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SOME CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE DATING  
OF FĪ TATLĪT ALLĀH AL-WĀḤID (Sinai Ar. 154)  
AND AL-ĠĀMI<sup>c</sup> WUĠŪH AL-ĪMĀN  
(London, British Library or. 4950)

PAR  
Mark N. SWANSON

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Students of the earliest Christian theological production in the Arabic language need little introduction to the two texts under consideration here, which received considerable attention at the last two International Congresses of Arabic Christian Studies at Oosterhesselen (1984) and Louvain-la-Neuve (1988)<sup>1</sup>. At the earlier congress, Fr. Samir Khalil SAMIR and Fr. Sid-

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1) Abbreviations used:

ATIYA, *Hand-list* (1955) = Aziz Suryal ATIYA, *The Arabic Manuscripts of Mount Sinai: A Hand-list of the Arabic Manuscripts and Scrolls Microfilmed at the Library of the Monastery of St. Catherine, Mount Sinai*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1955.

GRIFFITH, "Stephen" (1985) = Sidney H. Griffith, "Stephen of Ramlah and the Christian Kerygma in Arabic in Ninth-Century Palestine", in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 36 (1985) 23-45.

GRIFFITH, "Summa" (1986) = Sidney H. GRIFFITH, "A Ninth Century Summa Theologiae Arabica", in Khalil SAMIR (ed.), *Actes du Deuxième Congrès International d'Études Arabes Chrétiennes* (1984) (OCA 226), Rome, PISO, 1986, pp.123-41.

GRIFFITH, "Free Will" (1990) = Sidney H. GRIFFITH, "Free Will in Christian Kalām: Chapter XVIII of the Summa Theologiae Arabica", in Regine Schulz and Manfred Görg (eds.), *Lingua restitua orientalis: Festgabe für Julius Assfalg* (Ägypten und altes Testament, 20), Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 1990, pp.129-34.

GRUMEL, *Chronologie* (1958) = V. GRUMEL, *Traité d'études byzantines. I: La chronologie* (Bibliothèque Byzantine), Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1958.

HOLMBERG, *Treatise* (1989) = Bo HOLMBERG, *A Treatise on the Unity and Trinity of God by Israel of Kashkar (d. 872): Introduction, edition and word index* (Lund Studies in African and Asian Religions, 3), Lund, Plus Ultra, 1989.

LAKE, *Manuscripts* (1934-45) = Kirsopp LAKE and Silva LAKE, *Dated Greek Minuscule Manuscripts to the Year 1200*, I-X and Indices (Monumenta Palaeographica Vetera, First Series), Boston, The American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1934-45.

LECLERCQ, "Ère" (1923) = H. LECLERCQ, "Ère", *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* V,2, Paris, Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1923, cols. 351-53.

NASRALLAH, *Histoire* (1988) = Joseph NASRALLAH, *Histoire du mouvement littéraire dans l'église melchite du V<sup>e</sup> au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, II.2, 750-Xe S., Louvain, Peeters and Paris, by the author, 1988.

PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, *Bibliothēkē* (1891-1915) = Ath. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, *Ierosolomitikē bibliothēkē*, I-V, St. Petersburg, B. Kirschbaum, 1891-19.

PLATTI, "Deuxième Adam" (1988) = Emilio PLATTI, "Le Christ, deuxième Adam, dans le *Kitāb al-burhān* attribué à Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī" in *Mélanges Antoine Guillaumont: Contributions à l'étude des christianismes orientaux* (Cahiers d'Orientalisme, 20), Geneva, Patrick Cramer Éditeur, 1988, pp. 262-70.

SAMIR, "Date" (1985) = Khalil SAMIR, "Date de composition de la «Somme des aspects de la foi»", OCP 51 (1985) 352-87.

SAMIR, "Somme" (1986) = Khalil SAMIR, "La «Somme des aspects de la foi», œuvre d'Abū Qurrah?" in Khalil SAMIR (ed.), *Actes du Deuxième Congrès International d'Études Arabes Chrétiennes* (1984) (OCA 226), Rome, PISO, 1986, pp.93-121.

SAMIR, "Ère" (1987) = Khalil SAMIR, "L'ère de l'Incarnation dans les manuscrits arabes melkites du 11<sup>e</sup> au 14<sup>e</sup> siècle", OCP 53 (1987) 193-201.

ney H. GRIFFITH both presented major papers<sup>2</sup> on the theological compendium entitled *al-ġāmiʿ wuġūh al-imān* ("The Compilation of the Aspects of the Faith"), preserved in a parchment manuscript written by STEPHEN of Ramlah, a monk of the monastery of St. Chariton, in the year A.D. 877<sup>3</sup>, and now preserved in the British Library as Oriental MS 4950. Both presentations examined the question of the authorship of the work: did THEODORE ABŪ QURRAH write it, as has frequently been suggested, or not? As for the date, SAMIR interpreted a date discovered in the text as meaning that the work was written in A.D. 825<sup>4</sup>, while, on the basis of another date given in the text, GRIFFITH commended the hypothesis that the work was composed or compiled sometime after A.D. 870<sup>5</sup>.

Four years later at Louvain-la-Neuve, Fr. SAMIR presented the apology for the Christian faith which was entitled *Fī taṭlīṭ Allāh al-wāḥid* ("On the Triune Nature of GOD") by its first editor, Margaret Dunlop GIBSON<sup>6</sup>. This apology is preserved in a unique parchment manuscript written by the monk MŪSĀ of Mt. Sinai, where the manuscript is still preserved as Arabic MS 154<sup>7</sup>. The manuscript is evidently (on paleographic grounds) very ancient, and both Mrs. GIBSON and Aziz Suryal ATIYA assigned it an eighth- or ninth-century date<sup>8</sup>. Unfortunately, the end of the manuscript, where we might have expected to find the date of MŪSĀ's completion of his work, is

SAMIR, "Littérature" (1990) = Khalil SAMIR, "La littérature melkite sous les premiers abbassides", OCP 56 (1990) 469-86.

SAMIR, "Apologie" (1990-91) = Khalil SAMIR, "Une apologie arabe du christianisme d'époque umayyade?", *ParOr* 16 (1990-91) 85-106.

VASILIEV, 'Unvān (1910-15) = Alexandre A. VASILIEV (ed. and trans.), *Kitāb al-Unvān: Histoire universelle, écrite par Agapius (Mahboub) de Menbidj*, in *Patrologia Orientalis* 5 (1910) 559-692; 7 (1911) 457-591; 8 (1912) 397-550; 11 (1915) 5-144, Paris, Firman-Didot et Cie, 1910-15.

2) The published versions are SAMIR, "Somme" (1986) and GRIFFITH, "Summa" (1986).

3) For other manuscripts, see SAMIR, "Somme" (1986) 353-55 and "Littérature" (1990) 483, and add the two leaves preserved as Birmingham, Mingana chr. ar. 170 (Palestine/Sinai, 9th c.).

4) SAMIR, "Somme" (1986) 118-120.

5) GRIFFITH, "Summa" (1986), pp. 131-32.

6) Her edition is found in Margaret Dunlop GIBSON, *An Arabic Version of the Acts of the Apostles and the Seven Catholic Epistles, from an Eighth or Ninth Century MS in the Convent of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai, with a Treatise 'On the Triune Nature of God'* (Studia Sinaitica 7), London, C.J. Clay and Sons, 1899. SAMIR has prepared a new edition for publication.

7) A colophon of Mūsā is preserved on f.97r.

8) See the title of the work listed in note 6 above, and also ATIYA, *Hand-list* (1955) 6.

missing. But if the date of the *manuscript* is not known with any precision, at Louvain-la-Neuve SAMIR announced the discovery of a date in the text of “On the Triune Nature of GOD”. While this date requires some interpretation, SAMIR initially suggested that it may correspond to A.D. 738, that is, from the *Umayyad* period. In the published version of his paper, however, SAMIR gives an alternative calculation yielding the date A.D. 771, that is, from the early Abbasid period<sup>9</sup>.

The present paper is an attempt to review the evidence for the dating of these two very important Arabic Christian texts. I shall first reproduce the passages from *Fī taṭlīṭ Allāh al-wāḥid* and *al-ġāmi<sup>c</sup> wuġūh al-imān* which contain dates. Then I shall summarize the questions that require solution before the dates can be properly interpreted, and shall mention some of the solutions that have been published. After a review of evidence, I shall propose my own solutions to these questions, and convert the dates found in the texts accordingly.

#### A. THE DATES FOUND IN THE TEXTS

The following texts have all been published previously, but they are reproduced here for the sake of convenience.

##### 1. The Date Found in *Fī taṭlīṭ Allāh al-wāḥid*

It was Fr. SAMIR who discovered the passage containing the date, on a page of Sinai ar. 154 that Margaret Dunlop GIBSON had been unable to read<sup>10</sup>. Speaking of Christianity, the author writes:

ولو لم يكن هذا الدين حقاً<sup>11</sup> من الله،  
لم يثبت ولم يقم<sup>12</sup>  
منذ سبع مائة سنة وست وأربعين سنة.  
والأمم يقاتلونهم،  
لا يستطيعون أن يُطْلوا ديناً أقامه الله وصنعه.

9) SAMIR, “Apologie” (1990-91) 91.

10) Folio 110<sup>v</sup>, lines 12-14. See SAMIR, “Apologie” (1990-91) 89-90.

11) MS: حق

12) MS: يقوم

“If this religion were not truly from GOD,  
it would not have been established (*lam yaṭbut*)  
and would not have stood (*lam yaqum*)  
for seven hundred years and forty-six years,  
even though the nations battled them,  
they were not able to abolish (*yubtilū*) a religion  
which GOD had raised up (*aqāmahū*) and fashioned”.

Thus the text was written 746 years after the “establishment” or “raising up” of Christianity. SAMIR has pointed out, and we should note, that this is no round number, but a very precise date<sup>13</sup>.

## 2. The Dates Found in *al-Ġāmi<sup>c</sup> wuġūh al-imān*

There are two dates found in the text of *al-Ġāmi<sup>c</sup>*, which, unfortunately, do not appear to be in agreement.

### a) *The date in Chapter 21*

The first date (pointed out by Joshua BLAU in an article of 1962)<sup>14</sup> is found in Chapter 21, which deals with the prophecies of the return of the Jews to their land<sup>15</sup>. In the course of it, the author comments on the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem<sup>16</sup>:

وخرّب البيت،  
واستقرّ على خرابه منذ ثمان مائة سنة وأكثر.

“The House was laid ruin,  
and it has remained in ruins for eight hundred years and more”.

Since the Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70, this text indicates a date after A.D. 870.

13) *Ibid.*, p.90.

14) Joshua BLAU, “Über einige christlich-arabische Manuskripte aus dem 9. und 10. Jahrhundert”, *Le Muséon* 75 (1962) 102.

15) For the title of the chapter and the passage containing the date, see SAMIR, “Date” (1985) 365-67. Only fragments of *al-Ġāmi<sup>c</sup>* have been published, but Griffith is preparing an edition for publication in the CSCO.

16) London, BL or. 4950, f.154<sup>r</sup>, lines 17-18.

b) *The date in Chapter 22*

The second date (which was pointed out by SAMIR in the mid-80's) is found in Chapter 22, which deals with the acceptance of the Gentiles, along with the believing Jews, as GOD's people<sup>17</sup>. In an interesting passage, the author stresses that the religion of God, the religion which GOD intends for his worshippers, is *one*: first, the religion which GOD inspired in ADAM; then, the religion of the children of Israel; and finally, Christianity. And he comments<sup>18</sup>:

فتحقيق النصرانية، أنها دين الله،  
إبطال اليهودية منذ ثمان مائة سنة وخمسة وعشرين<sup>19</sup> سنة،  
وإبطال ما يدعى اليهود من العودة إلى ما كانوا فيه.

“The verification (*tahqīq*) of Christianity,  
that it is the religion of God,  
is the abolition (*ibtāl*) of Judaism  
eight hundred years and twenty-five years ago,  
and the abolition of what the Jews claimed  
concerning the return to their previous condition”.

Thus, the text was written 825 years after the “abolition” of Judaism.

c) *How may the discrepancy be resolved?*

The two dates given above - 800 years “and more” since the destruction of the Temple, 825 years after the “abolition” of Judaism - do not appear to be in agreement. How may the discrepancy be resolved? Two possibilities may be mentioned:

(a) SAMIR has suggested that the more precise date (825 years after the abolition of Judaism) is the actual date of the composition of *al-Gāmi*<sup>c</sup>, and that the round number (800 years) and vague addition (“and more”) of the second date point to an attempt by a scribe to bring his copy of *al-Gāmi*<sup>c</sup> “up to date”. This alteration was very likely carried out by STEPHEN of

17) See SAMIR, “Date” (1985) 375-79 for the title of the chapter and for the passage under discussion.

18) London, BL or. 4950, f.156<sup>r</sup> lines 16-19.

19) MS: عشرون

Ramlah himself, who wrote the manuscript preserved as BL or. 4950 in A.D. 877, indeed 800 years “and more” since the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70<sup>20</sup>.

(b) GRIFFITH has emphasized the *composite* nature of the work<sup>21</sup>, an observation which might lead to the suggestion that Chapter 21 and Chapter 22 were written at different times. Thus Chapter 22 may have been written 825 years after the abolition of Judaism (which, on any calculation, works out to a date before A.D. 870), and then incorporated - without any alteration of the date - into *al-Ġāmiʿ* in the 870's.

The two possibilities suggest different understandings of the role of STEPHEN of Ramlah: was he merely “a simple copyist” (as SAMIR has asserted)<sup>22</sup>, or might he have been the compiler of *al-Ġāmiʿ* (as GRIFFITH has suggested)<sup>23</sup>? In either case, it is the date in Chapter 22 which demands interpretation, as the date of composition either of the work as a whole or of its oldest dated component part.

### 3. The Problem to be Solved

We are therefore left with two dates to interpret: in *Fi taṭlīṭ Allāh al-wāḥid*, 746 years after the “establishment” or “raising up” of Christianity; in *al-Ġāmiʿ wuġūh al-īmān*, 825 years after the “abolition” of Judaism. How are these dates to be interpreted?

## B. QUESTIONS IN INTERPRETING THE DATES

The conversion of the dates depends on one's answer to three questions:

First, can we consider the two dates together, or must they be dealt with separately? Does the “establishment” of Christianity (*Taṭlīṭ*) correspond to the “abolition” of Judaism (*al-Ġāmiʿ*)?

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20) SAMIR, “Date” (1985) 380-81.

21) For recent example, GRIFFITH, “Free Will” (1990) 129.

22) SAMIR, “Date” (1985) 376.

23) E.g., GRIFFITH, “Stephen” (1985) 43-44; “Summa” (1986) 135; and recently “Free Will” (1990) 129.



Second, to what event or events in salvation history do the “establishment” of Christianity and/or the “abolition” of Judaism refer?

Third, exactly when would the Palestinian Melkite authors of these texts have considered this event or these events to have taken place?

Each question will be taken up in turn below.

### 1. A Single Turning-Point in Salvation History?

As for the first question, whether the establishment (*iṭbāt*) of Christianity (according to *Fī taṭlīṭ Allāh al-wāḥid*) corresponds to the abolition (*ibtāl*) of Judaism (according to *al-Ġāmiʿ wuḡūh al-īmān*), SAMIR has answered with a clear “Yes”<sup>24</sup>:

On peut donc affirmer, sans l’ombre d’un doute, que notre apologie [*Fī taṭlīṭ Allāh al-wāḥid*] est antérieure de 79 ans au *Ġāmiʿ Wuḡūh al-īmān* daté de l’année 825 suivant le même système de datation (746+79=825), c’est-à-dire après l’abolition du judaïsme par le christianisme. Ceci nous donne une chronologie relative.

I find this convincing. The two passages in question display clear parallels in vocabulary: the “verification” (*taḥqīq*) of Christianity as “the religion of GOD” (*dīn Allāh*) in *al-Ġāmiʿ* corresponds precisely to the “establishment” (*iṭbāt*) of “this religion” (*hādā l-dīn* as “truly from GOD” (*Ḥaqqaṅ min Allāh*) in *Taṭlīṭ*. Furthermore, as Samir has pointed out, the two passages even have the same curious method of counting the years: 800 years and 25 years in *al-Ġāmiʿ*, 700 years and 46 years in *Taṭlīṭ*<sup>25</sup>.

Conceptually speaking, for the author of the passage in *al-Ġāmiʿ* the “abolition” (*ibtāl*) of Judaism is simply the *negative* aspect of the one turning-point in salvation history described *positively* as the “verification” or “establishment” of Christianity as “truly” the religion of GOD. As he had already insisted, “the religion of GOD is one”<sup>26</sup>. To his way of thinking, the “establishment” of Christianity logically entailed the end of Judaism’s status as a God-willed means of worship.

24) SAMIR, “Apologie” (1990-91) 91.

25) SAMIR, “Apologie” (1990-91) 91.

26) دین الله واحد - London, BL or. 4950, f.156<sup>r</sup>, line 5. Again, the entire passage is reproduced in SAMIR, “Date” (1990-91) 377-79.

Let us, therefore, proceed with the assumption that any elucidation we can find of *al-Ġāmiʿ*'s "abolition of Judaism" may be applied to *Taḥlīṭ*'s "establishment of Christianity," and vice versa.

## 2. What is the Turning-Point?

The next question is: what event or events in salvation history would our eighth- and ninth-century Melkite authors have held to mark the "establishment" of Christianity and the "abolition" of Judaism?

The two obvious candidates are: (a) the Incarnation (whether calculated to the annunciation or to the nativity), and (b) the crucifixion (and/or resurrection and/or outpouring of the Spirit). In his most recent publications, SAMIR has presented both possibilities without making a firm decision between them<sup>27</sup>. Earlier, SAMIR had tended towards regarding the Incarnation as the turning-point<sup>28</sup>.

Can a decision be made? Commenting on the "abolition of Judaism" in the date from *al-Ġāmiʿ*, Joseph NASRALLAH stated that "après la tradition patristique, la fin de l'Ancienne Alliance est marquée par la déchirure du voile du Temple à la mort du CHRIST sur la Croix"<sup>29</sup>. This reference to "patristic tradition" is rather vague, and my consultation of some of the standard handbooks on the history of Christian anti-Jewish polemics<sup>30</sup> did not lead me to particular patristic texts. However, I have become convinced that NASRALLAH is correct with regard to early arabophone Melkite authors, who did indeed make the connection between the "abolition of Judaism" and the rending of the Temple veil at the time of the crucifixion of CHRIST (Matthew 27:51). In support of this, I would draw attention to three texts.

27) SAMIR, "Littérature" (1990) 483; "Apologie" (1990-91) 91.

28) See SAMIR Ḥalīl, "Kitāb «Ġāmiʿ wuĠūh al-īmān» wa-muġādalat Abī Qurrah ʿan ṣalb al-Masīḥ", *al-Masarrāh* 70 (1984) 412; idem, "Ṭiyūdūrus Abū Qurrah", *Maġallat al-Maġmaʿ al-ʿIlmī al-ʿArabī, al-Qism al-Suryānī* 7 (1984) 141; Samir, "Date" (1985) 380; idem, "Somme" (1986) 118, 121.

29) NASRALLAH, *Histoire* (1988) 142.

30) E.g., A. Lukyn WILLIAMS, *Adversus Judaeos: A Bird's-Eye View of Christian Apologiae until the Renaissance*, Cambridge, University Press, 1935; or Heinz SCHRECKENBERG, *Die christlichen Adversus-Judaeos-Texte und ihr literarisches und historisches Umfeld (1.-11. Jh.)*, Frankfurt a.M., Peter Lang, 1982.

a) *The Arabic version of the Anaphora Pilati*

In the Arabic version of the Greek *Anaphora Pilati*, which was made in Palestinian Melkite circles and for which we possess a tenth-century witness in Sinai ar. 508, the events surrounding the crucifixion of CHRIST, including the rending of the Temple veil, are brought into close connection with “the destruction (*halāk*, ἀπώλεια) of the nation of the Jews and their Law”. The passage in Sinai ar. 508, as published by GIBSON, describes these events as follows<sup>31</sup>:

فلما صُلب، صارت ظلمة على الدنيا كلها؛  
 أظلمت الشمس نصف النهار،  
 الكواكب لم تُظهر شعاعاً،  
 القمر انكسف،  
 وصار نوره مثل الدم.  
 وكذلك ستر هيكل اليهود انشق،  
 من شدّة الزلزلة تشققت الصخور.  
 وظهروا في ذلك الفرع الموتى، واموا،  
 ما شهدوا (*sic*) اليهود،  
 أنهم نظروا إلى إبراهيم وإسحق ويعقوب الآباء،  
 وموسى وأيوب،  
 الذين<sup>32</sup> ماتوا، كما قالوا أولئك<sup>33</sup>،  
 من ألفين سنة وخمسمائة سنة.  
 وأنا أيضاً رأينا كثيرين ظهوروا في الأجساد،  
 وناحوا نوحاً<sup>34</sup> كثير (*sic*) لِمَا صُنِعَ بيسوع من الفعل الفظيع<sup>35</sup>،  
 وهلاك أمة اليهود وناموسهم...

31) I have simply re-edited the passage as published in Margaret Dunlop GIBSON (ed. and trans.), *Apocrypha Sinaitica* (Studia Sinaitica 5), London, C.J. Clay and Sons, 1896, p.5 (Arabic), lines 7-15. For an idea of the underlying Greek text, see Constantinus TISCHENDORF, *Evangelia apocrypha*, Leipzig, Avenarius et Mendelssohn, 1853, pp.417-18, 423; or *Evangelia apocrypha*, editio altera, Leipzig, Hermann Mendelssohn, 1876, pp.439-40, 446-47. The oldest manuscript used by Tischendorf dated to the twelfth century.

32) Ed.: الذي

33) Ed.: هورليك

34) Ed.: نوح

35) Ed.: القطيع

“When he was crucified, darkness came over the entire world:  
 the sun was darkened half the day,  
 the stars did not show forth rays,  
 the moon was eclipsed,  
 and its light became as blood.

Likewise, *the veil of the Temple of the Jews was rent*,  
 and the stones were split from the violence of the earthquake.  
 And in the midst of that dismay the dead appeared and arose,  
 as the Jews bore witness:  
 that they had looked upon Abraham and Isaac and Jacob the patriarchs,  
 and Moses and Job,  
 who had died, as those said, 2,500 years previously.  
 And we also saw many who appeared in [their] bodies,  
 and made great lamentation  
 over the abominable deed that had been done to Jesus,  
 and over *the destruction of the nation of the Jews*  
*and of their Law*”.

b) *Peter of Bayt Ra's: al-Burhān*

In Book I of the ninth-century Arabic compilation entitled *al-Burhān* by PETER, Melkite bishop of Bayt Ra's (Capitolias)<sup>36</sup>, we find a description of the “mighty signs” that accompanied CHRIST’S crucifixion and which testify to the power of his divinity. Among these signs is the following<sup>37</sup>:

إن ستر الهيكل انشقّ باثنين  
 من فوق إلى أسفل،  
 مؤذناً بذهاب عهد بني إسرائيل  
 وانقطاع ما بينهم وبين الله من الميثاق.

“The veil of the Temple was rent in two,  
 from top to bottom,  
 announcing the passing (*dihāb*) of the covenant (*‘ahd*)  
 of the children of Israel  
 and the breaking off (*inqiṭā<sup>c</sup>*) of the compact (*mīṭaq*)  
 between them and GOD”.

36) Edition and English translation: Pierre CACHIA (ed.) and W. Montgomery WATT (trans.), *Eutychius of Alexandria: The Book of the Demonstration (Kitāb al-Burhān, I-II* (CSCO 192-193, 209-210/ar. 20-23), Louvain, Secrétariat du Corpus SCO, 1960-61. For the attribution to Peter of Bayt Ra's, see NASRALLAH, *Histoire* (1988), pp.31-34 and SAMIR, “Littérature” (1990) 483-85.

37) Reproduced from CACHIA (see previous note), vol.I, p.180 (paragraph #341).

In Book II of the same compilation we find a similar passage in the course of a discussion of how the Old Testament stories of JOSHUA provide types of CHRIST'S crucifixion<sup>38</sup>:

وشقّ [المسيح] ستر هيكلمهم [أي، اليهود] وسطاً  
 آذناً بذهاب كل ما<sup>39</sup> أعطوا<sup>40</sup> قبل ذلك،  
 ودمارهم على يدي طيطس ملك الروم الصنميّ.

“[CHRIST] rent the veil of [the Jews'] Temple in the middle,  
 announcing the passing (*ḡahāb*)  
 of all they had been given before that,  
 and their destruction at the hands of TITUS,  
 the pagan Roman emperor”.

These texts are extremely explicit: the rending of the Temple veil is an “announcement” (*āḡāna*) of the “passing” (*ḡahāb*) of the “covenant” (*ʿahd*) of the children of Israel and of all that they had been given, and of the “breaking off” (*inqiṭāʿ*) of their “compact” (*mīṭāq*) with GOD. When we consider the similarity in provenance and date of *al-Burhān* and *al-Ġāmiʿ wuḡūh al-īmān*, this is strong evidence that the author of Chapter 22 of *al-Ġāmiʿ* would have dated the “abolition” of Judaism to the crucifixion of CHRIST.

*c) A Melkite text in the Kitāb al-burhān attributed to Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī*

In 1974 Emilio PLATTI described a collection of thirty-three treatises attributed to the celebrated Jacobite philosopher and theologian YAḤYĀ B. ʿADĪ<sup>41</sup>, found in two manuscripts of the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate: Cairo, Copt. Patr. Theol. 184 (GRAF 641, SIMAIKA 400) (A.D. 1783) and a copy of a copy<sup>42</sup> made from it, Cairo, Copt. Patr. Theol. 183 (GRAF 642, SIMAIKA 526) (A.D. 1875). In the case of (at least) two of the treatises, the attribution

38) Reproduced and reedited from CACHIA (see previous notes), vol.II, p.56 (paragraph #488). MS in the notes refers to Sinai ar. 75 (9th-10th c.), the oldest manuscript and that reproduced in CACHIA's edition.

39) MS: كلما

40) MS: أعطوا

41) Emilio PLATTI, “Deux manuscrits théologiques de YAḤYĀ B. ʿADĪ”, *Mélanges d'Institut Dominicain d'Études Orientales du Caire* 12 (1974) 217-29.

42) This according to the *stemma* of manuscripts established in HOLMBERG, *Treatise* (1989) 107-19.

to YAḤYA is incorrect. Bo HOLMBERG has shown that one of them, the *Ri-sālah fī taṭbīṭ waḥdāniyyat al-Bāri' wa-taṭlīṭ ḥawāṣṣihi* (“Treatise on Establishing the Unity of the CREATOR and the TRINITY of His Characteristics”), is a *Nestorian* work probably to be attributed to ISRAEL, bishop of Kashkar (d. 872)<sup>43</sup>. The other treatise for which the attribution to YAḤYA is questionable, entitled *Kitāb al-burhān*, is a Jacobite compilation from which Emilio PLATTI has published the fifth and sixth discourses<sup>44</sup>.

The sixth discourse of the *Kitāb al-burhān*, a presentation of CHRIST as the second ADAM, appears to me to be a *Melkite* work that has been rather clumsily edited to suit it for inclusion in the compilation. The most glaring evidence for this hypothesis is the text’s closing reference to “the seven holy ecumenical councils” (*al-maġāmiʿ al-muqaddasah al-sabʿah al-maskūniyyah*)<sup>45</sup> at which the Fathers “determined the religion of Orthodoxy” (*rattabū dīm al-Urṭuḍuksiyyah*)<sup>46</sup>. But in addition to this, the christology of the text as it stands is a bit odd, and is best explained as that of a typical neo-Chalcedonian treatise<sup>47</sup> that has been appropriated by a henophysite editor who simply replaced all explicit references to “two natures” (and perhaps also “two wills” and “two activities”, etc.) with references to CHRIST’S “one nature” (and “one will”, “one activity”, etc.)<sup>48</sup>.

This Arabic Melkite text is probably not as old as the Arabic *Anaphora Pilati* or the *Burhān* of PETER of Bayt Ra's. As GRIFFITH has pointed out<sup>49</sup>, the seventh ecumenical council (Nicaea II, A.D. 787) was virtually unknown in the patriarchates within the *Dār al-Islām* before the revival of Byzantine power and extension of Byzantine ecclesiastical influence in the tenth century. I am inclined to think that the text was probably not written

43) HOLMBERG, *Treatise* (1989) 17-106.

44) Fifth discourse: Emilio PLATTI, “Une cosmologie chrétienne”, *Mélanges d'Institut Dominicain d'Études Orientales du Caire* 15 (1982) 75-118. Sixth discourse: PLATTI, “Deuxième Adam” (1988) 263-70.

45) PLATTI, “Deuxième Adam” (1988) 270, lines 11-12, with the reading of the older manuscript retrieved from the notes.

46) PLATTI “Deuxième Adam” (1988) 270, line 12.

47) This character of the treatise comes out, for example, in its insistence that Christ’s one hypostasis is the hypostasis of *the Logos* (PLATTI, “Deuxième Adam” (1988) 269, last line).

48) See PLATTI, “Deuxième Adam” (1988), p.269, line 8; p.270, lines 9-10.

49) E.g. in Sidney H. GRIFFITH, “Eutychius of Alexandria on the Emperor Theophilus and Iconoclasm in Byzantium: A Tenth Century Moment in Christian Apologetics in Arabic”, *Byzantion* 52 (1982) 154-90.

much *later* than the tenth century, but this is little more than a guess from its inclusion in a collection of treatises by YAḤYĀ B. ʿADI (d. 974) and one *older* Nestorian text attributed to him. In terms of hard evidence, all we have as a *terminus ad quem* for the composition of the text is the date of the oldest manuscript known to contain it: St. ANTHONY's Monastery, Theol. 130 (completed before the end of A.D. 1570)<sup>50</sup>.

Whatever the age of the text, it is interesting for our present purposes because we find in it another statement clearly linking the crucifixion of CHRIST, the rending of the Temple veil, and the abolition of Judaism:

في تسع ساعات<sup>51</sup> انشقَّ ستر حجاب الهيكل،  
 ليُعلم أنه عهد بني إسرائيل قد تمزَّق.  
 وفي تسع ساعات<sup>52</sup> بطل ملك اليهود ونبوتهم وكهنوتهم،  
 ولم يَقم فيهم إلى الآن ملك ولا كاهن ولا نبي،  
 ولا يقوم إلى الأبد.

“On the ninth hour the curtain of the veil of the Temple was rent,  
 to announce that the compact with the children of Israel  
 had been torn up (*tamazzaqa*).  
 And on the ninth hour the kingship of the Jews,  
 and their prophecy, and their priesthood,  
 were nullified (*batala*),  
 and until now there has not risen among them any king,  
 or priest, or prophet,  
 and none will ever arise”.

According to this text, the “nullification” of Jewish political, cultic, and prophetic prerogatives can be timed to the hour: the ninth hour of the day of CHRIST's crucifixion.

The conclusion to be drawn from these Arabic Melkite texts is clear: the “abolition” of Judaism - and with it the “establishment” of Christianity - took place with the death of CHRIST, and was “announced” by the rending of the Temple veil.

50) HOLMBERG, *Treatise* (1989) 107-8.

51) Sic.

52) Sic.

### 3. In Which Chronological System is the Turning-Point Dated?<sup>53</sup>

We have now arrived at the third question: for the Melkite authors of *Taṭlīṭ* and *al-Ġāmiṭ*, when did CHRIST'S crucifixion take place? Which chronological system or systems did they use, and what are the conversions that will allow us to calculate *anno Domini* dates of composition?

#### a) Samir's proposal: The Melkite "Era of the Incarnation"

One serious proposal is that of SAMIR, who has demonstrated by means of an inductive study of colophons that a large number of Arabic Melkite manuscripts from the eleventh through the fourteenth centuries are dated according to a Melkite "Era of the Incarnation" which begins on September 1, 9 BC<sup>54</sup>. In recent publications, SAMIR has suggested that this chronological system may already have been current among Melkites in the eighth and ninth centuries<sup>55</sup>. Then there are two possibilities for converting the dates, corresponding to the two possibilities for interpreting the "abolition of Judaism" and "establishment of Christianity" given above<sup>56</sup>:

(a) If these refer to the *Incarnation*, then the figures given in *Taṭlīṭ* and *al-Ġāmiṭ* may be considered dates in the Melkite era of the Incarnation: AInc 746 and AInc 825, which convert to A.D. 737-738 and A.D. 816-817 respectively.

(b) If, on the other hand, the "abolition of Judaism" and "establishment of Christianity" refer to the *crucifixion*, then one should add 33 to the above figures, yielding A.D. 770-771 and A.D. 849-850.

The hypothesis that the dates of *Taṭlīṭ* and *al-Ġāmiṭ* should be converted using the Melkite Era of the Incarnation is an attractive one, but before making decisions we need to consider the alternatives.

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53) The following section is a revision of the Appendix to Chapter One of my dissertation: Mark N. SWANSON, "Folly to the *Hunafā'*: The Cross of Christ in Arabic Christian-Muslim Controversy in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries A.D.", yet unpublished doctoral dissertation, Rome, PISAI, 1992, pp. 119-35.

54) SAMIR, "Ère" (1987). Note the rule for converting "Era of the Incarnation" dates ("AInc") to A.D.: for January through August, subtract 8; from September through December, subtract 9.

55) SAMIR, "Littérature" (1990) 483; "Apologie" (1990-91) 91.

56) See previous note.



*b) The alternatives*

First, we need to list the systems that may have provided our arabophone Melkite authors with their chronological frameworks. The main “candidates” are the following:

**(a) The Alexandrian World Eras<sup>57</sup>**

There are two Alexandrian chronological reckonings of which we must take account, both of which go back to the work of Egyptian monks of the fifth century: the “major” Alexandrian era of Panodoros, and the “minor” or “ecclesiastical” Alexandrian era of Annianos.

(I) The era of Panodoros dates events from the creation of the world on August 29 (or September 1) 5493 BC<sup>58</sup>. According to his calculations, the birth of CHRIST took place in  $AM^{\text{alex,pan}} 5494 = A.D. 2$ , and his crucifixion in  $AM^{\text{alex,pan}} 5526 = A.D. 34$ .

(II) The era of ANNIANOS takes its starting point nearly seven months later: from the creation of the world on March 25, 5492 BC<sup>59</sup>. According to ANNIANOS’ reckoning, the annunciation occurred exactly 5500 years later, i.e., on March 25,  $AM^{\text{alex,ann}} 5501 = A.D. 9$ , and the resurrection took place exactly 33 years later still, on March 25,  $AM^{\text{alex,ann}} 5534 = A.D. 42$ . The crucifixion of Christ is therefore very precisely dated to *March 23*,  $AM^{\text{alex}} 5534 = A.D. 42$ . It should be noted from the outset that ANNIANOS’ chronology enjoyed great ecclesiastical prestige because of its linkage of creation, Incarnation, and resurrection. St. MAXIMUS Confessor (ca.580-662) considered it (with slight modifications) to be the “traditional chronology of the Church”<sup>60</sup>.

Because dates in the two Alexandrian world eras coincide for five months out of twelve (specifically, for the period March 25 - August 28 or 31), it is not always possible to discern which of the two systems a particu-

57) See GRUMEL, *Chronologie* (1958), pp.85-97; LECLERCQ, “Ère,”(1923).

58) And thus the rule for converting dates in Panodoros’ world era (“ $AM^{\text{alex,pan}}$ ”) to A.D. dates is: from January through August 28 (or 31), subtract 5492; from August 29 (or September 1) to December 31, subtract 5493.

59) And thus the rule for converting dates in Annianos’ world era (“ $AM^{\text{alex,ann}}$ ”) to A.D. dates is: from January through March 24, subtract 5491; from March 25 to December 31, subtract 5492.

60) LECLERCQ, “Ère” (1923), col. 353.

lar writer is using. In my presentation of the evidence below, I will specify which of the two Alexandrian world eras is being used whenever it is possible to do so.

### (b) The Byzantine World Era<sup>61</sup>

In this system, the first day of creation, and therefore the beginning of the year AM<sup>byz</sup> 1, falls on September 1, 5509 BC. While there are no hard and fast rules concerning how the events in CHRIST's life are to be dated in this system, Psellos, Kedrenos, and Nikephoros Kallistos were agreed in assigning the death of CHRIST to *March 23, AM<sup>byz</sup> 5539 = A.D. 31*<sup>62</sup>.

### (c) (More on) the Melkite Era of the Incarnation

It may now be noted that the Melkite Era of the Incarnation combines features of the previously mentioned eras. In essence, it "imports" the traditional and "mystical" figure of 5500 years<sup>63</sup> between creation and Incarnation from the ecclesiastically prestigious Alexandrian world era of Annianos into the scientifically more "up-to-date" Byzantine world era. The result is perfect correspondence between AInc and AM<sup>byz</sup> dates, which are convertible by the simple addition or subtraction of 5500. However, this convenience is obtained at the cost of a certain awkwardness, since September 1, the day upon which this era of the *Incarnation* begins, corresponds neither to the annunciation nor to the nativity.

Once again, in this system the death of CHRIST would probably be dated to AInc 33, or possibly 34 (33 years + 9 months' gestation), yielding A.D. 25 or A.D. 26.

### c) The evidence<sup>64</sup>

In order to sort out the use of these various systems of dating by Melkite writers working within the *Dār al-Islām* I have surveyed a variety of evi-

61) See GRUMEL, *Chronologie* (1958) 111-28.

62) GRUMEL, *Chronologie* (1958) 122-23. Below we shall see confirmation of this calculation by Maḥbūb b. Qusṭanṭīn.

63) On the attraction of this number, see GRUMEL, *Chronologie* (1958), especially p. 3.

64) Throughout the following section I am dependent upon the chronological tables provided in GRUMEL, *Chronologie* (1958).

dence, including the colophons of Arabic Melkite manuscripts up to the year A.D. 1150, as well as some colophons of Georgian and Greek manuscripts written in Melkite circles.

**(a) Witnesses for the use of the Alexandrian world era**

(I) late 8th c.: the work of GEORGE SYNKELLOS (d. after 810), author of the *Ecloga Chronographica*. What is significant for our question is the fact that GEORGE lived a considerable time in Palestine, and may even have been a monk at the monastery of St. CHARITON. Recent studies have suggested that, as Huxley puts it, “the greater part of his research may have been done in Orthodox monasteries in Palestine before he came to live in Constantinople”<sup>65</sup> sometime in the 780’s<sup>66</sup>. Therefore George may to a certain extent be considered a witness to Melkite historical scholarship in late eighth-century Palestine.

Turning to the chronological framework of George’s work, we find that he uses *the Alexandrian world era of Annianos*.

(II) ca. A.D. 800: STEPHEN MANŞÜR<sup>67</sup>, *The Account of the Twenty Martyrs of the Monastery of St. Sabas*<sup>68</sup>. STEPHEN dates the martyrdom of his fellow monks to March 20, AM 6288 κατὰ τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆν ἀκριβεστάτην ψηφοφόριαν (“according to the most precise ecclesiastical calculation”), or the year 788 of the Incarnation, in the fifth indiction<sup>69</sup>. Not only do we find 5500 years between creation and Incarnation (as in the Alexandrian world era of ANNIANOS, but *not* in that of Panodoros or in the Byzantine world era), but the indictional date is correct only if the other dates are given according to the Alexandrian reckoning of ANNIANOS. Furthermore, we are informed that it was this reckoning which STEPHEN consi-

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65) G.L. HUXLEY, *On the Erudition of George the Synkellos* (Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, Section C, 81, C, 6), Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 1981, pp. 216. See also the remarks of Cyril MANGO, “Who Wrote the Chronicle of Theophanes?” *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta* (Belgrade) 18 (1978) 17.

66) George was *synkellos* to the Patriarch Tarasios (784-806).

67) On Stephen, see Robert P. BLAKE, “Deux lacunes comblées dans la Passio XX Sabaitarum”, *Analecta Bollandiana* 68 (1950) 39-42; NASRALLAH, *Histoire* (1988) 156-57.

68) Edition: Ath. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, “The Martyrdom of the Holy Fathers Who Were Killed by the Barbarians (that is, the Saracens) in the Great Laura of Our Blessed Father Sabas” (in Greek), *Pravoslavnyj Palestinskij Sbornik* 57 (1907) 1-41.

69) PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS (see previous note), p. 2.

dered to be “the most precise ecclesiastical calculation”. The dates convert to March 20, A.D. 797.

(III) between A.D. 807 and 821: LEONTIUS of Damascus<sup>70</sup>, *The Life of St. Stephen of the Monastery of St. Sabas*<sup>71</sup>. According to Leontius, STEPHEN died on “Monday morning after New Sunday [= νέα κυριακή, the Sunday after Easter], and was buried on Tuesday, April 2, i.e. Nisān, 6286 in the years of the age”<sup>72</sup>. Converting this date according to either Alexandrian world era yields A.D. 794, when Easter fell on March 23. Therefore, the Tuesday after New Sunday fell on April 1. The one day discrepancy between the chronological tables and LEONTIUS’ statement is not significant, since the closest years on which Easter fell on March 24 (which would give exact correspondence) were A.D. 737 and A.D. 821, neither of which can conceivably correspond to a world era date of 6286.

(IV) A.D. 873 (?): Sinai ar. NF perg. 16. In his catalogue of the newly discovered Arabic manuscripts at Mt. Sinai, Meïmarēs provides both a photograph and a transcription of the colophon of the manuscript now known as Sinai ar. NF perg. 16<sup>73</sup>. According to this colophon, which is damaged, the manuscript was completed on Tuesday, November 3 (Feast of St. GEORGE), 6368 “of the years of the age”, or 8[ ]9 “of the years of the Byzantines (*al-Rūm*),” or Tuesday, 8 Muḥarram...”. Unfortunately, the dates provided do not appear to be in agreement. Perhaps the best attempt to harmonize them lies in the observation that November 3, A.D. 873 = 8 Muḥarram, AH 260, and that this was indeed a Tuesday. If this is correct, however, it would imply a world era calculated from 5495 BC - two or three years earlier than the starting points of the Alexandrian world eras we have been considering, although still thirteen years later than the starting point of the Byzantine world era. I do not know how to explain the date given in the “years of the Byzantines”. Its second digit is missing, and its third probably in need of correction.

70) NASRALLAH, *Histoire* (1988) 158-59.

71) Edition of the Arabic version and Italian translation: Bartolomeo PIRONE (ed. and trans.), *Leonzio di Damasco: Vita di Santo Stefano Sabaita (725-794)* (Studia Orientalia Christiana Monographiae 4), Cairo, Franciscan Centre for Christian Oriental Studies, 1991.

72) PIRONE (see previous note) 388-89.

73) Iōannēs Emm. MEIMARĒS, *Katalogos tōn Neōn Arabikōn Cheierographōn tēs Hieras Monēs Hagias Aikaterinēs tou orous Sina* (in Greek and Arabic), Athens, Ethnikon Hidryma Ereunōn, 1985, pp.24-25 (Arabic), and Photograph 19, p.82.

The most important result for our purposes is that the colophon of Sinai ar. NF perg. 16 does not provide any evidence for knowledge of either the Byzantine world era or its associated Melkite Era of the Incarnation. While presenting difficulties, the world era date given therein can be emended to a correct Alexandrian world era date by the correction of a single digit, since (for example) Tuesday, November 3, AM<sup>alex,ann</sup> 6365=A.D. 873, and falls on 8 Muḥarram.

(v) A.D. 877 and 897: the colophons of STEPHEN of Ramlah, scribe of the monastery of St. Chariton<sup>74</sup>.

a. In the manuscript London, BL or. 4950, f. 197<sup>v</sup>, STEPHEN gives the date of completion of his copy of *al-Ġāmiʿ wuġūh al-īmān* as December 1, 6369 “in the reckoning of the years of the world according to what is accepted in the Church of the Resurrection [in] Jerusalem”, or 1188 “of the years of Alexander”, or Rabīʿ I, 264 “in the years of the Arabs”<sup>75</sup>. There is a problem here. Rabīʿ I, AH 264 corresponds to the period from November 11-December 10, A.D. 877, while according to the normal “Macedonian” reckoning (from October 1, 312 BC) of the Seleucid era, the year 1188 corresponds to October A.D. 876 - September A.D. 877. The Alexandrian world era date agrees with either the *hiġrī* date or the Seleucid date - but not both! - depending on whether it is calculated according to Annianos (December 1, AM<sup>alex,ann</sup> 6369 =A.D. 877) or Panodoros (December 1, AM<sup>alex,pan</sup> 6369 =A.D. 876). My own experience suggests that *hiġrī* dates in colophons are more reliable than Seleucid ones, and it is in any case possible that Stephen’s Seleucid era date follows the “Chaldean” reckoning (from April 1, 311 BC). Thus my first inclination would be to consider the world era of BL or. 4950 as that of *Annianos*.

b. In Sinai ar. 72, f. 118<sup>f</sup>, Stephen gives the date of completion of the manuscript as March 1, 6389 in the “reckoning of the years of the world according to that which the Church of Jerusalem (the Glorious Resurrection)

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74) On Stephen, see GRIFFITH, “Stephen” (1985).

75) The colophon has been frequently transcribed and discussed. A good photograph is provided in Agnes Smith LEWIS and Margaret Dunlop GIBSON, *Forty-One Facsimiles of Dated Christian Manuscripts with Text and English Translation* (Studia Sinaitica 2), Cambridge, University Press, 1907, Plate II. For recent discussions, see GRIFFITH, “Stephen” (1985), esp. pp. 38-39 and SAMIR, “Date” (1985) 357-63.

accepts,” or Muḥarram AH 284<sup>76</sup>. Now, Muḥarram AH 284 corresponds to February 8 -March 9, A.D. 897, which seems to require - barring errors - that AM 6389 be reckoned in the Alexandrian world era of *Panodoros*.

And so we end up asking: *which* reckoning of the world era was accepted at the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem in the last quarter of the ninth century? While it is perfectly clear that this reckoning was *Alexandrian*, it is not easy to say more since STEPHEN appears to have made at least one mistake. I see three possible answers here:

a. Stephen used the world era of ANNIANOS, and made a mistake in the *hiġrī* date given in Sinai ar. 72 and possibly also the Seleucid era date given in BL or. 4950. This is a plausible answer to our question, given the evidence for the use of the era of ANNIANOS that we have already reviewed, as well as the observation that a world era in which each year begins on the *date* of the resurrection (March 25) would surely have had an appeal at the *place* of the resurrection.

b. STEPHEN used the world era of PANODOROS, and made a mistake in the *hiġrī* date given in BL or. 4950.

c. Another possibility is that the years of the Alexandrian and SELEUCID eras as accepted at the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem began on *January 1*. This idea has two points to commend it. First, it absolves STEPHEN of any errors in dating. The conversions AM<sup>alex</sup> - A.D. and Seleucid era - A.D. become straightforward matters of subtracting and adding 5492 and 311 respectively, and we readily conclude that BL or. 4950 was written on 1 December, A.D. 877, and Sinai ar. 72 on 1 March, A.D. 897. Second, STEPHEN’s emphasis on the point that he is using the world era which “is accepted in the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem” seems to indicate an awareness that different world era reckonings will be known to his readers, and that he must therefore specify the particular - might we say peculiar? - reckoning being used at a prestigious ecclesiastical center.

A question that presents itself here is: if indeed Stephen is using a modified Alexandrian world era, when would he have considered the cruci-

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76) Transcription and photograph in Aziz Suryal ATIYA, *Catalogue Raisonné of the Mount Sinai Arabic Manuscripts: Complete Analytical Listing of the Arabic Collection Preserved in the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai*, I (translated into Arabic by Joseph N. YOUSSEF), Alexandria, al-Maaref Est., 1970, p. 143.

fixion to have taken place? Adding speculation to speculation, I would guess that such a modified ecclesiastical chronology would in all likelihood have preserved the traditional numbers 5500 (years from the creation to the Incarnation) and 33 (age of CHRIST when he was crucified), placing CHRIST's crucifixion in A.D. 42 (as in the world era of Annianos) or a year earlier.

(VI) A.D. 878: St. Petersburg, Public Library 206<sup>77</sup>. This manuscript was written by Theodore, deacon of the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem, at the order of NOAH, the *proedros* of Tiberias, in AM 6370, 11th indiction. The indicational date is correct only if the world era is Alexandrian.

(VII) A.D. 979: Sinai georg. 38. This was written by JOHN ZOSIME at Mount Sinai, and is dated "a principio anni erant graece 6471 et chronicon erat 87; et iberice a principio anni erant 6583 et chronicon erat 199"<sup>78</sup>. The Georgian dates yield A.D. 979, implying that the Greek world era and paschal cycle dates are Alexandrian: for at least part of the year, 6471 in the era of either PANODOROS or ANNIANOS = year 87 of the 13<sup>th</sup> paschal cycle = A.D. 979.

### (b) Witnesses for the use of the Byzantine World Era

(I) after A.D. 942: MAḤBŪB B. QUSṬANTĪN, *Kitāb al-tārīḥ*<sup>79</sup>. In his chronicon, MAḤBŪB, Melkite bishop of Manbiḡ, gives a series of dates for the birth of Christ: December 25, 46 in the caesarian era of Antioch = 1<sup>st</sup> indiction = 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the 194<sup>th</sup> olympiad = 309 in the years of the Greeks = AM 5506<sup>80</sup>. Correcting the olympiad date to the 1<sup>st</sup> year, and taking the final date as that in the *Byzantine* world era, all these dates convert to December

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77) On the dating of this manuscript, see Franz RUHL, "Die Datierung des Uspenskischen Psalters", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 4 (1895) 588-89; and Nikos A. BEĒS, "Un manuscrit des Météores de l'an 861/2 (avec une étude sur les manuscrits grecs datés de IXe siècle)", *Revue des Études Grecques* 26 (1913) 71-72.

78) Gérard GARITTE, *Catalogue des manuscrits géorgiens littéraires du Mont Sinai* (CSCO 165/subs. 9), Louvain, Imprimerie Orientaliste L. Durbecq, 1956, p. 151.

79) See GCAL II, pp. 39-41; NASRALLAH, *Histoire* (1988), pp. 50-52; Michel BREYDY, "Richtstellungen über Agapius von Manbiḡ und sein historisches Werk", *Oriens Christianus* 73 (1989) 90-96; SAMIR, "Littérature" (1990) 471.

80) Text in VASILIEV, *Unvān* (1910-15), XI, p. 131.

25, 4 BC. As for the crucifixion, MAḤBŪB dates it to March 23, 342 in the Seleucid reckoning = AM<sup>byz</sup> 5539 = A.D. 31<sup>81</sup>.

(II) A.D. 962: Patmos 136. According to POPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS' reconstruction of the damaged colophon of this manuscript, it was written by HILARION of the Monastery of Kalamon in the Jordan Valley for abbot PAUL of St. Sabas. The date is 18 April AM 6470, 5<sup>th</sup> indiction<sup>82</sup>. These figures are consistent given a Byzantine world era dating, and convert to A.D. 962.

(III) A.D. 1009: London, BL add. 39,598. This Greek manuscript was in the Monastery of St. Sabas, and was probably written in Palestine. The date is February AM 6517, 7<sup>th</sup> indiction<sup>83</sup>, figures which are consistent given a Byzantine world era dating and which convert to A.D. 1009.

(IV) A.D. 1050-1150. I have collected fourteen witnesses (nine Arabic and five Greek)<sup>84</sup> to clearly Byzantine world era dates, which may be listed briefly:

a. Sinai ar. 285, f. 334<sup>r</sup>: July AM 6561, 6<sup>th</sup> ind. (A.D. 1053)

b. Sinai ar. 144, f. 204<sup>r</sup>: September AM 6562, 7<sup>th</sup> ind. (A.D. 1053)

c. Sinai ar. 106, f. 194<sup>v</sup>: Thursday, March 15, AM 6564, 9<sup>th</sup> ind., AGr 1367 (A.D. 1056. There is a slight error: March 15 was a Friday)

d. London, BL add. 19,352 (Greek, written in Caesarea): February AM 6574, 4<sup>th</sup> ind. (A.D. 1066)

e. Paris gr. 1598 (written at St. Sabas): AM 6580, 10<sup>th</sup> ind. (A.D. 1071-72)

f. Jerusalem, Holy Sepulchre gr. 21 (written in Jerusalem): AM 6588, 3<sup>rd</sup> ind. (A.D. 1079-80)

81) VASILIEV, *Unvān* (1910-15), VII, p. 470

82) PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, *Bibliothēkē*, II, p. 716 (#18).

83) LAKE, *Manuscripts* (1934-45), IX, p. 8.

84) For the survey of Arabic manuscripts I found ATIYA, *Hand-list* (1955) to be especially helpful. For the Greek manuscripts, I used the catalogues mentioned in the previous two notes and also Heinrich HUSMANN, "Die datierten griechischen Sinai-Handschriften des 9. bis 16. Jahrhunderts, Herkunft und Schreiber", *Ostkirchliche Studien* 27 (1978) 143-68.



- g. Sinai ar. 481, f. 338<sup>r</sup>: 5 Baramhāt = March [14], AM 6599 = AH 48 [1?] (A.D. 1091, although the *hiġrī* date should then be 484)
- h. Sinai ar. 417, f. 318<sup>v</sup>: AM 6603 = AH 488 (A.D. 1095)
- i. Sinai gr. 742 (written at St. Sabas): January 25, AM 6607, 7<sup>th</sup> ind. (A.D. 1099)
- j. Sinai ar. 11, f. 136u<sup>r-v</sup>: April 25, AM 6624 = AH 509 (A.D. 1116)
- k. Jerusalem, Holy Cross gr. 43 (written in Jerusalem): Monday, February 27, AM 6630, 15<sup>th</sup> ind. (A.D. 1122)
- l. Sinai ar. 435, f. 142<sup>v</sup>: February 13, AM 6650, 5<sup>th</sup> ind. (A.D. 1142)
- m. Sinai ar. 346, f. 310<sup>r</sup>: October 20, AM 6658, 13<sup>th</sup> ind. (A.D. 1149)
- n. Sinai ar. 153, f. 225<sup>v</sup>: Monday, May 22, AM 6658 (A.D. 1150).

**(c) Witnesses for the use of the Melkite Era of the Incarnation**

(I) A.D. 1017: Sinai ar. NF paper 52. It was SAMIR who called attention to this witness, which is dated *Ḍū l-Qaḍah* AH 407 = AInc 1025, or April A.D. 1017<sup>85</sup>.

(II) ca. A.D. 1023: Sinai ar. 495. At f.81<sup>v</sup> the manuscript, which was written in Damascus, is dated to 1032 *min zuhūr hiġāb al-quḍrah* (“from the appearance of the veil of power”, that is, CHRIST as the revelation of the unseen God) = AH 413. There is a discrepancy of a single year here, but after correction of the first date to 1031 or the second date to 414 we may convert to A.D. 1023, plus or minus a year.

(III) A.D. 1173: Sinai ar. 553. At f.132<sup>r</sup> the scribe, IBRĀHĪM B. AL-QASS IŞĤĀQ B. AL-ĤŪRI YUĤANNĀ, provides a colophon with dates which, though damaged, can be reconstructed as follows: Saturday, [ ] September AM 6682 = AGr [14]85 = AInc 11[8]2 = AH 569. These all convert correctly to September A.D. 1173.

After this, we have the thirteenth-century Arabic and Syriac witnesses collected by SAMIR and HUSMANN respectively<sup>86</sup>.

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85) SAMIR, “Ēre” (1987) 194-95.

d) *Conclusions from the evidence*

We can summarize the above evidence as follows:

(a) Up to the year A.D. 900 it is exclusively *Alexandrian* world eras that we find used in the Melkite circles of Palestine and Mount Sinai. The evidence from around A.D. 800 points conclusively to the use of the Alexandrian world era of *Annianos*. Evidence from the latter part of the ninth century is less decisive, and seems to point to the presence of competing calculations, possibly including a modified Alexandrian ecclesiastical era counting the years from *January 1, 5508 BC*.

(b) The earliest example that I have found of the use of the *Byzantine* world era by an arabophone Melkite is in the *Kitāb al-tārīḥ* of MAḤBŪB B. QUṢṬANṬĪN (after A.D. 942). About a century later, the use of this world era becomes extremely common.

(c) The earliest known witness for the Melkite Era of the Incarnation is Sinai ar. NF paper 51 (A.D. 1017). In the eleventh and twelfth centuries there are scattered witnesses to the use of this era, which became very common in Melkite circles in the thirteenth century.

In all probability, then, the dates found in the eighth-century text *Fī taṭlīṭ Allāh al-wāḥid* and the ninth-century *al-Ġāmiṭ wuġūḥ al-īmān* are to be interpreted using the framework of an *Alexandrian* reckoning.

In the case of *Fī taṭlīṭ Allāh al-wāḥid*, this would probably have been the “most precise ecclesiastical calculation” of the Alexandrian world era of ANNIANOS, for which we have strong evidence at the beginning of the ninth century. According to this calculation, CHRIST was crucified on March 23, A.D. 42.

More caution is necessary in the case of Chapter 22 of *al-Ġāmiṭ wuġūḥ al-īmān*. I think that it is probable that the date found there is conceived either within the system of ANNIANOS or within a slightly modified system, which would date Christ’s crucifixion to A.D. 42 (or, in the case of the modified system, possibly a year earlier). However, it is not inconceivable that the system of PANODOROS is in the background of the passage. Then the death of CHRIST would be dated to A.D. 34.

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86) SAMIR, “Ère” (1987); Heinrich HUSMANN, “Die syrischen Handschriften des Sinai-Klosters, Herkunft und Schreiber”, *Ostkirchliche Studien* 24 (1975) 281-308.

### III. CONCLUSIONS

#### 1. Answers to Questions

I have suggested the following answers to the three questions posed earlier:

1. The two dates under consideration may be studied together. The “establishment of Christianity” in *Fī taṭlīṭ Allāh al-wāḥid* does correspond to the “abolition of Judaism” in Chapter 22 of *al-Ġāmiʿ wuḡūh al-īmān*.

2. This turning point in salvation history corresponds to the crucifixion of CHRIST. In particular, the “abolition of Judaism” is marked by the rending of the Temple veil (Matthew 27:51).

3. Authors from Melkite circles in Palestine and Sinai who wrote prior to the tenth century are almost certainly to have thought within the chronological framework provided by an Alexandrian world era, especially the “most precise ecclesiastical calculation” of the Alexandrian world era of ANNIANOS, in which the crucifixion is dated to March 23, A.D. 42. We have noted, however, the possibility that other Alexandrian world eras were in use late in the ninth century.

#### 2. Consequences

1. *Fī taṭlīṭ Allāh al-wāḥid* was probably written 746 years after the “establishment of Christianity” at the time of the crucifixion of CHRIST (to which may be added his resurrection and ascension, and the outpouring of the SPIRIT) in A.D. 42, or in A.D. 788.

2. Chapter 22 of *al-Ġāmiʿ wuḡūh al-īmān* was probably written 825 years after the “abolition of Judaism” with the crucifixion of CHRIST and the rending of the Temple veil in A.D. 42, or in A.D. 867 (or perhaps just a year earlier if the world era of ANNIANOS had undergone slight modification). Alternatively, but less probably, the crucifixion might have been reckoned to A.D. 34 as in the world era of PANODOROS, yielding A.D. 859 as the date of the chapter’s composition.

3. An additional consequence might be mentioned. We possess two dated manuscripts written at Jerusalem by DAVID of Ashkelon: Sinai ar. 73 [+ Paris ar. 6725 (#3)], dated Kānūn I, AM 6410; and Sinai ar. 309, dated Aḏār, AM 6417. Given the results of the present inquiry, it probable that these are *Alexandrian* world era dates, and should be converted to December, A.D. 918 (or 917) and March, A.D. 926 (or 925) respectively.

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