

APOSTASY FROM ISLAM: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE*

David Cook
Rice University

1. Introduction

Apostasy from Islam is a subject that has attracted some attention from the scholarly community during the recent past. However, for the most part this attention has been confined to the legal literature and has not involved a thorough survey of the historical records to see how apostates have been treated in practice and whether the uncompromising laws concerning them have been implemented or, in certain cases, ignored. The object of this paper will be to survey some of the sources until the Ottoman period with the hope of drawing conclusions about the practical treatment of apostates.

Apostasy from Islam and conversion to it are topics in which serious research is scanty. During the last decades, several studies have been dedicated to conversion to Islam.¹ However, few studies have dealt with the far more complicated question of Muslims converting to other faiths. Muslims have occasionally attempted to deny that such conversions have happened at all, or characterize them as a fringe occurrence which does

*I would like to thank Prof. Fred Donner for reading this manuscript and making valuable suggestions.

¹Richard Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1979); Nehemia Levtzion, ed., *Conversion to Islam* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1979); Yaacov Lev, "Persecutions and Conversion to Islam," *Asian and African Studies* 22 (1988): 73–91; Michael Gervers and Ramzi Jibran Bikhazi (eds.), *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1990); Devin DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde* (Penn State: University Park, 1994) (for a complete bibliography of relevant literature on the subject of conversion to Islam, see pp. 17–23); Larry Poston, *Muslim Da'wa in the West* (Oxford, 1992); Ali Kose, *Conversion to Islam: A Study of Native British Converts* (London: Kegan Paul, 1996).

not merit discussion.² This should be considered a triumphalist idea which does not accord with the facts presented in the Muslim sources themselves. The present paper will examine some of the cases of conversion from Islam and see how they conform to the legal principles applicable in such cases.

Several scholars have worked on the question of conversion from Islam. Not surprisingly, this is a topic which attracted the attention of Christian missionaries, and especially scholars who were associated with the missionary journal *The Muslim World*.³ Samuel Zwemer, the founder of this journal who was for many years a missionary in Egypt and in a number of other Muslim countries, was the first to dedicate serious research to the subject.⁴ His most detailed book on the subject, *The Law of Apostasy in Islam*, was written with the explicit purpose of encouraging Muslims to convert to Christianity as well as to explain why so few did.⁵ Some have said that this book was designed to show Islam in the worst possible light, given its obvious polemical nature. While this assessment is essentially true, and it is impossible to verify the conversion stories included in the book (few names are given and much of the material is anecdotal), the overall presentation of the Muslim legal material is accurate.

Other more scholarly approaches are available. The article "Murtadd" in *The Encyclopedia of Islam* has not been updated since the first edition, but still constitutes an important survey of the legal material.⁶ R. Peters and G.J.J. de Vries recently published an article on apostasy.⁷ It thoroughly deals with the legal aspects of the question. However, it is deficient from the historical point of view: it gives only cases of apostasy

²E.g., Ali Kettani, *Muslim Minorities in the World Today* (London, 1986), pp. 10, 113; and see the editorial in *Review of Religions* 63 (1965): 162-63; and Mahmud Brelvi, *Islam on the March* (Karachi, 1968), p. ix: "In the very first century of Islam, Christianity, or rather the Church authorities, lost to Islam several tens of millions of their adherents, none of whom ever came back to Christianity, even in the worst days of their worldly afflictions." Even Hodgson falls into this preconception: "But this rule [of execution for apostasy] had rarely to be invoked...for very few Muslims have ever wanted to abandon Islam." Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago, 1974), vol. 2, p. 539.

³In its early years, *The Muslim World* was known as *The Moslem World*. For the sake of consistency, it will be always referred to as *The Muslim World* (MW).

⁴For his obituary, see MW 42 (1952): 157-59; and J. Christy Wilson, "The Epic of Samuel Zwemer." MW 57 (1967): 79-93 (later expanded into book length).

⁵Samuel Zwemer, *The Law of Apostasy in Islam* (London: Marshall Brothers, 1924); see also the version in MW 14 (1924): 373-91; and the related article by F. Raxton, "Convert's Status in Mālikī Law," MW 3 (1913): 37-40.

⁶W. Heffening, "Murtadd," *EP²*, s.v.

⁷R. Peters and G.J.J. de Vries, "Apostasy in Islam." *Die Welt des Islams* 17 (1976-77): 1-25.

from the modern period and concentrates on examples showing that Islam has not reformed itself from the point of view of human rights. Joel Kraemer has written an article on several forms of lawlessness (including brigandage and rebellion), one of which is apostasy.⁸ While his presentation is an improvement upon that of Heffening's, he concentrates on the political implications of apostasy and is not interested in documenting the phenomenon. There is also heavy reliance upon *hadīths* supposedly from the time of the Prophet to illustrate historical events. It is highly unlikely that these *hadīths* are indeed historical; it would have been much better to examine the legal material in light of the actual way apostates were treated in order to reach substantive conclusions on the development of the Muslim attitude towards apostasy. Nonetheless, Kraemer's contribution is valuable.

Syed Barakat Ahmad's contribution is problematic.⁹ His study is much more historically oriented than that of Kraemer, but it suffers from the author's preconceived ideas. His apparent thesis is that no pressure was ever applied to apostates throughout the history of Islam, and even if such pressure were to be hypothetically postulated, there was virtually no apostasy from Islam anyway. Attention is given to the famous verse "There is no compulsion in religion" (Qur'ān 2:256), to the exclusion of all the other legal and historical material that indicates that there *was* some amount of religious compulsion in Islam. He states:

"An attempt to comb thirteen hundred years of Islamic history to find the number of Muslims who were put to death because of their conversion from Islam would prove futile."¹⁰

If this had been done, the author's thesis would collapse under the weight of evidence proving that there was a substantial number of Muslims who were put to death because of changing their religious affiliations. Ahmad spends much time emphasizing the fact that Christian missionaries in India did not succeed in converting the sub-continent during the British rule (1780s–1947), but refrains from mentioning converts whom they did manage to win over. In short, Ahmad's idea is that there has been so little conversion from Islam that it is not even worth discussing. It is striking to compare Ahmad's article with that of Zafrullah Khan,¹¹ since both of them feel the necessity to be extremely apologetic

⁸ Joel Kraemer, "Apostates, Rebels and Brigands," *IOS* 10 (1980): 34–73.

⁹ Syed Barakat Ahmad, "Conversion from Islam," in C.E. Bosworth, ed. *The Islamic World from Classical to Modern Times: Essays in honor of Bernard Lewis* (Princeton, 1989), pp. 3–25.

¹⁰ Barakat Ahmad, p. 15.

¹¹ Muḥammad Zafrullah Khan, "The Punishment of Apostasy in Islam," *Review of Religions* 77 (1982): 321–52. See also below, at note 129.

and defensive about this subject, and both of them carefully ignore the historical material that would destroy their theses. As a matter of fact, Ahmad and Zafrullah Khan simply ignore the traditional and Qur'ānic material that does not conform to their view. This defensive approach reduces the reliability of their work. Recently, Yohanan Friedmann has contributed a serious study of the legal issues involved in apostasy from Islam.¹² In this work, Friedmann surveys the respective attitudes of the legal schools in a way that makes further discussion of this subject unnecessary.

The main reasons why there is so much difficulty with this subject are: 1) scholars are unwilling to search the sources thoroughly for material and 2) the sources themselves do not offer very much in the way of information concerning conversion. Usually conversions to Islam are noted when prominent persons or court officials are involved; in view of their importance, this is only natural. Cases of apostasy are mentioned only when apostates are apprehended and punished. Therefore, the material culled from the sources is very fragmentary and does not create a complete picture; neither does it lead to clear-cut conclusions. Consequently, this paper can only probe the subject and classify the few examples found. As previously mentioned, it is only natural that some scholars interested in this subject have not been attracted to it for purely scholarly reasons. Much of the early twentieth century research was done by Christian missionaries, like Zwemer and the staff of *The Muslim World*, with the specific intention of proving that substantial numbers of people indeed had converted from Islam and of encouraging others to follow suit.¹³ Their anecdotal material is somewhat suspect and after reading numerous accounts of this sort, the suspicion grows that they contain some element of artificiality and wishful thinking. Nevertheless, some of the more plausible examples from this material will be used.

The pertinent prophetic traditions vary widely and allow for different interpretation by the jurists. The idea upon which the laws of apostasy were based are derived from the belief that Islam is the last

¹²Yohanan Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 121–159.

¹³There are numerous articles of this sort in the early volumes of *MW*; e.g., A Shīrī Muslim, "How I Found Christ." *MW* 1 (1910): 179–82; J.L. Barton, "A Mohamadan Imam's Discovery of Christ." *MW* 6 (1916): 389–93; J. Christy Wilson, "Muslim Converts," *MW* 34 (1944): 171–84; and Ch. Allen, "Why a Muslim official changed his faith," *MW* 40 (1950): 176–84. In later issues *MW* tended to publish histories of missionary movements: James Waltz, "Early 'Missions' to Muslims," *MW* 61 (1971): 170–86; Dennis Phillips, "The American Missionary in Morocco," *MW* 65 (1975): 1–20, at p. 13; Richard Schartz, "Missionaries on the Rezaiyeh Plains, Iran," *MW* 69 (1979): 77–100.

divinely revealed faith and that in the future all the followers of previous faiths will embrace Islam. In many ways Islam sought to keep the status quo as its policy towards other faiths; the only movement it allowed was conversion to Islam. In general, the attitude of the jurists was that a conversion to any faith other than Islam was prohibited. Therefore, there is a wide range of traditions similar to “whoever changes his faith, kill him.”¹⁴ One element frequently noted is that there is no Qur’ānic verse to which the jurists can refer in order to deal with apostates, let alone to justify their execution. The Qur’ānic verses cited do not have the meaning attributed to them by the jurists. For example, Qur’ān 2:217 states:

But if any of you turn back from their religion and die as unbelievers, these (are people) whose works come to naught both in this world and the Hereafter; these are inmates of the Fire, therein abiding.¹⁵

While this verse is a powerful denunciation of apostates, it does not stipulate any punishment for them in this world; they are threatened with punishment in the hereafter. Other verses significant for the Muslim attitude towards apostates are Qur’ān 3:85–89:

How will Allah guide a people who have disbelieved after having believed, and (after) they have testified that the messenger is true and that the Evidences have come to them? Allah doth not guide the people (who are) wrongdoers. Their reward is that upon them is the curse of Allah, and the angels and the people as a whole; therein to abide without the punishment being lightened from off of them and without their being respited. Except those who have afterwards repented and acted uprightly; then verily Allah is forgiving, compassionate. Those who have disbelieved after having believed and have then increased in disbelief — from them repentance will not be accepted; they are the ones who go astray.¹⁶

¹⁴For a selection see al-Hindī, *Kanz al-‘ummāl* (Beirut, 1987), vol. 1, pp. 90–91 (nos. 386–94) and *Concordance et indices de la tradition musulmane*, A.J. Wensinck, ed. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1936–62), s.v., *ridda*, *irtidād*, *baddala* (in all of the canonical collections, except for that of Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj); pertinent traditions are widely quoted in the later literature — e.g., Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Muḥallā* (Beirut, 1988), vol. 12, p. 110.

¹⁵Translation is from Richard Bell, *The Qur’ān Translated* (Edinburgh, 1937; in his numbering, the verse is number 214).

¹⁶Translation is from Bell (80–84 in Bell’s translation).

It is difficult to find consistency in these verses, but they do not contain worldly punishment for the apostate: it is left in God's hands.

This paper will treat apostasy on the basis of available historical sources and will attempt to classify the cases to the extent possible. This approach will be used, as opposed to the theoretical material presented by the jurists. Given the difficulties of the source material and the sensitive nature of the subject, the conclusions must at present be tentative.

2. The evidence of the sources

Cases of apostasy are mentioned in Muslim sources only at random. There is no collection of the material under any one given title or book; on the contrary, references are dispersed in historical, religious, *adab*, and legal sources. One can read volume after volume and find nothing; elsewhere one suddenly finds several cases of apostasy grouped together for no apparent reason. Is this so because there were no cases of apostasy during certain years, or was there some specific reason why a certain historian (or a compiler) saw fit to record this material while others did not? Perhaps there is a polemical element in the issue, since most historians are also religious figures. It is not clear what are the facts for the early, pre-Crusade period of Islam. For the Mamlūk period we are on relatively firmer ground, since this was precisely the period in which the bulk of Egypt's Coptic community converted to Islam.¹⁷ Therefore, it is hardly surprising to find that among these converts there were a number of nominal Muslims who apostatized at various points during this period. It is very likely that there existed an "underground church" of former Christians in Egypt during this period, not unlike similar phenomena in Spain; Muslim writers regularly accuse the Coptic converts of practicing Christianity in private.¹⁸ There is evidence of secret Christians among

¹⁷Ira Lapidus ("The Conversion of Egypt to Islam," *IOS* 2 (1972): 248-62) suggested that this happened centuries earlier, but see the critique by Yohanan Friedmann, "A note on the Conversion of Egypt to Islam," *JSIAI* 3 (1973): 238-40; Donald Little, "Coptic Conversion to Islam under the Bahri Mamlūks," *BSOAS* 39 (1976): 552-69; *idem*, "Coptic Converts to Islam," In *Conversion and Continuity*, pp. 263-88; and Lev, "Persecution," *passim*.

¹⁸Lev, "Persecution," pp. 88-89; and see Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr fī anbāʾ al-ʿumr* (Ḥaydarābād: Dāʾirat al-maʾārif, 1974), vol. 2, pp. 220, 256, vol. 7, 276-77; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk li-maʾrifat duwal al-mulūk*. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ziyāda, ed. (Cairo, n.d.), vol. 2, p. 927; crypto-Christianity was apparently widespread in Albania as well: György Lederer, "Islam in Albania," *Central Asian Survey* 13 (1994): 331-9, at p. 334; and see Paul Wittek, "Yazijoghlu ʿAlī on the Christian Turks of the

the Muslims of Syria.¹⁹ Therefore, it is very likely that the sources are presenting only the tip of the iceberg.

a. Political insurrections and apostasies

The original meaning of the Arabic word for apostasy, *ridda*, from which the noun *murtadd* (apostate) is derived, involves a political action of rebellion connected to the spiritual revolt against God. Many scholars have pointed out that the famed *ridda* that took place after the Prophet's death (632–34) was of this nature.²⁰ We will not cover this meaning of the word, since this type of apostasy has been very thoroughly dealt with. Let us only note that this sort of *ridda* was a very short phase in Muslim history. In the early period we frequently hear about foreign kings or rulers of territories on the fringes of Islam who revolted politically and religiously at the same time. For example, when Ibn al-Athīr discusses the kings of Sind, he says that they apostatized from Islam during the reign of Hishām (724–43).²¹ Or, in the same vein, the Turks of Kurdar apostatized in 110/728, were defeated and forced to return to Islam.²² Thus, too, the Berber tribes apostatized on a number of different occasions, each a reflection of political exigencies.²³ However, after the first two centuries of Islam, this type of *ridda* is usually not to be found in the sources.²⁴

Dobruja," *BSOAS* 14 (1952): 639–68; R.M. Dawkins, "The Crypto-Christians of Turkey," *Byzantion* 8 (1933): 247–75. Many Copts converted for material reasons, as is illustrated by the Christian man who brought his brilliant son to the Mamlūk court and was asked why he did not convert to Islam like his brothers had. He replied that they converted in order to ride horses (a practice which is denied to non-Muslims), and that he did not need to ride: see al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-risāla, 1995), vol. 2, p. 832.

¹⁹Mikhā'il al-Burayk al-Dimashqī, *Ta'rikh al-Shām (1720–82)* (Beirut, 1930), pp. 23, 29–30.

²⁰Kraemer, "Apostates," pp. 36–37, 39–40; Peters and De Vries, "Apostasy," pp. 2–3.

²¹Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-ta'rikh*, C. Tornberg, ed. (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1965 [reprint]), vol. 5, pp. 54–55.

²²Ibn al-Athīr, vol. 5, p. 154; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam fī al-ta'rikh*. Muḥammad Qādir 'Aṭā' and Muṣṭafā 'Abd al-Qādir 'Aṭā', eds. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1992), vol. 7, p. 135. A rare example of forced apostasy of Muslims to paganism occurred in the area of Kāshgar: Mirzā Ḥaydar Dughlat, *Ta'rikh-i Rashīdī*, W. Thackston, trans. (Harvard: Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures 38, 1996), p. 186.

²³Aḥmad b. Khālīd al-Nāṣirī, *al-Istiḳṣā' li-akhbār duwal al-maghrib al-aqṣā* (Casablanca, 1954), vol. 1, p. 89 says that they apostasized 12 times.

²⁴Even before that time it was usually common to settled groups; nomads usually simply defected (like the Persian mercenaries of the Khurramdīniyya: J. Rosser,

In later periods, prominent opponents of an Islamic government occasionally converted to Christianity. A prime example of this is the veteran rebel Ibn Ḥafṣūn in al-Andalus, who converted to Christianity in 286/899.²⁵ Armenian and Georgian princes were regularly forced to convert to Islam, and usually reverted back to Christianity at the first available opportunity.²⁶ After converting to Islam for political reasons, the Albanian hero Skanderbeg (d. 873/1468) apostatized to continue his fight for his people's freedom from the Ottomans in the middle 15th century.²⁷ It is remarkable how few of these people, deserving death according to Islamic law, ever had to face this ultimate punishment. In general, those who apostatized for political reasons were not executed.

b. "Voluntary martyrdoms" and double apostasy

One of the most interesting events in the early stages of the Christian-Muslim encounter in Spain (during the 3rd/9th century) was the period of the so-called voluntary martyrs of Cordoba.²⁸ Since these people did not apostatize from Islam, but were condemned because of their vilification of the Prophet or their attempts to proselytize among Muslims, they will not be dealt with here. However, it should be noted that this phenomenon is more widely spread than one would understand from the scholarly material on it, and indeed appears in Syria²⁹ and Egypt as

"Theophilus' Khurramite Policy and its Finale," *Byzantina* 6 [1974]: 265–71), or found a spot inaccessible to the Muslim armies.

²⁵Ibn 'Idhārī, *Bayān*, E. Levi-Provençal, ed. (Cairo, 1948), vol. 2, p. 139; see on him R. Marin-Guzman, "The Causes of the Revolt of 'Umar b. Ḥafṣūn in al-Andalus (880–928): A Study in Medieval Islamic Social History," *Arabica* 42 (1995): 180–221; and *idem*, "The End of the Revolt of 'Umar b. Ḥafṣūn in al-Andalus," *Islamic Studies* 34 (1995): 153–206.

²⁶E.g., Tovma Metsobetsi, *History of Tamerlane and His Successors*, Robert Bedrossian, trans. (New York, 1987), p. 55; and Iskandar-i Munshi, *History of Shah Abbas the Great*, Roger Savory, trans. (Boulder, 1978), vol. 2, p. 1243.

²⁷Hodgson, vol. 2, p. 560.

²⁸James Waltz, "The Martyrs of Ninth Century Cordoba," *MW* 60 (1970): 143–59, 226–36; see also Kenneth Baxter Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain* (Cambridge, 1988), *passim*.

²⁹Theophanes, *Chronicle*. Harry Turtledove, trans. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1982), pp. 107–08; and see M. Gil, *A History of Palestine 634–1099*, Ethel Broido, trans. (Cambridge, 1992), p. 472; and al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, vol. 3, pp. 492, 792.

well.³⁰ It is also related to a certain type of apostasy.³¹ Related to this category are Christians and Jews who converted to Islam and after some time apostatized from it.³² From the very first days of Islam this has been the most common category of apostates. However, some of the cases reported may be invented stories from the time of the Prophet designed to serve as legal precedents. It is difficult to tell when the first cases of execution for this type of apostasy actually took place. The tribe of Banū 'Ijl is said to have been punished by 'Alī when they apostatized,³³ but the historicity of this tradition is open to doubt. 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz is also said to have punished apostates, but no names are given. It is only with the 'Abbāsī caliphs al-Mu'tasim (218–28/833–42)³⁴ and al-Mutawakkil (233–47/847–61)³⁵ that we find detailed accounts. However, after this period apostasy becomes very widespread.³⁶ Captives were frequently converted, sometimes willingly, and then reverted back to their former faith at the first opportunity.³⁷

³⁰In the year 918/1512 Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-zuhūr fī waqā'i' al-duhūr* (Cairo, 1982), vol. 4, p. 286: "In this year there was an unusual event, and that was that a Christian man called 'Abd al-Ṣalīb from the south... said evil things about the Prophet... and he confessed... and they cut off his head under the window of the school and then the crowds prepared a fire for him and burned his corpse in the middle of the souk and when the evening came, the dogs ate his bones." See also Severus b. al-Muqaffa', *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church*. Abd al-Masīh, Aṭīya and Burmester, trans. (Cairo, 1943), p. 195f.; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, vol. 3, p. 383.

³¹See Friedmann, *Tolerance and coercion*, pp. 149–52.

³²For some legal comments, David Wasserstein, "A *Fatwa* on Conversion in Islamic Spain," in R. Nettle (ed.), *Studies in Muslim-Jewish Relations* (Oxford, 1993), vol. 1, pp. 177–88.

³³Kraemer, "Apostates," p. 45, note 41; and see Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Muḥallā*, vol. 12, pp. 110–11. This has the feel of an artificial situation about it, but since it is mentioned in the history books, it might be historical. See also Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'riḫ madīnat Dimashq* (Beirut, 1995–99), vol. 26, p. 164 for another apostate who is brought before 'Alī and asked to repent.

³⁴It is said about him that he burned Ghanam the apostate in the year 225/839: al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa al-mulūk*. De Goeje, ed. (Leiden, 1879–1901), vol. 3, p. 1302; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vol. 11, p. 99.

³⁵Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. 7, p. 81; and Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vol. 11, p. 296 for the year 242/856, where the whole correct process of asking the person to repent is detailed.

³⁶E.g., among the later 'Abbāsīs: Severus b. al-Muqaffa', *History of the Patriarchs*, vol. 2, pp. 152–53; see Kraemer, "Apostates," pp. 45–46; among the Golden Horde: DeWeese, *Islamization*, p. 246; and the Moghuls: Niccolao Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, (Calcutta, 1965), vol. 2, pp. 149–50.

³⁷E.g., G. Levi Della Vida, "A Portuguese Pilgrim at Mecca in the Sixteenth Century," *MW* 32 (1942): 283–97; and see for the western Mediterranean, Joseph O'Callaghan, "The Mudejars of Castile and Portugal in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," in James Powell, ed. *Muslims Under Latin Rule 1100–1300*. (Princeton, 1990), pp. 28–64; Robert Burns, "Muslims in Aragon," in *Muslims Under Latin Rule*, pp. 78–80; and Ellen Friedman, *Spanish Captives in North Africa* (University

For our purposes, the material originating from Egypt and Syria, especially from the 14th and 15th centuries CE, is particularly interesting. For it is precisely at this time that the majority of inhabitants became Muslim. A number of those converts decided to leave the Muslim faith and revert to Christianity. This was not difficult to accomplish. When they reverted to their former faith, some of them chose to make a statement, not unlike the “voluntary martyrdom.” Others were exposed only by accident. The example of Maimonides discussed below is a case in point: only his fame, coupled with pure chance, caused him to be exposed and apprehended. Had he chosen to live in obscurity, no one would have known that he had ever converted to Islam.

The living conditions of Jews in the Muslim world were much better than those of their coreligionists in Christendom. Nevertheless, many of them felt the pressure to embrace Islam. Not all these conversions were voluntary. A saying popular in Egypt during the Mamlūk times was that “when you put pressure on a Jew, he will convert to Islam.”³⁸ In other circumstances Jews used the threat of reversion to their ancestral faith as a blackmail technique to receive better treatment. In Ibn ‘Asākir (d. 572/1176) we find the following case:

We prayed in the mosque with Marwān b. Muḥammad b. Ḥassān al-Tatarī. When the prayer was over, a man stood up at the Bāb al-Sā‘āt and said: O Muslims, I am Jawṣa; I was a Jew and I converted to Islam, and I began to be condemned for [my] Jewishness! Do not condemn me for it, or I will return to it!³⁹

It is rather curious that such a technique would be used, in light of the legal restrictions involved. If a convert to Islam had really apostatized, he should have been put to death. Hence it is difficult to accept the idea that apostasy meant immediate death in the very early period, because such a technique would serve no purpose other than calling attention to the superficial nature of the conversion.

The threat of apostasy if better treatment was not forthcoming is illustrated by a story from 13th century Aleppo. A girl who was to be married to her cousin without her consent used this very threat. Unfortunately, the tactic did not work as well for her as it apparently

of Wisconsin, 1983), pp. 77–90.

³⁸Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’ al-zuhūr*, vol. 4, p. 481. This saying was quoted when the Sultan was torturing a Jew to obtain his wealth and he converted. The conversion was not accepted as legitimate and the Sultan resumed the torture. A similar event occurred in 1840 during the blood libel in Damascus; see Jonathan Frankel, *The Damascus Affair* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 47, 79.

³⁹Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh Dimashq*, vol. 5, p. 113.

did for the converted Jew above. She was beaten, had her nose and ears cut off and was paraded through the city and then married to her cousin anyway.⁴⁰ Perhaps this illustrates the differences between the 7th–8th centuries and the 13th century (or perhaps the differences between a man or a woman who try such a technique).

In order to find records of converts, we must go to the collection of the Geniza in Egypt, where Goitein's research discovered some converts from Islam. The famous rabbi, scholar, physician and polymath Maimonides in his *Responsa* mentions a Muslim convert to Judaism by the name of Ovadiah and advises him about his new faith. Primarily the letter shows that the Muslim converts had to leave Muslim lands as quickly as possible and go to Europe. Few other details are given.⁴¹ Records are known of crypto-Jews from the North African community in the 13th and 14th centuries,⁴² of the period of the Ṣafavids in Persia and the 19th century in Mashhad. Mashhad witnessed a massive forced conversion of the whole community in 1839; however, these converts remained separate from the larger Muslim community and reverted back to Judaism when it became possible.⁴³

In other localities, a certain Thomas the Monk (Tūmā al-Rāhib) in Damascus during 726/1325–26 was accused of apostasy, but was apprehended only after a number of years. He was executed and his body burned.⁴⁴

The following account will serve as an example of this type of apostasy.

In it [year 781/1380] during Dhū al-Ḥijja [March, probably around Easter] a group of men and women presented themselves and described that they had been Christians who had converted to Islam and chose to return to their faith and wished to make a sacrifice to their Lord by shedding their blood in atonement for what they had done. The Mālikī *qādī* 'Alam al-Dīn offered to them to return to Islam and

⁴⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, vol. 2, p. 726; in al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā'* (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥayāt, n.d.), vol. 3, p. 207 a woman makes a similar threat, but nothing is said of what happened to her as a result.

⁴¹ S.D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society II: The Community* (Berkeley, 1971), pp. 304, 310. Goitein noted that his material may be related to two separate converts. It is difficult to decide.

⁴² See Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 538; M. Garcia-Arenal, "Les Bildiyya de Fes, un groupe de neo-musulmans d'origine juive," *Studia Islamica* 66 (1987): 113–44.

⁴³ *Encyclopedia Iranica* s.v. "Conversions of Persian Jews to Other Faiths" (A. Netzer); and see Vera Moreen, "The problems of conversion among Iranian Jews in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries," *Iranian Studies* 19 (1986): 215–28.

⁴⁴ Al-Dhahabī, *al-'Ibar fī khabar man ghabar* (Beirut, n.d.), vol. 4, p. 75.

they refused; he ordered some of his subordinates to shed their blood. The heads of the men were cut off at al-Şālihiyya and the heads of the women were cut off under the Citadel at al-Rumayla.⁴⁵

Cases of such apostasy are mentioned for the following years: 782/1383 in Damascus (two cases);⁴⁶ 785/1384 again in Damascus and in Cairo;⁴⁷ 791/1389 in Cairo a great procession of former Copts asked for death to atone for their apostasy;⁴⁸ in 801/1398 in Cairo,⁴⁹ and 834/1430 in Cairo.⁵⁰ In 855/1451 a man presented himself to the *qādī* in Cairo asking to be put to death for his apostasy out of guilt for leaving Christianity.⁵¹ Other cases of persecution took place when Copts were accused of speaking ill about one of the Prophets, usually Muḥammad, but sometimes others as well.⁵² In a much later example we read:

During this year [1187/1773] a Christian youth, whose name was Ḥannā b. Mūsā... left his faith and pronounced the *shahāda* of Islam... on the second day he returned to his faith, and denied Islam, and said 'I am a Christian.' The judge ordered him to be beheaded. He said to the executioner: 'Strike, for I am a Christian! and I die in the love of the Messiah and his belief!'⁵³

One should note that the group atonement in Cairo and the first two cases in Damascus probably took place in the same season. While no exact dates are given, the period is always around the end of March and the beginning of April, which seems to indicate that this might have been an event brought about by the Good Friday–Easter time period of atonement. It is very uncertain. One should also note the regular sequence of punishment: a trial in which the person confesses his apostasy; the process of *istitāba* (asking for repentance); sentencing; execution by

⁴⁵ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʿ*, vol. 1, p. 308. The next lines tell of a soldier who came to the *qādī* to ask the same thing, but he was deemed to be insane and was imprisoned. Cf. al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, vol. 3, pp. 382–83.

⁴⁶ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʿ*, vol. 2, pp. 17–18.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 139; in Cairo: 'Alī b. Dawūd al-Şayrafi, *Nuzhat al-nufūs wa al-abdān fī tawārīkh al-zamān* (Cairo: Wizārat al-Thaqāfa, 1970), vol. 1, p. 64.

⁴⁸ Zwemer, *Law of Apostasy*, p. 87. I do not know what is the source of this, since I have not seen anything about it in Muslim sources used for the purpose of this inquiry. Perhaps it is from a Coptic source.

⁴⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, vol. 3, p. 917.

⁵⁰ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʿ*, vol. 9, pp. 101–02.

⁵¹ Al-Biqāʿī, *Izhār al-ʿaṣr li-asrār ahl al-ʿaṣr* (Riyāḍ, 1992), vol. 1, p. 121.

⁵² Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʿ*, vol. 8, p. 258.

⁵³ Al-Dimashqī, *Tawārīkh*, p. 100.

beheading and the body being burnt afterwards. This last would seem to be the regular fate of any non-Muslim who commits a grave crime.⁵⁴ It is rather interesting that virtually all of these cases are documented in Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī’s *Inbā’ al-ghumr*. Other historians surveyed, such as Ibn Taghribirdī, Ibn Da’wādārī, Ibn Iyās, al-Maqrīzī, or the lesser biographers of the Mamlūk sultans, or the Damascus historians like al-Dhahabī or Ibn Kathīr, do not mention this subject.

c. True apostasy

As modern Muslim scholars have noted, this is rarely reported in the sources. Of course, calling these apostates “true” does not imply a value judgment, since we have no way of knowing exactly what the motivation was in these cases. Indeed, the authenticity of several of the examples given here might be open to question, since conversion for romantic reasons (to cite one example from the next category) is not a very spiritual motivation. On the other hand, we should not be too quick to judge those who apostatized for apparently worldly reasons, since our sources are invariably hostile to them and might be giving us a biased view of their apostasy. In any case, even with a person whose motivation was romantic, the nature of the decision renders the conversion true beyond reasonable doubt. For while romantic love might spur the original decision to convert, it is not enough to keep a person inside a faith when part of the price is giving up everything, including one’s life. This is easily forgotten in our society where religious preferences are often subject to change with little fear of retribution. The romantic apostate from Islam was literally sacrificing everything for his beloved and this implies some amount of belief in his new creed. Once again, in this category there are several different types of apostasy.

One of these is the true convert, who converts to a new faith, usually Christianity, but occasionally Judaism, of his own volition for reasons of faith alone. One apparent example of this is the conversion of al-Salt b. al-‘Ās b. Wābisa b. Khālīd b. al-Mughīra b. ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar al-Makhzūmī al-Qurashī. Several accounts of his conversion are given. According to one, he is taken captive by the Byzantines, who ask him

⁵⁴ See al-Kutubī, *‘Uyūn al-tawārīkh* (Baghdad, 1984), vol. 21, p. 417 for the story of a Christian man who was found with a Muslim woman in a compromising situation, drinking wine during Ramaḍān; he was executed and his body burned afterwards; for other examples, see al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, vol. 4, p. 415; and Ibn al-Qunfudh, *al-Furūsiyya fī mabādi’ al-dawla al-Ḥafsiyya* (Tunis: al-Dār al-Tūnisiyya li-l-nashr, 1968), p. 115 (where a Christian is burned for making a joke about the Prophet).

whether he would like to convert; he answers in the affirmative, stays with them and marries a Christian woman. In the other account, 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz punishes him for some unnamed offense and he flees to the Byzantines.⁵⁵ It is impossible to decide which of these accounts is true, since one of them might have been circulated to defame him after his defection. However, factually speaking, both accounts are attested to historically and neither involves duress; one must therefore come to the conclusion that al-Salt converted out of his own free will.⁵⁶

He is not the only Arab nobleman to do so. A certain Rabī'a b. Umayya b. Khalaf al-Jumahī al-Qurashī is described as a lover of wine; consequently, 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb exiled him to Khaybar. Rabī'a apparently did not agree with his punishment, since he immediately defected to Byzantium and converted to Christianity.⁵⁷ Overall, 'Umar's excessive punishments are said to have caused a number of defections from the Muslim camp, including that of Jabala b. Ayham al-Ghassānī. Perhaps this is veiled criticism of 'Umar's policies, since after Rabī'a's defection he is quoted as saying "I will never exile anyone after him."⁵⁸

Although the evidence is sparse, one would suspect that there were secret Christians during times of persecution and after forced conversion of large groups.⁵⁹ A number of Arab tribes, including the Taghlibīs and the Tanūkhīs were forcibly converted to Islam and could have kept Christianity in secret.⁶⁰

There is some evidence from Christian sources that converts were

⁵⁵Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rikh*, vol. 8, p. 387; it seems that this is the person (unnamed in the text) meant in 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī, *Musannaf*, Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-A'zamī, ed. (Beirut, 1970-72), vol. 10, p. 338 (no. 19292). See also G.E. von Grunebaum, *Medieval Islam* (Chicago, 1953), p. 59. Other unnamed converts to Christianity are mentioned in Ibn 'Asākir, vol. 70, p. 9 (*man tanaṣṣara min al-muslimīn*).

⁵⁶Despite the fact that he was located in Constantinople, he was apparently the target of Muslim efforts to reconvert him, to which he answered using the Qur'ānic verse: "Whoever denies God after his belief, other than him who is compelled while his heart is tranquil with belief..." [16:106] (my translation), implying that he was indeed satisfied with his choice.

⁵⁷Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rikh*, vol. 18, p. 52. As for other converts to Christianity, there is an obscure mention of an Umayyad who converted in 187/802 in Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rikh*, vol. 23, p. 89, but the text is unclear.

⁵⁸Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rikh*, vol. 18, p. 52.

⁵⁹E.g., R.M. Dawkins, "The Crypto-Christians of Turkey," *Byzantion* 8 (1933): 247-75; and Demetrios Constantelos, "The Neo-martyrs as Evidence for Methods and Motives Leading to Conversion and Martyrdom in the Ottoman Empire," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 23 (1978): 216-31.

⁶⁰See Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, E.A.W. Budge, trans. (Oxford, 1932), vol. 1, p. 117; and Andrew Palmer, ed. *The Seventh Century in West Syrian Chronicles* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1993), p. 71 (citing an inscription at the church at Ehnes, on the Tanūkhīs); and M. Lecker, "Taghlib," *EI*², s.v. The same is true concerning the Copts; see notes 45-51, 53 above.

received into the church. However, this should be treated with caution. The official Muslim position on the subject of conversion to Christianity was generally known and therefore we are not likely to find mention of specific converts for fear of provoking the anger of the larger society. Conversion was frequently accompanied by defection to the Byzantine Empire or to other non-Muslim, mostly Christian, states. In these cases, the Christian historian is on the same level as the Muslim one: it is simply a historical event to be mentioned without any possible ramifications for the community as a whole. However, there are other cases in which martyrologies preserve references to converts who were received with open arms by the highest dignitaries of the church.

Three pertinent accounts have attracted the scholars' attention. The first, and probably one of the earliest, was published by Vasiliev and apparently has no historical validity. It purports to recount the conversion of Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān to Christianity.⁶¹ Most scholars have dismissed it as a forgery, as wishful thinking by the Christian community or as a misidentification by Vasiliev. However, one should remember that the Shī'īs frequently made the accusation of apostasy against the Sufyānī branch of the Umayyad dynasty a cornerstone of their polemic against the dynasty as a whole, and especially against the descendants of Mu'āwiya, who inspired a frenzy of hatred more intense than the rest of the family (see below).⁶² This coincidence and the likely source of this myth does not inspire much confidence in its veracity. Furthermore, there are many indications that certain noble families in Byzantium were in fact descendants of Arabs, whether converts to Christianity or not. These very likely included the dynasty of the Isaurians, and possibly Nicephorus I (r. 802–11).⁶³

However, two other accounts are historically more plausible. They were published respectively by Ignace Dick⁶⁴ and Sidney Griffith.⁶⁵ Both of these involve youths from noble Arab families (Antoine Ruwāh came

⁶¹A. Vasiliev, "St. Theodore of Edessa," *Byzantion* 16 (1943–44): 165–225, esp. 192f., which concerns al-Ma'mūn, although, according to Vasiliev, the original had the name of Mu'āwiya, on p. 199f.

⁶²E.g., Muḥammad al-Bāqir al-Majlisī, *Bihār al-anwār* (Beirut, 1983), vol. 41, p. 305.

⁶³Irfan Shahid, "Ghassān *post* Ghassān," in C.E. Bosworth, ed., *The Islamic World from Classical to Modern Times: Essays in honor of Bernard Lewis* (Princeton, 1989), pp. 323–36.

⁶⁴I. Dick, "La passion arabe de S. Antoine Ruwāh," *Le Muséon* 74 (1961): 108–33; and see Kh. Samir, "Saint Rawḥ al-Qurashī: Étude onomastique arabe et authenticité de passion," *Le Muséon* 105 (1992): 343–60. Samir dates the whole episode to 799. According to hagiographic sources, there was another conversion of a Muslim in 789: Gil, *History*, p. 474; and see overall, Ḥabīb Zayyāt, "Shuhadā' al-naṣārā fī al-Islām," *al-Mashriq* 36 (1938): 959–65.

⁶⁵S. Griffith, "Abd al-Masīḥ al-Ghassānī," *Le Muséon* 98 (1985): 331–74.

from Quraysh,⁶⁶ while ‘Abd al-Masīh, whose original name was Rabī b. Qays b. Yazīd, was from the tribe of Ghassān) who were convinced of the truth of Christianity and converted willingly. It should be noted that ‘Abd al-Masīh was a double apostate, because he had been brought up as a Christian and converted to Islam. Both ultimately paid for their conversions with their lives, thereby earning the title ‘martyr.’ While these accounts might seem fantastic at first glance, one should note that the Muslim sources themselves attest to a number of conversions from various noble Arab tribes, including several from Quraysh.⁶⁷ Therefore, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that these do represent historical accounts, even if the historical details are integrated into the heavily stylized Christian *Vita*.

It is rather difficult to obtain historical details from these accounts. For example, one would like to hear what Antoine Ruwāh’s genealogy was. Since the story takes place in Damascus, it seems very likely that he was from one of the Qurashī families associated with the Umayyads — the family of Abū al-Mu‘ayt, which settled in the area, comes to mind.⁶⁸ As far as ‘Abd al-Masīh goes, Griffith supports the historicity of the account.⁶⁹ Usually, conversions mentioned in Christian sources are representative of resurgent Christian power in the 10th and 11th centuries when large areas of the Muslim *thughūr* fell under Byzantine control.

There is some evidence that Muslims were influenced to convert to Christianity by holy men.⁷⁰ For example, it is said that the governor of Mosul was converted by Rabban Hormizd (d. ca. 670);⁷¹ and much

⁶⁶See the account of Bar Hebraeus, vol. 1, p. 121 (who dates it to about 800): “At this time a man of the tribe of Koraish, and a Muslim, whose name was Ruḥī lived in a house which was near a church and during the time of prayer he used to vex the priest by casting at him pellets made of mud [the text describes here a miracle which Rūḥī saw]... Then he believed, and left his house and went to the church and was baptized.” According to the account, Hārūn al-Rashīd threw him into prison for two years to get him to recant, but he did not: as a result, his head was cut off and hung on the wall of Rafīqa (the sister city of Raqqa).

⁶⁷See also Severus b. al-Muqaffa’, *History*, vol. 2, pp. 465–67, where a certain al-Hāshimī’s conversion and martyrdom is described.

⁶⁸Dick, “Antoine Ruwāh,” p. 126, where Ruwāh says that one of the reasons why he is seeking to be martyred by Hārūn al-Rashīd is that he raided the Byzantine empire and killed other believers; this seems to be believable, historical testimony, in view of the recurrent annual raids.

⁶⁹Griffith, “‘Abd al-Masīh,” p. 351.

⁷⁰Daniel Sahas, “What an Infidel Saw that a Faithful Did Not: Gregory Dekapolites (d. 842) and Islam,” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 31 (1986): 47–67, which purports to be the story of the nephew of a Muslim *amīr* who converted to Christianity under the influence of a monk and died a martyr’s death. The story is of doubtful historicity.

⁷¹Robert Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It* (Princeton, 1997), pp. 190–92.

later a number of Turks were converted by one Christian holy man.⁷² Another such account describes a certain Yūsuf who was a persecutor of the Christian Armenian population during the time of Tamerlane. He was given a vision of heaven and told to convert to Christianity; following his conversion he was put to death in Archesh.⁷³ In Moghul India, Muḥammad Zamān is said to have converted to Christianity, taking the name Paulo Zaman, as a result of a comparative study of Islam and Christianity (although apparently reverting back to Islam at a later time).⁷⁴ A large number of missionary-produced anecdotes about converts would fit into this category, since they tried to illustrate the purity of motivation of the new believers. Dārā Shukōh (d. 1659), the son of Shāh Jahān and brother of Aurangzīb, is said to have considered converting to Christianity before his execution.⁷⁵ However, it is not very easy to find stories of this nature even in the hagiographical material.

It is not possible here to document all the cases of conversion from Islam to Christianity. Suffice it to say that there are several large geographical areas where conversions have been documented. These can be classified into several types of regions: territories where Muslims settled or ruled, but which later fell under the political control of Christian powers (Spain,⁷⁶ Sicily,⁷⁷ India, Indonesia,⁷⁸ and some areas in Russia,⁷⁹), or at least non-Muslim rulers,⁸⁰ and those regions in which conversions

⁷²Kirakos Gandzakat, *History of the Armenians*, Robert Bedrosian, trans. *Sources for the Armenian Tradition*, (New York, 1986), pp. 147, 287.

⁷³Metsobetsi, *History*, pp. 60–63.

⁷⁴Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, vol. 2, pp. 14–15.

⁷⁵Manucci, *Storia*, vol. 1, pp. 338–40; see also Inayat Khan, *The Shah Jahan Nama* W. Begley and Z. Desai, trans. (Oxford, 1990), p. 560.

⁷⁶E.g., Hanna Kassis, "Muslim Revival in Spain in the Fifth/Eleventh Century," *Der Islam* 67 (1990): 83–95; D.M. Dunlop, "A Christian Mission to Muslim Spain in the 11th Century," *al-Andalus* 17 (1952): 259–310; Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission* (Princeton, 1984), pp. 57–84, and *passim*; O'Callaghan, "The Mudejars," pp. 28, 46–53, 62–63.

⁷⁷Jeremy Johns, "The Greek Church and the Conversion of Muslims in Norman Sicily?" *Byzantinische Forschungen* 21 (1995): 133–58; David Abulafia, "The End of Muslim Sicily," in *Muslims Under Latin Rule*, pp. 109, 111, 116; for the hostile account of Ataulloh Bogdan Kopanski, "Islam in Italy and its Libyan Colony," see *Islamic Studies* 32 (1993): 191–204. Conversion of Sicily to Christianity is discussed on pp. 194–96.

⁷⁸See, e.g., *Cambridge History of India*, R.R. Sethi, ed. (Delhi, 1963–68), pp. 97–99, 105–6, 114–20, 136–37; Lyle Vander Werff, *Christian Mission to Muslims* (South Pasadena, 1977), pp. 27–96; also Michael Northcott, "Christian and Muslim Relations in West Malaysia," *MW* 81 (1991): 62 (about conversions).

⁷⁹Hodgson, *Venture*, vol. 3, p. 221; B. Spuler, *The Mongol Period* (Princeton, 1994), pp. 88–91, 99–100; and Muḥammad Khan, "Islam under the Tsars and the October 1917 Revolution," *Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 12 (1991): 23–33.

⁸⁰Note the Muslim converts to Christianity in the West Bank, occupied by Israel:

took place during the period when Christianity was deemed to be a more powerful cultural force, attracting the dissatisfied (e.g., in India, Iran⁸¹ and in North Africa). Just as large numbers of Christians converted to Islam only when there was Muslim political domination of a particular region, large scale conversions of Muslims could also take place only under Christian political control.

It should be noted that Christian chronicles written in territories under Muslim political domination yielded surprisingly scarce documentation on conversion from Islam. This is surprising since these were strictly 'in-house' documents, a number of which were not even written in Arabic and there was little chance that they would be perused by Muslims. Perhaps they did not see the issue as newsworthy, in contradistinction to the Muslim sources which are more detailed in their descriptions of apostasy.⁸² This is also easily understandable, but the lack of Christian comment is curious. It goes without saying that the amount of polemical material produced by the subject Christian population (and the Byzantine Christians) was considerable. It is doubtful, however, whether this material was ever truly used for missionary purposes.⁸³ In all likelihood, the production of polemical material never succeeded in converting any Muslims to Christianity, although in certain cases that would seem to have been the stated purpose of the writing.⁸⁴ It should be noted, however, that the conversion process between Christianity and Islam still continues; whenever there is a vulnerable population within the reach of the other group, there is a missionary effort to convert them on the

"Documents and Source Material," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 27 (1998): 154-61, at p. 157; and *Christianity Today*, July 13, 1998.

⁸¹See Y. Armajani, "Christianity VIII: Christian missions in Persia" *EIr*, s.v.

⁸²Perusal of Severus b. al-Muqaffa', *History*, yielded three, and one of those was deemed to have actually been a Christian (by the author, at least), who was falsely accused of abandoning Islam (vol. 2, pp. 88-89, 97).

⁸³E.g., Adel-Theodor Khoury, *Polémique byzantine contre l'Islam* (Leyden, 1972); Sidney Griffith, "Islam and the *summa theologiae arabica*," *JSAI* 13 (1990): 225-64; *ibid*, "The Monks of Palestine and the Growth of Christian Literature in Arabic," *MW* 78 (1988): 1-28; *ibid*, "Muhammad and the Monk Bahira," *Oriens Christianus* 79 (1995): 146-74; and R. Haddad, "Ḥunayn b. Ishāq apologiste chrétien," *Arabica* 21 (1974): 292-302; G. Reinink, "The Beginnings of Syriac Apologetic Literature in Response to Islam," *Oriens Christianus* 77 (1993): 165-87.

⁸⁴Arthur Jeffery, "Ghevond's Text of the Correspondence Between Leo III and 'Umar II," *Harvard Theological Review* 37 (1944): 269-332; Daniel Sahas, "The Formulation of Later Islamic Doctrines as a Response to Byzantine Polemics," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 27 (1982): 307-26; Muzammil Siddiqi, "Muslims and Byzantine Christian Relations: Letter of Paul of Antioch and Ibn Taymiyyah's Response," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 31 (1986): 33-45; and see 'Abd al-Masīḥ al-Kindī, *Risāla* (Villach, 1990), which purports to be the correspondence between a Christian and a Muslim.

part of either Islam or Christianity.⁸⁵ That the issue of conversion is still a problem is revealed by the numerous *fatwās* being issued about this subject in various Muslim magazines and journals,⁸⁶ frequently concerning assimilation in the West. Yet Muslim writers, probably to minimize the problem and to emphasize the superiority of Islam, continue to deny regularly that there has been or is any conversion from Islam.⁸⁷

d. Apostasy for the sake of love

This may be considered a subsection of the above: sometimes there is the added element of love, which can ease the transition into the new faith and spice up the story. Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200) adds a number of stories of this nature to the repertoire of all the terrible things that falling in love can cause. Among them is a chapter called “those who apostatized because of romantic love.”⁸⁸ A number of the stories are stylized versions of Banū Isrā’īl stories; however, there are a few which inspire more confidence in their historicity, and it is apparent that Ibn al-Jawzī would not have included the chapter had he not been aware that this sort of apostasy occurred occasionally.

In al-Bayhaqī’s (d. 458/1066) *Shu‘ab al-īmān*, we have a romantic story of this nature. It is related as an aside and therefore inspires some confidence.

‘Abdū b. ‘Abd al-Raḥīm⁸⁹ said: We went out on a raid into the land of the Byzantines and a youth accompanied us. Among us there never was a more avid reader of the Qur’ān than him nor more learned in *fiqh* than him, nor one who fulfilled the ideal of fasting during the day and staying awake at

⁸⁵E.g., Lederer, pp. 331–32.

⁸⁶E.g., those of the Sa‘ūdī shaykh ‘Abdallāh b. Bāz in *Majallat al-buḥūth al-islāmiyya* 42 (1996): 97f.; and see the material about Hindu conversion drives among the Indian Muslims in *al-Rābiṭa* (Mar.-Apr. 1997), pp. 20–21.

⁸⁷See Gilles Keppel, *Islamic Extremism in Egypt* (London, 1985), pp. 117, 158; Muḥammad ‘Īsā Da‘ūd, *‘Alā ‘atabat al-Vatican* (Cairo: Dār al-Bashīr, 1997), pp. 66f.; for accounts of missionary activity among Muslims, see *Christianity Today*, Dec. 13, 1993, Mar. 4, 1996, Oct. 7, 1996, July 13, 1998. See also Barakat Ahmad, “Conversion from Islam.”

⁸⁸Ibn al-Jawzī, *Dhamm al-hawā* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadītha, 1962), pp. 458–60; see also Hanna Kassis, “Muslim Revival in Spain During the Fifth/Eleventh Century,” *Der Islam* 67 (1990): 84–85, 98–99 (the case of Zā‘ida, the daughter of al-Mu‘tamid b. ‘Abbād of Seville, who converted to Christianity when she married Alfonso VI of Leon-Castile; see also E. Levi-Provençal, “La mora Zaida,” *Hesperis* 18 [1934]: 1–8).

⁸⁹I could not find him in the biographical dictionaries.

night to pray more than him. We passed by a fortress, near which we had not received orders to halt, and that [youth] deviated from the army and went close to the fortress and we thought that he was going to urinate. But he gazed at a Christian woman looking from inside the fortress and fell in love with her and he called out to her in Greek: How can I obtain you? (lit. what is the way to you?) She said: When you convert to Christianity, and we open the gate for you, then I am yours. He said: And he did it, and he was granted leave to enter the fortress.

He said: We finished our raiding, depressed; every man among us was seeing the same sort of thing happening to the child of his loins, and then we returned in another raid [the next year] and passed by him looking down at us from the fortress with the Christians and we said: O so and so, what did your recitation [of the Qur'ān] accomplish, what did your knowledge accomplish? What did your prayers and your fasting accomplish? He said: Know that I have forgotten the entire Qur'ān; I do not remember any of it except this verse: 'Perhaps those who have disbelieved wish: "If they had become Muslims..." Leave them; let them eat and enjoy life, and let hope divert them; in the end they will know' [Qur'ān 15:2]."⁹⁰

This story, despite the fact that it appears in a *ḥadīth* collection, has a ring of historicity about it. The situation is entirely credible and the responses of each of the principal characters believable, though the citation of the Qur'ānic verse at the end might be a humorous touch.

In the following story from Mamlūk times, the protagonist appears in a less than positive light. A certain Christian man was having an affair with another man's wife and was caught *in flagrante delicto*. He

⁹⁰Al-Bayhaqī, *Shu'ab al-īmān* (Beirut, Dār al-Fikr, 1987), vol. 4, pp. 54–55 (no. 4319). The Qur'ānic citation is quoted slightly differently than in the received text; the translation is by Bell. His claim to have forgotten the Qur'ān is repeated in other similar inter-confessional love-stories: e.g., when Abū 'Abdallāh b. Jalā' fell in love with a Christian boy in Tortosa, he forgot the Qur'ān for a time; see Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīkh*, vol. 6, p. 84. On the subject of love between Arabs and Byzantines, see Nadia El-Cheikh, "Describing the Other to get at the Self: Byzantine Women in Arabic Sources," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 40 (1997): 239–50, esp. p. 242 where another convert to Christianity who fell for a Byzantine woman is described (the ultimate source for that is al-Qādī 'Abd al-Jabbār); and see also al-Ṭabarī, *Storm and Stress along the Northern Frontiers of the 'Abbāsī Caliphate* (trans. Bosworth [New York, 1990]), vol. 33, p. 108 [= al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, vol. 3, p. 1245] for a similar case.

was given the opportunity to convert to Islam to save his life and availed himself of this option. However, after a certain time, he went to the *qāḍī* and asked if he could return to Christianity. When he was told that was not possible, he began to shout that he believed in the divinity of Jesus and his mother (!). The *qāḍī* was quite tolerant and treated him well, merely imprisoning him for a period of time. But eventually he was killed and his body burned.⁹¹ Stories are available about beautiful Christian boys, for whom Muslims were willing to join monasteries (and presumably convert to Christianity).⁹² A great deal of work is left to be done on Muslim women converts to Christianity (and Christian women who converted to Islam), as Anna Vanzan has shown from material taken from the State Archive of Venice.⁹³

e. Apostasy under duress in war or during political reverses

There is also the category of those who are converted under duress or questionable circumstances. This is usually in the wake of a defeat on the battleground sustained by forces protecting the Muslim territory. This happened frequently along the borders with the Byzantine empire. The *adab* writer al-Tanūkhī records what happened when the Byzantine Nicephorus II conquered the city of Ṭarsūs (and much of the area of northern Syria over a period of years) in 354/965. His account is quite heart-rending and is probably designed to urge the disorganized Muslims to unite and take a stand against the energetic Byzantines. He says that the emperor gave the people several choices: exile, accepting Christianity or paying the *jizya* tax. It is interesting to see how this distinctly Muslim formula, which had been routinely addressed to the Byzantines after their defeats in the seventh century, is now offered to the vanquished Muslims. Al-Tanūkhī observes that a certain number of Muslims chose to convert to Christianity and that Muslim orphans were brought up as Christians.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, vol. 4, p. 884.

⁹² Al-Sibt b. al-ʿAjāmī al-Ḥalabī, *Kunūz al-dhahab fī taʾrīkh Ḥalab*, (Damascus, 1996), vol. 1, pp. 61–62, 63–65.

⁹³ Anna Vanzan, “In search of another identity: female Muslim-Christian conversions in the Mediterranean world,” *Islam and Muslim-Christian Relations* 7 (1996): 327–33.

⁹⁴ Al-Tanūkhī, *Nishwār al-muhādara*, Aboud Shalochy, ed. (n.p., 1971), vol. 4, pp. 52–53; Bosworth, “The City of Tarsus and the Arab-Byzantine Frontiers,” *Oriens* 33 (1992): p. 279; and J.M. Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford, 1986), p. 114, who lists a number of conversions in the frontier areas.

Prisoners on both sides were encouraged to convert in a manner not unlike the encouragement of defectors during the Cold War.⁹⁵ Sometimes they did so without being asked: in 325/936–37 a number of Muslims, who were persecuted by the governor of Sicily, fled to Byzantium, where it is said that most of them converted to Christianity.⁹⁶ On the Byzantine side, it was part of the reigning emperor's task to spread the Christian faith and therefore every opportunity was taken to do so.⁹⁷ Accounts for the year 251/865 mention that a number of the Muslim captives did not want to come back to the Muslim empire, stayed in Byzantium and converted to Christianity.⁹⁸ Similar events are documented for the years 322/934.⁹⁹ However, not all mass conversions were the result of conquests. Sometimes political exigencies influenced this policy as well. For example, in the year 1030, the Arab tribal confederations of Ṭayyī' and Kalb converted to Christianity under the influence of a political pact with the Emperor.¹⁰⁰ During the later Byzantine period, a number of Turks are said to have converted to Christianity during 662/1263 after a reverse in battle.¹⁰¹ 400 notables of the town of Shayzar led by their Qāḍī are said to have converted to Christianity when the Byzantine emperor appeared.¹⁰² Much later, a number of the members of the diplomatic delegation sent by Shah 'Abbās I to Europe in 1611 were said to have converted to Christianity in order to avoid the tyranny of the ambassador Dengiz Beg Rumlu, who was executed for his

⁹⁵See the examples in al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'* (Beirut, 1982), vol. 20, p. 28; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīkh*, vol. 19, p. 142, vol. 21, p. 357; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā'*, vol. 9, pp. 231–32; Matthew of Edessa, in *Armenia and the Crusades*, Ara Dostourian, trans. (University Press of America, 1993), p. 74; von Grunebaum, *Medieval Islam* (Chicago, 1953), p. 58; K.Y. Blankinship, *The End of the Jihād State* (New York, 1994), p. 200 (describing the expedition of Sulaymān b. Hishām in which some of the soldiers decided to stay and convert). Daniel Sahas, "Ritual of Conversion from Islam to the Byzantine Church," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 36 (1991): 57–69 gives us the formula prescribed for these converts. See also M. Arranz, "Les sacrements de l'ancien Euchologe constantinopolitain: admission dans l'Église des convertis des heresies ou d'autre religions non-chrétiens," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 49 (1983): 77–80 (on the conversion process for Muslims).

⁹⁶Ibn 'Idhārī, *Bayān*, vol. 1, p. 215.

⁹⁷P. Christou, "The Missionary task of the Byzantine Emperor," *Byzantina* 3 (1971): 279–86; and see Hussey, *Orthodox Church*, pp. 153–54 on the efforts of Manuel I Comnenus.

⁹⁸Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, vol. 1, pp. 144–45.

⁹⁹Bosworth, "Byzantium and the Arabs," *Journal of Oriental and African Studies* 3–4 (1991–92): 15

¹⁰⁰Andrew Cappel, "The Byzantine response to the 'Arab,'" *Byzantinische Forschungen* 20 (1994): 125–26, esp. note 30; during the reign of John Tzimiscēs a certain Turk of Baghdad converted with 500 followers: Matthew of Edessa, p. 24.

¹⁰¹Al-'Aynī, *Iqd al-jumān fī ta'rīkh ahl al-zamān*, Muḥammad Amīn, ed. (Cairo: al-Hay'a al-Miṣriyya, 1988), vol. 1, pp. 387–88.

¹⁰²Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij al-kurūb* (Cairo, 1953), vol. 1, p. 78.

behavior upon returning to Persia in 1613.¹⁰³

However, the most interesting and controversial case is that of Maimonides. He was from a refugee family originating in North Africa, where many of the Jews had been forced to convert to Islam during the period of the Muwaḥḥidūn (1147–1269). Later his family moved to Egypt, like so many of the Jews of al-Andalus and North Africa, and established itself there. However, the shadow of the past remained with Maimonides; at one point he was recognized by a man from North Africa, who by chance knew that he had converted to Islam (or so the man claimed).¹⁰⁴ This is a case in which scholars disagree on the interpretation of the data. Did Maimonides really convert to Islam or was this just a rumor spread by his enemies at court to lessen his influence there or to precipitate a scandal? We will probably never know the answer and it is impossible to reach a positive conclusion, although many scholars are inclined to believe the report.

In the western part of the Mediterranean, conversion of captives was very common. Prisoners who were not ransomed were usually expected to convert to the captor's faith.¹⁰⁵ The most outstanding example of this phenomenon was the geographer Leo Africanus, who was originally a Muslim from Granada whose name was al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Wazzān al-Zayyātī. After traveling widely in the areas of North Africa and Egypt and performing the *ḥajj*, he was captured by Christians and was converted to Christianity by Pope Leo X in 1520. Very little is known about him other than that he wrote the famous *Descrittione dell' Africa*. It seems that he eventually returned to Tunis after an extended absence and it is assumed that he reverted back to Islam, though there is no reference to the attitude of the Muslim authorities to his conversion, which was apparently performed willingly.¹⁰⁶ Others similar to him are said to have converted, and reverted back to their original faiths with great ease. Muḥammad Paulo Zaman¹⁰⁷ is said to have converted to Christianity while in Europe during the reign of Shāh 'Abbās II (1642–67), lived in India for a time, and then went back to Persia where he

¹⁰³Iskandar-i Munshi, *History*, vol. 2, p. 1076.

¹⁰⁴The much debated text is in Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, '*Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, August Müller, ed. (Königsberg: Sebsterverlag, 1884), vol. 2, p. 117.

¹⁰⁵See *Conversion and Continuity, passim*; on the subject of a Muslim captive in Europe, see P. van Koningsfeld and G.A. Wiegers, "The Polemical Works by Muḥammad b. Sa'īd al-Qaysī," *al-Qantara* 15 (1994): 163–99; Augustino Ahtisent, "Conversion de un sarraceno aragones," *al-Andalus* 31 (1966): 373–76 and the examples cited above.

¹⁰⁶Editors, "Leo Africanus," *EI*², s.v.; Constantinus Africanus 500 years before him was apparently also a willing convert, dying in Monte Cassino in 1087: B. Ben Yahia, "Constantinus Africanus," *EI*², s.v.

¹⁰⁷See above, at note 74.

reverted to Islam apparently without any compunction.¹⁰⁸

In other geographical areas, political reverses brought about religious changes as well. In Ethiopia there were periods when the Christian emperors forced Muslims to convert and thus removed large swathes of Muslim territory from *dār al-Islām*.¹⁰⁹ The situation was similar in the Christian Spanish kingdoms of Castile and Aragon,¹¹⁰ and in the Crusader kingdoms.¹¹¹ Usually Muslims who were captured by ships in the Mediterranean Sea were baptized without having much say in the matter. How many of these “converts” were or became true Christians is hard to tell because they left no record of their true feelings. Probably just like in the case of very dubious conversions to Islam, the first generation of such converts may not have been true believers, but their descendants were.

f. Defectors and theological examples

In *Siyar a‘lām al-nubalā’* by al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1347) we find the following entry concerning a Shī‘ī savant who is clearly disliked by the writer: “I [i.e., al-Dhahabī] found in a collection of the sayings of the Shaykh al-Ḥarīrī that ‘when my disciple enters the lands of the Byzantines, he converts to Christianity, eats pork and drinks wine; this is my work!’”¹¹² What is being described in this short citation is the process of precautionary dissimulation (*taqiyya*), but is it likely that a Shī‘ī religious leader would have his followers go to such extremes as conversion to Christianity, and even boast about it in public? It is more likely that

¹⁰⁸Nicholas Martinovitch, “The life of Mohammad Paulo Zaman,” *JAOS* 45 (1925): 106–9.

¹⁰⁹See J. Trimmingham, *Islam in Ethiopia* (London, 1965), pp. 122–23, on the emperor John at the end of the 1800s; E. Van Donzel, “L’Islam en Ethiopie vers 1650,” *Le Muséon* 100 (1987): 377–84; Ulrich Brankamper, “Medieval Muslim Survivals as a Stimulating Factor in the re-Islamization of South-Eastern Ethiopia,” *ZDMG* 137 (1987): 20–33.

¹¹⁰For early cases, see H. Kassis, “Roots of Conflict: Aspects of Christian Muslim confrontation in eleventh-century Spain,” in *Conversion and Continuity*, pp. 153–54, 156.

¹¹¹See H. Dajani-Shakeel, “Natives and Franks in Palestine: Perceptions and Interaction,” in *Conversion and Continuity*, pp. 172–78; and Benjamin Z. Kedar, “Muslims of the Frankish Levant,” in *Muslims Under Latin Rule*, pp. 153–56, 162–63; Kedar feels that conversion to Christianity was on the rise during the last 50 years of Frankish rule before 1187.

¹¹²Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, vol. 23, p. 225. He is also said to have told his disciples: “Swear to me (*bāyi‘ūnī*) that we will die as Jews and will be collected to the Fire [of Hell] so that no one will accompany me for a cause (*i-‘illa*) [other than true belief].”

in order to stigmatize this group, the idea that the instigator is likely to convert is mentioned, adding a further amount of opprobrium. The more common *topos* is found in connection to Judaism, like with the mysterious ‘Abdallāh b. Sabā’ or the beginnings of the Fāṭimīs,¹¹³ but the stigma of conversion to Christianity served the same purpose.

The Ash‘arīs apparently found this technique to be of good service. When the doctrines of al-Ash‘arī were being spread in Baghdad, for example, a number of people disagreed with them strongly. One such person was a certain Ibn al-Saqqā’ who attacked the local Ash‘arī scholar Yūsuf b. Ayyūb al-Hamdhānī about the fundamentals (*uṣūl*) of his creed. The latter is said to have replied to him: “Sit, for I find within your speech the air of infidelity; it may be that you will die believing something other than Islam.” The text goes on to say: “And it was agreed that after a time Ibn al-Saqqā’ went to the land of the Byzantines, converted to Christianity and died as an infidel.”¹¹⁴ It is rather difficult to ascertain the exact meaning of this story. One would suspect that the views of Ibn al-Saqqā’ were attacked because their author became a Christian later on, or perhaps the whole episode is fictitious and designed to present the Ash‘arīs’ opponents in a bad light.

The Mu‘tazila were also not above using this method. In *Kitāb al-bayān wa al-tabyīn* by al-Jāhīz (d. 255/869), we have an account of a certain *al-murtadd al-Khurasānī*. It is clear from the text that he had been converted to Christianity. The caliph al-Ma’mūn (r. 198–218/813–33) is debating him and is portrayed as being anxious to win the man back through rational arguments characteristic of the Mu‘tazila. The whole speech is formulated in the fashion of material written by al-Jāhīz himself, so there is no certainty that these are the words used by al-Ma’mūn, if the event was historical. Indeed, the *murtadd* himself speaks only twice — once when al-Ma’mūn asks him (after a long opening statement about his clemency — a broad hint) what made him want to convert to Christianity. His reply is that “the many [religious] differences that I see among you (i.e., the Muslims) troubled me.” Al-Ma’mūn answers that accusation, and finally the *murtadd* acknowledges the truth of what al-Ma’mūn was saying and converts to Islam.¹¹⁵ It is difficult

¹¹³ Al-Maqrīzī, *Itti‘āz al-ḥunafā’* (Cairo: Muḥammad Tawfiq ‘Uwayḍa, 1967), vol. 1, pp. 39f.

¹¹⁴ Al-Sibt b. al-Jawzī, *Mir‘āt al-zamān* (Ḥaydarābād, 1951), vol. 8, p. 41.

¹¹⁵ Al-Jāhīz, *Kitāb al-bayān wa al-tabyīn*, Ḥasan al-Sandawī, ed. (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Istiqāma, 1947), vol. 3, pp. 305–07; the story also appears in Ibn Qutayba, *Uyūn al-akhbār* (Cairo: al-Mu‘assasa al-Miṣriyya al-‘Āmma, n.d.), vol. 2, pp. 154–55 (in a slightly different form); and Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi, *al-‘Iqd al-farīd* (Cairo, 1949), vol. 1, p. 255. For Christianity in Khurasān at the time, J. Fiey, “Chrétiens Syriaques du Ḥorasan et du Segestān,” *Le Muséon* 86 (1973): 75–104.

to gauge what the *murtadd* believes, since the story does not allow him to speak about his beliefs; it is designed to facilitate his reconversion.

Several prominent intellectuals were under heavy suspicion of having abandoned Islam. Usually this group is subsumed in the blanket phrase of *zindīq* (pl. *zanādiqa*), which is defined as one who leaves Islam for some form of Mazdakism or secretly believes in an Iranian dualistic religion. However, given the uncertainty concerning the nature of the belief system of the *zanādiqa*, it is futile to examine this sort of apostasy here.¹¹⁶ It certainly did not involve a formal apostasy from Islam in the same manner as did the conversion to Christianity or Judaism.

Probably one of the strangest conversions to Christianity (if it can indeed be called a conversion) is related by Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba for the year 787/1385, and concerns an attack on a particular style of clothing. He says that Egyptian women adopted a fashion of wearing a certain band called *shāsh*.¹¹⁷ One anonymous woman saw the Prophet in a dream. He forbade her to wear this *shāsh*. For a while she obeyed him, but then she started wearing it again. She saw the Prophet for the second time, and he told her that if she continued to wear it, she would die a Christian. She consulted Shaykh Sirāj al-Dīn ‘Umar al-Bulqīnī, who told her that the word of the Prophet Muḥammad had the force of the law (*ḥukm*), but that she should go to the church, pray there, ask God’s forgiveness and then return and make entreaties to the Prophet. However, fate overtook her: she died in the church and was buried among the Christians with the approval of her family.¹¹⁸ In other words, she converted to Christianity on the strength of the dream in which she saw the Prophet Muḥammad.

h. Apocalyptic apostasy

Muslim fears of apostasy are not confined merely to the real, present world, but are projected into the apocalyptic future as well. However, these ideas may contain some element of historical truth, and one should not ignore the possibility that these are echoes of events not recorded in history books, but are, nevertheless, authentic. Several themes are

¹¹⁶For a full discussion, see Sarah Stroumsa, *Freethinkers of Medieval Islam: Ibn al-Rawāndī, Abū Bakr al-Rāzī and their Impact on Islamic Thought* (Leiden, 1999).

¹¹⁷For *shāsh* in the sense of turban-shawl, see L.A. Mayer, *Mamlūk costumes* (Genève: Albert Kundig, 1952), index (especially p. 71, note 3). Our text says that *shāsh* “resembles the humps of Bactrian camels” (*tushbīhu asnīmat al-bukht*). See Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh*, vol. 3, p. 534. For other examples of fashions which were offensive to religious sensitivities, see al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, vol. 2, p. 810.

¹¹⁸Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh* (Damascus, 1977), vol. 1, p. 162; al-Ṣayrāfī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, vol. 1, pp. 120–21; and al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, vol. 3, pp. 534–35.

dominant. The first one, that of defection, is well known. There are several cases of defection in Muslim apocalyptic traditions. They are subdivided into cases of individual defectors and cases of those who defected in groups. The Umayyads are singled out as the group from which the defectors come. They defect individually and in groups. The first conversion among them is that of an Umayyad prince, who was governor of Egypt, was dismissed, fled to the Byzantine Empire and converted to Christianity. Moreover, he is said to lead the Byzantine forces in their invasion of Syria.¹¹⁹ It is very likely that this is the incident mentioned in the Christian apocalypse of Peter (*ca.* 9th century CE):

When you see the King bringing out the young man who is a scion of the mighty Kings of the Children of Ishmael, and when (this young man) believes in me and becomes one of my lambs and enters my fold and goes to my holy city — he is one of the descendants of Ishmael and it is he who will induce the lion's whelp to cause the two Kings to appear on the earth. . .¹²⁰

But the woes of the Umayyads are not over yet; they are said to flee to Byzantium when the *mahdī* comes to Syria. However, the Byzantines, while welcoming them, demand that they convert to Christianity, which they do after an ineffectual protest.¹²¹ The Sufyānī, who is the apocalyptic enemy of the Shī'ī *mahdī*, is also said to come to Syria with a cross around his neck, emphasizing the fact that he has openly denied Islam.¹²²

Apostasies are expected also at other points in the apocalyptic scenario. Apostasy, or the danger of it, is expected during wars against the Byzantines. At a crucial battle against these powerful foes, there will be a terrible apostasy (*riḍḍa shadīda*) against Islam which will require the Muslim fighters to invest superhuman efforts in the war, but finally they will defeat the Byzantines and conquer Constantinople.¹²³ This fear was not confined to the Muslims of Syria; those in Spain also felt that many

¹¹⁹Nu'aym, *Fitan*, Suhayl Zakkār, ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1993), pp. 291, 295, 298, 300; al-Haythamī, *Maḡma' al-zawā'id*, vol. 7, p. 318; and al-Hindī, *Kanz*, vol. 11, p. 126 (no. 30888).

¹²⁰Alphonse Mingana (ed.), "The Apocalypse of Peter," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 14 (1930), pp. 492–93; there is a discussion about a prominent defector in S. Griffith, "Bešer/Bashir." *Le Muséon* 103 (1990): 259–310.

¹²¹Al-Majlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 52, p. 377.

¹²²Al-Majlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 52, p. 217, vol. 53, pp. 80–82.

¹²³Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaḡ*, vol. 11, p. 386 (no. 20813); Abū Ya'lā al-Mawṣilī, *Musnad* (Damascus, 1986), vol. 11, pp. 164–65, 259–60; and see al-Majlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 42, p. 151.

would be converted to Judaism and Christianity at the end of time.¹²⁴ Curiously, Muslims feared apostasy to idolatry, a faith which does not seem to have been particularly tempting. Most scholars believe that idolatry died out entirely after the coming of Islam and did not present a religious alternative in the same manner as Judaism or Christianity. However, not all Muslims felt the same way. Dhū al-Khalāṣa, an idol belonging to the Banū Daws, is said to have continuously tempted the Muslims. According to al-Ṭabarānī, “only Dhū al-Khalāṣa remains of the idols of the Jāhiliyya.”¹²⁵ This curious statement would be inexplicable if it were not for the numerous traditions describing apocalyptic apostasy precisely to this idol. “The Hour [of Judgment] will not arrive until the buttocks of the women of Daws will shake at Dhū al-Khalāṣa; it was an idol that Daws worshiped in the Jāhiliyya in Ṭabāla.”¹²⁶ Overall, there seems to be a fear that Muslims are going to revert to idolatry during the end of times. “The Hour [of Judgment] will not arrive until the Arabs will worship what their fathers worshipped 120 years after the descent of Jesus and after the Dajjāl.”¹²⁷ So it would seem that whatever the outward appearances of Islamization are, the future holds a period of idolatry for the Arabs in which they will return to their ancestors’ ways.

3. Conclusions

A serious history of conversion from Islam has yet to be written. The sources for this subject are plentiful, but scattered, and need to be collected. However, the research is likely to bear fruit, if only to put to rest an old canard: that Muslims do not convert to other faiths. In the present article, it has only been possible to classify some of the more prominent cases of conversion. In future, perhaps conclusions can be drawn from the proclivity of the inhabitants of certain regions to apostatize in contradistinction to others. It is rather interesting to note the changes over the centuries towards the ways in which the apostates acted. At first it would seem that apostasy was invariably connected

¹²⁴ Al-Dānī, *al-Sunan al-wārida fī al-ḥadīth wa-ghawā’ilihā wa al-sā’a wa-ashrāṭihā* (Beirut, 1993), vol. 3, p. 544 (no. 234).

¹²⁵ Quoted in al-Hindī, *Kanz*, vol. 1, p. 267 (no. 1344).

¹²⁶ Nu’aym, *Fitān*, pp. 365 and see 302, 364; and see Ibn Abī Shayba, *Musannaḥ*, vol. 7, p. 463 (no. 37246). See T. Fahd, “Dhū al-Khalāṣa,” *EI*², s.v. It was worshipped by the tribes of Daws, Khath’am, Bajīla and a part of the tribe of Azd. It was located between Mecca and the Yemen.

¹²⁷ Nu’aym, *Fitān*, p. 365.

with political defection. The apostate would make a run for the border and simultaneously change his faith. Thus it is hardly surprising to see that when many border regions changed hands during the course of raids, invasions and counter-invasions, their inhabitants changed their faith as well. Gradually, however, the apostate apparently would either seek to disappear within the mass of the Christian or Jewish population and hope that no one who had known him as Muslim would ever recognize him. The only way for him to become known would have been to seek martyrdom in order to make a religious statement of defiance. This last option was particularly attractive for double apostates, who felt a strong need to atone for their weakness. In Christianity this would be done by a passive martyrdom, like that of the Copts mentioned above.

The accepted punishment for apostasy from early stages of Islam was death; however, it is not certain when this became normative (probably during the early ‘Abbāsī times). This belies those modernists who have sought to deny the existence of this punishment, though their efforts are laudable as an attempt at reinterpretation of the legal tradition.¹²⁸ Aḥmadī Muslims have also sought to show that the punishment for apostasy is not death, that such was never the case in Islam, and that one is absolutely free to choose one’s faith.¹²⁹ This position is hardly surprising given the fact that Aḥmadīs, being a missionary oriented movement with considerable activity in the West, are sensitive to modern perceptions of Islam and have consciously sought to rectify what they see as misconceptions among their Western audiences. There is probably an element of self-serving propaganda in their conclusions as well, since while they see themselves as true Muslims, most Muslims consider Aḥmadīs to be apostates. In fact, it is really amazing when reading modernists like Syed Barakat Ahmad, or Aḥmadīs like Zafrullah Khan, to note the ease with which they ignore the weight of the entire Muslim legal tradition.

The Muslim attitude in the early period, before the ‘Abbāsīs, is very uncertain. It appears that there were very few executions of apostates during the Umayyad period and during the reign of the early ‘Abbāsīs. Most of the ones who were recorded and known to be apostates actually fled; others presumably disappeared into the local population of Jews and Christians. It is very difficult to interpret the material from the time of the Prophet and the first caliphs. On the face of it, they are

¹²⁸Some of these are mentioned in Peters and De Vries, “Apostasy,” pp. 18–24.

¹²⁹The most notable effort was that of Muḥammad Zafrullah Khan, “Punishment of Apostasy in Islam.” While this was a noble effort, one who has actually read the literature must conclude that the author simply ignores any tradition that does not fit his interpretation. See also Mawlānā Muḥammad ‘Alī, *The Religion of Islam* (Lahore, 1983), pp. 573–81, where the Christians are actually blamed for supposedly contriving these punishments.

supposed to have executed a considerable number of apostates (though Muḥammad was apparently inclined to be merciful after the conquest of Mecca), but one should note that only very few names are given by the sources.¹³⁰ Usually the situations that are described are very generic. This is in sharp contrast to the punishment, which is very specific, leading one to the conclusion that a number of these cases are simply legal precedents designed to justify the punishment of apostates in later times. If it had been different — for example, if the names of specific apostates were remembered, but their punishments were not — then it would be easier to believe that these were actual historical events. I have not come across any tradition in which the punishment was vague or unspecified, while the identity of the apostate was clear. If we were speaking about historical events, both types of information should be available.

However, the fact is that at an early stage of Islamic history, apostasy from the tiny minority of ruling Muslims was seen as a betrayal, and was punished by the government with all its resources. This attitude has been strengthened immensely over the centuries to the point where even when modern Arab or Muslim states abolish the death penalty for apostasy, it is usually enforced by the enraged populace.¹³¹ This attitude groups the prohibition of apostasy with a small number of extra-*sharʿī* laws, like those pertaining to honor and sexuality, whose enforcement does not rely upon written laws, but is part of the fabric of society.¹³² It is not at all unusual for Muslims to ostracize family members who convert to other faiths, and proclaim them to be dead when the judicial system cannot touch the offenders (e.g., when they are in the West).

The conclusion of this article is that Muslim attitudes toward apostasy did not develop until the ʿAbbāsī times for several reasons.¹³³ First of all, the most prominent apostates apparently placed themselves beyond the reach of Muslim justice. Secondly, it would seem that the policy of the Umayyads towards such people was that of persuasion and not of summary justice. Even ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz is portrayed, in several traditions, as a persuader rather than a punitive ruler. The positions of the early ʿIrāqī legal school of Abū Ḥanīfa also indicates that the attitude was considerably more lax at the time of the late Umayyads and early ʿAbbāsīs. It is possible that the government even encouraged apostates

¹³⁰Several exceptions to this rule are given: one al-Musawwar al-ʿIjlī is mentioned in Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Muḥallā*, vol. 12, p. 111 (he is called al-Mustawrid al-ʿIjlī in Kraemer, "Apostates," p. 42).

¹³¹In fact, Hodgson, *Venture*, vol. 2, p. 120 considers the stringent attitude to apostasy as one of the two unifying factors in the middle period of Islamic history.

¹³²See Frank Stewart, *Honor* (Chicago, 1994).

¹³³See Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 343, 596.

simply to leave, because then they would not have to deal with them, and punished only people like ‘Abd al-Masiḥ al-Ghassānī who were blatant about their apostasy and refused to leave. In other words, if someone sought martyrdom, they would not refuse it to him, but they preferred a different option. As a matter of fact, the sources clearly indicate that the punishment for apostasy was very haphazard. This is not to say that many of the offenders got off scot-free, but that there was no effective method for bringing them to justice. Either they were found out by chance, usually by someone who knew them, who recognized them as former Muslims, or they confessed their apostasy as part of a deliberate policy on their part, knowing what the punishment would be. We are not able to find out how many apostates slipped through the cracks of this extraordinarily inefficient method of keeping track of who is a Muslim and who is not. One can say that all the necessary laws were in place for the punishment of apostates; however, there does not seem to have been any machinery to enforce them. This is particularly true with regard to the Coptic converts to Islam in Egypt. Given the highly dubious nature of their conversion, it seems almost inevitable that some of them would remain crypto-Christians, as did the followers of Shabbetai Zvi (the *dönme*) in a later period with regard to Judaism. Yet the Copts were monitored by the Muslim populace, and it is impossible to find out how effective such a method was.

Regarding the apostasy versus conversion paradigm, one can say that while there is not very much evidence for apostasy from Islam, the material pertinent to conversion to Islam is also scarce. Though Muslims would like conversion to Islam to be irreversible,¹³⁴ most likely it was not, until very recent times when people’s religious beliefs have come under the scrutiny of centralized governments. Although one cannot say that there was at any time an inordinate number of apostates, it is reasonably certain that the numbers were much larger than the sources indicate. It also seems certain that the vast majority got away with it and were never exposed. The sources do not provide us with enough material to reach solid conclusions. In fact, scholars working on conversion to Islam noted that the historical sources pay little attention to the subject; this seems to be the situation regarding apostasy from Islam

¹³⁴There is a light-hearted story about that in al-Tawḥīdī, *al-Baṣā’ir wa al-dhakhā’ir* (Beirut, 1988), vol. 5, p. 47 (no. 156): “A Christian would come occasionally to al-Ḍahhāk b. Muzāḥim and one day he said: ‘I have always been attracted to Islam since I have known you.’ He said: ‘So what keeps you from it?’ He said: ‘My love of wine.’ He said: ‘Convert to Islam, and drink!’ When he converted, al-Ḍahhāk said to him: ‘You have converted to Islam, so if you drink wine, we will punish you with the *ḥadd* punishments, and if you abandon Islam, we will kill you!’ He abandoned the drinking of wine and became a good Muslim.”

as well. The conclusions of scholars who maintain that apostasy from Islam was infrequent are not justified, if only because there is almost as much material about apostasy as there is about conversion. While it would be incorrect to presume that apostasy was more prevalent than conversion, there is also the fact that Islam has not expanded in all areas at the same speed. This may reflect a hidden drain on the community not brought out by the historians, or perhaps not even seen by them. Probably the sources list only the celebrity cases; it is therefore very likely that we are dealing only with the tip of the iceberg. The policy towards apostasy developed during the late Umayyad period and the early 'Abbāsī one, coming into its present form during the high 'Abbāsī era (785–861). This is the period in which we have the first verifiable executions of apostates. It was part and parcel of the general injunctions against assimilation current in the society,¹³⁵ and was absolutely essential for the Muslim community to retain its integrity. However, the policy was not enforced by the government, but by the Muslim populace.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- A Shī'ī Muslim. "How I Found Christ." *MW* 1 (1910): 179–82.
- Abulafia, David Abulafia. "The End of Muslim Sicily." In James Powell, ed. *Muslims Under Latin Rule 1100–1300*. Princeton, 1990, pp. 104–20.
- Ahmad, Syed Barakat. "Conversion from Islam." In C.E. Bosworth, ed. *The Islamic World from Classical to Modern Times: Essays in honor of Bernard Lewis*. Princeton, 1989, pp. 3–25.
- Ahtisent, Augustino. "Conversion de un sarraceno aragones." *Al-Andalus* 31 (1966): 373–76.
- Ali, Mawlana Muhammad. *The Religion of Islam*. Lahore, 1983.
- Allen, Ch. "Why a Muslim official changed his faith." *MW* 40 (1950): 176–84.
- Arranz, M. "Les sacrements de l'ancien Euchologe constantinopolitain: admission dans l'Église des convertis des Heresies ou d'autre religions non-chrétiens." *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 49 (1983): 77–80.

¹³⁵See M.J. Kister, "Lā tashabbahū," *JSAI* 12 (1989): 321–71.

- Al-ʿAynī. *ʿIqd al-jumān fī taʾrīkh ahl al-zamān*. Muḥammad Amīn, ed. Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya, 1988.
- Bar Hebraeus. *Chronography*. E.A.W. Budge, trans. Oxford, 1932.
- Barton, J.L. "A Mohammanadan Imam's Discovery of Christ." *MW* 6 (1916): 389–93.
- Al-Bayhaqī. *Shuʿab al-īmān*. Beirut: Dār al-fikr, 1987.
- Bell, Richard. *The Qurʾān Translated*. Edinburgh, 1937.
- Al-Biqāʿī. *Izhār al-ʿaṣr li-asrār ahl al-ʿaṣr*. Riyāḍ, 1992.
- Blankinship, K.Y. *The End of the Jihad State*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1994.
- Bosworth, C.E. "Byzantium and the Arabs." *Journal of Oriental and African Studies* 3–4 (1991–92): 10–23.
- . "The City of Ṭarsūs and the Arab-Byzantine Frontiers." *Oriens* 33 (1992): 268–86.
- Brankamper, Ulrich. "Medieval Muslim Survivals as a Stimulating Factor in the re-Islamization of South-Eastern Ethiopia." *ZDMG* 137 (1987): 20–33.
- Brelvi, Mahmud. *Islam on the March*. Karachi, 1968.
- Bulliet, Richard. *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979.
- Burns, Robert. "Muslims in Aragon." In James Powell, ed. *Muslims Under Latin Rule 1100–1300*. Princeton, 1990, pp. 78–80.
- Cambridge History of India*. R.R. Sethi, ed. Delhi, 1963–68.
- Cappel, Andrew. "The Byzantine Response to the 'Arab.'" *Byzantinische Forschungen* 20 (1994): 125–26.
- Christou, P. "The Missionary Task of the Byzantine Emperor." *Byzantina* 3 (1971): 279–86.
- Constantelos, Demetrios. "The Neo-martyrs as Evidence for Methods and Motives Leading to Conversion and Martyrdom in the Ottoman Empire." *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 23 (1978): 216–31.
- Dajani-Shakeel, H. "Natives and Franks in Palestine: Perceptions and Interaction." In Gervers and Bikhazi, eds. *Conversion and Continuity*, pp. 172–78.

- Al-Dānī. *Al-Sunan al-wārīda fī al-fitan wa ghawā'ilihā wa al-sā'a wa ash-rāṭihā*. Beirut, 1993.
- Dā'ūd, Muḥammad 'Īsā. *'Ala 'atabāt al-Vatican*. Cairo: Dār al-Bashīr, 1997.
- Dawkins, R.M. "The Crypto-Christians of Turkey." *Byzantion* 8 (1933): 247–75.
- DeWeese, Devin. *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde*. Penn State: University Park, 1994.
- Al-Dhahabī. *Al-'Ibar fī khabar man ghabar*. Beirut, n.d.
- . *Siyār a'lām al-nubalā'*. Beirut, 1982.
- Dick, I. "La passion arabe de S. Antoine Ruwah." *Le Muséon* 74 (1961): 108–33.
- Al-Dimashqī, Mikhā'il al-Burayk. *Ta'rīkh al-Shām (1720–82)*. Beirut, 1930.
- Donzel, E. van. "L'Islam en Ethiopie vers 1650." *Le Muséon* 100 (1987): 377–84.
- Dozy, R.P.A. *Dictionnaire détaillé des nomes des vêtements chez les Arabes*. Amsterdam, 1845.
- Dughlat, Mīrzā Ḥaydar. *Ta'rīkh-i Rashīdī*. W. Thackston, trans. Harvard: Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures 38, 1996.
- Dunlop, D.M. "A Christian Mission to Muslim Spain in the 11th Century." *al-Andalus* 17 (1952): 259–310.
- El-Cheikh, Nadia. "Describing the Other to get at the Self: Byzantine Women in Arabic Sources." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 40 (1997): 239–50.
- Encyclopedia Iranica*. E. Yarshater, ed. Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1992–.
- Encyclopedia of Islam*². Bernard Lewis, C.E. Bosworth, et al., eds. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960–2002.
- Fiey, J. "Chrétien Syriaque du Horasan et du Segestan." *Le Muséon* 86 (1973): 75–104.
- Frankel, Jonathan. *The Damascus Affair*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

- Friedman, Ellen. *Spanish Captives in North Africa*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983.
- Friedman, M.A. *Ha-Rambam, ha-mashi'aḥ be-Teman ve ha-shemad* ("Maimonides, the messiah in the Yemen and apostasy"). Jerusalem: The Ben Zvi Institute, 2002.
- Friedmann, Yohanan. "A note on the conversion of Egypt to Islam." *JSAI* 3 (1981–1982): 238–40.
- . *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Gandzakat, Kirakos. *History of the Armenians*. Robert Bedrosian, trans. Sources for the Armenian Tradition, New York, 1986.
- Garcia-Arenal, M. "Les Bildiyya de Fes, un groupe de neo-musulmans d'origine juive." *Studia Islamica* 66 (1987): 113–44.
- Gervers, Michael and Ramzi Jibran Bikhazi, eds. *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands*. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1990.
- Gil, Moshe. *A History of Palestine 634–1099*. Ethel Broido, trans. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Goitein, S.D. *A Mediterranean Society II: The Community*. Berkeley, 1971.
- Griffith, S. "Abd al-Masīḥ al-Ghassānī." *Le Muséon* 98 (1985): 331–74.
- . "Islam and the *summa theologiae arabica*." *JSAI* 13 (1990): 225–64.
- . "The Monks of Palestine and the Growth of Christian Literature in Arabic." *MW* 78 (1988): 1–28.
- . "Muḥammad and the Monk Baḥīra." *Oriens Christianus* 79 (1995): 146–74.
- Grünebaum, Gustave E. von. *Medieval Islam*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953.
- Haddad, R. "Ḥunayn b. Iṣḥāq, apologiste chrétien." *Arabica* 21 (1974): 292–302.
- Al-Ḥalabī, al-Sibt̄ b. al-ʿAjamī. *Kunūz al-dhahab fī taʾrīkh Ḥalab*. Damascus, 1996.
- Al-Haythamī. *Majmaʿ al-zawāʿid*. Beirut: Dār al-fikr, n.d.

- Al-Hindī. *Kanz al-‘ummāl*. Beirut: Mu’assasat al-risāla, 1987.
- Hodgson, Marshall. *The Venture of Islam*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974.
- Hoyland, Robert. *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*. Princeton: Darwin Press, 1997.
- Hussey, J.M. *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire*. Oxford, 1986.
- Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi. *al-‘Iqd al-farīd*. Cairo, 1949.
- Ibn Abī Shayba. *Muṣannaf*. N.p., n.d.
- Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a. ‘*Uyūn al-anbā’ fī tabaqāt al-aṭibbā’*. August Müller, ed. Königsberg: Sebsterverlag, 1884.
- Ibn ‘Asākir. *Ta’rīkh madīnat Dimashq*. Beirut: Dār al-fikr, 1995–99.
- Ibn al-Athīr. *Al-Kāmil fī al-ta’rīkh*. C. Tornberg, ed. Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1965 [reprint].
- Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī. *Inbā’ al-ghumr bi-abnā’ al-‘umr*. Ḥaydarābād: Dā’irat al-ma‘ārif, 1974.
- Ibn Ḥazm. *Al-Muḥallā*. Beirut, 1988.
- Ibn ‘Idhārī. *Bayān*. E. Levi-Provençal, ed. Cairo, 1948.
- Ibn Iyās. *Badā’i‘ al-zuhūr fī waqā’i‘ al-duhūr*. Cairo, 1982.
- Ibn al-Jawzī. *Dhamm al-hawā*. Cairo: Dār al-kutub al-ḥadītha, 1962.
- . *al-Muntaẓam fī al-ta’rīkh*. Muḥammad Qādir ‘Aṭā’ and Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Aṭā’, eds. Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-‘ilmiyya, 1992.
- Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Sibṭ. *Mir’āt al-zamān*. Ḥaydarābād, 1951.
- Ibn al-Muqaffa‘, Severus. *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church*. ‘Abd al-Masiḥ, Atiya and Burmester, trans. Cairo, 1943.
- Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba. *Ta’rīkh*. Damascus, 1994.
- Ibn al-Qunfudh. *Al-Furūsiyya fī mabādi’ al-dawla al-Ḥafsiyya*. Tunis: al-Dār al-Tūnisiyya li-l-Nashr, 1968.
- Ibn Qutayba. ‘*Uyūn al-akhbār*. Cairo: al-Mu’assasa al-Miṣriyya al-‘Āmma, n.d.
- Ibn Wāsil. *Mufarrij al-kurūb*. Cairo, 1953.

- Al-Isfahānī, al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabāʾ*. Cairo: Dār al-ḥayāt, n.d.
- Iskandar-i Munshī. *History of Shah Abbas the Great*. Roger Savory, trans. Boulder, 1978,
- Al-Jāḥiz. *Kitāb al-bayān wa al-tabayīn*. Ḥasan al-Sindāwī, ed. Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-istiḳāma, 1947.
- Jeffery, Arthur. "Ghevond's Text of the Correspondence Between Leo III and 'Umar II." *Harvard Theological Review* 37 (1944): 269–332.
- Johns, Jeremy. "The Greek Church and the Conversion of Muslims in Norman Sicily?" *Byzantinische Forschungen* 21 (1995): 133–58.
- Kassis, Hanna. "Muslim Revival in Spain in the Fifth/Eleventh Century." *Der Islam* 67 (1990): 83–95.
- . "Roots of Conflict: Aspects of Christian Muslim Confrontation in Eleventh-century Spain." In Gervers and Bikhazi, eds., *Conversion and Continuity*, pp. 151–160.
- Kedar, Benjamin Z. *Crusade and Mission*. Princeton, 1984.
- . "Muslims of the Frankish Levant." In James Powell, ed. *Muslims Under Latin Rule 1100–1300*. Princeton, 1990, pp. 153–63.
- Keppel, Gilles. *Islamic Extremism in Egypt*. London, 1985.
- Kettani, Ali. *Muslim Minorities in the World Today*. London, 1986.
- Khan, Inayat. *The Shah Jahan Nama*. W. Begley and Z. Desai, trans. Oxford, 1990.
- Khan, Muhammad. "Islam under the Tsars and the October 1917 Revolution." *Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 12 (1991): pp. 23–33.
- Khan, Muhammad Zafrullah. "The Punishment of Apostasy in Islam." *Review of Religions* 77 (1982): 321–52.
- Khoury, Adel-Theodor. *Polémique byzantine contre l'Islam*. Leyden, 1972.
- Kindī, 'Abd al-Masīḥ. *Risāla*. Villach: Light of Life, 1990.
- Kister, M.J. "'Do not assimilate yourselves...': *Lā tashabbahū*." *JSAI* 12 (1989): 321–71.
- Konigsfeld, P. van, and G.A. Wiegers. "The Polemical Works by Muḥammad b. Sa'īd al-Qaysī." *Al-Qanṭara* 15 (1994): 163–99.

- Kopanski, Ataullah Bogdan. "Islam in Italy and its Libyan Colony." *Islamic Studies* 32 (1993): 191–201.
- Kose, Ali. *Conversion to Islam: A Study of Native British Converts*. London: Kegan Paul, 1996.
- Kraemer, Joel. "Apostates, Rebels and Brigands." *Israel Oriental Studies* 10 (1980): 34–73.
- Al-Kutubī. *‘Uyūn al-tawārīkh*. Baghdād, 1984.
- Lapidus, Ira. "The Conversion of Egypt to Islam." *Israel Oriental Studies* 2 (1972): 248–62.
- Lederer, György. "Islam in Albania." *Central Asian Survey* 13 (1994): 331–9.
- Lev, Yaacov. "Persecutions and Conversion to Islam." *Asian and African Studies* 22 (1988): 73–91.
- Levi-Provençal, E. "La mora Zaida." *Hesperis* 18 (1934): 1–8.
- Levtzion, Nehemia, ed. *Conversion to Islam*. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1979.
- Little, Donald. "Coptic Conversion to Islam under the Bahrī Mamlūks." *BSOAS* 39 (1976): 552–69.
- . "Coptic Converts to Islam." In Gervers and Bikhazi, eds., *Conversion and Continuity*, pp. 263–88.
- Al-Majlisī, Muḥammad al-Bāqir. *Bihār al-anwār*. Beirut: Mu’assasat al-wafā’, 1983.
- Manucci, Niccolao. *Storia do Mogor*. Calcutta: Editions Indian, 1965.
- Al-Maqrīzī. *Itti’āz al-ḥunafā’*. Cairo: Muḥammad Tawfiq ‘Uwayḍa, 1967.
- . *al-Sulūk li-ma’rifat duwal al-mulūk*. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ziyāda, ed. Cairo, n.d.
- Marin-Guzman, R., "The Causes of the Revolt of ‘Umar b. Ḥafṣūn in al-Andalus (880–928): A Study in Medieval Islamic Social History." *Arabica* 42 (1995): 180–221.
- . "The End of the Revolt of ‘Umar b. Ḥafṣūn in al-Andalus." *Islamic Studies* 34 (1995): 153–206.
- Martinovitch, Nicholas. "The life of Mohammad Paulo Zaman." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 45 (1925): 106–9.

- Matthew of Edessa. In *Armenia and the Crusades*. Ara Dostourian, trans. University Press of America, 1993.
- Metsobetsi, Tovma. *History of Tamerlane and His Successors*. Robert Bedrossian, trans. New York, 1987.
- Mingana, Alphonse, ed. "The Apocalypse of Peter." *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 14 (1930): 182–297, 423–562.
- Moreen, Vera. "The problems of conversion among Iranian Jews in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries." *Iranian Studies* 19 (1986): 215–28.
- Muṣaʿb b. al-Zubayr. *Nasab Quraysh*. E. Levi-Provençal, ed. Cairo, 1976.
- Al-Nāṣirī, Aḥmad b. Khālīd. *Al-Istiḡṣāʾ li-akhbār duwal al-maghrib al-aqsā*. Casablanca, 1954.
- Northcott, Michael. "Christian and Muslim Relations in West Malaysia." *MW* 81 (1991): 62–70.
- Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād. *Fitan*. Suhayl Zakkār, ed. Beirut: Dār al-fikr, 1993.
- O'Callaghan, Joseph. "The Mudejars of Castile and Portugal in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries." In James Powell, ed. *Muslims Under Latin Rule 1100-1300*. Princeton, 1990, pp. 28–64.
- Palmer, Andrew, ed. *The Seventh Century in West Syrian Chronicles*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1993.
- Peters, R., and G.J.J. de Vries. "Apostasy in Islam." *Die Welt des Islams* 17 (1976–77): 1–25.
- Phillips, Dennis. "The American Missionary in Morocco." *MW* 65 (1975): 1–20.
- Poston, Larry. *Muslim Daʿwa in the West*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Raxton, F. "Convert's Status in Mālikī Law." *MW* 3 (1913): 37–40.
- Reinink, G. "The Beginnings of Syriac Apologetic Literature in Response to Islam." *Oriens Christianus* 77 (1993): 165–87.
- Rosser, J. "Theophilus' Khurramite Policy and its Finale." *Byzantina* 6 (1974): 265–71.
- Sahas, Daniel. "The Formulation of Later Islamic Doctrines as a Response to Byzantine Polemics." *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 27 (1982): 307–26.

- . “Ritual of Conversion from Islam to the Byzantine Church.” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 36 (1991): 57–69.
- . “What an Infidel Saw that a Faithful Did Not: Gregory Dekapolites (d. 842) and Islam.” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 31 (1986): 47–67.
- Al-Sakhāwī. *Wājiz al-kalām*. Beirut, Mu’assasat al-risāla, 1995.
- Samir, Khalil. “Saint Rawḥ al-Qurashī: Étude onomastique arabe et authenticité de passion.” *Le Muséon* 105 (1992): 343–60.
- Al-Ṣan‘ānī, ‘Abd al-Razzāq. *Al-Muṣannaf*. Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-A‘zamī, ed. Beirut, 1970–72.
- Al-Sayrafi. *Nuzhat al-nufūs*. Cairo: Wizārat al-thaqāfa, 1970.
- Schartz, Richard. “Missionaries on the Rezaiyeh Plains, Iran.” *MW* 69 (1979): 77–100.
- Shahid, Irfan. “Ghassan *post* Ghassan.” In C.E. Bosworth, ed. *The Islamic World from Classical to Modern Times: Essays in honor of Bernard Lewis*. Princeton, 1989, pp. 323–36.
- Siddiqi, Muzammil. “Muslims and Byzantine Christian Relations: Letter of Paul of Antioch and Ibn Taymiyyah’s Response.” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 31 (1986): 33–45.
- Spuler, B. *The Mongol Period*. Princeton, 1994.
- Stroumsa, Sarah. *Freethinkers of Medieval Islam: Ibn al-Rāwandī, Abū Bakr al-Rāzī and their Impact on Islamic Thought*. Leiden, 1999.
- Al-Ṭabarī. *Ta’rīkh al-rusul wa al-mulūk*. M.J. de Goeje, ed. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1879–1901.
- Al-Tanūkhī. *Nishwār al-muḥādara*. Abood Shalochy, ed. n.p., 1971.
- Al-Tawḥīdī. *Al-Baṣā’ir wa al-dhakhā’ir*. Beirut, 1988.
- Theophanes. *Chronicle*. Harry Turtledove, trans. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1982.
- Trimingham, J. *Islam in Ethiopia*. London, 1965.
- Vander Werff, Lyle. *Christian Mission to Muslims*. South Pasadena, 1977.
- Vanzan, Anna. “In search of another identity: female Muslim-Christian conversions in the Mediterranean world.” *Islam and Muslim-Christian Relations* 7 (1996): 327–33.

- Vasiliev, A. "St. Theodore of Edessa." *Byzantion* 16 (1943–44): 165–225.
- Waltz, James. "Early 'Missions' to Muslims." *MW* 61 (1971): 170–86.
- . "The Significance of the Voluntary Martyrs of Ninth-Century Córdoba." *MW* 60 (1970): 143–59, 226–36.
- Wasserstein, David. "A *Fatwa* on Conversion in Islamic Spain." In R. Nettler, ed. *Studies in Muslim-Jewish Relations*. Oxford, 1993, vol. 1, pp. 177–88.
- Wensinck, A.J., ed. *Concordance et indices de la tradition musulmane*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1936–62.
- Wilson, J. Christy. "The Epic of Samuel Zwemer." *MW* 57 (1967): 79–93.
- . "Muslim Converts." *MW* 34 (1944): 171–84.
- Wittek, Paul. "Yazijoghlu 'Alī on the Christian Turks of the Dobruja." *BSOAS* 14 (1952): 639–68.
- Wolf, Kenneth Baxter. *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Zayyāt, Ḥabīb. "Shuhadā' al-naṣārā fī al-Islām." *al-Mashriq* 36 (1938): 959–65.
- Zwemer, Samuel, *The Law of Apostasy in Islam*. London: Marshall Brothers, 1924.