Contents of an Apologetic Nature
in Ms. Raqqada 2003/2
(formerly Great Mosque of Kairouan 120/829)

BY

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Introduction
Among the fundamental contributions of Giorgio Levi Della Vida to
the awareness of the literary output of the Christians from al-Andalus,
he left an article concerning the “Mozarabic text of universal history”
inserted into codex 120/829 of the Great Mosque of Kairouan.1 In that
work, published at the beginning of the 1960’s, the Italian orientalist
described concisely the contents of this summary of world history and
provided some broad notes on its sources. Some years later a rough
edition of the manuscript was posthumously published in the volume
that brings together several articles by Levi Della Vida devoted to the
Arabic literature of al-Andalus.2 Subsequently, both Levi Della Vida’s
article and the Christian chronicle dealt with in it received virtually no
scholarly attention. Things changed in 2004, when two articles were
written on the manuscript now preserved in the Raqqāda Museum of
the Arts of Islamic Civilization,3 catalogue number 2003/2: one by
Philippe Roisse,4 and the other by myself.5

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1 “Un texte mozarabe d’histoire universelle”, in Études d’orientalisme dédiées à la
2 “Un texte mozarabe d’histoire universelle”, in Notedistoria letteraria arabo-ispanica, a
3 The collection of manuscripts of the Great Mosque was moved in the eighties to
Raqqāda, a small village close to Kairouan.
4 “Redécouverte d’un important manuscrit ‘arabe chrétien’ occidental: le ms. Raqqāda

This paper has benefited from the learning of Prof. Samir Khalil SAMIR, Prof. Luis
MOLINA, and Prof. Juan Pedro MONFERRER-SALA, to whom I owe every gratitude for
their generous and inestimable help.
Intending to prepare a new edition of this peculiar universal history, I have specifically written two articles in which I aim to show its position within Andalusi historiography. The present paper, however, will not deal with this work, which occupies twenty-seven of the fifty folios that comprise the codex, but rather will focus on the rest of the codex, namely, the material of an apologetic nature.

Levi Della Vida already pointed out that, apart from the "universal history", the codex contains two different Christian apologies: one of them is a version of the dialogue between the Nestorian patriarch Timothy I and the Abbasid caliph al-Mahdi; the other one is a controversy between al-katūlīqī and al-a'rābī. Most folios do indeed belong to one of these apologies, but there are some whose origin I have not been able to determine: they may be part of one of the two works singled out by Levi Della Vida; or perhaps we are dealing with a third work.

Whether they are two or three Christian apologies, the fact is that their subject-matter is quite distant from my main line of research, but I became interested in them as part of the same codex as the Christian chronicle. After examining them in depth—which was rather difficult given the deplorable state of the manuscript,— I must admit that I have not found out a great deal about the apologetic contents of the Raqqāda codex. Nonetheless, I shall present here the results of the research, outlining the contents of the twenty-two folios that are not part of the "universal history",9 and offering some examples taken from the most legible fragments, which may provide some clue to the ascription of the non-identified parts.

1. Dialogue between al-katūlīqī and al-a'rābī

Six folios10, at least, undoubtedly belong to the dialogue between al-katūlīqī ('the Catholic', 'the catholicos' [\(<\text{Greek}\ katōlikōs\)]11 and al-a'rābī (lit. 'the Arab', 'the Bedouin'), since all include mention of one or both interlocutors. And little more can be said on these folios with complete certainty. Most of them are in a terrible state of conservation, to such an extent that sometimes one cannot tell for sure who is talking. It is, therefore, almost impossible to reconstruct any part of the text in order to identify the controversy, if it were a known one. Only about four pages are slightly more legible and allow us to reconstruct the text minimally, providing some information, albeit very little, on the contents of the dialogue. In short, any conclusion must be put forward—and by the same token accepted—with caution.

Among a number of questions, the conversation seems to deal with a problem central in the theological debate between Christians and Muslims, namely whether the spirit of God is uncreated, that is, eternal in him, or created. Moreover, several statements appear to point to the discussion on the eternity of God's attributes in general. Seemingly, al-a'rābī would not accept that God's knowledge and will may be eternal. No fragment of the text is in a sufficiently good state of conservation to say so with certainty, but some of the arguments set forth by al-katūlīqī suggest that he intended to convince his interlocutor that God's attributes, some of them at least, are eternal.

From some scattered legible sentences the reasoning of al-katūlīqī can be partially reconstructed.12 He argues, for example, that God is not

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10 For the first one, see the previous note; the other article, entitled "El Kitáb Hurfīyiyyūs y el «Texto mozárabe de historia universal» de Qayrawán: contenidos y filiación de dos crónicas árabes cristianas", will appear in the proceedings of the colloquium Quelle identité mozarabe ? Histoire, langue et culture des Chrétiens d'al-Andalus (IX-XII siècles), Casa de Velázquez, Madrid, 16-17 juin 2003. Some important notes on the foliation of the manuscript, applicable here, can be found in footnote 5 of this article.

11 "Un texte mozarabe d'histoire universelle", in Note di storia letteraria, p. 124.

12 The word katūlīqī, as it appears in the manuscript, is quite rare. The spelling is documented in the Vocabulario en Arabico with the meaning of 'Catholic' (see Federico Corriendo, A Dictionary of Andalusi Arabic [Leiden: Brill, 1997], p. 456). However, it may also be a variant of 'katholikōs', a title given to the patriarchs of some Eastern Churches. So it was suggested to me by Prof. Samir Khalil Samir.
subject to change, addition or decrease. If knowledge specifically were not in him eternally, then it follows that He would have admitted addition; so, of necessity, He was not perfect prior to that. Knowledge cannot exist without the spirit, nor the spirit without knowledge, for, in that case, it would be an irrational spirit (al-rūḥ al-bahīmī, lit. ‘the animal spirit’). The spirit cannot exist without will either. Will is indeed indispensable in the creative act, as al-a’rābī himself recognizes. From all this, one can infer that if knowledge and will cannot exist without the spirit, and vice versa, and if knowledge and will are eternal in him, then the spirit is also eternal. Unlike the spirit of God, that of angels is a created spirit with temporal knowledge (räḥaḥī bi’ilm zamānī). Likewise, knowledge and will are not in the essence of Satan and his companions, but rather they are created spirits that acquired knowledge and will, hence their knowledge is temporal.

2. Dialogue between Timothy I and al-Mahdi

Something more can be said about the other Christian apologia inserted into the codex of Raqûqda: the dialogue between the Nestorian patriarch Timothy I and the third Abbasid caliph al-Mahdi (r. 775-785), to which at least nine folios belong. This is evident from the contents of the dialogue, but especially from the mention of the interlocutors as al-ğātālīq – i.e., ‘the katholikós’ – and al-Mahdi. The entire name of the patriarch is given in the title, which is partly written with red ink and not wholly legible. It reads more or less as follows: “hādā kitāb iḥtiğā mhā ḥāgga bi-hi al-amīr al-Mahdī Ṭimūţāwūs al-ğātālīq” (this is the book of the argumentation used by the katholikós Timothy to contend with the emir al-Mahdi).

Timothy I was the patriarch of the Nestorian Church from 780 to his death in 823. He had a friendly relationship with the caliph al-Mahdi and his successors, and took part in the cultural life of the Baghdadian court. Timothy allegedly wrote down one of the theological discussions he had with al-Mahdi, which was held in two sessions. This he did in the form of a letter addressed to an anonymous correspondent, probably a priest friend of his called Sergius. The letter was originally written in Syriac, the oldest testimony of which is a 13th-century manuscript preserved in a monastery in the north of Iraq. In 1928, Alphonse Mingana published a reproduction of the Syriac text in facsimile, along with an English translation.

As far as I know, up to now the Arabic versions of the conversation between patriarch and caliph have been classified into three main families. All of them are much briefer than the Syriac original, being actually limited to the discussion on the first day.
At the beginning of the twenties, Louis Cheikho\textsuperscript{23} edited the Arabic translation represented by the 19th-century manuscript 662 of the Oriental Library of Beirut (from here on B.O. 662), bought in Mosul. A new edition of this version was published in the mid-1970's by Hans Putman and Samir Khalil Samir,\textsuperscript{24} who, in addition to editing the text, translating it into French and studying it, offer a complete view of the situation of the Nestorian Church with the first Abbasid caliphs. This new edition is well justified given the important faults of the previous one.\textsuperscript{25}

The translation that is most complete and faithful to the Syriac text, in the words of its editor, is the one represented by a 14th-century manuscript from Egypt, now preserved in the National Library of France, catalogue number \textit{arabe 82}. This version was edited and translated into French by Robert Caspar in 1977, and translated into Spanish by Francisco del Río twenty years later.\textsuperscript{26}

There is a third Arabic version very unfaithful to the original, contained in the manuscript \textit{arabe 215} of the National Library of France, which dates from the 16th century and also comes from Egypt.\textsuperscript{27}

Just like these three Arabic testimonies of the conversation between Timothy I and al-Mahdi, the one preserved in the Museum of Raqqāda offers a summary of some of the topics discussed on the first day. As a matter of fact, in its present state, this translation only deals with a small number of topics pertaining to the beginning of the dialogue,\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{23} "Al-Muhāwara al-dinīyya allatī ġarāt bayna l-ḥalīfa al-Mahdi wa-Ṭīmātīwus al-qātaliq", \textit{Al-Māqrī} 19 (1921), pp. 359-374 and 408-418.


\textsuperscript{25} See H. Putman and S. Kh. Samir, \textit{L'Eglise et l'Islam sous Timothée I}, pp. 185-187. The latest edition is the one I have mainly used.

\textsuperscript{26} R. Caspar, "Les versions arabes du dialogue entre le catholico Timothée I et le calife al-Mahdi (IV/Ve siècle)" (complete reference in footnote 19); F. del Río, "El diálogo entre el califa al-Mahdi y Timoteo I", \textit{Ir} 3 (1998), pp. 229-247.

\textsuperscript{27} On this version, see R. Caspar, "Les versions arabes du dialogue", pp. 110-111.

\textsuperscript{28} With respect to the Syriac in particular, all the questions dealt with in the codex of Raqqāda, except one, are concentrated in the first quarter of the first-day's dialogue, approximately.
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- God, his Word and his Spirit are not three gods, but just one, in the same way as the sun, its light and its heat are not three suns, but only one.38

Many of the arguments set forth by Timothy and the similes used to support them, as included in the text of Raqqa'da, were the usual ones among Christian apologists. But in this paper I am concerned with the contents of this testimony, rather than from a theological point of view, insofar as they inform about its relationship both to the Syriac text and to the other Arabic translations.

With respect to the Arabic testimonies in particular, the first issue is whether it belongs to any of the known families. As regards the translation not yet edited –to my knowledge–, which is represented by the manuscript BnF arabe 215, I have not seen it, but from the description made by Robert Caspar in “Les versions arabes du dialogue”, it is clear to me that the text of Raqqa'da has no relation at all with it. Apart from the omission of a lot of passages and the addition of quite a few others, Caspar informs us that, in this version of the dialogue, the tone of Timothy’s speech is contemptuous, scornful, even insolent, whereas that of al-Mahdi is acquiescent.39 There is nothing of that in our text, the common omissions being mere coincidences.40

Let us, therefore, focus on the two edited Arabic translations. As said before, they are represented by manuscripts BnF arabe 82 and B.O. 662, respectively. I have compared them with the one preserved in Tunisia, and the only definitive conclusion I have drawn is that the latter is an independent translation. Just like them, the text of Raqqa'da is a summary of the conversation on the first day, but it is, in its present state, less complete than those edited. As an illustrative example, it only covers about one-third of the questions with respect to BnF arabe 82: if this translation is divided into twenty-seven questions, our text comprises only the first eight; only the last one, namely that concerning the falsification of the Gospels, corresponds to the fifteenth question in that version. At a first glance, it is also a less faithful version since, besides the omissions, it contains some passages that are not even in the Syriac text. Furthermore, the dialogue is written in the third person, whereas in the other testimonies the speaker is Timothy, who addresses the caliph as malik-nā al-muṣaffar (“our victorious king”), or the like. However, after doing a thorough collation, I have noticed that sometimes the text of Raqqa'da offers a rendering more faithful to the original than the other Arabic testimonies. I shall give here some examples that illustrate all this, extracted from the best preserved fragments, and hence the most reliable.

The verso of folio 28 (fol. 28a) is quite well conserved compared with other pages. It corresponds to the beginning of the conversation, where al-Mahdi reproaches Timothy, being such an intelligent man, for saying that God had a female mate, from whom He begot a son. The passage inserted into Raqqa'da 2003/2 is reproduced next, along with the other two Arabic translations in columns for the sake of easier comparison:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raqqa'da 2003/2, fol. 28a (verso)</th>
<th>BnF arabe 82, ed. CASPAR, par. 1-2</th>
<th>B.O. 662, ed. PUTMAN/SAMIR, par. 3-8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>قال في الملك (...) : يا حائطين</td>
<td>قال المهدي: إنه لا يسمح</td>
<td>قال الله تعالى إنه أخذ صحة ولد منها ولدمنها...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>فيك العلم الأبد وترفع في الله</td>
<td>يا لى الله يدعو الله</td>
<td>فاتولداً صاحين: يا يا الملك</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ما ليس يسمح أن تقوم إلاه</td>
<td>ء على الله تعالى يقول هذه</td>
<td>صاحين يتعبد</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>الله تعالى أخذ صحة ولد منها ولد</td>
<td>صاحين: يا يا الملك</td>
<td>صاحين يتعبد</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>وقال تعالى إنه أخذ صحة ولد منهما ولد</td>
<td>صاحين: يا يا الملك</td>
<td>صاحين يتعبد</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>فيك يا للملك لله تعالى يقول هذه صاحين</td>
<td>صاحين: يا يا الملك</td>
<td>صاحين يتعبد</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

38 Fol. 30a. Cf. MINGANA, p. 158; PUTMAN/SAMIR, par. 42-43; CASPAR, par. 8.
40 For the omissions of BnF arabe 215, with regard to BnF arabe 82, see R. CASPAR, “Les versions arabes du dialogue”, p. 110, a. 14.
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Translation of the passage inserted into ms. Raqqada 2003/2:

«The king said to me [...]: O katholikós, you, possessor of all knowledge, say of God what ought not to be said, that God took a female mate from whom He begat a son. -The katholikós replied: Who slandered God saying that He took a female mate? -Al-Mahdi said: What then do you say of Christ? -The catholics replied: I say that Christ is the word of God that appeared in a body for the salvation of the world. -Al-Mahdi asked: Do you not say that Christ is the son of God? -The katholikós replied: I say of him what the books of the Prophets say and what Christ said of himself. However, he was not engendered in the same manner as the sons of carnal or corporeal people [...], but rather his engendering was marvellous...»

The three Arabic translations reflect quite accurately the Syriac text, which reads as follows, according to the English translation by Mingana:

«He [the caliph al-Mahdi] said to me: O katholikós, a man like you who possesses all this knowledge and utters such sublime words concerning God, is not justified in saying about God that He married a woman from whom He begat a son. -And I replied to his Majesty: And who is, O God-loving king, who has ever uttered such a blasphemy concerning God? -And our victorious king said to me: What then do you say that Christ is? -And I replied to his Majesty: O king, Christ is the son of God, and I confess him and worship him as such. This I learned from Christ himself in the Gospel and from the Books of the Torah and of the Prophets, which know him and call him by the name of “son of God” but not a son in the flesh as children are born in the carnal way, but an admirable and wonderful son» (MINGANA, p. 153).

Even if the Arabic versions of this passage are all quite faithful to the original, each differs notably from the others. The text most similar to that preserved in Raqqáda is BnF arabe 82. Both contain parts that are almost identical, using coincident terms and expressions against the third testimony. Both, for instance, say that God took a “sähiba” (female mate) where B.O. 662 gives “hnra’a”; or that He begot a “walad’ (son) where B.O. 662 has “ibn”. In addition, both use the prepositional idiom “wafari ‘álà” to refer to the slander uttered against God, whereas B.O. 662 employs the word “tagfif” (blasphemy).

These examples cannot be regarded as really significant, however. Actually, Raqqáda 2003/2 and BnF arabe 82 offer a quite different rendering in some parts. Thus, in BnF arabe 82, al-Mahdi’s praise of Timothy’s wisdom is less assertive than those of the Syriac original and the other Arabic translations. Furthermore, unlike the other testimonies, in BnF arabe 82 Christ himself is not expressly mentioned among the sources of knowledge on his nature. In short, if Raqqáda 2003/2 belonged to the same family as BnF arabe 82, it would come from an earlier and more complete version than the one transmitted in the manuscript of Paris. Nevertheless, I rather think that they belong to different families, and that the similarities between them are mere coincidences, not rare taking the subject into consideration.

This seems evident to me in the following passage. Here, the discussion deals with certain words uttered by Jesus that al-Mahdi regarded as contradictory:

42 For the other Arabic testimonies, see the French translations made by CASPAR and PUTMAN/KHALIL.

43 In Io 20,17.
The Arabic translation of this passage that is most complete and similar to the original is that represented by manuscript BnF arabe 82. In contrast, that of BnF arabe 82 is very brief, as it only includes the essential information. As for the text of Raqqâda, it is not so literal as the former, but it is much more complete and faithful to the Syriac than BnF arabe 82.

Further evidence confirming that the text of Raqqâda does not belong to any of the known families is the fact that it includes some passages that do not appear in the Arabic translations edited so far. This is true, for example, in the case of one of the similes used by Timothy

"Vocabulario en Arábigo" (Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 1989), p. 238. See also F. Corriente, A Dictionary of Andalusi Arabic, p. 413.

Note, though, that B.O. 662 leaves out the sentence "He is, however, from his Father by the nature of the word, born of him from eternity", of which Raqqâda 2003/2 offers a quite accurate rendering.
in support of his arguments, to be exact that of the king's letter to prove that Christ is not two, but only one with two natures, which in the original reads as follows:

«The letter of the commander of the faithful is one, both in the words that are written in it and in the papyrus on which the words are written, and our king, the king of kings, is called both the father and the owner of his letter. He is called its father through the words born of his soul, which have been impressed on the papyrus, and he is called its owner through his being the owner of the papyrus on which the words have been written. Neither the papyrus, however, is, by nature, from the soul of the king, nor the words are by nature from the papyrus-reed, but the words are by nature born of the soul of the king, and the papyrus is by nature made of the papyrus-reed. In this same way Christ is one...» (MINGANA, p. 157).

Unfortunately, of the whole passage, which—I insist—is omitted in the other Arabic translations, only the final sentence can be read:

«Your throne, O God, is everlasting, and the sceptre of your reign is the sceptre of rightness. You loved justice and loathed what is reprehensible. That is why God, your Lord, anointed you with the oil of happiness more than your equals» (fol. 43b).46

To summarise, from these and other examples it is evident, in my view, that our text belongs to a family different from those distinguished up to now, since, on the one hand, the version it offers is manifestly dissimilar to them, and, on the other hand, it contains material that is omitted from them. Moreover, some passages are not even in the Syriac text. This is the case, for example, of the following quotation from Psalm 44 concerning the eternal reign of God:

3. Unclassified folios

The codex of Raqqāda contains another seven folios47 I have not been able to classify as pertaining to any of the two described apologies. They were not edited by Levi Della Vida as part of the “Mozarabic text of universal history”, but no names of the interlocutors are mentioned (either al-kaṭṭāliqa / al-ārībi or al-ghātiliq / al-Mahdī), as far as I am able to tell.48

I have, however, found out the original source of many passages making up those folios. They are mainly biblical quotations, mostly coming from the books of Psalms and the Prophets, to which Christian apologists in general, and Timothy in particular, usually resorted when searching for support for their arguments. I shall here provide a survey of the contents of these folios, offering some examples from them.49

The list of the prophets, to whom identified biblical quotations are attributed, includes three major prophets, specifically, Isaiah, Daniel, and Jeremiah, and the following minor prophets: Hosea, Micheas, Zeplaniah, Zechariah, and maybe Amos. Isaiah is the most frequently relied upon. Thus, different chapters of this Book are the source of most

46 Cf. Ps 44,7-8: Sedes tua, Dens, in saeculum saeculi: Virga directionis virga regni tui. Dilexitis justitiam et odisti iniquitatem; proprieas unxit te Dens, Deus tua, oleo luetitiae, prae consortibus tuis.
47 Folios 3, 14, 22, 27, 35, 44 and 45.
48 It is naturally possible that Levi Della Vida could read some words that are illegible today.
49 A list of the identified quotations is given in Appendix II.
50 I will leave it for another place the edition and translation of the biblical quotations whose source I have ascertained. Before, I would like to see the codex in situ again and check if some doubtful readings can be confirmed.
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passages of folio 22. The following quotation, surprisingly wholly legible, comes from chapter 19:

"Then [Isaiah] also says: This Lord will ascend on a light cloud and will go into Egypt; the idols of Egypt will tremble at the Lord's face and Egypt will be acquainted with God." 51

Folio 35 also depends mainly on Isaiah, but only on chapter 45, which describes the mission of Cyrus as revealed to the prophet by God. Despite the lacunae and unreadable words, narration of the first three verses can be easily followed in folio 35a (recto):

«Then [Isaiah] also says: This Lord will ascend on a light cloud and will go into Egypt; the idols of Egypt will tremble at the Lord's face and Egypt will be acquainted with God». 52

The following passage is an excerpt from the first one:

«Then [Isaiah] also says: This Lord will ascend on a light cloud and will go into Egypt; the idols of Egypt will tremble at the Lord's face and Egypt will be acquainted with God». 51

The Prophets and the Psalms have proved to be the primary source of the unidentified folios, but they also contain biblical quotations from the Pentateuch —specifically, Genesis, Leviticus and Deuteronomy—,

51 Identified quotations come from three chapters of Isaiah, but there are quite a few more that are illegible, whose source is the same Book. All are introduced by "wa-qāla ba'ṣīl al-nabi", "tammun qaṭla (ayy)" or "wa-qāla ayyīm".


53 The usual meaning of the word a'īdā (sing. 'āmid) is "columns". However, here it renders the Latin term "vestae" (vestes, -is, i.e., "bar to bolt a door". For other testimonies, see F. CORRIENTE, A Dictionary of Andalusi Arabic, p. 364.

54 Cf. Is 45,1-3: Haec dicit Dominus christo meo Cyrus, cuius appropredi statoram, ut subiclion ante faciem eis gentes, et dorsa regum vertant, et offeriam coram eo insuus, et

Fol. 35b is hardly legible, just like most "b" pages, but some scattered readable words make it evident that the quotation from Isaiah 45 extended at least to verse 13.

The Book of Psalms has also provided a great deal of material for the compilation of these folios. For instance, folio 44 contains quotations from at least three or four psalms: 71, 101, 131, and maybe 86. The following passage is an excerpt from the first one:

«Before him the Ethiopians will prostrate themselves and his enemies will lick the earth. The kings of Tharsis and the emirs of the islands will offer presents; the emirs of the Arabs and Sabab will ...»

This quotation is followed by another from Psalm 101:

«In the Book of Psalms: God will build Sion and He will be seen in his majesty». 58

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55 As we are told through formulae such as "wa-qāla Dāwūd al-nabi", "wa-fi l-zāhir (ayy)" or "wa-qāla (ayy) fi l-zāhir".

56 Cf. Ps 71,9-11: Coram illo proclivit Aetheopios, et invinciatus est terram lingent. Reges Tharsis et insulae munera offerunt; reges Arabum et Saba dona adducunt; et adorabunt eum annos reges terrae.

57 Cf. Ps 101,17: Quita aedificavit Dominus Sion et videbatur in gloria sua.
Judges, Proverbs, Baruch (Kitāb Barūḥ), and the Gospel of John. The one from Proverbs runs as follows:

"He says that wisdom built a house for itself and carved seven columns." 59

It is important to note that some folios include biblical quotations we also find in the dialogue between Timothy I and al-Mahdi. 60 However, the fact that other passages are not in it led me, not long ago, 61 to rule out the possibility that these folios belong to that work. Today, I would not dare state that categorically, considering that other folios that are without doubt part of the well-known apology contain material foreign to it. Just as a hypothesis, one can guess that more passages were added to those adduced by the Nestorian patriarch in support of his statements, as was the case with the aforementioned quotation from Psalm 44, which is not in the Syriac text —in the form we know it today at least— but is included in a folio undoubtedly pertaining to the discussion between the patriarch and the caliph. Nevertheless, the fact that these folios contain just one biblical quotation also found in that work and quite a few others not included in it leads me to think that they rather belong to another work.

Fol. 14a contains, for instance, a quotation from Daniel that, in Timothy’s apology, is adduced to prove Christ’s coming down from Heaven as predicted by the prophets. 62

«The prophet David says in Psalm 21: They pierced my hands and my feet, counted all my bones, divided my garments for themselves and drew lots for my clothing». 63

This passage is preceded by a quotation from the Gospel of John that is not in the dialogue between Timothy and al-Mahdi:

«He says: In the same way as Moses... the serpent in the desert, so it is necessary that the Son of the man be lifted up, for whosoever believes in him shall never die». 65

In addition, fol. 14a is made up of other passages that do not appear in the apology, taken from the books of three different prophets: the page begins with the mention of an uncertain prophet, who may be Amos (wa-qāla 'Āmūs / Ḥāmūs (?) al-nabi); a quotation from Micheas follows that of Daniel; the source of the third is the Book of Zechariah.

The following quotation from the Psalms, inserted into folio 45, would give testimony of Christ’s crucifixion according to the Nestorian patriarch. 64

و قال داود النبي في الحادي والعشرين مزمور (كذا): نفروا يدي ورحلي وحسوا جميع عظامي وقساما لأنفسهم تبابي واقتروا ثوبي (6)

«The prophet David says in Psalm 21: They pierced my hands and my feet, counted all my bones, divided my garments for themselves and drew lots for my clothing». 65

This passage is preceded by a quotation from the Gospel of John that is not in the dialogue between Timothy and al-Mahdi:

قال: كما موسى ... التعبان (؟) في المفرق كذلك ينبغي أن يرفع ابن الإنسان فكل من أمر به لا يموت في الأبد

«He says: In the same way as Moses... the serpent in the desert, so it is necessary that the Son of the man be lifted up, for whosoever believes in him shall never die». 66

59 Cf Prov 9,1: Sapientia aedificavit sibi domum, excidit columnas septem.
60 Specif., folio 14: Dan 7,13-14 (see infra); folio 27: Is 35,4-5 (MINGANA, p. 168; PUTMAN/SAMIR, par. 96; CASPAR, par. 17); folio 45: Ps 21,17-19 (see infra); and probably folio 44: Gen 49,10 (MINGANA, p. 174; PUTMAN/SAMIR, par. 151; CASPAR, par. 27).
61 "El Kitāb Hurūfīyah y el «Texto mozárabe de historia universal» de Qayrawān", footnote 8.
62 MINGANA, pp. 169 and 223; PUTMAN/SAMIR, par. 100; CASPAR, par. 18.
64 MINGANA, p. 177; PUTMAN/SAMIR, par. 193; CASPAR, par. 31.
65 Cf. Dan 7,14: et omnes populi, tribus et linguæ iuxta servivere: potestas eius, potestas aeterna, quae non aperiatur, et regnum eius, quod non corrupitur. Some scattered readable words indicate that the quotation from Daniel 7 also takes in verse 13.
The contents of folio 27 differ remarkably from the rest. The biblical material included in it comes from chapter 22 of the First Book of Kings, which one would rather expect to find in the “universal history”. However, this folio was not edited by Levi Della Vida; actually, it seems that the quotation was adduced as demonstrative evidence of a controversial argument. In this chapter Josaphat, king of Juda, and Achab, king of Israel, form an alliance against Syria. Achab consults with the prophets, and all of them recommend going into battle. All except Micheas, who affirms that a spirit has seduced the rest of the prophets into persuading Achab to go against Ramoth Galaad, so that he falls into Syrian hands. Apart from the kings’ names (Yitscfñz and Ahāb) and a few readable words, fol. 27b is illegible. Fol. 27a (verso) starts in verse 19, where Micheas tells his vision: God, sitting in the company of the heavenly army, asked who would persuade Achab to go against Ramoth Galaad; each one answered in his manner, until a spirit came forth and said:

أنا أسرء وأخدده. فقال الله له: كيف تخدده؟ فقال: أكون روحًا كاذبة في أوؤاه أبياه.

"I shall go forth and deceive him. Then God asked him: "How will you deceive him?" And he answered: "I shall be a lying spirit in the mouths of his prophets"." 68

This quotation seems to have been introduced to make a distinction between false and real prophets. As a matter of fact, the author explains next that the trustworthy prophets and the virtuous men assert that God will come at the end of time and will become incarnate, He will suffer Passion and will die for the world’s salvation. Are the prophets referred to here those to whom biblical quotations of the other folios are attributed? Although such a question cannot be answered with certainty, whatever the answer, the fact is that most identified biblical quotations constituting these folios deal with the arrival of the Messiah and the restoration of the divine kingdom, when peace will spread all over the world and every nation will submit to God. However, this evidence is—needless to say—conclusive.

Conclusion

To recapitulate, the codex Raqqâda 2003/2 contains, apart from a summary of world history, fragments belonging to at least two Christian apologies. One of them is the well-known dialogue between the Nestorian patriarch Timothy I and the Abbasid caliph al-Mahdi. The Arabic translation of this work inserted into the manuscript of Raqqâda differs notably from the other Arabic testimonies edited so far: it is much briefer than them and less faithful to the Syriac original, even though it sometimes offers a more accurate rendering and even contains passages omitted from the other translations. There is a second dialogue held between al-kaṭiʿlīgī and al-aʿrībī, in which some of the usual topics in the Christian-Muslim controversy, concerning God’s attributes, are discussed. In addition, there are some folios I have not been able to classify under either of those two controversies. They are mainly made up of biblical quotations, most of which are prophesies dealing with the arrival of the reign of God and, seemingly, serve an apologetic purpose.

This paper has been a first approach to the apologetic contents of the manuscript preserved in Raqqâda, and it goes without saying that the examples adduced are too few to reach categorical conclusions. This said, there is every reason to think that the codex was compiled by the Christians in al-Andalus, from where it arrived at Kairouan. As regards the date and place of origin of the manuscript, Levi Della Vida stated that its origin is Hispanic, as revealed by the “typically Mozarabic” script, and it dates back to the 13th century or the beginnings of the 14th. 69 I could not be more precise on the date of the manuscript, but, in principle, I agree with Levi Della Vida as to its Andalusí origin. The script of the manuscript is without doubt Magribi, and the “universal history” it contains is related to other chronicles written in the Iberian peninsula by Christians and Muslims. Obviously, that does not exclude

68 Cf. Lo 3,14-15: Et sicut Moyses exaltavit serpentinum in deserto, ita exaltavi eopiet Filium hominis: ut omnis qui credit in ipsum, non pereat, sed habeat vitam aeternam.
67 The quotation takes in verses 6 to 22, at least.
69 "Un texte mozarabe d’histoire universelle", in Note di storia letteraria, p. 124.
the possibility that the codex was compiled in Kairouan. However, there are some dialectal varieties that, in my view, point towards al-Andalus as the place of compilation. The codex would have been composed by the Christians there from heterogeneous materials of a historical and apologetic nature, all of them of unquestionable interest to the Christian community.

Appendix I. Texts in Arabic


— Fol. 8b —

الشيطان ولأوليائه (...) لم يكن في واحد من هولاء عالم من ذاته ومريد من ذاته بل كلهم كانوا أرواحا مخلوقة استفادوا العلم والإرادة فكان علمهم زمانيا له البدء والحدود

«Satan and his companions [...] there was among them no one who had knowledge in his essence, and no one who had will in his essence, but all of them were created spirits that acquired knowledge and will, since their knowledge was temporal, with beginning and fixed term».

— Fol. 9a —

لا يبدل ولا يقبل الزيادة ولا النقصان فلوا كان ... بلا علم ثم علم لوجب أن يقبل الزيادة وتحدث عليه ما لم يكن فيه وأنه اليوم كامل وقد كان بالأمس لا كاملا

«[God] does not change and does not admit addition or decrease. If He had been ... without knowledge and then He had got it, of necessity He would have admitted addition and what was not in him would have been created for him; today He would be perfect, but yesterday He would not».

إذا قلت إن العلم كان قبل الروح وذلك من المجال الطائر (...) ولا يوجد العلم إلا يوجد الروح

«If you say that knowledge existed before the spirit, this is manifestly impossible [...] Knowledge does not exist if the spirit does not exist».
«Al-kətūlqī said: Did He will and create what He willed? Or did He create something without previous will? Al-ʻarba‘ī answered: Yes, He did will».

«The sun, with its light and its heat, is not three suns but only one; in the same way, God, with his Word and his Spirit, is not three gods, but only one god».

Appendix II. Biblical quotations in the unclassified folios

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