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Appendix. Bibliogr. Index.

Texts in english and in syriac.

I. Manuscripts, Syriac. II. Jean de Dailam, m. 738 — Biographies.

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A SYRIAC LIFE OF JOHN OF DAILAM *

BY

SEBASTIAN P. BROCK

Both Thomas of Marga (*Liber Superiorum* II.22-25) and Isho'dnah (*Liber Castitatis* 104, 116) provide entries on John of Dailam, an East Syrian saint of the 7th-8th century¹, but the information they give on the details of his life is only summary; Thomas indeed specifically excuses the brevity of his narrative on the grounds that many others had written about him, 'especially Abu Nuh' (II.23)², and later on (II.24) Thomas implies that John of Dailam also featured in the 'Little Paradise', by David, bishop of the Kurds³. It is thus a matter for surprise that the majority of the extant later sources on John, including various lives, almost all happen to be West Syrian (and mostly in Arabic). Fiey, in his useful article 'Jean de Dailam et l'imbroglio de ses fondations'⁴, plausibly suggested that the cult of the saint passed to the Syrian Orthodox at Arragan⁵ in Fars⁶ where Qawad had settled a populace from the Amid

* I have greatly benefitted from the comments of my colleague Dr Patricia Crone who most kindly read through, at short notice, a draft of the introduction, commentary and chronological appendix; some of her specific points are indicated in the notes by her initials. She should of course be exonerated from any errors of fact or judgement that may remain in my interpretation of the documents published here.

(1) The precise date for his death is given by the Syriac verse panegyric as the third Sunday after Epiphany AG 1049 = 26th January 738.

(2) Contemporary of the patriarch Timothy I; better known as the translator of Greek philosophical texts (cp H. Putman, *L'Eglise et l'Islam sous Timothée I (780-823)* (Beirut, 1975), p. 85).

(3) The work is lost; cp A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (Bonn, 1922), pp. 205-6.

(4) *Proche Orient Chrétien* 10 (1960), pp. 195-211.

(5) Regan in the text published here.

(6) The name of one of his monastic foundations there, the monastery of the *Suryaye* (=

region in the early sixth century, and no doubt these will have been largely Syrian Orthodox.

Many of the late Arabic texts used by Fiey seek to link John with the village of Qaraqosh (Beth Khudaida, to-day predominantly Syrian Catholic)⁷, but this is obviously a secondary development, and it is significant that no mention of such an association is to be found in either of the two Syriac sources for his life which are presented in the present article. These two new sources are:

- (1) A prose life, preserved in a West Syrian manuscript, Harvard syr. 38 (of AD 1448/9); this is published in full, and is referred to as H.
- (2) An East Syrian verse panegyric, for which I use Cambridge Add. 2020 (of AD 1697); parallels to the West Syrian life from this rather verbose text are quoted or summarized in the commentary to the prose life (the Syriac text of those passages which are quoted verbatim is given in an appendix). This verse text is referred to as C.

The materials common to these two Syriac sources allow us to take back the details of his life and travels to a much earlier stage than was previously possible; quite a number of these, indeed, are already attested in our two ninth-century sources, Thomas and Isho'dnaḥ: Thomas, in fact, indicates that he himself already knew of two quite different traditions concerning the area to which John and his spiritual teacher were driven by famine, either Nerba d-Beth Gazza, or as 'some say, the country of Salakh'⁸; it is to this latter tradition that our new sources both belong.

Syriac speakers), could easily have given rise to misunderstanding since *Suryaye* also means 'Syrian Orthodox'.

(7) Cp J.M. Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne II* (Beirut, 1965), pp. 439-61. H. Pognon, *Inscriptions sémitiques de la Syrie, de la Mésopotamie et de la région de Mossoul* (Paris, 1907), p. 126 gives an inscription (no. 72) from the vicinity of Qaraqosh which records the restoration of the 'sanctuary (altar) of Mar John known as the Dailamite' in AG 1874 = AD 1562-3.

(8) See commentary to 4.

The manuscripts

The Syriac prose life (H) is to be found in Harvard syr. 38, ff. 175a-186b, a sermo manuscript copied by the deacon Addai, son of the priest Melke, in AG 1760 (f.111b) = AD 1448/9. This manuscript contains the following texts⁹:

- ff. 1-49a, History of Cyriacus (beginning lost); cp Bedjan, *AMS* III, pp. 254-83 = *BHO* 194.
- 49b-61a, First Letter from heaven, in the time of Constantine.
- 61a-72a, Second, Letter from heaven, in AG 1258, 25 Kanun 1 (= AD 946, 25 December).
- 72a-83a, Third Letter from heaven, in AG 1094, 24 Nisan (= AD 783, 24 April)¹⁰.
- 83a-111b, History of Shallīṭa (beginning lost); cp Bedjan, *AMS* I, p. 424-65 = *BHO* 1034.
- 111b-121b, Prose life of Philoxenus; this is the same text as that translated by A. Mingana (from Manchester, Rylands syr. 45) in *The Expositor* 19 (1920), pp. 149-60¹¹. It probably constitutes the basis for the verse life by Elia of Qartmin.
- 122a-174a, Acts of Thomas.
- 175a-186b, Life of John of Dailam (published here).
- 187a-236a, History of Eulogius, from the band of Mar Awgen. (Earlier manuscripts of this work include BM Add. 12174 (no 37; of AD 1197) and Damascus Patriarchate 12/17 (no 48; of AD 1194/5).
- 236b History of John of Kfenna, also from the band of Mar Awgen. (Other manuscripts of this include Mingana syr.

(9) I give a full list of contents since that in M.H. Goshen Gottstein, *Syriac Manuscripts in the Harvard College Library: a Catalogue* (Harvard Semitic Studies 23, 1979) is only partial.

(10) For this correspondence see M. Bittner, *Der vom Himmel gefallene Brief Christi in seinen morgenländischen Versionen* (Denkschriften der kais. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Wien, phil.-hist.kl. LI; 1905).

(11) For other manuscripts see A. Vööbus, 'La biographie de Philoxène: tradition des manuscrits', *Analecta Bollandiana* 93 (1975), p. 114; cp also my remarks in *Ostkirchliche Studien* 28 (1979), pp. 180-1 (note 30).

71, Paris syr. 379, and Charfet fonds patr. 115). Only the first folio is preserved.

The last five items are numbered '2' to '6', and so the lost beginning of the History of Shalliṭa will have figured as no 1. No obvious reasons seem to lie behind the choice of saints' lives, and the numbering probably belongs only to the scribe of Harvard syr. 38.

This Syriac prose life is evidently identical¹² with the Arabic life in Mingana syr. 543, ff. 68b-75b (Garshuni), 18th century. On the whole it seems more likely that the Arabic is a translation from Syriac, rather than the reverse, although the spelling DMŠQ in the Syriac Life 31 might be thought to suggest the opposite¹³.

For the East Syrian verse panegyric (a memra in 12 syllable couplets) use is made here of Cambridge Add. 2020, ff.109a-120b¹⁴. This manuscript is dated 18 Tishri I, AG 2009 (= 18 October, AD 1697). The same text is also to be found in Vatican Borgia syr. 39¹⁵. The piece was expressly written as a homily to be read on the annual commemoration of the saint in the monasteries which he had founded (f.118b), and on f.120a the author asks for blessings specifically on 'our community' and on 'the two monasteries', i.e. the twin monasteries of the Persian and Syriac speaking monks which John founded near Arragan (Regan), (H 31-40). This of course indicates that the two monasteries near Arragan were still functioning at the time of the *memra's* composition; unfortunately, however, we have no information at all about how long they existed, but it is most unlikely that they survived beyond the 13th century¹⁶. The

(12) Sample checks indicate only minor differences. For other Arabic texts see Fiey, 'Jean de Dailam.', p. 210.

(13) Compare, however, BŠRH in the Syriac verse panegyric (C, f.115a), which is certainly not a translation from Arabic; the Arabic form will be due to the fact that the writer will have been a native speaker of Arabic for whom Syriac was just a liturgical and literary language (H in fact uses the proper Syriac form DRMSWQ in 27).

(14) For the other contents of the manuscript see W. Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge, pp. 583-7).

(15) See J.M. Saugey, *Un cas très curieux de restauration de manuscrit: le Borgia syriaque 39* (Studi e Testi 292, 1981), pp. 78-9. Cp note 84.

(16) The latest known reference to the monasteries seems to be from the 11th century: see J.M. Fiey, *Communautés syriaques en Irak des origines à 1552* (London, 1979) ch. II, p. 195.

memra furthermore specifies as its written source 'the book of the history of his story' (*ktaba d-taš'it šarbeh*, f.118b), much of which, to judge from the *memra*, must have been written in the form of a narrative where John spoke in the first person. Clearly this life was quite distinct from, and much longer than, the surviving prose life in H¹⁷.

There is nothing inherently unlikely in the author of the *memra*'s claim that it was based on a longer prose life, and if, as seems probable, such a life was similarly composed in one of John's monastic foundations, it is likely to have been based on reasonably good — though inevitably somewhat embellished — oral traditions going back to the founder himself¹⁸.

Relationship between H, C, Thomas of Marga and Išo'dnah

The summary below of the contents of the prose life (H) and the parallels in the verse panegyric (C) at once indicates that the two texts provide a very similar framework for John's life; only a few items in H are in a different order, or altogether absent, from C. On the other hand, as will emerge from the commentary, C contains many episodes absent from H; accordingly the extant prose life cannot possibly be the life mentioned in C as the source for its verse account. Three main possibilities are left:

- (1) The extant prose life (H) is based on the verse *memra* (C);
- (2) both depend on the lost life which is mentioned by C as its source;
- (3) H is based only indirectly on the lost life which served as C's source.

The dissimilarities between the two extant Syriac texts, H and C, makes the first option very unlikely; on the other hand the undoubted similarities¹⁹ that do exist make it reasonably certain that either (2) or (3)

(17) See below.

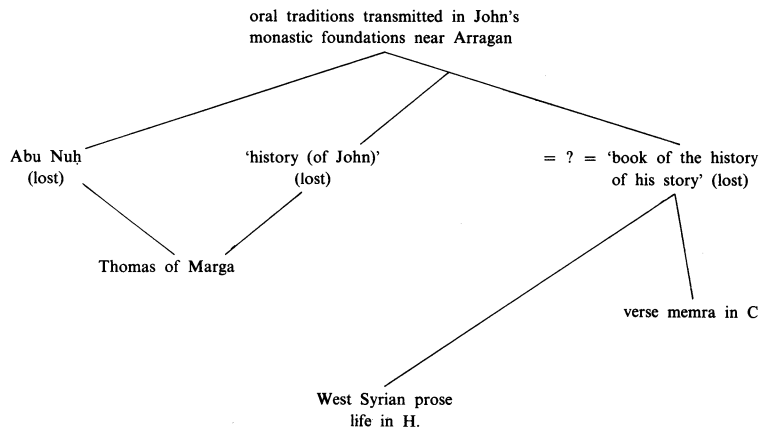
(18) C specifically mentions oral traditions on f.110a (quoted in commentary to H 6); the reference is presumably borrowed from the lost prose life.

(19) Note especially the common details over the axe under John's head in H 17.

must be applicable²⁰, though which, is probably impossible to say on the evidence available.

The relationship between the extant prose and verse lives and the two ninth-century sources, Thomas of Marga and Isho'dnah, is certainly not a direct one: although there is a certain degree of overlap in content (see the table below), there is never any very close agreement, and it can safely be said that neither H nor C is using Thomas or Isho'dnah. It has already been mentioned that Thomas refers to the existence, by his time, of a number of biographical texts concerning John of Dailam, and in particular he singles out for mention one by Abu Nuh (II.23) and a 'history' (II.24); from the latter he derives the story about Shem'on's prophecy to his three disciples which features (in somewhat varying forms) in both H 6 and in C. Could this 'history' have been the same as the lost life which lies behind C, and perhaps also H? This is certainly a possibility, but no more than that.

Isho'dnah's references to John are too summary to allow any worthwhile discussion, and accordingly he is omitted from the following diagram which shows the probable relationship between the various Syriac texts on John²¹:



(20) This makes it likely that the Arabic life in Mingana syr. 543 is a translation from Syriac, rather than *vice versa*.

(21) I am not concerned here with the later Arabic developments, for which see Fiey, 'Jean de Dailam..'

Comparative table of contents

H	C	Thomas	Isho'dnah
1	Introduction		
2	His parent's house	109b	II.22-3 116
3	Goes to Beth 'Abe, becomes pupil of SNT'	110a	II.23
4	In famine they leave for Mt Beghash	110a	II.24 104
5	John by then a solitary	110a	
6	Prophecy of SNT' to his disciples	110ab	II.24
7	Death of SNT'		
8	Fate of one of the other two disciples	110b	II.25
9	Fate of the other, Isho'sabran	110b	II.25 104
10	John captured by Dailamite raiders	109a	II.25 44, 116
11	He miraculously provides them with water	110b-11a	
12	John curses his master for his idolatry; the man and his sons die	111a	
13	The wife accuses John of being a sorcerer	111b	
14	His house is set on fire, but John is not affected; he is freed	111b	
15	His healing of some children leads to conversions		
16	He fells sacred trees of the Dailamites	112b	
17	He is stoned but survives	112b	
18	Many Dailamites are converted	112b	
19	John goes to interior regions and finds a pagan temple	112a	
20	The pagan priests challenge		

H	C	Thomas Isho'dnah
him to an ordeal by fire; the fire is quenched by his prayer	112a	cp Chronicle of Seert XL
21 When they still fail to believe, he strikes their spring and the water turns to blood; they promise to convert if he restores the water; he does so and many are baptized	112b-113a	
22 He weans them away from pagan practices over three years		
23 Annual commemoration of John's miracle when spring turns to blood for three days	113a	
24 John penetrates interior regions of NE; many conversions over 33 years	(cp episodes in 113ab)	
25 Told in revelation to build three churches in Fars	113b-114a	
26 He sets off to visit Jerusalem	114a	
27 At Damascus he heals 'Abd al-Malik's daughter; he is given permission to build churches and monasteries	114ab	
28-9 'Abd al-Malik's missive to governor of Beth Aramaye and Beth Parsaye	114ab	
30 John is sent off in honour	114b	
31 He visits Ḥajjaj who gives him similar letters; he builds monastery on Mt Mam, near Regan	} 115a-117a	
32 Revives a dead Jew in Fars;		

H	C	Thomas Isho'dnah
	destroys idol of demon Babi	
33	Converts Babi's temple into monastery of St Sergius and St Bacchus	
34-5	Trouble caused to him by demons	
36-8	Miraculous removal of monastery to a site provided with water	}117ab
39	Quarrel between Persian and Syriac speaking monks over which language to use in church	
40	John resolves the problem by building a second monastery nearby	117b-118b
41	An angel tells John that his death is close at hand; John asks for time to build Church of Theotokos first	119a
42	He builds it and it is consecrated	
43	His death	119a
44	His burial	(Isho'dnah) 116
45	Chronology of his life.	119a

Historical value

Even though the lives in H and C display a degree of chronological confusion²² and of credulity over the miraculous that are familiar from many hagiographical texts, this does not by any means automatically

(22) See Appendix I for the chronological problems.

divest them of all historical value and interest. In fact a closer examination of the implied synchronisms (as opposed to some of the explicit chronological information) in these two Syriac sources indicates that there are no glaring flaws such as one would expect in a purely fictional source. Confidence is further strengthened by various incidental pieces of evidence, such as the mention of Ḥajjaj's cancer, known from Muslim sources; and there is even a strong possibility that a chance Muslim allusion may refer to John's success in treating Ḥajjaj's illness (see commentary to 31).

In the light of this it would seem that the outline in H and C of John's career as a whole, stripped of its more miraculous embellishments and legendary numbers (typical accretions of an underlying oral tradition), can be accepted as generally reliable. Indeed, in a couple of cases it is easy enough to see how such legendary accretions came about (see commentary to 23 and 36-7). Thus we can reasonably accept as historical his early call to the monastic life at Beth'Abe, his departure with Rabban Shem'on to the mountainous area in NE Adiabene in search of food during famine, his capture by Dailamite raiders and subsequent missionary activities in the mountain fastnesses of their homeland south west of the Caspian, his journey west to Damascus (whether or not he actually met 'Abd al-Malik and healed one of his children), probably c. 701²³, his visit to Ḥajjaj, his final years in Fars and his monastic foundations there in the vicinity of Arragan, and his burial in the monastery of the Syrians there in January 738.

But even if all or most of this were to be rejected (which would seem to me to be quite unwarranted), the lives would still retain their interest both as reflections of numerous aspects of social life and economic conditions contemporary with their authors (rather than with their hero), and for their topographical information. This applies above all to C, where we find passing references to such topics as a manumission document, ransom fees, land prices, a deed of sale and a workman's wages. The pagan festival in the month Tir, likewise described by C, is

(23) Suggested by various synchronisms; see Appendix I.

hardly likely, either, to have been entirely the author's invention, and in any case it points to a time prior to the Islamicisation of the Fars region. Nor will the description in H of the dispute over which liturgical language to use fail to convey a ring of truth to the modern reader.

The present edition

H is reproduced in its entirety. The original scribe of Harvard syr. 38 wrote out the text somewhat carelessly and then went over it making corrections and supplying omissions (the latter ranging from numerous additions of the conjunction *waw* to the occasional whole new sentence). These corrections, some of which seem to have been made by a hand other than that of the original scribe, are marked '[...]' in the edition²⁴. The original scribe has also provided the occasional vocalization, especially of proper names: these I reproduce only where the vocalization is of interest. The scribe's usage over punctuation consists of three points (vertically) for a heavier stop and one point for a lighter one; for typographical reasons I have replaced the former by a colon, otherwise the punctuation is basically that of the manuscript. Abbreviations²⁵ are resolved and numbered paragraphing has been introduced. A few errors have been corrected in the text and the manuscript's reading has then been relegated to a footnote; erroneous omissions have likewise been corrected, using the symbol <...>

Noteworthy is the regular use of the plural *'lpy*, 'thousands', instead of the more usual *'lp*²⁶; otherwise H displays the usual orthographical features to be found in later West Syrian manuscripts (e.g. 3 f.pl.pf. of the regular verb in *-y*, *af^lel* ipf. (etc.) of certain verbs with the *aleph* preserved after the preformative).

(24) I have not sought to distinguish between the first and second hand in this since in many cases the distinction between them is by no means clear.

(25) Besides such features (usual in late medieval manuscripts), as *qd* for *qdyš'* and *tšm* for *tšmšr'*, the frequent contraction of the 3m.s. suffix to 3 m.pl. perf. ver^{ts} is worth mentioning (e.g. *'wqdw* for *'wqdw^hy*).

(26) Nöldeke, § 148.

In contrast to H, the long-winded text in C is merely summarized in the course of the commentary to H; a few passages have been quoted verbatim in the commentary, and the Syriac text of these samples will be found in Appendix II: this is taken from Cambridge Add. 2020, and I have tacitly corrected one or two obvious (and very minor) errors. (For a promised edition of the verse panegyric, see note 81).

I am grateful to the Harvard College Library and to the Syndics of the Cambridge University Library for permission to publish these texts.

The use of macrons in the commentary is deliberately selective. Harvard syr. 38, ff.175a-186b:

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1. ms ...
 2. ms ...

3. ms ...

Greek words in H

- γένος 2 24
ζεῦγος 43
κανών 33
κελλίον 37 43
κόγχη (qumkaya) 34 43
κοινόβιον 5
μίλιον 36
νόμος 19 29
τάξις 33
χριστιανός 15 21 22 27 29.

Translation of H

Next we write down the exploits of Mar Yoḥannan of Dailam whose monastery is in Persia near the town of Regan.

1 Mighty in truth is the monastic way of life, and its greatness proves inaccessible to the words of created beings, for it is a sign of the crucifixion, teaching a dying to this world in accordance with our Saviour's words, 'whosoever wishes to follow me, let him deny himself, and whosoever wishes to save his soul, should lose it'²⁷. He spoke this concerning those who fearlessly despise death and, out of reverence for God, endure the constraint of sufferings. It was to this exalted way of life that Mar Yoḥannan of Dailam was summoned by grace: he made his soul die to transient desires, just like the apostle Paul²⁸, and his deeds were made manifest in the conversions he effected in the church of God.

2 By family he was from the town of Ḥdatta, in Beth Qira. Seeing that his parents' house was a home for monks, it was through their prayers that God gave them this fruit full of blessings. When he was a small child he joined the other children in learning the psalms. He overheard two monks talking about the monastic life: they were from the monastery of Beth 'Abe, and were speaking about the riches of the monastic life and about their love for God and for each other. **3** As a result of hearing about these divine matters his mind was enflamed with love for Christ and he set off for the monastery of Beth 'Abe. They refused to accept him on the grounds that he was still a child, but one of the holy men, whose name was SNT̄', who knew his parents, received him into his cell and gave him a sufficient training in the scriptures. **4** As a

(27) Mt 16:24-5 and parallels; curiously the writer omits the phrase 'and take up his cross', required by his preceding words.

(28) Cp Titus 2:12.

result of the famine that reigned in that region his teacher SNT'²⁹ and the brethren left for the mountain of Beghash, and lived quietly in caves there, nourishing themselves from roots and from fruits on trees. **5** At that time Yoḥannan had become a solitary and had left the koinobion. Because the brethren had been scattered as a result of the famine, he too accompanied his teacher and lived in quietude, fully observant of the scriptures³⁰.

6 After he had lived for some twenty years in the mountain of Salakh and of Beghash SNT' said to his disciples, amid tears, 'My children, you should know that one of you will be devoured by a wild animal after my death, another will go off and not be heard of again, while the third will gain a great reputation in the world, and mighty deeds will be performed at his hands; he will convert many peoples, and become a father for solitaries'. As he intimated this concerning Mar Yoḥannan of Dailam he turned his gaze towards him and addressed him: 'Be valiant, my son, and rejoice in Christ who has chosen you, for you shall be a preacher of his Gospel'. As he said this he admonished them not to leave him and abandon this man alone in the cave. **7** Three days later, when he was due to depart from this life, SNT' died and they carried out the funeral rites, laying him in his cave.

8 Three days later one of them went to sell the produce of their handiwork — and married a wife, thus falling back into the world. This was the one whom his master said would be devoured by a wild animal. **9** The other went off to see what had happened to his companion, but the Dailamites seized him and took him off captive. The one who was seized was Išo'sabran, whose exploits we wrote out above.

10 Yoḥannan remained by the grave of his master, but when he realized that none of them was going to return he stayed on there some days and then rose up, received a blessing from the grave of his master, and descended the mountain. He was met by some Dailamite robbers who

(29) I.e. 'the Beardless'; see commentary.

(30) Dan. 3:27.

seized him — seeing that the Arab king, ‘Ali bar Abuṭalib, was lax and slack, the Dailamites used to plunder his territory unsparingly.

11 When the glorious Yoḥannan had gone off with them the Dailamites were tormented by a great thirst on the mountain roads; thereupon they promised they would release him if he gave them water to drink. Having knelt down and prayed there immediately burst forth some water, and they drank; whereupon he said to them, ‘Now that you have drunk water, let me go in accordance with your promise’. They, however, refused to do so and returned to their own territory.

12 When they divided up the plunder they counted Yoḥannan as ten portions. He was taken by their chief, who was held in great honour. Now this man had nine sons, and every day they used to worship idols — at which Mar Yoḥannan was so greatly enraged that he cursed them. Over the course of the next ten days that man and his nine children died, one each day. All this took place thanks to the zeal of Mar Yoḥannan. **13** His mistress then summoned him and said to him in the presence of her household, ‘This man is a sorcerer and he has killed my sons and my husband, finishing them off one after another. **14** They then gathered wood and fire, hurling it at the saint in the house where he was living to set alight to it. The house and the wood burnt up, but the fire did not touch the saint: not even a hair of his head was singed³⁰. Everyone was astounded at this, and so they let him go free, driving him away from their houses.

15 He did not, however, go far. There was a child standing there with the crowds who was tried (by a demon). The saint sent him to them to fetch some vegetables for him from the garden, whereupon he was immediately healed. Wonder and astonishment seized everyone, and he healed the sick children of the pagan priests and head men, all idol worshippers, whereupon they believed. There were some 10,100 souls in all. He built them many churches and they became Christians.

16 Once again he travelled round the regions of the Dailamites, reproving those who worshipped trees. He besought God in prayer, saying, ‘Let every tree I strike with a single blow of the axe fall to the

ground!' In this way he felled 4000 trees. **17** On the following morning when they came to worship the trees they saw them all cut down, lying on the ground, with the holy man asleep, the axe under his head. They banded together against the saint and began stoning him, fiercely battering him with stones. He was thrown aside as though dead, but our Lord called him saying, 'Be valiant and strong, Yohannan, for you have a numerous people whence to select for me for the Kingdom. Have no fear of them'. **18** Then their eyes were opened and they realized he had been sent to them to turn them to the way of truth. They all turned to him and believed in the living God. He baptized many people from among them, some 25,000 men and women, built them churches and established for them priests, deacons and numerous teachers.

19 He then went to even more interior regions, to numerous peoples who had no leaders, but resembled fierce wild animals, not subject to law. These had an evil pagan custom of assembling on their foul festivals to a temple of a great idol situated in the midst of their territory: There they offered sacrifices to the idol and conducted themselves in a foul manner by a spring of water in front of their temple. They used to perform this foul festival for seven days three times a year. He reproved them but they paid no attention and failed to believe his preaching.

20 Subsequently their pagan priests and chiefs gathered to him and said, 'Unless you show us a sign we will not listen to you; rather, we will light a great fire and you must enter and stand in it: if you do not burn, we will all believe in your God'. So they lit a huge fire, and the holy Yohannan entered it and came out three times without any of his garments getting burnt, not even a single hair of his head³⁰. He then prayed and the entire fire was quenched.

21 On seeing that they did not yet believe, he drew near and struck their spring of water with his staff: all of a sudden the water turned into blood, and the fish in it rotted, and all died from thirst and from anguish. Their chiefs and priests collected together before him and said, 'Restore our water so that we can drink, and then we will all believe in your God and become Christians'. The holy Yohannan prayed over the water and struck it with his staff a second time, whereupon it was restored as it had

been before. Then they all believed and acknowledged God. He baptized them and they became Christians. On the first day 4,900 souls were baptized as he recited over them the entire baptismal service. Thus he converted and baptized all the errant peoples in these regions.

22 Over the course of three years he cleansed them of every pagan practice and they became true Christians, zealous for the faith. Thus for all the Dailamites there proved to be a fine new growth.

23 Each year, corresponding to the (time of) saint's miracle, the spring is turned to blood for three days, (starting) on the day when the saint had (first) changed it. All the Arab merchants who go there tell of that spring which they had seen become blood with their own eyes; and they give praise to God for this.

24 Then the saint entered even more interior regions, ascending difficult mountains. In that north eastern region he converted many peoples over the course of thirty three years, (enduring) hunger, thirst and nakedness, extirpating every trace of paganism in the east, especially from among the Dailamites, his own people. He made them 'a fair field' of believers, rejoicing over them as they rejoiced over him. He prayed over them and blessed them, entrusting them to God.

25 He went off and lived in quietude, serving God, and there appeared to him an angel of God in a revelation, saying, 'Go to the region of the Persians, and build there three glorious churches to God, one for laymen, the other two for solitaries'.

26 He rose up as instructed by God and went up to pray in Jerusalem, receiving a blessing from the holy places where our Lord had walked. **27** He visited the Arab king 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwan, who was residing in Damascus at that time; he greeted him and was received in great honour. The king asked him to pray for his daughter who was tried by demons. She was healed, and the king, delighted, gave him royal gifts, which, however, he refused, asking the king instead for peace and calm for the Christian people, and for permission to build churches and monasteries wherever they wanted.

28 He wrote a royal missive to his governor who resided in Beth Aramaye and Parsaye: 'Let the holy man build churches and monasteries throughout our entire empire wherever he wants to do so; furthermore, let the expense be provided him out of my royal treasury'. **29** He wrote another document to the effect that 'tribute should not be exacted from any of the priests, monks, teachers and leaders of the Christians throughout our entire empire; but let the Christians be honoured in their customs and laws, as befits them'. **30** He wrote many letters like these, sealing them with his signet ring and giving them to Mar Yohannan, whom he sent off with messengers and with honours that befitted him.

31 From Damascus he came to Ḥajjaj, who wrote for him similar letters. He then travelled to the mountain of Mam, in the vicinity of the town of Regan. There he built a large and flourishing monastery, settling many brethren in it. **32** He then travelled along the coast of Fars, and saw a dead man who had been drowned in the water. He prayed over him and revived him. Conversing with him, the man said, 'I am a Jew'; whereupon the saint said, 'Show me the idol temple of the demon Babi'. He did so, and he went in and saw the idol. He took the gold crown that was on the head of the idol Babi, and when the priests and the chiefs of the Mamians resisted, he performed many miracles in their presence and converted them. **33** Then he showed them the king's letter, and they were afraid. They believed and he baptized them, tearing down their idol temple and building in its place a monastery where to-day the brethren recite the services in the Persian tongue; it is dedicated to Mar Sargis and Bacchus, the soldier martyrs. For this he established rules appropriate for solitaries.

34 For twenty years the demons battled with him because of their idol temple. One day they struck down the sacristan as he sounded the semantron, throwing him down. The saint, however, healed him, and the next day he himself went up to sound the semantron. Seeing that he was unable to touch him, the demon went off to the kitchen and threw water on to the dough, spoiling it. **35** On another occasion he also blew like a wind through the windows and made the flour for the dough fly up, scattering it all over the monastery buildings. In their affliction the brethren informed the holy man and he grabbed Satan, rebuked him with

the word of God and drove him from the monastery, binding him so that he would not ever enter it again — and he never did, in accordance with the saint's word; nor was he ever seen there again.

36 Because water was only to be found at the distance of a mile and a half from the monastery, and the brethren were put to the trouble of bringing the water to the monastery up a climb, the saint prayed to God on account of their inconvenience, and an angel of the Lord came to him and said, 'Make the brethren leave the monastery, because I have been ordered by God to remove the monastery and its palm garden to the spring of water and replant the trees there'.

37 So all the brethren left, and stood in prayer to God. Then all of a sudden the mountain shook and trembled to its foundations; the mountain moved and the monastery on it was resituated below the spring of water. Nothing remained in its old position apart from the cell of Mar Yoḥannan. In this way the spring's water flowed down and entered the monastery in between the cells, irrigating the gardens and orchards. The brethren gave thanks and praise to God who had given them this relief.

38 When news of this wonder spread everyone gave praise to God, and innumerable brethren gathered to the monastery, serving God in joy.

39 Now the Persian and Syriac speaking brethren quarrelled with each other over the services: the Persians said, 'We should all recite the services in our language, seeing that we live in Persian territory'; while the Syriac-speakers said, 'Our father is a Syriac-speaker, and so we should recite the services in our language, on account of the founder of the monastery; furthermore we do not know how to recite the services in Persian'.

40 When Mar Yoḥannan saw the quarrel that had arisen, he pacified the brethren and prayed to God with deep feeling. Thereupon he was told in a revelation from God: 'Build them another monastery the other side of the river, opposite this one, resembling it in every respect. Let the Persian-speakers live in one, and the Syriac in the other'. So he built another monastery just like the first, and the Syriac-speaking brethren

lived there. Thus the quarrel between the brethren was resolved.

41 Then the time for Mar Yoḥannan to depart from this life approached, and an angel came to him from God and told him, 'Your Lord summons you, O good servant'. The holy man replied to the angel, 'Tell our Lord that I do not want to leave this temporal life until I have built a church to the Mother of God, Mary, and it has been consecrated and I have received the life-giving Mysteries in it; then I am prepared to die'. He prayed to God who granted him his wish.

42 He then began building a large church dedicated to the Mother of God, Mary; it was consecrated and he received the life-giving Mysteries in it; then he gave praise and thanks to God who had performed all these acts of grace for him.

43 When he left (the church) he summoned the sacristan and told him to sound the semantron (that served) for the pair (of monasteries). He did so and the brethren assembled. He went off to his cell and rendered up his spirit to God, into the hands of the angel of care. **44** The brethren of the two monasteries, Persian and Syriac-speaking, assembled, along with the inhabitants of the entire region who had been baptized by him, and they escorted him with canticles and due rites for seven days; then they laid him in the burial place of the church, in the martyrion, which he had built.

45 He died aged one hundred less one year. He left the world at the age of thirteen, spent thirty three years in the land of the Dailamites, thirty years in the monastery of Beth 'Abe, and twenty three years with his master SNT'. May his prayer be with us, amen.

Commentary

(I give the commentary in the form of a running comparison with the other Syriac sources, in particular the verse panegyric in C).

2. Thomas (II.22) likewise states that his parents lived in Ḥdatta³¹, but specifies that the child was born to his aged and barren parents (left nameless) through the prayers of Rabban Shem'on the Beardless (*Sanoṭa*) when he and some other monks from Beth'Abē were in Ḥdatta to pay a visit to the patriarch George (659-680/1)³². Thomas adds that Shem'on told them to call the child who would be born to them John, and that his parents subsequently placed him in a school where he learnt the Psalms (so H, but not C).

C (f.109b) says that he was born 'in the region of Ḥdatta, beside the Tigris, known as Beth Qira by its inhabitants'. C goes on to state that his parents, called Abraham and Sarah³³, were barren, and that they cared for travellers; on one occasion 'there gathered at their house five old men who were chaste solitaries from Beth 'Abē, the monastery of Jacob'³⁴. These monks ask Abraham to bring his child to their monastery to be blessed; to this he replies that he has none, whereupon they promise he will have a son in the following year. It is later mentioned that one of the five was Shem'on the Beardless.

(31) I.e. Ḥaditha (just south of where the Great Zab meets the Tigris); cp Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne* I, pp. 101-14. The name Beth Qira, in both H and does not appear to be otherwise known.

(32) For Shem'on, see commentary to 3, and for the chronology see Appendix I.

(33) Probably these names originated in a comparison of the aged and barren couple with the biblical Abraham and Sarah (Sarah is explicitly mentioned in this context by Thomas, II.23).

(34) I.e. Jacob of Lashom, the first Abbot; see E.A.W. Budge, *The Book of Governors* (London, 1893), I, pp. lxx-lxxvi.

3. Thomas merely says that John left his old parents and came to Beth 'Abe, without giving any further reason for this action (similarly C); his arrival there is said to have been the days of Mar Abraham of Beth R. Zkhaisho'. He was received by Shem'on, who evidently had to persuade the other monks to receive him despite his youthfulness. Thomas goes on to give details of the work he was set to do in the monastery's vineyard near Dure, in Naḥla d-Malka (to the north)³⁵.

C (f.110a) states that John left home after studying the Scriptures for twelve years, to go to Beth 'Abe (compare H 45, 'he left the world at the age of 13'). It does not mention the refusal of the monastery to accept him, but simply says that 'he became a pupil of Shem'on the Beardless, of holy soul, who had been one of the five solitaries who had announced his birth'.

Whereas Thomas and C both give the name of John's spiritual father as Shem'on the Beardless (*sanoṭa*), Isho'dnaḥ (104) calls him 'Abraham the Beardless'; this is perhaps a confusion with Abraham of Beth Zkhaisho', whom Thomas says was abbot at the time. H's SNT' (probably *sannata*; Mingana syr. 543 *snwt'*) curiously preserves only the epithet; for the form SNT', instead of SNWT', compare Bar Bahlul, *Lexicon* (ed. Duval), col. 1363-4³⁶.

4. The famine is mentioned also by Thomas (II.24), who says that they went off to mountainous country to live off 'leaves of trees'.

C has no mention of a famine, and it is merely stated that 'he lived more or less 40 years³⁷ in the monastery, and (then) left for a mountain (to live) an anchoritic life with Mar Shem'on. It was to the mountain of Slokh that the blessed Shem'on set out with his children — Isho'sabran, along with Maranzkha and Mar Yoḥannan'. (For the names of the other two disciples, see commentary to 9 below).

(35) Thomas records a delightful detail: a certain old monk Elisha related that when he (Elisha) was later sent to do the same work, John's finger marks could still be seen on the mud plaster with which he had covered the cave he lived in.

(36) Referring to a biblical scholar SNT' at a monastery in Resh'aina.

(37) This conflicts with H 45; see Appendix I.

Although H mentions only Beghash (so vocalized) here, in 6 it speaks of the mountain of Salakh and Beghash. As already noted in the introduction, Thomas knew two traditions of the area to which they went as a result of the famine, *Nerba d-Beth Gazza*³⁸, or 'the region of Salakh'. Isho'dnah, when speaking of Isho'sabran (104), says that he left the monastery of Mar Ganiba in Beth Garmai and 'came to the mountain of Beghash where he found Mar John and his master Abraham the Beardless... After a little time all three went to the wilderness of Beth Gazza.

Salakh (of which C's SLWK is clearly just a deformation, due to confusion with the more familiar (Karka d-Beth) Slokh) and Beghash are the mountainous regions NE of Ḥadyab/Adiabene³⁹ (i.e. the party must have travelled SE from Beth'Abe and crossed the Great Zab).

5. C states that they built a small sanctuary (*haykla*) with an altar, and there they would meet for the Eucharist each Sunday.

6. H's 'twenty years' seems to conflict with 'twenty three years' which H 45 says that John spent with his teacher⁴⁰ (though possibly this higher figure was meant to include time before the famine as well). Thomas (II.24) provides no figure, and according to C it was only five years. C also adds that Shem'on told his disciples to return to their old monastery (i.e. Beth 'Abe) after his death, otherwise they would face various afflictions; it then continues:

'But we did not heed the counsel which our aged master gave us,
and so each one of us was afflicted with all kinds of ills.'

Thus did our master Mar John relate, and his children wrote it all
down afterwards in books.

(38) According to Budge, *The Book of Governors*, II, p. 225, this was in Dasen (i.e. further north), but the narrative in Isho'dnah 104 (referred to below) implies that it was south of the Great Zab, in Adiabene. Beth Gazza features again in Thomas (VI.15), and there the context suggests it was not far from that river.

(39) Cp Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne*, I, pp. 151 (Salakh) and 213 (B. Beghash), and maps opposite pp. 40 and 225.

(40) See Appendix I.

Our master said that when he went out to the mountain with the blessed man
he was about fifty years old.

Shem'on's prophecy is to be found in both Thomas and in C. In Thomas it appears as follows (Shem'on addresses them):⁴¹ "Come to me, my disciples, and I will tell you what will happen to you after my departure from you". When the first approached he said to him, "A wolf will seize you", and to the second he said, "No one shall oppose you (? , *lit.* 'stand up to you'; Budge 'follow you'; Abuna's Arabic translation (Mosul, 1966) omits the words), or know the path by which you will depart from the world. And as for you, my son John, Our Lord will magnify you with miracles and signs, and he shall make you a leader, and one mighty in the instruction of the barbarian pagans, and in the assembly of the brotherhood of ascetics" .

C gives the prophecy as follows (f. 110ab):

One of you will be taken captive by pagans, another by the world, while another will become a father, and master of fathers.

7. There is nothing which corresponds to this in either Thomas or C.

8-9. The fate of the other two disciples is related by both Thomas and C. Thomas (II.25) says that after Shem'on's death the disciples remained in the cave, and one of them took the books written (*lit.* copied) by Shem'on down to the villages to sell them and buy food. 'When he saw the world and its beauty, he took a wife: this is the one whom a wolf seized. The two remaining ones waited a few days and their companion did not appear, so the middle one went down to see what had happened to him. He likewise did not return; in that it was not known what had happened to him, it was said that he went as a 'mourner' in the interior mountains'. Thomas thus has nothing about the second (Isho'sabran in C and H) being taken captive by the Dailamites (H 9), but this is well known to Isho'dnah (104), who says that Isho'sabran and

(41) My translation (Budge's is not always quite accurate).

John were both taken captive, but on separate occasions: the former became a 'shepherd of the sheep of the person who had taken him captive', and on healing his owner's son of an illness he was later given his freedom (similarly C, quoted below).

C describes the fate of the other two disciples in the reverse order (f.110b):

The Dailamites took Isho'sabran captive and he became a slave;
 he was allocated to an owner of sheep and became a shepherd.
 Now the owner of the upright man had a son who was clothed in
 leprosy,
 and he begged the upright man to wipe away the leprosy — and then
 he would let him go free.
 He fulfilled his request, prayed to his Lord, and cleansed the leprosy.
 So he let him go free, whereupon he returned back to John.
 Now Maranzkha went down to a village and fell back into the world.
 So the words of the old teacher Shem'on were fulfilled with respect to
 us,
 and I remained on the mountain alone without any company.

Isho'sabran as the name of one of the disciples is thus found in Isho'dnaḥ, H and C; if we are to believe the author of H, he had written a life of this man too; if, however, it contained the episode described in Isho'dnaḥ and C, it is curious that H says nothing of Isho'sabran's subsequent return to John, has reported in C. Maranzkha as the name of the third disciple is only known from C.

10. John's capture by the Dailamites⁴² is mentioned in Thomas (II.25) and Isho'dnaḥ (116), as well as in C which explains his epithet at the opening of the *memra* (f. 109a):

Because he had been taken captive to Dailam and converted it, he gained this name.

(42) On Dailam see Fiey, *Communautés..* (see n. 16), ch. V (= *Parole de l'Orient* 2 (1971), pp. 338-40), and V. Minorsky in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd ed.), II, cols 189-94, and 'La domination des Dailamites', repr. in his *Iranica* (Tehran, 1964), pp. 12-30. C regularly has Dailom.

The prelude to John's capture in C is, however, rather different, for there John relates (in the first person) how there was snow for 40 days and he lived unharmed in a cleft with a bear, while a plant which sprang up miraculously provided him with food; when the snow melted he left for the mountain region of Maday (Media), and he was taken prisoner by the Dailamites while they were raiding a local village. He was subsequently made to carry heavy loads.

C has no mention of 'Ali; for the chronological problems it introduces ('Ali died in 661), see Appendix 1.

11. The miracle is narrated in C as follows (f.110b-111a):

While the captives and robbers were travelling on the road to Dailom they failed to find any water during three days.

Many of the people and animals died,
and the compassion of the upright man was stirred for their lives:
the saint approached the chief man and said
"If someone can provide water for you to drink, what will you do for him?"

To which they replied they would release him to go back home, taking with him whatever he wanted, without any hindrance.

The upright man knelt down in prayer before his God
and all of a sudden living water spurted up in the arid region.

The people drank, and so did all the captives and animals,
giving praise to the Lord who magnifies his servants by means of his miracles.

... He asked to be released, as they had agreed,
but they refused, saying "You are our god".

C then goes on to give another reason for their refusal to let him go: his captors deduced from the miracle that he must be of a rich family, so they told him to write home for 5000 dinars to ransom the 1000 captives, giving him two months to pay up. When the money fails to turn up, one of them angrily tries to strike John with his sword, but his hand withers. On being asked to heal the hand, John does so. Henceforward they are afraid to demand money any longer.

12-4. C gives a somewhat different, and much fuller, account of this episode (f.111a):

They arrived back in the land of the Dailamites
and our master was allocated to the head of the Dailamites.

This man, who had eight children, made John shepherd his sheep. While acting as shepherd John composed laments for himself, and one day when his master had a feast he told John to sing in his presence; this he does, but his master is annoyed by the lugubrious nature of the songs, and so strikes him and sends him away with all sorts of abuse. Such action, they soon see, leads to divine retribution (f.111b):

They saw the justice of the Lord of the just who had shown zeal for justice:
justice avenged the upright man, punishing the unjust.
The headman died suddenly on the very next day,
followed by his eight sons, one after another.
The evil people died and received punishment for their abuse of the upright man;
the wife and one daughter thus remained alone.
Our master said "I was a slave for nine days and I slaved zealously for nine masters."
After a little some friends of the man and his sons came
to pay them their respects, not being aware of the news of their deaths.
His wife came out, her hair all torn and pulled,
and she told the men of the sorrow that had met her over the nine days.
They asked her the reason, "What was the cause of your husband's death?"
And she replied, "Ever since this man entered the house, this fate has befallen me."
"What do you want us to do to this bloodstained man?"
"Let him be killed," she said, "so that I and my daughter may remain on our own."
She showed them the house where our chaste father lay
and told them, "Let the house along with the man inside go up in flames."
So she set fire to the surrounds of the house and it went up in flames—along with all her gold.
But the fire did not touch the pure-souled man at all.
When the woman and the men with her saw that the chaste man was not burnt up,
she lamented all the more that her possessions had been burnt.

“O man, we do not know whether you are human or not,”
for from the moment you entered this house, its owners have died.”
They gave him his freedom from servitude, testifying to it in writing,
and so he went forth and preached the Gospel of our Lord in all
Dailom.

15. C is very different (f.111b-112a)⁴³: John goes forth to preach the gospel, destroying idols; he builds a place suitable for baptism by the sea, and baptizes all who believe in the one God. Those who refuse baptism he threatens with the plague. Plague duly breaks out in the town of SWDY’N (vocalized *Sūdāyān*)⁴⁴ and only those who had been baptized escape death. John builds there a church of stone and mortar, and established priests and deacons. His fame spreads, and he himself moves on to a town called ’WHR (partially vocalized ’*wāhr*)⁴⁵, whose headman, having an only daughter who had just died, had asked John to come and revive her. John makes the sign of the cross on her forehead and she returns to life, whereupon the whole town is converted and John sets up priests from among the 20.000 captives living in his dominion whom the headman liberates in gratitude. C then goes on (f.112a):

Our master provided a water mill for the poor,
but some cruel man diverted the water to his own use.
The mill, however, went on grinding continuously, even without
water,
at which the astonished man restored the water and confessed his
fault.

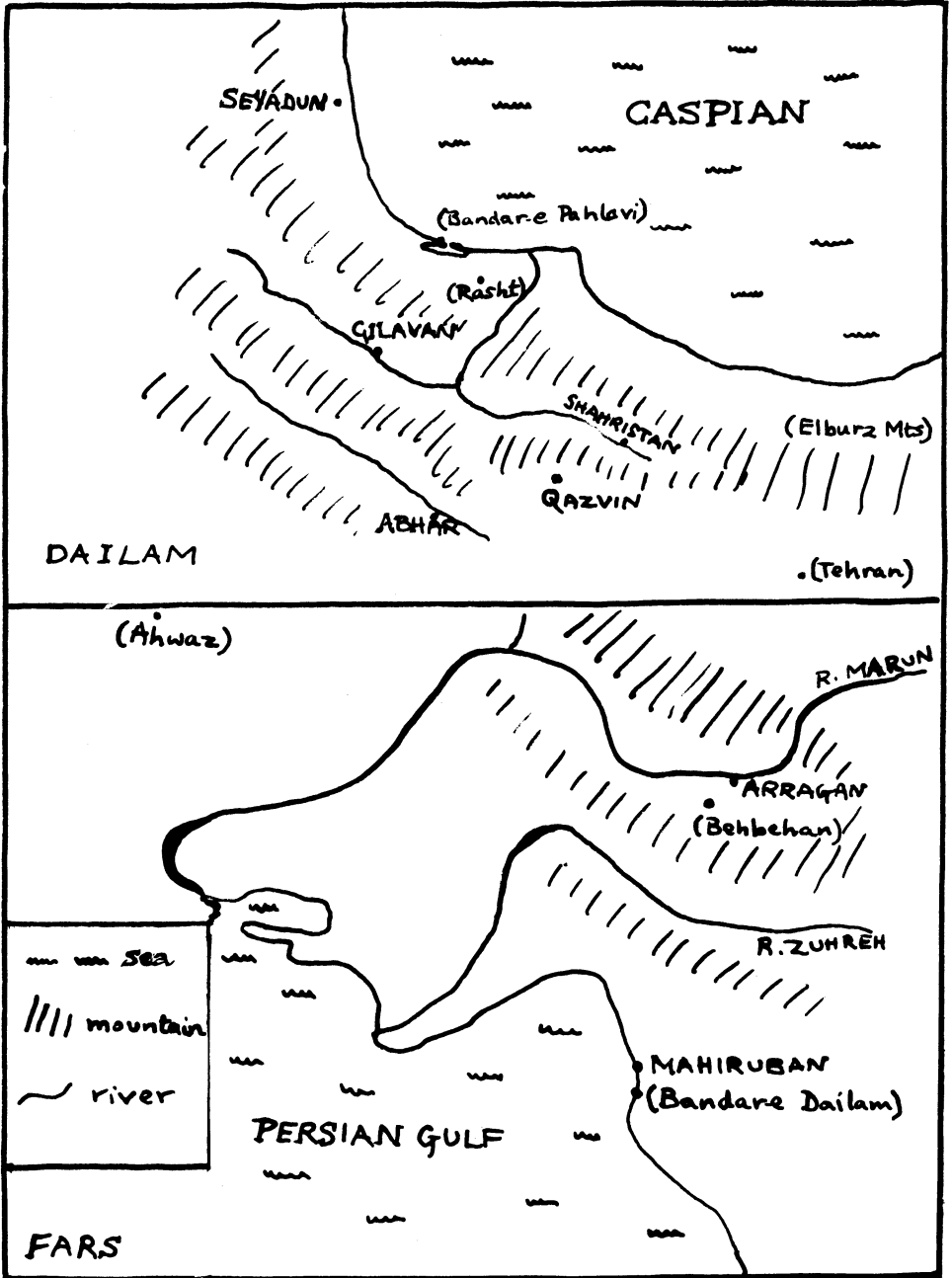
According to C John then sets off for a town called Bāshān⁴⁶, where an episode parallel to H 20 takes place (see below).

(43) For a parallel in C to the miracle of H 15 see the commentary to H 31-32 below, and note 6.

(44) Unidentified; possibly Sēyādūn, not far from the Caspian on the coastal road north from Bandar-e Pahlavi [map 1-15-B in L.W. Adamec, *Tehran and North Western Iran* (Graz, 1976)].

(45) Probably Abhar, to the west of Qazvin; Yaqut states that it was called Awhar by the Persians (C. Barbier de Meynard, *Dictionnaire géographique, historique et littéraire de la Perse.. extrait du Mo’djem el-Bouldan de Yaqout* (Paris, 1861), pp. 11-12; cp P. Schwarz, *Iran im Mittelalter nach den arabischen Geographen* (repr. Darmstadt, 1969), pp. 726-8). Map 1-23-C in Adamec, *Tehran..*

(46) Unidentified. Yaqut mentions a town of the same name near Herat (Barbier de Meynard, *Dictionnaire..*, p. 77). Just possibly BSN is a corruption of KSBN, i.e. Kašvīn, which according to Yacout was the Persian name of Qazvin (Barbier de Meynard, *Dictionnaire..*, pp. 441-2; cp Schwarz, *Iran..*, pp. 705-20).



16-18. In C this episode follows the ordeal by fire (H 19-20), and it takes place in a sacred garden of a town called GLBY' (vocalized *Galbāye*)⁴⁷, 'whose inhabitants worshipped trees'. C continues (f. 112b):

The upright man went and bought an axe, and cut down the trees;
 he then laid it under his head and slept in the garden.
 In the morning the inhabitants came to worship their trees;
 they saw them cut down, lying on the ground,
 and said to the upright man, "Did you cut down our gods?"

On his admission,

the accursed men struck him until he was (nearly) dead, and dragging
 him, cast him out,
 heaping on him a pile of stones, as though he were dead.
 In the middle of the night an angel stood above his head
 and, on the Lord's instructions, bade him return to the garden of the
 pagans.
 So to the garden of the pagans the saint returned and stood (*or*
 began) there to pray;
 they heard his voice, came and saw him bent in worship;
 they said to him, "We do not know what you are,
 for we put you to death, but you have returned back here
 unharmed."
 He replied, "I am an ordinary man, whom the Lord has sent
 to make you into his good and obedient servants."
 He then urges them to convert and they are baptized.

19-20. It has already been noted that C places this episode before that of H 16-18; it also gives its location as the town of Bashan, whose inhabitants worshipped water and fire (i.e. were presumably Zoroastrians). When he urged them to convert, they replied (f.112a):

«We recognize no other god but fire,
 for we see that it provides light and burns.
 If this God whom you proclaim is true,
 then enter the fire — which is our goddess — and come out
 unharmed.

(47) Unidentified; just possibly Gilavan, north west of Qazvin (map 1-23-A in Adamec, *Tehran..*).

If you do come out of it unharmed, then we will believe,
 acknowledging you to be his apostle, and we will worship him.»
 So they piled up masses of wood and set it on fire.
 The upright man entered it and came out unharmed,
 whereupon they were baptized and all believed in the name of the
 (true) Being.

John's ordeal by fire is included in a list of miraculous 'resurrections' in the Chronicle of Seert XL (*P.O.* 5, pp. 257-8), in the course of the History of Barshaba (time of Shapur II).

21. Whereas in C the fire-worshippers are immediately converted, in H their conversion requires the further miracle of the water becoming blood, an episode which C indeed knows, but locates it in the next town which John visits, SHRW (vocalized Shahrō)⁴⁸, where the inhabitants worship water and the fish in a local fountain (f.112b):

They used to attach gold rings and pearls to the fish,
 but (John) shook his sandal in the water and it became red blood:
 the fish died and turned putrid in the water now made blood.

— whereupon John simply departs. The local inhabitants, however, run after him and beg him to restore their water. This he does and they are converted; he then builds a church and provides priests.

The linking of the events in 21 with those of 19-20 in H is probably due to a process of telescoping.

22. C has no parallel to this summarizing paragraph.

23. In C's account the miracle lasts only one day (f.113a):

In token of the wonder which the Lord performed through his
 associate,
 the water is turned into blood each year for one day.

(48) For the name, but in a different locality, see Schwarz, *Iran...*, p. 225; possibly Sharistan on the Shah-Rud, NNE of Qazvin.

It is not difficult to see how what was probably just a natural phenomenon came to be transformed into a miracle associated with a visiting holy man. C has no mention of the visiting Arab traders.

24. Some of the events of these 33 years, passed over by H, are to be found in C at this point (f.113ab):

— In an unnamed town plagued by lethal snakes he curses the reptiles and they leave.

— In another town the people worshipped a tree where a dragonshaped demon lived; this tried to kill John, but when he cursed it, it burst and evaporated like smoke.

— On the mountains of Dailom there lived another dragon⁴⁹, locally known as 'the great god of all Dailom', whom people came to worship, and offer gifts, from all over the place, throwing gold and silk into its cavern. They challenge John saying, "Kill it, and then we will believe." John, recognizing it to be a demon which manifested itself in bodily form, as Satan did in the serpent (Gen. 3), is afraid he may come to harm, so he collects some priests and people to process out to the mountain with the cross, singing hosanna; when he then curses the demon it duly vanishes like smoke. Many are converted, and he built a church 'in the name of Jesus, Lord of all'.

— Outside this town he sees a woman whose leprous son the people had turned out of the town. He anointed the boy with oil, and he was healed.

— For the next episode I quote C verbatim (f.113b):

The Dailamites set off again for the region of Mosul
and took people captive, including two men, members of the
*shahrigan*⁵⁰,

(49) For the role of dragons in Iranian popular religious beliefs see A. Christensen, *Essai sur la démonologie iranienne* (Copenhagen, 1941).

(50) The *shahrigan* were hereditary landed proprietors; the term occurs frequently in Thomas of Margā. See G. Hoffmann, *Auszüge aus syrischen Akten persischer Märtyrer*

one, son of Gurya, the headman of Arbad⁵¹, whose name was Bahloi, the other, Behriya, son of Nuryād, the headman of Slokh⁵². The blessed (John) saw them and recognized them as headmen from his own region, and so he bought the two of them from the Dailamites for 6000 (dinars);⁵³ he wrote off to their home country and they sent silver in the hands of their servants, six (thousand) pieces to ransom themselves, and six (thousand) for our master, making 12000 in all. along with the *shahrigan* Bahloi and Behriya they went off home.

25. C gives rather more details of the revelation; according to this account (f.113b-114a), John continued his preaching, and one day he told his spiritual children of a vision which he had had: "I saw an angel with three rods in his hand, made of sweet pomgranate; he gave them to me and told me to follow him. We came to the mountain of Mām and to Pashkar, and there he showed me three locations; in one I was to found a monastery dedicated to St Sergius, another was to be a monastery for the Persians, a third was to be in Pashkar⁵⁴. I then planted the rods and they

(Abh.K.M. VII.3; repr. 1966), pp. 236-9, and M.G. Morony, 'The effects of the Muslim conquest on the Persian population of Iraq, *Iran* 14 (1976), p. 45.

(51) Not known; possibly a corruption of Ardabad or Darabad, for which see Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne* III, pp. 76-81.

(52) I.e. Salakh, rather than (Karka d-Beth) Slokh.

(53) 3000 dinars each is no doubt exaggerated: the normal ransom price was 33 1/3 dinars, though prominent persons (such as these) would have commanded a higher sum; cp S.D. Goiten, *A Mediterranean Society* (Berkeley, 1967), I, p. 329.

(54) There is a certain disagreement between H and C over the three monastic foundations in Fars: H has (1) a monastery on mount Mam near Regan, (2) St Sergius (former temple of Babi) = monastery of the Persians, and (3) monastery of the Syrians over the river; C, on the other hand, differentiates St Sergius (former temple of Babi: see commentary to 31-33) from the Persian monastery, and says it was used by nuns (see commentary to 41), while the third foundation is the Syrian monastery across the river on mount Pashkar. Since C was evidently written at the monastery of the Syrians, its account should be preferred. Mam and Pashkar seem to be otherwise unknown, though for Pashkar perhaps compare Faskara, mentioned by Yaqut as being in Fars (Barbier de Meynard, *Dictionnaire...*, p. 423, Schwarz, *Iran...*, p. 131). If the monasteries were (like Arragan) on the river Marun, Mam and Pashkar should correspond to the Kūh-i Behdi (to N) and Kūh-i Kavi (to S): if, however, they were sited between Mahiroban and Arragan, then the river in question would be the Zuhreh Rūd, and the mountains would be the Kūh-i Pāzanū (to N) and Zīr-i-Kūh (to S). (Cp World map 1:1000,000, ed. 6-GSGS, series 1301, sheet NH 39).

grew up into three trees". On asking the angel where he would get money for all this building programme he was told 'I will fill your belly to satiety'. On a third visit from the angel he was given a document in Persian, a language which he did not know; this he took to Pāleh Lābād, who told him it said that he was being sent to the region of Fars — whereupon John believed in the truth of his vision.

26. The astonishingly roundabout route⁵⁵ taken by John also features in C, which at this point states that John was fifteen years in the Dailam region, leaving it at the age of 85; he set off 'on the road of the Romans (Byzantines)' to Jerusalem in the company of a solitary called Giwargis, a skilled scribe.

27-30. Likewise in C (f.114a) John proceeds to Damascus, 'the city of the king, who was 'Abd-malik, son of Marwan'. The ensuing details, however, are somewhat different in C: John performs some miracles in Damascus, and this reaches the ears of 'Abd al-Malik, who asks him to come and heal his *son*, who is tormented by a demon⁵⁶. John then (f.114ab):

Washed his cross (in water) and signed it over the child's head, whereupon he was healed.

He gave John 12000 pieces of silver to build a monastery.

John took from the king of kings a letter to the serpent Ḥajjaj, because he was going to go there, as he had asked.

He passed by way of the patriarch Ḥnanisho⁵⁷ to receive his blessing and inform him of his vision.

(55) The abruptness is probably ultimately due to the artificial juxtaposition of two separate oral traditions.

(56) The absence of the mention of any daughters from the traditional genealogies does not of course preclude the possibility that he had some [in fact, according to Ṭabari, *Ta'rikh*, ser.ii, p. 1174 he had three (P.C.)]. In view of C's 'son', however, H's 'daughter' may well be a secondary element in the Syriac tradition. Similar healings of early Arab rulers or their children are recorded elsewhere, e.g. Chron. Seert XCVII (*P.O.* 13, p. 589; Mar 'Abda heals 'Ubayd Allah b.Ziyad, emir of Iraq), *ibid.* XCIX (Khudahwi heals and baptizes one of Mu'awiya's daughters).

(57) Ḥnanisho' is mentioned as being contemporary with John by 'Amr and Mari (ed. Gismondi, p. 57; Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* II, p. 425). For the chronological implications, see Appendix I.

The patriarch replied, "Stay here with us, and I will give you (permission) to build as many of your monasteries as you need."

Our master said in answer, "The Lord's angel has sent me to Mam; I shall travel towards Beth Hendwaye⁵⁸ in order to find Mam."

The patriarch gave a document to the archdeacon, who received him into (his) house as the patriarch had written.

John ate and drank in honesty and simplicity,

— until the archdeacon was shocked at the pure-shoulded man.

Now there was in Baṣrah a handsome deacon⁵⁹,

whose speech had been impaired by sorcerers for eight years.

His mother took him round to a monastery to be healed,

but he received no healing, either from the monastery, or from anyone else.

So she went off to the doctors, followers of Plato⁶⁰,

but she received no help from Plato or his followers.

She set off on a journey of so many parasangs to some sorcerers, she (got) nothing either from them or from the wicked whom the demons had deceived.

She heard of John, and came in supplication to the archdeacon's house,

to bring in her son to the blessed man, in case he might be cured.

The stupid man, because he had been shocked, told the woman 'Go away to your home,

for this man drinks wine all the night long'.

She cried out loudly, entreating him to let her son enter;

he went in and told the upright man the story of the woman and her son,

(58) Arḍ al-Hind in early Islamic times denoted all the coastal area from the head of the Persian Gulf to India: see J.C. Wilkinson, 'Arab-Persian land relationships in late Sasanid Oman', *Proceedings of the 6th Seminar for Arabian Studies* (London, 1973), p. 41 (P.C.)

(59) For the following, compare a rather similar episode in the life of John of Nḥel, ch. 22 [ed. Brock, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 9 (1978)], where John of Nḥel, on a visit to the Catholicos Sabrisho' (596-604), healed the deacon Markos, 'whose tongue had been bound by sorcery'.

(60) No hint of Plato's medical expertise is to be found in the anecdotes concerning him studied by A.S. Riginos, *Platonica: the Anecdotes concerning the Life and Writings of Plato* (Leiden, 1976), or in the biographical notice in Theodore bar Koni's *Liber Scholiorum* (ed. Scher) II, pp. 292-3 (a passage included in A. Baumstark, 'Griechische Philosophen und ihren Lehren in syrischer Überlieferung', *Oriens Christianus* 5 (1905), pp. 1-25). On the testimony, however, of Iṣḥaq b. Ḥunayn's *Ta'riḥ al-aṭibba'* the tradition that Plato was a physician goes back to John Philoponos: see F. Rosenthal, 'Iṣḥaq b. Ḥunayn's *Ta'riḥ al-aṭibba'*', *Oriens* 7 (1974), pp. 55-80, esp. 75, 77, 79, 80 (I owe the reference to my colleague Dr F. Zimmermann).

and the upright man, through a revelation of the spirit, spoke first and said to the wretch,
 "A wretched wine-bibber cannot heal".
 When the priest saw that our master was aware that he had stupidly been shocked,
 he acknowledged his fault and prostrated himself before our master.

The woman and her son are now brought in, and when John laid his cross on his tongue, the boy spoke at once; John told him to say the Gloria. The next Sunday he read the Epistle to everyone's astonishment.

It is interesting that, against H 29, C has nothing on the exemption of the clergy and certain other categories from 'tribute' (*madatta*, probably the poll-tax). The early evidence on this subject for Syria and Mesopotamia is very scant (note the Life of Gabriel of Gartmin, ed. P.Y. Dolabani, *Maltabzabne d-'umro qaddiso d-Qartmin* (Mardin, 1959), p. 47 = 12 of a new edition prepared by A.N. Palmer), and even in Egypt where the evidence is fuller, the situation is far from clear: see D.C. Dennett, *Conversion and Poll Tax in early Islam* (Cambridge, Mass., 1950), pp. 77-115. Cp *Synodicon Orientale* (ed. Chabot) p. 225 = 490 (A.D. 676).

31-33. C again has a much fuller account, and its narrative continues as follows: as a result of this miracle many other people come to John for healing, and soon his fame reaches Ḥajjaj⁶¹, who sends for him (f.115a):

..in order to receive from him healing of an evil ulcer.
 The blessed man entered Ḥajjaj's presence and gave him the document
 in which the king commanded 'Give the blessed man 12000 (pieces of silver)'
 The serpent asked him, "What is the reason for this money?"
 to which he replied, "Our Lord healed his son at my hands, and so he gave it to me."
 He asked the upright man what he would do with this money;
 he replied, "I will build with it monasteries for the worship of the Lord."

(61) For Ḥajjaj, the famous governor of Irqa (694-714), see *Enc. Islam*² III, pp. 39-43.

So he gave him the money as 'Abdmalik had instructed.
 The chaste man took the money and left straightway.
 (Hajjaj) gave him a document for all the regions under his authority,
 ordering that none should hinder him building a monastery wherever
 he liked.
 The accursed man had cancer which could not be healed,
 but the upright man healed him through the power of the Creator,
 by the laying on of his hand.
 So the upright man left Hajjaj, bearing the silver;
 and all this he divided among the prisoners of taxes in torment.
 The accursed man heard that he had distributed his wealth on
 prisoners,
 so he sent for him and ordered his servant to cut off his head.
 The man lifted up the sword to kill the upright man, but his hand
 withered,
 and full of repentance he besought him to heal his arm.
 Through the Creator's power did the upright man heal both Hajjaj
 and his servant,
 and (Hajjaj) signed the document concerning the building in his
 presence, and he went out.
 So the blessed man left that tyrant's presence unharmed,
 accompanied neither by the silver or his document. (*Sic!*).

That Hajjaj eventually died of cancer (of the stomach) is recorded quite independently by Arabic sources (see references in *Encyclopedia of Islam*², III, p. 42). Could John of Dailam in fact have been 'the Dailamite, the physician of Hajjaj,' after whom a bridge on the R. Tab (modern Marun) near Arragan was named, according to Istakhri⁶²? It would be a remarkable coincidence if there had been two Dailamites both associated with healing Hajjaj and with building activities in the Arragan region in Fars.

C continues (f.115ab) by relating that John healed some more sick people in Basrah, and that he and Giwargis were joined by another solitary named K'NY (vocalized *Kinay*). The three of them set sail in a boat for Hendu⁶³ in order to find Mam. When they reach a place called

(62) M.J. De Goeje, *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum* I (Leiden, 1870), p. 152, quoted by A. Stein, *Old Routes of Western Iran* (London, 1940), pp. 86-7.

(63) See note 58.

MHYRWBN (vocalized *Mhīrōban*)⁶⁴ the boat stops and John learns that the adjacent mountain is called Mam, and that the demon Babi⁶⁵ lived there, worshipped by the people of Fars, and called by the Magians 'chief of the gods (*rab allahe*)'.

John and his companions go ashore to Arragan⁶⁶, where they enter the church. The local priest, Mihrshabur, thinking that they are beggars, does not go out to receive them, and so they sit there till midday without anyone paying any attention to them. "We will have to perform a miracle", says John; and so they went out into the street and find the son of a notable from BDYNG'N⁶⁷ who is possessed. John gives him some money to go and buy bread, cheese and vegetables, and this (evidently) heals him⁶⁸. All this has the desired effect: Mihrshabur comes out, apologizes for his former neglect, and takes them to his home; he also shows them the shrine of Babi, and the village of Mam and Pashkar, which John recognizes from his vision.

John now buys land for the monastery of the Persians, paying for it 40 pieces of silver. He then begins the building operations, even though he has only 60 pieces left. (f.116a) He was 87 when he began building and breaking stones,

resembling in strength Joshua son of Nun and the aged Caleb who both had the same strength in old age that they had had in youth (cp Josh. 14:10-11).

(64) Mahrubān (Māhīrūbān) on the coast, SW of Arragan; cp Schwarz, *Iran...*, pp. 124-5.

(65) Related to the frequently occurring personal name Babai; no deity of this name, however, seems to be known.

(66) H Regan (R'GN), Mingana syr. 543 'R'GN, C Argan; i.e. Arragan, on which see *Enc. Islam*² I, p. 659. The form in C will represent Arghan, which, according to Mustafwi, was the one in popular use (see G. Le Strange, *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate* (Cambridge, 1905), p. 269). See also Fiey, *Communautés*, ch. II, p. 194-6. Isho'dnaḥ already records (116) that John 'planted a monastery in the mountains of Fars, in the region of the town Argan'. The site of the ruins is about 5 miles from modern Behbehan, on the river Marun (see Sketch map II in A. Stein, *Old Routes*, opposite p. 76); cp Schwarz, *Iran...*, pp. 112-8.

(67) Not identified; possible candidates are Bādergān (Schwarz, *Iran...*, pp. 195-7) or Bidan (in Sus, *ibid.*, 367).

(68) This would seem to correspond to the miracle in H 15.

John built the monastery for the Persians with two sanctuaries (*haykle*), one for the community (*knušya*), the other dedicated to Mart Maryam, for whom he had a special devotion. Funds for the building were provided by PRSGY', a Christian whom Ḥajjaj had put in authority over the whole of Fars⁶⁹.

John now writes to Shem'on 'head of the bishops'⁷⁰ to come and consecrate the monastery he had built in his diocese. Shem'on, however, writes back a fierce letter, threatening to tear down the monastery and chase John from his diocese. John then turns to another bishop, Mar Sargis, who came from Beh Shapur (BHRŠBWR)⁷¹, and consecrated it.

C's account goes on to say that Shem'on of Fars had an only daughter⁷² who was troubled by a demon, and that she was sent by her father for healing to John. When John effected this, Shem'on wrote him a letter — and at this point there appears to be a lacuna in C, for it continues with quite a different episode: John owes a workman 12 *zuze* in wages, but is unable to pay it; a mouse, however, obligingly comes to the rescue and lays the money before John just when the workman was threatening him. Henceforth the workers get on with the building without worrying about their pay. John also heals many of the local sick and possessed.

(69) The only known governor of Fars under Ḥajjaj was Ḥakam b. Nahik al-Hujaymi (see P. Crone, *Slaves on Horses: the Evolution of the Islamic Polity* (Cambridge, 1980), Appendix III, p. 131), but he need not have been the only one in Ḥajjaj's time; that Christians still held such high posts at this time is specifically mentioned in the Anonymous Chronicle *ad annum* 1234 [ed. Chabot, I, p. 294 (text) = 229 (translation)], and the names of some who were put to death by him are given. Alternatively PRSGY' may have held some other high office, presumably financial (P.C.).

(70) I.e. Metropolitan of Fars, with his see at Rev Ardashir. No names of the metropolitans of Fars for this period are known, and so this name may be added to the lists in Le Quien, *Oriens Christianus* (Paris, 1740) II, col. 1253. and Fiey, *Communautés*, ch. II, p. 189.

(71) Beh Shapur was a bishopric under the metropolitan of Fars: clearly John had no scruples about correct etiquette in such matters! No names of the holders of this see at this time are known, so Sargis too is a new name for the list (Le Quien, *Oriens Christianus* II, cols 1255-6; Fiey, *Communautés*, ch. II, pp. 199-200). Cp also Schwarz, *Iran...*, pp. 119-20.

(72) I.e. he was married, in accordance with the synod of 497 [Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 63 (text) = p. 312 (translation)].

After a year the festival of Babi comes round in the middle of TYRMH⁷³, and large crowds come to it. This provides John with an opportunity to try to convert the people, and he speaks to them with K'NY acting as interpreter. A dialogue ensues: "It is Satan you are worshipping". "No, it is not, but the great god of Fars." "Have you seen what he looks like?" "No, only his deeds: he does everything that we ask him to do in our vows; we name children after him, and he looks after them." "If he shows his face, so that you can see that he is not a god, will you believe in my God?" The people then agree to the bargain, whereupon John shouts out to the demon, telling him to show his true appearance. When he is seen as an ugly monkey, the people realize he is just a demon. John then bids him show his full ugliness, and he changes into a negro⁷⁴, immensely tall, with one foot on mount Mam and the other on mount Pashkar. On being ordered by John to disappear for ever, the demon dutifully obeys. The people are then baptized and John changes the festival in the middle of the month Tir to that of Mar Sargis. The lady owner of the property in which the temple, sacred garden and fig tree, were situated, donated the land to John, and he built on it a church dedicated to Mar Sargis.

34-35. C offers nothing corresponding to these episodes. *qumkaya* (Mingana syr.543 *qnk'ny*) is evidently a byeform of *qunkaya*: it is not recorded in Payne Smith's *Thesaurus Syriacus* or Brockelmann's *Lexicon*.

(73) I.e. Tir mah, 'the month Tir' (the *teth*, rather than *tau*, is perhaps surprising). Tir (Armenian Tre) was the fourth month of the Zoroastrian calendar whose new year fell in early June in the late seventh century; i.e. Tir would have approximated to October (Teshri 1). The festival of the god Tir (the Tiragan) fell on the 13th (the day in each month named after Tir): cp E. Sachau, *Al Biruni, The Chronology of Ancient Nations* (London, 1879), pp. 205-6. As emerges below, John diverts attention from this old pagan festival in the middle of Tir by introducing to the new converts the feast of St Sergius. Now, although St Sergius and St Bacchus were normally commemorated on the Fourth Friday of the Resurrection in the Church of the East (see Fiey, 'Le sanctoral syrien oriental d'après les evangéliaires et breviaires du xi au xii siècle'. *L'Orient Syrien* 8 (1963), p. 40), there is some evidence for another commemoration also being held in October (Fiey, p. 40; 7th October is the date in the West Syrian calendar); it thus looks as if John cunningly introduced a rival celebration perhaps a little earlier in the same month!

(74) *zngy'*, not otherwise attested in Syriac; I take it to represent Arabic *zanji*. A connection with *zng*, a bye-form of *znq*, 'throw, cast' (see T. Audo, *Dictionnaire de la langue chaldéenne* (Mosul, 1897), I, pp. 281-2) seems less likely.

36-37. Corresponding to these sections C provides the following, rather different, account of the re-siting of the monastery (f.117a-b). Alongside the monastery of the Persians was a palm grove of 400 trees, with a spring; above it was a high mountain which deprived the garden of the sun, a cause of complaint to John from the monks. The next night the trees, the garden and the spring, were all miraculously transported lower down to level ground which got the sun all day long. For good measure the new site was provided with two extra springs. Three cells were left on the former site, and their ruins served as a testimony to the miracle.

For an analogous miracle concerning a monastery and its water supply, compare the Life of John of Nhel 13-15 (*Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 9 (1978)), where, however, a river is brought (underground) to the monastery. Both accounts will be embellished memories of a need to resite monasteries whose original position had been selected by a holy man who had overlooked the practical requirements of day to day community living.

39-40. C says nothing of the intriguing dispute over which language to use in the liturgy, leading to the building of the second monastery, of the Suryaye (here = Syriac speakers)⁷⁵. Instead, in C (f.117b) John asks to be shown the site for the third monastery of which he had been told in his earlier vision. An angel comes and takes him 'in mind' across the river to Pashkar and pointed out the site for him. The monastery for the Suryaye was to be more spacious than that of the Persians (contrast the egalitarian H!), and was to be made as beautiful as possible.

John sends some monks to the local *dihqans*⁷⁶ who owned the land,

(75) Fiey, *Communautés*, ch. II, pp. 194-5, assumes the *suryaye* were Greek-speaking deportees: since they came from the Amid and Martyropolis regions it is much more likely that they were Syriac speakers, and this is explicitly stated in H (Fiey's source for this was evidently Mingana syr. 543, which, as we have seen, was probably a translation from Syriac). The ambiguity *suryaye* = 'Syriac-speaker', but also 'Syrian Orthodox' no doubt assisted in the transfer of the life of John of Dailam from East to West Syrian tradition.

(76) Small landed proprietors, lower down the social scale than the *sharigan*; cp Budge, *Book of Governors*, II, pp. 256-7 note; Morony, 'Effects' (n. 50), pp. 45-6.

bought up the whole of the Pashkar area, and got written confirmation of the sale, with *mobeds* and local dignitaries acting as witnesses.

The building commences in princely fashion — to the astonishment of the monks who (f.118a) are rebuked by John for their lack of faith. Two of them are sent by John to ‘the great sea’, and they bring back 70,000 pieces of silver from Serendib⁷⁷ (Ceylon). The monastery of the Suryaye is then built, also with two sanctuaries, one for the community, and the other dedicated to Mart Maryam. A hostel (*putaqa*) for wayfarers is also built, and this was run by the monks.

John then asked God what would happen to the monastery after his death:

He showed the upright man two walls of encircling fire,
the two mountains on which the two monasteries were built;
inside the surrounding wall the saint beheld
the Shekhina⁷⁸ of the Lord, like a cloud overshadowing them.
(f.118b) “Thus shall I care for your monasteries”, said God to our
father,
With all kinds of provision and honour for all eternity.”

41. According to the concluding summary in C (f.119a), the angel of death appeared to John three times offering to remove him from this world, but John replies that he cannot come until he has finished building a church dedicated to Mart Maryam⁷⁹. This he does, but no further details are given.

43-4. C gives no details of his death and burial. For ‘the angel of

(77) The manuscript has SRYDB, an easy corruption. Evidently some mercantile speculation was involved! For maritime trade to Ceylon at a slightly earlier period see D. Whitehouse and A. Williamson, ‘Sasanian Maritime Trade’, *Iran* 11 (1973), 43-5 (P.C.). For the economic flair of another early eighth-century monastic builder, see my summary of the life of Simeon of the Olives, *Ostkirchliche Studien* 28 (1979), pp. 174-9.

(78) The term is not infrequently found in East Syrian liturgical texts; for a curious context see my ‘Some aspects of Greek words in Syriac’, *Abh.Ak.Wiss. Göttingen* 96 (1975), pp. 106-8.

(79) The title *yaldat allaha* in H is of course confined to the West Syrian texts.

care' in H, compare Solomon of Basra, *Book of the Bee*, ch. V (ed. Budge, p. 14 (text) = p. 10 (translation)): 'With each and every one of us is an angel of this group (i.e. 'angels' within the nine-fold angelic hierarchy based on Ps. Dionysius), call 'the angel of care (*da-bṭiluta*), who directs man from his conception until the general resurrection.'

Earlier in C (f.118b), after describing God's promise to John (see 39-40), the author of this account refers the reader to a fuller account of John's miracles to be found "in the book of the history of his story, from which we have only indicated a few things, for the purposes of this *memra*, for the day of his commemoration."⁸⁰ C then states that the two monasteries were for monks (solitaries) and the great church of St Sergius (Sargis) for 'the daughters of the covenant' (here evidently synonymous with nuns).

H implies that John was buried in the monastery of the Suryaye; this is in fact stated explicitly already in Isho'dnah 116: "(John) died and was buried in the monastery of the Suryaye."

45. C provides a chronological note immediately before the episode of the angel of death (quoted under 41). Here (f.118b-119a) we are told that John spent 35 years in his monasteries, and that he died in AG 1049, at the age of 122, on the Sunday of "Come, let us wonder..", i.e. the Third Sunday after Epiphany, AD 738.⁸¹ This Sunday fell on 26th January in 738.

(80) See introduction.

(81) For 'Come, let us wonder..' as belonging to the Third Sunday after Epiphany, see the explicit statement in Barhebraeus, *Chron. Eccl.* (ed. Abbeloos and Lamy) II, cols 369-70; cp *Breviarium. Chaldaeorum* I, p. 137. This was the Sunday when John was formerly commemorated in the East Syrian calendar (see Fiey, 'Le sanctoral..', p. 44). The date 26th January can be worked out with the help of the tables in V. Grumel, *La chronologie* (Paris, 1958), pp. 274 and 312. According to J-M. Sauget, *Premières recherches sur l'origine et les caractéristiques des synaxaires melkites* (Subs. Hag. 45, 1969), p. 302 note 6, the life in Paris ar. 281 (f.86b) gives his death as occurring on 10th Tishri I, a Friday: as Sauget notes, this also points to 738. Since Paris ar. 281 (along with Borgia ar. 219) calls John a 'martyr'. It is no doubt preferable to accept the East Syrian evidence of C as the more reliable (for 10th October see also note 84).

Chronological summaries, such as we find at the end of H, are quite common in hagiographical texts of the Islamic period⁸².

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(82) E.g. life of Mar Yoḥannan Tayyaya (John the Arab), summarized in my 'Notes on some monasteries on Mt Izla', *Abr Nahrain* 19 (1980/1), pp. 6-11., and life of Gabriel of Qartmin, ed. P.Y. Dolabani, *Maktabzabne d-'umro qaddišo d-Qartmin* (Mardin, 1959), pp. 119-20.

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 Joshua son of Nun 31 33*
 K'NY 31-33*
 Maday 10*
 Mam (mountain) 31 32 25*
 Maranzkha 4* 8-9*
 Mary 41 42
 Mihrshabur 31-33*
 MHYRWBN (town) 31-33*
 Nuryād 24*
 Pāleh Lābād 25*
 Pashkar (mountain) 25* 31-33* 39-40*
 Paul (apostle) 1
 Plato 27-30*
 PRSGY' 31-33*
 Regan (= Arragan) Title 31
 Salakh 6
 Sarah 2*
 Sargis (bishop) 31-33*
 Serendib 39-40*
 Sergius (St) 25* 33
 Shem'on the Beardless (Sanotā) 2* 3* 4* 6* 8-9*
 Shem'on (head bishop) 31-33*
 ŠHRW (town) 21*
 SNT' (= Sannātā 'Beardless') 3 4 7 45
 SWDY'N (town) 15*
 T̄ir (month) 31-33*

APPENDIX I.
CHRONOLOGICAL DATA

Our various sources provide a wealth of different chronological indications which it will be convenient to collect in tabular form⁸³ before attempting any discussion of the often conflicting data.

	H	C	other
- John born during patriarchate of George	—	—	Thomas II.2
- became monk aged	13 (45)	12+(110a)	
- time at Beth'Abē	30 (45)	40+(110a)	
- goes to mountain with Shem'on, aged	—	50+(110a)	
- lived as solitary with Shem'on	20 (6)	5 (110a)	
	23 (45)		
- Dailamite raids in time of 'Alī	(10)		
- among the Dailamites	33 (24,45)	15 (114a)	
- age on leaving Dailamites	—	85 (114a)	
- visit to 'Abd al-Malik in Damascus	(27)	(114a)	
- visit to patriarch Ḥnanisho'	—	(114a)	
- visits Ḥajjaj	(31)	(115a)	
- begins building in Fars aged	—	87 (116a)	
- Shem'on 'chief bishop' in Fars	—	(116a)	
- Sargis bishop of Beh Shabur	—	(116a)	
- lived in monastery in Fars	—	35 (118b)	
- date of death (Jan.) AG 1049	—	(118b)	
- age at death	99 (45)	112 (119a)	

(83) Unbracketed figures refer to years, bracketed ones give the references in the various sources.

The data concerning the later years of his life and his death are inherently more likely to be accurate than any information given concerning his earlier years; accordingly it will be best to work backwards, from his death.

The year of John's death is reasonably likely to have been known in the monastery which he founded (from which C originates), and so the date may be accepted as correct. The day (third Sunday after Epiphany) corresponds with the day on which he was commemorated in the East Syrian calendar⁸⁴.

The wildly conflicting figures given in H and C for his age at death will be no more than guesses: at a time before the introduction of birth certificates a person's age at death would rarely be known exactly. The two figures both conflict with Thomas of Marga's statement that George was patriarch when John was born: H's figure for his age would give his birth in AD 638/9 and C's in 615/6(!), whereas George probably became patriarch in 659⁸⁵. Thomas' synchronism is the sort of information that might have been correctly transmitted orally from an early period, and so

(84) See note 81. In West Syrian calendars he was commemorated on 27 April according to various calendars published by Nau (*P.O.* 10, pp. 76, 95), but on 31 March according to the martyrology of Rabban Sliba (ed. Peeters, *Anal. Boll.* 27 (1908), pp. 150, 178). John even attained inclusion in some Melkite and Maronite calendars on 10 October: Sauget, *Premières recherches*, pp. 301-2 (on p. 302 n.5 Sauget promises an edition of the verse life in Borgia syr. 39); cp also note 81. An October date is also found in the Ethiopian synaxary (19th Teqemt = 16 October); translated by E.A.W. Budge, *The Book of the Saints of the Ethiopian Church* (Cambridge, 1928), I, pp. 168-70. The fairly extended narrative in the Ethiopian synaxary is clearly related somehow to C, since John's parents are called Abraham and Sarah; the following episodes are mentioned: birth and early years (H 2, C f.109b); he goes to B.'Abe aged 14 (cp H 3, C f.110a; Eth. adds a new episode: John is helped by some Arabs to cross a river on the way there); he is a disciple of Shem'on, who prophesies the fate of his three disciples (cp H 6 [8-9], C.f.110a-b); he is captured by the Dailamites (H 10, C f.109a; Eth. adds that he was fettered between two beautiful women); the miracle of the provision of water (H 11, C f.110b-111a); the punishment of his master (H 12-14, C f.111a-b); he cuts down sacred trees and makes conversions (H 16, 18, C f.112b); the ordeal by fire (H 20, C f.112a; Eth. here has H's sequence); the changing of water into blood (H 21, C f.112b-113a); he builds a church and died 'in the country of Der'eyan'.

(85) This is the date given by Fiey for Isho'yahb III's death: see his 'Isho'yaw le grand', *O.C.P.* 36 (1970), p. 7; the precise date cannot be ascertained with certainty, but it was certainly before 'Ali's death.

could, provisionally at least, be accepted; in this case John's birth will have fallen between 659 and 680/1. This would make nonsense of H's mention that John's capture during Dailamite raids took place in the time of 'Ali (died 661), but this is a piece of information which in any case cannot be reconciled even with H's own internal chronology⁸⁶. Perhaps, if the name of 'Ali was genuinely connected with some event in John's life, this was really his birth: that this fell early in George's patriarchate is in fact implied by Thomas's narrative, for Shem'on and the monks of Beth 'Abe visited the house of John's parents on their way to greet (i.e. congratulate?) George.

The data surrounding the journey west, to Damascus, and then on to Fars by way of Baṣrah, is more satisfactory, and there is no conflict between the various synchronisms provided. This journey is said to have taken place in the time of:

'Abd al-Malik' i.e. between 685 and 705
 Ḥnanisho' i.e. between 685/6 and 692/3 or 695 and 701
 Ḥajjaj i.e. between 694 and 714.

Although it is possible that John might have visited Ḥajjaj while the latter was in Iraq (691) but before he was made governor there (694), the implication of the narratives in both H and C is that Ḥajjaj was already governor. This means that the synchronisms point to a date for the visit between 695 and 701, i.e. after the death of the usurping patriarch John of Dasen (died AH 76/ AD 695⁸⁷; he had had Ḥnanisho' deposed in AH 74 /AD 693). The only problem with this is the statement by Elias of Nisibis that on John's death Ḥajjaj gave orders that no new leader for the church should be appointed; Barhebraeus, however, specifically states⁸⁸ that Ḥnanisho' took office again, and so Elias' statement perhaps refers to the situation at Ḥnanisho' 's death in 701. In any case, even if

(86) This would have made John into a teen-age monk c.652/3; his capture would have been 23 years later (i.e. 685/6) at the minimum (it is not clear how the 23 years in the mountain and the 30 years at Beth 'Abe are meant to be related to each other).

(87) Elias of Nisibis (ed. Brooks) I, pp. 55, 153.

(88) *Chron. Eccl.* II, col. 139.

Ḥnanisho' 's second term of office was not officially recognized by Ḥajjaj, it would have been by members of the Church of the East.

Although the figures in C for John's age on going to Damascus (85) and on arrival in Fars (87) are not likely to be correct (see above), the related figure of 35 years spent in Fars could well be a genuine memory which then served as a basis for the age 87 (i.e. $122-35 = 87$); if we suppose that the figure 85 was similarly reached thanks to a recollection that his visit to Damascus took place two years earlier, then we could use these figures for narrowing down the date of the visit to Damascus: it will have fallen 37 years before his death, i.e. $738-37 = 701$, in other words, very shortly before the death of the patriarch Ḥnanisho'; this means that John must have gone on to Iraq at once, and perhaps stayed there for a period. The visit to Ḥajjaj will have taken place shortly before the latter built Waṣit as his new residence.

Unfortunately the mention of Shem'on 'head of the bishops' (of Fars) and of Sargis bishop of Beh Shabur, which could have shed further light on this issue, proves to be of no assistance, since no names of bishops of these sees are known for the early eighth century.

In conclusion then we can say that John was probably born (early?) in the patriarchate of George (659-680/1); became a monk at an early age at the famous monastery of Beth 'Abe, subsequently to become a solitary. He was captured during a Dailamite raid in the Salakh area, and after being freed he spent many years preaching in Dailam. About 701 he travelled to Damascus and then on to Baṣrah and Fars, arriving there c.703. In Fars he made various monastic foundations in the region of Arragan (where his memory may also have been connected with a bridge over the R. Tab/Marun)⁸⁹. He died, perhaps in his late seventies, on Sunday 26th January 738⁹⁰.

(89) See commentary to 31.

(90) See commentary to 45.

APPENDIX II.**EXTRACTS FROM CAMBRIDGE ADD. 2020**

I give here the Syriac texts of extracts from C which were quoted verbatim in the course of the commentary. In the right hand margin will be found the folio numbers and, in brackets, the corresponding section in H: the translations will thus be easily located in the commentary to that section. I have tacitly corrected a few minor and obvious errors.

