by their deeds because their essences are not seen ... and His justice and His breaking of traditions.

80. The answer is that the skilful doctor must bring the patient along step by step and not rush in with difficult treatments.

91. In place of the old law, bliss, through the resurrection and the gift of filiation, and through eternity in bliss and the new law.

92. So it says 'the Only-begotten, God who is in the embrace of His Father made [Him] known' and the meaning of this is that the Son of the eternal God is the one who appeared to us in that He dressed in a body from us and addressed us from it and taught us truth.

95. It is only out of an abundance of concern [for us] when He wishes to appear and does appear to men in that He takes matter from the air and appears from it as He wishes.

Bibliography.

Abbreviations.

BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies.*
CHAL	*Cambridge History of Arabic Literature.*
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium.
JAOS	*Jounal of the American Oriental Society.*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.*
OCA	Orientalia Christiana Analecta.
OCP	*Orientalia Christiana Periodica.*
PO	Patrologia Orientalis

Ethiopian authors appear alphabetically according to their second (i.e. father's first) names.

Sub-sections

1. Primary sources.
2. Bibles.
3. ms catalogues / lists
4. Dictionaries.
5. General.

1. Primary Sources:

Arabic

This section includes translations from Classical Greek into Arabic, and from Arabic into modern languages.

Abū al-Barakāt, ed. and trans. K.Riedel, *Abū 'lBarakāt's Katalog der christlichen Schriften in arabischer Sprache* (Göttingen, 1902).

anon., ed. and trans. H.Staal, *Mt.Sinai Arabic Codex 151*, 4 vols. CSCO 452-3 (Pauline Epistles) and 462-3 (Acts, Catholic Epistles), (Louvain, 1983-4).
[The extensive marginalia to this ms comprise a commentary attributed to Ibn al-Sirrī.]

Aristotle, *Categories,* trans. Ḥunayn, ed. A.Badawi, *Manṭiq Arisṭū 1-3* (Cairo, 1948-52).

Aristotle, *Categories*, trans. Ḥunayn, ed. Kh.Georr, *Les Catégories d'Aristote dans leurs versions Syro-Arabes* (Beirut, 1948).

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