

FRIDAY VENERATION IN SIXTH- AND SEVENTH-CENTURY CHRISTIANITY AND CHRISTIAN LEGENDS ABOUT THE CONVERSION OF NAĠRĀN

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INTRODUCTION: A LOST *EPISTLE ON FRIDAY*

The principal focus of this study is the sixth- and seventh-century Christian hagiographical documents concerning an outstanding veneration of Friday. Some of them, however, will lead us to stories about the conversion of Naġrān to Christianity.

In the 1970s, John Wansbrough opened a new era in the study of the origins of Islam by stating that Islam emerged from some unknown Jewish-Christian sectarian milieu.¹ At the same time, however, it became clear that our lack of knowledge of the actual Jewish and Christian traditions of the sixth and seventh centuries prevented us from going further. But in the 1980s these studies received a new impetus. In particular, the special veneration of Friday in Islam was examined against its eventual Christian background.

In 1959, Shelomo Dov Goitein published an influential article in which the Muslim veneration of Friday was explained as an adaptation of the Jewish custom of the Friday fair.² Goitein and, after

¹ See especially Wansbrough, J. *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History*. Oxford, 1978.

² Goitein, S. D. "The Origin and Nature of the Muslim Friday Worship." *The Muslim World* 49 (1959): 183–95.

him, many others did not see any problem with the derivation of a liturgical institution (Friday veneration in Islam) from a secular custom whose secular nature was in particular contrast in the context of Jewish veneration of Sabbath. Were it true, we would have here an example of the breaking of Baumstark's Law of Organic Development (of the liturgy).³ This, however, is not the case in this instance. Other hypotheses put forward to explain the Muslim veneration of Friday did indeed respect Baumstark's law.

Gernot Rotter put forward a hypothesis stating that the Friday veneration in Islam was a continuation of a pagan cult of Venus called, according to Rotter, *kobar* in Mecca.⁴ The main problem of his hypothesis, however, is that the existence of the corresponding Meccan cult, also hypothetical, is extremely unlikely. The witness of John of Damascus concerning the Meccan cult, which is the main ground of Rotter's hypothesis, must be placed in the context of the parallel witnesses of other Christian polemical sources, and thus interpreted as yet another representation of the accusation that Muslims worshipped some "Akbar" along with God. The pretext for this accusation was given by the *azan* "Allāhu akbar" ("God [is] greater"), interpreted by Christians as "God *and* Akbar."⁵

³ The Law of Organic (Progressive) Development presupposes that the new elements in the liturgy at first take their places alongside the more primitive elements of the liturgy (that is, not of a secular custom) but, over the course of time, cause the latter to be abbreviated and even to disappear completely; Baumstark, A. *Comparative Liturgy*. Tr. A. R. Mowbray, 23–24. London/Westminster, MD, 1958. Thus, a secular fair replacing a complicated liturgical custom (probably with paraliturgical additions such as a fair day) is not a violation of this law, but the creation of a liturgical custom on a secular tradition does represent such a violation.

⁴ Rotter, G. "Der *veneris dies* im vorislamischen Mekka, eine neue Deutung des Namens 'Europa' und eine Erklärung für *kobar* = Venus." *Der Islam* 70 (1993): 112–32.

⁵ Roggema, B. "Muslims as Crypto-Idolaters—A Theme in the Christian Portrayal of Islam in the Near East." In Thomas, D., ed. *Christians at the Heart of Islamic Rule: Church Life and Scholarship in 'Abbasid Iraq*, 1–18, here 6–11. *The History of Christian-Muslim Relations*, 1. Leiden/Boston, 2003.

Another approach derives Islamic Friday veneration from Christian liturgical traditions. Heribert Busse in 1984 demonstrated that the earliest Islamic accounts of Friday veneration as the *Yaum al-Ġumra* (“Day of Assembly”) go back to an eight-day ceremony of ʿOmar ibn al-Ḥaṭṭāb’s entrance into Jerusalem (Busse states that the date of this event should be corrected to 635, instead of 637 or 638, and that the leader of the Muslims was in fact not ʿOmar ibn al-Ḥaṭṭāb but the general ʿAmr ibn al-ʿAs). The culmination of the whole ceremony took place on Friday, when the head of the Muslims held a prayer service in the assembly on the spot of the Temple of Solomon, the future site of the great mosque. Busse argues that the event took place on the Christian Great Friday, 2 April 635, and the whole ceremony was performed in connexion with the rites of the Christian Holy Week. According to Busse, these events predate the formation of the Qur’an, including its *sūrah* 32 *Al-Sağda* (“Worship,” “Adoration”) dealing with the veneration of Friday.⁶

Be that as it may, some knowledge of the importance of Friday must be a prerequisite of such a mode of action by the Muslim leader. Discussions about the comparative importance of different weekdays were then in vogue among the Christians. As Michel van Esbroeck showed, this was an important battlefield around the time of the Council of Chalcedon. I will summarize van Esbroeck’s findings briefly.

He published two sets of the texts ascribed to St Basil of Caesarea, both translated from the lost Greek originals. One of them, in Armenian, insists that all the main events of world history and salvation took place on either Wednesday or Friday.⁷ Two

⁶ Busse, H. “ʿOmar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb in Jerusalem.” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 5 (1984): 73–119.

⁷ van Esbroeck, M. “Un court traité pseudo-basilien de mouvance aaronite conservé en arménien.” *Le Muséon* 100 (1987): 385–95 [reprint: idem. *Aux origines de la Dormition de la Vierge. Études historiques sur les traditions orientales*. Variorum Reprints. Collected Studies Series, CS, 380. Aldershot, 1995, ch. VIII].

other texts, in Arabic, insist that the main day is Sunday.⁸ In the Arabic texts, the calendar starts on Sunday, on the very day of the creation of the world. In the Armenian text, the calendar starts on Wednesday, which is a well-known Jewish tradition based on the fact that the luminaries were created on the fourth day of creation. Moreover, the Armenian text explicitly refers to the calendar in which the year contains 364 days, known from Jewish pre-Christian and early Christian sources. In the 364-day calendar, every date is immobile within the week, being attached to its proper weekday (because 364 is a multiple of 7). This Armenian text belongs to the so-called Aaronites, a group of anti-Chalcedonians of the first half of the sixth century renown for their adherence to “Jewish” (in fact, Jewish-Christian) customs.

The two sets of the Pseudo-Basilian texts are obviously in polemic with each other. But the most important document engendered by the same polemics in the first half or the middle of the sixth century is the famous *Epistle on Sunday* (also called *Epistle of Christ*), an autograph of Jesus Christ that had been received directly from heaven. This epistle exists in dozens of recensions and in hundreds or even thousands of manuscripts in the main languages of both the Christian East and West. Of course, it insists on the predominance of Sunday over all other days of the week.⁹

According to van Esbroeck, all these documents are connected in some way to Jerusalem, and the tradition of Wednesday and Friday goes back to the twenty-month period of the mono-

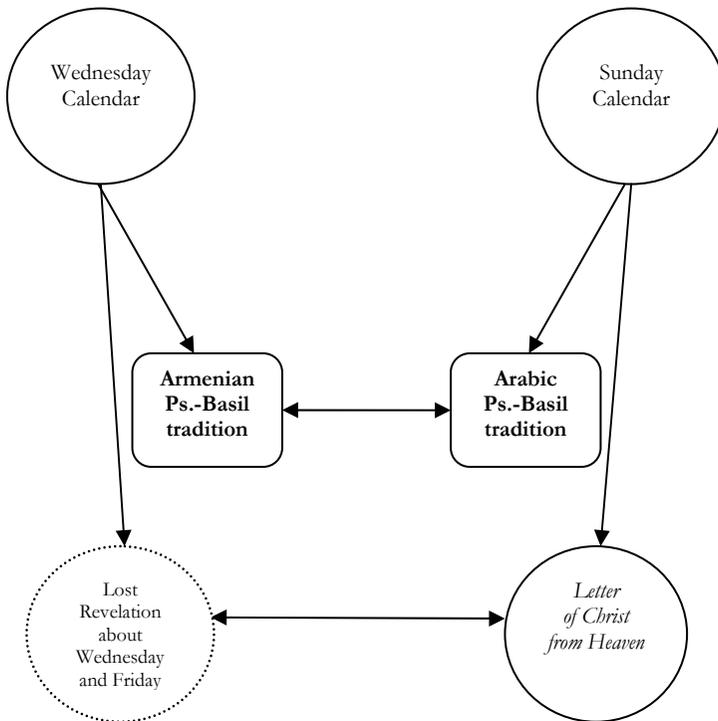
⁸ van Esbroeck, M. “Deux homélies pseudo-basiliennes sur le Dimanche et le Vendredi.” *Parole de l’Orient* 16 (1990–1991) [= Samir, S. Kh., éd. *Actes du 3^e Congrès international d’études arabes chrétiennes*]: 49–71.

⁹ An edition of the most important versions: Bittner, M. “Der vom Himmel gefallen Brief in seinen morgenländischen Versionen und Rezensionen.” *Denkschriften der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien. Philosophisch-historische Klasse* 51.1 (1906): 1–240; on the origin of the document, see: van Esbroeck, M. “La lettre sur le Dimanche descendue du ciel.” *AB* 107 (1989): 267–84; cf. Backus, I. “Introduction” [to the French translation of one Greek and one Latin recension]. In Geoltrain, P., Kaestli, J. D., direct. *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*, II, 1101–6. La Bibliothèque de la Pléiade. Paris, 2006.

physite rule of the anti-Patriarch of Jerusalem Theodosius immediately after the Council of Chalcedon (451–453).

M. van Esbroeck supposed that the *Epistle of Christ* was created at the time of the establishment in Jerusalem of the Church *Nea* dedicated to the Virgin, in the 540s, as a substitute for a document of a similar nature but venerating Wednesday and Friday and created in the time of Theodosius of Jerusalem (see Stemma 1): “Rien n’élimine mieux un document que la création d’un parallèle destiné à le remplacer.”¹⁰

Stemma 1.
The Main Documents of the “Calendric War” of the Sixth Century



¹⁰ van Esbroeck, “La Lettre sur le dimanche...,” 283.

My own purpose here will be to go further and to recover traces of this lost document of the epoch of Theodosius. Indeed, we have a tradition of Friday veneration that certainly goes back to the time before Justinian and has so far been overlooked by scholars of the Christian calendar and calendrical customs.

However, some parts of this tradition are familiar to historians of mediaeval literature, although none of them has been aware of the real breadth of the dossier. One part of the tradition exists in the different texts dealing with the “twelve Fridays.” These texts are available in Greek, Latin, and Slavonic, as well as in several vernacular Romance, German, and Slavic languages. These texts exist in three different forms: (1) as separate texts; (2) attached to a story on the anti-Jewish dispute of a certain Eleutherius; and (3) within a tenth-century Jerusalem calendar composed in Georgian by John Zosimos. Both the calendar of the “twelve Fridays” and the story of Eleutherius have some connexions with pre-Islamic Arabia.

Another part of the Christian Friday veneration dossier is presented by the hagiographical legends on the personified Friday, the holy martyr Parasceve. These legends show Arabian connexions as well. Moreover, there are other Christian legends, although little known, dealing with the Friday veneration and even the personified Friday and having some connexion to pre-Islamic Arabia. Thus, our study will be divided into three major parts: (1) calendars of the “twelve Fridays”; (2) the hagiographical dossier of Eleutherius; and (3) other hagiographical legends related to Friday (St Parasceve and others).

I hope that this study will shed some additional light on the conversion of Nağrān to Christianity and the nature of the pre-Islamic Arabian Christian traditions which contributed to the emergence of Islam. As to the Islamic Friday veneration, I hope to show that it was directly borrowed from the Christian traditions available in the Arabian Peninsula.

PART ONE: THE CALENDARS OF THE “TWELVE FRIDAYS”

1.1. The Twelve Fridays Texts: an Introduction

The “twelve Fridays” texts outside the calendar of John Zosimos are especially popular in the Orthodox Slavic literatures. Adelina Angusheva, with the collaboration of Anissava Miltenova, is currently preparing a critical edition of the Slavonic *Skazanie o 12 pjat-*

nicax (“Narration on the 12 Fridays”) in its most elaborated (“Eleutherius”) recension. Various manuscripts transmitting this work have previously been published and/or described.¹¹ The most comprehensive (although not a critical) edition of one recension is that by Matvej Ivanovich Sokolov¹² (1855–1906), probably the most brilliant figure in the philological studies of the Slavonic apocrypha. Another brilliant figure, a precursor of the modern critical hagiography, Alexandr Nikolaevich Veselovsky (1838–1906), was the first to understand the importance of the *Skazanie* for different Christian literatures and who collected its many recensions, including those in Western European languages, some of

¹¹ See, for the most complete (but still far from complete) list of manuscripts and editions, de Santos-Otero, A. *Die handschriftliche Überlieferung der altslavischen Apokryphen*, II, 223–232. *Patristische Texte und Studien*, 23. Berlin/New York, 1981; see also Рожественская, М. В. “Апокрифы в сборнике XVI в. из Стокгольмской Королевской библиотеки (А 797)” [Rozhdestvenskaja, M. V., “Apocrypha in the 16th-century Collection from the Royal Library of Stockholm (A 797)”]. *Труды Отдела древнерусской литературы* [*Works of the Department of Old Russian Literature* <of the Institute of Russian Literature (Pushkinskij Dom)>] 55 (2004): 391–97, here 392. Cf. also a study taking into account for the first time fifty-five Slavonic manuscripts (with the publication of seven mss of the Clement recension and three mss of the Eleutherius recension): Иванов, С. В. “«Сказание о 12 пятницах» в рукописях ИРЛИ РАН (Пушкинского Дома)” [Ivanov, S. V. “The Narration on the 12 Fridays’ in Manuscripts of the Institute of Russian Language and Literature of the Russian Academy of Sciences”]. *Известия РАН. Серия литературы и языка* [*Bulletin of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Series of Literature and Language*] (in press).

¹² Соколов, М. *Материалы и заметки по старинной славянской литературе*. Выпуск первый: I–V [Sokolov, M. *Materials and Notes on Ancient Slavic Literature*. First issue: I–V], 51–57 [Nr III]. Москва, 1888. This most important publication is not mentioned in the entry (which has little scholarly value) dedicated to our text in the standard reference book on Old Russian literature: Салмина, М. А. “Сказание о двенадцати пятницах.” In: Лихачев, Д. С., ред. *Словарь книжников и книжности Древней Руси* [*A Dictionary of the Scribes and Literature of Old Rus*] (1987; electronic publication at <http://www.pushkinskijdom.ru/Default.aspx?tabid=4606>).

which are currently being published for the first time.¹³ Some directions opened by Veselovsky remain to be explored, such as the afterlife of the Christian apocryphon in Western European folklore (its presence in Slavic folklore is much better studied). Veselovsky's work received impetus from Cardinal Pitra, who published an excerpt of the Greek text of the *Skazanie* in the notes to his huge canonical collection.¹⁴ So far, this Greek manuscript (*Vaticanus gr.* 1538, fifteenth century, Calabria) is the only one of the three known sources to have been published. There are more than fifty Latin manuscripts of the short (Clement) recension, about twenty

¹³ Веселовский, А. “Опыты по истории развития христианской легенды. II. Берта, Анастасия и Пятница. Гл. IV: Сказание о 12 пятницах [Veselovsky, A., *Essays on the History of the Development of the Christian Legend. II: Berta, Anastasia, and Friday. Ch. IV: Narration on the 12 Fridays*].” *Журнал Министерства народного просвещения* [*The Journal of the Ministry of National Education*], 185 (1876): 326–67; idem, “гл. VI: Freiheit—Элевферий [Freiheit—Eleutherius].” *ibid.*, 191 (1877): 76–125 [separate pagination of the scholarly division of the journal]. For general information about the Western European versions, see Ivanov, S. V. “The legend of twelve golden Fridays in the Western manuscripts. Part I: Latin.” In Bondarko, N. A. Kazanskij, N. N., eds. *Colloquia classica et indo-germanica—V*. Acta linguistica Petropolitana. Труды ИЛИ РАН, vol. VII, part 1. St Petersburg, 2011 (in press); Ivanov describes fifty-three Latin manuscripts, the oldest of them dated to the 11th century. There are innumerable manuscripts transmitting vernacular versions (S. V. Ivanov's personal communication); there are more than twenty mss in Old Irish alone (see Ivanov, S. V. “The Legend of Twelve Golden Fridays in the Irish Tradition,” forthcoming).

¹⁴ Pitra, I. B. *Juris ecclesiastici Graecorum Historia et Monumenta*, t. I, 301. Romae, 1864 (republished in Веселовский, “Сказание о 12 пятницах,” 329). The first paper by Veselovsky on the *Twelve Fridays* is even dedicated to Pitra (after its title, the author wrote: «Посвящено Джузеппе Питре»—“Dedicated to Giuseppe Pitra”). The complete Greek text is published by Mercati, G. *Note di letteratura biblica e cristiana antica*, 238–41, esp. 240–241. Studi e testi, 5. Roma, 1901 (with no knowledge of Veselovsky's work). I owe the information about the unpublished Greek manuscripts to Sergei Valentinovich Ivanov (personal communication). The Greek manuscripts are not earlier than the 14th century.

of them being published; however, I will quote only *Vaticanus lat.* 3838.¹⁵ Veselovsky saw a fourteenth-century Latin manuscript but was unable to use it in his work.¹⁶ No Christian Oriental versions of the *Skazanie* are known.

There are two recensions of the *Skazanie*, which Veselovsky named the “Clement recension” and the “Eleutherius recension.”

1.2. The Clement Recension of the Twelve Fridays

The best-known part of our dossier is the Clement recension of the *Twelve Fridays*. It is this version that is transmitted in Greek, Slavonic, Latin, and European vernacular languages. The Greek and Latin texts are rare, but the Slavonic one is available in many variations, including the so-called *duxovnye stixi* (“spiritual poems,” a kind of Russian folk spiritual poetry), but only in relatively recent manuscripts (not earlier than the eighteenth century).¹⁷ All the texts of this recension are reduced to very short enumerations of the twelve Fridays when fasting is obligatory (sometimes, against the normal order of the Church calendar, e.g. after Christmas or, on the contrary, during long fasts, when all the weekdays are already fasting days). Sometimes, brief historical motivations for keeping each of these Friday fasts are provided. These motivations are subject to change in the many different derivatives of the Clement recension.

¹⁵ Mercati, *Note*, 80–81, cf. 64–65 on the manuscript.

¹⁶ He refers to this ms as *Palat.* [= Bibliotheca Palatina in Heidelberg? Veselovsky does not provide any explication] *st.* 21, *sc.* 2, cod. 218, f. 160v; *inc.*: Clemens episcopus servorum Dei Romanorum dixit quod invenerat in actibus... (Веселовский, “Сказание о 12 пятницах,” 329).

¹⁷ I quote the only published manuscript among the oldest ones (cf. de Santos-Otero, *Die handschriftliche Überlieferung...*, II, 224, Anm. 8): Тихонравов, Н. *Памятники отреченной русской литературы. (Приложение к сочинению «Отреченные книги древней России»)* [Tikhonravov, N. *Monuments of the Apocryphal Russian Literature. (Supplement to the study “The Apocryphal Books of Ancient Russia”)*], II, 337–338. Москва, 1863 (the ms is now lost; Tikhonravov, p. 337, attests it as “из раскольничьей тетрадки нового письма”—“from a schismatic [*sc.*, Old Believers] tetradion of new writing”; this is to be understood as not earlier than the late eighteenth century).

The existence of the Slavonic version from Greek casts doubt on claims for the priority of the Latin version, as some earlier scholars had proposed. But even more important is the very attribution of the treatise to St Clement of Rome. The sixth century is the last point at which such an attribution might have been (and indeed really was) of interest. At that time, the anti-Chalcedonians engaged in protracted arguments, quoting extensively from the *Octateuch* of Clement (the teaching of the Apostles given through Clement of Rome, in eight books). The *Octateuch* of Clement of Rome, in different recensions, thus became one of the most authoritative canonical collections throughout the anti-Chalcedonian world,¹⁸ although it was excluded from the canon of the Holy Scriptures by the Council *Quinisextum* in 692 as “corrupted by the heretics” (canon 2). However, our twelve-Friday literature is absolutely unknown outside the Chalcedonian world, and so its attribution to Clement of Rome became impossible, at least by the second half of the seventh century.

Therefore, with Clement of Rome we are in a Chalcedonian milieu of the sixth or the early seventh century. An earlier date is extremely unlikely given that our texts are absent in the anti-Chalcedonian traditions.

We are interested in the calendar data only (see Table 1). In Table 1, the column labeled “Clement SI” corresponds to the manuscript published by Tikhonravov, while the column labeled “Veselovsky” quotes Veselovsky’s summary of the data of several Russian manuscripts (including those of the *stixi duxovnye*) compared with European vernacular versions¹⁹; *L is a reconstructed archetype

¹⁸ See, as a useful introduction, Cowley, R. W. “The Identification of the Ethiopian Octateuch of Clement, and its Relationship to the Other Christian Literature.” *Ostkirchlichen Studien* 27 (1978): 37–45.

¹⁹ Веселовский, “Сказание о 12 пятницах,” 347–49; for the texts of the German (G), Provençal (P), Italian (I; two mss are used, I₁ and I₂), English (E), and French (F) versions, see *ibid.*, 330–334; the sigla R and Eu mean “all Russian mss” and “all Western European mss,” respectively. I omit the readings of those Russian mss which are qualified by Veselovsky as severely corrupted. I hope that the selection of manuscripts in Veselovsky’s

of the Latin version; *Clement is a reconstruction of the original calendar. It is easy to see that the Slavonic version follows the Greek version, although not precisely following the existing Greek text.

Table 1. Calendar data in the Clement recensions (Greek, Slavonic, Latin) of the Twelve Fridays

Nr	Clement Gr (Gr)	Clement SI	Veselovsky	Clement L (L)	*L	*Clement
1	1 st in March	First week of Lent ²⁰ = R	R = EF Gr = GPI	in the month of March	in March before Annunciation	in March
2	1 st after Annunciation [25 March]	before Annunciation [25 March] = R	Gr = R = Eu	before Annunciation [25 March]		before Annunciation [25 March]
3	Great Friday	Great Friday	Gr = R = Eu	[Great] Friday	Great Friday	Great Friday
4	1 st after Ascension	before Ascension	Gr = R = Eu	before Ascension	before Ascension	before Ascension
5	1 st after Pentecost	before Pentecost	Gr = R = Eu	before Pentecost	before Pentecost	before Pentecost
6	after John the Baptist ²¹	before Nativity of John the Baptist Day [24 June]	some Russian mss: before Prophet Elias [20 July]; "after Pentecost" (GEF and I ²²); corrupted in P ²³	in quattuor temporibus in June = I	after Pentecost ²⁴	before Nativity of John the Baptist

publication is representative but, of course, a new study based on all the available data (or, at least, on all the Latin mss) would be welcome.

²⁰ Roughly in March.

²¹ It is obvious that the Nativity of John is meant, 24 (or 25) June.

²² The Italian text has: "per le diggiuna quattro tempora dopo la penticosta."

Nr	Clement Gr (Gr)	Clement Sl	Veselovsky	Clement L (L)	*L	*Clement
7	1 st after Peter and Paul [29 June]	before Prophet Elias' Day [20 July]	some Russian mss: before Transfiguration; before Nativity of John the Baptist (Eu ²⁵)	before Nativity of John the Baptist ²⁶	before Nativity of John the Baptist	before second Pentecost in late June [pre-Justinianic (pre-ca 550) date of the Feast of the Apostles]
8	1 st after Dormition [15 August]	before Dormition [15 August]	some Russian mss: before Prophet Elias; some others: before Beheading of John [29 August]; before Peter and	before Peter and Paul [29 June] ²⁷	before Peter and Paul	before Dormition

²³ The text of P is corrupted, repeating “devant Pendecoste,” which is either a repetition of the previous text (belonging to the fifth Friday) or, as Veselovsky supposed, an error in place of “apres”; cf. Веселовский, “Сказание о 12 пятницах,” 330. I think the original reading of P was identical to that of L but erroneously shifted to Nr 10 (see below).

²⁴ Corroborated by GIEF, without contradicting Gr and Sl. The reading of L “in quattuor temporibus in June” is corroborated by IP but the Western fasts of “the four seasons” are to be dated to the early ninth century. Thus, their mention is certainly a late adaptation.

²⁵ German “von sunwenten” means the same thing; the date of the summer solstice was considered to be near to or coinciding with the day of St John the Baptist, 24 June.

²⁶ Given that the text is translated from Greek, most probably the Greek date is meant, i.e. 24 (or 25) June.

²⁷ Too close to the preceding date, Nr 7, but the reading is corroborated by the entire Western European tradition (Eu). Obviously, the problem is that the Feast of the Dormition on 15 August was largely unknown in the West up to the end of the sixth century.

Nr	Clement Gr (Gr)	Clement SI	Veselovsky	Clement L (L)	*L	*Clement
			Paul [29 June] (Eu)			
9	1 st after Nativity of Theotokos [8 Sept.]	before Cosmas and Damian [17 October or 1 November]	some Russian mss: before Beheading of John [29 August]; after Peter and Paul (GI ₁); before St Peter in Chains [1 August] (P) ²⁸ ; 1 st in September (I ₂); before Dormition (F ²⁹); “first day in harvest” (E).	after James and Christopher [25 July] ³⁰	[some date in July]	1 st in September ³¹
10	1 st after Christmas	before Michael Archangel [12 November]	some Russian mss: before Cosmas and Damian [17 October or 1 November]; in September (G); “al de-junas de las IV temporas” (P) ³² ; 1 st in September (I ₁); 2 nd in September	1 st in the month of September	1 st in September	[unknown date in October or early November]

²⁸ Ms: “devant la festa de sant Pierre d’aoust.”

²⁹ The ms has “devant la mi aoust,” that is, “before 15 August.”

³⁰ This date shifted earlier because of the absence of the Dormition.

³¹ The date is preserved in I₂ and Clement L (where it is shifted to Nr 10).

³² Erroneously shifted here from Nr 6 (see above).

Nr	Clement Gr (Gr)	Clement SI	Veselovsky	Clement L (L)	*L	*Clement
			(I ₂); before Dormition (E ³³); before September (F).			
11	1 st after Baptism of Christ	before Christmas	in December (G); before St Andrew (PI) [30 November]; before All Saints [1 November] (EF)	1 st in the month of December	1 st in the month of December (?)	before Christmas
12	1 st after Hypopante [Candlemas] ³⁴	before Hypopante [Candlemas]	some Russian mss: before Christmas; before Christmas (Eu)	before Christmas	before Christmas	before Hypopante

The main disagreement between Clement Gr and Clement SI, on the one hand, and Clement L, on the other, is the presence in Gr and SI only (along with some other Russian manuscripts) of the Dormition in August (Nr 8) and the Hypopante (Nr 12). The references to the Dormition in some Western vernacular versions (F in Nr 9 and E in Nr 10) with no corroboration by any other Western version are certainly later local adaptations; moreover, in F, the Dormition is mentioned in an indirect way.

This fact is in perfect accord with the realities of the sixth century, when both feasts became very important in both Jerusalem and Constantinople but were still unknown in the Latin world, where these feasts appear not earlier than at the very end of the

³³ The ms has “before the second Lady-day, in harvest,” which indicates the Dormition.

³⁴ 2 February since the middle of the sixth century; 14 February before this date.

sixth century.³⁵ Therefore, Clement L must be considered as a sixth-century adaptation of a Greek *Vorlage* to the current Latin Church calendar. Actually, the known Latin text is even later because it contains some formulations of the second half of the first thousand years A.D. (*in quattuor temporibus*, Nr 6), but its core (*L) is certainly earlier than the seventh century. It predates the August Dormition feast and the Hypopante in the West.

Our reconstruction of the lost *Vorlage* of the Clement recension (*Clement) is based, first of all, on the mutual accord between the Greek text and the Slavonic version. In most cases, our choice of the original reading is evident and, in one case, we have made no choice at all (Nr 10). Two cases, Nrs 6 and 7, require commentaries. The variety of readings must emerge from the disappearance in about 550 of the older date of the Feast of the Apostles, the fiftieth day after Pentecost, that is, on the second Pentecost.³⁶ This is evident from two indications which seem to emerge from the earlier indication of the Feast of the Apostles at the second Pentecost after the first Pentecost: “after Pentecost” (in the earlier Western recensions in Nr 6) and “first [Friday] from Peter and Paul” (Gr in Nr 7). The Nativity of John the Baptist certainly belongs to the

³⁵ It is clear, from the order of the feasts, that Gr and Sl do not presuppose the Feast of the Dormition in January, which is known in some places in the East and in the Gallican rite of the sixth century; cf., for the Western data, Capelle, B. “La Fête de l’Assomption dans l’histoire liturgique.” *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 3 (1926): 35–45, and, for the Eastern data, van Esbroeck, M. “La Dormition chez les Coptes.” In Rassart-Debergh, M., et Ries, J., eds. *Actes du IV^e Congrès Copte. Louvain-la-Neuve, 5–10 septembre 1988*. II, 436–445. Publications de l’Institut Orientaliste de Louvain, 41. Louvain-la-Neuve, 1992) [repr.: idem, *Aux origines de la Dormition de la Vierge. Études historiques sur les traditions orientales*. Variorum Reprints. Collected Studies Series CS, 380. Aldershot, 1995 (ch. XI)].

³⁶ On the origin of the Byzantine feast on 29 June, see Лурье, В. *Введение в критическую агиографию* [Lourié, B. *An Introduction to the Critical Hagiography*], 141–42. Санкт-Петербург, 2009.

archetype because of its presence in all recensions (in either Nr 6 or 7).³⁷

1.3. The Eleutherius Recension of the Twelve Fridays: an Introduction

The Eleutherius recension of the *Twelve Fridays* is known only in Slavonic in an early translation of South Slavic origin. The text of this translation still needs to be studied properly (a critical edition is currently being prepared by Adelina Angusheva). All published manuscripts preserve somewhat different texts of the same work. We thus retain the term “recension” for all Eleutherius texts for convenience only and following tradition going back to Veselovsky; in fact, this “recension” is, in turn, presented in several recensions. Some of them are excerpts containing the calendar part only. In its full form, the Eleutherius recension contains an introductory story about a dispute between a Christian and a Jew in which the text on the twelve Fridays is used as an argument; after this, the text itself

³⁷ To appreciate the stability of the popular tradition of the Friday veneration, I would like to add a recent Russian document, a description of the popular custom in the province of Vladimir in the Russian Empire, near the town of Shuya (now in the region of Ivanovo, several hours by car from Moscow), made by the Ethnographical Bureau of Prince V. N. Ténicheff between 1897 and 1901. There are twelve Fridays when one has to abstain from bread and even water for twenty-four hours in order to protect oneself from diseases and disasters: 1. before Epiphany (6 January); 2. before Cheese-fare week; 3. before Candlemas; 4. before Annunciation; 5. Great Friday; 6. before Pentecost; 7. before Elias day, 20 July; 8. before the Dormition; 9. before the Beheading of John; 10. before the Nativity of the Theotokos; 11. before the Exaltation of the Holy Cross; 12. before the Nativity of Christ. See Фирсов, Б. М., Киселева, И. Г. *Быт великорусских крестьян-землепашцев. Описание материалов этнографического бюро князя В. Н. Тенишева. (На примере Владимирской губернии.)*, 150. С.-Петербург, 1993 [Firsov, B. M., Kiseleva, I. G. *The Way of Life of the Great-Russian Peasant-Ploughmen. A Description of the Materials of the Ethnographic Bureau of Prince V. N. Ténicheff. (On the Example of the Province of Vladimir)*. St Petersburg, 1993]. I am grateful for this reference to V. Zemskova.

is provided. The text on the twelve Fridays contains brief explanations of the reasons to continue to mention each of the Fridays.

Veselovsky observed that the Eleutherius recension is subdivided into two main types, A and B. Their most striking differences are in the calendric section, for the fourth to the tenth Fridays. Veselovsky argued convincingly that the calendar of type B is a later alteration of type A. One of his main arguments was the almost complete identity of the calendar in type A with that of the Clement recension.³⁸ Thus, we can skip a detailed analysis of the calendar of type B.

Types A and B differ also in the short notices provided for the fourth through the tenth Fridays. Veselovsky considered one of the sources of these notices to be the *Apocalypse of Methodius of Patara*,³⁹ written (according to S. P. Brock and in agreement with current scholarly consensus) between 685 and 692 in Syriac but within twenty years translated into Greek and Latin; three independent Slavonic versions of this work are now known,⁴⁰ the oldest

³⁸ Веселовский, “Сказание о 12 пятницах,” esp. 333–41. Veselovsky used three mss of type A (he published one of them, a Serbian ms of the 14th–15th century) and five mss of type B. The oldest known ms of type A is currently the 13th-century Serbian ms published by Sokolov (Соколов, *Материалы и заметки...*, 51–57) together with the variant readings of the mss used by Veselovsky and two more mss presenting type A. One of the earliest Russian mss (*T*¹ = Russian National Library, St Petersburg, Софийское собрание [collection of St Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod], Nr 1264, 15th century), previously published by Tikhonravov (Тихонравов, *Памятники*, II, 323–27), is republished with corrections from other mss, including the unpublished Stockholm ms, by Rozhdestvenskaja (Рождественская, М. В. “Сказание о двенадцати пятницах [Narration on the Twelve Fridays].” In Лихачев, Д. С., и др. (ред.), *Библиотека литературы Древней Руси* [Likhachev, D. S., et al. *The Library of the Literature of Old Rus'*], т. 3. С.-Петербург, 1999 (quoted according to the electronic publication <http://www.pushkinskijdom.ru/Default.aspx?tabid=4922>). This ms belongs to type A.

³⁹ Веселовский, “Сказание о 12 пятницах,” 345–346.

⁴⁰ See, for the main bibliography on the whole corpus, *CPG* and *CPG Suppl* 1830.

of them being of unknown date but belonging to the earliest layers of translated literature in Slavonic.⁴¹ The parallels with Pseudo-Methodius (corresponding to V, 4-6 in Reinink's edition⁴²) concern, naturally, the Arab invasion into the Byzantine Empire in the seventh century, which was also the main challenge answered by Pseudo-Methodius of Patara in his *Apocalypse*. Veselovsky indicated two close parallels, one of them shared by both the A and B types⁴³ and another one specific to type B⁴⁴; I will add (in section 1.5) a third parallel, common to A and B. Veselovsky concludes that types A and B go back to the common archetype, where the sequence of the Fridays was the same as in type A but the borrowings from Pseudo-Methodius were the same as in type B. However, Veselovsky does not consider the possibility of a common source for our text and Pseudo-Methodius, although such a proposal is worth evaluation.⁴⁵ Moreover, Veselovsky overlooked an important contradiction between the material proper to B and the material common to both A and B. We will address these points below (section 1.5).

⁴¹ On the Slavonic translations, see Thomson, F. J. "The Slavonic Translations of Pseudo-Methodius of Olympus' Apocalypse." *Търновска книжовна школа* 4 (1985): 143–73.

⁴² Reinink, G. J. *Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*, 8–9 (txt) / 11–14 (tr.). CSCO, 540–41 / Syr 220–21. Leuven, 1993.

⁴³ Our text (5th Friday) ascribes to the Agareniens the eating of the meat of camels and the drinking of the blood of goats; cf., in Pseudo-Methodius, the eating of the meat of horses and camels and the drinking of the blood and the milk of cattle. The Syriac text here (V, 3) has a different wording than the Slavonic version of Pseudo-Methodius quoted by Veselovsky. It would be interesting, although beyond my purpose in this study, to compare the wording of Eleutherius with all known recensions of Pseudo-Methodius.

⁴⁴ Our text (8th Friday, type B) presents the Agareniens as scampering over the sea in their boats like birds; the same in Pseudo-Methodius.

⁴⁵ As I have already stated in Лурье, В. М. [Rev. of:] S. P. Brock. *Studies in Syriac Christianity. History, Literature and Theology, Христианский Восток* 1 (7) (1999): 455–63, here 439–40.

Be this as it may, the Arab conquest of the middle of the seventh century is the *terminus post quem* for the Eleutherius recension.

We begin with an analysis of the calendar of the Eleutherius recension. Only after this will we turn to the introductory story of this recension.

1.4. The Twelve Fridays Calendar of the Eleutherius Recension

The calendrical scheme of the Eleutherius recension is well preserved in the manuscripts along with the main ideas explaining each of the twelve Fridays. The difference between types A and B affects mostly the placement of seven of the twelve Fridays. The manuscripts differ, however, in some of the details and wording of the notices, and, moreover, contain some individual corruptions already detected by Veselovsky and Sokolov (and thus not discussed here).

The calendrical data are presented in Table 2. There is no need for reconstruction. Readings specific to type B but going back to the common archetype of A and B (in Nrs 5 and 8) are marked as "B." These parts proper to B contain not only parallels with the *Apocalypse of Methodius of Patara* but also Old Testament prototypes of the corresponding events. Thus, there is no Friday without an Old Testament prototype, including Fridays 5 and 8, where fasting is related to the Arab invasion.

Table 2.
Calendar data in the Eleutherius recension of the Twelve Fridays

Nr	Eleutherius	*Clement
1	in March [Expulsion of Adam from Paradise]	in March
2	before Annunciation [Cain killed Abel]	before Annunciation
3	Great Friday	Great Friday
4	Before Ascension [Sodom and Gomorrah]	before Ascension
5	before Pentecost [Agarenians occupied many countries; B: Noah's flood]	before Pentecost
6	2 nd of June [Fall of Jerusalem in Jeremiah's time, for 63 years]	[in June]

7	before Peter's Day [29 June] [Punishment of Egypt by Moses]	before second Pentecost
8	before Dormition [Ismaelites occupied the Western land for 63 years; B<?>: redeeming through Gideon ⁴⁶]	before Dormition
9	before Beheading of John the Baptist [29 August]	1 st in September
10	after Exaltation of Cross [Moses' Pass-over through the Red Sea]	[unknown date]
11	before Andrew's Day [30 November] [Jeremiah concealed the Ark]	before Christmas
12	after Christmas [Herod slew the babies]	before Hypopante

1.5. The Eleutherius Recension as a Seventh-Century Apocalyptic Writing

First of all, we have to point out the third parallel with Pseudo-Methodius, overlooked by Veselovsky. The duration of the Arab occupation is estimated at sixty-three years. This number is known also from Pseudo-Methodius (ch. XIII, 1-15), where it is inscribed into his general scheme of the end of the history of the world: the whole process takes ten Danielic year weeks, in sum seventy years, but the last Danielic year week, which starts when sixty-three years have passed, contains the most important events. In the beginning of the tenth year week, the Christians defeat the Ismaelites and restore the Christian kingdom.⁴⁷ This peculiar chronology allowed Sebastian Brock and, following him, Gerrit Reinink and other scholars to consider the *Apocalypse* as a true prophecy in one sense (it is not a *vaticinium ex eventu*) and a false prophecy in another sense (it was never fulfilled), and then to date the text near to the time

⁴⁶ Gideon is mentioned in some mss of type A as well, but only B contains an elaborated account. According to Sokolov, “[это] место в списках группы А сокращено и искажено [this place in the manuscripts of group A is abridged and corrupted]” (Соколов, *Материалы и заметки...*, 56, n. 39).

⁴⁷ Reinink, *Die syrische Apokalypse...*, 35/57–40/65 (txt/tr.).

63 AH / 685 AD (supposing that Pseudo-Methodius counts his Danielic weeks from the date of the Hegira, 622 AD).⁴⁸

Eleutherius shares these hopes that the Arab rule will be thrown off after sixty-three years, but his claim is grounded quite differently. There is no reference to Daniel at all but there are two references unknown to Pseudo-Methodius.

The first reference is the duration of the Exile in Jeremiah's time of sixty-three years (Nr 6). It is difficult not to see in this number a precedent for the current situation with the Arab occupation. However, this number of years is in blatant contradiction to the biblical data, seventy years, repeated in Josephus and the rabbinic tradition. There is only one remote parallel in the corpus of the known pseudepigrapha, *4 Baruch*, where the duration of the Exile seems to be sixty-six years.⁴⁹ This parallel, albeit remote, corroborates the view that the number sixty-three goes back to an early epoch (early Christian or Second Temple period) when such differences in the number of years of Exile appear; it is hardly a random corruption.

Now, it is important to our purpose that this so-far-unknown tradition of the sixty-three-year Exile is used, in Eleutherius, to support an estimate of the duration of the Arab dominion. Apply-

⁴⁸ Cf. *ibid.* [translation vol.], 40, Anm. 2 to XIII, 2, with the main bibliography. Brock's seminal papers are the following: Brock, S. P. "Syriac Sources for Seventh-Century History." *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 2 (1976): 17–36; *idem*, "Syriac Views of Emergent Islam." In Juynboll, G. H. A., ed. *Studies on the First Century of the Islamic Society*, 9–21, 199–203. *Papers on Islamic History*, 5. Carbondale/Edwardsville, 1982 [both are reprinted in: *idem*, *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity*. *Variorum Collected Studies Series CS*, 199, London, 1984; Ch. VII and VIII].

⁴⁹ On the problem of the "abnormal" duration of the Exile, see, most recently, Herzer, J. *4 Baruch (Paraleipomena Jeremion)*. *Translated with an Introduction and Commentary*, 82–83. *Writings from the Greco-Roman world*, 22. Atlanta, GA, 2005, which, however, does not cite a very important study by Piovanelli, P. "Les Paralipomènes de Jérémie dependent-ils de l'Histoire de la captivité babylonienne?" *Bulletin de l'AELAC* 7 (1997): 10–14; cf. also the duration of the Exile as seventy-seven years in the *Assumption of Moses* 3:14 and as seven generations in the *Epistle of Jeremiah* 1:2.

ing to our case the same reasoning as Brock applied to Pseudo-Methodius, we arrive at the conclusion that the date of Eleutherius precedes 63 AH. Alternatively, we can suppose that Eleutherius starts his counting of sixty-three years after the Arab invasion in Palestine in 635, which gives Eleutherius a slightly later *terminus ante quem*, 698 AD (76 AH).⁵⁰ Both possibilities mean that Eleutherius must be understood as an eschatological prophecy in the same manner as Pseudo-Methodius: a true prophecy in the sense that it is not a *vaticinium ex eventu* but a false prophecy in the sense that it has never been fulfilled.

We have to conclude as well that Eleutherius shared to a great extent the historical and eschatological views of Pseudo-Methodius, although his own theory was different. This is also seen from another of Eleutherius' biblical references, Gideon (Nr 8, type B only).

Gideon and his war against four heathen princes, Oreb, Zeeb, Zebah, and Zalmunna, is mentioned in Pseudo-Methodius (V, 6),⁵¹ and this parallel to Eleutherius is already indicated by Veselovsky. However, there is a difference here, too. Pseudo-Methodius (V, 6) names the mother of these princes, a name not mentioned in the Bible; he gives the names as Mūyā in Syriac, Οὐμαία in Greek, and Umea in Latin. All these names allude to either "Umayyad" or "Mu'āwiya," the name of the first caliph of the dynasty of the Umayyads (661–680). It is clear that Pseudo-Methodius indicates here the ultimate origin of the Arabs. Eleutherius does not mention the mother of the Arabs, but, before listing the names of these four kings, he gives the names Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek (Ps 83:7 [82:8]), and then states that "in the last time they have to exit and to possess the lands for thirty and one and one-half years [*variant*

⁵⁰ Pseudo-Methodius is clear when starting the Arab history from the very appearance of Islam, but Eleutherius mentions explicitly only the invasion into the Christian world. Thus, my hesitation: Eleutherius either implies the same chronology as Pseudo-Methodius or he counts from a later date. However, this difference is not particularly important.

⁵¹ Reinink, *Die syrische Apokalypse...*, 9/13 (txt/tr.), cf. Anm. 2 to V, 6 (ibid., 13–14 of tr. vol.).

reading: forty and two years].”⁵² Both numbers, however, have some relation to the chronologies already known to us:

(1) 30 and 1 and $\frac{1}{2}$ = one-half of 63. This is a 63-year chronology of the Arab dominion but different from that of Pseudo-Methodius, where the middle of the 63-year period passes unmarked. This subdivision of the 63-year period is hardly compatible with the chronology of the Danielic year weeks (the number $31\frac{1}{2}$ is not a multiple of seven nor is it divisible into half of seven).

(2) $42 = 7 \times 6$, that is, six weeks of years (probably a chronology implying that the final period will take seven year weeks, among which the last one is culminating; we know an example of such a chronology in Clement of Alexandria⁵³).

On the one hand, this $31\frac{1}{2}$ - or 42-year chronology proper to B is in contradiction to the 63-year chronology in the same Nr 8 but in the part common to A and B. On the other hand, it is in contradiction with the 63-year chronology in Pseudo-Methodius, even if it shares with Pseudo-Methodius an idea of redemption through Gideon. This fact prevents us from accepting Veselovsky’s conclusion that this part of the text proper to B belongs to the common archetype of A and B and ultimately goes back to Pseudo-Methodius; both parts of this claim are unacceptable.

It is tempting to agree with Veselovsky in a limited sense, namely, that the references to Noah in Nr 5 and to Gideon in Nr 8 belong to the common archetype of A and B. In this case, this archetype would contain an Old Testament prototype for each Friday. Be this as it may, however, the chronology of “redemption through Gideon” in Nr 8 that is proper to B is in contradiction to the common 63-year chronology of A and B in the same entry. Therefore, we have to admit that type B was edited under influence of other eschatological traditions, similar but different from these

⁵² See a synopsis of several mss in Веселовский, Сказание о 12 пятницах,” 343–44.

⁵³ *Stromata* 1:21:126: “And thus an anointed one became king of the Jews, reigning in Jerusalem in the fulfilment of the seven weeks”; cf. Beckwith, R. *Calendar and Chronology, Jewish and Christian: Biblical, Intertestamental and Patristic Studies*, 273. *Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums*, 33. Leiden etc., 1996.

of Pseudo-Methodius (a 63-year chronology in Danielic year weeks) and Eleutherius (a 63-year chronology without Danielic year weeks but with reference to the 63-year Exile).

In spite of the fact that Eleutherius is close in some ways to Pseudo-Methodius, it nevertheless reveals a somewhat different eschatological tradition. It is different enough to invalidate Veselovsky's opinion that Pseudo-Methodius is among the sources of Eleutherius. Instead, Eleutherius offers an alternative development of the same eschatological tradition whose clearest mark is the 63-year duration of Arab rule.

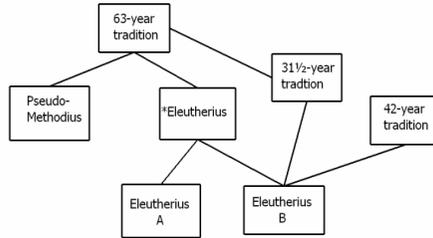
Finally, we can cautiously propose to take a further step in defining the tradition of Eleutherius. After the reference to the Arab invasion in Nr 5, the text continues with the phrase "...and expelled them [*sc.*, the Ismaelites]..."; the rest of this phrase is extremely distorted and varies considerably in the different manuscripts.⁵⁴ However, one manuscript (B; Russian, sixteenth century) continues as follows: "... and expelled Alexander," while another one (the oldest manuscript of Eleutherius, Serbian, thirteenth century) has in the corresponding place "... and expelled Karda king"; the name "Karda" can be a distortion of "Alexander." We know that, according to Pseudo-Methodius, the Arabs will be defeated by an eschatological figure, the so-called Last Roman Emperor (unnamed in Pseudo-Methodius), but there was, in seventh-century Byzantium, a tradition seeing in this eschatological emperor Alexander the Great (considered as a Christian and almost a saint; at least, certainly a recipient of divine revelation during his ascension into heaven). This tradition became part of the official Byzantine ideology under Heraclius (610–641) after his victory over the Persians (628).⁵⁵ It is probably this tradition that is reflected in Eleutherius.

⁵⁴ See a synopsis in Соколов, *Материалы и заметки...*, 55.

⁵⁵ See, for details, Лурье, В. "Александр Великий—«последний римский царь». К истории эсхатологических концепций в эпоху Ираклия, [Lourié, B. Alexander the Great—the Last Roman Emperor. Toward the history of eschatological concepts in the epoch of Heraclius]." *Византиноведение / Byzantinorossica* 2 (2003): 121–49.

In Stemma 2, I have sketched the mutual relationships between different eschatological traditions concerning the estimation of the duration of the Arab dominion. (In the diagram, *Eleutherius means the common archetype of types A and B.)

*Stemma 2: Eleutherius Recension among the Traditions
Concerning the Duration of the Arab Dominion*



1.6. A Jewish Tradition Shared with Early Islam

Eleutherius' calendar implies, in Nr 10, the Passover (traversing the Red Sea led by Moses) in September, which is certainly not an equivalent of Nisan. So far, the only instances where such a chronology was explicitly mentioned are several early *hadiths* on the establishment of the fast of Ashura, although these *hadiths* are disputed by many authorities in the Islamic tradition itself.⁵⁶ According to these *hadiths*, Muḥammad established this fast following the example of the Jews of Medina, who were fasting for their Yom Kippur, 10 Tishri. However, according to the *hadiths*, in their explanation of their practice to Muḥammad the Jews said that on this day they commemorate, among other things, Moses' salvation of the Jewish people from the Pharaoh. This argument became decisive for Muḥammad: "I have more rights to Moses and to fasting on this day!" he exclaimed. Bashear pointed to several features of fast rather than fast in early Islamic Ashura practices, especially

⁵⁶ See, as the most comprehensive study and review of the Islamic sources, Bashear, S. "‘Āshūrā,': An early Muslim fast." *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 141 (1991): 281–316 [repr. in: idem, *Studies in Early Islamic Tradition*. Jerusalem, 2004, ch. VII], esp. 290–92.

those relating to the inauguration of the Temple (covering the Ka'ba, in Islamic interpretation),⁵⁷ whose position, according to the biblical account, is in the eight-day period of the Sukkoth feast (2 Chr 7:8–10). There are some parallels in rabbinic interpretations of Yom Kippur (Yom Kippur is included among the days of consecration)⁵⁸ but there are even more explicit parallels in *3 Baruch*, ch. 14 (Yom Kippur as the inauguration of the heavenly sanctuary) and *4 Baruch*, ch. 9 (consecration of the Second Temple on Yom Kippur).

In Eleutherius, we have an independent witness of the commemoration of Moses' Passover in Tishri.⁵⁹ Indeed, in Eleutherius' calendar, the first month of the year is March (see Nr 1), which presumes an identification between March and Nisan, and which is further supported by the identification of Kislew (the month of Hanukkah) with November (in Nr 11). The reference to the story of Jeremiah concealing the Ark corresponds to 2 Mac 2:1–7, where it is put in the frame of the legend of Hanukkah. Thus, according to this calendrical scheme, September in Nr 10 corresponds to Tishri.

The distribution of the Old Testament events according to their dates, in Eleutherius, is somewhat self-evident (following explicit biblical accounts) but at the same time somewhat problematic; see Table 3. In the last column, "Traditional Date Meant," I try to explain the traditions underlying the calendar of Eleutherius. The traditions underlying Nrs 10 and 11 have already been commented on above; that of Nr 1 is self-evident from the Genesis account.

⁵⁷ Bashear, "'Āshūrā,'" 315, cf. 282.

⁵⁸ Mostly known to Bashear; cf. Stoekl Ben Ezra, D. *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity. The Day of Atonement from Second Temple Judaism to the Fifth Century*, 123–24. WUNT, 163. Tübingen, 2003.

⁵⁹ It is interesting to note that the commemoration of Moses on 4 September (Byzantine and Latin traditions) or 5 September (Coptic and Ethiopian), although unknown to the early mediaeval Syrian calendars, may go back to the same tradition about the Passover in Tishri.

Table 3.
The OT events and their dates in the Eleutherius recension

Nr	Eleutherius' OT Prototype	Eleutherius' Date	Traditional Date Meant
1	Expulsion from Paradise	March	Nisan
2	Cain killed Abel	before 25 March	Nisan ⁶⁰
3	[Great Friday]	—	—
4	Sodom and Gomorrah	before Ascension	Nisan ⁶¹
5	Noah's flood	before Pentecost	Iyyar ⁶²
6	Fall of Jerusalem in Jeremiah's time	2 nd Friday in June	?
7	Punishment of Egypt by Moses	before 29 June	?
8	Redeeming through Gideon	before 15 August	Wheat harvest (Jdg 6:15)
9	[Beheading of John the Baptist]	—	—
10	Moses' Passover	after 14 September	Tishri
11	Jeremiah concealed the Ark	before 30 November	Kislew
12	[Christmas]	—	—

⁶⁰ Cf. Glenthøj, J. B. *Cain and Abel in Syriac and Greek Writers (4th-6th centuries)*, 5 [rabbinic tradition], 130, 148, 153, 170 [Greek and Syrian fathers]. CSCO, 567 / Subs, 95. Lovanii, 1997.

⁶¹ *Beresbit Rabba* 51:1–6 (16 Nisan); cf. in the Samaritan *Asatir*, VII, 28 and VIII, 29: Sodom was burned on Friday, in Nisan. See Gaster, M. *The Asatir. The Samaritan Book of the Secrets of Moses*, 243 and 262, cf. 188, n. 8 [other parallels from the Samaritan tradition]. London, 1927.

⁶² That is, the second month; cf. Gen 7:11, 8:14, and parallels in the literature of the Second Temple period.

The traditions underlying Nrs 6 and 7 remain the most problematic. Even if we accept the shifting of the date of Exodus from Nisan to Tishri in Nr 10, the date of the punishment of Egypt must be closer to that of Exodus, because, in the biblical account, it is somewhere at the beginning of Nisan or at the end of Adar (cf. Ex 12:2). The Fall of Jerusalem in June (Nr 6) looks no less strange. It is normally placed in the fifth month (Ab) which is difficult to identify with June.⁶³ For instance, Talmud (*bTʿanit* 29b) mentions different dates of this commemoration, either 7 Ab (as in 2 Kings 25:8) or 10 Ab (as in Jer 52:12), and chooses 9 Ab as a kind of compromise.

Both of these problems probably have a single solution. There is a Second Temple tradition placing the Fall of Babylon on the Pentecost. In some of the modifications of this tradition, Babylon is identified as Egypt⁶⁴ or Jerusalem.⁶⁵ Both our Nrs 6 and 7 are

⁶³ The equation Ab = June (instead of July) contradicts the main scheme of our calendar, although such a confusion might be possible somewhere in the Hellenistic world. Cf. Samuel, A. E. *Greek and Roman Chronology. Calendars and Years in Classical Antiquity*, 150. Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft, I, Abt., 7. Teil. München, 1972: Paone (June in Egypt) = Loios (the Macedonian name for the month); but normally Loios = Ab in Antioch (where the year starts from October = Tishri, cf. the name of this month as Teshrin in Syriac).

⁶⁴ Cf., on the confusion between the construction of the Tower of Babel with brick-making in Egypt in *3 Baruch*, Harlow, D. *The Greek Apocalypse of Baruch (3 Baruch) in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity*, 110–12. *Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha*, 12. Leiden, 1996. On the connexion of this scene to the Pentecost, see Lourié, B. “Cosmology and Liturgical Calendar in *3 Baruch*.” In Kulik, A., Orlov, A., eds. *Harry E. Gaylor Memorial Volume* (forthcoming).

⁶⁵ Cf., on this tradition in the Apocalypse of John in NT, Beagley, A. J. *The “Sitz im Leben” of the Apocalypse with Particular Reference to the Role of the Church’s Enemies*. Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche, 50. Berlin/New York, 1987. The matter remains controversial but I am inclined to agree with this identification; cf. Лурье, В., [Rev. of:] Don K. Preston, Who is this Babylon? (Ardmore, 1999). *Христианский Восток* 2 (8) (2000): 497–99 (in Russian).

dated to near the Pentecost. Thus, Eleutherius' calendar may follow a tradition where the Pentecost implied commemoration of the Fall of Babylon, the punishment of Egypt, and the Fall of Jerusalem as a New Babylon.

Redeeming through Gideon "before 15 August" (Nr 8) is also somewhat problematic. The date of the biblical account is the wheat harvest (Jdg 6:15), which corresponds to the beginning of summer (cf. also Ruth, ch. 2), that is, *long* before 15 August. The Qumranic *Temple Scroll's* Festival of First-Fruits for Wheat is the Pentecost. Thus, it is natural to consider this Friday of Gideon as belonging to the Pentecost series, together with the previous three Fridays.

Thus, the Old Testament precedents for Eleutherius' Fridays are grouped as follows:

Passover series (Nrs 1–4, where Nr 3 is the Christian Great Friday);

Pentecost series (Nrs 5–8);

Yom Kippur series (Nr 10; and Nr 9?);

Hanukkah series (Nr 11; and Nr 12?).

One can conclude that Eleutherius seems to use an ancient Jewish calendric tradition even though we are unable to identify it in its entirety. Nevertheless, it looks consistent with and rooted in the Jewish liturgical traditions of the Second Temple period. The tradition referred to in the *hadiths* on the Jewish roots of the fast of Ashura is, at least, similar (if not identical) to this one.

1.7. The Twelve-Friday Tradition in Palestine: John Zosimos

John Zosimos was a Georgian monk in the middle of the tenth century at the St Sabbas Laura near Jerusalem who composed, in Georgian, a calendar collecting liturgical commemorations from four sources, which he listed. Three of these sources represented Palestinian liturgical usages and one of them represented the rite of Constantinople. His work ends with a short notice on peculiar fasts before certain great feasts.⁶⁶ Among these feasts is the commemo-

⁶⁶ Garitte, G. *Le calendrier palestinogéorgien du Sinaiticus 34 (Xe siècle)*, 119–20 [Georgian with Latin tr. on the same pages]. *Subsidia hagiolo-*

ration of St Sabbas on 5 December, which suggests strongly that, for this part of his calendar, his sole source was a document from St Sabbas (probably some kind of lectionary). Thus, for John Zosimos' notice on these strange fasts we have as the *terminus ante quem* the early tenth century.

Garitte had already observed that the number of days of fasting, 56, was the normal duration of the Quadragesima (40-day fasting) throughout the East before the late seventh century, when it was forbidden for the Chalcedonians.⁶⁷ Fifty-six days are equal to 8 weeks and contain 40 days of fasting on the weekdays, with no fast on Saturdays and Sundays (where only meat is prohibited). In the Byzantine rite, this manner of fasting was replaced by the 7-week Quadragesima preceded by one cheese-fare week having the same rule of fasting as previously prescribed for Saturdays and Sundays. This means that John Zosimos' 56-day fasts are a pre-eighth century custom.

However, 56 days contain exactly 40 days of fasting only if the fasts start on Mondays and end before the feasts falling on Sundays, that is, for the movable feasts only. In this case, the last fast day is always Friday. This is why this practice of 56-day fasts is a development emerging from the practice of specific Friday fasts.

Nevertheless, in John Zosimos there is no 56-day fast before the movable feasts. The reason is clear: all these feasts (Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, and also the movable feast of the Apostles on the fiftieth day after the Pentecost) are connected to Easter with its Lent, the first and the main 56-day fast before the late seventh century. John Zosimos' 56-day fasts are an expansion, in the Palestinian monastic milieu, of the 8-week Lenten principle onto other important feasts with, however, the inevitable loss of the correspondence with the weekdays. Two traces of this earlier connexion of the 56-day fasts with the weekdays remain: their very length of

graphica, 30. Bruxelles, 1958. Cf., *ibid.*, 35–36, on the Sabbaitic source of John Zosimos, and 433–434, Garitte's commentary to this notice.

⁶⁷ It was prohibited by the *Quinisextum* Council (692), canon 56. This manner of fasting is attributed here to "the country of Armenia and other places."

56 days and the distribution of the fasts at the point at which the core of the Clement twelve-Friday scheme is clearly discernible.

In John Zosimos, the 56-days fasts are grouped into two series, one obligatory and one optional (preceded by the words “if you wish”). Below both series are compared with the data from Table 1.

The obligatory series contains:

1. Nativity of John the Baptist (25 June is meant)—cf. *Clement Nr 6
2. Dormition (15 August)—cf. *Clement Nr 8
3. Nativity of the Theotokos (8 September)—cf. Clement Gr, Nr 9
4. St George (10 November)⁶⁸—not in Clement
5. Archangels (Palestinian date 14 November is meant)—cf. Clement Sl, Nr 10
6. St Sabbas (5 December)—not in Clement
7. Christmas (25 December)—cf. *Clement, Nr 11

The non-obligatory series contains:

8. Annunciation (25 March)—cf. *Clement, Nr 2
9. Transfiguration (6 August)—cf. some Russian mss in Veselovsky’s synopsis, Nr 7
10. St Chariton (28 September)⁶⁹—not in Clement
11. St Conon (5 June)—not in Clement
12. Moses (4 September)—not in Clement but cf. Eleutherius, Nr 10 (Table 2)
13. Elias (3 September, an otherwise unknown commemoration)—not in Clement

⁶⁸ Especially venerated not only in Georgia, the homeland of John Zosimos, but also in Palestine, where his main shrine is located (in Lydda). 10 November is the date of the consecration of St George’s church in some unidentified place named Enbiglon or Engiglon and known from the sources in Georgian only (which indicates its importance for Palestine in the eighth through the tenth centuries).

⁶⁹ St Chariton is especially venerated in Palestine as the founder of Palestinian monasticism.

14. Beheading of John the Baptist (reading is not completely certain)—cf. some Russian mss in Veselovsky's synopsis, Nrs 8 and 9

It is clear from this comparison that the calendar laying out the 56-day fasts follows the calendar of Clement, although excluding the movable feasts and adding some feasts especially important for Palestinian monastic circles. The recension of Clement which lies in the background of John Zosimos is close to our reconstructed *Clement calendar with some variations closer to the Greek and Slavonic recensions (cf. especially points 3 and 5 in the list above).

John Zosimos is important to our study as a witness, certain even if indirect, of the authority of the Twelve-Friday calendar for pre-eighth-century Palestine.

1.8. The Twelve-Friday Calendar: a Preliminary Conclusion

The Twelve-Friday calendar was widespread throughout the Christian world but only in its Chalcedonian part. There are no Twelve-Friday documents among the non-Chalcedonian sources, whereas in the Chalcedonian traditions they are quite abundant. Their extreme popularity in the East and the West as well as the witness of John Zosimos point to Palestine as their place of origin, not earlier than 518 (the end of the rule of the monophysite emperor Anastasius who pursued a policy of suppression of the Chalcedonians). The *terminus post quem* follows from the fact that such a popular tradition is completely absent in the anti-Chalcedonian milieu. In the sixth century, Palestine was the centre at which liturgical customs of the East were available to the Western pilgrims, and so they could easily be translated to the West without any involvement on the part of the imperial government.

As seen from the Eleutherius calendar, the Twelve-Friday scheme was constructed on the matrix of some Jewish liturgical tradition highlighting several important feasts with their specific interpretation. This Jewish tradition as a whole remains obscure but it is recognisable—at least partially—in the Islamic accounts of the establishment of the fast of Ashura.

The story of Eleutherius, which is the main object of the second part of this study, sheds more light on the Twelve Fridays as a

veritas hebraica and on possible points of contact between the Twelve-Friday tradition and early Islam.

1.9. A Syriac Legend about the Secret Bishop John and the Personified Friday

We know of no Twelve-Friday document outside the Chalcedonian part of the Christian world. Nevertheless, we do know a Syrian anti-Chalcedonian legend of the veneration of each Friday throughout the year which presents the closest parallel to the Muslim practice. This legend is important to us also in several other respects, so we will deal with it here, before proceeding to the second part of our study.

Unfortunately, this legend is still unpublished. In 1910, François Nau published a detailed periphrasis⁷⁰ but he has never returned to it, nor, to my knowledge, has anyone else. The legend is a typical *narratio animae utilis*, although unknown in any language other than Syriac. The manuscript Paris, *Bibl. Nationale* 234 contains a cycle of the three “beneficial tales” attributed to a certain abba Meletius of Antioch; our story is the first of the series. It is a very important text which must be published and studied properly. Here I do not pay it the attention it deserves, but only sketch some especially important motives.

John was a Christian slave of a pagan master. He venerated Friday to such an extent that, from Thursday evening until Saturday, he never worked, never ate, and never even spoke. Every week on Friday he reported himself sick. This manner irritated his master, who often insulted him. Meanwhile, two daughters of the master fell into a pit on Friday. At the request of the master’s wife, John saved them (a clear allusion to Jesus’ words relating to the Sabbath, Lk 14:5) with the miraculous help of a lady that he called “Holy Friday” (ܩܕܝܫܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ). The master, without knowing these events, demands that John participate in the harvest, even though it was still Friday. John refuses, and his master tries to kill him with a sword; however,

⁷⁰ Nau, F. “Hagiographie syriaque.” *ROC* 15 (1910): 53–72, 173–97, here 192–94.

his sword is stopped by the same lady, “une belle femme revêtue d’habite noire et brilliants.” She lets him know that John saved his daughters. They then go out to the workers in the field, but all of them have died: the same lady reproached them for working on Friday, the day of the Passion of our Lord. She touched each of them with a kind of fiery lance and each of them was burned, although the ears of wheat in their hands remained intact. The master asks to be baptised but John refuses, pretending that he is only a layman with no right of administering baptism. They all go to the bishop of Antioch, Meletius (Meletius was the bishop of Antioch from 360 to his death in 381; thus, this epoch had already become “epic” to the hagiographer). Meletius salutes John as a New Job and reveals that he is a bishop consecrated in Alexandria and who had left his see (unnamed) twenty-seven years previously. John, unhappy with this disclosure, reveals in turn that Meletius holds a great sum of money which was donated for the poor but which Meletius had planned to spend on church decoration; Meletius publicly repents. John baptises his master with the name Theodore together with two hundred other people. Theodore donates his slaves to John and John sets them free.

Four motives of this story will be paramount to the whole of our dossier of Friday veneration in the context of Christian influence on the Arabs. We will meet them in the legends on St Eleutherius and St Parasceve:

- (1) the veneration of Friday as a specific day (fast, abrogation of work⁷¹);
- (2) the veneration of the personified Friday as a saint;
- (3) the main character as a bishop who left his see;
- (4) freedom and slavery, true *vs* apparent.

It is difficult to say whether the present legend is a product of a separate development of the tradition within the anti-

⁷¹ On the early Muslim custom of fasting on Friday, see Goldziher, I. “Usages juifs d’après la littérature religieuse des musulmans.” *REJ* 28 (1894): 75–94, here 83–84; Vajda, G. “Jeûne musulman et jeûne juif.” *The Hebrew Union College Annual* 12–13 (1937–1938): 367–85, here 379.

Chalcedonian milieu or an earlier product of the epoch shaped by the *Henotikon* of Zeno (482), at a time when the attitude toward the Council of Chalcedon was not an insurmountable obstacle to communion. In fact, even in the 520s the Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian parts of the Christian world were united in their reaction to the murder of the Christians of Nağrān.

PART TWO: ST ELEUTHERIUS AND THE LEGENDS ABOUT NAĞRĀN

2.1. The Text of the Slavonic Story of Eleutherius

The text of the introductory story of the Eleutherius recension is almost unknown in languages other than Russian.⁷² The translation that follows does not pretend to anything more than a useful outline of the text. In the text below, I have indicated my interpretations of passages whose exact meaning is far from obvious by using [square brackets]; all of these passages will be discussed below (section 2.2). The <angled brackets> mark the text where I do not propose any choice between the variant readings nor do I propose any specific reconstruction. Because no critical text is available, my translation follows the texts of Sokolov's edition (based on a Serbian manuscript of the thirteenth century, with variant readings from several other manuscripts). Rozhdestvenskaja's edition (siglum R) is taken into account for some important variant readings only; I mostly omit the rhetorical amplifications specific to the manuscript *T'* (the oldest Russian manuscript, Novgorod, fifteenth century) on which R is based. I believe, along with Sokolov, that his Serbian manuscript better preserves the general flow of the text than the later Russian manuscripts.

⁷² Milena Rozhdestvenskaja's edition (Рождественская, "Сказание о двенадцати пятницах") is provided with a Russian translation. There is also a French translation of the ms *Пап* (= Paris, Bibl. Nationale, Nr 10; Serbian, parchment, 13th century; it is published in Веселовский, "Freiheit—Элевферий," 124–25) in the description of the manuscript by Ivan Martynov: Martynov, [I.] *Les manuscrits slaves de la Bibliothèque Impériale de Paris*, 69–72. Paris, 1858.

In the West, there is a land [called] Laura, and in this land, a great city called [Septail/Dyrrachium], and a multitude of Jews lived in it. And they had quarrels with the Christians, sometimes in the market, sometimes in the streets, and sometimes in the city's gates.⁷³ And they had beaten each other. And there was a council, under <Karmian> king. The Jews said to the Christians: "Until what time do we have to bear this misery and have our children beaten by you? Let you choose one philosopher and let us choose another (and) let them dispute with each other, and let us all remain silent. If your philosopher out-argue, we all baptise ourselves. And if somebody from ours will not wish to baptise himself, he will have from you a great mischief. [R *adds*: And if our philosopher out-argue, you convert into our faith.]" They have said this relying on their wise philosopher.

And the Christians liked their speech. They had chosen for themselves a pious man whose name was Eleutherius, and the Jews had chosen one named Tarasius. They started to discuss, having gathered together in one building. [R *adds*: They discussed for many hours but, despite this, were never left without an audience.] When they were gathered for the third assembly,⁷⁴ the Jew took with himself his son, whose name was Malchus. Then [they went into the depths of the struggle]. The Sovereign Lord who sees everything helped Eleutherius the Christian [*instead of this sentence, R has*: O Lord who sees everything, help Eleutherius to out-argue the Jew!].

And the Jew said to the Christian with an angry heart: "I saw that you have already out-argued me, our faith is a shadow

⁷³ The phrase "sometimes in the market, sometimes in the streets, and sometimes in the city's gates" sounds like a citation. City gates, in Eastern cities, are also places of the market, court, gatherings, etc. For "market" and "streets" in one phrase, cf. Prov 7:12 (MT and Tg but not LXX and Peshitta); among the many biblical passages featuring the function of city gates, cf. Prov 31:23.

⁷⁴ Cf. the *Doctrina Jacobi nuper baptizati* (CPG 7793); the text was written shortly after the summer of 634, and it records a total of nine assemblies between the Jews and the Christian Jacob.

while yours is true. Moreover, to Moses on the Mount of Sinai a shadow is revealed while to you the truth has shown itself. From the Virgin Theotokos Maria the Christ was born who was professed by our prophets and was indicated with the finger by your apostles. I see that you are a wise man but you do not know about the twelve Fridays which are profitable for your souls.” And after having said this, he departed, being incapable of staying because of affliction. But his son remained, and Eleutherius said to him: “Do you know about the twelve Fridays of which your father has spoken?” And he said: “I know that our grandfathers had taken some Christian, one of your apostles, and had found with him a scroll in which it was written about the twelve Fridays. They had put him to a terrible death after which the scroll, after having been read, was consigned to flames. And there is an oath among us, up to the present day, not to make it known to the Christians. And my soul thirsts for your faith.” And, having started, explained to him everything up to the end.

The Jew came in again and said [*some mss add*: to Eleutherius]: “I know that you are perplexed about the twelve Fridays!” But he opened his lips and explained to him everything that he has heard from his son. And the Jew said to him with great anger: “[According to the explanation delivered to me], this is not known among the Christians. My son said [this] to you.” And having taken a knife, he slaughtered his son and slaughtered himself.

But I, Eleutherius, oh brothers, after having known this from the Jew, did not hide this but wrote to all the Christians.

(There follows the text enumerating the twelve Fridays.)

2.2. Syriac as the Original Language

There are strong reasons to consider the original of the Eleutherius recension as written in Syriac. Most of these reasons are based on the phenomena coined by Gérard Garitte as “*les interférences accidentelles*,” in contrast to “*les interférences implantées*,” which are loanwords that have already been absorbed by the language of translation. The lower the quality of a translation is, the richer it becomes in “*interférences accidentelles*,” that is, the borrowings of the words, the meanings of the words, syntactical constructions, and spellings of proper names. The “*interférences accidentelles*”

are often a cause of mistranslation (when the word is translated in its primary meaning although it had been used to convey another meaning, one absent from the language of translation), in addition to the mistranslations due to outright mistakes. Thus, for the study of the history of texts, as Garitte formulated, the worst translators are the best ones: "...vus de notre point de vue particulier, ce sont les moins bons qui sont les meilleurs."⁷⁵ The Slavic translator of Eleutherius was rather good, but only "vu de notre point de vue particulier."

In this section, we will discuss three cases of mistranslation and one case of a corrupted spelling of a toponym. In all these cases our demonstration will pertain to the original text written by the author but not the immediate original of the Slavonic version, which might be, of course, in languages other than Syriac (*e.g.*, in Greek).

2.2.1. A Friday which is временная ("temporary")

In the calendar part of the Eleutherius recension, some Fridays are called "temporary" (*пятница временная*). These are the Fridays Nrs 6, 10, and 12, but in some manuscripts there are fewer than three "temporary" Fridays. So far, there has been no explanation of this epithet, although the term "temporary" certainly goes back to the original of Eleutherius.

One can recognize here confusion between two homographs in consonant writing, the Syriac roots *zbn* "time" and "to buy." The translator read something like ܙܒܢܐ "temporary," while in the original the meaning was something like ܙܒܢܐ "merchant, trading," which gives the sense "market Friday." These words are scarcely discernible in consonant writing when the vowel signs are omitted.

In Islamic society, Friday is the day of the weekly market, which is considered to be a part of the festal pastime on the *Yaum al-Ġumʿa*. Eleutherius provides only three market Fridays: in the

⁷⁵ Garitte, G. "Traduttore traditore di se stesso." *Bulletin de la Classe des Lettres de l'Académie Royale de Belgique*. 5^e sér. 57 (1971): 39–80 [reprinted in idem, *Scripta disiecta. 1941–1977*, II, 676–717, here 691. Publications de l'Institut Orientaliste de Louvain, 22. Lovanii, 1980].

middle of the summer (Nr 6), in the middle of the winter (Nr 12), and in the autumn, at the end of the harvest (Nr 10). This practice is not the same as in the Muslim world but it is quite reasonable *per se* and already highlights the feature of Friday as being *the* market day.

S. V. Ivanov is now preparing a publication of five Slavonic manuscripts in which the number of such Fridays is reduced to four and they are called *четвертовременныя* “four-temporary.” They correspond to the Latin fasts of the “four seasons,” even in the calendrical dates. However, as we have seen above (section 1.2), the four seasons motive is a later addition to the Latin version; moreover, two of Ivanov’s five manuscripts are Glagolitic Croatian, that is, Roman Catholic. Therefore, I think that we have in these manuscripts a later Western rationalisation of the incomprehensible term. At any rate, a full discussion of these particular readings must be postponed until Ivanov publishes his study.

2.2.2. ВНИДОСТА ВЪ ГЛУБОКОЮ ПОВѢСТЬ

The phrase rendered in our translation as “Then [they went into the depths of the struggle]” is flawed in the manuscripts. Some of them give the strange phrase “they went into the depths of the books (*въ глубокія книги*)”; some others, including the Serbian manuscript of the thirteenth century used by Sokolov as the basis of his edition, contain the smoothed-out phrase “they went into the depth(s) of books (*въ гльбину кнѣжноую / въ книжныя глубины*; the noun “depth” is in either singular or plural).” But the ms *T*¹ used as the basis of Rozhdestvenskaja’s edition (Novgorod, fifteenth century), contains a *lectio difficilior*: *внидоста въ глубокою повѣсть*. Literally it means “they went into (a) deep narration.” Scholars, including Rozhdestvenskaja, have naturally dismissed this reading as corrupt. However, if the clearly understandable reading “they went into the depth(s) of books” is genuine, the appearance of a quite widespread but meaningless reading “they went into the deep books” is inexplicable: it is hardly possible as a replacement for “the depth(s) of books” but easily possible instead of the genuine “deep narration.” The reasons for dismissing this *lectio difficilior* emerge from scholars’ understanding of the text rather than from purely textological considerations.

The word *povēst*’ means “narration,” a standard rendering of Greek διήγησις. I think this is a mark of a confusion common in

Syriac texts and their translations between two root stems of the verb ܠܥܠ: as ethpeel, “to play” or “to compete” (e.g., in sport) or as ethpaal, “to narrate.”⁷⁶ Thus, the meaning of the Syriac original was something like “they went into the depths of the struggle” (a confusion took place between derivatives such as, e.g., ܠܥܠܐ “δύγῃσις” and ܠܥܠܐܝܘܬܐ “play, competition”).

2.2.3. Како ми ся дана сила

The phrase rendered in our translation as “[According to the explanation delivered to me], this is not known among the Christians” is also a reconstruction based on a peculiar reading of the ms T¹. This reading was correctly published only in Rozhdestvenskaja’s edition: *Како ми ся дана сила, яко нѣсть се въ хрѣстианехъ вѣдомо*. It is difficult to translate the first part of this sentence, even if all the words in it seem to be clear. An attempt at a literal translation would result in something like the following: “As (or according to, in the same manner, etc.) a/the power/force is given to me, that this is not known among the Christians.” In other manuscripts, the readings are as follows: *Тако ми великаго б(о)га Атанаила/Аданаила...* (Sokolov’s ms/ms T²) “I swore by the great God Atanail/Adanail [Adonael⁷⁷]...” or the same but with the insertion of another name of God, “Adonai”⁷⁸ (ms N).⁷⁹ The whole sentence

⁷⁶ Payne Smith, R. *Thesaurus Syriacus*, cols. 4248–50. Oxonii, 1879–1901.

⁷⁷ Adonael (“Lord God”) is the name of one of the seven greatest angels in the *Testament of Solomon*, 81, 84, 102, and also an angelic name in some rabbinic and cabbalistic traditions (Schwab, M. *Vocabulaire de l’angélologie, d’après les manuscrits hébreux de la Bibliothèque nationale*, 41 [153]. Extrait des *Mémoires présentés par divers savants à l’Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*, 1^{re} série, tome X, 2^e partie. Paris, 1897).

⁷⁸ Cf. LXX Αδωναι: 1 Sam 1:11; throughout Ez, ch. 11, but only in some of the mss.

⁷⁹ Sokolov incorrectly states, in his critical apparatus, that the ms T¹ has *Аданаила* (“of Adanael”) (Соколов, *Материалы и заметки...*, 54, n. 17). In fact, this is not a reading of the manuscript but only a reconstruction that his editor, Tikhonravov, printed within the text; Tikhonravov explains in a footnote that the ms has *ся дана сила* (Тихонравов,

verb ܘܒܝܢ “to give” in ܘܒܝܢܘܢ “to be given” (ethpeel) also has the meanings “to be granted,” “to be delivered,” etc.⁸¹ Thus, the obscure part of the Slavonic sentence can be approximately reconstructed in Syriac as ܘܒܝܢܘܢ ܠܝ ܘܒܝܢܘܢ “According to the explanation delivered to me,” where the initial ܘܒܝܢܘܢ has an exact equivalent in the Slavonic *како*.

This construction is also interesting because it is specific to Syriac, and thus is hardly possible in a Syriac translation from Greek (because such translations generally follow Greek syntax). Therefore, this is an argument for Syriac as the original language of the Eleutherius recension itself (that is, it was not translated into Syriac from another language, and, specifically, not from Greek).

Another important, although indirect, argument for Syriac as the original language is the similarity of Eleutherius’ eschatological conception to that of Pseudo-Methodius (see above, 1.5). Both works are nearly contemporary and both are independent from each other but have some common roots. Pseudo-Methodius, however, was written in Syriac.

2.2.4. “Laura” means “Illyria”

After having been prepared to meet, in the Eleutherius recension, some undigested remnants of its Syriac original, we are in a position to take a fresh look at the toponym “Laura” (*Лаурпа*).⁸² If this

(Sokoloff, M. *A Syriac Lexicon. A Translation from the Latin, Correction, Expansion, and Update of C. Brockelmann’s Lexicon Syriacum*, 447. Winona Lake, IN/Piscataway, NJ, 2009).

⁸¹ Payne Smith, J. *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary founded upon the Thesaurus Syriacus of R. Payne Smith, D. D.*, 189. Oxford, 1903.

⁸² This reading is present in the earliest manuscripts (Sokolov’s ms as well as *T*¹, *T*², and *Пап*; the ms *Унд* contains a corruption of the same reading, *оурпа*). In ms *N* (Serbian parchment ms of the 13th or 14th century), the word is rendered as *оурвьениа* (“(which is) made plain”). This reading, according to Sokolov, is “вероятно, искажено из собственного имени [probably corrupted from a proper name]” (СОКОЛОВ, *Материалы и заметки...*, 53, n. 1). This reading or its derivatives are present in some unpublished late manuscripts from the 16th to the 18th centuries (whose readings were communicated to me by Anissava Miltenova). I am espe-

is a transliteration of a Syriac word, it can be understood as “Illyricum” or, more exactly, “Illyria” (another form of the same toponym in Greek). Indeed, in the Peshitta, Ἰλλυρικόν in Rom 15:19 is rendered as ܘܨܝܪܝܐ (*ʿhwrqwn*). For another form of this toponym, Ἰλλυρία, the transliteration must be ܘܨܝܪܝܐ (*ʿhwr̄y*). This is not exactly what we might expect as an ideal transliteration of “Laura”: ܘܨܝܪܐ (*ʿhwr̄*). Nevertheless, it is certainly meant to refer to Illyria. In addition, there are two extra-linguistic arguments that support this assumption, although the linguistic correspondence discussed above is sufficiently precise to corroborate it.

The first argument is the name of the town where the discussion with the Jew took place. The manuscript tradition has basically two options for this (setting aside the third option, which is to skip the name entirely): either *Septail* (or derivatives of this name which will be discussed later; see Note 1 below) or Драчъ (*Drač*).⁸³ Drač is the Slavic name of Dyrrachium, a coastal town in the southern part of the Roman province Illyricum, the modern Durrës in Albania.⁸⁴

cially grateful to Anissava Miltenova, who shared with me her data on the unpublished manuscripts.

⁸³ In *N* and *M* among the published mss, and in Beljakovski 309 (16th century) and Dujchev 17 (18th century) among the unpublished.

⁸⁴ Without knowing the reading “Drach,” the first student of the Eleutherius recension, Ivan Martynov, provided the name Laura in his translation with a note: “Ne serait-ce pas Illyrie?” (Martinov, *Les manuscrits slaves*, 70, n. 2). Veselovsky, although already knowing this reading and, moreover, knowing the existence of the martyr Eleutherius of Illyria and considering these facts as arguments in favour of Martynov’s intuition, nevertheless rejects it. Veselovsky’s own choice of locale is Tarsus (Веселовский, “Freiheit—Элевферий,” 82, cf. 82–85). Veselovsky derived “Tarsus” from the name of Eleutherius’ protagonist Tarasius (this procedure hardly fits modern criteria of critical hagiography, but Veselovsky was a pioneer and even a precursor of this discipline). Veselovsky’s argument is based on the Passion of Eleutherius the Cubicularius (*BHG* 572, 572c; 4 August), where the martyrdom takes place in Tarsus. The existence of one of the martyrs named Eleutherius in Tarsus is not sufficient reason to derive “Tarasius” from “Tarsus” and to ignore

The second argument is the name of Eleutherius himself. Eleutherius is a twenty-year-old bishop martyr of Illyricum whose hagiographical dossier, including its Syriac part, will be discussed below.⁸⁵

There is no doubt that our Eleutherius of Laura is none other than an avatar of Eleutherius of Illyria, so the hagiographical dossier of the latter is thus the hagiographical substrate of the story of Eleutherius and Fridays. This identification is, in turn, an additional confirmation of our previous conclusion that the Eleutherius recension was translated from Syriac.

The land of Laura, or Illyria, is certainly “in the West,” as it is localized at the beginning of our story. Unfortunately, the province of Illyricum is located in the extreme west of the eastern part of the Roman Empire, in such a way that, from our perspective, it is “in the West” from everywhere. Thus, such geographic precision is of almost no help in specifying the locale of the place where Eleutherius narrated his story.

***Note 1: “Šeptail” and the Possibility
of a Slavonic Translation from Syriac***

For the present study, it is irrelevant whether the Slavonic text of the Eleutherius recension is translated from a lost Greek intermediary or directly from the Syriac original. I mention this problem here only because of the reading “Šeptail” (and other similar readings) as the name of the town in which the dispute with the Jews took place. If this reading belongs to the original, the existence of a Greek intermediary is unlikely. It is hardly possible that the phoneme /š/ would be preserved after having

all the toponyms given by the manuscripts. Unfortunately, Veselovsky did not know that the “Laura” of our text could be read as “Illyria.”

⁸⁵ Veselovsky’s knowledge of this *Life* was based on the texts (Latin and metaphrastic Greek) published in the *Acta Sanctorum* on 18 April (commemoration date according to the Roman calendar). Oddly enough, he mentions 15 December as a commemoration day of Eleutherius in the Byzantine rite but says that this is an erroneous (“по ошибке”) repetition of the commemoration of the Cubicularius from 4 August (Веселовский, “Freiheit—Элевферий,” 82). In fact, it is Veselovsky who is in error here.

passed through Greek transliteration. Normally in such cases, we have, in the Slavonic translations, the phoneme /s/. Given that the Eleutherius recension is a Syrian work written in Syriac, one has to conclude—on the assumption that a reading similar to “Šeptail” is the genuine one—that the Slavonic version is translated from Syriac. A detailed discussion of this issue would involve the problem of Syrian influence on the earliest Slavonic literature in general and especially the *Sitz im Leben* of another Slavonic document translated from Syriac, the so-called “Legend of Thessalonica.”⁸⁶ Such a discussion should be avoided here. Our only interest at present is the reading “Šeptail.”

The manuscripts give, for the corresponding toponym, three main possibilities (the following manuscript readings have been provided to me by Anissava Miltenova): the omission of the city’s name entirely (or a lacuna, as in *Пап*); the name “Drach”; and a group of readings which I consider to be similar to “Šeptail.” These readings are the following: ШЕПЪТАИЛЪ (*Šep’tail’*; *T1*); ШИПЪЛЪ (*Šipeľ’*; Sokolov’s ms and the unpublished ms Nr 53 of Miltenova’s list, no date available); ШИНЪТАЛЪ (*Šin’tal’*; Vienna 149, 16th century, and Adzharski 326, 17th century, both unpublished); and ШЦПАЛЪ (*Ščpal’*; *V10*). Moreover, I add to the same group the reading ВІИПІТАН (*Vipitan*) of *T2*: confusion between *ša* and *vēdi* is quite possible in the Croatian angular Glagolitic where the corresponding letters are written as *v* and *š*. *T2* is a Russian manuscript of the sixteenth century but it goes back to the South Slavic manuscript tradition.

The reading ШЦПАЛЪ obviously results from confusion between Ш and ШЦ. All the readings of this group except ШИНЪТАЛЪ have as the second consonant /p/, not /n/; one can take it almost for granted that /n/ appeared in ШИНЪТАЛЪ as a result of confusion (quite common) between Cyrillic *pokoj* (*n*) and *nyne* (*n*); it is /p/ that is genuine here. Finally, the readings differ in either the presence or absence of the third consonant, /t/, given that the fourth consonant, /l/, is present everywhere. However, the third consonant is mostly present (exceptions are ШИПЪЛЪ and ШЦПАЛЪ; both of them sound similar to some Slavic words, and so were probably created by medieval editors). Thus, the original consonantism of

⁸⁶ Cf. Лурье, В. “Около Солунской легенды. Из истории миссионерства в период монофелитской унии” [Lourić, B., “On the Context of the Legend of Thessalonica. From the history of the missionary activity in the period of the monothelite union”]. *Славяне и их соседи [The Slavs and Their Neighbours]*, вып. 6 (1996): 23–52.

the toponym can be recovered as /š/-/p/-/t/-/l/ (less likely, without /t/).

It is tempting to read these four consonants in Syriac as *šabtāyē* (ܫܒܬܝܝܐ) in the sense of σαββατιανοί (“Sabbatarians”).⁸⁷ The alternation of /b/ and /p/ is known in Syriac.⁸⁸ The ending *-il*, in this case, is an adaptation of an unusual, to the Slavic ear, ending *-ie* within the Slavonic tradition (where the proper names of Semitic origin with ending *-il* are numerous). If this hypothesis is correct, *Šeptail* was originally not the name of the city but rather its predicate: “the great city of the Sabbatharians.” It is probable, although not absolutely certain, that the city in question is Dyr-rachium; the Slavs had been settling near Dyr-rachium since at least the middle of the sixth century, even before the composition of our text, and so the toponym Drač in its Slavonic version may be the correct translation of the original city’s name.

Another question is, who are these “Sabbatarians”? In the context of Friday veneration, there is no need to see them as a separate sect; the ordinary Jewish population would represent a sufficiently distinct population. In fact, Jewish presence in Illyricum was rather strong and conflicts did occur.⁸⁹

Finally, I would like to mention a possibility pointed out to me by S. A. Ivanov, namely, that the toponym is influenced by the South Slavic name for the Albanians, *шиптар* (*šiptar*, which now has a derogatory sense) derived from the Albanian *shqipe* “Albanian” through an archaic form *шшиптар* (*ššipetar*). The word *shqipe* goes back to the late proto-

⁸⁷ Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, col. 4049.

⁸⁸ In Syriac, as well as in other spoken Semitic languages, “...voiced consonants may become voiceless in contact with other consonants and in final position in the syllable” (Lipiński, E. *Semitic Languages: Outline of a Comparative Grammar*, 104. OLA, 80. Leuven, 1997). Cf., in a Melkite ms, a case when an etymological /b/ is represented by /p/, also in the name of a day of the week: ܠܫܒܘܝܢ instead of ܠܫܒܘܝܢ “Friday” (Sachau, E. *Verzeichniss der syrischen Handschriften*. 2. Abt., 856 (Nr 310); *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*, 23; Berlin, 1899). I owe this reference to N. Seleznyov.

⁸⁹ The laws concerning the Jews issued by Arcadius (397) and Theodosius II (ca 420) in the *Codex Theodosianus* (16.8.1 and 21) are both addressed to the Prefects in Illyricum; cf., for general context, Katz, T. S., ed. *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 4, 1043. Cambridge etc., 2006.

Albanian period (6th–7th century) and is, in turn, a calque of the Slavic word *slověne* “Slavs,” both having the meaning “those who speak clearly.”⁹⁰ The history of the South Slavic *шлугар* is not clear enough to permit any further evaluation of Ivanov’s hypothesis.

2.3. The Hagiographical Dossier of Eleutherius of Illyricum: an Introduction

We have recognised the presence of St Eleutherius, bishop of Illyricum, in our “Slavic” Eleutherius; now we must look at the hagiographical dossier of the latter and then study both Eleutherii in parallel. This will lead us more closely to the Arabs and the Arabian Peninsula.

So far, not all the known texts about Eleutherius have been published and, most probably, not all have even been found. Judging from the published texts and manuscript descriptions, four of the recensions are the most important: one Greek, one Latin, one Syriac, and one Slavonic. These will be reviewed below. Some important data are also preserved in Syriac liturgical calendars and in the Ethiopian Synaxarium; they will be mentioned below as required. Our Eleutherius seems to be absolutely unknown to the Coptic tradition. His Armenian short *Life* is derived from the known Greek recensions⁹¹ and is of no particular interest for us. The Georgian texts on Eleutherius are unexplored. The same is true for the Arabic tradition despite the fact that it might turn out to be of special importance.⁹² Finally, there is a tradition of the

⁹⁰ Orel, V. *Albanian Etymological Dictionary*, 434. Leiden/Boston/Köln, 1998.

⁹¹ Cf. its text, translation, and notes in Bayan, G. *Le Synaxaire arménien de Ter Israel. V. Mois de Kalotz*, 48[734]–51[737]. PO 18, 1; N 86. Paris, 1924 [repr. Turnhout, 1974] (under 7 Kaloc’ = 15 December).

⁹² Cf., in the ms *Sinaiticus arab.* 398 (Melkite), the title of the *Life* where the proper names are severely garbled: *وتاريوس* for “Eleutherius” (the first syllable is dropped, probably because of confusion with the article *al-*) and *انخاوس* for Anthia; Gibson, M. D. *Catalogue of the Arabic Mss. in the Convent of S. Catharine on Mount Sinai*, 66–68, here 67. *Studia Sinaitica*, III. London, 1894 (I am grateful to N. Seleznyov for this reference). This ms will soon be available on line.

eneration of St Eleutherius' relics in Constantinople. It turns out to be at odds with the data of his Greek *Life*, and so will be considered in comparison with the latter.

2.3.1. *The Byzantine Tradition and Constantinople*

The Byzantine tradition is represented by the *Lives* (long and short) in Greek, Latin, Slavonic, and also Syriac.⁹³ The Greek recensions are BHG 568–571b, of which two are published: BHG 570 (pre-metaphrastic, seemingly the oldest one) and BHG 571 (one of the two metaphrastic recensions). It is BHG 570 which is of primary interest for us. There is a critical edition by Pio Franchi de' Cavalieri with an important study, "Il testo originale della leggenda di S. Eleuterio."⁹⁴ There are, in addition, short notices on Eleutherius in various recensions of the Synaxarium of Constantinople which are of interest because of their various spellings of the proper names.

The Latin recensions are BHL 2450–2452 (four recensions, among which one is unpublished, BHL 2451a). There are, moreover, several documents concerning the later Eleutherius cult in the Roman Church (cf. BHL 2453–2453c). According to Franchi de' Cavalieri, the three published recensions go back to two Latin translations from Greek. The location of Eleutherius' diocese in Illyricum is preserved only in a part of the Latin manuscript tradition. Two other variants are names of the Italian towns Rieti and Etana; these adaptations are certainly insertions by later Italian editors.

The Syriac recension BHO 266⁹⁵ is similar to BHG 570, especially in the variants proper to the codex *Barberinianus* III 37,⁹⁶ which means that the Syriac text is based on a Greek text that is

⁹³ And also by an Armenian short *Life* (see above) and, presumably, by a number of texts in Georgian.

⁹⁴ Franchi de' Cavalieri, P. *I martiri di S. Teodoro e S. Ariadne, con un' Appendice sul testo originale del Martirio di S. Eleuterio*, 149–161. Studi e testi, 6. Roma, 1901. Cf. *ibid.*, 137–46.

⁹⁵ Published in Bedjan, P., *Acta martyrum et sanctorum*, VI, 417–30. Parisii/Lipsiae, 1896.

⁹⁶ Franchi de' Cavalieri, *I martiri*, 142, n. 1.

somewhat later than the earliest Greek text available to us. It is a witness of the Byzantine cult of Eleutherius rather than an independent Syriac hagiographical work.

Among the variant readings common to the *Barberinianns* and the Syriac version, the most interesting to us is the indication of the city in Illyricum where Eleutherius was the bishop (all other recensions are silent on this). It is Sirmium, the most important city of the entire province and one of the locations of the imperial court in the fourth century. No wonder that such a reading is proper to a later manuscript tradition and is not genuine. Appointing a twenty-year-old bishop unmentioned in any other source to such a city was apparently something of a stretch even for hagiographers.

There are three Slavonic recensions of the long *Life*⁹⁷ although only one of them is published.⁹⁸ There are also short (Synaxarium) recensions,⁹⁹ seemingly of no particular interest. The unpublished recensions described by Klementina Ivanova preserve the location in Illyricum. However, the published recension contains a quite different location, which will be discussed below.

In Constantinople, there was a martyrion (a church on the tomb) of St Eleutherius in Xerolophos, allegedly (according to the legends collected in the *Patria Constantinopolitana*) constructed by the emperor Arcadius (395–408). The first historical witness to its exist-

⁹⁷ Иванова, К. *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Balcano-Slavica*, 360. София, 2008 (in Bulgarian). There are no additional recensions in the Russian tradition: Творогов, О. В. *Переводные жития русской книжности XI–XV веков. Каталог* [Tvorogov, O. V. *The Translated Lives of the Russian Manuscript Tradition of the Eleventh-Fifteenth Centuries. A Catalogue*], 55. Москва/С.-Петербург, 2008.

⁹⁸ By S. O. Dolgov in: *Великие Минеи Четии, собранные Всероссийским митрополитом Макарием. Декабрь, дни 6–17* [*The Great Menologion Collected by the Metropolitan of All Russia Makarij. December, Days 6–17*], cols. 1030–40. Москва, 1904. The editor did not know Franchi de' Cavalieri's edition, and so considered the premetaphrastic Greek original of this *Life* as unpublished; he compared his text with the Latin version BHL 2450.

⁹⁹ In the Russian *Prolog* book (a kind of Synaxarium) under 15 December, cf. Dolgov's edition, *ibid.*, cols. 1040–41; there are also many editions, from the seventeenth century on, of the whole *Prolog* book.

tence is a story preserved as ch. 145 of the *Pratum Spirituale* of John Moschus.¹⁰⁰ The story, written down in the early seventh century, goes back to the time of patriarch of Constantinople Gennadius (458–471). The patriarch complained to the saint about one of his clerics, who was serving in this church of St Eleutherius but whose behaviour was not just bad but even criminal. Through a messenger, the patriarch asked the saint about the choice of either improving this cleric's behaviour or dismissing him entirely. The clergyman in question then miraculously died.¹⁰¹ What is most important to us is the fact that the messenger of the patriarch speaks to the martyr "addressing his sepulchre" (προσέχων εἰς τὴν κόγχην). Thus, the church was actually a matryrium preserving relics of the saint. This fact is in blatant contradiction to the *Life* of Eleutherius—there is no account of the provenance of these relics in Constantinople.

According to all the recensions of the *Life*, the martyrdom of Eleutherius and his mother, Anthia, took place in Rome, but the relics were immediately taken away by members of the martyr bishop's flock and translated to his diocese. The latter is, in most of the recensions, somewhere in Illyricum (apart from the Italian alternatives mentioned above, there is another alternative which will be discussed in the next section). Thus, according to the existing *Lives*, the relics of the saint cannot remain in Constantinople (even if we suppose that "Rome" in his Passion is a substitute for "New Rome"). One might propose that the martyr of Xerolophos is some other Eleutherius, but Eleutherius of Illyricum is celebrated, in the Byzantine rite, on 15 December and a *synaxis* in Xerolophos is on the same day, together with another *synaxis* on 20 or 21 July. Thus, according to the tradition preserved by the Synaxarium of Constantinople and also by the *Typicon of the Great Church* (both are dated to the tenth century in their earliest available recensions), St Eleutherius of Xerolophos is indeed Eleutherius of Illyricum.

¹⁰⁰ See, for general information on the church, Janin, R. *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire Byzantin. Première partie: Le siège de Constantinople et le Patriarcat Œcuménique, t. III, Les églises et les monastères*, 110. Publications de l'Institut français d'études byzantines. Paris, 1969.

¹⁰¹ PG 87/3, 3009 A. The story was often quoted by later Byzantine writers; see references in Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique*.

Janin suggests that the July date is probably the commemoration of the consecration of the church. I would prefer another explanation. Our witnesses of the identification between Eleutherius of Illyricum and the martyr of Xerolophos are very late, not earlier than the tenth century. There are absolutely no data on Constantinople in the texts of Eleutherius' dossier, where, on the contrary, a different location for his relics is specified. It is reasonable to assume that the celebration of St Eleutherius in Xerolophos on 15 December is a late development whereas the July dates go back to the authentic commemoration day of the martyr whose relics were placed here. In other words, Eleutherius of Xerolophos is a different Eleutherius who was identified with the martyr of Illyricum at a later date.

2.3.2. Hierapolis

The only published Slavonic recension of the long *Life* is distinguished by a peculiar geography. Illyricum is mentioned nowhere. Instead, after having been consecrated bishop, Eleutherius was appointed in a "monastery." When the martyr died, his relics were taken away by the people from this "monastery." However, at the end of the episode with the relics, there appears the following sentence in which the syntax is severely damaged: *Се же преданъ бысть Римъ во Ераполи, при цари Андрѣанъ*.¹⁰² This sentence has a remote equivalent in BHG 570: ἐπράχθη δὲ ταῦτα ἐν Ῥωμῆ μὲνι δεκεμβρίῳ πεντεκαδεκάτη.¹⁰³ One can tentatively reconstruct the initial words of the original of the corrupted phrase in Slavonic as ταῦτα δὲ παρεδόθη... Then there follows the word "Rome" in Nominative or Accusative, which does not make any sense; the following words are "...in Hierapolis, under Emperor Hadrian." The whole sentence is untranslatable due to corruption, but the mention of Hierapolis in the context of the deposition of the relics is, at any rate, clear.

In all the recensions, the relics were deposited in the place of the bishopric ministry of Eleutherius which is, in this particular Slavonic recension, some "monastery" (evidently, a substitute for a

¹⁰² Dolgov's edition (see n. 98), col. 1040.

¹⁰³ Franchi de' Cavalieri, *I martiri*, 161.10.

toponym). Our corrupted sentence causes us to wonder if the original toponym is Hierapolis. It is *a priori* the most likely that such a strange word represents an undigested remnant of a previous recension in which each reference to “Hierapolis” was replaced with the word “monastery” by a later editor. Theoretically, this supposition can be verified, given that we are dealing with a typical *Passion épique* where the hagiographer is working within a matrix (coined by Michel van Esbroeck as the “hagiographical substrate”¹⁰⁴) imprinted with the hagiographer’s place and time. The “epic” hagiographer is much less free in his choice of episodes and motives than the writer of a *Passion historique*, in the same manner as the fairy tale is not as rich in motives and images as the historical novel.

Indeed there is, in the *Life* of Eleutherius, an episode shared by all recensions which must be read as a hallmark of the place of origin. Felix, the officer sent to arrest Eleutherius, was converted. When both were on their way to Rome, in a place where water was available, Felix asked to be baptised by Eleutherius. The hagiographer states (according to all recensions although in somewhat varying wording) that this scene repeats the baptism of the eunuch of the queen of the Ethiopians by Apostle Philip (Acts 8:36–38).¹⁰⁵ In the language of the “epic” hagiography, this scene is to be read as presenting Eleutherius as a second Apostle Philip, which, in turn, would make sense only in a local tradition in which Apostle Philip is considered as the founder of the corresponding Church. Several different locations would theoretically be possible here but Illyricum is certainly not one of them (no legend about Apostle Philip as the founder of the Church of Illyricum is known).

However, the main place of the cult of Apostle Philip was Hierapolis in Phrygia, near modern Pamukkale in Turkey. From the early fifth century, there was, in Hierapolis in Phrygia, a great martyrdom of Apostle Philip, who was reputedly buried in the middle of this building. The ruins of this martyrdom are present to this day. The tradition about the grave of Apostle Philip in Hierapolis is not the only tradition about his place of burial, but it is traceable to the

¹⁰⁴ van Esbroeck, M. “Le substrat hagiographique de la mission khazare de Constantin-Cyrille.” *AB* 104 (1986) 337–48.

¹⁰⁵ Franchi de’ Cavalieri, *I martiri*, 151.4–8.

very early accounts of the Apostle.¹⁰⁶ What is most important for our purpose is that Hierapolis is the place of the martyr death and burial of Apostle Philip according to the greatest document of his hagiographical dossier, the fifteen *Acta Philippi* (*CANT* 250),¹⁰⁷ cf. especially Act XV, Martyrium (*CANT* 250.II). In addition to the texts, this tradition is commemorated by the great martyrdom of Philip in Hierapolis of Phrygia. This tradition of Hierapolis¹⁰⁸ is the mainstream tradition available in Byzantium which is preserved in the documents in Greek, Armenian, Georgian, Slavonic (in the documents closely related to the *Acta Philippi*, see *CANT* 250), Latin (*CANT* 254), and even Old Irish (*CANT* 255). It is not, however, part of the mainstream tradition of the anti-Chalcedonian milieu (the Copto-Arabo-Ethiopic tradition of *CANT* 252 and the Syriac tradition of *CANT* 253¹⁰⁹), where Apostle Philip was put to death in Africa (sometimes, with precision, “in Carthage”) but his

¹⁰⁶ Kreitzer, L. J. “Epaphras and Philip: the Undercover Evangelists of Hierapolis.” In Wooden, R. G., T. R. Ashley, and R. S. Wilson, eds. *You Will Be My Witnesses. A Festschrift in Honor of the Reverend Dr. Allison A. Trites on the Occasion of His Retirement*, 127–43. Macon, GA, 2003. It is more natural to consider the early Christian traditions about Philip as pertaining to a unique person; cf. Matthews, Ch. R. *Philip: Apostle and Evangelist: Configurations of a Tradition*. Supplements to *Novum Testamentum*, 105; Leiden/Boston/Köln, 2002.

¹⁰⁷ See, first of all, Bovon, F., B. Bouvier, and F. Amsler, eds. *Acta Philippi. Textus*. Corpus Christianorum, Series apocryphorum, 11. Turnhout, 1999.

¹⁰⁸ Sometimes explicitly located in Phrygia but very often not; some texts contain only the name of Hierapolis, some others add “in Asia.”

¹⁰⁹ To add to the bibliography on *CANT* 253, see van Esbroeck, M. “Les Actes syriaques de Philippe à Carthagène en version arabe.” *Oriens christianus* 79 (1995): 120–45. There is another Syrian and Armenian (anti-Chalcedonian) tradition, according to which he died and was buried in Pisidia. Cf. van Esbroeck, M. “Neuf listes d’apôtres orientales.” *Augustinianum* 34 (1994): 109–99, here list V (Armenian), p. 182/136 (txt/tr.); list VIII (Syriac; this 8th-century list contains the Ephesian tradition about the tomb of the Theotokos near Ephesus), p. 188/142 (txt/tr.); list IX (Syriac), p. 193/154 (txt/tr.).

corpse was miraculously translated to Jerusalem. Frédéric Amsler argues that the latter tradition, too, has its point of departure in the *Acta Philippi*, namely, Act III, where Philip is said to go to “the country of the Candaces,” that is, to Nubia (an allusion to Acts 8:27 *sqq* is implied), but “Candaces” was subsequently corrupted into “Carthages” which then resulted in “Africa.”¹¹⁰

The *Life* of Eleutherius is also patterned after the *Acta Philippi* in another episode, when Eleutherius is preaching to the wild beasts and the beasts are praising God.¹¹¹ Compare, in the *Acta Philippi*, Acts VIII and XII where the kid of a wild goat and the leopard in the wilderness become believers (leopards are also enumerated in Eleutherius’ list of the wild beasts touched by his preaching). There is a parallel episode also in the Syriac *Historia Philippi* (CANT 253) with an ox. However, all the converted beasts in the Philip tradition are able to speak (and even to argue with the apostle, to be transformed into a human-like image, and to take communion, as in *Acta Philippi* XII), whereas the beasts in the *Life* of Eleutherius are, naturally, unable to speak; instead, they raise their right paws as a sign of praising the Lord. This, apparently, is an indication that Eleutherius is similar to Philip, but not as great as the apostle.

There are also, in the *Life* of Eleutherius, several marks of his “secondary rank” with respect to Apostle Philip. First of all is the attribution of his death to Emperor Hadrian. The *Passions épiques* are dated, in their texts, to one or another emperor depending on the rank of the martyr (the “epic” hagiography does not show interest in the absolute chronology in any historical sense but it does show a great deal of interest in its own symbolic way). The first-rank apostles must die under Nero or, at least, Vespasian. Hadrian is precisely the appropriate emperor for apostles of secondary rank, in contrast to the emperors Decius and Diocletian, who are appropriate for the ordinary heroes of the *Passions épiques*.¹¹² To be mar-

¹¹⁰ Amsler, F. *Acta Philippi. Commentarius*, 149. Corpus Christianorum, Series apocryphorum, 12. Turnhout, 1999.

¹¹¹ Franchi de’ Cavalieri, *I martiri*, 157.

¹¹² See van Esbroeck, M. “Le saint comme symbole.” In Hackel, S., ed. *The Byzantine Saint. University of Birmingham XIV Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, 128–40. Studies Supplementary to *Sobornost*, 5. London,

tyred by Emperor Hadrian in Rome indicates a very high rank for a local saint but is, nevertheless, not equal to that of the apostles. Another detail with the same meaning is the reference to Eleutherius' mother, Anthia, as a companion of Apostle Paul.¹¹³

At any rate, some traditions associated with Philip are reworked in the *Life* of Eleutherius, the toponym Hierapolis certainly among them. Thus, it must be a genuine reading of the *Life*.

We have reached this conclusion mostly in a philological way but, from the historical point of view, it is rather difficult. One can easily imagine Eleutherius as an apostolic figure patterned after Apostle Philip and presented as the apostle of some locality. One cannot imagine, however, that it was to Hierapolis that Eleutherius' relics were translated by his flock (as stated in his *Life*); Hierapolis already had apostolic relics of her own, and there was no room for Eleutherius'. The name of Hierapolis appears in the *Life* of Eleutherius in the context of its Philip-related background; because, according to the same tradition, Philip himself was the apostle in Hierapolis, this necessarily precludes the possibility of Eleutherius' apostolate there. This, in turn, should exclude the deposition of Eleutherius' relics in Hierapolis, given that the relics were deposited in the place of his apostolate. Thus, before explaining this difficulty, we have to note that:

- (1) The *Life* of Eleutherius was composed with no relation to the real relics of Eleutherius (even if he was a somewhat historical person and not a purely hagiographical symbol);
- (2) The hagiographer and his audience were not aware of nor were they interested in the real ecclesiastical history and the real sanctuaries of Hierapolis mentioned in the *Life* (regardless of the identification of this city with Hierapolis in Phrygia or any other homonymic city).

In meeting these two conditions, the hagiographer was avoiding the choice between Eleutherius and Philip as the apostle of Hierapo-

1981. Generally, on the role of absolute dating in the "epic" hagiography, see Delehaye, H. *Les Passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires*, 173–177; *Subsidia hagiographica*, 13 B. Bruxelles, 1966.

¹¹³ Franchi de' Cavalieri, *I martiri*, 149.

lis who is present through the deposition of his relics here. He was able, in some way, to reuse the Philip-Hierapolis tradition by replacing Philip with Eleutherius. Of course, such a substitution was impossible in any milieu which was in contact with Hierapolis in Phrygia, but was quite possible in any milieu satisfying condition (2) above.

It is important to note that location of Eleutherius' ministry in "Hierapolis," despite its inadmissibility as a historical fact, cannot be void of historical value. The author of a *Passion épique* is much less free in the choice of the details of its narrative than the "historical" hagiographer. The "epic" hagiography is working according to laws similar to those of the fairy tale or the dream, and so its historical value can be discovered in the historical circumstances of the hagiographer himself. Thus, if a hagiographer places his completely or mostly fictional character in Hierapolis, it is certainly meaningful for him and, therefore, for us. And, therefore, we have to find this Hierapolis, wherever it may be.

2.4. The "Wolf of Arabia" and Arabian Connexions of Eleutherius

One hint is provided by the text of the *Life* of Eleutherius: addressing his torturer, Emperor Hadrian, Eleutherius uses a series of epithets including the phrase "Wolf of Arabia (λύκε τῆς Ἀραβίας)."¹¹⁴ The expression itself is a biblical one (Hab 1:8 and Zeph 3:3), proper to the Septuagint due to a mistranslation of ערבֵי זאבֵי ("evening wolves"); the words *ereb* "evening" and *arab* "Arabia" are complete homographs in consonant writing. The original sense of the expression is explained in Zeph 3:3 ("they gnaw not the bones till the morrow"), and it is translated correctly in the Targums on the corresponding books, the Peshitta and the Vulgate.

Despite its biblical provenance, the expression "wolf of Arabia" was not commonplace in Christian hagiography. The usual expression, "rapacious wolf" (λύκος ἄρπαξ), was also biblical

¹¹⁴ Franchi de' Cavalieri, *I martiri*, 153.4. The same epithet appears in the Slavonic (*Великие Мучени Четии... Декабрь, дни 6-17*, col. 1033: волче аравитъскіи) and Syriac (Bedjan, *Acta...*, VI, 422.2: ܠܘܟܘܨ ܐܪܘܒܝܐ ܠܘܟܘܨ) versions.

(Gen 49:29; Mt 7:15; cf. Ez 22:27 and Jn 10:12) and was common to all versions of the Bible; it was also used in the Latin version of the *Life* of Eleutherius (*lupus rapax*).¹¹⁵ The reading “wolf of Arabia” is considered by Franchi de’ Cavalieri as genuine on textological grounds (as the reading shared by most of the witnesses and, I would add, as the *lectio difficilior*), whereas the reading “rapacious wolf” is a result of standardisation.

The “wolves of Arabia” are rare in the literature of the Byzantine commonwealth with the exception of the exegetical context and quotation from Hab 1:8 or Zeph 3:3. “Wolf of Arabia” as a pejorative marker is almost exclusively connected with the Arabs or the Muslims.¹¹⁶ Thus, in the middle of the sixth century, Cyril of Scythopolis wrote in his *Life of Euthymius*, ch. 24, on newly baptised Saracens: “those who were formerly wolves of Arabia are becoming (members) of the spiritual flock of Christ.”¹¹⁷

Apart from the *Life* of Eleutherius, the phrase “wolf of Arabia” as an epithet describing a torturer is known to me in the *Martyrium of Parascève* (and this occurrence, also connected to Arabia, will be dealt with below, 3.1.2), and in the Armenian *Martyrium of Chosrow of Ganjak* († 1167, written by a contemporary author), where the hagiographer labels as an “Arabian wolf (ՊԱՄԼ

¹¹⁵ Cf., on this reading in the Latin recensions, Franchi de’ Cavalieri, *I martiri*, 143, where he argues that this reading was already in the (lost) Greek original of the Latin versions.

¹¹⁶ The only exception I have found in the on-line database of *TLG* is an epigram of John Mauropodēs, 11th century, where a man tearing up his own manuscript is compared with an Arabian wolf (οὐτός δ’ ὁ δεινός τῆς Ἀραβίας λύκος): *Epigram* 51.4 (de Lagarde, P. *Joannis Euchaitorum Metropolitae quae in codice Vaticano Graeco 676 supersunt; Abhandlungen der Historisch-Philologische Classe der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, 28. Göttingen, 1882 [repr. Amsterdam, 1979] (quoted according to *CPG* 2709.004).

¹¹⁷ Schwartz, E. *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 24.20-22. *Texte und Untersuchungen...*, 49.2. Leipzig, 1939: οἱ ποτὲ λύκοι τῆς Ἀραβίας, ἔπειτα τῆς λογικῆς ποιμνῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ γενόμενοι.

արարացի)” a Persian muezzin who saw at night a brilliant light on the grave of the martyr.¹¹⁸

Taken together with the mention of Arabia, another detail of the *Life* of Eleutherius reveals Arabian connexions in the very name of Ἐλευθέριος, which means “free.” The possible historical meaning of this name will be discussed below (2.9.3) but at this point, we are in a position to discuss its symbolic meaning. The existence of such meaning is explicit in the *Life* itself (in all recensions).

At the beginning of the interrogation, Hadrian asks Eleutherius (here in a literal translation): “Eleutherius, how you who have such a liberty have committed yourself to the craziest religion and venerate a god who was nailed down by the mortal humans? (Ἐλευθέριε, πῶς τοιάυτης ἐλευθερίας τυγχάνων ἐξέδωκας ἑαυτὸν μανιωδεστάτῃ θρησκείᾳ καὶ σέβῃ θεόν, ὅστις ὑπὸ θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀνηλώθη;)” Eleutherius remains silent but Hadrian insists. Then, “...Eleutherius, after having looked upwards to heaven and made the seal of Christ [= sign of the cross], started to say: ‘The very liberty is to know the creator of heaven and earth who has produced everything’ (ὁ δὲ Ἐλευθέριος ἀναβλέψας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ ποιήσας τὴν ἐν Χριστῷ σφραγίδα, ἤρξατο λέγειν· Ἐλευθερία ἐστὶν αὕτη, τὸ γινώσκειν τὸν ποιητὴν οὐρανοῦ τε καὶ γῆς, τὸν πάντα δεδημιουργηκότα.)”¹¹⁹

This entire passage is not common to hagiographical writing in general; in fact, it is rather unusual. However, it has a parallel in the *Life of Euthymius* of Cyril of Scythopolis, ch. 18, dealing with the Arabs baptised together with their phylarchs Aspebetos (Peter in

¹¹⁸ Մանանդեան, Յ., Աճառեան, Հ., *Հայոց նոր Վիպանէրը (1155–1843)* [Manandean, Y., and H. Ačaṙean. *The Armenian New Martyrs (1155–1843)*], 29.27. Վաղարշապատ [Valaršapat], 1903; cf. Тер-Давтян, К. С. *Армянские жития и мученичества V–XVII в.в.* [Ter-Davtyan, K. S. *The Armenian Lives and Martyriums of the fifth—sixteenth centuries*], 318–25. Ереван [Yerevan], 1994.

¹¹⁹ Franchi de’ Cavalieri, *I martiri*, 151.15–152.3.

baptism) and his son Terebon.¹²⁰ Euthymius baptised Terebon and the others and “...dismissed them not as the Agarenes and the Ismaelites but as the descendants of Sarah and the inheritors of the Promise [cf. Gal 4:22–31], transferred by baptism from slavery to liberty (...ἀπέλυσεν οὐκέτι Ἀγαρηνοὺς καὶ Ἰσμαηλίτας, ἀλλὰ τῆς Σάρρας ἀπογόνους καὶ τῆς ἐπαγγελίας κληρονόμους γεγονότας διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος ἀπὸ δουλείας εἰς ἐλευθερίαν μετενεχθέντας).”¹²¹ This text shows that, at least in the time of Cyril of Scythopolis, there was a tradition of interpreting the baptism of the Arab tribes as giving them liberty: they become free-born from Sarah instead of being born into slavery from Hagar.

The two “Arabian connexions” detected here are not enough to state definitively that the *Passion épique* on Eleutherius relates to some processes of conversion among the Arab tribes but, at least, they are enough to cause one to consider such a possibility seriously. Conclusive proof, however, would be indicated by finding a link between the three areas: Eleutherius’ dossier, the Arabs, and Hierapolis.

It is also necessary to add that the motives of freedom *vs* slavery, together with a motive of a bishop confessing and preaching Christianity outside of his see are also found in the Syriac legend of the personified Friday and Bishop John (see above, 1.9). The roots of these two legends of the veneration of Friday must be common.

2.5. Hierapolis and Arabia in a Peculiar Tradition about Apostle Philip

Students of the traditions related to Apostle Philip have not paid sufficient attention to an Armenian source published in 1994 by Michel van Esbroeck. This is an Armenian list of the apostles¹²² in

¹²⁰ On the historical analysis of these facts, see Shahîd, I. *Byzantium and the Arabs in the fifth century*, 40–49. Washington, D.C., 1989 [repr. 2006].

¹²¹ Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 21.8–10. It is interesting that this kind of biblical interpretation seems not to be shared by the Arabs themselves, who were proud to be descendants of Ishmael; cf. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the fifth century*, 209, n. 10.

¹²² List III in van Esbroeck, “Neuf listes,” 120–25, 166–69. No reference to this list is known to me in later scholarly publications.

which the role of Philip is especially prominent: he is the first apostle after James. The prominence of James instead of Peter is not especially unusual in the Orient, but Philip in the second place immediately after James has no analogues except the tradition of the miraculous burial of Philip in Jerusalem, the city of James (*CANT* 252 and 253), which implies a specific and close relationship between Philip and James. This list is preserved in the manuscript *Matenadaran* 2678 (dated to 1426–1476) and is attributed to patriarch of Antioch Michael the Syrian, a renowned historian, although the genuine list of the apostles in Michael the Syrian, even in the Armenian version, is quite different. In its present form, the Armenian list contains several details proper to the Armenian tradition, but its core, as shown by van Esbroeck, is a Syriac list of apostles of the late sixth century; its Syriac tradition was anti-Chalcedonian and shared some Julianist features.¹²³ Below, I continue van Esbroeck’s analysis.

The account of the apostles begins with the event of the Pentecost in the High Chamber of Sion where James, the bishop of Jerusalem, performed the Eucharist for the very first time. Then it continues (ch. 1): “Et le début de cette Église matérielle fut la sainte chambre haute, et le début de l’intégration des païens la même première année, celle de l’Eunuque Couchite (քուշացի), auquel Philippe donna le nom de ΡοτᾶμϞος (Փոթաւփոս), et qui lui aussi commença à prêcher aux Couchites (քուշացոցն) de croire à l’évangile.”¹²⁴ About the destinations of Philip, the text says

¹²³ See van Esbroeck, “Neuf listes,” 124. Julianism (called “aphthartodocetism” by its adversaries) was one of the two main anti-Chalcedonian movements beginning in the 520s, especially strong in Armenia, where it was officially accepted by the Second Council of Dwin in 555 at the insistence of a Syrian bishop, ʿAbd-Isho. See, most recently, Lourié, B., “Julianism,” in: Uhlig, S., ed. *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, 3: *He–N*, 308–10. Wiesbaden, 2007.

¹²⁴ van Esbroeck, “Neuf listes,” 166/121(txt/tr.); van Esbroeck transliterates the name of the eunuch as “Photaphos,” where the missing “m” is a typo. The name Փոթաւփոս is known elsewhere in the Armenian tradition. In the Byzantine and Coptic traditions this eunuch is also among the apostles but—unique case!—with no name at all.

the following (ch. 7): “Et saint Philippe circulant sur ces rivages de la mer fut achevé aux frontières d’Antioche à Mambidž qui est Hierapolis.”¹²⁵

Apostle Philip died, according to this document, in another Hierapolis, that of Syria, called Mabbug in Syriac and Manbeğ (Menbiğ) in Arabic. The whole geography of this passage is not as absurd as it seems at first glance. Mabbug was certainly a metropolitan city belonging to the patriarchate of Antioch. However, it is very distant from the sea (about 200 km or more, depending on one’s route). What is even more important, Apostle Philip has never been considered as either apostle of Mabbug or even as a saint especially venerated in the city.¹²⁶ Thus, this tradition hardly goes back to Mabbug itself.

The words used in the Armenian text for “Cushites” are not Armenian but transliterations of Syriac ܡܘܨܝܘܬܝܢ going back to the Syriac text of Acts 8:27 (in Armenian, the normal term for “Ethiopian” is Էթովպացի and for “Ethiopia,” Եթովպացիք). The Syriac word covered the whole area allotted to the Cushites in the Bible (Nubia, Ethiopia, South Arabia), so the eunuch’s destination in our Syro-Armenian text does not contradict the “common knowledge” of the epoch, according to which this

¹²⁵ van Esbroeck, “Neuf listes,” 168/122 (txt/tr.); van Esbroeck, quite naturally, notes: “L’auteur de la liste ne connaît plus très bien la géographie de l’ouest: il confond l’Hierapolis de Phrygie où Philippe est souvent envoyé, avec Mabboug, et considère l’endroit comme proche de la mer par rapport à Antioche” (ibid., 123–24).

¹²⁶ The patrons of the city were Apostles Peter and Paul; near the city’s walls there was a tomb of Apostle Matthew. See Goossens, G. *Hierapolis de Syrie. Essai de monographie historique*, 175. Recueil de travaux publiés par les membres de Conf. d’histoire et philologie de l’Université de Louvain, III, 12. Louvain, 1943 (cf. de Halleux, A. *Philoxène de Mabbog. Sa vie, ses écrits, sa théologie*, 34; Universitas Catholica Lovaniensis. Dissertationes ad gradum magistri in Facultate Theologica vel in Facultate Iuris Canonici consequendum conscriptae, III, 8. Louvain, 1963); on post-Chalcedonian Hierapolis, see Goossens, *Hierapolis de Syrie*, 174–80.

knowledge” of the epoch, according to which this eunuch became apostle of South Arabia and Ceylon (Taprobana).¹²⁷

For the sixth century, we are able to point out a diocese of the metropolis of Mabbug of the patriarchate of Antioch, which was located in a coastal area, namely, the diocese of Nağrān in Ḥimyar (Nağrān was in fact a group of oases traditionally referred to as a city). It was established by Philoxenus, bishop of Mabbug, near 500 when he consecrated its first Bishop Paul. After the martyr death of this bishop in Zafār, the capital of the Ḥimyarites, shortly before 518, Philoxenus consecrated the second bishop of Nağrān, also Paul, martyred together with most of his flock in 523.¹²⁸ The establishment of a diocese in Nağrān around the year 500 is corroborated by the historian John Diakrinomenos, who was writing in the time of Emperor Anastasius (491–518); he stated that, under Anastasius, the Ḥimyarites, “...after having become Christians, asked and

¹²⁷ See an article based primarily on Coptic and Byzantine sources: Störck, L. “Der Eunuch der Kandake als Missionar Südarabiens und Ceylons.” *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 26 (1998): 239–50 (I am grateful to A. Muraviev for this reference).

¹²⁸ I follow the chronology as established in Marrassini, P. “Note di storia etiopica. 3. Problemi cronologici relativi ai fatti di Nağrān.” *Egitto e Vicino Oriente* 2 (1979): 179–86, 190–96; de Blois, F. “The date of the ‘martyrs of Nağrān’.” *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 1 (1990): 110–28; and Beaucamp, J., F. Briquel-Chatonnet, et Ch. Robin. “La persécution des chrétiens de Nağrān et la chronologie Ḥimyarite.” *Aram* 11–12 (1999–2000): 15–83 (thus, I do not accept the earlier chronology proposed by Irfan Shahīd and supported by Paul Devos and Michel van Esbroeck). For a review of the sources and scholarship, see Bausi, A. “Introduzione.” In Bausi, A., Gori, A. *Tradizioni orientali del “Martirio di Areta.” La Prima recensione araba e la versione etiopica. Edizione critica e traduzione*, 1–18; Quaderni di semitistica, 27. Firenze, 2006. I was unable to take into account the most recent publication of the 2008 colloquium on the martyrs of Nağrān: Beaucamp, J., F. Briquel-Chatonnet, et Ch. J. Robin, eds. *Juifs et chrétiens en Arabie aux V^e et VI^e siècles: regards croisés sur les sources*. Monographies (Centre de recherche d’histoire et civilisation de Byzance), 32; Le massacre de Najrān, 2. Paris, 2010.

received a bishop (ἐπὶ Ἀναστασίου δὲ χριστιανίσαντες ἐπίσκοπον αἰτήσαντες ἔλαβον).¹²⁹

Neither Naḡrān nor Zafār were coastal cities, but Ḥimyar as a whole was a coastal country; it was connected to the external world, first of all, via coastal (through Ḥiḡāz) and maritime routes. The latter was especially true for the contacts with Ethiopia (Aksum), whose garrison in Zafar, also martyred in 523, constituted the main part of the local Christian community.

The hagiographical interests of the Syrian missionaries working in South Arabia were not the same as those of the residents of Mabbug. They had to establish a connexion between South Arabia and Mabbug-Hierapolis, and, for this purpose, the figure of Apostle Philip was especially attractive: on the one side, he was the apostle of the apostle of South Arabia, the Ethiopian (“Cushite”) eunuch; on the other side, he was, indeed, the apostle of Hierapolis. Therefore, the “confusion” between two Hierapoleis in our text is a deliberate replacement reinforced by a symbolic geography in which a different coastal area is inscribed onto the metropolis of Mabbug. It was the Syrian missionaries in Ḥimyar who were interested in seeing Apostle Philip in another Hierapolis.

From this point, the next stage of our inquiry suggests itself. These Syrian missionaries were certainly interested in producing hagiographical legends of their own; without such legends, no mission was possible. Given that the *Life* of Eleutherius presents its hero as a new Philip in Hierapolis and, moreover, has some Arabian connexions, we have to recognise in this hagiographic legend the same authorship, that is, the same *Sitz im Leben*. This conclusion is, however, too imprecise and needs to be clarified further.

2.6. The Legends about the Conversion of Naḡrān: an Introduction

The mass murder of the Christians in Naḡrān in 523, followed by a military operation by the king of Aksum, produced a true tempest

¹²⁹ Hansen, G. C., ed. Theodoros Anagnostes, *Kirchengeschichte*, 157.13–16. Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte. N. F., 3. Berlin, 1995².

in the hagiography on both sides of the border marked by Chalcedon. Inevitably, it overshadowed earlier legends about the origin of Christianity in Naḡrān and the martyrdom of the earlier Naḡranite martyrs (*e. g.*, the first bishop of Naḡrān, Paul I). The available data have not been properly collected or published.¹³⁰

Setting aside the data relating to the fourth-century missionary Theophilus of India¹³¹ and the *Gādlā Azqir* (see below, 2.8), the other legends about the establishment of Christianity in Naḡrān can be classified depending on either their West Syrian or East Syrian connexions.

2.6.1. A Legend with an East Syrian Background

A natural centre of Christian influence on Arabia was the Lakhmid capital Ḥīra in southern Iraq, a Christian city since the early fourth century. The Nestorian historiography preserves a story about the Naḡranite merchant Ḥayyān¹³² (or Ḥannān; in Arabic, the spelling

¹³⁰ As the most complete, although not exhaustive, bibliographical introduction, one can suggest Hainthaler, Th. *Christliche Araber vor dem Islam. Verbreitung und konfessionelle Zugehörigkeit. Eine Hinführung*, 121–24. Eastern Christian Studies, 7; Leuven/Paris/Dudley, MA, 2007. The Syriac legends we have to deal with below are not mentioned in Briquel Chatonnet, F. “L’expansion du christianisme en Arabie: l’apport des sources syriaques.” *Semitica et classica* 3 (2010): 177–87.

¹³¹ See Fiaccadori, G. *Teofilo Indiano*. Biblioteca di “Felix Ravenna,” 7. Ravenna, 1992. So far, no trace of Theophilus is recognised in the hagiographical legends related to Arabia; Philostorgius (an Arian fourth-century historian) is the only available source. However, the first church in Zaḡār was allegedly built by him, and so the existence of some legends recounting his activity is to be expected.

¹³² Scher, A. *Histoire nestorienne (Chronique de Séert)*. Première partie (II), 330[218]–331[219]. PO, 5, 2. Paris, 1910 (ch. 73). The ultimate source is the lost chronicle of Bar Saḡdē from Karka de Beth Selok, early 7th century. In the late Nestorian encyclopaedia *Kitāb al-Miḡdal (Book of the Tower)* of Mārī b. Sulaymān (late 11th or the first half of the 12th century) as well as in its epitomised recension by ʿAmr b. Matta, the introduction of Christianity in Naḡrān is dated to the time of Catholicos Maʿna (deposed in 420); see Gismondi, H. *Maris, Amri, et Slibae de patriarchis Nestorianorum*

of both names is the same with the exception of the dots, which are in different places¹³³), who was converted to Christianity in Ḥīra in the time of shahanshah Yezdigerd, most probably Yezdigerd II (438–457) rather than Yezdigerd I (399–420).¹³⁴ This story is historical and not a remnant of some “epic” hagiographical text because it is corroborated by the testimony of the *Book of Ḥimyarites*. This book shows that the descendants of Ḥayyān (not Ḥannān) “by whom God first sowed Christianity in our land” were, in 523, part of the flock of a bishop of the West Syrian metropolis Mabbug.¹³⁵ No confrontation between the two Syrian traditions, eastern and western (that of Mabbug), is implied, which is to be expected if the eastern tradition was not Nestorian.¹³⁶

commentaria. Pars prior. *Maris textus arabicus*, 33. Roma, 1899; *ibid.*, *Maris versio latina*, 29. Roma, 1899; *ibid.*, Pars secunda. *Amri et Slibae textus*, 28. Roma, 1896; *ibid.*, *Amri et Slibae textus versio latina*, 16. Roma, 1897.

¹³³ This ambiguity in the spelling was first noticed by Eduard Sachau without knowing the *Book of Ḥimyarites*: Sachau, E. *Zur Ausbreitung des Christentums in Asien*, 68, n. 2; *Abhandlungen der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philos.-hist. Kl.*, Jg. 1919, Nr. 1. Berlin, 1919.

¹³⁴ See the bibliography in Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber*, 121, n. 42.

¹³⁵ Cf., on this episode, Axel Moberg’s introduction in Moberg, A. *The Book of the Ḥimyarites. Fragments of a hitherto Unknown Syriac Work*, xlix–l. *Skifter utgivna av Kungl. Humanistiska Vetenskapsamfundet i Lund*, 7. Lund, 1924 (cf. p. 32b, Syriac text; cf. also another similar phrase about Ḥayyān, p. 31a).

¹³⁶ Cf. Tardy, R. *Najran. Chrétiens d’Arabie avant l’Islam*, 102–9. *Recherches publiées sous la direction de l’Institut de lettres orientales de Beyrouth, Faculté des lettres et des sciences humaines, Université Saint-Joseph. Nouvelle série: B. Orient Chrétien*, 8. Beyrouth, 1999. Hainthaler’s note (*Christliche Araber*, 122) that the Church of the East in the fifth century was still not “Nestorian” because its famous teaching of “two hypostases” in Christ was proclaimed much later seems to me to be true but not especially relevant. To be separated from other Syrian Churches and from Constantinople, it was enough, to the Church of the East, not to anathematize Nestorius, even if its Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia was shared by some of the followers of Chalcedon.

It is no wonder that among the legends about the conversion of Nağran, there is at least one patterned after the East Syrian martyrdoms. It is the second of the legends about the conversion of Nağran preserved by Ibn Ishāq (eighth century, quoted in later Muslim authors) and in some other Muslim sources (with important variants) in which the principal actor is an anonymous anchorite who settled down near Nağran. This anchorite converted one young man who had to pass near his place when going to his teacher. Unfortunately, no trace of this legend in the Christian literature has been found so far. Axel Moberg examined this legend in great detail, revealing an East Syrian Christian background for at least part of it.¹³⁷ We see from this analysis that the legend seems to have no point of contact with either the Eleutherius tradition or the other legends of West Syrian origin which will be dealt with in the next section.

2.6.2. Two Legends with a West Syrian Background and Their Common Source

The Christian (West Syrian) parallel for the first legend reported by Ibn Ishāq¹³⁸ was noticed by some scholars.¹³⁹ Now that the corre-

¹³⁷ Moberg, A. *Über einige christliche Legenden in der islamischen Tradition*. Lund, 1930 (with further bibliography). As for another part of this legend, which Moberg considered to be Arab and not Christian (*ibid.*, p. 9), we have to be more cautious. It deals with the choice of the “greatest” name of God among a huge number of other names of God. In addition to its Muslim theological associations, we have to recall the lists of the names of God which are quite widespread in different Christian (somewhat apocryphal) literatures, from Ethiopia to Russia. The study of the present legend is certainly to be continued.

¹³⁸ Wüstenfeld, F. *Das Leben Muhammed's nach Muhammed Ibn Ishāk bearbeitet von Abd el-Malik Ibn Hischām*, Bd. I., Theil 1., 20–22. Göttingen, 1858; English translation in *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, vol. V, *The Sasanids, the Byzantines, the Lakhmids, and Yemen*. Transl. by C. E. Bosworth, 196–99. Albany, 1999 (this translation will be quoted below). Moreover, there is an English translation of both legends and of the *Gādlā Azgīr*. Jeffery, A. “Christianity in South Arabia.” *Anglican Theological Review* 27 (1945) 193–216.

¹³⁹ Especially by Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber*, 123. The parallel with St Alexis Man of God [proposed in Tubach, J., “Das Anfänge des Christen-

sponding Syriac legend has been published in full, a more detailed comparison has been completed by Kyle Smith.¹⁴⁰ The Syriac legend is a hagiographical novel on Bishop Paul and Priest John preserved in three manuscripts of the sixth century (and in at least two later manuscripts); one of them is dated to 569.¹⁴¹ It is also known in Greek (*BHG* 1476), in one manuscript from the tenth century, where, due to a large lacuna, the entire section of the novel related to Arabia is missing.¹⁴² Sebastian Brock supposes that the Greek might be a translation from Syriac.¹⁴³ For our purposes, it is important that, in any case, the novel is of West Syrian origin (from a source originally written in either Syriac or Greek) and is ascribed, through its text, to the “epic” time of Bishop Rabbula of Edessa (411–435); the latter fact means that it is substantially later.

The Christian novel contains almost all of the episodes reported in its Muslim Arabic summary, in such a way that we have to conclude that the Arabic text is an epitome of the same legend (see Table 4). Previous scholars, including Kyle Smith, did not formulate such a conclusion due, I think, primarily to the important differences between the two legends in personal names. In

tums in Südarabien. Eine christliche Legende syrischer Herkunft in Ibn Hišām,” *Parole de l’Orient* 18 (1993): 101–111] is, in my opinion, rather remote and properly belongs to another “cluster” of wandering saints.

¹⁴⁰ Smith, K. “Dendrites and Other Standers in the *History of the Exploits of Bishop Paul of Qanetos and Priest John of Edessa*.” *Hygoie: Journal of Syriac Studies*, 12.1 (2009) 117–34.

¹⁴¹ Arneson, H., E. Fiano, C. Luckritz Marquis, K. Smith, eds. *The History of the Great Deeds of Bishop Paul of Qenṭos and Priest John of Edessa*. Texts from Christian Late Antiquity Series. Piscataway, NJ, 2010 [this edition will be quoted below for both text and translation]. Cf. Smith, K. “Introduction.” In *ibid.*, 1–26 (an expanded version of the article Smith, “Dendrites...”). The first description of the novel was given by Nau, “Hagiographie syriaque,” 56–60.

¹⁴² Παπαδόπουλος-Κεραμεύς, Α. *Ανάλεκτα Τεροσολυμικῆς Σταχυολογίας*, V, 368–83. Αγ. Πετρούπολις, 1898.

¹⁴³ Brock, S. “Syriac on the Sinai: The Main Connections.” In Ruggieri, V., L. Pieralli, eds. *Eukosmia: Studi Miscellanei per il 75. di Vincenzo Poggi, S.J.*, 103–17, here 104–5. Soveria Mannelli, 2003.

Arabic, Paul and John became, respectively, *Fymywn* (فيميون) and Šaliḥ. However, the personal names are not invariants of the “epic” legends and are of far less importance than the toponyms.

Nöldeke, who authorised the reading of *Fymywn* as Femion, has noted that it is a corruption of some Greek name, such as Ποιμήν (through a Syriac spelling such as ܦܘܡܝܘܢ) or Εὐφήμιος (from Accusative Εὐφήμιον, as proposed by Zotenberg).¹⁴⁴ The name Šaliḥ has no exact equivalent in Greek or Syriac Christian names but might correspond, *e. g.*, to “Eusebius” or “Sebastos.” At any rate, the personal names in the two legends are quite different but, in the “epic” hagiography, this by no means precludes a shared identity of the name bearers.

Table 4. The Plot of the Fymywn Legend with Parallels from the Paul and John Legend

Episode Nr	<i>Fymywn</i> Legend	Parallels from the Paul and John Legend
1	A pious man named <i>Fymywn</i> was wandering from one village to another working as a brick mason.	In some town [as is clear from the continuation, it is Edessa or at least a town in the diocese of Edessa], Priest John happened to meet a certain Paul when looking for a mason; he hired him to work in his home, hoping to hold him there for a common ascetic life.
2	“He used to keep Sunday (يوم الأحد) holy, and when this day came round would do no work but would go out into a desert place and pray and worship there until it was evening.”	“He [Paul] kept this money [his wage] until the holy day of Friday (يوم الجمعة) when he bought bread and other alimts “for the needy people who live in the desert land in

¹⁴⁴ Nöldeke, Th. *Geschichte der Perser und Araber bis zur Zeit der Sasaniden. Aus der arabischen Chronik des Tabari übersetzt und mit ausführlichen Erläuterungen und Ergänzungen versehen*, 177, n. 3. Leyden, 1879.

Episode Nr	<i>Fymywn</i> Legend	Parallels from the Paul and John Legend
		the mountains” (evidently, anchorites). “On the holy day of Sunday (<i>שבת</i>), he again acted in this way” but for those in the <i>xenodocheion</i> , that is, the poor and strangers (lay people).
3	“In one of the villages of Syria” a certain Şalih noticed his behaviour “and felt a love for him such as he had never felt for anything previously.”	John’s extraordinary love for Paul is the paramount motive of the whole Paul and John legend and the <i>Leitmotiv</i> of the whole novel. ¹⁴⁵
4	Şalih started to follow him secretly and, on Sunday, saw him praying in a desert place. A seven-headed serpent appeared but <i>Fymywn</i> cursed him and he died. Şalih, without understanding this, cries out about the danger, and so reveals himself. Then he explains to <i>Fymywn</i> his love for him and obtains his permission to become his companion.	The same scene as in the <i>Fymywn</i> legend with two details that are different: the serpent is not seven-headed and John saw lightning that killed the serpent.
5	<i>Fymywn</i> becomes known to the people because of a healing. He decides to continue his wandering.	Paul and John left John’s home and promised each other to remain together forever. For the six summer months they live as wandering workers and for the six winter months they live near the cave of the twelve recluses.

¹⁴⁵ See, for a detailed study, Smith, “Dendrites...”

Episode Nr	<i>Fymywn</i> Legend	Parallels from the Paul and John Legend
6	A meeting with an old ascetic who lived on the branches of a tree [a dendrite]. He asks <i>Fymywn</i> and Šaliḥ to wait for his death. He dies immediately and they bury him. Then they continue on their route.	The scene with a dendrite is much more elaborated but placed <i>after</i> the episodes connected to Nağrān (Paul and John met the dendrite on their way back to Edessa). The dendrite died on the third day.
7	When wandering in certain territory of the Arabs, they were captured by Arabs who eventually sold them in Nağrān.	Together with one of the twelve recluses (named <i>Zmbys</i> “Zenobius”), Paul and John travelled to Sinai. Here, they were captured by Arabs and sold to the Ḥimyarites.
8	The citizens of Nağrān were worshipers of a date palm, with a very solemn annual festival.	The citizens are worshipers of a date palm (see below, Nrs 11–12).
9	A nobleman to whom <i>Fymywn</i> was sold happens to see him praying during the night until the morning within a light so bright that there was no need for a lamp. He asks him about his religion. <i>Fymywn</i> explains to him that the Nağrānites’ religion is erroneous and that their palm tree does not have any power.	Paul and John healed a girl and baptised her together with her parents.
10	The nobleman promised, on behalf of the citizens, to accept <i>Fymywn</i> ’s religion if he, with the help of his God, destroys the palm tree.	The citizens took them and led them to a palm grove so that they might pierce them against the bark of the trees.

Episode Nr	<i>Fymywn</i> Legend	Parallels from the Paul and John Legend
11	<i>Fymywn</i> purifies himself and prays, making two <i>rak'abs</i> (bows) and asking God to curse the palm tree.	They destroy with a prayer the most beautiful palm tree, called "the god of the camp," which was pulled up by its roots by the wind and destroyed as if by fire. The Arabs convert to Christianity.
12	God sends a wind that tears the palm from its roots and casts it down. The people of Naḡrān accept Christianity.	
13	"He (<i>Fymywn</i>) instructed them in the law (<i>šar'ab</i>) of the faith of ʿĪsā b. Maryam."	Paul is a bishop who left his see for ascetic reasons and keeps his dignity secret.

One can see that most of the episodes are either identical or differ in rather small details. Even episode Nr 13 has a parallel, although in the Arabic legend it is never stated that *Fymywn* is a bishop. However, no other bishop is mentioned as assisting in the conversion of the Naḡrānites and, most important, the functions described in episode Nr 13 are certainly the duties of the bishop. Therefore, a rank of bishop for *Fymywn* is implied, although in the Arabic text this reference is dropped.

An important difference is the Syrian novel's lack of attention to liturgical details, which resulted in reducing episode Nr 11 to a simple mention of prayer (whereas the Arabic legend mentions purification and specifies exactly two bows).

The episode of the meeting of *Fymywn* and Ṣaliḥ (alias Paul and John) with a dendrite (an ascetic who was living in a tree) is quite important for the plot of the Syrian legend and for its historical background,¹⁴⁶ but does not make any sense in the Muslim epitome. It is, however, a mark testifying that it is our Syrian legend (or its *Vorlage*) that is summarised in the Muslim account.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Smith, "Dendrites..." and, on the dendrites in general, Charlampidis, C. P. *The Dendrites in Pre-Christian and Christian Historical-Literary Tradition and Iconography*, 67–76. *Studia Archaeologica*, 73. Roma, 1995.

It is the parallel episode Nr 2 that is especially interesting to us. The Sunday almsgiving in the Paul and John legend is a doublet of the Friday almsgiving, and thus it is clearly a later addition. In fact, the text presumes that Paul was spending the whole of his wages for almsgiving, and it is not very likely that he was working on Saturday to obtain enough money for those in the *xenodocheion*. Moreover, the text implies that Paul did not work on Friday because this day was dedicated to almsgiving to the people dwelling in remote places. Thus, Paul was venerating Friday not only by almsgiving but also by abstention from work, in the same manner as that of another secret bishop, John, from another Syrian legend (see above, 1.9). We have to conclude that, in the available recension of the legend about Paul and John, the Friday veneration motive is reduced and overshadowed by that of the Sunday veneration, although it was important in an earlier recension of the novel and/or the source of the corresponding episode. The Arabic legend of *Fymynn* reflects only the Sunday veneration motive, which is a later addition to the Paul and John legend intended to substitute for the original Friday veneration motive.

The novel about Paul and John, despite its early date (569 as *terminus ante quem*), is hardly the original form of the encompassed legends. Normally, such novels containing long series of mutually independent episodes (for instance, the scene with the dendrite is not connected to a specific moment of the plot) are of a composite nature.

One must therefore conclude that the source of the Arabic legend was not the novel on Paul and John that is known to us but rather an earlier legend, the *Vorlage* of some sections of the future Syrian novel. In this novel (let us call it **Fymynn*), specific attention was paid to the liturgical institutions (especially to the Friday veneration), and the episode with the dendrite was placed before the captivity of its principal heroes; it is also very probable that the personal names in this legend were the Greek or Syriac prototypes of those preserved in the Arabic legend. For this legend, the *terminus ante quem* is the early sixth century.

2.7. The *Fymywn Legend, Eleutherius' Dossier, and the Legend about John and Friday

Four motives of the *Fymywn legend are shared with the two main texts on Eleutherius, his *Life*, and the Eleutherius recension of the *Twelve Fridays*:

1. The main character is a bishop acting outside his diocese (the same in the *Life* of Eleutherius);
2. A motive of slavery and freedom (the captivity and slavery of Paul and John/*Fymywn* and Şalih; cf. the very name of Eleutherius and the discussion of Eleutherius with Hadrian about the meaning of true freedom);
3. Praying with wild beasts (in the novel on Paul and John, there is a scene when they become encircled by reptiles and lions when they are praying; then Paul dissipates the reptiles with his prayer and John does the same with the lions; cf. the scene of the common prayer with wild animals in the *Life* of Eleutherius);
4. Friday veneration in *Fymywn and in Eleutherius of the *Twelve Fridays*.

There is, however, another legend that provides a missing link between *Fymywn and Eleutherius, namely, the legend of Bishop John and the personified Friday which is available only in Syriac and is, most probably, of Syrian origin (see above, 1.9).

This legend is especially close to *Fymywn in the main component of its plot, the story of a secret bishop working as a slave. As to his name, John, matching that of Paul's companion in the Syrian novel, it is such a widespread name that its appearance is probably due to mere coincidence. This is also a legend about the conversion from paganism of a large number of people, although most of the geographical markers seem to be lost. However, two geographical markers are preserved: the patriarchate of Antioch as the supreme bishopric see of the relevant Church area and Alexandria as the name of the patriarchate to which the former see of Bishop John belonged. We know that such a geographical situation corresponds to early sixth-century Nağrān. It belonged to the patriarchate of Antioch through the metropolis of Mabbug, although it was adjacent to the patriarchate of Alexandria (to which Egypt and Aksum belonged in the early sixth century). The main feature of Bishop

John's Friday veneration is abstinence from work; the same theme is implied in the legend of Paul and John and can be recovered for the **Fymywn* legend.

Given that the **Fymywn* legend deals with Naḡrān, we have to conclude, taking into account the Syrian origin and the geography of the John and Friday legend, that the latter, too, deals with Naḡrān. One would like to be more precise about the relationship between the legend about John and Friday and the **Fymywn* legend but it would be premature at this point. Let us wait at least for the publication of the text of the legend about John and Friday. So far, we can cautiously propose a date within the period between the very late fifth century and the early sixth century for both legends.

It is unknown whether the legend about John and Friday is related to Mabbug, although this is, of course, quite possible. Another West Syrian legend, **Fymywn*, was probably connected to Edessa (at least its later avatar, the novel on Paul and John, was firmly rooted in Edessian soil).

The Friday veneration tradition represented in the John and Friday legend and in the **Fymywn* legend found its continuation in the legends of Eleutherius and the personified Friday, St Parasceve of Iconium.

2.8. Eleutherius and the Gädlä Azqir

The *Gädlä Azqir* ("Acts [*lit.*, Struggle] of Azqir") is a martyrrium preserved in an Arabic-based Ethiopic version and its epitome in the Ethiopian Synaxarium on 24 Ḥädār (30 November).¹⁴⁷ Accord-

¹⁴⁷ For the main bibliography, see Witakowski, W. "Azqir: Gädlä Azqir." In Uhlig, S., ed. *Encyclopaedia Aethiopia*, I, 421–22, with additions in Bausi, A. "Naḡrān." In *ibid.*, III, 1114–16, here 1114. Wiesbaden, 2007. A new English translation with commentaries was prepared by the late Zeev Rubin (d. 2009) and was scheduled to be published in 2010 [in: Rubin, Z. *Religious and Economic Struggles in the Red Sea Basin in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries*. Translated Texts for Historians. Liverpool] but did not appear until the spring of 2011. The full text of the *Gädlä* is published in Conti-Rossini, A. "Un documento sul cristianesimo nello Iemen ai tempi del re Šarāḥbīl Yakkuf." *Rendiconti della Accademia dei Lincei*, Ser. V, 19 (1910): 705–50; the Synaxarium entry is published in: Colin, G. *Le Synax-*

ing to Carlo Conti-Rossini,¹⁴⁸ the lost Arabic original of the Ethiopic version was, in turn, translated from Syriac. However, he provided no linguistic basis for this supposition. In light of modern knowledge of the linguistic situation in Naḡrān¹⁴⁹ and taking into account Conti-Rossini's own conclusion that the author was a Ḥimyarite clergyman, it seems to me more likely that the martyrrium was originally composed in (North) Arabic.

The name Azqir (ⲀⲛⲪⲚ) was interpreted by Conti-Rossini as a transliteration of the Arabic ازقير which was, in turn, a corruption of اوفير < اوفير < اوفيمون "Euphemion," who is the "Femion" of the Arabic legend.¹⁵⁰ However, there is no particular affinity between the legends of Azqir and Femion/*Fymymn*, and there is no need to invent such a complicated scheme to connect one name with the other. Recently, Sergei Frantsuzoff proposed a much more plausible interpretation of the name Azqir as a nickname, a slight corrup-

aire éthiopien. Mois de Hedār, 354/355[122/123]–356/357[124/125]. PO, 44, 3; N° 199. Turnhout, 1988.

¹⁴⁸ Conti-Rossini, C. "Azqir." In *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie Ecclésiastiques*, vol. 5, 1377–78. Paris, 1931, quoted by Witakowski, "Azqir: Gädlä Azqir," 421.

¹⁴⁹ Ḥimyar was a country with Arabic–Sabaeen (that is, North Arabic–South Arabic) bilingualism. The inhabitants of Naḡrān were mostly—although not exclusively—North Arabic-speaking. In Conti-Rossini's time, the early and middle twentieth century, it was taken for granted that the local people were Sabaeen-speaking even in Naḡrān; thus, Arabic as a possible original language of a work composed by a Ḥimyarite clergyman was, in Conti-Rossini's view, excluded *a priori*. Irfan Shahīd's studies revealed (and even somewhat exaggerated) the predominance of North Arabic in Naḡrān (see esp. Shahīd, I. *The Martyrs of Najrān. New Documents*, 242–50. *Subsidia hagiographica*, 49. Bruxelles, 1971). For a modern balanced viewpoint, see, e.g., Beaucamp, J., Ch. Robin. "Le christianisme dans la péninsule Arabique d'après l'épigraphie et l'archéologie." *Travaux et mémoires* 8 (1981): 45–61, here 56, n. 58, containing also a reference to W. W. Müller's review of Shahīd, *The Martyrs of Najrān*, in *Oriens christianus* 58 (1974): 182–85.

¹⁵⁰ Conti-Rossini, "Un documento," 726.

tion of the Syriac “weaver” > الزقور > اُقْعُ > ܐܩܘܪ. A secular occupation of this sort for the priest Azqir is not so very far from that of a brick mason, the occupation specified for Bishop Paul and Priest John of the Syriac legend.

The pagan king who delivered Azqir to the torturers is named Sārabəḥīl Dankəf, which corresponds to the Šarahbi’il Yakkuf of Sabaic inscriptions.¹⁵² His reign is dated to ca 455–ca 475. Scholars normally consider these dates as the time of the activity of the historical prototype of Azqir. On this basis, they conclude that the difficult relations between the Nağrānite Christians and the local “Jews” (that is, those who adopted Judaism, not ethnic Jews, of course) go back, at least, to the third quarter of the fifth century.¹⁵³

To take such absolute dating (according to the name of the reigning king) at its face value is not the best way to interpret a typical *Passion épique*, however. No matter how tempting it may be,

¹⁵¹ Французов, С. А. “Житие св. Азкира» как источник по истории Южной Аравии [The *Life of St Azqir* as a Source for the History of South Arabia.]” In *Ежегодная богословская конференция Православного Свято-Тихоновского богословского института: Материалы 2003 г.* [The *Annual Theological Conference of the Orthodox St Tikhon Theological Institute: Proceedings, 2003*], 139–46. Москва, 2003. Frantsouzoff seems to be less convincing when supposing that the form Aşkir (ܐܫܩܝܪ), the variant reading of the name in most of the manuscripts of the Synaxarium, could result from a confusion between ܐ and ܫ in Syriac (which look very similar, according to Frantsouzoff, in some kinds of Syriac script).

¹⁵² For a thorough linguistic analysis of this correspondence (more detailed than in Conti-Rossini, “Un documento,” 739, n. 4), see Французов, “Житие св. Азкира,” Without knowing Frantsouzoff’s article, Bausi expressed some doubts (Bausi, “Nağrān,” 1114).

¹⁵³ Cf., among the most recent studies, Rubin, Z. “Judaism and Raḥmanite Monotheism in the Ḥimyarite Kingdom in the Fifth Century.” In Parfitt, T., ed. *Israel and Ishmael. Studies in Muslim-Jewish Relations*, 32–51, here 41–43, 50–51. New York, 2000 (contains a brilliant analysis of certain difficult places in the legend); Frantsouzoff, “Житие св. Азкира”; Bowersock, G. W. “The Ḥaḍramawt between Persia and Byzantium.” In *La Persia e Bisanzio. Atti del convegno internazionale (Roma, 14–18 ottobre 2002)*, 263–73, here 270. Atti dei convegni Lincei, 201. Rome, 2004.

in the study of the *Passions épiques*, we must keep in mind that such an association with a specific reigning king represented an “epic” period which was certainly remote from the hagiographer and the real events he has in mind.¹⁵⁴ The reign of Šaraḥbi’il Yakkuf roughly corresponds to that of Yezdigerd II, that is, the time of the establishment of Christianity in Naḡrān. This is an appropriate time to place a legend about the local apostolic figure. However, setting aside the mention of Šaraḥbi’il Yakkuf, there is absolutely no reference in the *Gädlä Aẓqir* to any other detail which could be dated precisely to the 450s–470s and not just as readily to *ca* 500. The need for an appropriate locally coloured legend about conversion arises when the local Church organization is established, which, for Naḡrān, is *ca* 500. Before this, some legends might be produced in the missionary milieu, but such legends, as we have seen in the Syrian legends reviewed above, were not “localized” enough and, instead, bore many hallmarks of the missionaries’ lands of origin. It is at least worth noting that these early Syrian legends are silent about the Jews, presenting their heroes as struggling against the local pagan cult only. It is an important argument for a relatively later dating of the “hot phase” in the competition between Judaism and Christianity in Ḥimyar. Unless we are able to recognize some other datable features of the *Gädlä Aẓqir*, it seems safer to consider this source as a witness of the situation *ca* 500 rather than earlier.

Be that as it may, for our study of the Eleutherius tradition only one fact is important, namely, that at least since *ca* 500, the anti-Jewish polemics are a major component of the hagiographic legends related to Naḡrān. This is not traceable in the *Life* of Eleutherius, but the Eleutherius recension of the *Twelve Fridays* is an anti-Jewish work *ex professo* combining one *topos* of the Naḡrān-related legends, Friday veneration (cf. the legend about Bishop John and the personified Friday and Sunday veneration as its counterweight in the *Fymynn* legend), with another one, the quarrels with the “Jews.”

However, the precise motives representing the anti-Jewish polemics in Eleutherius’ dossier show no trace of the influence of the *Gädlä Aẓqir*, and for this reason their source will be dealt with be-

¹⁵⁴ See above, n. 112.

low (see below, 2.8). Nevertheless, the *Gädlä Azqir* is recognisable within the hagiographic substrate of the *Life* of Eleutherius.

Two episodes in the *Gädlä Azqir* have direct parallels in the *Life* of Eleutherius:

- (1) Azqir baptises two men when he is arrested and led under escort to the king;
- (2) Azqir enters into a confrontation with a Jew who has a little son; both die, and the child becomes an innocent victim of his father's anti-Christian hostility.

The first episode is similar to the baptism of Felix by Eleutherius, also performed *en route* to the king under escort. There is, however, an important difference. Eleutherius is acting in imitation of Apostle Philip's action with the eunuch of the queen of Ethiopia, thus he performs the baptism when water becomes available. Azqir, on the contrary, baptises in an arid place after having caused water to flow from the rock; no parallel with Apostle Philip is intended. Indeed, Apostle Philip appears in the *Life* of Eleutherius as a hallmark of a Syrian missionary tradition related to the metropolis of Mabbug. For the local Christian community of Ḥimyar, Philip was hardly of particular interest. The corresponding episode in the *Life* of Eleutherius reveals both Syrian and Ḥimyarite hagiographic substrates.

The second episode is the second (unsuccessful) attempt of the "Jews" to kill Azqir. It runs as follows (translated by A. Jeffery): "There was a Jew there with his wife and his sons. Having put on festal attire they had come out to take part in the death of the holy martyr Azqir. He and his wife were the first of all to hurl stones at the holy Azqir. The stone did not reach the holy Azqir, but the little son died before his father's eyes, even though his father was protecting him. His stomach split and he died [an allusion to Judas' death according to Acts 1:18]. Also his wife, while still alive, was devoured by worms." In the Eleutherius recension of the *Twelve Fridays* there is no Jew's wife and the roles of the father and the son are somewhat different. Nevertheless, the basic features are the same: the Azqir persecutor died the same sort of death as did Judas, a kind of suicide along the lines of Mt 27:5; also the Jew's child is not acting as a helper of Azqir but he, too, is killed by his father.

The third important link between Azqir and Eleutherius is probably Cyriacus, Azqir's companion. We will discuss this character in the next section.

2.9. The Personal Names in Eleutherius' Dossier

In this section, we will discuss the names of the three main characters of the *Life* of Eleutherius. The name of Tarasius (Eleutherius' antagonist in the *Twelve Fridays*) will be discussed in section 3.2, together with other elements of the anti-Jewish polemics.

The sense of the name Felix (the officer baptised by Eleutherius) is transparent: (true) liberty gives (true) happiness. The name Malchus (Tarasius' son in the *Twelve Fridays*) is Greek (Μάλχος), although of Semitic origin, from the root *mlk*, here in the sense "counsellor," which is in perfect accord with the role of this character in the story.

2.9.1. Eleutherius' Companion

The name of Eleutherius' companion in his *Life*, an eparch who was first sent to him by Hadrian as a torturer but who converted and suffered martyrdom, varies significantly; this fact itself is a demonstration that his name was somewhat difficult for the Greek-speaking milieu. At the same time, this name has some affinities with the name of the king in the Eleutherius recension of the *Twelve Fridays* and even with the name Cyriacus, the companion of Azqir.

In the *Life* of Eleutherius this name appears variously as Κορέβων (corroborated by Latin *Corribon*), Κορέβωρ (corroborated by Syriac *Qwrbr*¹⁵⁵ and Slavonic *Koribor*), and Κορέμων in the metaphrastic recension BHG 571. Moreover, the short *Life* of Eleutherius available in the Synaxarium of Constantinople on 15 December has a different set of variants: Κορέβορος, Κορέμ-βωρος, Κορέβωρ, Κορέμβων, Κορέμμος, Κορέμων.¹⁵⁶ This testimony is important because the epitomiser (who was working not

¹⁵⁵ Thus in the Syriac version of the *Life*. In the Syriac calendars, normally *Qrbnr* (see below, n. 191).

¹⁵⁶ Delehaye, H. *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae e codice Sirmondiano nunc Berolinensi adiectis synaxariis selectis*, cols. 309–13. Acta Sanctorum, Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum Novembris. Bruxellis, 1902.

later than in the tenth century, maybe even in the ninth century¹⁵⁷) had access to earlier manuscripts of the *Life* of Eleutherius. One can see that all Greek variant readings differ in the third consonant position, which is /b/ or /m/ or the group /mb/. Thus, these possibilities correspond to the three variants of the original reading: /m/ (K-r-m), /mb/ (K-r-mb), and /b/ (K-r-b).

Let us turn to the Eleutherius recension of the *Twelve Fridays*. Here, a similar name is given to the king during whose reign the dispute takes place. This king is not a companion of Eleutherius but he is, nevertheless, the person whose authority made the dispute—and the following victory of Eleutherius—possible.

The king's name is spelled as Карьмянь, Карьминь, Каринь, Каринь,¹⁵⁸ Карьмиль (the latter variant certainly resulted from confusion with a well-known toponym, Carmel). Although the spelling *Karmian* is probably genuine for the Eleutherius recension, it also corroborates the reading K-r-m as the name of the historical prototype of both fictive characters, that of the eparch of the *Life* and that of the king of the *Twelve Fridays*.

Indeed, there is a very popular Arabic name, كريم (*Karim*), whose meanings “generous, honourable, noble, high-born” (cf. also as one of the names of Allah, in Qur'an 27:40 and 82:6) resonate with the paramount motive of the Himyar-related hagiography: liberty *vs* slavery and the noble origins of the martyrs (cf. especially in the *Book of Himyarites*). The most important point of contact, however, is that the name of the last Himyarite Christian king before the great persecution of 523 was Karīm—at least, in Syriac. The king whose name in the inscriptions is Muḥdi Karab Yaḥfir is called ܡܘܚܕܝܟܪܝܡ (*M^hdykerm* = Muḥdi-Karim) in the *Book of Himyarites*.¹⁵⁹ The king's second name, Karab, is spelled as Karim in

¹⁵⁷ For the date of the Synaxarium of Constantinople, see Luzzi, A. *Studi sul Sinassario di Costantinopoli*, 5–6, n. 3. Testi e studi bizantino-neoellenici, 8. Rome, 1995.

¹⁵⁸ This reading gave Veselovsky (Веселовский, “Freiheit—Элевферий,” 84) a pretext to interpret this name as Carinus, the name of a Roman emperor (283–285). He took for granted that the legend is limited to the realm of the Roman/Byzantine Empire.

¹⁵⁹ Moberg, *The Book of the Himyarites*, 43b.

Syriac, and both variants, Karab and Karim, seem to pass into the hagiographical dossier of Eleutherius.

Cyriacus (ܩܝܪܝܩܘܨ *Kiryāq*) in the *Gädlä Azqir* is a character whose participation in the story is certainly damaged in the available recension. He appears before Azqir when he was in prison, saying (in Jeffery's translation): "I am come to give you good news, because the king of Hamer [= Himyar] has sent a message regarding you, for which reason they will take you to him for martyrdom." Nothing is said about Cyriacus' source of information. Then, "the inhabitants of the city came and spoke to the holy Azqir, brought him out of the prison, and bound him with that man who had held discourse with the holy Azqir." One can guess that Cyriacus, too, suffered martyrdom but nothing else is said about him. The episodes related to Cyriacus are shortened somewhat mechanically, although presumably they were present in a more explicated way in an earlier recension. Such severe damage to the entire Cyriacus line of the plot seems to have involved a "familiarisation" of his name. If his name was the same as that of the companion of Eleutherius, it would have sounded unfamiliar to the Ethiopian ear, unlike the well-known name Cyriacus. Thus, I think that it is most likely that the name of Cyriacus in the lost genuine recension of the *Gädlä Azqir* was either *Krym* (Karīm) or *Krb* (Karab).

2.9.2. *Eleutherius' Mother*

The mother of Eleutherius in his *Life* bears the name Ἀνθία, which is not a common Christian or Greek name even if it is similar to the name of one of the Graces, Ἀνθεῖα, the goddess of flowers. The only St Anthia known to the calendars is the mother of Eleutherius. Even in Eleutherius' dossier her name is not stable: in the metaphrastic recension *BHG* 571 it is replaced by an ordinary Greek name, Evanthia.¹⁶⁰ Now, taking into account the Arabic

¹⁶⁰ The same perplexity when confronting a strange name is probably also reflected in some Syriac calendars in which the mother of Eleutherius became Nonna: see below, note 191.

background of Eleutherius' dossier, we can recognise in Anthia a woman's name very popular among the Arab nobility, Hind (هند).

The name Hind is represented in the *Book of Himyarites* as Hint; Shahîd explains this form as reflecting an Arabic dialect of Yemen in which /d/ is pronounced as /t/.¹⁶¹ The expected form of this name in Syriac would be either Hind or Hint; the latter is possible due to a common phenomenon, the devocalizing of the consonant at the end of the word.¹⁶² Thus the Syriac Hint (ܗܝܢܬ), clothed in Greek dress and provided with a Greek feminine ending, becomes Anthia.

This reconstruction is corroborated by the facts of Arabic onomastics. The name of the mother was often used by the Arabian nobility instead of the name of father, e.g., ʿAmr III ibn al-Mundîr, the king of the Lakhmid Arabs (554–569), was often called ibn Hind after his mother, Hind bint al-Harîṭ. Eleutherius, as a saint accompanied by his mother (which is not a very usual situation), was another ibn Hind.

2.9.3. *Eleutherius*

The Arab hagiographic substrate of Eleutherius' dossier authorises us to look for an Arabic prototype of the Greek name "Eleutherius." Of course, it is possible that this name reflects the hagiographer's main agenda, that of creating a personification of the "liberty in Christ." But this purpose does not exclude the possibility that there was a real prototype for the name Eleutherius, although, at first glance, we see no such prototype in the Arabian pre-Islamic milieu.

However, let us examine the Nağrānite onomasticon without paying attention to the modern scholarly etymologies of the names but, instead, trying to look at them through the eyes of a contemporary Syrian armed with the lens of popular etymology. Harîṭ is one of the most popular Nağrānite names; in addition to St Arethas

¹⁶¹ Shahîd, I. "The Martyresses of Najrān." In Zanetti, U., et E. Lucchesi, eds. *Aegyptus Christiana. Mélanges d'hagiographie égyptienne et orientale dédiés à la mémoire du P. Paul Devos bollandiste*, 123–33, here 129. Cahiers d'orientalisme, 25. Genève, 2004.

¹⁶² See above, note 88.

of Nağrān, the best known bearer of this name, the *Book of Himyarites* alone enumerates eight other Nağrānite martyrs with this name.¹⁶³ The name Ḥarīt can be comprised as a derivate of the root *ḥr* “to be free” (in both North and South Arabic). In Syriac, it becomes ܚܪܝܬ “Ḥarīt” (and “Arethas” in Greek) due to the lack of the phoneme *ṯ* in Syriac, where /*ṯ*/ is the post-vocal allophone of /*t*/. Let us recall that Nağrān was a zone of coexistence of both North and South Arabic languages. The Syriac form of this name can then be “etymologised” (with a violation of modern scholarly principles, of course) as a South Arabic proper name composed from the root *ḥr* and the suffix of proper names *-t* specific to South Arabic,¹⁶⁴ which results in an interpretation of “Ḥarīt” as “a free one” (substantivated as a proper name).

Although I am not necessarily completely convinced of this proposed explanation, it is tempting to interpret the name Eleutherius, the son of Anthia, as Ḥarīt ibn Hind. At any rate, this interpretation does not affect the possibility of identification of the historical prototype of Eleutherius. It is very probable that Eleutherius is merely a generalised character and a symbolic figure.

PART THREE: ELEUTHERIUS AND FRIDAY

3.1. Friday Veneration in Bostra: St Parasceve and Baḥīrā

3.1.1. *St Parasceve’s Dossier: Introduction*

The hagiographical dossier of St Parasceve of Iconium has not been studied properly to date, although this saint was extremely popular in certain countries during the mediaeval period (especially in the Slavic world).¹⁶⁵ The critical edition of the mediaeval recensions of her *Martyrium* (nine recensions in the Greek original and several in Latin, Slavonic, and Romanian from Slavonic versions)

¹⁶³ See the references in Moberg, *The Book of the Himyarites*, xci.

¹⁶⁴ Beeston, A. F. L. *A Descriptive Grammar of Epigraphic South Arabian*, 30. London, 1962 (§ 25:1).

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Scharpé’s thesis (see next note), vol. I, p. 14–21.

was prepared by J. L. Scharpé in his 1971 thesis¹⁶⁶ but was never published. A critical analysis of these materials remains a desideratum. For the present, I will limit myself to pointing out some features demonstrating that the *Martyrium* of Parasceve has something to do with the Arabs and then to describing an anti-Jewish polemical tradition that influenced some of the later recensions of the *Martyrium* of Parasceve as well as the Eleutherius recension of the *Twelve Fridays*.

There is absolutely no trace of a St Parasceve cult in the anti-Chalcedonian traditions.¹⁶⁷ The *terminus ante quem* could be the eighth century, the date of the panegyric *BHG* 1420p by John of Euboea (whose activity is not dated more precisely),¹⁶⁸ although the popularity of the St Parasceve cult in the Latin world and the symbolic nature of the figure of Parasceve (a personified weekday) are arguments for a relatively early dating of the *Martyrium*, most likely to the sixth century.

¹⁶⁶ Scharpé, J. L. *Parasceve—Venera—Petka—Vineri. Passionum graece, latine, slavice, romanice manipulus*. Academisch Proefschrift. Faculteit der Letteren en Wijsbegeerte, Rijksuniversiteit Gent, 1971. The manuscript is in 4 vols. with no consecutive pagination; the details of the *Martyrium* shared by at least several recensions will be quoted without specific references; other details will be quoted with reference to the recension(s) only. I am grateful to A. Yu. Vinogradov for a copy of this work. For the Slavonic tradition, one should add Петрова, М. “Към въпроса за южнославянските преводи на житието на мъченица Параскева/Петка Римлянка” [Petrova, M. “On the Question of the South-Slavic Translations of the *Life* of the martyr Parasceve/Petka of Rome”]. *Palaeobulgarica* 20 (1996): Nr 2, 83–109.

¹⁶⁷ The only exception is the Armenian version of the recension f (= *BHG* 1420f–g) *BHO* 841. It is an 11th-century translation from Greek commissioned by a great bibliophile, Catholicos Grigor II Vcakaser [Martyrophilos] (1065–1105).

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Halkin, F. “La passion de sainte Parascève par Jean d’Eubée.” In: Wirth, P., hrsg. *Polychronion. Festschrift Franz Dölger zum 75. Geburtstag*, 226–37. Heidelberg, 1966.

The plot can be roughly divided into five parts: (1) birth and earliest years; (2 to 4) preaching in three cities and interrogations by three kings; and (5) death and burial.

No place of birth is indicated in the early recensions (thus, Iconium is a later identification, probably influenced by the parallel with St Thecla). The parents are named Ἀγάθων and Πολίτεια, recalling a popular expression ἀγαθός πολίτης “good citizen” (e.g., Aristophanes, *Knights* 944 Hall, Geldart). Parasceve received her name after the weekday on which she was born. As a teenager, she took up an apostolic mission and even performed a baptism of a multitude of people with the water from heaven. The first king she encounters is called Antoninus (in some recensions, Antonius; other Roman emperors’ names in recension Y¹⁶⁹ only); the city is Rome. So far, the main hagiographical substrate is certainly the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* (CANT 211.III; the parallels are sometimes noted by Scharpé) or their derivates. Antoninus Pius (138–161) is an emperor of almost the same rank of antiquity as Hadrian (cf. the *Life* of Eleutherius), that is, ancient enough for a “secondary” apostolic figure (not for Thecla herself but for a “second Thecla”). Parasceve continues preaching in the second city (unnamed) and is interrogated by the second king. His name varies considerably, probably revealing a difficulty with an unfamiliar non-Greek name.¹⁷⁰ This part of the *Martyrium* is very detailed and requires much further study. Parasceve then preaches in the third city (unnamed) and is interrogated by a king named Asclepius (but in BHG 1420j and 1420f, the third city is Rome and its king is named Tarasius, which is the same as the third king’s name in the work of John of Euboea). Finally, after having pronounced a long prayer about the world (the items of this prayer obviously correspond to a suppli-

¹⁶⁹ Unique ms Cod. Mosq. Synod. 410, 15th century, not in *BHG*.

¹⁷⁰ The variants are as follows: in recension a (*BHG* 1420d–e) as Ἀθέμενος, Ἀθέμιος, Ἀρτέμιος, Θέμιος, Θέσμιος, Θεότιμος, Θέμης, Ἄνθιμος, and Θέμος; in its Latin version (*BHL* 8530, 8531) as Themus and Theotimus; in its Slavonic version as Темѡсь, Θεωμисъ, and Θεμѡсь; and in its Romanian version as Atizma. Other recensions mostly repeat the same variants but add Arthemius (Lat. of rec. b = *BHL* 8529) and Ἀνθέσβιος (rec. c = *BHG* 1420a).

cant's needs when praying to St Parasceve), she is beheaded with a sword and buried by a pious Christian.

The episode with King Asclepius reveals, as its hagiographical substrate, the *Martyrium* of Leontius of Tripoli (in Syria, modern Lebanon, and not in Africa), the martyr who vanquished the false god Asclepius in Tripoli, the main city of his cult.¹⁷¹ Unlike Leontius, Parasceve does not perform any healing in the third city, but her prayer is primarily about the health of Christians.

The Passion, in which three consecutive places are connected within a unique plot, is a legend representing the mutual connexions between the corresponding Church centres.¹⁷² It is clear that the first centre, Rome, represents, in the realities of the sixth century, New Rome, that is, Constantinople. The *Martyrium* of Parasceve is about a development within the Church structure of the Patriarchate of Constantinople (and this is why this legend did not pass to the anti-Chalcedonian traditions). This development is the establishment of a new Church centre, represented in the legend by Parasceve's second destination. At this point, the narration becomes especially detailed; this is the core of the whole plot. The third city is the final destination of St Parasceve, the place of her deposition; probably but not necessarily the place where her relics were deposited. At any rate, the third destination represents, in the legend, the main place of the cult of St Parasceve. The whole legend is to be read as dealing with a Church organisation established in the second city under the omophorion of the patriarch of Constantinople by missionaries from the third city. It is a delicate mat-

¹⁷¹ For a convenient summary of his dossier, see van Esbroeck, M. "Leontius of Tripoli, Saint." In Atiya, A. S. *The Coptic Encyclopaedia*, V, 1442–44. New York, 1991.

¹⁷² This kind of "hagiographical network" was first studied by Paul Peeters in his "La légende de S. Orentius et de ses six frères martyrs." *AB* 56 (1938): 241–64 (the complete text is preserved in the Georgian version only; cf. *BHG* 2326n for a Greek Synaxarium entry); cf. also *BHG* 646–646c (*Martyrium* of Eustratius and those with him). Both *Martyria* describe the routes connecting Byzantium with the Caucasus and the corresponding Church organisation in the seventh century, the maritime route, via Trebizond (St Orentius), and by land, via Satala (St Eustratius).

ter to identify the second and third cities. Their names must have been present in the original recension of the legend going back to the pre-Islamic time but they were lost when the Church geography changed after the establishment of the Caliphate. An exhaustive analysis of the *Martyrium* of Parasceve is beyond the scope of the present study but some considerations will be discussed below.

3.1.2. St Parasceve's Dossier: Arabian Connexions

There is only one explicit mention of Arabia in the *Martyrium* of Parasceve, and it is shared by most of the recensions. Parasceve addresses the second king as, among other epithets, “wolf of Arabia—λύκε τῆς Ἀραβίας.” The mise-en-scène is basically the same as in the *Life* of Eleutherius.

The *Martyrium* of Leontius of Tripoli that is present in the hagiographical substrate of the legend of Parasceve suggests that the mention of Arabia is not incidental. According to one of the traditions, Leontius of Tripoli was an Arab. Although all other traditions of the *Martyrium* describe Leontius as a Greek, the Coptic traditions label him as an “Arab,” even in the titles of the Passions.¹⁷³ This tradition is explained by a “contamination” of Leontius of Tripoli with Leontius the Arab, also martyred in Tripoli, a companion of the martyr Theodore the Eastern (Anatolius).¹⁷⁴ It seems better to say, along with Delehaye, that these Leontii are identical¹⁷⁵; thus, Leontius of Tripoli was deliberately represented as an Arab. Although this tradition is now preserved only in Coptic documents, its origin is certainly outside of Egypt and, most

¹⁷³ For the Coptic *Martyrium*: Garitte, G. “Textes hagiographiques orientaux relatifs à Saint Léonce de Tripoli. I. La Passion copte sahidique.” *Le Muséon* 78 (1965): 313–48, here 319/334 (txt/tr.); for the Coptic version of the panegyric by Severus of Antioch: idem. “Textes hagiographiques orientaux relatifs à Saint Léonce de Tripoli. II. L’homélie copte de Sévère d’Antioche.” *Le Muséon* 79 (1966): 335–86, here 355/372 (txt/tr.).

¹⁷⁴ Garitte, “Textes hagiographiques,” I, 334, n. 1.

¹⁷⁵ Delehaye wrote about this possibility as “n’est pas improbable”: Delehaye, H. “Les martyrs d’Égypte.” *AB* 40 (1922) 5–154, 299–364, here 99.

probably, within the patriarchate of Antioch (at least, the cult of Theodore the Eastern is of Syrian origin¹⁷⁶). Tripoli belonged to the patriarchate of Antioch but the local cult of Leontius was certainly not connected to the Arabs. However, the cult of Leontius of Tripoli was popular in Hawran, which was inhabited by the Ghassanid Arabs,¹⁷⁷ also within the patriarchate of Antioch,¹⁷⁸ and especially in a major Ghassanid (formerly Nabatean) city, Bostra. The cathedral (bishop's church) of Bostra was constructed between September 512 and March 513 under Bishop Julian with an unfamiliar dedication to three saints, to Sergius and Bacchus and to Leontius.¹⁷⁹ As early as 1991, van Esbroeck proposed that this cathe-

¹⁷⁶ The two main documents of his hagiographical dossier, the anonymous *Martyrium* and the *Encomium* to both Theodore the General and Theodore the Eastern, attributed to some (maybe fictitious) Archbishop of Antioch Theodore (both in Coptic) have as their main *locus in quo* the seat of war between the Roman Empire and Persia. See, for both texts with translations, Balestri, I., and H. Hyvernat. *Acta Martyrum*, I, 34–62/30–46 (txt/tr., *Martyrium*) and 90–156/62–107 (txt/tr., *Encomium*). CSCO, 43–44; Copt, 3–4 [= Copt. III, 1]. Parisii/Leipzig, 1907, 1908 [reprint: Louvain]; *Encomium* also in: Winstedt, E. O. *Coptic Texts on Saint Theodore the General, St. Theodore the Eastern, Chamoul and Justus*, 1–166. Text and Translation Society. Publications. Oxford/London, 1910. Leontius the Arab was, before his conversion, a Persian warrior. His death is described only in the *Martyrium* (*ibid.*, 59/44, txt/tr.), the *Encomium* being mutilated in the corresponding section.

¹⁷⁷ On Christianity among the Ghassanids, see, most recently, Hoyland, R. “Late Roman Provincia Arabia, Monophysite Monks and Arab Tribes: A Problem of Centre and Periphery.” *Semitica et Classica* 2 (2009): 117–39 (I am grateful to G. Benevich for this reference).

¹⁷⁸ Churches were dedicated to Leontius in 483 at Dur and in 565 at Sur; Fowden, E. K. *The Barbarian Plain. Saint Sergius between Rome and Iran*, 111. The transformation of the classical heritage, 28; Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 1999.

¹⁷⁹ Fowden, *ibid.* It was an epochal building in the history of Christian architecture which became a template for several later churches constructed by Justinian.

dral with its cult of St Leontius of Tripoli was responsible for Leontius of Tripoli becoming an Arab.¹⁸⁰

Given the decisive role of the Ghassanid ruler Al-Ḥārīt ibn Ġabalāh (528–569/570), a Roman patrician, in the reestablishment of the anti-Chalcedonian (Jacobite) hierarchy in 542/543, it is no wonder that the identification of Leontius of Tripoli with Leontius the Arab is preserved in an anti-Chalcedonian tradition, although limited to Egypt; the authentic tradition in which Leontius was a Greek was already strong enough, however, to prevent this identification from being accepted in Tripoli and Syria.¹⁸¹ For Hawran, however, this identification must be common to the partisans and adversaries of Chalcedon going back, at least, to the epoch of their Church union under the *Henotikon* of Zeno (482). Bishop Julian of Bostra, who constructed the cathedral dedicated to Sergius and Bacchus and to Leontius, was a Chalcedonian, although in communion with the anti-Chalcedonians in the context of the policy of the *Henotikon*. He was deposed in 513, however, for his opposition to Severus' election to the See of Antioch, but he returned to his see in 518 after the deposition of Severus and remained bishop of Bostra until his death (before 539 or even before 530).¹⁸² It would not be at all strange, therefore, if a Chalcedonian legend of Parasceve was produced in Bostra implying that Leontius of Tripoli was an Arab.

If the third destination of Parasceve, where she is presented as a second Leontius of Tripoli, is Bostra, and if Leontius of Tripoli is considered to be the same as Leontius the Arab, Bostra must be the place of origin of the cult of Parasceve. Is there any way to verify such a rather strong claim? Fortunately, there is.

¹⁸⁰ van Esbroeck, "Leontius of Tripoli," 1443: "Probably there is some connection with the sanctuary of Leontius in the Hauran."

¹⁸¹ Leontius of Tripoli was the personal patron of Severus of Antioch, and was thus especially venerated in the Syrian Jacobite tradition. Cf., for details, Allen, P., and C. T. R. Hayward. *Severus of Antioch*, 6–7. London/New York, 2004.

¹⁸² Sartre, M. *Bostra. Dès origines à l'Islam*, 109–10. Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, 117; Paris, 1985.

3.1.3. *Bostra, the Teaching of Baḥīrā, and the Lost Revelation on Friday*

The region of Bostra is pointed out almost unanimously by different sources as the location of the monastery of the monk Baḥīrā, the main character of the eighth-century Baḥīrā legend.¹⁸³ This legend itself is heavily dependent on the Syrian traditions about the conversion of Naḡrān (see below, Note 2). Therefore, the appearance of the Friday motive in the Baḥīrā legend is a continuation of the line of such legends as the unpublished Syriac legend about Bishop John and the personified Friday and the Eleutherius recension of the *Twelve Fridays*. Taking into account the author's polemical attitude toward Baḥīrā's teaching on the Friday veneration, one can say more accurately that the Baḥīrā legend continues the line of the *Fymym legend.

The Friday motive is one of the themes especially stressed in the main recensions¹⁸⁴ of the Baḥīrā legend. According to both the two Syriac and the two Arabic recensions, Baḥīrā commands the young Muḥammad to establish Friday as the most honoured day of the week, when a great congregation is made for a common prayer (§ 16.13, the same numeration of chapters and paragraphs for the four recensions). He formulates the reasons for doing so with the words "...because [on that day] you [will] have received the Law." Baḥīrā then explains his plan to Muḥammad: he will write a book

¹⁸³ Roggema, B. *The Legend of Sergius Baḥīrā. Eastern Christian Apologetics and Apocalyptic in Response to Islam*, 45–46. History of the Christian-Muslim Relations, 9. Leiden/Boston, 2009. There is no exact location for Baḥīrā's dwelling in the available recensions of the legend but there are several other (Islamic) written sources and the local oral tradition of present-day Bosra in Syria which indicate as the monastery of Baḥīrā some ruins in the city. The latter tradition is hardly true in the literal sense but it is, nevertheless, an important witness of a connexion between the region of Bostra and Baḥīrā.

¹⁸⁴ With the exception of the Latin recension, which is limited to the apocalypse of Baḥīrā. It is now known in two manuscripts (Roggema, *The Legend*, 215–18), one of them published: Bignami-Odier, J., et G. Levi Della Vida. "Une version latine de l'apocalypse syro-arabe de Serge-Bahira." *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* 62 (1950): 125–48.

for him and will put it on the horn of a cow (a clear allusion to the *sūrah* 2 of the Qur'an, "The Cow"), and Muḥammad will find it and present it to his people on Friday as a revelation descended from heaven (§ 16.14).¹⁸⁵ Here we see that Friday becomes the day of the revelation of the Qur'an, and that this appears in a polemical context. Scholars have generally considered this context as limited to that of Islamo-Christian polemics. However, Friday as the day of the revelation of the Qur'an is never mentioned in the Islamic sources. Our previous review of the pre-Islamic hagiographical legends demonstrates that this controversy goes back to inter-Christian conflicts.

According to the legend about Baḥīrā, his teaching delivered to Muḥammad was a perversion of the Christian doctrine. Thus, the veneration of Friday is a part of this perversion or, perhaps more accurately, its main liturgical expression. And, indeed, we do know that a competition between Sunday and Friday was a hot polemical topic among the Christians involved in the mission to the Arabs in Arabia.

One of the legends reviewed above, namely, the Eleutherius recension of the *Twelve Fridays*, presumes the existence of a document containing a revelation about Friday. This document is reputed to be of apostolic origin, and nothing is said about the circumstances of its revelation to the apostles. However, Michel van Esbroeck, in his study of the *Epistle on the Sunday*, already postulated that there was an analogous earlier document based on the Wednesday calendar and which insisted on the veneration of Wednesday and Friday (see above, Introduction and Fig. 1). Our observations on the Baḥīrā legend lead to the conclusion that such a document did actually exist, written in the same genre of "letter from heaven."¹⁸⁶ The Baḥīrā legend takes a polemical attitude to-

¹⁸⁵ I quote according to the East Syrian recension (Roggema, *The Legend*, 282/283 txt/tr.), but the wording of the West Syrian recension is very similar (*ibid.*, 352/353); both Arabic recensions convey the same sense (*ibid.*, 406, 407/408, 409 and 484/485, 494/495).

¹⁸⁶ I have a strong feeling that van Esbroeck had already come to the same conclusion himself, although he never formulated it in print. In the late 1990s, he told me that he considered the very idea of a *tanẓīl* from

ward it. In some way, this conclusion is corroborated by the Eleutherius recension of the *Twelve Fridays* because the apostolic writing on Friday mentioned here might well be either the same document (if it was allegedly received from heaven by the apostles) or a related one.

3.1.4. Sitz im Leben of the Parasceve Legend

We must also retain from the discussion above that Bostra did have a reputation of being a centre of Friday veneration, and this especially in Christian circles involved in the mission to the Arabs. This fact confirms our supposition that the third destination of St Parasceve, which is the main location of her cult, is Bostra. It is Bostra that must be the place of origin of the legend.

We still have not identified the second destination of Parasceve but we do know at least that it must be a Chalcedonian mission to the Arabs. The Christian missions became specifically Chalcedonian or anti-Chalcedonian only after the policy of the *Henotikon* failed. For Bostra, this is in 512 (the opposition of Bishop Julian to Severus of Antioch). This date is the *terminus post quem* for the legend.

The mediaeval historians seem to be silent about the sixth- or early seventh-century Chalcedonian missions to the Arabs, but Byzantine hagiography preserves at least one legend of a series of such (unsuccessful) missions under the auspices of Constantinople. These missions allegedly ended with the creation of the Islamic doctrine and the inauguration of Muḥammad as the prophet by a certain Sinaitic monk Gerasimos surnamed Πουχμπάν Βαρκάς (“Raḥman Barka” or “Baraka”?). This Gerasimos is the complete opposite of Baḥīrā, although the *Life* of Muḥammad which preserves his story contaminates it with the Baḥīrā legend (making Baḥīrā the first teacher of Muḥammad but Gerasimos his succes-

heaven as going back to some Christian traditions of the sixth century, akin to those reflected in the *Epistle on Sunday*. He must certainly have had in mind the Baḥīrā legend with its version of revelation “from heaven,” but I am unable to say whether he knew the Christian Friday veneration tradition. However, the general direction of the present study was indicated to me by Michel van Esbroeck (1934–2003).

sor, found by Muḥammad five years after Baḥīrā's death; Gerasimos becomes both the author of the Qur'an and the author of the fraudulent dispatch "from heaven"). The legend about Gerasimos can be dated to the seventh or the early eighth century, although further studies are needed for more certitude.¹⁸⁷ At any rate, this legend is a witness that Parasceve's *Martyrium* is not an isolated case of the legend of the mission to the Arabs being influenced by the Chalcedonian policy of Constantinople.

In establishing a date for the Parasceve legend, the crucial consideration is its image of a personified Friday. This is hardly compatible with the age of Justinian, and certainly less so for later times. Instead, since the middle of the fifth century, we see a policy of suppression of the Friday veneration in the Christian milieu, both Chalcedonite and anti-Chalcedonite. The emphasis on Parasceve's loyalty toward Constantinople (symbolised by her first destination, Rome) points to an earlier epoch, when discussion about Friday was still not officially closed, nearer to the date of the legend about Bishop John and the personified Friday, that is, *ca* 500. In this epoch, the circle of Bishop Julian of Bostra is the best (if not the only possible) milieu of origin of such a legend. Julian's staunch Chalcedonism at such an early period was rare among the episcopate. However, the leader of this kind of Chalcedonism, which was in complete loyalty to the *Henotikon* (and thus still not in communion with Rome), was the contemporary patriarch of Constantinople, Macedonius, who was deposed and exiled in 511 (partially for his opposition to Severus of Antioch); he died in 517.

¹⁸⁷ See the anonymous Ἱστορία τῆς γεννήσεως καὶ ἀναθοροφῆς τοῦ Μοάμεθ (*The History of the Birth and Breeding of Muhammad*; unique ms of the 17th century), published incompletely in Delatte, A. *Anecdota Atheniensia. Textes grecs inédits relatifs à l'histoire des religions*, I, 333–57, esp. 339–45. Bibliothèque de la Faculté de philosophie et lettres de l'Université de Liège, 36. Liège/Paris, 1927. For the 7th-century dating of the Gerasimos legend, see Lourié, B. "India 'far beyond Egypt': Barlaam and Ioasaph and Nubia in the 6th century." In Bumazhnov, D., E. Grypeou, T. B. Sailors, and A. Toepel, eds. *Bibel, Byzanz und Christlicher Orient. Festschrift für Stephen Gerö zum 65. Geburtstag*, 135–80, here 143–44, n. 26; OLA, 187. Leuven/Paris/Walpole, MA, 2011.

Thus, it is reasonable to date the Parascève legend to the episcopate of Julian of Bostra (that is, from the period before 512 to the period before 530 or 539), with exception of the short period between 511 and 518, when loyalty to Constantinople was impossible for a staunch Chalcedonian.

The second destination of Parascève is obviously some Arabian city (or oasis) but, for its identification, we have to wait for a detailed study of the rich data provided by her *Martyrium*. This does not exclude the possibility that the second destination is Nağrān; according to one of several Islamic traditions concerning the identification of Baḥīrā's monastery in Bostra, this monastery was called Dayr Nağrān.¹⁸⁸ One can ask whether the Parascève legend was created for some polemical needs in the competition between different Christian circles related to Nağrān or for Christianisation of a different region inhabited by Arabian tribes.

***Note 2: The Baḥīrā Legend, Its Sources,
and the Hagiographical Substrate***

A detailed analysis of the Baḥīrā legend is rather difficult because, in its present recensions, its image of Baḥīrā is ambiguous. On the one hand, Baḥīrā is the author of the false doctrine delivered to Muḥammad. On the other hand, he has a rather high spiritual authority as the recipient of the apocalypse on Sinai (a piece of *Reichseschatologie* after Ps.-Methodius' heart). Such ambiguity probably results from a contamination of different legends, one about the recipient of the revelation on Sinai and a different one about the teacher of Muḥammad.

An additional argument for a compilative nature of the common archetype of the present recensions of the Baḥīrā legend is provided by its eschatology. In the apocalypse of Baḥīrā, the eschatological period opened by the rise of Islam is rather long-lasting, although in another part of the legend, Baḥīrā prophesies to the Ismaelites only ten weeks of years, that is, 70 years of reigning (§ 6.5). Commenting on this, Roggema writes that "[i]t must have been taken from the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, in which the time span of seventy years for the Sons of Ishmael plays a central role."¹⁸⁹ In fact, as we have seen above (section 1.5), this seventy-year

¹⁸⁸ Yāqūt quoted in Roggema, *The Legend*, 45.

¹⁸⁹ Roggema, *The Legend*, 93.

eschatology is not specific to Pseudo-Methodius and, in particular, is shared by the Eleutherius *Twelve Fridays* legend. So far, any particular influence of Pseudo-Methodius on the Baḥīrā legend remains unproven, although it is certain that the apocalypse of Baḥīrā is composed in the same vein of Syrian *Reichseschatologie* as Pseudo-Methodius (and as the Eleutherius recension of the *Twelve Fridays* as well).

Be this as it may, we are interested only in the part of the Baḥīrā legend related to the teacher of Muḥammad. It is in this section in which a hagiographical substrate of the Naḡrān-related legends is seen. It shares at least four important motives with the legends about the conversion of Naḡrān (without taking into account the motive of visiting Sinai, cf. the legend about Bishop Paul and Priest John, which may be explained by the overwhelming influence of the Sinai monastery):

- (1) Baḥīrā is living in a neighbourhood with the Arabs but separately; among those who visit him are children, including young Muḥammad: cf. the legend with an East Syrian background about an anchorite who converted a young man (see above, 2.6.1);
- (2) Friday veneration: cf. the legend about Bishop John and the personified Friday and Eleutherius' dossier;
- (3) Anti-Jewish polemics (according to the Baḥīrā legend, ch. 9, Baḥīrā's teaching was subsequently corrupted by a Jew, Ka'b al-Aḥbār¹⁹⁰): cf. the Eleutherius recension of the *Twelve Fridays* and Parasceve's dossier (see below, 3.2) as well as the Naḡrānite hagiography that emerged from the massacres of 523;
- (4) The narrator of the Baḥīrā legend meets Baḥīrā shortly before his death and remains with him until then: cf. the scene with the dendrite in the Bishop Paul and Priest John legend and especially the same scene in the *Fymynn* legend (although in the available recensions of the latter legends the nature of the connexion between the dendrite and Naḡrān is already damaged irreparably).

In its non-apocalyptic section, the Baḥīrā legend is based on the hagiography related to the conversion to Christianity of the Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. also Roggema, *The Legend*, 159–160, on this Jew in the Arabic Islamic tradition.

3.2. The Anti-Jewish Polemics in Parasceve's Dossier and in Eleutherius

Several recensions of the *Martyrium* of Parasceve contain anti-Jewish motives. The earliest recensions a (*BHG* 1420d-e) and b (only in *BHG* 1420b-c, not in *BHG* 1420i, k, and r, which also represent the same recension) present the Jews as acting together with the "Hellenes" in delivering Parasceve to the first king. In recension b this motive is even reinforced: Parasceve is to go to "the villages of Jews" (εἰς τὰς κώμας τῶν Ἰουδαίων) to proclaim herself Christian (thus in *BHG* 1420b; in *BHG* 1420c, the corrupted reading πρὸς τὰς τυναγωγὰς [sic!] τῶν Ἰουδαίων evidently corresponds to "the synagogues of the Jews").

In recension Hi (*BHG* 1420b), the Jews form an important group of the spectators of Parasceve's exploits and especially those who converted and were baptised after her preaching and miracles.

In recension f (*BHG* 1420j, f) and in John of Euboea (*BHG* 1420p), the third king is named Tarasius. Only in *BHG* 1420f is the king's command to place Parasceve into a deep pit with poisonous reptiles addressed to the Jews. The same *BHG* 1420f contains the following dialogue which explains as well the name Tarasius in the Eleutherius recension of the *Twelve Fridays*:

And again the saint said to him [*sc.*, the king]: 'Oh king, announce to me your name.' The king says: 'Why do you want to know my name? I am called Tarasius.' And the saint said: 'Justly you are named Tarasius, oh Tarasius! Your father is Satan, and you have an idol's and dumb [*lit.* speechless] name (Δικαίως ἐκλήθης Ταράσιος, Ταράσιε, ὁ πατήρ σου ὁ Σατανᾶς, εἰδωλικοῦ καὶ ἀλάλον ὄνομα ἔχεις).'

It is implied that Ταράσιος is derived from ταράσσω "to trouble."

One can see traces of anti-Jewish polemics in the earliest recension and in some other parts of the dossier; we must thus conclude that the cult of Parasceve was, to a certain extent, anti-Jewish. The wordplay with the name "Tarasius" is present in one sub-recension represented by only a single manuscript; it is thus obviously not genuine for Parasceve's dossier, but is presented together with another anti-Jewish motive specific to the same sub-recension (Jews as those who put Parasceve into the pit). The name "Tarasius" used in the Eleutherius recension of the *Twelve Fridays* for the

Jewish adversary of Eleutherius is a weighty argument for the conclusion that *BHG* 1420f (and, tangentially, *BHG* 1420p) intersects with an anti-Jewish legend where Tarasius is the name of the main anti-hero. This same legend forms part of the background of the Eleutherius recension of the *Twelve Fridays*.

3.3. Concluding Remarks on the Cult of Eleutherius

3.3.1. Commemoration Dates of Eleutherius

Eleutherius and Anthia are commemorated on 15 December (Byzantine rite), 18 April (Latin rite), and 26 March (West Syrian rite¹⁹¹). The latter date is interesting because of its proximity to the traditional date of the spring equinox in the Roman calendar, 25 March.

There were different traditions in the Christian world concerning the relationship of the Easter triduum dates to the spring equinox. In at least some of them, 26 March was the “historical” date of Great Friday.¹⁹² We know nothing about the Easter

¹⁹¹ In some Syriac menologia, the Byzantine commemoration is also represented, although in corrupted form. Thus, in the two Greek-influenced calendars published in section VI of Nau’s collection, 13 December is headed either “Martyrium of Eustathius and Nonna, his mother (ܡܬܪܟ ܨܠܘܨܐ ܘܡܬܠܦܘܟܐ ܨܘܡܘܨܐ),” or simply “Crowning of Eustathius, martyr”; 15 December is, in these calendars, occupied by the commemoration of John the Theologian: Nau, F. *Un martyrologe et douze ménologies syriaques, édités et traduits*, 68, cf. note 23. PO, 10, 1, Nr 46. Paris, 1912 [reprint: Turnhout, 2003]. For the commemoration of Eleutherius, Anthia, and “*Qrbwr* eparch” on 26 March, see *ibid.*, 73 (the same calendars) and 120 and 9, note 1 (other calendars). The commemoration on 26 March is also sometimes distorted; thus, in a martyrologium of the late 13th or the 14th century, Eleutherius is commemorated on 27 March and “*Qrbwr* eparch” on 28 March: Peeters, P. “Le martyrologe de Rabban Sliba.” *AB* 27 (1908): 129–200, here 150 (txt)/178 (tr.).

¹⁹² An explicit statement that Jesus was crucified on 26 March is contained in a Western computus, that of Victorius of Aquitania, 457 AD (Mosshammer, A. A. *The Easter Computus and the Origins of the Christian Era*, 240. The Oxford Early Christian Studies. Oxford, 2008), but Victorius might be following some earlier traditions concerning this point.

computus in the Christian tradition(s) presupposing the Friday veneration but, at any rate, the date 26 March is worth noting for future studies.

3.3.2. *Illyricum*

In Eleutherius' dossier, the genuine location in Hierapolis was replaced by Illyricum (see above, 2.3). The corresponding change of ecclesiastical geography took place after 525, that is, after the recovery of Nağrān's church organisation under the Ethiopian domination in Ḥimyar and the deposition of Philoxenus of Mabbug under Justin I. But why was it Illyricum that was chosen instead?

Some light is shed by John of Ephesus in his *Life* of Simeon of Bet-Arsham (an anti-Chalcedonian Syrian bishop, the author of several epistles on the murders of Christians in Nağrān in 523, and an extremely active preacher who visited a multitude of lands and mastered no less a multitude of languages). John describes the geography of Simeon's preaching, comparing him with Apostle Paul as follows: "...he [Simeon] had travelled not only from Jerusalem and as far as Illyricum [cf. Rom 15:19], but also in all countries in which the preaching of Christ had travelled, except only the territories of Rome."¹⁹³

Of course, this is not necessarily a witness of any particular interest to the sixth-century Syrian anti-Chalcedonians in Illyricum, although such a possibility is not to be excluded. However, this is at least testimony of a symbolic importance of Illyricum, in this milieu, as a mark of extreme missionary zeal. Thus, Illyricum was chosen in this milieu for the up-to-date recension of the *Life* of Eleutherius and subsequently in the seventh-century Eleutherius recension of the *Twelve Fridays*.

CONCLUSION: A LOST *EPISTLE ON FRIDAY?*

The epistle from heaven on Wednesday and Friday (see Stemma 1 in the Introduction), probably discovered in Jerusalem under the

¹⁹³ Brooks, E. W. John of Ephesus, *The Lives of the Eastern Saints. Syriac texts edited and translated*. I, 138. PO, 17, 1, Nr 82. Paris, 1923 [reprint: Turnhout, 2003].

brief patriarchate of the anti-Chalcedonian Theodosius (451–453), has eluded discovery despite our best efforts to trace it. No wonder. It was to be extinguished like a meteorite in the dense atmosphere of the confessional polemics of the sixth century with its exceptional multiplication of various religious factions, especially among the anti-Chalcedonians. However, the meteorite's trajectory can be traced. By good fortune, there are two legends that mention it rather directly: the Bahīrā legend (composed by “anti-Friday” Christians) and the Slavonic Eleutherius recension of the *Twelve Fridays* (composed by “pro-Friday” Christians). Both legends are nearly contemporary (their dates are the early eighth century for the Bahīrā legend and the late seventh century for Eleutherius' *Twelve Fridays*). There are, moreover, several earlier Christian legends dealing with the Friday veneration. In these legends, Friday is *the* holy weekday, when one has to abstain from work and to fast (fasting on Friday was common in early Islam, too). In some of these legends, Friday as the market weekday (the Eleutherius recension of the *Twelve Fridays*) and the day of almsgiving (the Syrian legend of Paul and John) is also mentioned.

All these legends are connected with the Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula, and some of them certainly with the conversion of Naḡrān to Christianity. All these legends are of Syrian origin (regardless of the original language, either Syriac or Greek), with the possible exception of the Parasceve legend (which originated in Bostra in southern Syria but in a milieu closely connected to the Ghassanid Arabs, possibly among the Ghassanids themselves).

Among the legends related to Naḡrān, those that show no interest in the topic of Friday are the East Syrian legend transmitted by the Muslim authors and the *Gādlā Azqir*, which is very close to our West Syrian legends in other respects but whose origin is autochthonic (Himyarite).

The Eleutherius recension of the *Twelve Fridays* is of special interest to our quest. Its reference to an early Christian document of apostolic origin burned by Jews is in accordance with the documented practice of Jews to burn Christian books. For instance, in the *Tosefta*, we have such a prescription on behalf of R. Tarfon (in the late first–early second century), *ṯShabbat* 13(14):5, who said that *ha-gilyonim* (gospels) and other books of *minim* (heretics) should be burnt.

It would be an attractive hypothesis to see behind this legendary apostolic writing a real document “discovered” in Theodosian anti-Chalcedonian Jerusalem as allegedly having descended from heaven to the apostles. In any case, regardless of such hypotheses, the hagiography produced by the conversion of Nağrān was common to both Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian traditions in the period from 482 (*Henotikon* of Zeno) to the 520s. This is why we see remnants of the Friday veneration in both Christian camps, although initially the idea to venerate Friday must belong to the anti-Chalcedonians.

The overwhelming presence of the Friday veneration motive in the Christian legends related to the conversion of the Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula and even the conversion of Muḥammad himself (the Baḥīrā legend) is sufficient reason to identify this Christian tradition as the source of the Friday veneration in Islam.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁴ I am especially grateful to Anissava Miltenova, Sergei Valentinovich Ivanov, Nikolai Seleznyov, Sergei Arkadievich Ivanov, and Sergei Frant-souzzoff for their advice and to Elena Bormotova, Pavel Vorobjev, and Eugen Shteyn for their continuous help. My special gratitude goes to Claudia R. Jensen, the best editor of my publications in English.